



#### Summary

**Type:**

Private university

**Founded:**

1971

**Location:**

San Diego, California

**Enrollment:**

~40,000

Launched TimelyCare in 2022

# “A Significant Student Success Impact”

## National University Adds TimelyCare to Support Whole Human Education

### Challenge

National University is renowned for offering accessible, achievable higher education to adult learners of various ages and educational backgrounds. The San Diego-based institution serves more than 40,000 geographically dispersed students largely pursuing their education in an online environment, with some onsite classes offered as well. National's demographically diverse students include a wide range of life experiences, including traditional college-aged students, parents, enlisted service members, veterans, and learners with full-time jobs. Founded by a military veteran in 1971, National was established to serve working adults, and this focus continues to shape its guiding principles today. By emphasizing access and support for students to thrive both in and out of the classroom, National is helping to redefine what it means—and what it takes—to pursue higher education in the U.S. today.

Despite National's commitment to a success model called “Whole Human Education,” the school's Student Wellness team experienced an influx of requests for mental health services. Students reported feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation, often more pronounced than those of traditional university students who have on-campus community support. While Dr. Wanda Addison and other faculty members did their best to provide resources, they had to work twice as hard to identify the warning signs. “Online, my cues are not visual,” said Dr. Addison. “It becomes: Are they missing from class? Have they not signed in in four days? Instead of visual red flags, I might see onsite, I look for digital red flags.”

## A SIGNIFICANT STUDENT SUCCESS IMPACT

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ADDS TIMELYCARE TO SUPPORT WHOLE HUMAN EDUCATION

“Students are human first, and you have to meet those human needs before you can actually challenge them to go deeper on the learning side.”

**Dr. Mark Milliron**  
President

### TimelyCare's Impact on National University



**57%** of students would have done nothing without access to TimelyCare



**45%** of visits are after-hours care

The Student Wellness team faced a difficult task, handling individual student requests to connect to counseling resources in their communities across the country, helping identify underlying food or housing insecurities, researching local support resources, and educating students on their personal insurance policies. This process was unsustainable, with the National staff often forced to navigate bureaucratic hurdles to connect students to resources. This frequently left students facing weeks or months of wait time for in-person counseling appointments.

“When you're working with primarily online students, one of the challenges in trying to provide them with wellness resources is simply location. We can't be experts in every single county in the entire United States.”

**Ashley Maakestad**  
*Associate Director of Student Wellness*

To ensure students wouldn't have to make the tough decision to pause their education due to a lack of mental health support, the Student Wellness team was determined to find a solution to connect students to care faster and more efficiently.

National University needed to address:

- Barriers to care, such as long wait times, cost, insurance, and transportation
- The challenges of navigating state licensure restrictions for geographically dispersed students
- An unmanageable volume of requests for mental healthcare services that had to be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Student Wellness team

“Online students face a lot of challenges in their academic journey with life, work, family – things outside of the academic sphere. The juggling act tends to be the biggest barrier.”

**Ashley Maakestad**  
Associate Director of Student Wellness

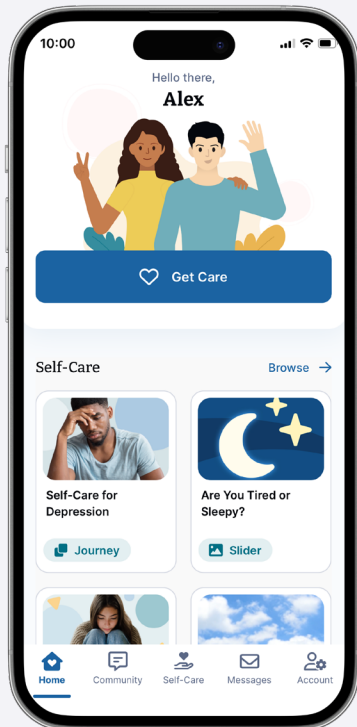


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“Our students expect us to provide whole human care as a function of their tuition dollars. The fact that we provide sessions for free is both keeping with their expectations and making sure services are equitable, widespread, and not dependent on healthcare coverage, copays, or any of the usual baggage that goes along with mental health.”

**Dr. J.B. Robinson**  
Associate Dean of Students



“Expanded healthcare resources are vital to students. There’s no other way to put it. It is their lifeline. Having an online mental healthcare space is as important as any class they take. It helps them through that bump in the road that almost always happens.”

