Student Recruitment Team Report
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues in developing this report. Our team started with a main idea and through innovation, persistence, research, many conversations and emails, produced a report that covers every area of the college. Thank-you to my team members for everything you have contributed.

Sponsor: Jane Johnson
Facilitator: Faith Brenner
Team Leader: Cathy Marx
Team Members:
  Catherine Sebok
  Lori McKenzie
  Mary Donovan
  Patrick Rickert
  Ron Wilson
  Saul Solano
  Steve Austin
Our Mission

Identify recruitment activities already established, and initiate new or innovative recruitment ideas that target the educational needs of the community.
Summary

On September 8, 2007, the Institutional Effectiveness Group approved a proposal to establish a Recruitment Team in response to a “think-tank” session discussing student recruitment. Our team was formed to identify existing recruitment activities, figure out where we have gaps, identify our target audience, develop a means to recruit them, and fill their educational needs.

Our team began by gathering information throughout Richland of recruitment activities already in progress. We researched demographics specific to Richland and then throughout the United States, compared our data, analyzed our ideas, and came up with recommendations.

Our criterion was, there is no such thing as a bad idea as long as it doesn’t cost any, or very little money. Our ideas needed to focus on little or no additional support personnel, and everyone in the college had to benefit in some way. We needed to use the resources we already have avoiding “re-inventing the wheel”, and finally those people in positions higher than ours had to like it.

Our first task was to figure out what everyone was doing in all the divisions within the college to recruit students. The realization was, some divisions were doing a lot, and others not so much. The bottom line is, we need a formal recruitment plan with a master calendar to track and benchmark all recruitment activities. Without this document our successes or our failures cannot be tracked to shape our ideas for the future.

Our next question was who are our recruiters? The answer, our own college employees are our best assets at recruiting. Our team came up with a new twist on an old
idea. Give everyone in the college business cards to hand out to potential students and reward those employees who do.

Researching our target population to recruit was our next area of concern. Research revealed that parents have the most influence on their sons or daughters choice of higher education. Our target audience was parents. Our recommendation is to send out letters to parents with customized folders of information specific to their interest, including financial advantages, quality of education and transfer information. A unified look to all of our recruitment information would go well in customized folders. Our parents are also potential students who could return to finish up a degree or enroll in lifelong learning skills. They are also our business owners who have employees that could benefit from specific training offered by Richland.

Our faculty team members were beginning to warm up to the idea of recruitment and came forth with the inside scoop on getting potential students attention. Give hands on demonstrations of our technical and occupational programs at strategic location as well as “open houses” at Richland. Go to the area schools with Power Point presentations and CD’s of current events. Invite high school counselors to come to “open house” to see what we are doing. Educate them about programs so they can channel that information to potential students.

Our next ideas came from a field trip to Kaskaskia College; their student recruitment plan was amazing. They used dynamic students in creative ways to promote enrollment. We propose to modify the current Student Ambassador Program to include the recipients of the RCC Trustees’ Scholarship forming a “Student Recruitment Team”. This is an excellent way to communicate to potential students, use our “Team” to go
along on recruitment activities to answer questions and talk to students about their
Richland educational experience, and how Richland can help them obtain their goals.

Our last focus was on technology, we felt like we were preaching to the choir, but
all research leads to technology, and how we need to be proactive in e-recruiting.
Potential students want to complete a financial aid estimator, use a tuition cost calculator,
fill out forms and submit them on line, IM a counselor or student recruiter, view a virtual
tour, email a faculty member, and read a profile or blog. We must continue to move
forward in technology or we will lose out on recruiting our techno savvy students.

This concludes our recommendations summary. We feel like we have covered or
touched every area of the college. No one escaped our scrutiny. Involving everyone in the
recruitment process is a daunting task. Not everyone is a recruiter or even wants to be
involved. We all have choices as Richland employees, our most important
recommendation is for everyone to get involved, stay involved, go forth and recruit!
Report

Our goal has been to identify recruitment activities already established, and initiate new or innovative recruitment ideas that target the educational needs of the community. In our team effort to establish a recruitment plan we focused on several areas and ideas.

There is a need to develop a coordinated student recruitment plan that incorporates all the recruiting efforts in each department within the college. A plan that incorporates these activities would allow for consistent tracking, reporting, and benchmarking of recruitment efforts. A coordinated plan also decreases the amount of duplication efforts and increases the consistency of efforts used to recruit students. This proposed plan also allows for better communication between departments, resulting in possible combined recruitment activities.

