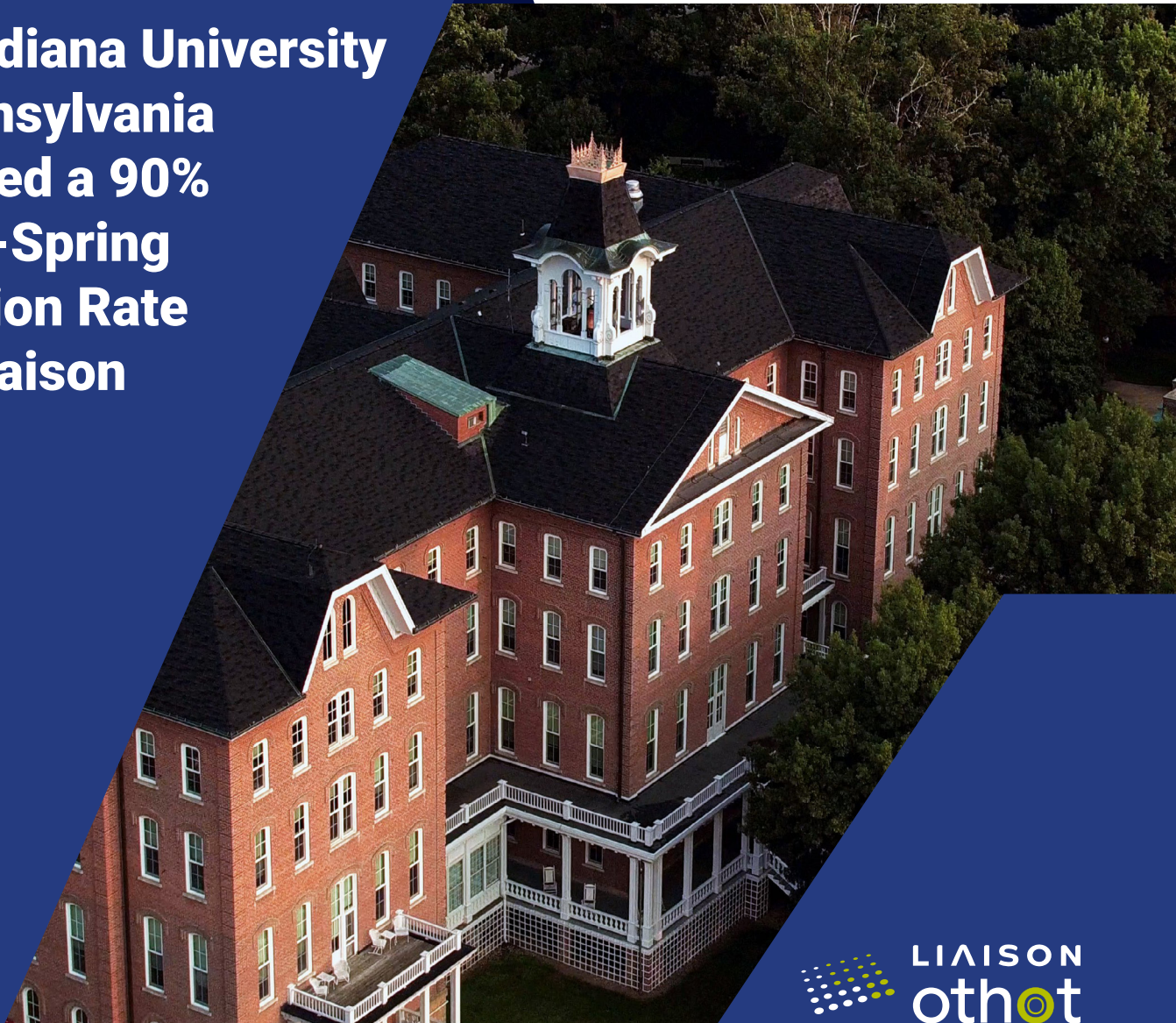


## CASE STUDY

# How Indiana University of Pennsylvania Achieved a 90% Fall-to-Spring Retention Rate With Liaison Othot



## Overview

Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) identified a gap in managing student outreach and engagement. With increasing competition in higher ed, IUP needed a more holistic, data-driven, and targeted approach to connect with its students. The university sought a solution that would not only enhance communication but also streamline student success efforts and improve outcomes. Recognizing the necessity for innovation, IUP turned to Liaison Othot and its advanced analytics capabilities to transform its strategy.

## The Challenge

### Limited Outreach and Fragmented Processes

Before adopting Othot, IUP encountered some pain points that hindered its efforts to improve student success.

As Strategic Advisor to the President for Student Success Paula Stossel noted, "We had all this rich data, but we were struggling with how to put it together in a meaningful way to help move the needle. We needed a platform that could help us make sense of the data and drive retention initiatives." Even early in its partnership with Othot, IUP had access to powerful insights—but lacked the infrastructure and alignment needed to fully utilize them. Internal silos, competing priorities, and limited cross-departmental coordination slowed efforts to intervene with students at the right time.

