LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

MOTIVATE

STUDENTS TO ENROLL AND GRADUATE
A USER’S GUIDE TO STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

As anxious as a student might seem to engage in his or her courses, sometimes that just doesn't happen. Students drop out before each term’s start date, or even well into a program, for a variety of reasons. While some are beyond the control of the institution, there are some things schools can do to ensure students who enroll actually start, and those who start, are retained.

Let’s explore ways technology and data can drive communication and outreach strategies to reinforce the student/school relationship, providing the necessary information, encouragement and motivation from start to finish.
TODAY’S DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION

Flexible scheduling and the use of technology-driven innovation have opened up doors to students who may not otherwise have had a choice to pursue their degrees. Today, we see a much more diversified student population.

While the days of the traditional fresh-out-of-high-school student have not gone away, teenagers now can find the 32 year-old single mother sitting across the room. The career changing accountant who always wanted to go into marketing can work on a group project alongside the returning hero service member working to assimilate to the civilian world. The son of the blue collar sheet metal worker now is found collaborating with the C-Level Business Women on their power-point presentation for their 6th week Human Capital Management class presentation.

Of course, with this fantastic shift in access, it’s never been more important to evolve the industry’s best practices when it comes to enrolling and retaining such a diverse group of learners.
STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

STUDENT TRENDS

Understanding and navigating through current enrollment and retention trends can help you better implement necessary strategies to keep students motivated.

The following figures come from the higher education marketing group Classes and Careers, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and consulting firm Noel-Levitz.

Enrollment Projections

- Between 2011 and 2021, undergraduate enrollment is expected to increase to 20.3 million students.
- Our nation continues to show positive enrollment growth, but a slower growth rate of increase than we have seen in recent years.

Retention Data

- Among full-time, first-time students who enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting institution in 2010, about 79 percent returned to 4-year institutions and 60 percent to 2-year institutions in the following fall.
- The retention rate for 2-year institutions was highest at private for-profit institutions (67 percent), followed by private nonprofit institutions (61 percent) and public institutions (59 percent).
- More than one-third of all undergraduates are college transfer students—they started at one institution and, for whatever reason, have moved on to the next. That amounts to millions of college students transferring each year.
ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

DID YOU KNOW?

- Based on our research, almost 60% of students actually apply within 4 weeks of starting to research their options.
- Approximately 80% of prospective students who inquired about a school but did not enroll indicate that they intend to go back to school in the near future.

So, what does this mean? It means that quick, relevant responses while education is top-of-mind for students can be just the ticket to getting students to take that next step in the enrollment process. It also means that just because a student doesn’t immediately enroll, there is still a significant chance that he or she will at some point.
TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS CAN HELP HESITANT STUDENTS BUILD THE CONFIDENCE TO KEEP GOING.

ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING 101

Be Proactive:

• Send relevant and customized messages in a well-thought-out order.
• Use a variety of channels to give students the opportunity to connect with you in different ways (e.g., video chats and live orientations can be especially effective for hesitant students with an online modality).
• Be available and responsive at all times, retuning emails and voicemails right away.
• Get to know your prospective students beyond their responses on an inquiry form.
• Keep in contact with those prospects who don’t initially enroll.

Connect Students to the Right Resources From the Get-Go:

• Put students in touch with a coach, advisor or faculty member as soon as possible.
• Offer up existing students and alumni as advocates.
• Make your website user-friendly so they can find information without calling.
• Have academic program answers readily available at the front-end (e.g., an admissions rep should know how many courses are required, book fees and more).

Prepare Students for What’s to Come:

• Expose students to courses prior to enrollment.
• Communicate clear expectations about the process, timeline and what is required of them.
ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

During that all-important window between enroll and start, it is important that you keep the channels of communication open and active in order to create a meaningful dialog and relationship between your school and your (soon-to-be) students. An operational hiccup or unresponsive rep can turn off a student very quickly.

We recommend creating a disciplined strategy to ensure consistent communication.
ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

WHAT ARE YOUR CORE COMPETENCIES?

Assessing where you should dedicate your internal resources in the enrollment process and where expert third-party sources can help will likely save you time and money. Consider the following:

Managing Student Data:
- CRM technology that uses the most effective contact strategies can help you reach prospective students, log conversations and establish next steps.

