Case study

University of British Columbia
Alma Mater Society

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Case Study: University of British Columbia Alma Mater Society

The University of British Columbia (UBC) is a large research university, offering approximately 500 Bachelor and Master degree programs in the sciences, arts, business and engineering. Ranked 37th in the World University Ranking 2022 by Times Higher Education, the school draws students from all over the world.

The Alma Mater Society represents student interests at UBC. Starting in 1915, this student society now represents more than 58,000 undergraduate and graduate students, operating student services, businesses, resource groups and clubs. In many regards, it acts as a hub for students looking to access services and connections in the university.

Nimbus Learning partnered with the Alma Mater Society at UBC in January 2020 to expand their tutoring program without increasing the team's workload and has delivered. Partnered with Nimbus, the AMS team saw the use of their program grow by more than 360%, while their administrative workload decreased by at least 5-10 hours per month.

RESULTS:

360%

With Nimbus, the UBC AMS Tutoring program grew by 360% year over year
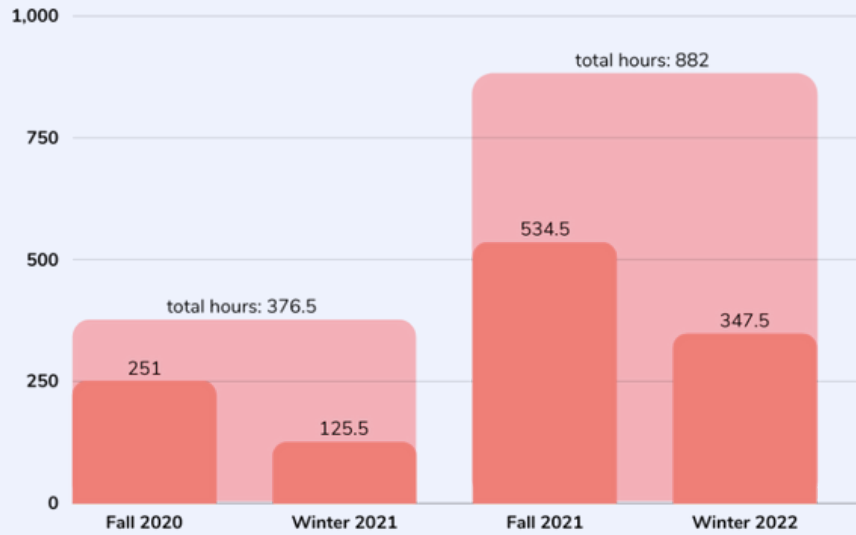
Growing your tutoring program by more than 300% is no easy task. Doing it during a global pandemic when all students, tutors and administrators are working virtually from around the globe is unheard of - until the UBC Alma Mater Society (AMS) teamed up with Nimbus Learning, that is.

With Nimbus Learning, the AMS tutoring program has exploded in popularity, seeing a 360% increase in the number of tutoring sessions and a 230% increase in booked tutoring hours from the first year they partnered with Nimbus Learning to the second.
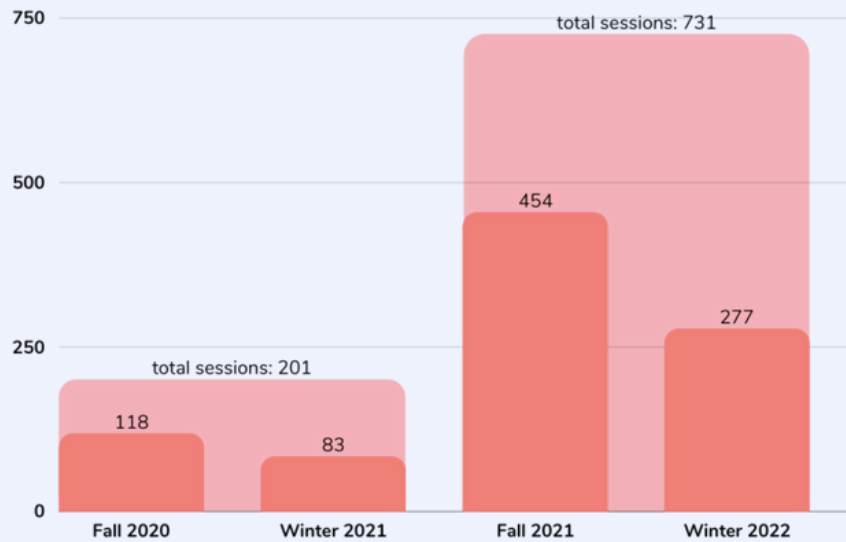
TOTAL NUMBER OF TUTORING SESSIONS:

AMS tutoring hours
2020-2022

total hours: 882

total hours: 376.5

534.5

347.5

251

125.5

Fall 2020   Winter 2021   Fall 2021   Winter 2022

PRIVATE TUTORING HOURS BOOKED:

AMS tutoring sessions
2020-2022

total sessions: 731

454

277

total sessions: 201

118

83

Fall 2020   Winter 2021   Fall 2021   Winter 2022

Administrative workload decreased by at least 5-10 hours per month

While usage of the tutoring program exploded, the AMS tutoring team found their administrative duties decrease by at least five to ten hours per month. The team saved even more time during their end-of-term reporting periods.

