

# ENROLLMENT MANAGER

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 1, 2020

## THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FORCED CHANGES TO THE STATEMENT OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR NACAC

John W. Dysart  
President  
THE DYSART GROUP

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has made dramatic changes to its Code of Ethics and Professional Practices after pressure from the Department of Justice. In the past, the organization had some strict rules which the DOJ found restrained trade. The previous rules contained:

- Prohibition on recruiting students who are committed to attending another 4-year institution.
- Prohibition on recruiting students who are currently enrolled at another 4-year institution.
- Prohibition on offering special perks to Early Decision applicants/matriculants.
- Colleges must not offer incentives exclusive to students applying or admitted under an Early Decision application plan.
- Colleges will not knowingly recruit or offer enrollment incentives to students who are already enrolled, registered, have declared their intent, or submitted contractual deposits to other institutions.
- May 1 is the point at which commitments to enroll become final, and colleges must respect that. The recognized exceptions are when students are admitted from a wait list, students initiate inquiries themselves, or cooperation is sought by institutions that provide transfer programs.
- Colleges must not solicit transfer applications from a previous year's applicant or prospect pool unless the students have themselves initiated a transfer inquiry or the college has verified prior to contacting the students that they are either enrolled at a college that allows transfer recruitment from other colleges or are not currently enrolled in a college.
- College choices should be informed, well-considered, and free from coercion. Students require a reasonable amount of time to identify their college choices; complete applications for admission, financial aid, and scholarships; and decide which offer of admission to accept.

ENROLLMENT MANAGER is a publication of Dwyer Education Strategies, Inc. Inquiries and comments can be mailed to [dwyereducation@aol.com](mailto:dwyereducation@aol.com). An electronic version of the newsletter is available at [www.dwyereducationstrategies.com](http://www.dwyereducationstrategies.com).

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

#### PAGE 1

The Department of Justice Forced Changes to the Statement of Good Practices for NACAC

#### PAGE 3

Addressing Student Loan Default Rates at Your Institution

#### PAGE 5

Promoting Your Brand.

#### PAGE 6

Wake Up Call

#### PAGE 7

Upcoming Conferences

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON FSC, SFI & RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED PAPER

## THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FORCED CHANGES CONTINUED:

- Once students have committed themselves to a college, other colleges must respect that choice and cease recruiting them.

The changes are going to impact the recruitment and retention landscape. What will colleges and universities do to mitigate the impact?



### Require students to submit higher enrollment deposits to secure their place in the class

Asking families to submit larger, non-refundable deposits will provide a financial disincentive for students and families to change the chosen institution late in the admission cycle. Higher deposits, however, may create a barrier for students and families with high financial need.

### Tighten restrictions on deposit refunds

Colleges and universities may make the timing and process to refund deposits less advantageous for consumers. Again, this is a tactic to provide a financial disincentive to withdraw a commitment.

Consider providing incentives to secure deposits and encourage students to follow through on their commitments.

### Offer priority course scheduling

The opportunity for better course scheduling is an attractive incentive for many students. You can not only provide more convenient schedules, dependent upon offerings, but prioritized selection of faculty.

### Demonstrate options for early completion

Course scheduling can also impact how quickly students will be able to complete their degrees. Offering scheduling opportunities for early completion will get students in the job market sooner and likely reduce indebtedness.

### Offer preferred housing placement

While it is not always possible at some colleges and universities, preferred residence hall placement can be a powerful incentive.

### Offer roommate selection priority

Some students already have preferred roommates in mind before the academic year begins. A better chance to be housed with a preferred roommate is an attractive benefit for some students.

### Actively build better relationships with admission applicants

Students are less likely to withdraw if they have established good relationships with representatives on campus, especially admission counselors.

Ensure that your counselors are using all forms of personalized communication with their admission applicants including telephone, email, text messages and social media. Personalized communication requires knowing a great deal about each applicant and referring to this knowledge when communicating.

- Intended major
- Co-curricular Interests
- Academic Support Needs
- Honors Opportunities
- Family Dynamics
- Ability to Pay
- Spiritual Expectations
- Career Objectives

## THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FORCED CHANGES CONTINUED:

### Engage parents in the communication plan

It helps to keep parents in the loop and committed to the institution. Systematic outreach is important.

