

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS: A RECORD-BREAKING TRAJECTORY

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group

Six years ago, *Enrollment Manager* featured the awe-inspiring transformation of Virginia Wesleyan from an aspiring local college to an inspiring international university, highlighting it as one of the most remarkable shifts of the decade. The article encouraged readers to keep an eye on Virginia Wesleyan's trajectory in the years to come. Today, in 2023, the university's journey has indeed been nothing short of amazing. Led by President Scott Miller, a staunch advocate of The Dysart Group model, and Vice President for Enrollment Heather Campbell, the institution has just concluded a record-breaking year following the challenging pandemic period.

VWU witnessed an impressive surge in its traditional program recruiting cycle ending on August 31. Inquiries increased by 32 percent, applications by 54 percent, acceptances by 35 percent, and new student enrollments by 28 percent while maintaining a strong 71 percent acceptance rate. The university's success stands as a testament to effective leadership and enrollment strategies.

With future projections promising even more growth, Virginia Wesleyan's plan encompasses all seven components of the Dysart Model (see companion column by Drs. Miller and Sanders) focusing strongly

on its primary budget driver: traditional undergraduate enrollment.

Here are the main drivers of the model's success at Virginia Wesleyan University.

A Transformative Journey

Virginia Wesleyan's metamorphosis from college to university began six years ago, a move that stirred considerable attention within a contested higher education market. The transformational shift aimed to elevate the institution's status, expand academic offerings, and strengthen its position in the competitive landscape. The strategic vision, inspired by The Dysart Group model, set the stage for the university's remarkable trajectory, led by the visionaries President Miller and VP Campbell.

Overcoming Pandemic Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic tested the resilience of educational institutions worldwide, and Virginia Wesleyan was no exception. However, the university's leadership, armed with insights from The Dysart Group model, responded swiftly and effectively. With adaptable strategies in place, they navigated the uncertain terrain and emerged from the pandemic stronger than ever before.

Record-Breaking Performance

The collective efforts of President Miller, Vice President Campbell, and the entire Virginia Wesleyan community bore fruit as they celebrated

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 1

Virginia Wesleyan University Soars to New Heights: A Record-Breaking Trajectory

PAGE 3

The Dysart Model: A Seven Part Model for Success

PAGE 4

Clinton College Defies the Enrollment Cliff and Continues Growth

PAGE 5

Emory & Henry College Enrolls Largest Number of Undergraduate Students in Nearly 20 Years

**The Three Year
Pause on Federal
Student Loan
Payments is Set
to End in
October**

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VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS CONTINUED:

a record-breaking year post-pandemic. With innovative outreach initiatives, enhanced student support services, and a focus on experiential learning opportunities, the university attracted a surge of new and returning students.

Embracing the Dysart Model

The Dysart Model, a comprehensive framework designed by The Dysart Group, encompasses seven vital components crucial for institutional success. Virginia Wesleyan's resounding achievements can be attributed to its commitment to embracing each element of this model:

- **Visionary Leadership:** President Scott Miller's visionary leadership and adherence to The Dysart Group model have been instrumental in driving Virginia Wesleyan's transformation and growth.
- **Data-Informed Decision-Making:** Utilizing data insights, the university made informed decisions that strategically aligned its academic offerings and student services with market demand.
- **Innovative Marketing and Recruitment:** Heather Campbell's strategic enrollment management approach, rooted in The Dysart Group model, empowered Virginia Wesleyan to revamp its marketing and recruitment strategies, effectively reaching out to potential students and showcasing the institution's unique strengths.
- **Retention Initiatives:** Recognizing the significance of student retention, the university implemented targeted support programs and resources to ensure students' success and persistence.
- **Financial Aid Strategies:** Virginia Wesleyan tactfully employed financial aid strategies, making education accessible and affordable to a diverse range of students.

- **Capital Investment:** With prudent financial planning and investment in campus infrastructure, the university enhanced its learning environment, attracting students seeking a holistic educational experience.
- **Continuous Assessment and Improvement:** The culture of continuous assessment and improvement fostered within the institution allowed for the adaptation of best practices, ensuring the university's sustained growth.

Future Projections and Prospects

Virginia Wesleyan's trajectory appears even more promising. With the strategic vision set by President Scott Miller and Heather Campbell's enrollment expertise, the university is poised for further expansion. Emphasizing traditional undergraduate enrollment as a primary budget driver, the institution aims to continually strengthen its academic programs, invest in student support initiatives, and expand its reach to new markets.

Student Type	2015	2023
Undergrads	1,441	1,676
Online	0	1,021
Lifelong Learning	31	1,583
VWU Global	0	122
Graduate	0	115
Grand Total	1,472	4,517

(Enrollment Comparison 2015 versus 2023)

Virginia Wesleyan University's journey from an aspiring local college to an inspiring international university and its subsequent remarkable trajectory is a testament to the transformative power of visionary leadership and effective enrollment management strategies. Guided by The Dysart Group model, President Scott Miller and VP Heather Campbell have paved the way for sustained success, breaking records post-pandemic and positioning the institution for continued growth in the years to come. As we witness this remarkable story unfold, it serves as an inspiration to other higher education institutions to embrace innovation and adaptability as they navigate the ever-evolving landscape of academia.

THE DYSART MODEL: A SEVEN PART MODEL FOR SUCCESS

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An accompanying feature underscores the remarkable success of implementing a comprehensive enrollment model despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. This feature not only highlights the immediate benefits of the model's implementation, which has led to a significant surge in student enrollment, but also emphasizes its enduring advantages. Much credit is attributed to the strategic application of John Dysart, president of The Dysart Group of Chicago, and his proven seven-part enrollment model of success. This model, developed over three decades, has established itself as a robust framework for attracting and retaining diverse student populations.

