Genio

# Florida Atlantic

## Institution wide case study

# Executive summary

- Florida Atlantic University (FAU) students using Genio Notes recorded a GPA **5.5% higher** than non-users, providing measurable evidence of academic impact.

- **Usage grew 450%** between Fall 2024 and Fall 2025, with over 1,800 student accounts claimed through Student Accessibility Services alone.

- Student outcomes were consistently strong with **100%** of learners reporting increased confidence, **97%** improved enjoyment of learning, and **86%** reduced stress.

- Florida Atlantic University (FAU) secured long-term institutional funding for Genio Notes through the **Technology Access Fee.**

- Adoption extended well beyond accessibility services, with over **100 faculty members** actively using the platform, reinforcing Genio Notes as a tool for the whole campus.

# Introduction

**Michelle Shaw** is the Director for Student Accessibility Services at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), an institution with an FTE in excess of 25,000 of whom 93% would be considered **New Majority Learners.**

With over 20 years of experience, having joined the office in 2003 and holding the position of Director since 2013, Michelle has been a strong advocate for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and extending support to all the students across her campus. This is particularly important as **24% are first-generation, 16% have English as a second language and 72% work while learning.**

Since many of her New Majority Learners are considered to be at a greater risk for dropout or failure, Michelle knew she needed to have the right support in place to enable her students to thrive.

Through collaboration with Genio, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) have equipped, empowered and encouraged their learners to own their academic journeys, with **Genio Notes users reporting a 5.5% higher GPA than non-users.**

Michelle's work has demonstrated the significant value that learning technologies such as Genio Notes can have in boosting her student's knowledge, increasing their skills and improving their confidence, securing long term funding via the **Technology Access Fee.**



***"It's like the best gift you ever could get.*** *This is a tool for student success that allows the learner to listen, participate more actively in the classroom and ultimately have a better learning experience."*

**Michelle Shaw, Director for Student Accessibility Services at Florida Atlantic University**

# **The challenge** for Florida Atlantic

In 2023, Michelle and the team at FAU were at a crossroads. They wanted to champion the principles of **Universal Design for Learning** (UDL) across campus as they knew it was vital to help all students learn in the way that works best for their individual needs.

But their methods of supporting students were either flawed, or difficult to scale.

At an institution with a large number of working students, veterans and Hispanic students with English as an additional language, they needed to extend their support beyond the Disability Services office to give them the tools they needed to be successful.

They had tried using volunteer peer notetakers but came across issues with consistency and quality. Likewise, they'd looked at technological solutions but encountered problems with accuracy and the ability to comprehend STEM classes.

Within the state of Florida, institutions are measured across a matrix of outcomes including student success, retention and graduation. As such, when Michelle and the team discovered Genio Notes, they knew they had to investigate the opportunity.

*"We're really focused on UDL and ensuring the best possible outcomes for student success, retention and graduation. As a result we're always on the look out for the newest tool to help our students and* ***we fell in love with Genio Notes as soon as we saw it"***

**- Michelle Shaw**

# Building a **business case**

Following a meeting at the **AHEAD 2023** conference, FAU began conducting an informal trial period with students, encouraging them to try Genio Notes for free to gauge an initial reaction.

***"Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive,*** *with students reporting that they use the app daily in class and really find it helpful."* **- Michelle Shaw**

Throughout that pilot period, FAU received positive feedback across the board. 266 students registered within the first 90 days, capturing over 3600 separate classes. As a result, the institution looked to purchase 200 licences via the Student Accessibility Services office.

However, with conversations progressing, Michelle started speaking with other colleagues at FAU, including her VP of Student Affairs and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Together, they saw the value in looking beyond individual interventions to serving all students with proactive, success orientated initiatives.

Having seen the impact Genio Notes could have across a broader cohort, they immediately wanted to expand institution wide.

# **Securing buy-in** for Genio Notes

In order to achieve her goals, Michelle needed to ensure there was **a consensus across the institution** around the value that Genio Notes could bring.

To do this, she enlisted key stakeholders, including the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the latter being particularly important for securing faculty buy-in.

The first meeting focused on the value Genio Notes, as part of a wider drive toward UDL, could bring to all students at FAU. Having aligned on this, as well as understanding how Genio Notes could help with student success, retention and graduation, the next step was to collaborate with the Office of Information Technology (OIT).

Gaining buy-in from these key individuals was crucial for securing support and resources while working with the OIT was essential for approving and implementing the technology solutions that FAU needed.

With all stakeholders bought into the project, the next step was to secure funding. To do so, FAU utilized a **tech fee grant process** to fund the initial purchase of Genio Notes licenses.



From there, Michelle worked closely with the Vice President for Student Affairs to secure additional funding, one third provided by the Student Accessibility Services and two thirds from Student Tech Fees.