The university's leadership launched a bold institutional structure focused on student-centeredness, outreach for all students, and proactive support, referred to collectively as the Student Success Infrastructure (SSI). Built on national best practices and IUP insights, this infrastructure was designed to deliver consistent, hands-on support to every student, leveraging Othot's capabilities and data-driven analytics.



## The Solution

### Othot: The Game-Changer for Student Success

IUP's multi-year partnership with Othot provided a foundation of critical data, including real-time risk indicators and success scores that pinpointed student needs. But it wasn't until the SSI was operationalized that those insights translated into action. For example, IUP hired 18 navigators, professionals embedded within IUP's University College who provide support across programs and campuses, to use Othot's insights to proactively engage students, anticipate challenges, and respond to emerging issues before they escalated.

This transformation marked IUP's shift from being data-aware to data-driven. Othot became more than just a tool—it became a strategic partner in IUP's larger commitment to student persistence and support. The system's predictive modeling gave the student success leadership team insights on which students needed outreach, while CRM-integrated workflows helped standardize timely interventions.



"The visibility that we are creating with Othot is really important," said Vice Provost for Academic Success and Dean of the University College Amber Racchini. "For example, we added the success score element to our CRM so staff and faculty could quickly see the likelihood-to-retain scores and top five impacts, allowing them to have more informed conversations with students."

IUP's commitment to building a data-driven culture, with input from key departments and stakeholders, allowed for a smoother transition and more productive use of Othot. As the university continued to expand its focus on student success, Othot evolved alongside its needs, producing additional predictive models, which help IUP identify students at risk of not maintaining good academic standing and veering off track for timely graduation.

## The Outcome

### Impressive Results and Increased Retention

The partnership between IUP and Liaison Othot has led to tangible, impressive results:

- ✔ Using Othot's deep insights into student success, together with IUP's SSI, the university was able to increase its fall-to-fall retention rate for first-year students by 4 percentage points (from 71% to 75%) in just one year.
- ✔ For Title III grant-eligible students, including Pell eligible, first generation, and students from underrepresented populations, retention increased by more than 5%.
- ✔ IUP also achieved its highest fall-to-spring retention rate in over a decade, reaching 90.1%.

As Stossel noted, "These results are exactly what we needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of our student success initiatives."

Othot has also played a significant role in improving the university's financial aid strategies. With the help of Liaison's team, IUP was able to leverage Othot's financial aid sensitivity analysis, which allowed the university to make data-driven decisions about scholarship and retention grant awarding. This has improved IUP's ability to better serve students.

"Not only did Othot help us consider what our scholarship model should look like, but now it's helping us understand the sensitivity of our retention grants," Stossel said. "We can now be much more strategic about how we allocate these awards."

“What really kicked off our relationship with Liaison was Othot’s data modeling and the customer support that came with it. **It wasn’t just the technology—it was also the people behind it, helping us with the analytics and making sure the solution worked for us.**”



**PAULA STOSSEL**  
*Strategic Advisor to the President  
for Student Success*  
IUP

## More Student Success With Othot

The future holds even more exciting possibilities for IUP with Othot. The university is focused on integrating additional data sources into the platform, including counts of navigator, tutoring, and supplemental instruction meetings to ensure that all aspects of student success are assessed for ROI.

"We're continuing to explore how Othot can help us with summer melt and the transition from enrollment to retention," Racchini explained. "We also have plans to use the persistence model to improve four-year graduation rates, and we're excited about the potential for Othot to help us expand into graduate student models."

IUP aims to refine its summer melt strategies by using Othot to identify students in need of support earlier and intervene more effectively for better success rates. The integration of data, along with ongoing enhancements to the platform, will provide the university with more powerful insights as it continues to focus on student success.

The collaboration between Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Othot has not only improved retention rates but also helped IUP foster a more data-driven culture that empowers staff to make well-informed decisions. Othot's adaptability, and a strong partnership with Liaison's client success team, now position IUP for long-term success in its student retention and success initiatives.

As Stossel concluded, "Everyone who has worked with us from Liaison has been so attentive and insightful, taking the time to get to know our institution. The relationship we've built is what has made Othot so successful for us, in addition to the technology itself."



## About Indiana University of Pennsylvania

For almost 150 years, Indiana University of Pennsylvania has been committed to transforming lives through education, innovation, and research. With a strong focus on student success, IUP continues to make an impact on the region and beyond.

- ✔ IUP is one of Pennsylvania's most affordable colleges, offering over 160 associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs.
- ✔ With more than 9,250 students, IUP provides a dynamic learning environment that fosters personal growth and professional development.
- ✔ IUP has earned accolades from the *Princeton Review*, *Washington Monthly*, and the Carnegie Foundation, which classifies it as a High Research Activity (R2) institution (one of only 93 in the country) and as the only member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education selected for the "Opportunity College and University-Higher Access, Higher Earnings" designation, which recognizes institutions whose graduates earn salaries that are 50 percent or more higher than their peers in similar fields and institutions that provide access to students that reflect the communities that they serve.
- ✔ Guided by its 2020–28 Strategic Plan focused on student success, IUP is enhancing student engagement and experience at every stage—from enrollment to graduation and beyond.



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