College wide many recruitment activities are taking place within each division year round. To further our recruitment plan initiative, we propose a master calendar that incorporates this information. This would be a "living document" that allows for easy access and planning. It would be available online to give everyone the opportunity to plan for upcoming events. It would facilitate planning, and encourage communication between departments. It would give us the ability to analyze and review our strengths and weaknesses in the recruitment process, as well as make informed recommendations for
improvement. Because of the scope and detailed of this project, we suggest this master calendar and recruitment policy be given “action project” priority.

Our next strategy involves all Richland employees. Many of our employees are involved in community activities, recreational sports, and charitable events. Because of this personal interaction with many individuals, we consider employees a rich source for recruitment possibilities. In an effort to encourage everyone to be involved in the recruitment process, we have designed a business card that could be distributed to all employees. Each card would be tri-fold with Richland information on the front, on the back would show the phone number of each administrative assistant. The bottom part of the card would be a tear off section with the name and contact information of the potential student. It would also include the name of the employee that referred that person. This tear off section would be turned into Student Services for follow-up. The name of the contributing employee would go to the Employee Appreciation Taskforce for follow up recognition. As a result, every employee becomes more involved in the recruitment process, and is rewarded for their efforts.

We would also like to encourage and recognize Richland Community College employees who display yard signs at designated times. Marketing used this idea in the past with good success; we think it is worthwhile to consider it again. Any employee who chooses to display a sign should be recognized by the Employee Appreciation Taskforce. The more we involve our employees in the recruiting process, the more students we can recruit. Our own employees are our greatest source of information, not only inside the college, but in every area outside as well.
Our Richland Community College instructors are also a valuable source of information. They recognize that hands-on demonstrations are an effective way to spark interest and enthusiasm in a topic or future career. To further this initiative, we would like to increase the exposure of our technical and occupational programs by utilizing hands-on demonstrations at strategic locations at least two times a year or more. Some locations to consider are Hickory Point Mall, ADM, Tate and Lyle, Caterpillar, Decatur Memorial Hospital, St. Mary’s Hospital, and the Civic Center. These demonstrations can also be used for area high school career nights as a recruitment tool. Once again, the employees who participate in these recruiting demonstrations should be recognized by the Employee Appreciation Taskforce.

Our RCC research indicates that 31% (Fall 05) of students enroll at Richland because of their parents influence. With parental influence being the largest deciding factor, followed by friends (22%) then students seeking a degree (10%) we concluded that we need to actively target parents of high school students. We recommend starting high school recruitment early by sending out a letter to all sophomore parents informing them about the advantages of enrolling at Richland Community College. The Marketing Department needs to develop and provide a consistent appearance for all recruiting folders to be sent and distributed to parents and potential students. These folders need to contain information specific to parents’ interest, including financial information, transfer opportunities, scholarships, and quality of education. By educating parents, we also encourage the opportunity for them to return and finish up a degree, or enroll in a program of personal interest. We need to take the necessary steps to instill in parents that Richland is the preferred choice for higher education for them, as well as their children.
It is important to continue the recruiting efforts by developing and implementing the use of recruiting information and college information on CD's or power point presentations. These tools will provide consistent images and messages that can be customized for area high schools with photographs and information of graduates from that high school. The hands on demonstrations previously discussed in this report can also be recorded and used on the recruitment CD or power point presentation.

Another strategy is to create a Summer Scholarship program to encourage high school students to enroll at Richland Community College. This program would provide free college credit for high school students. Students accepted into the Summer Scholarship program receive the first 4 hours of credit free of charge (for 100 level classes or above). The program would be available to high school students who are entering their junior or senior year of high school. Students may select any course that Richland Community College offers in their normal summer schedule.

A simple idea to recruit students that can be implemented quickly and easily would be to mail out an RCC Letter of Acceptance in January or February, to all graduating high school and GED students. Receiving a letter of acceptance and information regarding enrollment might be enough to capture some students who may be undecided, or whose plans have recently changed. This is another area where a customized folder of specific information would be useful.

