

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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RE-RECRUITING STOP-OUTS

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group

As colleges and universities struggle with demographic declines, there exists a significant source of prospective enrollments from students who attended college but never completed. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports that there are more than 39 million such students. Now is the time to start trying to re-enroll students your institution has lost.

- Identify students who have departed in good academic standing over the last five years.
- Aggressively contact them via telephone, email and text messaging inviting them to return.
- Demonstrate a clear path for degree attainment.
- Be willing to work with these students to settle outstanding balances.



If you do not have the time or resources for such an initiative, consider out-sourcing the project to a company experienced in working with this population

ADMISSIONS AND FACULTY COLLABORATION: A TOOL FOR ENROLLMENT SUCCESS

Tracey Dysart Ford
Vice President of University Partnerships
(South)
enrollmentFUEL

It seems no matter how large or small the university, the connection between faculty and the enrollment team is paramount. In a time when so many are questioning the value of higher education, the faculty are key to admissions and recruitment success.

While most of us understand that academic marketing and faculty interaction should be a part of the recruitment plan for graduate and adult learners, a big opportunity is missed if collaboration is not also sought for the traditional undergraduate recruitment program. Parents and students need to see the value of the education they're considering investing in, and faculty can deliver this message better than anyone.

A recent focus group study from enrollmentFUEL showed that students wanted colleges and universities to focus less on selling the experience and more on selling the education. This is relevant for juniors and seniors.

Often, students fail to self-select meeting with a faculty member during their on-campus visit and are much more likely to want to meet with a coach than with a professor. However, time with a faculty member can be a vital opportunity to tip the

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The National Association for Student Aid Administrators reports that interest rates on federal, undergraduate direct loans will increase from 3.73 percent to 4.99 percent. Graduate rates will increase from 5.28 percent to 6.54. PLUS loans will increase from 6.28 percent to 7.54 percent.

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ADMISSION AND FACULTY COLLABORATION CONTINUED:

balance and make a difference in the decision to attend.

We all know the earning potential over a lifetime for a person with a bachelor's degree is significantly more than for someone who has a high school diploma. Your faculty can and should serve as a strong resource as you make the case for their academic program's long-term ROI. Spending time with a faculty member also facilitates the development of a strong relationship between that faculty member and student before they have even enrolled. This type of early bond can be a powerful retention tool because it helps students feel like they already have a supporter on-campus and in the classroom rooting for their success.

While admission counselors provide program overviews about academic majors, it is most unlikely they can be a subject-matter expert for every major and program. Faculty are the best providers of information when it comes to the academic advantages of individual programs. They can share stories of what alumni from their program are doing today and recommend what professional organizations will be most beneficial for students to participate in as they build their resume.



Whether it be traditional undergraduate or graduate admission, faculty participation is different for each audience and at each stage of the recruitment cycle. Faculty are key to convert undergraduate students during their senior year of high school and after application submission. For graduate and adult learners, faculty are key starting with the very first inquiry. The audiences are very different, so plan accordingly to ensure your collaborative recruitment efforts with faculty go smoothly and are positioned for maximum impact.

If you recognize missed collaborative recruiting opportunities with your faculty, consider ways to address them for the next recruiting cycle and don't be surprised if the benefits far

surpass simply meeting your institution's recruitment goal. Opportunities to collaborate open the door to improved information sharing, better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of colleagues outside of your usual operational sphere, and improved outlook as each area has an opportunity to witness the passion and dedication of the other. Finally, if you are blessed to already have faculty committed to being an integral part of the recruitment process, be sure to let them know how important a role they play, and how valued and appreciated they are.

FIVE WAYS CAMPUS COMMUNITIES CAN EMBRACE BOLD CHANGE

Dr. Marylouise Fennell
Principal
Hyatt-Fennell

Dr. Scott D. Miller
President
Virginia Wesleyan University

In recent years, the traditional landscape of higher education has been repeatedly disrupted by one serious difficulty after another.

From the logistical and financial complications of safely delivering a high-quality education during the COVID-19 pandemic to fluctuating enrollment trends across many fields of study, institutions of higher education are facing not just one era-defining dilemma but a confluence of intersecting challenges.

Developing solutions for these problems will require adopting new strategies and behaviors at every level of the educational experience and reconsidering all aspects of how a meaningful education is organized, delivered, measured, and valued.

