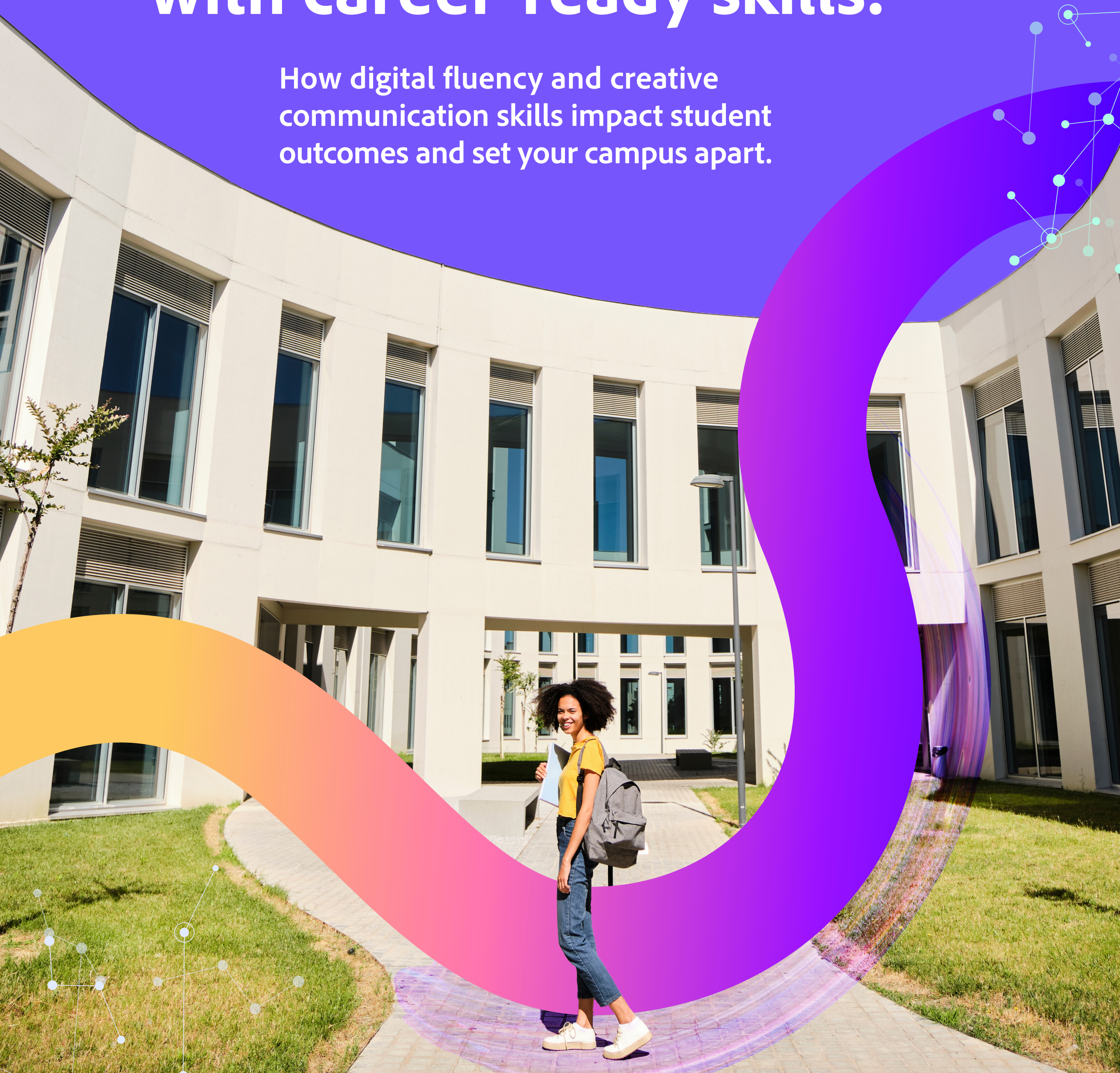
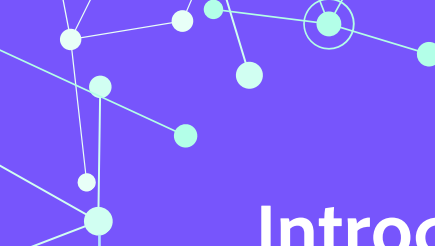




Empowering students with career-ready skills.

How digital fluency and creative
communication skills impact student
outcomes and set your campus apart.