Another consideration presented by AQIP Team #11 and reinforced by our visit to Kaskaskia College was the importance of high school counselor relations with Richland Community College. We need to make sure these counselors have updated information
that they are presenting to their high school students. Recruitment CD's or Power Point presentations are a perfect tool to use with high school counselors. Marketing should create a short, informational CD or Power Point featuring new program information, current events, student happenings, and general college updates. We can update and distribute this information to area high school counselors at least three times a year, or as the need arises. In the fall of 2003, counselors from the area schools were invited to come to Richland to participate in round robin workshops sponsored by the occupational and technical departments. This gave the counselors the opportunity to learn more about our occupational and technical departments, and also opened the door for better communication and facilitated discussions concerning duel credit initiatives’. We should consider re-instituting the round-robin open house demonstrations, and expand the idea by incorporating an “open-house” for area high school counselors. The concept is to educate our high school counselors, so they in turn can channel students toward specific programs of interest. It might also be a good idea to invite the newly formed Decatur Area Education Coalition. This is a good opportunity for them to see many of our educational programs, and promote conversation about what Richland Community College can do in a combined effort with the Education Coalition and high school counselors to raise the standards of education in our community.

Therefore our next area of interest is actively involving our vast pool of dynamic students in the recruitment process. The current Student Ambassadors program could be modified to include the recipients of the RCC Trustees’ Scholarships, to form a foundation of students for a Student Recruitment Program. According to our statistics, 22% of students enroll at Richland because their friends are attending. We need to
investigate how to incorporate these students in recruitment activities at the area high schools. During these activities student recruiters can talk to potential students about what Richland is doing for them, and answer questions about how to become a Richland student. Nothing speaks better than a student who is happy at Richland, and is willing to talk to other students about their educational experience. Student Recruiters can also be used for direct contact by phone or e-mail to potential students. They can share personal RCC experiences, and positive information regarding RCC to encourage students to enroll, they could also share personal statement letters with their home high school students. Any request for information that comes to into RCC can be sent out by Student Recruiters. They can also send customized follow-up cards/phone calls to students who have called RCC requesting information or have visited the RCC website. Student Recruiters would be expected to participate in community events and represent Richland Community College to the community. Student Ambassadors/Recruiters will benefit by receiving free tuition and also having a great addition to their personal resume.

Our last proposal deals with technology. In a world of Facebook, MySpace and instant messaging, our prospective students are social networking more than ever. A 2006 survey of 1,000 college bound juniors sponsored by Noel-Levitz titled “Engaging the Social Networking Generation” reveals that 43 percent of those students have created a profile on a college or university website. Of those students who haven’t yet created such a site, 46 percent indicated they would do so. E-mail and the internet remain the baseline for e-recruitment efforts but with increasing technology, we have the ability to use instant messaging and cell phones. Roughly 82% of the prospective college students indicated they would consider reading and responding to instant messaging from a college
representative. This is a clear indication of how important it is in the recruitment process to be proactive in our use of available technology. The RCC webpage needs to address what students are looking for on college websites. Students are looking for the following information:

- Complete a financial aid estimator to learn how much money they might receive in aid or scholarships.
- Complete a tuition cost calculator to see how much school will cost.
- Request a campus visit by completing a form.
- Complete an admissions application, and submit it online.
- Instant message an admissions counselor or student worker.
- Complete a form to RSVP for a campus event.
- Submit a form online to receive more information in the mail or by e-mail.
- View a virtual tour.
- E-mail a faculty member.
- Read a profile of a faculty member and a blog written by them.

The Recruitment Team suggests that RCC update the website to include this basic information.
Recommendations of the Recruitment Team

1. Develop a strategic coordinated recruitment plan that incorporates recruitment activities of all the divisions within the college.

2. Form a Master Calendar with all recruitment activities posted online for easy access.

3. Get all employees involved in the recruitment process by making available business cards they can distribute to prospective students that includes an incentive for their recruitment efforts.

4. Actively involve parents in the recruitment process by mailing out letters of acceptance before senior graduation. Send out a custom folder of information to all sophomore parents informing them of the advantages of enrolling at Richland.

5. Increase the exposure of our technical and occupational programs by utilizing hands-on demonstrations at strategic locations at least two or more times a year. Reinstatethe round robin workshops and open houses sponsored by the occupational and technical departments.

6. Design distinct uniform recruitment materials for first time enrolling students, transfer students, and parents.

7. Develop a CD or Power Point presentation containing recruitment information customizable to be used in a variety of recruitment opportunities.
• Create a Summer Scholarship program to encourage high school students to enroll at Richland Community College. The program would offer 4 hours of credit, free of charge, for all 100 level classes or above.

