

Modernizing Non-Credit Enrollment at the University of Illinois Springfield

How the University of Illinois Springfield modernized
continuing education with Eduframe



860+
users onboarded



20
active courses



24
courses completed



66
courses planned

Introduction: University of Illinois Springfield



For modern universities, continuing education is no longer a peripheral offering but a core strategic pillar. Today's professional learners demand a frictionless experience similar to modern retail platforms: they want to easily discover, enroll, pay for courses, and go into the course material.

Recognizing that traditional credit-bearing systems often create barriers for non-traditional students, the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) embarked on a digital transformation in 2025. By moving away from fragmented legacy platforms and adopting a purpose-built solution, UIS has centralized its operations, professionalized its course delivery, and set a scalable foundation for the future of its educational offerings.

Meet the Institution: University of Illinois Springfield (UIS)

Located in the capital city of Illinois, UIS serves a diverse population of learners, including a significant number of state agency professionals. The university's Department of Continuing and Professional Education operates three distinct areas:



Client-Facing: Custom workforce training programs and learning opportunities for state agencies and corporate clients



Retail: The ION Professional eLearning program prepares learners to become leaders in online learning by offering professional certificates, microcredentials, and courses in online teaching best practices, accessibility, learning technology, artificial intelligence, and open educational resources.



Internal Faculty Collaboration: Partnering with faculty to offer non-credit learning opportunities for students and the community outside the traditional curriculum.

The department operates with a small but dedicated team of five full-time staff, one part-time employee, and external contractors who support course development.

Meet the Speaker: Emily Keener



Emily Keener Director, Continuing and Professional Education

Emily Keener leads the Department of Continuing and Professional Education at UIS. In her role, she oversees both the client-facing side of the business, where the department acts as a training partner for Illinois state agencies, and the retail, ION Professional eLearning Programs. Her leadership was instrumental in transitioning UIS to a managed, sustainable technology stack that supports the department's strategic growth goals.



UNIVERSITY OF
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SPRINGFIELD



The Challenge: “Borrowed” Systems Built for Credit, not Continuing Education



Starting Point

1 Legacy systems built for traditional degrees

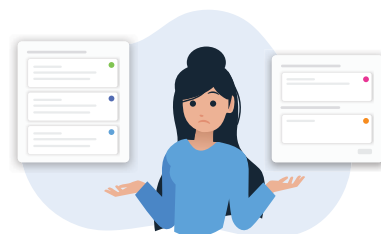
When Emily joined the continuing education team at UIS, the department relied on outdated systems not built for continuing education. One LMS handled client-facing programs, while the ION Professional eLearning program operated on a separate LMS inherited in 2020. The systems couldn't be merged because student records were connected to the university's CRM and SIS.

Friction

2 Professional learners faced a full academic application

The CRM was built for credit-bearing admissions, not continuing education enrollment.

Learners signing up for a single professional development course were pushed through a traditional university admissions process, creating immediate friction.



“The previous CRM forced non-traditional learners through a complex admissions funnel designed for full-time students. They often questioned the necessity of a full academic application when their goal was simply to enroll in a single professional development course.”



- Emily Keener, Director, Continuing and Professional Education

Payment barrier

3 No way to pay during registration

UIS couldn't accept credit card payments at the point of registration. Instead, learners were invoiced after registering, adding delays and causing many to simply never pay.



Deteriorating LMS

4 An LMS becoming difficult to maintain

The LMS infrastructure was deteriorating, and the IT team no longer had the backend expertise to reliably maintain it. When the university's CIO became personally involved in keeping the system running, it was clear the model was unsustainable.

Behind the scenes

5 No visibility or scalable processes

Enrollment data lived in spreadsheets on one person's computer. There were no shared dashboards, no standardized operating procedures, and no centralized visibility into enrollment performance as the department continued growing.



Key Challenges

Facing UIS Continuing and Professional Education

Challenges



Fragmentation: Two separate, outdated LMS instances that couldn't be unified.



Payment Barriers: No ability to accept credit card payment at the point of registration.



Friction: Borrowed systems designed for credit enrollment, not CE learners.



Data Silos: Enrollment data siloed in individual spreadsheets with no central visibility.



Maintenance: Outdated LMS with no internal IT support for required updates.



Operational Maturity: No structured operating procedures to support a growing team.



