

# Save Time and Money While Ensuring Business Continuity With a Centralized Application Service (CAS™)







“With Liaison’s help, we were able to not only launch a new application for our 60 graduate programs within about five weeks, but we quickly began to see results as well: In the six weeks since we went live with GradCAS™, we have already seen a 19% increase in applications.”

SEAN PITZER  
Associate Director of Graduate Admissions



**Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the world of college admissions was being transformed by profound new changes, challenges and opportunities.**

Prior to the pandemic, researchers asked nearly 500 public and private higher education leaders to identify which market trends will have the biggest impact on their institutions in the next five years. Most — 62% — said, “increasing/new forms of competition for prospective students.” The top-five list also included a declining traditional-age student population (59%); increasing nontraditional student population (39%); declining federal and state financial support (38%); declining public confidence in the value of higher education (27%) and; geopolitical uncertainty affecting international students (23%).<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the outlook has become far less certain in recent months. A survey of college and university presidents conducted in March revealed that “overall financial stability” is now their most commonly cited long-term concern (89%), followed closely by “decline in overall future student enrollment” (88%).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, many parents and students have said the pandemic could change their priorities and choices about college. According to one study, 36% of parents “strongly agreed” that COVID-19 has impacted the search process, as did 27% of students. Twenty percent of parents and 15% of students said students will be more likely to stay closer to home.<sup>3</sup>

Coupled with these troubling results is the interruption of business processes on college campuses. Nearly all colleges that have participated in Liaison’s COVID-19-related webinars have expressed concerns over interruptions of admissions business operations (e.g., receiving and opening mail, processing documents and data) that have delayed or negatively affected their ability to make admissions decisions.

As a result, it’s now more important than ever to help your prospects, applicants and enrollment professionals break barriers to admission, and to partner with an experienced company to survive these difficult times and prevent you from being affected in the future.

# CAS Offers High Value at No Cost to Your Institution

When you join the CAS community, your institution will receive a wide array of benefits at no cost, including:

**Test score and foreign credential evaluation:**

Through partnerships with virtually every global testing provider and transcript authority, Liaison streamlines the integration of official test scores and foreign credentials with your application data.

**Applicant support:**

Liaison handles applicant support for application process questions, leaving the recruiting to you. We respond to questions about whether materials have been received and progress on the application via phone, email and chat. Our U.S.-based call center employs highly trained staff to help students move through application completion resulting in more completed applications sooner in the admissions cycle. During peak periods, the call center is staffed 24/7, so we can be there when students are working on their applications.

**Outsourcing of administrative tasks:**

We physically receive and scan transcripts, helping you go paperless. During peak periods of the admissions application cycle, Liaison performs these tasks on a 24/7 basis eliminating delays in providing your institution with the materials you need to complete the review process. This speeds packaging completion and your decision making, allowing you to reclaim headcount and focus your enrollment efforts on reaching the next level. Your college can review and make decisions earlier in the cycle, beating your competitors with offers to students and reclaiming time to focus on enrolling admitted students. Allowing Liaison to perform these back-office tasks ensures that your school will never suffer from service interruption and that admissions processing will continue even if an emergency takes place.

**Analytics:**

Cutting-edge reporting and analytics tools will enable you to conduct trend analyses for benchmarking and forecasting purposes, providing you with the insight you need and allowing you to compare your results to the cohort of participating colleges, averting the time-consuming and frustrating process of hunting for numbers and aggregating them yourself.

**The power of community:**

Joining a CAS means joining a community of like-minded graduate professionals who are working toward goals that are similar to yours and facing challenges similar to those that you face. CAS members regularly convene to share their best practices at in-person and digital networking events.

“Even before we redirected our official application to Liaison International’s BusinessCAS™ [the first and only CAS for business programs], we had new applications coming through organically just because the Miami Business School was listed in this central directory for graduate management education programs. I knew we’d get exposure to a whole new pool of applicants who hadn’t considered our programs before when we joined BusinessCAS, but I didn’t realize it would happen that quickly. Excited about being a part of this initiative!”

DR. LOUBNA BOUAMANE  
Former Director of Admissions





For close to three decades, colleges and universities have used Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS™) to save time and money while growing enrollment and simplifying admissions. With a CAS, which is available to institutions at no cost, Liaison's clients have experienced up to a 70% reduction in time to decision and roughly a 90% reduction in manual administrative application processing tasks while avoiding the need to add headcount to manage growing application volumes.