• Enhance high school counselor relationship by sending updated information by way of Power Point or CDs with current program information, current events, and student happenings.

• Actively involve our students in the recruitment process by modifying the Student Ambassadors program to include the recipients' of the RCC Trustees' Scholarship forming a Student Recruitment Team.

• Update the RCC webpage to include features requested most often by potential students.
Conclusion

At this time we are continuing to gather information from all the divisions within the college concerning their student recruitment activities. This information will go into the Master Calendar already in progress. This is the starting point for a formal Recruitment Plan. Our business cards are ready to go to Graphics for a prototype and then approval by the Quality Council. We would like for Marketing to help us develop and launch this idea, a target time would be Spring Convocation. I have talked to the Employee Appreciation Taskforce about this idea and we would like for this effort to be integrated into the existing Employee Recognition Awards.

Our team has worked on many ideas to increase our enrollment. We have attempted to create a recruitment process that incorporates every employee within the college. We also focused our efforts on a “low budget” recruitment plan that would not require adding additional employees by maximizing existing resources. Through the proposed coordinated student recruitment plan we expect developing processes that will sustain and grow student enrollment and the continued success of Richland Community College.
RESEARCH
Who/What Influences Student's Decision to Attend RCC?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 05</th>
<th>Fall 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need Class for Degree</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Schedule</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reasons</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advertising Seen, Heard, or Read About RCC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 05</th>
<th>Fall 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Ad</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Fair</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Rep</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Presentation</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Saw/Heard</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Marketing Outreach Research Information (CARS)

Who Are Richland's Graduates?

Degrees Awarded in 2004-05 to Richland Graduates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Fall 05</th>
<th>Fall 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Degrees</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational/Technical Degrees</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies Degrees</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificates</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Certificates</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Gender*

- Men: 197
- Women: 337

By Ethnic Origin*

- Asian: 2
- American Indian: 0
- Black/Non-Hispanic: 61
- Hispanic: 6
- White/Non-Hispanic: 465
- Other: 0

*Unduplicated Numbers

What Do Graduates Say About Their College Experience?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Overall Academic Experience</th>
<th>Non-Major Classes</th>
<th>Classes in Major Field</th>
<th>Academic Services Used</th>
<th>Support Services Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2005 Graduate Survey

Four-Year Colleges Where Most of Our Students Have Transcripts Sent*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Sent %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bradley University</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Illinois University</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville College</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State University</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millikin University</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millikin-PACE</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois University-C</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois University-E</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois/Springfield</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Illinois University</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transcript Request Information from CARS

What Percent of Our Occupational Graduates Are Employed?*

Occupational Follow-up Survey

Fiscal 2004 Percentage Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Field</th>
<th>Employed %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAS Automotive Technology</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAS Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAS Mechanical Technology</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAS eBusiness/eCommerce</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Pharmacy Technician</td>
<td>NSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Senior Automotive Repair Tech</td>
<td>NSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Auto Brake, Steering, Suspension</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Automotive Service Specialist</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NSR - No Surveys Returned

Richland Community College
Board of Trustees

Randy Prince – Chairman
Rita Colee – Vice Chairman
Tim Dudley – Secretary
Carol Chiligiris
Julie Curry
Rev. Wayne Dunning
Dr. Larry Osborne
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President
Dr. Gayle Saunders
Richland Community College
Core Values

Commitment
We are dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities we serve.

Respect
We recognize the expertise of all members of the College community and encourage individual contribution.

Excellence
We strive to develop and pursue higher standards.

Accountability
We assume and demonstrate responsibility for our actions.

Diversity
We believe that our similarities and differences are opportunities for establishing a common bond and strengthening the College.
Engaging the “Social Networking” Generation
How to Talk to Today’s College-Bound Juniors and Seniors

The Internet has changed the college recruitment landscape in nearly a blink of an eye. Many of the rules of enrollment have been rewritten or even discarded as prospective students turn to the Web as their source of college information.

Initially, campus Web sites were little more than online viewbooks. Students, however, began demanding more personalization from college and university Web sites—a reflection of the growing personalization on the Web. Last year, Noel-Levitz, James Tower, and the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA) chronicled these expectations and experiences in the E-Expectations: Class of 2006™ report, Navigating Toward E-Recruitment: Ten Revelations About Interacting With College-Bound High School Students, based on a nationwide survey of 1,000 high school juniors.

