# funnelback

# Skyline College

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# The Organization

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean in San Bruno, just south of San Francisco, the team at Skyline believes in students' optimism, is inspired by their passion, and is driven by a commitment to empower all students to achieve their educational goals.

Skyline College empowers students to find success at every point in their educational journey. The team is committed to readily-accessible information on the College website. The Skyline College Marketing, Communications and Public Relations office, working with the District Information Technology Services, identified Funnelback as a part of the solution to that challenge.

**INDUSTRY**

Education

**COUNTRY**

United States

**WEBSITE**

skylinecollege.edu

**FEATURES**

Funnelback for Higher Education
Faceted Navigation Concierge

# Key Project Objectives

Skyline College was faced with a number of challenges that their Google search solution could not solve. Reducing call volume across departments and support centers could save money and boost student and prospect satisfaction. Moving away from an expensive, manually-updated "knowledge base" could reduce duplication of efforts when other pages were updated. And a one-size-fits-all search solution that couldn't integrate with multiple data sources made search a frustrating endeavor for admins and end users.

"We implemented a self-service question-bank solution that allowed students to type questions and it would provide them with the 'best' answers based on a knowledgebase of answers that we had to manually maintain. Populating the knowledgebase and keeping the content up-to-date was time consuming and just not sustainable," the Skyline College team noted. "We want to empower our students and community to be able to find solutions to their questions quickly."

Accessibility was also a challenge for the team at Skyline College. The staff sought to meet minimum ADA 508 and WCAG 2.0 requirements, identified as critical for student success.

Unify student resources with one search

Move away from generic search

Eliminate manual knowledge base & reduce duplication of efforts

Ensure accessibility across websites

# The Solution

The project was managed in an agile style, starting from a Funnelback for Higher Education build with Skyline College branding. The team gave iterative feedback on a live prototype, allowing the team at Skyline College to continually engage with a version of their future search and test actual functionality.

The separate, redundant knowledgebase was removed in favor of Funnelback search across all Skyline College properties.

"Our existing Google search results page did not allow you to filter by file type or category," the team says. "We had no control over page ranking and it did not include search results from our database of classes, degrees, events or even social media. Funnelback allows us to have a central location for our students to search multiple locations and get relevant results. It also gives us flexibility in customizing the ranking of the results so we could ensure more pertinent information showed near the top."

With the ability to ingest content from college APIs, Funnelback also prompted the use or creation of new APIs for many web services at Skyline. As a result, course, degree and employee information can be integrated throughout digital properties without re-entering information. "It helped us work smarter. If the data exists somewhere, we query it from its original location instead of recreating it."

# Validating Accessibility

The team was also concerned about site accessibility, and Funnelback presented an obvious solution. Funnelback for Higher Education includes the Funnelback Accessibility Auditor, allowing the team at Skyline College to see the content not meeting ADA 508 and WCAG 2.0 requirements.

"Ensuring our college website meets accessibility requirement is critical for student success. It not only provides all students with access to the same information -- eliminating inequities -- but also allows us to implement 'universal design' best practices making our site more intuitive for all users."
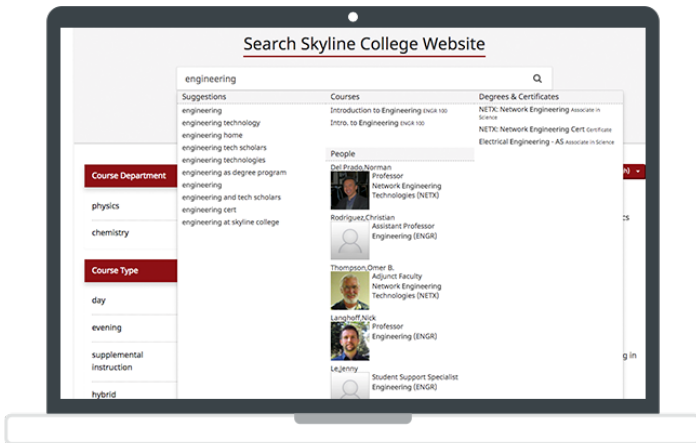
> *"Funnelback search is a game changer... The ability for a student to find information quickly and easily can often be the difference in their academic success."*
>
> **CHRISTOPHER SMITH, WEB PROGRAMMER / ANALYST**