Not only have their results been significant, but the seamless implementation of this solution and its complementary services means that these institutions were able to quickly realize the return on their time investment. To Kyron Carter, manager of enrollment analytics at Howard University, setup was "quick and easy, and we were up and running within six weeks." Sean Pitzer, associate director of graduate admissions at St. Cloud University, saw a similarly quick implementation: "With Liaison's help, we were able to launch a new application for our 60 graduate programs within about five weeks."

A CAS will allow your institution to maintain its business rules, requirements and unique branding while streamlining the application process for students, faculty and staff. Liaison collects and processes admissions application documents and data on behalf of participating colleges and provides student support at no cost.

#### Graduate schools that participate in a CAS:

- Avoid business continuity issues when crises like COVID-19 strike.
- Can expect increases in application volumes once they join these discipline-based communities for graduate programs.
- Have seen increases in students accepting offers of admission.

Today, Liaison partners with over 30 associations and provides more than 31,000 programs on over 1,000 campuses cost savings each admissions cycle. Last year Liaison processed over 2,500,000 graduate and undergraduate admissions applications.

"The associated **cost and time savings** were main motivators in our decision to launch 10 CASs on our campus. Before CAS, at least four of our seven admissions counselors spent the majority of their time on administrative tasks. When you consider their average salary of \$50,000, **CAS is helping us save \$200,000 on application processing**. The best part is that we still employ those staff members, but CAS allows us to reallocate their efforts. They have more time to focus on recruiting and responding to prospective students' inquiries — the work that actually helps us meet our enrollment goals."

JAMES WALTER  
Director of Admissions



#### FEWER MANUAL, ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Temple University shaved 75% off application review time — from 4-6 weeks to just 1 week — by joining a CAS.

"Having to do everything manually, including sending physical files out to faculty for review — and then hoping that faculty would return them — was a very tedious, long and cumbersome process," said former Academic Coordinator Erin Brosious. "A CAS is going to make you more available to your students, and it's going to make the relationships you have with your students more personable."

"After our first cycle in BusinessCAS, we've seen a **44% increase in our class size**. We were expecting significant results after we saw a **50% increase in applications** just one month after launching the CAS, but this is beyond what we even imagined."

DEE STEINLE  
Executive Director,  
MBA and MSB Programs



Before adopting a CAS, Oregon Health & Science University's admissions team manually processed all applications and supporting documents. Automating document management with the CAS was "like moving from the Stone Age to an iPhone," said Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs Richard Goranflo, as application processing times have decreased by a whopping 99%.

"I'd say we do 5% of the manual processing we used to do," Goranflo said. "It's shocking how little time we're spending on admissions compared to the past, and it's fantastic."

"As of this fall, we have documented an **increase of 7.5% in full-time enrollments** as compared to two years ago. We had under 1,000 graduate students across the University; now, we have over 2,000. We've also **cut our application processing time by 50%** — we used to take eight weeks to manually put the files together. After CAS, we're down to 3-4 weeks."

DR. ROBBIE MELTON  
Transitional Dean







## How Students Find CAS

**W**hen you join a CAS, students who begin their application process on your institution's website will be directed to your program listings in the CAS, easily locating their desired program to complete the application process.

Because students can apply filters to search for similar programs at other participating colleges and universities, joining a CAS means your programs will increase their discoverability. Many participating colleges and universities have seen a 10% increase in applications over the first three years of joining a CAS.

Along with leveraging its in-house marketing services to facilitate Drive-to-Apply campaigns that lead to CAS member programs, Liaison has also launched digital and print advertising

campaigns to drive students to CASs, and we have formed partnerships with professional associations to promote CAS to their members. **These efforts have accounted for nearly 25% of all new applicants to CAS in just the last six months.**

Each CAS — and therefore its member programs — is promoted to prospective students through paid promotion across popular social media channels and also ads that display on:

- ▶ Search engines, including Google and Bing.
- ▶ International outlets, including StudyPortals.
- ▶ Industry-specific outlets, including Financial Times, Princeton Review and U.S. News & World Report.

### FASTER DATA ANALYSIS AND DECISION TIMES

Like Temple, Our Lady of the Lake University's Department of Communication Disorders experienced a 75% reduction in application review time with a CAS. Formerly, the Department's admissions team needed at least two weeks after the application deadline to continue processing paperwork, receiving transcripts and creating folders for each applicant.

"Before, it would take up to a week to review 60 or so folders, with faculty spending every waking moment, that we weren't teaching, in meetings or doing research, looking at graduate applications," said Dr. Christine Carmichael, director of graduate admissions for the Department of Communication Disorders. "Now, we still have two faculty reviewers for each applicant, but they can review all of their applicants within one day's time — in less than an 8-hour day."