This year’s E-Expectations: Class of 2007 study reveals just how quickly these expectations are evolving. Personalization is just the beginning. More and more, the Internet is serving as a social network for high school students. From blogs to MySpace pages to podcasts, today’s college-bound students connect, communicate, and create collectively online. This trend toward online social networks presents dramatic implications—and new possibilities—for e-recruitment.

This report presents some of the findings from this new survey of 1,000 college-bound high school juniors from throughout the United States.
Here's what I want to do on your site...

A real-time financial aid estimator is the most critical function to offer at your Web site, as shown by the responses below. Here are the top activities students said they would like to complete on college Web sites:

1. Complete a financial aid estimator form (88%)
2. Complete a tuition cost calculator form (83%)
3. Complete an admissions application online (81%)
4. Request a campus visit by completing a form (81%)
5. Exchange instant messages with an admissions counselor or student worker (72%)
6. Complete a form to RSVP for a campus event (72%)
7. Inquire online (70%)
8. Read profiles of faculty (64%)
9. E-mail a faculty member (64%)
10. Read a blog written by a member of the faculty (64%)
11. Read profiles of current students (63%)
12. Read a blog written by a current student (63%)
13. View a virtual tour (63%)
14. Personalize a Web site (62%)
15. E-mail current students from the site (61%)

My e-network

Students are also expressing a desire for "social computing"—the application of computer technology to facilitate collaboration. As discussed in the 2006 edition of The Horizon Report, students are already familiar with and using these types of tools: sites such as Flickr for photo sharing, instant messaging (IM) software for immediate communication, and other applications that help them connect online socially with their peers.\(^1\)

Personalization and social scorecard: Rate your institution

Personalization on the Web has increased dramatically, and Internet users have come to expect this type of customization. Students are looking for one-to-one connections, to feel that the impersonal is personal. Web sites, e-mails, and other e-communication tools can help facilitate that personalization. While many campuses have gotten on board with this trend, colleges and universities could still do a better job in this arena in the eyes of the class of 2007.

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But many students now also seek more than just personalization. They want online social networks, through applications and communication streams that pull them into a virtual community. Many students desire this type of online socialization as they conduct their college searches.

The following scorecards show how many students had completed these activities and how many would if they could. Is your campus e-communications program offering what students want?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Have done this</th>
<th>Have not</th>
<th>Would if they could</th>
<th>Offered by your campus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalized Web page</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized viewbook PDF</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online chat on Web site</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaged an admissions counselor/student worker</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailed current students from the site</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prospective students also seek more information on students and faculty through online profiles and new avenues such as blogs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Have done this</th>
<th>Have not</th>
<th>Would if they could</th>
<th>Offered by your campus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read profiles of current students</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read profiles of alumni</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a blog written by a current student</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read a blog written by a faculty member</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribed to an RSS or XML feed</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a profile page for prospective students like MySpace or Live Journal</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the blog and RSS responses, even though many students had not done these activities, there were still quite a few who would like to if they could. In the case of RSS and XML feeds, the lower "would if I could" response may be due to students being unfamiliar with these applications. However, RSS and XML are great ways for campuses to deliver blog content to students without students having to seek it out.
Students are also showing interest in new technologies such as podcasts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Have done this</th>
<th>Have not</th>
<th>Would if they could</th>
<th>Offered by your campus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downloaded a podcast</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloaded a video podcast</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewed a virtual tour</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As The Horizon Report notes, because of the explosion in popularity of the iPod, many high school students already possess the technology to download podcasts and video podcasts.2

**Text messaging is the new e-mail**

Every year, the Beloit College Mindset List describes the cultural touchstones of entering college freshmen. This year’s list included this entry: “Text messaging is their e-mail.”3

Students increasingly use technologies such as instant messaging and cell phones to send messages or even get online. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents said they own a cell phone, and 64% said they use instant messaging.

A growing number of students appear open to recruitment efforts used through these media:

- **Would you consider sending an IM to a college rep through the school’s site?** Yes 71%
- **Would you consider reading/responding to an IM from a college rep if he or she noted you were online?** Yes 82%
- **Would you consider taking a call on your cell from a college representative?** Yes 59%
- **Would you consider accepting a text message from a college rep?** Yes 49%

Cell phones in particular are important to note, as cell phone technology is advancing rapidly and offering users an increasing number of communication options: Web browsing, e-mail, text messaging, and phone calls. Colleges and universities that have not already begun to explore cell phones in their recruitment efforts may not be able to wait much longer.