Introduction

As institutions navigate shifts in an ever-changing higher education landscape, countless opportunities emerge. Rapid digitization and new modes of collaboration and creativity allow us to redefine teaching, learning, and administration. Central to this transformation are the importance of creativity and the need to bridge the gap between digital skills on campus and the evolving demands of the job market.

Understanding digital and creative skills.

Visual communication, virtual collaboration, and creative problem-solving skills have become more important in recent years, ranking among the top skills sought by hiring managers. In fact, 48% of available jobs in the US requires diverse creative and visual communication abilities, while 66% of U.S. employers have unfilled positions requiring these skills. However, only 25% of recent US higher education graduates highlight these same competencies on their resumes or profiles.

— This data is sourced from [Lightcast](#), formerly Emsi Burning Glass, a global leader in labor market analytics that has operated for more than 20 years in higher education, serving global institutions and millions of students. Lightcast provides data from diverse sources to inform institutions and organizations about student opportunities, employer demands, and regional economic trends.

According to research, institutions that invest in fostering creativity and digital fluency among students and faculty don't just meet the evolving needs of employers — they also experience tangible benefits themselves. With the right tools, students can exercise their voice and choice in learning, showing up as more engaged and confident learners, which ultimately gives them the freedom and encouragement to express themselves.

Ignite your institution's journey.

This guide is a starting point, igniting your institution's journey toward improving student success and outcomes. It offers examples from other institutions that have set realistic goals, improved teaching and learning, enhanced campus life, and helped students build lasting skills for future careers. Plus, it provides conversation starters to spark discussions that may be applicable to your institution.



Lay out your vision and goals.

Leading institutions who partner with Adobe are finding success by bringing together project leads and campus advocates to foster digital fluency, promote multimodal communication, and enhance collaboration. These can be staff, faculty, and student leaders across various disciplines and departments, including IT, academia, marketing, and student life. Institutions that are part of the Adobe Creative Campus program bring together a group of these stakeholders to create a holistic strategy, evaluate campus needs, and choose the right partners and technology to support strategic initiatives.



For example, Weber State University (WSU) aims to achieve full student digital fluency by 2025. To accomplish this, they became an Adobe Creative Campus and put Adobe tools in the hands of all students, faculty, and staff. WSU began by evaluating the needs of various departments and found ways to make digital experiences accessible to all.

This included establishing a pilot that incorporated creative tools in the English composition program, using video to host virtual field trips for Geology students, creating digital assignments for nursing students to design web pages and infographics on medical topics, and even creating a “Digital District” for faculty, staff, and students to find resources that help them become digitally fluent.

Conversation starters

What does your vision of increased student success and digital fluency look like?

Define emerging areas as priorities and consider drafting an AI strategy.

How are you ensuring every student on your campus has access to the same learning opportunities and experiences?

Consider accessibility and student skill levels when evaluating technology needs.

What are the key goals or outcomes that technology should deliver for your institution?

Consider how these technology-based initiatives can help support your institution’s strategic priorities.

Empower teaching and learning.

Student success begins in the classroom, and it's shaped by how students learn. Students have different learning styles and preferences, incorporating a mix of auditory, visual, or text-based approaches. Campus instructors are finding that integrating digital tools for creativity and productivity into student projects like video essays and podcasts accommodates and engages these diverse learning styles.

A report on authentic assessment highlights that finding alignment between experience, process, and output fosters content engagement, resulting in higher grades and increased institutional retention. This approach emphasizes students' application of learning to real-world problems, rather than demonstrating knowledge solely through memory-based testing.



For example, at **Weber State University**, incorporating creative tools has led 89% of composition students to exceed or greatly exceed course learning outcomes.

Conversation starters

How is teaching evolving to engage students deeply and assess crucial career skills?

Evaluate the various teaching methods and potential opportunities to engage students in a way that cultivates future skills.

What is the digital capability level of all stakeholders?