Jon Parker, assistant director of admissions at Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy, attributes Samford's newly efficient processing of complex applications to the superior workflows within the CAS platform.

"Other solutions have the capability to pull in the application and let you see transcripts in their original form, but with a CAS that same information is displayed in a format that is more directly associated with what we need to see during the application process," he said. "That makes admissions committee meetings work a lot more smoothly."

# 10x

With a Liaison CAS, Dominican University attracted applications from national and international students and increased applications 10X.



“Our homegrown graduate application system was being retired, and we saw that as an opportunity to deliver a better applicant experience, introduce process efficiencies and save valuable staff time. We knew GradCAS was the solution for us because of the results we've seen from SocialWorkCAS™ [the CAS for social work programs] and CASPA™ [the CAS for physician assistant programs], two of Liaison's CASs that were already active on our campus.”

BRANDICE DURHAM  
Director of Recruitment  
and Marketing



**LIAISON**



“With BioMedCAS™ [the CAS for biomedical science programs], our admissions office and faculty are both seeing time and effort savings. Now, our prospective students are met with an application that’s far more intuitive and easier to use than our prior application service. As far as processing goes, BioMedCAS eliminates a lot of the work on our side, and it makes it easier for our various committees to review their applicants.”

MATTHEW BRANDON  
Associate Director of the Office  
of Graduate Studies



Weill Medical College of Cornell University initially planned to implement UniCAS™ [a CAS that provides a unified view of enrollment efforts across your institution] for two Ph.D. program applications in its initial year working with Liaison. The implementation went so smoothly that the school ended up using UniCAS to process applications for four Health Policy and Research master’s programs as well and later switched to BioMedCAS [the first and only CAS for biomedical sciences programs] for its Ph.D. programs, while expanding its use of UniCAS to encompass seven master’s programs, three summer programs and a certificate program.

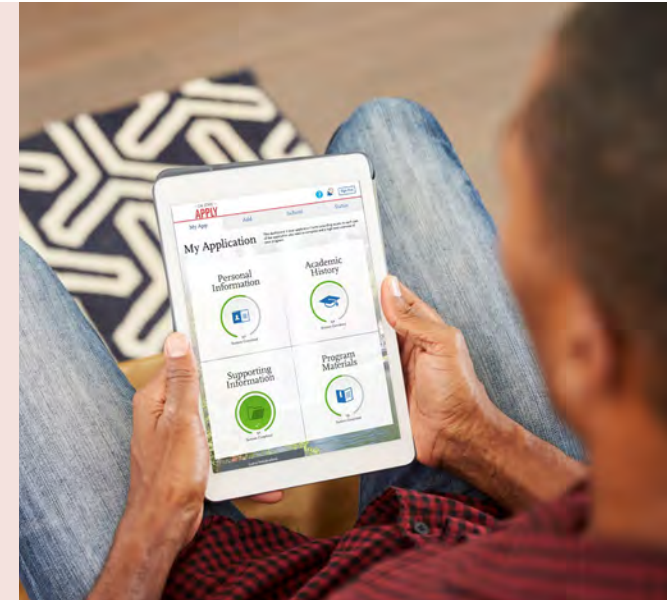
Associate Director of Enrollment and Education Operations Matthew Cipriano also discovered that UniCAS offers tools Weill Cornell could use throughout the admissions process, creating efficiencies in application review. “Our previous process took literally weeks on end, with people working 80 hours a week to prepare applications for review,” he said. “With UniCAS, we didn’t have to spend that time processing applications to get everything where it needed to be or sending requests for letters of recommendation out — all those things were handled by the software itself or by Liaison’s services team.”

The new service freed staff from compiling and distributing applications and collecting reviewer feedback. “By creating users and user groups, we could parcel out applications within WebAdMIT™, Liaison’s robust admissions management software, to our reviewers. They could then provide their commentary and feedback online,” said Cipriano. “We would end up with everything in hand immediately, no need to wait for their responses.”

## — CAL STATE — APPLY

By introducing Cal State Apply — a system based on UniCAS, the university-wide version of Liaison’s discipline-specific CAS platforms — San Francisco State University’s Division of Graduate Studies has **saved an estimated \$40,000 annually on labor**, decreasing its team of student assistants from seven to three.

“It has been a transformational implementation,” said Associate Dean for the Division of Graduate Studies Noah Price. “My team can focus on the less transactional interactions with students and more on the academic advising, the student support. We’re engaged with students in a totally different way.”



On top of that, institutional leadership gained access to robust data for reporting with built-in Tableau visual analytics to comprehensively analyze applicant trends and make strategic decisions. Having a common data set for the entire applicant pool — and being able to analyze it with real-time visualization — enables a new level of strategic short- and long-term planning. And that will help your entire institution save time and money while getting the best possible return on its investments.

