

A Self-Assessment on Your Readiness to Optimize the Fall 2021 Recruitment Cycle



Have you determined how you will offer courses in Fall 2021 and what makes that great?

Students have been on a roller coaster ride since March, and they are seeking clarity on how you offer courses – online, in person, flexible, omni – and how you make those courses great learning experiences for them. Be transparent with your students on what you offer and why.



Have you defined your desired student populations?

By knowing your desired student populations, you can define what you offer, why it is important to them and why your institution is the right fit for them. It is unlikely for even the wealthiest institution to be all things to all students; what makes you a good fit for your students?



Are you clear and transparent about finances?

Colleges have been deemed unaffordable and finances have been challenging for a long while, but now we have the most challenging unemployment environment in 100 years and the associated impact on state budget allocations. Students know this and they want to spend their time applying to schools that they know they can afford. What can you offer, and if a student's situation changes, how do you fill the gap? Being clear on how you will articulate your approach to financial aid and being authentic in the real costs will help move students through the admissions funnel.



Do you have sensible processes and timelines (for the student as well as the institution)?

Students are short on time and getting used to Amazon-level customer services. The one-click purchase is possible and students want that ease in every purchase decision. Students don't want to answer the same question multiple times or have a fragmented admissions-enrollment process. Reviewing processes and timelines to make the process seamless and relevant will build students' confidence that you are the right choice for them.



Are you tracking how prospective students engage with your outreach and changing your messaging based on student behaviors?

By understanding open rates, click-through rates, and how fast students respond to your outreach, you will understand what an effective message for your desired student must look like. The more effective you are in communicating to compel action, the less effort that your team will have to expend on crafting communication and the more time you can spend moving your students to enrollment. Rethinking your communication strategy – types of information, frequency, channel – based on student behaviors increases the likelihood that they will actually respond versus tuning out. There is no need to send the same message multiple times. There is a huge need to send the right message to the right student at the right time.



Do you have a coordinated plan of who communicates different types of messages/information with students?

A presidential/provost/chancellor update signals that the campus leadership is engaged and focused. However, this does not mean that students are seeking information and guidance from these individuals. COVID has created a new pipeline of communication from campus leadership. Providing students direct, easy and quick access to professional staff becomes ever more important as students make decisions on their next steps. Knowing who is responsible for providing just-in-time updates to students will ease the staff workload, as well as ensure that they are aware of directives going out to students.