- Parent Newsletter
- Letter from Faculty
- Letter from Parent
- Invitation to Visit Campus

### Create a plan for a more aggressive financial aid arms race

Financial aid offers have been used to attract students for a long time and many colleges have engaged in negotiations with students to equal or beat offers at competing institutions. Count on the use of this tactic to increase and now it will be utilized even after prospective students have deposited. Further, it will now be safe to apply it to students who are already enrolled at your institution.

### Update your retention plan

Hopefully your retention strategy already includes appropriate tracking mechanisms, active intervention and mentoring. Many schools already include strategies to address financial, academic and social challenges for currently enrolled students. Make plans now for how to address efforts by other colleges and universities to encourage your students to transfer.



The NACAC changes are going to have a material impact on recruitment and retention at most colleges and universities.

## ADDRESSING STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATES AT YOUR INSTITUTION

Alex Reinstadtler  
Vice President, Business Development  
Loan Science

Outstanding educational debt in this country exceeds \$1.5 trillion. CNBC reports that one million people default on their student loans every year. The default rate at any college or university is an important metric. High default rates can mean limits on participation in Title IV federal financial aid programs and even losing access to federal financial aid funds. What can colleges and universities do if they are faced with rising default rates?

It is critical to preface any discussion about student loan default prevention with the universal truth that the federal student loan program offers repayment options for EVERYONE. Borrowers can qualify for an income based repayment plan that has a \$0 payment and offers

**Hyatt•Fennell**  
*Executive Search*

*Serving  
Small Colleges,  
Universities  
& Non-Profits*

Marylouise Fennell  
*Partner*  
mfennell@hyatt-fennell.com  
p: 412.638.8814

Cheryl Hyatt  
*Partner*  
chhyatt@hyatt-fennell.com  
p: 724.242.0476

[www.hyatt-fennell.com](http://www.hyatt-fennell.com)

## ADDRESSING STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATES CONTINUED:

loan forgiveness after 20 years for undergrads (25 for grads). Given the payment options, why do so many borrowers default on their student loans? The answer is simple: they don't understand their options. Some borrowers are just plain angry and choose not to take action out of spite, but that's a small group.

The next logical question is why don't they know?

- The information is available in entrance counseling.
- The information is also outlined in exit counseling material.
- The loan servicers mail and email information about these programs.
- Loan servicers also call borrowers.
- Schools will also often mail and email information.

The challenge is in the borrower response to information provided. Entrance counseling can occur four or more years prior to repayment; exit loan counseling can be muddled in the fog of graduation activities or the stress of separation due to dropping out, suspension or expulsion. People, especially young people, often do not read or respond to email, robocalls or physical mail. What can be done?

Create a default prevention unit on your campus.

- Establish a goal for your default rate.
- Create a written default prevention plan.
- Make your default prevention plan a campus-wide effort. Your retention professionals, for example should be involved in any default prevention discussions.

- Update all your student loan borrower information materials to maximize effectiveness. Make sure you have a financial literacy program in place for your students.
- Consider purchasing software to track your borrowers internally. Such software is also available to electronically enable you to communicate with your borrowers utilizing mail, email and telephone outreach.

Many schools now collaborate with a partner to counsel borrowers and stem loan defaults.

- An experienced partner will be able to help you create and implement the priorities outlined above.
- The best tactic to help borrowers who run into trouble is telephone counseling. It is critical to find a partner with the ability to make LOTS of telephone calls. Call centers designed to handle only in-coming calls are not sufficient. It's a difficult task as borrowers are naturally skeptical to speak with people regarding debt, but persistence does pay off. You need a partner with the ability make *tens of thousands* of outgoing calls per month. This is where the help of a partner is beneficial.
- Search for a company able to communicate with your borrowers by email. Keep in mind, however, that the general expectation is that only 15% of the borrowers will open such emails. Further, fewer than 3% will take action as a result of opening the message.

Default prevention is important. The College Scorecard is a resource that more families are using to assess the quality of outcomes for prospective colleges and universities. Student loan repayment rates are a key statistic in the scorecard. Understanding these dynamics is important because if your default and repayment rates lag those of your competitors it creates one more reason for a student to select another school to attend.

