SMITHSON* UNIVERSITY
Application Growth Boosts Diversity

HAMPSTEAD* UNIVERSITY
Enrollment Goes from Good to Great

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Application Growth Boosts Diversity

* All profiled institutions have been changed to a pseudonym to preserve anonymity.
Institution Type
Selective private, not-for-profit

Student Population
5,000–10,000

Location
West; adjacent to a large city

Other Profile Specifications
- Majority undergraduate
- Moderate research activity
- Doctoral university

MARGATE University
One-Year
IMPACT spotlight

28%
ENROLLMENT INCREASE

22%
NET TUITION REVENUE INCREASE

24pt
SAT SCORE INCREASE
In December 2013 (Figure 1), Margate became increasingly alarmed about what appeared to be a significant shortfall in applications for its 2014 entering class.

Brought in to investigate, Enrollment Services analysts determined that the apparent shortfall was due to glitches in Margate’s implementation of new third-party software. In fact, applications were coming in; they just weren’t appearing in Margate’s system. As a result, the school was significantly behind schedule in making offers to applicants, which put them at a competitive disadvantage relative to other schools in their market.

To expedite admission offers, Enrollment Services helped Margate implement a system whereby applicants would be evaluated based on their self-reported grades—an approach that would eliminate delays stemming from transcript collection and verification.

Success of an improved workaround leads to a revised admission strategy.
Seeing how much easier this approach made the admissions process, Margate decided to apply it in a more planned and intentional fashion for their 2015 entering class as well. Margate hoped that this new approach would help them get admission offers out more quickly. As shown below (Figure 2), Margate managed to shift its admission offers forward by several weeks. An additional benefit of the approach was a reduced administrative burden on the admission office, as it could now limit grade verification to enrolling students (as opposed to the entire admit pool).

加速的录取决定带来了广泛改善的入读表现。

**FIGURE 2**
Admits by Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013</th>
<th>---</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Accelerated offers drove broad improvements in enrollment performance.
Margate saw broad improvement in enrollment performance in 2015, with historic growth in enrollment and net tuition revenue, coupled with significantly higher average SAT scores for its freshman class.

Even considering that 2014 was an anomaly (due to the software glitch mentioned above), Margate’s 2015 performance represented a marked improvement on past steady-state performance (Figure 3).

Margate was able to achieve these gains even though the number of applicants was about the same each year, evidence of the benefits of expediting admission offers.

**FIGURE 3**
Net Tuition Revenue for Entering Classes and Average SAT Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLS</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE SAT SCORES</td>
<td>1046</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANCASTER STATE

University

Institution Type
Regional, public

Student Population
>15,000

Location
Midwest, urban

Other Profile Specifications
Access-focused
One-Year Spotlight

Ancaster State University

Increasing Results: Case Study Spotlight

- 67% increase in applications
- 10% increase in enrollment
- 0 pt decrease in average ACT score
Not long ago, Ancaster State University enjoyed consistently strong enrollment results, with several consecutive years of double-digit growth. Recently, however, the proven methods it relied on for years stopped working. From 2010–2013, the application rate increased by 12%, 15%, 16%, and 10% respectively. Ancaster actually saw a 7% net decrease in enrollment in 2014 however—attributable in part to intensified competition in its region.

A legacy recruitment strategy led to diminishing returns.

Ancaster faced serious constraints in terms of its ability to respond. Most notably, it had very little wiggle room on a discount rate, as it was already one of the lowest-priced institutions in the state.

With Enrollment Services’ assistance, Ancaster unlocked significant untapped potential for application growth from legacy markets and historically under-recruited geographies and demographics.
Ancaster’s approach was twofold: activating the application as a marketing and customer service platform to convert inquiries into completed applications, and ensuring more complete capture of attractive candidates in its list sourcing efforts.

The animating principle underlying Ancaster State’s work with Enrollment Services was to grow applications from attractive candidates to such an extent that missing enrollment targets would be all but impossible—even factoring in the high level of uncertainty around yield in its region.

Ancaster State advanced this aim, in part, through an application process that reinforced core marketing messages at each step of the way and made completing the application as hassle-free as possible for students (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**
Staged Approach to Enrollment Growth

- **Personalized** student-centered messaging front and center at every stage of application
- **Extensive** user-experience testing resulting in a process that is easy and intuitive for applicants
- **Wraparound** email, paper, and web-based communications to maximize completion rates
Enrollment Services also helped Ancaster identify a large pool of prospects to feed into its improved application process.

The result was record-breaking application growth—an increase of 67% in 2015, relative to the preceding year (Figure 2).