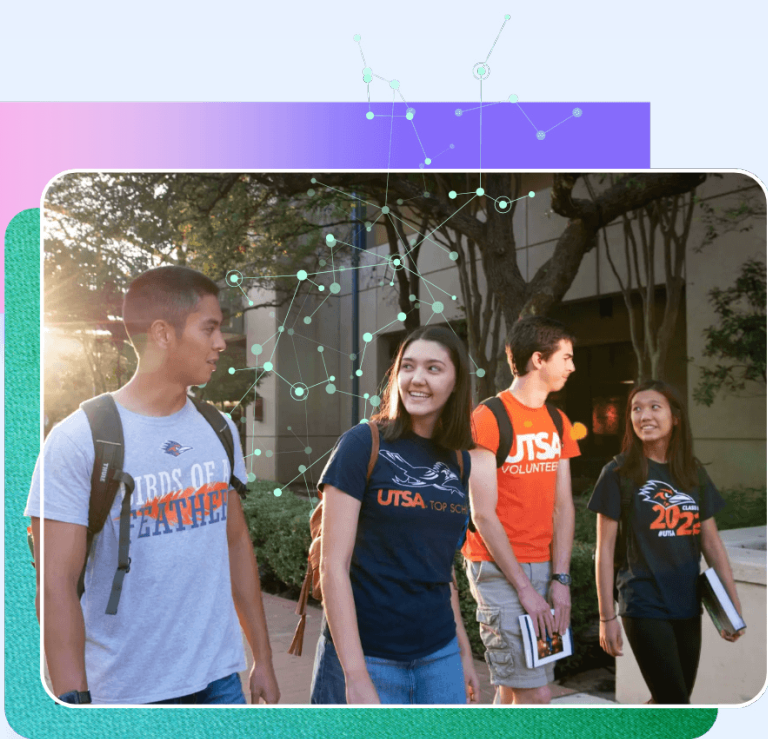
Evaluate digital capabilities and explore the potential for shifting towards authentic multimodal assessment.

How is your institution addressing the increased use of generative AI technology and ensuring ethical practices?

Review [our guide](#) to discover how institutions can integrate AI in a productive and ethical way.

Enhance the whole student experience.

Student life in higher education extends beyond the classroom, including campus clubs, career services, and social activities. Considering the role of technology in enhancing student experiences, it's helpful to also assess whether campus clubs are equipped with creativity and productivity tools.



At the University of Texas at San Antonio, Professor Jodi Peterson led an interdisciplinary initiative to bring 500 students together using Adobe creative tools.

Through diverse activities such as journaling, creative writing, exhibit design, and music composition, students were empowered to express themselves and connect with others. This initiative set a precedent for holistic engagement with the help of digital creativity tools, equipping students with essential career skills such as collaboration across fields and participation in complex projects.

Conversation starters

How are career services adapting to meet new student needs?

Assess how your campus uses digital tools for all processes outside the classroom.

How can your institution educate students about the ethical use of generative AI technology?

Help students understand the importance of responsible AI development and why adopting ethical practices and tools can prevent misinformation and drive trust.

How does your campus promote awareness of available curriculum, tools, and resources for enrolled students?

Evaluate how student ambassadors, club activities, and campus events can help spread the word.

Build lasting skills and tangible career readiness.

Considering the evolving landscape of skills development, it's helpful to assess how your institution equips students through both standard curricula and broader experiences. Moreover, it's worth exploring whether your institution should implement a strategy for badging and micro-credentialing to recognize students' achievements and enhance their marketability. According to a [recent global study](#) conducted by Edelman, **88% of hiring managers** agree that non-degree certifications are an important factor in demonstrating creative and visual design skills.



In nursing, for example, effective communication is becoming more and more important with the rise of telemedicine. Denise Dawkins, assistant professor at the Valley Foundation School of Nursing at [San José State University \(SJSU\)](#), advocates for Adobe Express as a tool to teach students inclusive and concise communication for their future careers. **"It's so creative and simple to use, and it helps students keep information short, clear, and easy to digest."**

Conversation starters

What are the key skills graduates need to excel in their desired careers?

Determine what career-readiness looks like for your students and evaluate how curriculum-based projects can help them cultivate the necessary skills.

How can your institution implement a strategy for badging and micro-credentialing for students?

Explore a [student badging program](#) that offers relevant digital skills courses and a LinkedIn-ready badging system.

What projects can your institution develop in standard curricula and broader campus-based experiences to equip students with these skills?

Think about student-led competitions (like the [Digital Edge Awards](#)) to cultivate interest and engage your students.



Evolve the entire campus by engaging all stakeholders.

The path to digital fluency requires engagement from various stakeholders: leadership, staff, faculty, and students. Each plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of higher education over the next decade. But institutions can also cultivate digital fluency through coursework by integrating creative and digital-based projects into standard curricula.