## PROMOTING YOUR BRAND

Dr. Marylouise Fennell  
Principal  
Hyatt-Fennell

Dr. Scott D. Miller  
President  
Virginia Wesleyan University

We have written in the past about the importance of institutional branding, a factor that is especially critical these days as enrollment markets continue on their most competitive and aggressive course in history. As colleges and universities seek to differentiate themselves from their competition, a carefully constructed brand is vital to recruiting students.

Even a strong brand, however, is only as good as its effective use in the right market, at the right time, with the right strategy behind it. We offer some advice on the effective use of branding—one of the most important tools for campus recruiters.

**Protect it at all costs.** Corporate history in America is full of stories about brand damage and recovery. From the tragic Tylenol poisoning incidents to Coke reversing course on “New Coke” to Martha Stewart’s conviction, brand damage can come quickly—and take months or even years to recover fully. But your brand need not be globally famous to suffer. Especially with campus constituents, like parents, attention to details at all levels is vital. Train your staffs on effective customer service, follow-through on complaints (financial aid, residence halls are frequent targets of concern), and positive messaging internally and externally.

**Use the brand strategically.** Remember that more isn’t always better, so make sure you’re effectively reaching the right market with the right strategy. Today’s “non-traditional” (older than age 25) students are fast becoming the “traditional” ones. Therefore, your messaging to each group should be adjusted accordingly. Similarly, promotional dollars are too precious to waste on advertising or publications that do not prompt the desired results from prospective students. Once, a college’s brand was effectively displayed via printed view books. Now, everybody is online. Transfer the strength of your brand to newer, more popular platforms.

**Be authentic.** Audiences today, especially students and young alumni, believe in authenticity. If marketing strategies conflict with the mission or reputation of a brand, it will not be effective. The best marketing is synergistic with the goals and mission of an organization, product or service, as well as its brand, each reinforcing the other. For example, if your institution is known for being inclusive—a valued component of many colleges’ brands—make sure your messaging illustrates how and why this is so to differentiate you from the competition.

**Get ahead of the curve.** Every brand reaches a point where it needs to change or be refreshed, or it will stagnate and eventually decline. Even the best organizations sometimes fail to be proactive, preferring to stay with the known rather than to risk change. In today’s enrollment wars, however, complacency is not an option. Plan well in advance, and in detail, the rollout of new academic programs, facilities, or athletic teams. Don’t wait for your competition to seize the marketing initiative.

**Beware of higher education espionage.** As in the corporate world, proprietary information at colleges and universities should be guarded at all costs. The good news about an institution’s success can turn to bad once the competition jumps ahead of you with the same ideas or uses privileged information against you. For example, don’t offer up your institution as a target with your competitors if you have challenges on your own campus. You may find that they will gleefully spread the word that you’re in trouble. Likewise, a strong brand can usually withstand imitation, but that’s where effective target marketing, seizing the initiative, and guarding trade secrets become critical. Staff and faculty should be taught to be circumspect about what kinds of information they share with colleagues at other institutions. The competition is always listening....

We reiterate that while quality of educational services is always important, in marketing it’s usually better to be first, rather than to introduce a finely honed program after it has already proven successful elsewhere. Protecting and promoting your brand effectively is equally critical for long-term success in today’s supercharged enrollment markets.

## WAKE-UP CALL

John W. Dysart  
President  
THE DYSART GROUP

For many colleges and universities, it has been another rough year as hundreds failed to meet their recruitment goals. The national trends are discouraging.

- Demographics continue to be problematic and are more negatively pronounced in certain regions of the country.

The greatest declines in the number of students enrolled in college in 2019 were realized in Florida, California, Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

- College enrollments declined for the eighth consecutive year in 2019. The latest represents a drop of approximately 300,000 students in a single cycle.
- It has been predicted that college enrollments will drop by 10-15% by the end of the decade.
- Non-Hispanic White population growth is lagging behind growth among Asians, Blacks and Hispanics.