The Solution: Eduframe, the Continuing Education SIS & Registration Platform



After evaluating several options, the UIS team selected a learning management system alongside Eduframe as their enrollment management, storefront, and student information system.

The partnership was solidified during the discovery phase. Following discussions with the LMS provider, it became clear that teaming up with Eduframe would suit the university's needs best, specifically for handling complex use cases like institutional discount codes and pricing models that the ION program had developed over decades.

The combination of Eduframe and the LMS addressed UIS's needs on multiple fronts:



Purpose-Built CE SIS & Registration Platform

Eduframe provides a seamless learner journey from course discovery to automated enrollment and secure payment. Designed specifically for continuing education, it offers the flexibility to handle diverse B2B and B2C workflows, customizable storefronts, and automated email communications, all without requiring learners to navigate a traditional academic admissions process.

Seamless LMS Integration

The native integration between the LMS and Eduframe was a primary deciding factor. Single sign-on (SSO) works out of the box, while grade synchronization and course completion data flow automatically between the two systems. Emily Keener noted that the platforms speak together seamlessly, delivering a high-quality environment with no unexpected friction.

Power BI Data Dashboard

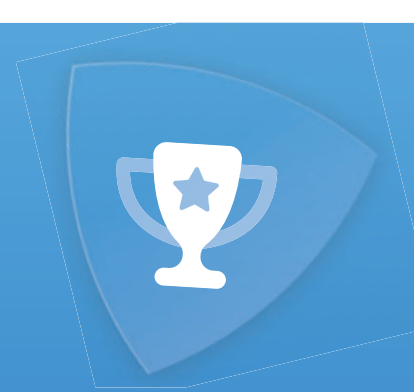
In collaboration with the Eduframe team, UIS implemented a Power BI dashboard that unifies current Eduframe enrollment data with historical CRM records. For the first time, leadership can monitor real-time enrollment trends at the course level through a single, shared data view, eliminating the need to request manual spreadsheets from individual team members.

"This collaboration will make it easier and faster for us to develop, launch, and manage workforce-driven programs, expanding opportunities for our students and the entire community."

- Dr. Robert Kerr, Executive Director of Innovation and Opportunity



Results: Smoother Operations, Better Learner Experience, and Data-Driven Decisions



Since launching in August 2025, the UIS Continuing and Professional Education department has unified its continuing education programs onto a single modern platform, streamlining operations and enabling scalable growth across all offerings. This shift has resulted in several key operational and learner experience improvements:



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Fewer support tickets, happier learners:

The smooth transition from the previous LMS environment to the new learning management, combined with Eduframe's intuitive registration flow, resulted in significantly fewer support tickets from learners. The first cohort to go through the new system generated almost no tickets, an outcome the team described as both surprising and gratifying.

Operational infrastructure that can scale:

The transition forced the team to document every process, creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for everything from course setup to quality assurance.

Actionable Insights:

Using Power BI, UIS discovered that its flagship "Master Online Teacher" (MOT) program remains highly relevant and strong, allowing them to focus resources on top-performing assets.

Speed to market:

The flexibility of Eduframe has also opened up new use cases. When the UIS Innovation Center needed to run an AI business training for entrepreneurs on short notice, the CE team was able to set up registration through Eduframe quickly and successfully. The course was held in person at the Innovation Center, demonstrating that the platform can support non-traditional, quick-turnaround program needs beyond the core CE catalog.

"Success is defined by our ability to provide a frictionless learner journey where the technology becomes invisible. We want our learners to get exactly what they came for without noticing the systems behind the scenes, ensuring they can simply sign in and focus on their education."

- Emily Keener, Director, Continuing and Professional Education



What's next: Growing ION and Expanding Beyond the Educator Audience

Looking ahead to the next 12 to 18 months, UIS has clear strategic priorities:



Enrollment Goals:

The primary objective is to achieve 20% revenue growth and double retail (ION) enrollment by January 2027, specifically focusing on the MOT program.

Regional Alignment:

UIS plans to launch new programs targeted at regional employer needs, such as a Project Management program designed specifically for government workers.



Modern Credentials:

The department is reconfiguring long programs into shorter, more flexible certificates and micro-credentials that match modern learner expectations for speed and transparency.

As Emily summarized it, the next phase is about consolidating what's working, building from a position of operational strength, and expanding toward new audiences and program formats, all on a platform they can trust to scale with them.

Manage & grow your Continuing Education business

The Continuing Education SIS & Registration Platform

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