*"We found out that for the Technology Access Fee,* ***some departments were able to kind of get a cut of the fund without having to go through writing the grants.*** *Due to the relationships we'd built, and the value Genio Notes has had, the committee agreed to give us a lump sum every year to do our renewals for our institution wide technology."*

**- Michelle Shaw**

Michelle and the Genio team then worked closely together to ensure a contract could be agreed and students could realize the value of the technology newly available to them.

Since then, the value of the collaboration has been effectively demonstrated resulting in FAU's Genio Notes funding now being sourced entirely from the Technology Access Fee, overseen by key stakeholders including the Associate Director of Information Technology, Chair of the Distance Learning Committee and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

# **Implementing** Genio Notes

When it came to implementing Genio Notes, FAU's primary challenges were related to **navigating internal contracting processes.** This required a lot of back and forth which the Genio team supported on throughout.

At the same time, there were state regulations to which FAU had to comply regarding technology and student data. Ensuring that all parties supplied the relevant information made this process significantly smoother.

To support adoption, Michelle ran a "roadshow" across multiple departments, introducing them to Genio Notes, sharing the positive potential impact and building an environment of collaboration so strong that she received several requests from faculty who wanted a licence for themselves. To this date, over 10% of Genio Notes users are faculty members.

***"Building strong partnerships*** *with key stakeholders, including faculty, IT, and administration was so important. As was emphasizing the benefits of UDL for all students, not just those with disabilities."* **- Michelle Shaw**

Equally important was student activation and engagement. To ensure learners across the institution knew about their new support offering, Michelle ran a coordinated campaign across every touchpoint available to her.

Digitally, she listed Genio Notes within Canvas, created a pop-up on the MyFAU login portal, and ran targeted email campaigns each semester, including dedicated outreach to incoming students and their parents.

In person, she took Genio Notes on the road. Michelle utilized TV screens around campus, flyers distributed at SOAR orientation days, and a live demonstration of the Quiz Me feature at orientation tables for 4,500 new students to spread the word.

She also partnered with University Advising to push tool notifications directly through their channels and ran dedicated workshops for the 9,000-strong online learning community.

As a result of her hard work, utilization of Genio Notes steadily increased, **culminating in a 450% rise** from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025.



# **What impact has Genio Notes had** at Florida Atlantic University?

In the state of Florida, there is a matrix by which institutions are held to account and funding is provided. Student success is a fundamental tenet of this matrix, particularly time to graduation, meaning demonstrating the impact of Genio Notes was vital.

- Genio Notes saw a **96.2% utilization rate** among Student Accessibility Services as over 1800 learner accounts were claimed. Across the entire Fall 2025 undergraduate cohort, the average GPA of a Genio Notes user was **5.5% higher** than that of a non Genio Notes user
- Additionally, in excess of **100 faculty members** actively engaged with the platform, using it to share lectures with students who missed classes and to support various academic activities.
- Engagement has grown ever since launch, with **100%** of students saying they had increased confidence, **97%** of students enjoying their learning and **86%** students experiencing reduced stress.

> *"So far, I've found it works better for me in classes where I'm having trouble keeping up with the lecturer because now I can go back and re-listen.* ***I love Genio Notes."***
>
> **- Omaris Rojas, Student at Florida Atlantic University**

> ***"Using Genio Notes has given me more confidence while studying,*** *because it alleviates the stress and anxiety of having missed something that the professor talked about, and I didn't get a chance to write down in my notes. So now when I go back to study, I can see everything that was discussed in the PowerPoint. and I can know and be confident in my work that I did not miss anything. And in turn, definitely has been bringing up my grades."*
>
> **- Maya Hochberg, Student at Florida Atlantic University**

# The future for **Genio Notes and Florida Atlantic University**

The collaboration between Genio Notes and Florida Atlantic University is only just getting started.

***"The results we've seen with Genio Notes have exceeded our expectations.*** *Not only are we seeing improved academic performance, but students report feeling more confident and engaged in their learning."*

**- Michelle Shaw**

To improve moving forward, Michelle and the team are working with the university's internal marketing function to promote Genio Notes to more students and staff across the campus. This includes incorporating Genio Notes into the institution's "We Do, I Need, We Lead" initiative which focuses on leadership development sessions and opportunities to build connections with community partners.

They also plan to create a website for Genio Notes that will have information about the app and a way for students or staff to sign up for an account. This will go alongside a series of presentations about Genio Notes' features and how it can improve students' learning and retention of information.

Additionally, flyers have been created and are being handout out during SOAR's (Orientation Days for all students), their open house days and throughout the "Need Help Just Ask Campaign" which runs through the first week of each semester.

Michelle and the FAU team have also partnered with Genio Notes on the Skills Partnership initiative to test new tools and product functionality as well as provide important insights and feedback to help shape the future product roadmap and improve skills for success within their student population.

**Want to see what Genio Notes could do for your institution?**

**▶ Book a call**

