



AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE

CASE STUDY
2021

CHALLENGES

01

Inefficiencies associated with using disparate SIS, CRM, and LMS

02

Lack of single, versatile platform to foster collaboration around the world

03

Discontinuation of student and faculty mobility due to COVID-19 pandemic

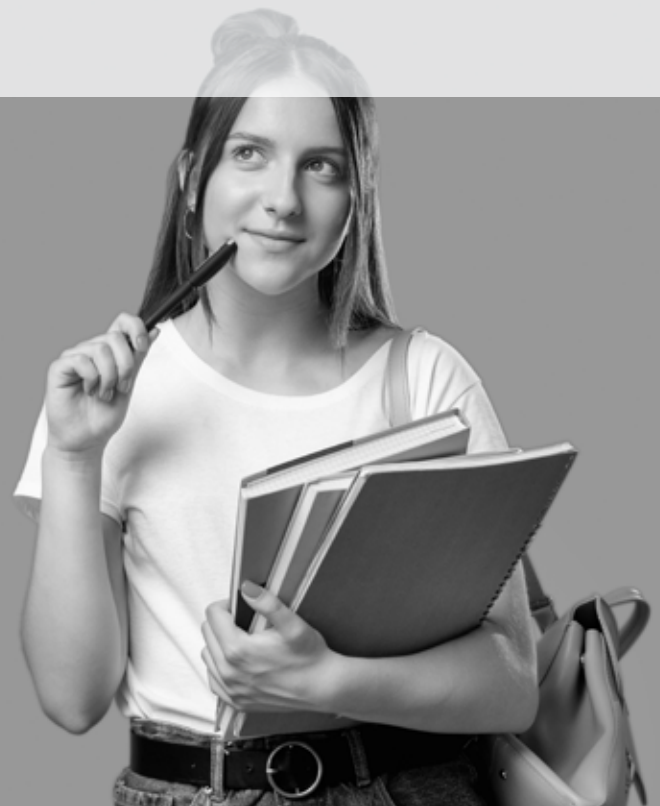
SOLUTIONS

InspirED™
by TOWER

CollaboratED™
by TOWER

BlendED™
by TOWER

ConnectED™
by TOWER



RESULTS

PROVIDES

STUDENTS AND FACULTY
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE DURING
PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

DELIVERS

THE WORLD'S FIRST PROFES-
SIONAL ENGAGEMENT SOLUTION
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PROVIDES

THE ONLY CLOUD-BASED
PLATFORM WITH A FULLY
INTEGRATED SIS, CRM,
AND LMS

PROFILE
AHEA

AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE

is a nonprofit focused on the issues and opportunities facing higher education, including the globalization of education, virtual learning, collaboration, student success, and lifelong learning. Its mission is to drive equity in higher education by connecting the global community through collaboration and shared learning experiences. Through its partnerships with colleges and universities around the world, the nonprofit organization contributes to the development of global citizens through internationalized education, lifelong learning, and universal credentialing.

The organization's goal is to lower the barriers to global education through content, connection, and leadership. AHEA supports institutions of higher education so they can expand their footprint and make a greater impact in their students' academic and career success.

AHEA provides methodologies, services, and tools to enable teaching, learning, educational diversity, and equality. The result is a highly skilled, productive graduate and lifelong learner who impacts their field while earning a competitive wage.



CHALLENGES

AHEA

sought to build an international network of institutions to enhance students' learning experiences and support faculty development through academic diversity, cross-cultural interaction, and critical thinking. Up to that time attempts to internationalize campuses across the United States had been met with varying degrees of success. Lack of infrastructure, budget, processes, and direction were partly to blame. However, the real challenge stemmed from the absence of a software platform that was intuitive and versatile enough to use at colleges and universities around the world.

From the onset, AHEA's executive team realized they'd need to have custom software built to meet its vision of providing education for all. "We wanted a way for faculty to network and collaborate – and then parlay that into student learning, using a single, unified solution," says Karli Grant, President of AHEA.

In 2017, the nonprofit's leadership began the search for a technology partner that would best fit the organization's specific criteria. They wanted to partner with a team of technology experts who were nimble, entrepreneurial, and equally passionate about AHEA's mission.

For AHEA to successfully build an international learning community, it needed a solid and flexible platform to help colleges and universities address their biggest challenges. This included facilitating internationalization, improving enrollment management and student success, and enabling faculty engagement – a need often left unaddressed.



The solution also had to be intuitive enough to foster cross-collaboration with institutions around the world. Enter Tower Education Technologies.

"We understood the steps AHEA wanted to take to eliminate the hurdles and present students with better academic opportunities regardless of their background, socio-economic status, or geographic location," says Benjamin Shank, CEO of Tower Education Technologies.

They responded with **InspirED™**, the only cloud-based platform with a fully integrated SIS/CRM (**ConnectED™**), LMS (**BlendED™**) and a professional engagement solution (**CollaboratED™**).