Ancaster State University's surge in applications for 2015 translated into a 61% increase in the number of students admitted as compared with the preceding year. This increase resulted in a 10% boost in enrollment (Figure 3). Critically, this result was achieved without any reduction in academic standards—the average freshman-class ACT score actually increased slightly in 2015.

Massive application growth creates an ample margin of safety from missing enrollment targets—making it all but impossible.

The sophisticated data collection and tracking system that Enrollment Services implemented at Ancaster delivered additional benefits, particularly an ability to understand the impact of their recruiting efforts at a granular level. For example, the system revealed the consistent impact that application marketing had across diverse prospect groups, including the institution’s organic inquiry pool, students newly targeted by Enrollment Services, and names previously purchased by Ancaster.
CASE STUDY

SMITHSON University

Institution Type
- Highly selective liberal arts
- Private, not-for-profit

Student Population
<5,000

Location
Northeast

Other Profile Specifications
- Common-App exclusive
- 17% minority students

3

Application Growth Boosts Diversity
One-Year Impact Spotlight

39% increase in minority-student deposits

10% increase in total student enrollment

47pt increase in average SAT score
APPLICATION GROWTH BOOSTS Diversity

Smithson University had a long history of enrolling well-rounded classes—a trend they were eager to continue.

But to do so they needed to grow their applicant pool within select demographics.

One key problem was the volatility of its application pipeline, which showed double-digit percentage swings from year to year (Figure 1). This was due in part to an increasingly competitive marketplace, including more aggressive recruitment efforts by Smithson’s main competitor. However, without a steady and predictable volume of applications, Smithson struggled to grow its pool of minority candidates.

Class-shaping ambitions foiled by volatility in application volume.
Smithson’s excellent reputation in the marketplace meant that there were plenty of inquiries from interested students. The problem lay in converting these warm leads into applications, and this is where Smithson chose to focus its efforts.

Smithson targeted three categories of “warm leads” (Figure 2) with an intensive and comprehensively reworked outreach program aimed at converting initial student interest into applications.

Since Smithson is a Common Application-exclusive school, it could not leverage features of the application itself—format, messaging, copy, graphics, etc.—as a marketing tool, as schools with custom applications can.

**FIGURE 2**
Intensified Outreach Focuses

- **Inquiry Pool**
  Responded to initial outreach

- **“Suspects”**
  Non-responders but still a strong match

- **Common App Starters**
  Started but did not complete an application
However, with Enrollment Services’ assistance, Smithson was able to craft and execute a comprehensive and intensive “wraparound” campaign of communications related to the application.

Outreach was optimized across dozens of parameters, including:

- Mobile-first design
- Proven message formats
- Proven message content
- Proven communications timing
- Optimized communications cadence
- Optimized frequency of communications
- Optimized graphic presentation
- Expert copywriting
- Maximal parental engagement
- Themes that resonate
- Engaging content gives
- Assured message delivery
- Immediate response to queries
- Painstaking quality assurance
- Real-time progress tracking
- A frictionless student experience

Sample elements from the campaign included reminder emails and personalized student landing pages.

The campaign also factored in approaches aimed at compensating for a relatively late (October) launch.

Application growth translates into class-shaping success for Smithson.

Smithson’s intensified outreach generated a 12% increase in applications in 2015. Within that increase, black applicants showed disproportionate growth, while applications from Hispanic students were approximately in line with overall increases. The downstream impact was even more striking, with deposits from black and Hispanic candidates growing by 27% and 64%, respectively (Figure 3). A control group analysis suggested that much of the increase was attributable specifically to the modified outreach approach, which produced a 14.7% higher response rate. Also worth noting is the fact that Smithson’s modified approach proved to be strikingly effective in tapping latent demand in distant markets—68% of its increase in deposits came from students more than 500 miles away.

**FIGURE 3**

Application and Deposit Increases from 2014 to 2015, by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Deposits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HAMPSTEAD University

Institution Type
Regional, public

Student Population
10,000–15,000

Location
Midwest; small town

Other Profile Specifications
- Master’s university
- Very high proportion undergraduate
- Inclusive, higher transfer-in
Enrollment Goes from Good to Great
One-Year IMPACT spotlight

31% ENROLLMENT INCREASE

0.6pt INCREASE IN ACT SCORE
But Hampstead’s new president saw significant opportunity for improvement and decided to leverage cutting edge recruitment practices that had been used at other institutions to grow enrollment.

The new president identified several best practices for Hampstead to adopt:

- Optimize applications for mobile devices
- Ensure collection of parent email addresses
- Perfect mix of digital and paper outreach
- Execute four or more search launches per year

Prior to starting its partnership with Enrollment Services, Hampstead University was seeing stable enrollment growth, in spite of stiff regional competition.
• Make the financial aid model more transparent
• Perform A/B split tests on more than 150 parameters each year
• Verify email addresses to ensure marketing emails reach their intended recipients
• Determine optimal number of marketing emails to send to prospective students
• Survey students to determine their enrollment intentions

The president engaged Enrollment Services to implement these enrollment initiatives. To get stakeholders on board with the changes, the first year of the new initiatives was funded by alumni donations solicited specifically for that purpose.