**Maintain a multimedia mix**

While students appear to be open to multiple communication avenues, what communications do they prefer? Are they interested in print materials? Can schools only send e-mails to them? The survey used forced pair questions to uncover some of these communication preferences.

---

2 The Horizon Report, 12


4 Seventy-two percent (72%) of students noted that their cell phones could receive text messages.
One of the most pressing questions for campus marketing and recruitment professionals is: can we switch from print to e-communications? When asked to choose between the Web and printed brochures, here is how students responded:

- I would rather look at a Web site than read brochures sent in the mail: 56%
- I would rather read brochures sent in the mail than look at a Web site: 44%

While the majority showed a preference for Web pages over brochure pages, there is still a strong desire to receive information in the mail:

- I would like to receive information in the mail about a school on my list: 64%
- I would like to receive e-mail messages from people at a school on my list: 36%

Face-to-face contact is also important. Students expressed a strong preference for visiting campus and talking in person to students and staff:

- I prefer to go to the campus and talk with people to learn about the school: 63%
- I like seeing information in the mail, online, and in e-mail messages about schools on my list: 37%

---

Keep talking to me

Naturally, students want to receive information about your campus when they are beginning their searches. But they also want to continue communicating throughout the recruitment process. We asked students about the kinds of communications they prefer and when they prefer them. In every case, the majority of students wanted to engage in these communications throughout the funnel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Before applying</th>
<th>After applying</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sending a brochure or letter to me in the mail</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending me an invitation to visit campus</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailing me general information about the school</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailing me a personalized PDF brochure</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about academics</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about financing and scholarships</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about student life and activities</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about athletic programs</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting me to participate in an online chat session</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging with a representative from school</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Recruit my family

While students are forming new social networks online, their most immediate social network still plays a big role in their decision: their families.

When asked how involved their parents or family were in the college research and application process, 61% said their parents or family were helping with “some of the research and paperwork,” while 6% said their parents or family were doing “most” of the research and paperwork. Seventy percent (70%) also said their parents or family were using the Internet to research these schools. Finally, the vast majority of respondents said their parents/family had visited a college campus with them (51%) or thought that they would (42%).

Given the high rate of parental/familial involvement in the college decision process, campuses should be actively recruiting parents of students, not just the students themselves.

Bye-bye dial up

When students go online, the majority of them now use broadband connections. More than three-quarters (78%) said they access the Web through some form of high-speed connection. This is a key trend, because faster connection speeds pave the way for more elaborate content options. Audio and video are no longer time-consuming forms of online content considered taboo during the dial-up era.

Eighty-three percent (83%) also reported that they go online most often from home, with 12% mentioning high school as their preferred Internet surfing spot. This means that most visits to college Web sites are happening at home, with parents or family nearby or even reading along.

Six strategies to take away

What implications does this research have for campus e-recruitment programs? Here are six strategies to help campuses stay ahead of the e-communications curve.

1) Make e-recruitment a social experience.

Personalization is now a key strategy for any e-recruitment communication program. But more than personalization, students are looking for socialization.

Campuses should definitely explore options such as blogs and instant messaging, and even campus-specific social networking pages. Why? Because the “authentic voices” of your students, faculty, staff, and alumni are important and compelling.

2) Expand e-recruitment beyond e-mail and Web pages.

Students are using an increasing array of media to communicate and receive information. E-mail and Web pages are still very important and probably the anchor of any e-recruitment program. But tools such as instant messaging, online chats, podcasts, or virtual tours can greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of e-recruitment.

Cell phones are also another avenue campuses need to use. More and more students have their own cell phones, and many are open to receiving calls and text messages. Plus, as cell
phones become increasingly powerful and versatile, students will use them for activities such as Web surfing and playing audio files.

3) Remember the power of print and personal contact.
While more students expressed a preference for Web pages over printed brochures, they also strongly preferred receiving information by mail to e-mail. Communication programs should still have a mixture of e-communications and print materials in order to reach the greatest range of students.
Likewise, students expressed a 2:1 preference for visiting campuses in person versus receiving information by mail or electronically. E-communications should give students a taste of campus life and encourage them to check out the campus themselves.

