



From regional respect to national recognition

Maryville University Case Study

In partnership with



BOUNDLESS
LEARNING™

How Maryville University disrupted the online learning space to redefine its place in higher education

By partnering with Boundless Learning, Maryville University broke the boundaries of physical space to bring high-quality, career-driven education to learners across the globe — more than doubling its total enrollment from 2011 to 2020 and showcasing exceptional elearning at scale.



Unprecedented growth

Maryville was listed among the **top 5 fastest-growing private universities** 6 straight years (2019-2024)



Enhanced learner outcomes

Graduates saw **98% positive career outcomes** thanks to collaboratively designed career-focused, skills-based coursework



Global brand presence

With enrollees in **50 states and at least 56 countries**, Maryville expanded far beyond its St. Louis home



Relentless learner support

Maryville students built real connections with advisors, leading to **better retention and graduation rates**



Jessica Croft | MSN FNP Graduate

Braving the online education space together

Maryville University has a history of pushing boundaries in education that dates back more than 150 years — **prioritizing better educational offerings and providing better outcomes through access, support, innovation, and technological solutions.** With world-class ambition, the St. Louis-based university sought to expand its reach and make high-quality education accessible to prospective learners beyond its Missouri backyard.

The solution? Enter the online learning space: No small feat for a regional university on its own, but achievable with a capable, experienced partner.

They found that partner in Boundless Learning.

Together, Maryville and Boundless Learning worked to implement the right plan of action, integrate an effective digital infrastructure, and provide strong learner support. These strategic, tech-empowered higher education solutions and services changed the trajectory of Maryville's history and enhanced its reputation as a national — even global — education brand.

Under the mantra **“Let’s Be Brave Together,”** Maryville University and Boundless Learning worked to reach new heights, taking Maryville's mission coast to coast and around the globe.

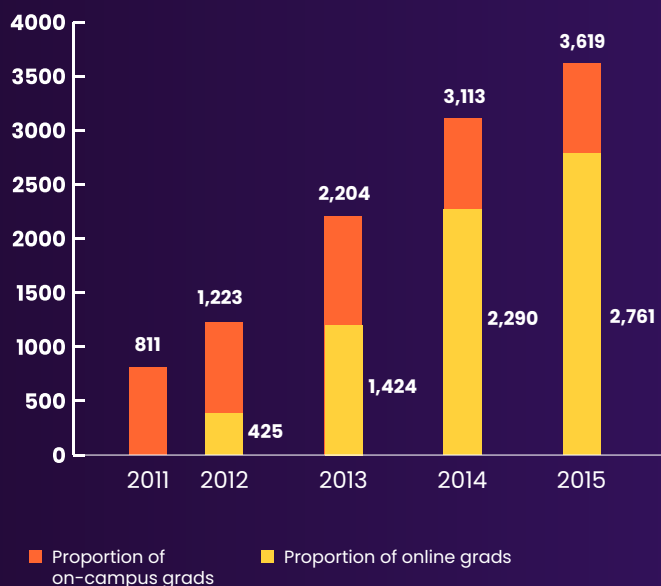
Pursuing unprecedented growth and expansion together

In 2011, Maryville University partnered with Boundless Learning to accomplish its goals, starting with bringing its suite of nursing programs online. The partnership included market research and strategic insights, enrollment and retention services, learner counseling and support, comprehensive marketing solutions, learning design, and access to a robust infrastructure upon which the online learning initiatives were to be built and launched.

The next several years brought tremendous growth and record-setting enrollment. From a total headcount below 4,000 in 2011, Maryville University saw counts approaching 7,000 just five years later and eclipsing 10,000 by 2020 — an increase of well over 150% in less than a decade.

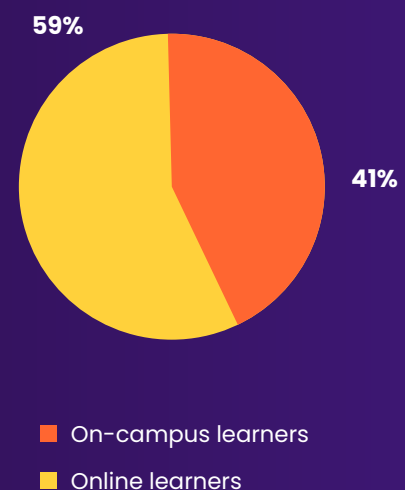
During this period, undergraduate and on-campus enrollment remained mostly steady, even seeing some decline at times. This means Maryville's expansion into the online space in partnership with Boundless Learning, driven by its graduate nurse practitioner degrees and certificates, accounted for the vast majority of this remarkable growth.

Total Maryville graduates, 2011–2015



The increase in number of graduates for Maryville University during the first five years of its partnership with Boundless Learning was heavily fueled by online growth.

Percentage of online and on-campus learners at Maryville University in 2024



Online learners comprise nearly 6 out of 10 learners at Maryville University.

