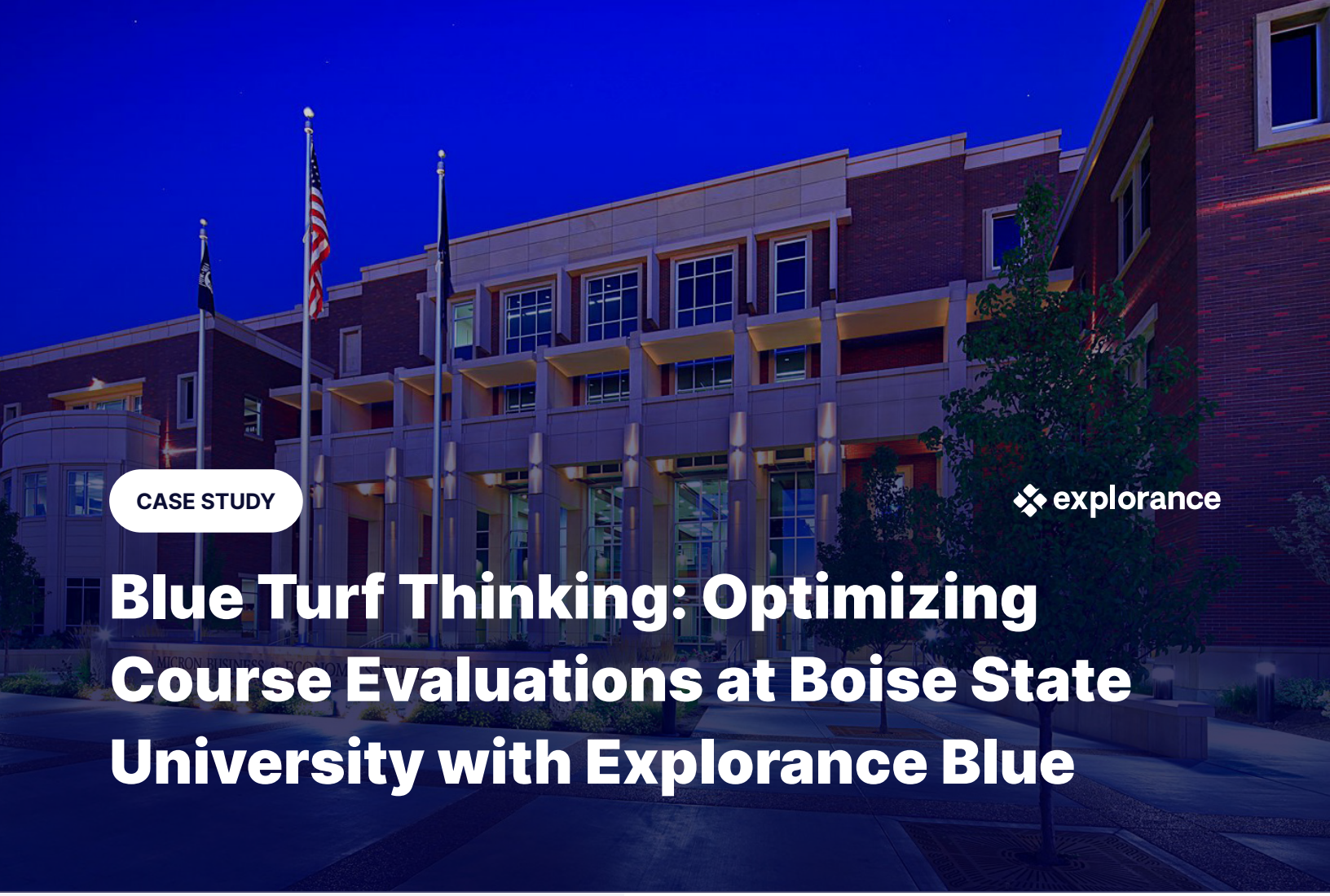

CASE STUDY

explorance

# Blue Turf Thinking: Optimizing Course Evaluations at Boise State University with Explorance Blue

### About Boise State University

Boise State University is a public research institution in Idaho boasting a diverse academic offering to over 26,000 students. Notable for its innovative programs and commitment to student success, Boise State emphasizes experiential learning, fostering a collaborative environment that prepares students for real-world challenges.

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

blue

CHALLENGE

## Transitioning from a Homegrown System to an Enterprise-Level Solution

In 2008, Boise State University introduced a new policy that would provide its students with a confidential and online course evaluation system. Embarking on this digital transformation, Boise State later implemented a home-grown online system in 2010.

The legacy system faced issues with part-time support, administrative churn, and the inability to scale the unique needs of each college, department, and faculty. The complexity of evaluations and the necessity for custom questions at a program level and reports for each school further raised questions about the sustainability of the platform.

## SOLUTION

## Applying “Blue Turf Thinking” to Course Evaluations

“Blue Turf Thinking” is Boise State’s unique mindset and approach to problem-solving, innovation, and strategy. Engrained in the university’s culture, it was only a matter of time before this philosophy was also applied to the institution’s search for a new course evaluation system.

Boise State began with engaging all stakeholders, including faculty and IT, and questioning assumptions about its existing evaluation system. The university aimed at streamlining the support and administration of the course evaluation process with central IT, saving time and reducing the stress on 56 different departments.

“We took a vested interest in course evaluations as a way to formatively improve instruction and not just as a technology,” said Dr. Leif Nelson, Director of Learning Technology Solutions at Boise State University.

“It established trust and introduced the concept of scale and sustainability from a support standpoint, but we still had challenges with customization and complexity.” In 2016, the Project Management Office (PMO) analyzed backend processes, troubleshooted issues, and separated backend and frontend operations, leading to the realization that a new system was needed to enhance both aspects.

Selecting Explorance Blue in 2020, the university began its implementation by migrating historical data, integrating with the university’s Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, and reverse engineering unique question sets and reports for consistency across departments and schools. The emphasis was on automating data connections, streamlining students’ experience with evaluations, and unifying the system to simplify the evaluation instrument.

## OUTCOME

## Aligning Course Evaluations with Excellence in Education

The implementation of Explorance Blue in the spring of 2022 brought key improvements to Boise State University’s course evaluation process.

**Automated Data Sync**

**Advanced Scheduling**

**Aggregated Reports**

**Teaching Assistant Evaluations**

The integration with Canvas streamlined the process further, and university-level questions ensured consistency across all courses. “The LMS integration and university-level questions were the first time ever for both. User experience, reporting, and having consistent data across the university – these were all huge wins,” said Michael Ellis, Project Manager at Boise State.

The university achieved its goal of cross-institutional benchmarking, saving administrative time and reducing stress on department heads. The new system not only met the complex needs of each department but also provided a foundation for future capabilities, including midterm evaluations and the auto-syncing of evaluation results with the tenure and promotion system.

The institution’s commitment to a better future for its students and faculty has resulted in a streamlined, consistent, and efficient course evaluation process that aligns with the university’s vision of excellence in education.