Qualifying & Transferring Candidates:
- Customizable scripts can help you verify that prospects meet minimum qualifications via a simple qualifying conversation, or you can conduct a more in-depth discussion.

Nurturing Prospective Student Relationships:
- The appropriate channel, message and frequency can help you keep in touch with prospective students on an ongoing basis.

CONNECTING WITH AN EXPERT THIRD PARTY CAN PROVIDE YOUR TEAM WITH GREATER INSIGHT.
According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 34 million Americans over 25 years old have some college credits but haven’t received a diploma.

College drop-out data from Classes and Careers tells us that:

• 40% of students who enroll in college will not earn a degree
• 53% of students at public institutions drop out
• 64% of students going to a non-profit drop out
• 25% of students leaving college are freshmen

College transfer data from Noel-Levitz indicates that:

• More than 37% transfer during their second year of college, yet many (22%) find themselves transferring even later, during the fourth or sometimes fifth years.
• Forty-three percent transfer from a four-year campus to a two-year college, a trend that may surprise many who are just now beginning to pay attention to this group of students.
Be Proactive:
- Leverage data collected during the enrollment stage to better understand any risk factors that might deter a student from staying engaged and retained.
- Check in on students regularly, and assess whether or not there are issues you can help resolve.
- Monitor student progress in each course and track milestones that are not met.
- Analyze student survey responses and act.

Connect Students with a Continual Support System:
- Align students with a relevant faculty member before starting courses.
- Assign a point of contact (coach, advisor, faculty) who is responsible for maintaining a relationship and ensuring a positive experience, especially within the first year or term (can be evaluated based on the tipping point for drop outs).
- Build a sense of community (i.e. connect students with similar interests).
- Make sure advising offices are readily available and responsive.

Engage Students:
- Implement action plans to help students stay on track.
- Make technology intuitive so students can easily pay bills, find grades and more.
- Make sure the courses and non-course interactions are social.
WHAT ARE YOUR CORE COMPETENCIES?

Believe it or not, retention begins during enrollment. Once you have invested the time, money and resources it takes to enroll a student, you want that relationship to last, and you want that student to keep moving forward to graduation.

One way to do that is to identify important student milestones and build a dialog communication strategy to help maintain a connection with your students, keep them motivated, celebrate successes and prevent students from becoming disengaged or discouraged.

Success Coaching

- Helping a student to set realistic academic goals from week to week, term to term and year to year, and supporting them in the accomplishment of those goals, means that students are ready and prepared for the next phase of life and career. It also means you can increase your retention and graduation rates.

Dialog Communications

- Communication is the foundation of a good retention strategy. By establishing a pattern of two-way communication with students, they know where to turn when they have questions or issues arise, and you likely already know when and how to deal with such obstacles.
CONCLUSION

The most forward thinkers in higher ed are focused not only on winning searches and keywords to drive inquiries, but also on looking at the entire lifecycle of the student, providing support and motivation from start to finish. At every touch point, technology and big data can help you more effectively enroll and retain your students.

Summary Success Factors:

• Know your student before they know you.
• Ask the right questions.
• Set the proper expectations.
• Clarify cost and time commitments.
• Share your success stories.
• Deliver timely interaction from classmates, coaches, mentors, faculty and staff.
• Use multiple communication channels to stay connected.
• Focus on graduation from the beginning.
• Challenge the student to paint his/her own vision of success and revisit it often.
• Limit clutter that inhibits learning.
• Provide coaching and mentoring.
• Never, ever give up on an inquiry, instead be sure to time your strategy right.
• Never, ever give up on a student.

Helix Education can help you achieve these goals and as a result, enroll and retain a greater number of students with successful outcomes.
HELIX EDUCATION ENROLL AND RETAIN SOLUTIONS

At Helix Education, we can help you motivate prospects to enroll and keep students moving forward to graduation. Through technology and data, we can help you develop the communication and outreach strategies that enable you to serve the needs of the typical 18-year-old college freshman, the 32-year-old single mother, the career changing accountant, the returning hero service member, the son of the blue collar sheet metal worker and the C-Level Business Woman.

We are committed to helping colleges and universities make significant, lasting changes that will improve completion rates, affordability and effectiveness. Our comprehensive and collaborative approach will enhance how your students, faculty and technology interact, from the moment students enroll in your programs throughout the learning experience.

For more information, please visit www.helixeducation.com.