Of course, recruitment and growth only comprise one piece of the puzzle. To ensure learners received the full benefit of a Maryville education, Boundless Learning's research and insights team helped build efficiency and connect academic offerings to real workforce-aligned outcomes, and the student support team worked to provide best-in-class service to address challenges and pain points at the personalized level, helping learners avoid becoming discouraged or losing motivation.

As a result, Boundless Learning's enrollment and support advisors have maintained high retention rates — typically one of the biggest concerns universities encounter when entering the distance learning space. In 2024, Maryville University saw a **90% overall retention rate term over term** for its online programs, including a **79% retention rate** for the critical, volatile transition from first term to second term.

As of 2024, Maryville has been listed among the **top five fastest-growing private universities** in the nation for six years in a row.*

*According to data collected by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



Empowering personalized support at a global scale together

A far cry from its regional roots, Maryville University now serves learners nationwide and around the world, helping them achieve their educational and professional goals in **50 states and at least 56 countries**. Better yet, they did this without compromising their steadfast commitment to their students.

Maryville prides itself on giving learners personalized support from application through graduation, allowing them the chance to get the most from their education and maximize their return on investment. But such dedicated attention can be challenging when paired with unprecedented growth.

By partnering with Boundless Learning, Maryville added a devoted, capable support team to help guide online learners throughout their education, overcome unexpected challenges or obstacles, find preceptors and clinical locations, complete their degrees, and plan for career success.

Maryville has served learners in:



50 States



56+ Countries

In 2024 alone, Boundless Learning's student support team:

Spent an average of

100 minutes per day per advisor speaking directly with students

Sent

30k+ text messages to current and prospective learners

Supported

807 Maryville learners as they completed their programs and graduated

This level of personalized attention helps bolster retention and education outcomes by demonstrating the commitment to learner support that Maryville and Boundless Learning share. It also shows proven effectiveness for recruitment: In 2024, the enrollment services team converted **37% of all opportunities to new applicants** within just 30 days.

“Our enrollment advisors work hand in hand with our learners to explain the benefits of an education with our partners, expedite and support them through the application process, and partner with our learners post-acceptance to ensure they are prepared to be successful learners come start day.”

— Chris Heath, Director of Enrollment for Boundless Learning

Always innovating ways to streamline and improve the education experience, the Boundless Learning student support team works with learners through a variety of means including text, email, phone, and video — whatever’s most comfortable and convenient for them. Boundless Learning continues to invest in technology and tools to make communication easier for the learner with a goal of engaging in organic, robust conversations to customize and personalize their experience and educational journey.

Maryville’s commitment to learner support and career outcomes pairs perfectly with Boundless Learning’s culture of student-centered learning design and workforce-aligned innovation. The result is an empowering partnership that allows Maryville to advance its mission — and that has led to thousands of learners accomplishing their educational goals.

“We’re proud to provide a team of expert advisors who are fully committed to putting the learner at the center of everything they do daily.

As the students embark on their educational journey, our student success team is with them every step of the way to help them achieve both academic and professional growth.”



Darlene Pittman, Vice President, Global Student Success for Boundless Learning

Going further together

When learners know they're being heard and supported, they respond — both academically and personally. Here is one of the many stories about Boundless Learning's incredible support of Maryville University's online nursing students.

“I felt overwhelmed and uncertain about my ability to continue the program. When I asked [my advisor] Annie questions about dropping or withdrawing from courses after the deadline, she responded with patience, understanding, and encouragement. Annie took the time to help me reflect on my strengths and reconsider my decision. Her encouraging words and empathy empowered me to push through the semester and complete it successfully.”

— Marcel Pearson, Online Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)

Weathering challenges together

In 2020, education — like many industries — faced unexpected large-scale challenges with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent health concerns, lockdowns, and social distancing recommendations. Colleges and universities across the country found themselves underprepared for a sudden shift toward distance learning.

Maryville University wasn't among them. After nearly a decade of partnership with Boundless Learning — and with online enrollment at an all-time high and a strong digital infrastructure in place — they were prepared to face the challenge, even as unpredictable as it was.

For learners, the disruption was significantly mitigated. Campus-based students had to familiarize themselves with digital systems, but for the roughly 60% of learners already enrolled online, it was business as usual. Most importantly, Maryville was able to continue its mission to provide high-quality education through an intuitive online platform.



Building a national brand together

Maryville University has always provided world-class education, but it didn't have the world-class brand recognition to match. With Boundless Learning's marketing team, the university sought to solidify a brand that fully represented its values while differentiating it from the competition.

Together, they worked to distill Maryville's mission into a simple message that would resonate with audiences across the country:

"Let's Be Brave Together."

This mantra, which became the cornerstone of a nationwide marketing campaign for Maryville's online degree programs, represented so much about Maryville's identity: Its commitment to access and opportunity for all, its relentless dedication to learner support, its willingness to pioneer and innovate in higher education, and its position as a disruptor of the status quo.