# The Result
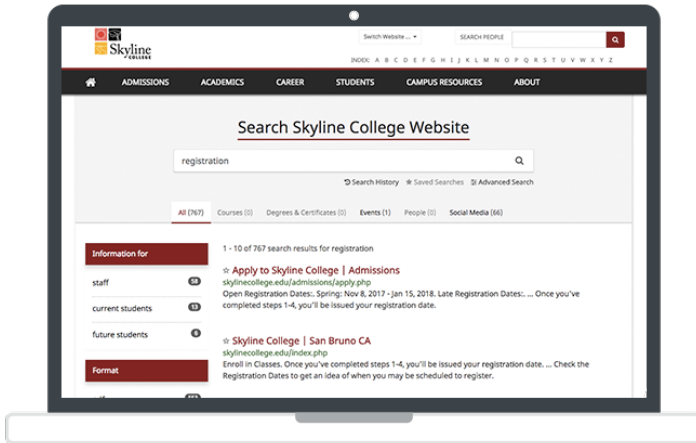


The new Skyline College search results page serves as a central location for students to search multiple locations and get relevant results.



The Funnelback Concierge provides instant results as users type, including course, people, and degree results next to live web results to save users time and send them directly to the correct result.
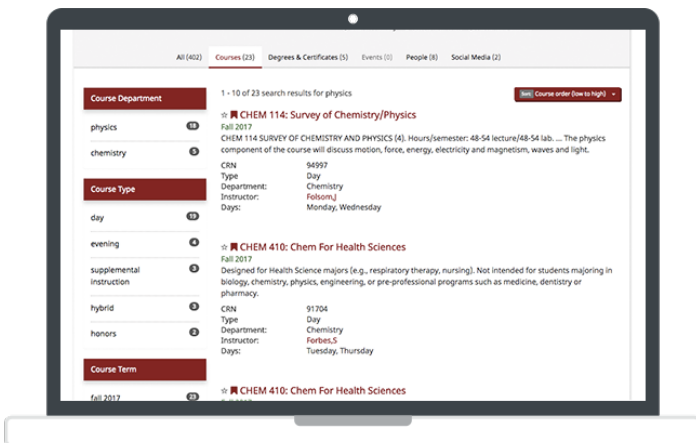


Robust course search allows students to fine-tune search offerings to fit their interests and availability, then favorite and shortlist those of particular interest to aid the registration process.

# The Result

The new site search solution at Skyline College went live in 2017.

"With over 20 years in Higher Education IT experience I cannot emphasize enough the importance of selecting vendors who not only offer an excellent product but also provide exceptional customer service. Funnelback exceeded our expectations and made implementation seamless by guiding us through the process and going over and beyond to ensure we met goals. Working with Funnelback feels like having an extension of your own team who are responsive, hard-working and not only provide the promised service but also offer suggestions to enhance the overall project."

Jasmine Robinson, Director of Web Services, San Mateo County Community College District

"Funnelback search is a game changer for content discovery in Higher Education websites. The ability for a student to find information quickly and easily can often be the difference in their academic success. Finding that information can be very challenging in large, content heavy sites that have services spread across multiple web applications. After implementing Funnelback, our students can now search all of our web services at once, with results that are very contextual and easy to understand. In my 10+ years of Higher Education experience, I have never seen anything remotely as sophisticated and useful as Funnelback to improve the findability of content in College and University websites."

Christopher Smith, Web Programmer / Analyst, San Mateo Community College District

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