But knowing that changes are necessary and having a successful system for implementing these changes at the practical hands-on level are two very different standpoints.

Failing to achieve buy-in from critically important stakeholders in the process can lead to unnecessary slowdowns, prolonged debates, imprecise strategies, and ultimately failed attempts to achieve real change.

When that happens, institutions can become reluctant to even attempt changes in the future, instead falling back on the timeworn explanation of "we tried something like that once, but it didn't work." What's usually left out of such discussions are the reasons why a change strategy didn't work, and a comparison to the cases when it did.

FIVE WAYS CAMPUS COMMUNITIES CAN EMBRACE BOLD CHANGE CONTINUED:

Here are several ways higher education institutions can avoid similar roadblocks when implementing bold visions for change — the kind that don't just sound optimistic, but which work at the day-to-day, year-after-year level.

Acknowledge that there isn't just one answer

Often, decision-makers search for a “magic wand” solution: a single action with the power to solve a complex problem without creating additional complications. But the challenges higher education currently faces are not simple problems with one-size-fits-all solutions. Be proactive about explaining the nature of these challenges to your campus community, the reasons why a change is necessary, and the possibility that multiple approaches may need to be tried and measured to find the right fit for your particular situation. By setting everyone's expectations clearly from the outset, you can more easily cultivate a culture that is receptive to implementing and adapting to change over time.

Involve participants from all affected departments in the change planning process

From administrators and faculty to students, staff, and alumni, we all have a stake in shaping the future of higher education. But top-down decisions that leave out key stakeholders can create rifts among constituencies who would normally work well together if given the opportunity to collaborate in advance. Be sure that representatives from each demographic within your campus community who will be affected by major changes are actively involved in the planning and implementation process.

Encourage and support innovative ideas regardless of where they originate

Believing that a bold vision or an innovative idea can only come from the top levels of an organization is a sign that an organization is more concerned about hierarchy than it is about success. Sometimes the best ideas come from the least expected sources, such as a person from a completely different department than the one facing the challenge, because they can see the problem with a fresh perspective. The truth is that good ideas can come from anywhere, but they all have one thing in common: they need nurturing, support, and appreciation in order to succeed.

Celebrate all wins, big and small

If your goal is to increase overall enrollment by 10% over a five-year period, don't wait five years to celebrate all the small steps along the way. Instead, point out when even a minor goal or benchmark has been reached, and publicly acknowledge the efforts of the teams or individuals who have helped make it happen. As marathon runners know, every cheer they hear along the way helps give them the momentum they need to successfully cross the finish line.

Change is easier when it's embraced, not feared

Adopting a new way of doing things can be stressful, even under the best circumstances. In organizations where change typically means “new headaches,” that stress can be exponentially magnified. This can make people extremely resistant to incorporating new ideas and behaviors, and in some cases can even motivate them to prove that the changes “can't work” and should be abandoned altogether. To be fair, this does not mean that legitimate concerns about the potential complications of any change should be ignored. Addressing these concerns respectfully and in good faith is part of a responsible strategy and can help institutions avoid attempting to implement flawed plans whose shortcomings could have been avoided with broader inclusion and evaluation during the planning stages. But at the same time, “change” should not be synonymous with “worry.” For a bold vision to take root and lead to lasting changes across higher education, those affected must see that change not as a burden, but as an opportunity to achieve even greater outcomes.

Dr. Scott D. Miller is President of Virginia Wesleyan University, Virginia Beach, VA. Previously, he was President of Bethany College, Wesley College, and Lincoln Memorial University. He is Chair of the Board of Directors of Academic Search, Inc.

Dr. Marylouise Fennell, RSM, a former president of Carlow University, is senior counsel for the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and principal of Hyatt Fennell, a higher education search firm.

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Dwyer Education Strategies

195 North Harbor Dr. #4701
Chicago, IL 60601



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

We have worked collaboratively with colleges and universities to significantly grow enrollment. Our institution-specific recommendations have helped 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. New student enrollments have grown by as much as 70% in a single cycle while discount rates have been controlled. Proven strategies have increased retention rates by as much as 7% in one year.

thedysartgroup.com
(312) 888-3199
thedysartgroup@gmail.com