"I [would] spend at least five to ten hours a month for in-person data. And so not having to do that for Nimbus, I would say, is probably about the equivalent. Especially at those sort of transitional periods — the end of first semester, the end of second semester — where we're sort of finishing everything up reading reports, getting things set up for next year,"

-Jae Sharpe, 2021-22 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

The Nimbus Learning solution

Automatic data collection with the administrative platform

Like with many departments, the AMS tutoring budget is based on student usage throughout the year. Because of this, end-of-term reporting is critical to ensuring a much-used service continues to get the attention it deserves. The Nimbus platform automatically collects usage data, and easily generates precise, accurate reports — saving the team even more time.

Smaller faculties also saved on time tracking credits and payment systems. Student-athletes at UBC, for example, get free tutoring credits. Nimbus Learning was able to accommodate this credit system on top of the in-app stripe payment system, so administrators did not have to track and then reimburse students.
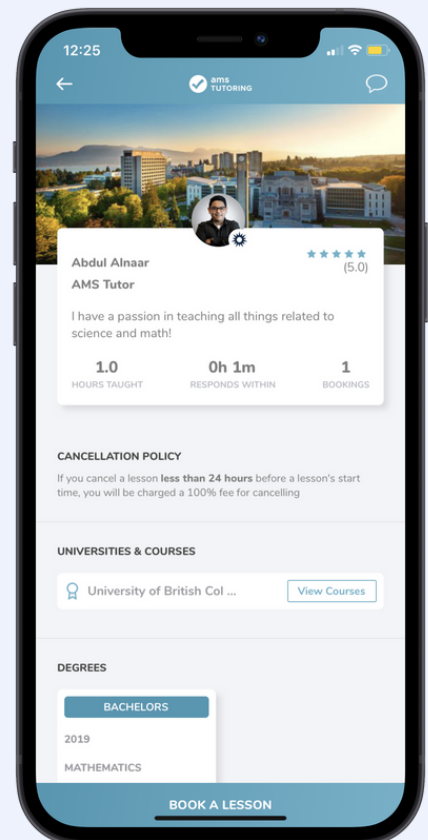
"Our funding depends on collecting data and analytics about students using the service. Something that's really nice about Nimbus is I don't have to worry about any of that — I can just see the data. I know it's perfect, or almost perfect,"

-Jae Sharpe, 2021-22 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

"What the coordinator used to do at the end of every term [was] tally up all the training sessions and hours ... extended the payment, everything. On the Nimbus app...[UBC varsity] just pay on an as needed credit basis through the app, which is super helpful for myself as I don't have to keep track of that."

Sheldon Birkett, 2020-21 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

CUSTOMIZED, FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS

Nimbus Learning increased student usage of the AMS tutoring program by creating multiple different session options for the tutors and students: online or offline, structured or drop-in, group or private. These options, rather than a one-size-fits-all model, allowed students to find the sessions that would best fit their personal learning styles.

"We wanted to keep [the tutoring program] as a hybrid model so students would have access to tutoring sessions in a lot of different ways. We knew that even if we were going back to in-person sessions, students might not necessarily be comfortable coming and sitting in a big classroom."

- Jae Sharpe, 2021-22 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

"…It's just really something that students are looking for: a more accessible way to get help with tutoring with course content. As soon as they know that it's an option, it's something that they'll latch on to."

The online tutoring feature includes functions like a whiteboard and chat, to provide a full learning experience even if the students are miles apart. The Nimbus Learning online tutoring and mentoring platform, powered by Zoom, includes:

- ✓ A whiteboard feature, giving students and tutors a fully flexible way to illustrate concepts.

- ✓ Screen sharing

- ✓ Group tutoring sessions of up to 300 people per call

- ✓ Breakout rooms

- ✓ An integrated chat function allows students to write down thoughts or questions to their tutors as they teach, as well as interact with their tutors if they find themselves in a location where they can't talk (like a library or noisy apartment)

"Through Nimbus, AMS tutors and clients can continue to have a similar experience to what they would have in person with the use of features such as the whiteboard."

