



Alfred University's procurement revolution with Unimarket.

An eProcurement success story

Procurement at Alfred University used to be time consuming, inefficient, and paper based. Now the institution automates and simplifies processes with Unimarket and hasn't looked back.

Nestled in what has been dubbed a "magical valley" in upstate New York, Alfred University has an idyllic rural campus with the nearest city an hour away. The setting is part of what makes Alfred so special, says Melissa Badeau, the institution's Director of Procurement.

When Melissa joined the university she was tasked with getting control over spend, something that she knew would be almost impossible with its existing paper-based procurement system.

"Way behind the times"

Melissa doesn't look back fondly on the university's old procurement process. Staff had to fill in paper requisition forms and walk them to the procurement office. The team would then type the information into another system and send it out for quotes, get approvals, and place orders — all through email.

Staff used university-issued credit cards and bought through Amazon, rather than the university's catalog. This meant the university had little oversight into spend, missed out on preferential rates from approved suppliers, and often doubled up on the same purchases.

"It was archaic. We were way behind the times, and there was a lot of rogue spending. People didn't mean to spend wrong — they just didn't know," explains Melissa.

When Covid-19 shut down the campus, Melissa had to work fast to rein in spend, recalling credit cards and requiring procurement approval for any purchase over \$250. That created even more work for Melissa and her team.

"There I was, a director, pulling long hours just pushing paper. I couldn't work on bigger projects and I was not doing what I was hired to do."



Alfred University
OUTSIDE of ORDINARY

Founded in 1836, Alfred is a non-sectarian private university with a commitment to independent thinking.

Location: Alfred, New York

Enrollment: 2,000

ERP: Ellucian Banner

Finding a better way

Melissa urgently needed a modern, automated system to let her take control of the university's procurement.

Alfred University is part of a consortium that has a vetted eProcurement solution provider that members can access. She started to engage with this solution provider but it was very slow to respond to questions and couldn't provide clear information on costs.

Melissa soon lost confidence that the provider would be the right choice for the university.

Around the same time, Melissa came across the Unimarket eProcurement solution and learned about the company's extensive experience integrating with Ellucian Banner — Alfred's ERP. She reached out to a colleague at another school that was already using the Unimarket solution.

"She raved!" says Melissa. "The implementation timeframe and the integration with Banner were faster than she ever expected. The support was great and she didn't have anything negative to say, and believe me, I asked! Unimarket almost sounded too good to be true."

Melissa decided that she had found the right solution for Alfred so she began working to convince the university's senior stakeholders.

"They could immediately see the value and that Unimarket would give us a much-improved process," remembers Melissa. The decision was made and the university began to prepare for its move to eProcurement.



A procurement revolution

Alfred University went live with Unimarket in March of 2022 and it's entirely changed how purchasing happens across campus. The solution facilitates the university's decentralized procurement process while delivering the necessary control and oversight.

It's also been instrumental in helping Melissa deliver on her mandate to rein in spend across the board. Thanks to greater visibility there are no more purchases for unnecessary software and the Unimarket solution can be used to automatically renew software licenses.

Its contract management solution also allows the procurement team to set spending milestones and warning notifications around spend limits.

Alfred now has a comprehensive catalog accessible through an intuitive marketplace that lets people from across campus buy what they need simply and easily. All products are provided by the institution's preferred suppliers and at negotiated prices.

"If a staff member sends us a requisition for something they can buy in our catalog, I simply click 'reject' and redirect them to the marketplace. Even that is a huge efficiency gain," says Melissa.

The significantly reduced administrative load has also let Melissa and her procurement team shift their focus to higher-value work.

"I can't even begin to tell you how much time we've saved. Before Unimarket, I spent 95% of my time on admin. Now it's more like 15%," says Melissa. "Instead of essentially shopping for everyone, I can do things like support the facilities group on RFPs and negotiate on larger equipment bids."

A bright future

Following the implementation period, including a seamless integration with Alfred's Ellucian Banner ERP, the Unimarket team has been on hand whenever needed.

"If I run into a problem, it's a quick email, and they get back to me pretty much immediately. They're so easy to work with, and my account manager, wow, she has so much knowledge."

Melissa has been showing the system to counterparts at other universities: "I see they're struggling like I was, so I have to tell them about Unimarket. Recently I shared my screen in a meeting, and they were really impressed," she says.

"Somebody asked me if I'd implement Unimarket all over again, and I said, '100 times, yes!' And I'm looking forward to what we'll do with them in the future."

"Somebody asked me if I'd implement Unimarket all over again, and I said, '100 times, yes!' And I'm looking forward to what we'll do with them in the future."

Melissa Badeau, Director of Procurement at Alfred University.

Results



Simple to use marketplace makes purchasing easy



Greater visibility into spend



Significant reduction in manual effort



Reduction in unnecessary software costs



Transformation to a more strategic procurement approach

Want to know more?

Visit our website for more eProcurement success stories and to discover how we help organizations like yours get procurement done right.



unimarket.com | hello@unimarket.com



Scan the QR code to visit our website