**Dr. Wanda Addison**  
Department Chair for Arts and Humanities

## Solution

Drawing from their holistic approach to student wellness, leaders at National University began searching for a sustainable solution that would not only meet their students’ immediate needs and also leave a lasting impact on their academic, personal, and professional lives. “We love the term ‘scaffolding’ because scaffolds go away once a structure gets stronger,” said Dr. Milliron, president of National University. “We want to help create that structure. It’s not just about responding to crises; it’s about making sure our students become stronger by the time they leave, ready to survive and thrive.”

Providing support to more than 40,000 students across the country is no simple task. However, National University leaders were determined to find a robust, fully accessible solution.

“The three things we were looking for in a provider were one-on-one support from therapists, 24/7 access, and the ability for faculty to have 24/7 access to support. Because our students are taking classes at unique times, our faculty are as well. Being able to have someone they can call if they experience a student in crisis is really important and helps them feel supported.”

**Ashley Maakestad**  
*Associate Director of Student Wellness*

After searching for the right fit for the university and its students, National found a trusted partner in TimelyCare to help raise its standard of care and provide staff with much-needed relief.

TimelyCare’s array of virtual health and well-being services included:

- 24/7, on-demand emotional support, with wait times of approximately four minutes
- Scheduled counseling sessions for students, with appointments often available in less than a day
- A nationwide, anonymous peer community where students can share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions
- A library of digital self-care content offering evidence-based tools, techniques, and journeys for navigating student’s unique life challenges

## A SIGNIFICANT STUDENT SUCCESS IMPACT

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ADDS TIMELYCARE TO SUPPORT WHOLE HUMAN EDUCATION

“Being able to access TimelyCare from most any time of day and really most any location from my phone, just gives me one more reason to do it instead of one more reason not to do it.”

**Mark Fisher**  
Student



## TimelyCare Ratings by National University Students

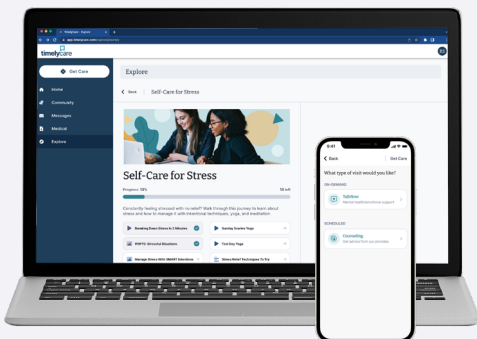
Average rating  
of visits

**4.9/5.0**



Average rating  
of providers

**4.9/5.0**



## TimelyCare's Impact on National University



Students have accessed  
TimelyCare in **47 of 50 states**

## Results

Partnering with TimelyCare helped National University fortify its “Whole Human Education” framework. Virtual care options became an additional “scaffolding” support, reducing the burden on the Student Wellness team. “TimelyCare allows my team to do its best work and that’s what makes it really valuable,” said Maakestad. “Knowing students are always going to have support, it takes the pressure off. We are no longer feeling stuck with staffing and overwhelmed with numbers.”

The impact of TimelyCare’s services was immediately felt by the students who needed it most, including student veterans like Shawn Simms and Ivy Ramos.

“I have PTSD from the military. But with the help of the wellness team and the TimelyCare app, I’m successful and happy. I’ll be graduating soon.”

**Shawn Simms**  
Student

Ramos faced a three-month wait to get an appointment with her therapist through the VA. “TimelyCare really filled that gap for me to see somebody and talk to somebody sooner,” she said. “The provider I’ve been working with has given me more tools than my own behavioral therapist. TimelyCare has been a very big part of my ability to cope and work through my mental health.”

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## TimelyCare's Impact on National University



**78%** of students reported mental health improvement after a counseling visit



**94%** of students reported mental health improvement after a TalkNow visit

### Top Reasons for Mental Health Visits:



- Stress
- Anxiety
- Relationship Issues
- Depression

Non-traditional students like Mark Fisher said TimelyCare's easy access to support makes a difference in their mental health. "I needed help. I've been struggling with some school. I've been struggling with some family issues and had felt it kind of boiling over," he said. "And here I am with a resource that's free and available right there for me. TimelyCare gives me the peace of mind that I am facing my struggles and addressing them."

For Dr. Milliron, TimelyCare's virtual support is a key component to helping National University students realize their academic goals. "TimelyCare is one of those things that we can add to the family of smart strategies that will help our students early and help them stay on track and, hopefully, walk across that stage with a big smile and on the jumbotron with their name being announced. Those are the moments you're working for."

"If you're thinking about a resource like TimelyCare, it's going to have a significant student success impact. You're going to help more students persist, you're going to help more students succeed."

**Dr. Mark Milliron**  
President