- Ian Stone, 2021 Student Services Manager of the Alma Mater Society at the University of British Columbia

PROGRAM EXPANSION

The efficiency of the Nimbus platform allowed the AMS to expand their tutoring program into niche subjects, supporting students in less-in-demand courses.

"The really nice thing about Nimbus is that it lets us expand our course offerings even further. This past year, we were able to expand out into some humanities courses that we otherwise wouldn't have been able to teach. We had tutors who are qualified to teach English and Philosophy and stuff like that, and there's not a lot of really high demand for in-person sessions with that sort of thing...We can still offer, through Nimbus, one-on-one appointments if students need it...and that was really beneficial."

- Jae Sharpe, 2021-22 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

MARKETING SUPPORT

Marketing a new learning tool during a time when everything is changing is a tall order. Nimbus provided custom-made flyers and information packets about the app that informed the student body and encouraged students and professors to sign up for the service. Self-promotion tips for individual tutors, also provided by Nimbus, helped the team reach even more students.

"What we really appreciated at the start of the year was self-promotion tips for tutors on the Nimbus app. That was a great idea because tutors can have much further reach than a coordinator can by just doing the promoting online." Sheldon Birkett, 2020-21 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

The AMS continued to reach out to students with pre-recorded messages that professors could play at the start of their virtual classes instead of the standard in-class announcements. They also featured the new tutoring service on their virtual Imagine Day and provided professors with a QR code to include with the class syllabus, which would take students to a list of virtual services being provided by the school.

CONSOLIDATING PLATFORMS

Nimbus reached out to the other organizations at UBC to inform them about the new platform and draw in other tutoring services. This allows students to quickly see all the tutors the school has to offer, regardless of the faculty or subject matter, creating a greater value for students and extending that same time-saving benefit to other campus tutoring programs.

One such established tutoring program, administered by the Engineering Society, connected with the Nimbus platform so their students could easily find the tutors they require.

"Nimbus helped a lot because they reached out to many AMS constituencies – the clubs and organizations at UBC, like the arts undergrad societies, the economics society, geography...there's only two of us overseeing 30 to 40 tutors for both in group and private tutoring, so we don't have that much time to devote to marketing."

- Sheldon Birkett, 2020-21 coordinator for AMS Tutoring

AROUND-THE-CLOCK PARTNER SUPPORT

When things are rapidly changing, support services are often needed on the fly. The Nimbus Partner Success Team met with AMS frequently to ensure the program was exceeding the needs of the program, and to suggest ideas to continue the positive momentum.

If there were any technical questions or concerns, the Nimbus team was ready to jump in at a moment's notice.

"Having Marilyn [Partner Success] and Abhi [Tech services rep] especially, just being sort of around and available when we did have sort of technological questions or issues and having them reply so quickly. [We were] able to fix any issues that we ran into quickly [which] was really beneficial,"

- Jae Sharpe, 2021-22 Coordinator, AMS Tutoring

CONCLUSION

In two short years, Nimbus Learning achieved our objective of increasing program usage while decreasing the administrative workload. Data shows a more than 300% increase in the number of sessions booked year over year. And thanks to the Nimbus scheduling and payment feature, while the success of the program was off the charts, the team saw their workload decrease by a minimum of 5-10 hours per month.

Nimbus Learning achieved these results by providing a flexible platform that caters to many different learning styles, providing customized marketing support and around-the-clock support services for the program. The Nimbus Admin portal also collects accurate, ongoing data, which makes reporting and planning easy and gives the team more time to expand the program into niche areas. Bringing multiple constituencies onto the same platform also saves the AMS team from having to search for appropriate tutors for their students.

ABOUT NIMBUS

Nimbus Learning is an ed-tech platform that helps educational institutes and organizations build, manage, and optimize tutoring and mentorship programs. The Nimbus app helps students to search for specialized support, book a mutually available time, apply payments or credits for the service (if applicable), choose a location or access an online session, and provide feedback – all directly through the platform.

Organizations that have partnered with Nimbus Learning see, on average, a 52% decrease in administrative labor time and 263% year over year increase in their tutoring program usage. Because of the increase in efficiency, 63% of our partners have been able to launch brand new student success services since partnering with Nimbus.

Nimbus isn't just a tech platform. Our team also provides year-round support to your programs including guidance on how to design and implement a program tailored exclusively to your institution's needs, a full suite of tutoring and mentorship material, on-boarding and training support, program integration to unite various programs across campus and a designated marketing team to help spread the word about your program.

We believe student services can truly set students up for educational and career success; if they are easier to manage, you can continue to improve the scope and effectiveness of these programs for an ever-changing world. Learn about how Nimbus can work for you at **www.nimbuslearning.com.**