

University payment systems: What do students want?

Meeting new demands from students and parents will actually save you money

Steve Kramer, Vice President, [ACI Worldwide](#)

I know the pain Finance VPs in higher education experience. It seems like every day that someone comes to you saying “Our students need new technology. Can we squeeze it into the budget?” I own the P&L, so I get it.

Did you know that your university payment systems can take away some of your pain? **Meeting new demands from students and parents will actually save you money.** How? We sponsored a [revealing survey](#) with Aite Group that explains the potential savings.

Here are the top three things students and parents want when dealing with their college bills:

1. More online payments, less talking to people

Don’t be offended, but today, parents and students don’t want to talk to someone to make a payment. Our survey revealed that 90 percent of students and parents that pay by calling in or walking into your office would switch to paying you online if they could. They want a few upgrades to your university payment system to make paying online easier.

- [Text message reminders to pay](#)
- Online answers to billing questions
- Credit card and ACH payments
- Incentives

Implementing these changes and moving these payments online will save your staff time.

2. Engaging eBilling that answers their questions

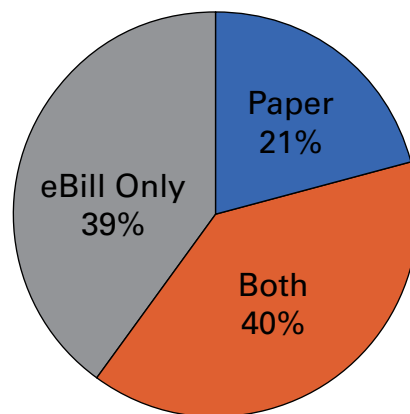
When it comes to billing systems, you can spend less and get more.

79 percent of students and parents receive tuition bills on their phone or computer. **Does your university have this many families using eBilling?**

These [eBills](#) save you money. They also offer students bonus features like videos, billing FAQs and personalized messages.

Unfortunately 40 percent of families receive both paper and electronic bills. This means you may pay twice to send bills to these families.

How do you receive your tuition bill?



Source: Aite Group's How Americans Pay Bills Survey

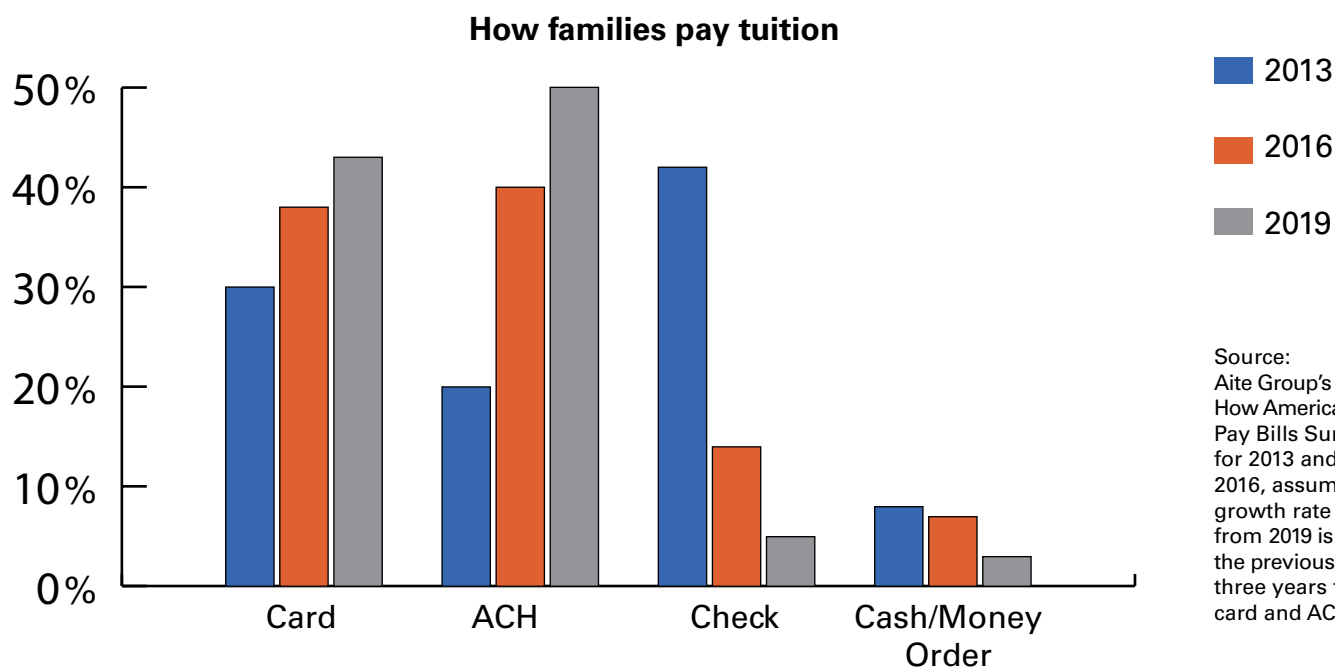
To achieve the cost savings that eBilling offers, follow the lead of a university that achieved 100 percent eBilling. They reached this goal while preventing complaints by communicating the change using: emails, postcards and website messages.

3. Pay with a card, even if there's a service fee

The top three things students and parents want when they pay you are

1. Safety
2. Ease
3. Speed

To get these benefits, families increasingly pay tuition with a credit and debit card. Millennials especially prefer cards, paying 42 percent of tuition bills with a card and only 5 percent via check. They pay with a card even if there's a fee to get this service.



57 percent of colleges and universities don't let payment processors take a slice of their pie. They avoid paying credit card fees by shifting the expense to those families that want to pay with a card.

Worried about complaints over the fees? [Read how Indiana Wesleyan and Spalding University avoided issues by offering ACH for free.](#)

As LEGO Batman said "If you wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make a change. Hoo!" So take a look at how your payment volumes compare to the higher education industry by [reading the full survey results](#) that I summarized above.

ⁱ ACI Worldwide, Achieve best in class payments that drive engagement webinar, 2015, <https://www.aciworldwide.com/insights/webinars/search/2015/november/achieve-best-in-class-payments-that-drive-customer-engagement>

ⁱⁱ IMDb, The LEGO Batman Movie Quotes, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4116284/quotes>

ⁱⁱⁱ All other data comes from Aite Group's How Americans Pay Bills Survey sponsored by ACI Worldwide, 2017, <http://www.aciworldwide.com/billpayhabits>