Traditional Undergraduate

At the heart of the enrollment model, the traditional undergraduate program focuses on high school graduates seeking a comprehensive on-campus educational experience. This segment encompasses the largest student population and revenue source, offering a broad array of academic disciplines and extracurricular opportunities.

Traditional Transfers

The second facet caters to transfer students aiming to seamlessly continue their educational journey. By offering a smooth transition process and tailored support services, institutions welcome students from other colleges who seek a fresh start or specialized programs.

Evening/Weekend/Adult

Providing flexible learning options for non-traditional students, including working professionals and individuals

with family commitments, the evening and weekend programs accommodate diverse learners' schedules. This approach draws a varied group of learners eager to pursue higher education on their own terms.

Online

The online program extends the reach of institutions beyond geographical confines, enabling students from different regions and time zones to access quality education remotely. With a robust online infrastructure, institutions ensure a seamless virtual learning experience for students worldwide.

Graduate

Catering to students pursuing advanced degrees, graduate programs offer specialized training and research opportunities. These programs respond to the growing demand for advanced education in various fields, enhancing institutions' reputation as academic centers of excellence.

Dual Enrollment

An integral component of the model, early enrollment initiatives attract high-achieving high school students eager to begin their college education ahead of time. These academically motivated individuals benefit from advanced coursework and immersive experiences, setting the stage for a successful college journey.

Continuing Education/Workforce Development

Nurturing a commitment to lifelong learning, continuing education and workforce development programs provide professional development opportunities for working adults. These programs enhance employability, empowering students to remain adaptable and competitive in their careers.

Through these seven interconnected components, institutions have established comprehensive and inclusive enrollment models that appeal to a wide spectrum of learners. The post-pandemic period has illuminated the resilience of this approach, validating its effectiveness in attracting and retaining students even in challenging circumstances.

As the trajectory of enrollment success is traced, it becomes evident that John Dysart's expertise and guidance have played a pivotal role in shaping and

THE DYSART MODEL CONTINUED:

refining this model over the years. His commitment to fostering a diverse and thriving academic community has yielded tangible results, positioning institutions as noteworthy examples in higher education enrollment strategies.

In conclusion, the enduring seven-part enrollment model of success has demonstrated its efficacy both before and during the pandemic. It is also durable, meaning that a fluctuation in any one area can be offset by higher success in another. With its adaptability and emphasis on meeting the diverse needs of learners, institutions continue to flourish while upholding their dedication to educational excellence.

Thanks to John Dysart's visionary leadership and the unwavering dedication of the higher education community, institutions are poised to shape the future of higher education for years to come.

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CLINTON COLLEGE DEFIES ENROLLMENT CLIFF AND CONTINUES GROWTH

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group

Clinton College has overcome demographic declines to grow enrollment, while most other colleges and universities have stagnated or right sized under the current challenging market conditions.

The institution has effectively invested in programming and the physical plant under the leadership of Dr. Lester A. McCorn. Recent innovation and investment have made the institution more attractive to prospective

students and supported the institutional focus on Scholarship, Social Change, Spirituality and Service.

- The College expanded academic offerings with its new Clinton College Global initiative designed to provide 100% online offerings in accelerated and flexible formats.
- The College introduced a Bachelor of Science in Nursing this year.
- Construction has been completed on the new Academic Center for Excellence. The 7,178 square foot facility includes classrooms, offices, conference spaces, a choir room, a writing lab and the new nursing lab.

Additional improvements have been made to the admission and financial aid operations. The more aggressive approach to enrollment management enabled the College to show growth during the first year of implementation.

- Admission Applications have increased by 33%.
- The number of students living in the residence halls has increased by 20%.
- Total enrollment is up by 6% compared to last year.

Clinton College continues to change and evolve to meet the needs of students in the 21st century.



Dr. Lester McCorn, President Clinton College

EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE ENROLLS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NEARLY 20 YEARS

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group

Emory & Henry College increased its student population more than 2% by enrolling the largest number of undergraduate students in nearly 20 years. The total enrollment continues the remarkable growth at the institution over the last three years. The growth has occurred while increasing diversity.

The College continues its emphasis on an enrollment management plan that emphasizes communication with prospective students and a financial aid operation that provides access and affordability.

Under the leadership of Dr. John Wells, the institution has made significant enhancements to the physical plant, co-curricular activities and academic programming.



Dr. John Wells, President Emory & Henry College

- The total number of students living in the residence halls grew by 5% this year with introduction of a new apartment complex to house 96 students. Students residing in the new facility enjoy private patios or balconies and impressive amenities.
- The move to NCAA Division II athletics has enhanced the profile of the College.

- A new, hybrid MBA program was launched this year.
- A new School of Nursing has been introduced.
- New degree offerings in Clinical Mental Health and Addiction Counseling
- The College established a new Center for Outdoor Studies.
- The College invested in new Centers for Student Success and Career and Professional Development.
- Emory & Henry built a new multi-sport complex for track and field, soccer and lacrosse.
- The commitment to infrastructure and student development has resulted in 95% of the graduates at Emory & Henry College employed or pursuing graduate studies.

The College has contributed significantly to the economic development of the local area. A recent economic impact study demonstrated \$96 million in support of the surrounding region.

Emory & Henry College has successfully shown that a state-of-the-art recruitment and financial aid operation combined with investments in academic programming, co-curricular offerings, the physical plant and student outcomes can fuel significant growth even with economic downturns and demographic challenges.

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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THE DYSART GROUP is a higher education consulting firm specializing in enrollment management. We have provided consultation services to more than 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.

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