Hampstead’s work with Enrollment Services began with a targeting initiative (Figure 1) that identified a large number of new and highly attractive students in Hampstead’s legacy markets—students who would have been overlooked previously. The initiative also surfaced excellent prospects in historically under-targeted geographical regions.

Hampstead’s revised approach to recruitment included a deep reworking of its application, turning it from a mere information-gathering tool into a marketing and customer service platform.

Hampstead’s improved targeting and application marketing initiatives drove a 90% increase in application volume from 2014 to 2015 (Figure 2).

A key factor behind this increase in applications was mobile optimization of Hampstead’s application. (More than 900 students submitted an application on a mobile device in 2015.)

New initiatives drove massive application increases from new and legacy markets.
Another important part of the story is that Hampstead was able to generate growth from both legacy markets and previously untapped geographies. Approximately 80% of Hampstead’s enrollment growth in 2015 came from areas where it was historically strong. The remaining 20% originated from new markets (states from which Hampstead enrolled no students in 2014).

In its first year of working with Enrollment Services, Hampstead drove a 31% increase in enrollment (Figure 3). Half of students enrolling in 2015 were recruited through Enrollment Services’ application marketing program.

Enrollment grew by almost a third while maintaining quality.

It’s important to note that these initiatives led not only to an increase in Hampstead’s enrollment numbers, but also to a 0.6-point increase in average ACT scores. Not content to rest on its laurels, Hampstead is partnering with Enrollment Services to determine any potential vulnerabilities by surveying students who applied but did not enroll.

Hampstead continues to work with Enrollment Services and is expanding its recruiting efforts to include marketing to high school sophomores and juniors. These efforts promise to build an even more robust application pipeline in 2017 and beyond.

Enrollment Goes from Good to Great
Rapidly Changing Student Behavior
The number of students searching and applying for school via mobile platforms increased by 54% from 2010 to 2015 at Enrollment Services partner institutions. Today, one in seven applications is submitted via mobile.

Growing Consumerism
From 2006 to 2015, the number of students applying to six or more schools increased by 19%.

Unfavorable Demographics
The growth rate of U.S. high school graduates from 2002 to 2011 was just 1.6%. From 2012 to 2013, the rate fell to 0%.
Data and Technology in the Service of Principled Growth

**Strategic Pipeline Cultivation**
Ensuring high school students engaged at earliest opportunity

**Frictionless Application Processes**
User-tested, web-based, and mobile service portals

**Financial Aid Optimization**
Proprietary data assets and methodologies

**Media-Channel Optimization**
Data-driven, millennial-focused communication plans

**Data-Driven Yield Management**
Analytically guided triage of admission efforts

**Day 1 Retention-Risk Alerts**
Proprietary risk profiles built on pre-enrollment data

100+ Data and analytics professionals on staff

300+ A/B tests performed annually

Average Results Across Surveyed Enrollment Services Partner Schools

*Outsized, Consistent, Repeatable Impact*

**8%**
Average annual increase in net tuition revenue for Enrollment Services’ growth-focused schools
n=90

**6.6pt**
Average annual increase in SAT scores for Enrollment Services’ quality-focused schools
n=45

To learn more about how Enrollment Services helps its partners achieve desired enrollment outcomes, visit eab.com/services/enrollment-services.
EAB in Brief

- Start with best practices research
  - Research Forums for presidents, provosts, chief business officers, and key academic and administrative leaders
  - At the core of all we do
  - Peer-tested best practices research
  - Answers to the most pressing issues

- Then hardwire those insights into your organization using our technology & services

  **Enrollment Management**
  Our Enrollment Services division provides data-driven undergraduate and graduate solutions that target qualified prospective students; build relationships throughout the search, application, and yield process; and optimize financial aid resources.

  **Student Success**
  Members of the Student Success Collaborative use research, consulting, and an enterprise-wide student success management system to help students persist, graduate, and succeed.

  **Growth and Academic Operations**
  Our Academic Performance Solutions group partners with university academic and business leaders to help make smart resource trade-offs, improve academic efficiency, and grow academic program revenues.

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1.2B+ Student interactions annually

1M+ Individuals on our student success management system

1,200+ Institutions we are proud to serve

1 Goal: Make education smarter

Delivering Results: Case Study Spotlight
Let us help you find your best practices today.

eab.com/services/enrollment-services