Most enrollment managers and higher education leaders are not surprised by the trends and recent outcomes. Demographic trends are not new, and many institutions have been struggling to meet their enrollment objectives for years. Meetings are being held, discussions are taking place and hands are wringing. Too often, the meeting, discussions and concern are not followed by action. For many colleges and universities, it is time to wake up and address the challenges head on.

### Invest in Your Product

While resources can be scarce for many colleges, it is always a good idea to evaluate the physical plant and identify areas in need of improvement. You might be

able to secure donors for specific physical plant enhancements.

### Reach Out to Under-Represented Populations

Introduce a plan to recruit students from under-represented populations to increase college attendance rates within the populations and to increase enrollments at your institution.

### Expand Academic and Co-Curricular Offerings

In the last six years, colleges and universities have added more than 40,000 new academic programs. While this can be effective, leaders must be careful in choosing new programs and ensure that there is a market for them. Often, academic majors and concentrations are added without sufficient research.

Offer new co-curricular options that enhance the college experience and are attractive to prospective students. Offerings such as internships, research opportunities within majors and study abroad are popular.

### New Revenue Sources

Seek new sources of revenue if your net tuition from traditional students has stagnated or declined. Colleges have introduced a number of new sources in recent years:

- Degree Completion for Adults
- Online Programs
- Increased Summer School Courses
- Hosting Summer Events on Campus
- Dual Enrollment

### Comprehensive Review of Your Current Admission and Financial Aid Operations

Reconsider all strategies and tactics within your enrollment management division and discontinue outdated measures. After the review, commit to **actually doing things differently**. This is your wake-up call.

Mark your calendar to meet with  
John Dysart, President of  
**THE DYSART GROUP**  
to discuss your enrollment and revenue  
needs at these upcoming conferences:

**The Council of Independent Colleges  
Presidents Institute**  
January 4-7, 2020  
JW Marriott Marco Island  
Marco Island, FL

**Council for Christian  
Colleges & Universities  
Annual Presidents Conference**  
January 29-31, 2020  
The Westin Washington  
Washington, DC

**The Association for Biblical  
Higher Education  
Annual Meeting**  
February 12-14, 2020  
Rosen Plaza Hotel  
Orlando, FL

**Association of Business  
Administrators of Christian Colleges  
Annual Conference**  
February 24-28, 2020  
Florida Hotel and Conference Center  
Orlando, FL

**American Council on Education  
Annual Conference**  
March 14-16, 2020  
Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina  
San Diego, CA

**THE DYSART GROUP**  
9310 Dufaux Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28278  
980-224-7327  
thedysartgroup@aol.com  
www.thedysartgroup.com

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) issued its rule regarding the parameters for payment of overtime. The rule increases the annual salary threshold for white collar exempt employees to **\$35,568 (from \$23,660)**. It's higher than the minimum proposed earlier.

All employers, including colleges and universities, must be in compliance by January 1, 2020. There are likely implications for many institutions, especially in the Admission Office. Many admission counselors are considered exempt but may not meet the minimum salary requirement for that designation.

## Website Maintenance

**PARKER**  
WEB SERVICES

Parker Web Services  
[www.parkerweb.com](http://www.parkerweb.com)  
sales@parkerweb.com

## **ENROLLMENT MANAGER**

Dwyer Education Strategies

310 S. Michigan Avenue #1912  
Chicago, IL 60604



**THE DYSART GROUP** is a higher education consulting firm specializing in enrollment management. We have provided enrollment management services to nearly 200 colleges and universities throughout the United States with extraordinary results.

### **Admissions**

We have worked collaboratively with colleges and universities to significantly grow enrollment. Our institution-specific recommendations have helped colleges and universities increase the number of admission applications as much as three-fold. Improved communication strategies and new tracking metrics have resulted in higher folder completion rates and increased the number of students accepted for admission.

### **Financial Aid/Pricing/Net Revenue**

Client institutions have been able to transform policies and practices to significantly improve financial aid operational efficiency, design better targeted institutional scholarship and grant programs, stabilize or reduce discount rates and utilize scarce institutional aid resources to specifically support recruitment and retention objectives.

[www.thedysartgroup.com](http://www.thedysartgroup.com)  
(980) 224-7327  
[thedysartgroup@aol.com](mailto:thedysartgroup@aol.com)