




Gila Community College Leverages Regroup for Reliable Emergency Communication



For two decades, Gila Community College operated as a provisional district, relying on another institution for academic services, per Arizona Revised Statutes. Spread across multiple campuses and two additional sites, some 85 miles apart, Gila embarked on a journey to build its own infrastructure and gain independence, focusing on creating a self-sufficient institution.

This transformation culminated in securing Candidacy Status with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and establishing Gila Community College as Arizona's newest community college. To ensure safety and efficient communication for their growing student body of over 1,500, they chose to implement Regroup, leveraging its flexible options for setting up groups and admins, automated weather alerts, and Single Sign-On (SSO) capabilities.

Dynamic Notifications and Emergency Alerts

The community of Gila County, Arizona, is thrilled to witness the launch of its own community college. With over 1,000 students already admitted and more on the way, there's palpable excitement for this new chapter. This move to independence wasn't just about autonomy; it also resulted in over \$1 million in annual savings for Gila County taxpayers, eliminating a 25% overhead fee.

When speaking about Gila's impact on the local community and how critical this evolution is for the campus population in the Globe, Miami, Hayden, and Payson, Arizona, areas, Janice Lawhorn, President, went on to say, "This isn't just a job, it's a mission. It's the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my life."

This change enables impactful local control, allowing tailored programs, such as nursing and EMT, to address specific community needs. In a past incident with the previous system, a false active shooter alert was inadvertently sent to students and staff, causing confusion and panic on one of these campuses. Recognizing the need for a reliable and user-friendly mass communication system, Gila Community College chose Regroup for its proven capabilities and ease of use, ensuring the safety and well-being of its growing campus communities.

"The wrong number was dialed, and a false alert went out to the campus and caused a large panic," Lawhorn explained. "We needed a system that is reliable and easy to use, and that's why we chose Regroup."



Gila Community College Motivated by Regroup Team

It's one thing to sell an organization on the idea of a product like Regroup. It's another thing to guide their teams through each step of the onboarding process and help them navigate various challenges as they become accustomed to the tool.

According to Lawhorn, "The implementation of Regroup has been a smooth and positive experience. The Client Success team has been a delight to work with, and any time we had an issue, they got it figured out."

A key highlight during Gila's onboarding process has been the seamless integration through Single Sign-On (SSO), ensuring that every faculty member, staff member, and student is automatically added to the system. Addressing Gila's geographically dispersed campuses, the ability to notify specific locations was paramount.

"This capability will also extend to community partners, with the Chiefs of Police and fire authorities in Payson, Globe, Miami, and Hayden able to receive alerts, ensuring coordinated safety efforts," Lawhorn continued.

With its first academic year scheduled to commence soon and additional training offered after the initial kickoff, Gila Community College is confident in Regroup's ability to effectively serve its diverse community.

Regroup Encourages Improved Communication

Looking ahead, Gila Community College envisions utilizing Regroup primarily for emergency preparedness, ensuring focused and timely communication. Recipients will include students, staff, parents, and community members. Messages can be dispatched by campus directors, administrators, and maintenance teams. Recognizing the importance of location-specific notifications, Gila will leverage Regroup to target messages to its specific campuses and satellite locations rather than sending college-wide alerts.

"There has to be an issue, concern, or something important to send an alert. We don't want alerts to go campus-wide and have this system be diluted," Lawhorn exclaimed. "We need to set up these alerts quickly, for something as simple as a snow day, and by campus to target messages to the right audience."

This granularity is essential as weather conditions vary, such as snow days affecting the Payson campus but generally not Globe. The community and parents can opt into alerts directed to them, and day-to-day announcements will continue to be handled through existing video screens across campus, preserving Regroup for crucial emergency notifications.



Scalable Communication Solutions

Gila Community College found significant value in Regroup's automated NOAA and NWS alerts during severe weather events. These alerts are particularly crucial due to the region's susceptibility to brush fires and forest fires, which have previously caused disruptions in the Globe/Miami and Payson areas, shutting down highways and preventing students from traveling to and from Phoenix.

In addition, templates that can be pre-programmed give administrators the ability to control communication during emergencies. Gila intends to utilize predefined templates for various scenarios, such as active shooter situations, disturbances, and general safety concerns.

"We'll start with the template and the name of the campus with predefined alerts for active shooters, fights, 'Be on the Look Out' signals, or other threats, to ensure student safety during events we hope never happen on our campus," said Lawhorn.

While students will not send out general notifications, they will have the ability to request help using specific templates that are available to them through the Regroup mobile app. This balanced approach ensures effective communication while maintaining control and student safety.

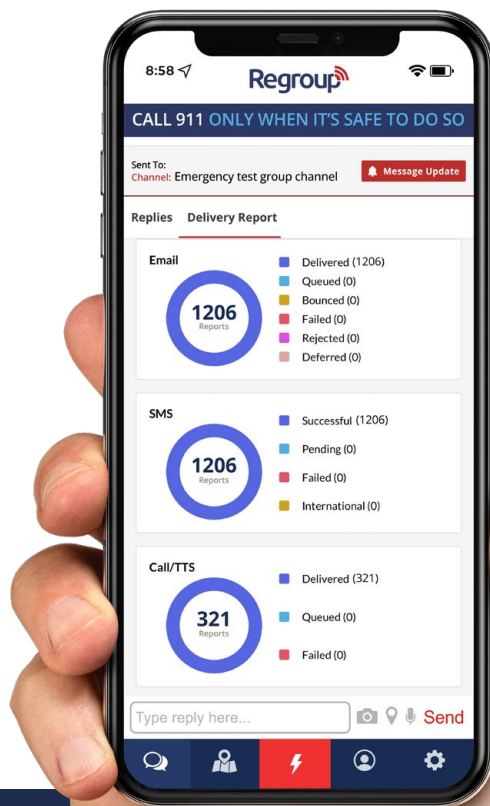
"We thought that was one of the best features to control that communication," Lawhorn added. "You don't want students to send out messages, but having two-way communication back and forth with that single person was a huge benefit of the Regroup program."

Enhance Communications and Mass Notification Success with Regroup

Gila Community College is set up for continued growth with flexible solutions from Regroup. The platform's user-friendly approach improved value across the entire campus community, and Regroup's framework offers the potential to delve into untapped resources and expand the possibilities of emergency alerts and mass notifications.

Simply put, Regroup makes life easier—no matter what kind of notifications you send. "Less data to manually process back and forth, and only notifying the individuals in the area is incredibly beneficial," Lawhorn rejoiced.

According to Lawhorn, Regroup helps simplify daily operations and campus communications by, "Putting the right people on the right bus, in the right seats, going to the right place, at the same time."



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