LET'S
BE
BRAVE
TOGETHER

“Choosing to continue your education isn’t a decision people take lightly. It takes courage to commit to bettering yourself with everything else you have going on in your life. So we wanted potential learners facing that brave decision to know they’re seen — and to know that with Maryville, they’re fully supported. We know you’re brave, and we’ve got your back.”

— Tricia Drummond, Senior Director of Partnership Strategy and Engagement for Boundless Learning

The message worked. Data from Google suggests Maryville saw an immediate and permanent boost in awareness and search volume at the onset of the partnership in 2011, with numbers peaking in the years following the “Let’s Be Brave Together” campaign.*

More importantly, the message resonated with learners everywhere. Amid a sea of sameness in higher education and faced with so many choices, they saw Maryville as a unique university that would give them the support, resources, and education to achieve their goals.

*Based on data compiled by Google Trends

Being brave together

What does it mean to be brave? It's something different for every learner. But under the "Let's Be Brave Together" banner, they knew they had support to be brave and accomplish their goals on their terms.

"Being brave is just being willing to put yourself out there — taking that step toward your goal, no matter how big or small that step is. Just having the courage to pursue your dreams."

— Lexy Kaase, Online Master of Science in Nursing (MSN PMHNP)

"Being brave is not being afraid to keep going, even when you encounter struggles or hardships."

— Ashley Lewis, Online Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)

Innovating and advancing together

The relationship Maryville University and Boundless Learning share is a true partnership built around expertise, trust, care, and communication.

Members across various teams at Boundless Learning regularly collaborate with faculty members, program directors, department chairs, and university leadership to update course curriculums, innovate and build tech-based solutions, connect education with improved outcomes, and enhance the learner experience.

“The collaborative partnership with the Maryville Nursing Department has been invaluable in fostering innovation and prioritizing student success within the program. Together, we effectively address a range of student needs, including identifying candidates for DNP chairs, assisting with DNP project completion, supporting preceptor placements, and ensuring students have the information required to progress smoothly through the program.”

— Megan Prince, Director of Student Support Services
at Boundless Learning

Refining and optimizing together

One of the guiding principles of the partnership between Maryville University and Boundless Learning was ensuring Maryville could continually grow and improve its program offerings to **provide the high-value education and positive career outcomes** its learners expected.

The Boundless Learning research and insights team collaborated with Maryville faculty and administration to develop academic programs that uphold high standards of quality and relevance. Through **market research, competitor analysis, market placement strategy, and structural program design**, the team provided data-driven insights to align offerings with both student and industry needs. By benchmarking against key competitors for program effectiveness and efficiency, the team helped Maryville ensure its programs remained market-aligned and competitive — evaluating factors such as program structure, curriculum content, admission requirements, and cost.

The research and insights team also served the function of future-proofing degree and certificate offerings. Through planned auditing and optimization of program content and structure, they helped Maryville **anticipate trends and respond to market shifts**, so they could take advantage of opportunities as they appeared. This collaborative effort provided a roadmap for academic programs that ensured viability for online delivery, fulfillment of performance expectations, and scalability, enabling Maryville to continue meeting and exceeding expanding learner needs.

The team's contributions extend beyond market and programmatic research and strategy. **Maryville University believes in offering a streamlined, simplified experience outside the classroom so learners can focus on what's important: Their education.** The Boundless Learning research and insights team helps Maryville make that goal possible by providing support, advising, and administrative staff with the data and insights to inform more meaningful learner communication and to support interactions and better connect education with career outcomes.

“Our team works to refine the organization and delivery of academic programs by identifying structural inefficiencies and optimizing program sequencing to improve learner progression, reduce barriers to completion, and enhance multi-cohort course scheduling for better resource allocation.

We also provide annual updates on program-market alignment, competitive insights, and evolving job skills to ensure programs remain informed, relevant, and aligned with learner and workforce needs.”

— Andrea Marcinkus, Senior Director, Research and Insights
for Boundless Learning

Empowering potential together

Through one unified vision, the partnership between Maryville University and Boundless Learning saw the realization and modernization of Maryville's 150-year mission to innovate in higher ed and push beyond the traditional paradigm, changing countless lives along the way.

This partnership is one of many through which Boundless Learning has helped universities and organizations empower learners to maximize their potential with high-value, career-focused skills and education.

With expertise across all facets of educational technology, learning design, learner support, enrollment and retention, and marketing, Boundless Learning is equipped to help partners across fields and locations achieve their learning goals on their terms.



Want to learn more about how Boundless Learning's services and solutions can empower your organization to go further?

See what can happen by leveraging our industry expertise. Contact us at info@boundlesslearning.com to learn more.

Get in touch with us



Email: info@boundlesslearning.com

Web: boundlesslearning.com



BOUNDLESS
LEARNING™