When San Francisco State University (SFSU) learned of the 23-campus California State University (CSU) network’s plans to introduce Cal State Apply — a system based on UniCAS — the Division of Graduate Studies couldn’t jump at the opportunity soon enough.

In fact, SFSU’s physical therapy and nursing programs had already been using discipline-specific CASs.

“We were super eager,” said Associate Dean for the Division of Graduate Studies Noah Price. “We were ready to go the second we could start implementing Cal State Apply, and we hit the ground running.”

From June to August 2017, Price’s division proceeded to meet with nearly every single graduate program at the University to assess their needs on document collection, application questions and prompts for letter

of recommendation writers. Then, SFSU set up new application portals for its graduate programs — putting a merciful end to those “dark ages” of manual processing.

“It has pretty much transformed our admissions process,” Price said. “We’re basically 100% paperless, which is fantastic.”



The train was leaving the station, and I wanted to be on that train, which is the future of making the process for admission for graduate studies in engineering one that is much more dynamic, much more user-friendly and one that provides us with the data to make critical managerial decisions. The potential that I see in EngineeringCAS™ [the CAS for graduate engineering programs] is almost limitless. It brings together all the aspects that you would need within enrollment management.”

DAVID T. POOLE  
Director of Admission



Visit [liaisonedu.com](https://liaisonedu.com) to learn more about how a CAS can help your institution save time and money while increasing enrollment with best-fit students.





## Admissions Services Ensure Business Continuity for Admissions Offices

**W**hy do more than 31,000 programs at over 1,000 campuses use Liaison's admissions technology? The support services offered by a CAS are unparalleled in the admissions space. In the realm of **application processing services**, Liaison physically receives and scans transcripts, helping schools go paperless. This speeds packaging completion and decision times, allowing your institution to reclaim headcount and focus enrollment efforts on reaching the next level.

As Liaison processes supporting documents for over 2.5 million applications annually, we've met the market's substantial demand for this admissions benefit by expanding our staff and developing proprietary software solutions, enabling us to scale our services to meet the

needs of a continuously growing number of academic institutions. Our expansion in staff support and software solutions has also enabled us to seamlessly add entire university systems to the CAS platform, such as public university networks in California, Hawaii, Montana and Indiana, and to partner with entities such as the Common App.

By processing applications for **more hours per day as well as on weekends and holidays**, Liaison helps you overcome your staff and time limitations. This means that when your college joins a CAS, you will see more applications completed sooner in the admissions cycle, allowing for you to make admissions decisions earlier and ultimately to finalize incoming classes in time for your enrollment deadlines.

By allowing Liaison to perform these back-office tasks, your institution will protect itself from disruptive events and maintain "business as usual" admissions operations even if physical campuses must shut down their operations.

Liaison will even handle **applicant support** for process questions, leaving the recruiting to you. We respond to questions about progress on the application, whether materials have been received and other questions related to the online application via phone, email or chat.

### In this realm, Liaison:

- Processes over 2 million documents annually.
- Resolves over 1 million calls, chats and emails annually, serving as an extension of thousands of admissions offices.

A CAS can also serve as the postal point of contact for an admissions office, **collecting and storing all official transcripts** indefinitely electronically and in a secure physical facility for up to two admissions cycles.

The CAS platform's reporting capabilities enable you to **conduct trend analyses** for benchmarking and forecasting purposes — that's right, no more hunting and aggregating numbers.

Finally, unlike other admissions tools which would leave you to fend for yourself once you purchase the software, a CAS comes with the peace of mind of continuous access to Liaison's highly experienced and responsive support staff: a processing and services team for schools and programs, and for applicants, a support call center based in the US.

## ABOUT LIAISON

For nearly three decades, Liaison has streamlined the process by which higher education institutions manage their application processes and market their programs to prospective students. More than 31,000 programs on over 1,000 campuses nationwide reach prospective students, minimize administrative tasks and create exceptional experiences for applicants across the full enrollment cycle — from first interest to first day on campus — through our admissions management and enrollment marketing solutions. Across our Centralized Application Services (CASs), we process over 2,500,000 applications per year.

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## SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> [Huron](#), the American Council on Education and the Georgia Institute of Technology, "The Transformation-Ready Higher-Education Institution," December 2019.
- <sup>2</sup> [Inside Higher Ed](#) and Hanover Research, "Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis: A Survey of College and University Presidents," March 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> [Maguire Associates](#), "Fall 2020 Prospective Parents and Students," March 2020.

