TERRADOTTA

BOSTON COLLEGE



BOSTON COLLEGE BUILDS A STRONGER FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH TERRA DOTTA



Summary

NAME:
Boston College

LOCATION:
Chestnut Hill, MA

 # OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

- 9,600+ total undergraduate students
- 5,000+ graduate students
- 80+ countries and 50 states across the student body

For Boston College, international partnerships are central to how the university advances its global mission. As a Jesuit, Catholic research university, Boston College has intentionally built relationships with institutions that share its educational and social mission. Those connections include Jesuit universities around the world, members of the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU), international nonprofits, and other organizations working across education, research, culture, and migration.

Managing those relationships, however, requires a lot of effort. For Bryan Fleming, Executive Director of Global Engagement at Boston College, the goal was to create a more connected way to understand each partnership.

Building infrastructure for a growing global strategy

Boston College's Office of Global Engagement oversees the university's international strategy, including study abroad and international students and scholars. Fleming spends much of his time developing and maintaining partnerships, visiting institutions, managing agreements, and helping turn strategic relationships into meaningful collaboration.

1 place

for agreements, partner information, activities, and institutional history

Connected workflows

from partnership proposal through review, approval, and signing

Greater visibility

for campus stakeholders to discover partnerships and understand what's happening around the world



The vision was to give campus partners a clear way to propose new agreements, provide the information needed for review, and move proposals through an established approval process.

Opportunities

9
schools and colleges

300+
student-run clubs and cultural organizations

26
club sports teams

150+
international partnerships across 30 countries

When Fleming joined the university, there wasn't a centralized system for managing international agreements. Different schools and departments maintained their own records, and information about partnerships could be spread across spreadsheets, email, and individual institutional knowledge.

Over time, the Office of Global Engagement began creating a more centralized approach. That work gave Boston College a stronger foundation for its international strategy, but it also highlighted an opportunity: create a system that could connect the administrative side of agreements with the broader relationship surrounding them.

"We wanted a good way to track agreements from beginning to end," says Fleming. Boston College wanted to understand where the agreement stood, who needed to review it, when it would expire, and what would happen between the two institutions after the agreement was signed.

From agreement management to relationship management

Boston College had previously implemented a system to store and manage agreements, but Fleming was seeking a more comprehensive approach. The vision was to give campus partners a clear way to propose new agreements, provide the information needed for review, and move proposals through an established approval process. Once an agreement was signed, the same system could serve as the central record of the partnership.

Instead of searching through folders and email threads to reconstruct a relationship, the team could open a partner profile and see the agreement alongside the activity surrounding it. "I wanted a place where I could go to a partner and say, here's the agreement. It's good for another couple of years. Here's what we've done, here's who has visited, and here are the events we've had," Fleming explains.

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Designing workflows around how Boston College works



Partnership management also presented an opportunity to make collaboration across campus more transparent. Previously, a faculty member interested in establishing a relationship with another institution might start with an email. That could lead to additional questions, follow-up messages, internal reviews, and eventually a formal agreement process.

Boston College wanted to replace that informal starting point with a more consistent workflow. The vision is straightforward: a faculty member or department can initiate a proposal, provide the relevant information, and start a defined review process. From there, the appropriate offices can review the proposal, provide comments, approve or decline it, and move the agreement toward signing.

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For stakeholders involved in the process, that creates visibility into where an agreement stands.
Legal and accreditation teams, which participate in the review process for certain agreements, have already seen the workflow in action. “They think it’s great,” says Fleming. “They can see all the information about the proposal, look at the agreement, approve it, deny it, or make notes. It’s straightforward.”

Boston College is continuing to test and refine the workflow, particularly the sequence of approvals, but the early experience has been positive.



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Creating a shared view of global partnerships

One of Fleming's most ambitious goals is making partnership information more visible across the university. The Partnership Management dashboard, or "Brag Page," gives Boston College a visual starting point. Users can see information about institutional partners and drill into geographic areas to discover relationships around the world.

For Fleming, that kind of visibility has value beyond reporting. "I think it looks beautiful. I'm really excited about it," Fleming adds.

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The longer-term vision is to make that information useful to people who may not work directly in global engagement. Imagine a faculty member preparing to travel to Egypt. Instead of starting with an email to ask whether Boston College has relationships there, they could explore the university's partnership information, discover an existing connection, and identify the people or activities associated with it.



That changes the role of the partnership database. It becomes not just an administrative resource, but a way for the broader university community to discover its global network. Fleming sees value in giving people enough visibility to answer basic questions for themselves. That distinction reflects an important design principle for Boston College: self-service visibility does not have to mean self-service administration.

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A foundation for better institutional memory



The implementation is also helping Boston College identify information about partnerships that it wants to capture more consistently going forward. The initial data transfer was relatively straightforward because Boston College already had core partnership information in a database. The team mapped existing fields, including agreement information, into the Partnership Management platform.

"The completeness of the profile is way better than what I had," says Fleming. The next phase is more expansive. The team has an opportunity to decide what institutional knowledge matters and how the university wants to preserve it. For Boston College, that work will continue as the team adds historical events and activities to partner profiles and develops its approach to organizing that information.

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Early adoption as a collaborative process

Boston College chose to participate as an early adopter because the team saw a strong connection between the product's direction and the university's needs. Fleming was excited to participate while the product was still developing because he saw value in helping shape something that could support the university's longer-term goals.



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As Boston College has worked through its workflows and data, the team has shared feedback with Terra Dotta. Some of that feedback has already informed product updates, while other ideas are helping guide continued refinement. For Fleming, that two-way relationship is part of the value of being an early adopter. Boston College can help articulate what a sophisticated global engagement operation needs from partnership technology, while Terra Dotta can incorporate those insights into the evolving product.

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Making room for more meaningful global engagement

Boston College is still early in its partnership management journey. The team is continuing to clean up data, build out partner profiles, refine workflows, and add historical activity. That makes this less a story about a finished transformation and more a story about building the foundation for one.

The immediate opportunity is practical: make agreements easier to propose, review, approve, and track. But the larger opportunity is strategic. By bringing agreements and partnership activity into a connected environment, Boston College creates a clearer institutional picture of its global relationships. Faculty and other stakeholders discover connections more easily. Reviewers see where agreements are in the process. Global Engagement spends less time reconstructing information from individual messages and more time engaging with the people and institutions behind that information. Perhaps most importantly, the university begins capturing the history of its partnerships in a way that isn't dependent on where a document happens to be stored or who happens to remember what happened.



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