“For our students to succeed in tomorrow’s workforce they must be digitally fluent. It’s critical that they have the tools to make sense of data and communicate that meaning to others. Through the Adobe Creative Campus program, we put the infrastructure in place to teach our students how to tell stories. The partnership between UTSA and Adobe is not merely transactional — it’s transformational.”

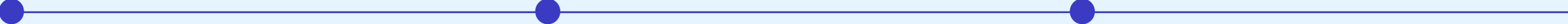
Taylor Eighmy, president of University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)



“Adobe Express makes everything so quick and convenient. I can draft a flyer or create carousel images easily. There are templates to create something that’s very professional and effective, but I also have enough freedom to add my own creativity and brand to the project. My skills with Adobe apps will give me an advantage on my resume and in my career.”

Na’Shae Wagoner, a business and marketing student at Bowie State University

Conversation starters



How are faculty empowered to introduce new tools into the classroom and develop innovative assignments?

Consider regular check-ins via surveys to discover pain points.

How is staff support aligned with evolving student and faculty needs?

Assign a task force responsible for aligning support with student needs.

How do you support enablement and upskilling for faculty and staff to help them integrate new tech into their curriculum?

Establish a working group to assess new technology and host monthly open meetings to discuss.

Finding the right technology partner.

With the rapid growth and constant change in technology, it's essential to find tools tailored to your institution's needs. Finding a partner that's aligned with your priorities and equipped to offer strategic support can help you make the right tech investments. Explore strategies employed by other institutions to drive campus-wide success, such as building a student ambassador program, implementing clear rollout strategies for new disciplines, and cultivating faculty champions across departments.



Dr. Kim Blisniuk, associate professor of geology at **San José State University (SJSU)**, uses Adobe tools to help students cultivate their skills in converting technical information to visual mediums so it's easier to understand — a valuable skill for aspiring geologists.

“I’m so thankful that SJSU makes Adobe Creative Cloud available to students,” says Dr. Blisniuk. “It allows us to train students in skills that they can put on their resume. And as a professor, it pushes me to evolve the class, enhance educational experiences, and be more creative in the classroom.”

Conversation starters

How does your technology roadmap support your strategic mission, and how do you prioritize initiatives?

Engage your IT team early in the process to plan technology initiatives effectively.

Does leadership have enough opportunity to engage with new technology and consider the implications for your university?

Organize talks and workshops with external partners to inspire leadership.

How can vendors or partners assist in effective change implementation?

Involve reliable partners to help with the overall strategy and support the transition.

Fostering career-ready skills.

Turn your campus into an innovation hub by embracing digital fluency.

Understanding digital skills gap

Skills like visual communication and creative problem-solving are in high demand, with nearly half of US jobs requiring them.

48% of jobs mandate creative and visual communication skills while 25% of graduates highlight these competencies.

Empowering teaching and learning

Explore strategies to integrate digital tools and enhance student engagement: Educators can leverage creativity and productivity methods such as video essays and podcasts to engage students effectively.

At Weber State University, 89% of composition students exceed course outcomes through the use of Adobe tools.

Building lasting skills for career readiness

Availability of tools like Adobe Creative Cloud empowers students to develop tangible skills applicable to their careers.

Digital credentialing/micro-credentialing can enhance student marketability: 88% of hiring managers value non-degree certifications.

Enhancing student experiences beyond the classroom

By integrating creativity and productivity tools, students engage in diverse activities outside the classroom fostering self-expression and connection within the campus community.

At the University of Texas, San Antonio, Professor Jodi Peterson started an interdisciplinary project using Adobe tools involving 500 students, fostering collaboration and complex project participation.



Empower your students with Adobe.

Investing in creativity and digital fluency can transform student experiences and prepare them for tomorrow's careers. By transforming your approach to teaching and learning, you can help your students develop the skills they need to thrive in the modern economy, especially with the right partners by your side.

That's where Adobe can help.

Adobe has long been on a mission to help institutions drive student success.

With Adobe's suite of tools, students from diverse backgrounds can cultivate critical skills and earn credentials that set them apart academically and professionally. Designed by faculty, these credentials seamlessly integrate into your curricula, assignments, and institutional objectives, empowering students and educators.

Additionally, you can become an [Adobe Creative Campus](#) and join a community of like-minded institutions that are dedicated to fostering student success and innovation.



● [Reach out](#) to learn how Adobe can help your institution become a hub for innovation, collaboration, and communication.