FACILITATING INTERNATIONALIZATION

with InspirED™

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, internationalization was becoming part of the postsecondary experience. Over 1.07M international students enrolled in courses at colleges outside of their home country. Beginning in March 2020, international education exchange came to a halt as the health crisis shook humanity to the core, and the higher ed industry right along with it.



Institutions were forced to reshuffle their priorities and resources to accommodate a curriculum that was hosted almost entirely online. Virtual courses became mandatory to protect the health of academic stakeholders and provide students a safe, enriching, and rewarding educational experience.

As a result, students who were once studying abroad now lost their exposure to diversity and intercultural communication. Equally difficult was the stress and fatigue faculty faced converting their resident courses to online format, leaving little time to bring a global perspective to their courses.

This disruptive environment is where AHEA and Tower flourished. The nonprofit knew internationalization was instrumental in broadening students' views, bolstering their soft skills, and challenging their identities, cultural understanding, and assumptions. It also fortified the need for faculty to collaborate with their peers to meet current educational demands, transform students into global citizens, and support lifelong learning.

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“Deciding to partner with Tower was an **EASY DECISION**. They understood how crucial it was to deliver one all-inclusive platform. Currently there’s a consortium of institutions toggling between 48 different technologies to engage in online learning. We knew there had to be better way,” says Grant.

FOSTERING COLLABORATION

with CollaboratED™

AHEA sought to provide a solution that fostered academic networking, engagement, mentoring, and collaboration around the globe. Yet no technology existed to promote such professional interaction for faculty and academic administrators. That’s why Tower developed CollaboratED, the first professional engagement solution for higher education.

CollaboratED promotes professional growth and global engagement by providing the centralized venue, guides and standards so faculty can collaborate on research, peer review pedagogy and lessons, and co-author scholarly articles.

“Our desire is to enable a professor in the United States to easily co-create a course on microeconomics with a partner faculty member in Malaysia, for example,” said Grant. “The CollaboratED solution has essentially removed geographical, time zone, and language barriers. It also provides a reliable tool to those institutions that lack resources, support, or the necessary infrastructure needed to engage in online collaboration, teaching and learning.”

CollaboratED™
TOWER

INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

with BlendED™



According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 34.7% of college students were enrolled in at least one online course prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. That number nearly doubled (67%) as remote instruction became more mainstream as a result of the pandemic.

Although the location of their courses changed, students' need to juggle multiple priorities, including work, family, and life hadn't. Overnight instructors were required to transform their classroom lectures and courses to an online environment. This made it more difficult than ever to keep students on track, let alone engaged. To keep pace with learning styles and needs, faculty found out quickly that they must blend a variety of teaching methodologies, tools, and opportunities to support their online classes.

To meet this challenge, Tower developed BlendED, the modern learning management system that integrates pedagogy with technology. It also removes the technical challenges associated with disparate systems and eliminates geographical boundaries for students. The easy-to-use solution provides faculty the confidence to create engaging virtual courses. It also gives students the flexibility to access 24/7 learning. Best of all, by utilizing the chat, SMS, and video functionality, students can share their "a-ha!" moments in real time with classmates and teachers.



“Partnering with **AHEA** was a natural fit. Their international network of academicians combined with our nimble technology and entrepreneurial spirit, allows both organizations to impact higher education institutions in a positive and powerful way,” said Shank.



THE APPROACH

Tower Education Technologies takes a unique approach to addressing higher education issues. They engage respected faculty and administrators, from AHEA's academic network, to assist with the planning, development, and testing of their InspirED platform. This pilot program for the platform features faculty fellows from the United States, Mexico, Canada, Italy, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

Hear what faculty fellows have to say about InspirED...



" One of the exciting things for me...is that we are able to provide feedback on the platform, InspirED™...so end users have a better experience when it's fully developed. "

Celeste González-Bustamante
Associate Professor,
Journalism
University of Arizona



" Something very positive about this virtual experience is that...now our Mexican students are going to be able to travel to the United States. "

Lenin Martell
Professor, Journalism
Universidad Autónoma Del
Estado de México



" Being able to access data and analytics...can be a real tool to provide us...continued institutionalized support. "

Mary Fanelli Ayala
Dean, Professor of Spanish
Eastern New Mexico
University



" Internationalization...is something that we want to transmit through AHEA and the wonderful platform that they have shared with us. "

Ana Luisa Desdier
Director of
Internationalization
Universidad Anáhuac Puebla

About Tower

Tower Education Technologies (Tower) was founded with the mission to build innovative technology to impact higher education institutions in a positive and productive way. The company's flagship product, InspirED™, is the only higher education platform that natively integrates a student information system, ConnectED™, a learning management system, BlendED™, and a professional engagement solution, CollaboratED™. It also combines operational highlights, performance reports, CRM, and analytics.

In 2017 Tower formed a strategic partnership with American Higher Education Alliance (AHEA). Together these organizations support institutions of higher education so they can expand their footprint and make a greater impact in faculty development, and their students' academic and career success. As a result, the InspirED platform has empowered students and institutional stakeholders at colleges and universities in Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, China, Latin America, and North America.

Connect with Tower Education Technologies at www.TowerEdTech.com or on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#).

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