4) Give students the information they want as soon as they want it.
This may seem somewhat obvious, but many campus Web sites and communication programs forget this simple principle. Web pages should have quick, easy access to the information nearly all students want: financial aid, tuition, and academic programs. Furthermore, students want tools like financial aid calculators. Help students envision themselves on your campus with effective content and service. Students also want continuous contact, not just up front until they apply. Keep a communication flow going through the admission stage to push students to enroll.

5) E-recruit parents and family, too.
Social recruiting extends to parents and family, too. According to the E-Expectations respondents, 70% of parents are also going online to research college information.
Having sections of a Web site for parents provides another powerful method for influencing prospective students. Personalizing these parental/family Web pages—and offering family members a chance to opt in for more information—allows you to turn them into influential proponents for your campus. Information and tools such as a financial aid calculator could have an even greater impact on them than the prospective students themselves.

6) Gain their trust and respect their privacy by offering them the option to opt in.
One thing that the E-Expectations survey has made clear is that, even in cases where most students prefer a form of e-communication, not all of them do. Some may not want to take phone calls or read instant messages or receive text messages.
Respecting their privacy can seem like a barrier to e-communications. But it’s really an opportunity. By providing students with a range of opt-in options—e-mail, cell phones, instant messaging—campuses can give students the types of communications they most want.
Following the Link to Two-Year Colleges

The E-Expectations of High School Students Considering Community College

The E-Expectations: Class of 2007 study examined the online expectations and behaviors of college-bound high school students. But college-bound students have a fundamental choice to make: enroll at a four-year institution or a two-year college? Do the students considering the two-year route have different expectations and behaviors than students only considering four-year colleges and universities?

The E-Expectations study asked 1,000 respondents, all college-bound high school students, whether they were considering attending community college, then compared the e-expectations of the two groups.

In general, both groups of students had very similar expectations from college Web sites. They expressed an interest in using many of the same communication tools beyond e-mail, particularly instant messaging (IM) and text messaging. They want a personalized, fluid online experience that makes them feel part of the college community, not an outsider looking in. This report details the e-expectations of the community college group.

The study was conducted by Noel-Levitz, James Tower, and the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA). Questions were administered to a telephone survey of 1,018 college-bound juniors. The paper is a complement to "Engaging the Social Networking Generation: How to Talk to Today's College-Bound Juniors and Seniors," which can be downloaded at www.noellevitz.com/expectations.

Sponsored by

- National Research Center for College & University Admissions
- James Tower
- Noel-Levitz
Here's what I want to do on your site...

More than anything else, students considering community college want to know how much college will cost and how much assistance they will receive. Many of them are also interested in exchanging instant messages with admissions personnel and reading blogs from faculty and students. Here are the top activities these students said they would like to complete on college Web sites.

1. Complete a financial aid estimator to learn about how much money you might receive in aid or scholarships (88%)
2. Complete a tuition cost calculator to learn more about how much a school might cost (85%)
3. Request a campus visit by completing a form (80%)
4. Complete an admissions application online (79%)
5. Instant message an admissions counselor or student worker (74%)
6. Complete a form to RSVP for a campus event (71%)
7. Submit a form online to receive more information in the mail or by e-mail (70%)
8. View a virtual tour (67%)
9. E-mail a faculty member (65%)
10. Read profiles of faculty (64%)
11. Read a blog written by a member of the faculty (64%)
12. Fill out a form to get a personalized viewbook PDF (62%)
13. Enter information about your interests to see a personalized Web page (61%)
14. Read profiles of current students (61%)
15. Read a blog written by a current student (61%)

What I want to know

When given a list of topics or information that they might find on a Web site, students considering community college again showed strong interest in financial aid information. But they also expressed interest in information on job placement rates and graduate school placement.
Students rated these items on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning "extremely valuable."
Here were the items rated 4.00 or higher:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Importance rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic programs or majors</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and fees</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student life and activities</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and residence life</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement rates</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and teaching</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school placement</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents said they would rather look at a Web site than read brochures.

Students not considering community college actually placed significantly less importance on graduate school and job placement, rating those items 3.85 and 3.84 respectively. Meanwhile, parking—often viewed as a big concern of commuting students such as those at community college—rated only 2.99 on the importance scale with the community college group.

How I prefer to communicate with you

The respondents gave a somewhat mixed message about new forms of communications—the Web, instant messaging—versus traditional communication, such as mail and phone. When asked to choose between reading Web pages and reading brochures, the majority chose the Web:

- I would rather look at a Web site than read brochures sent in the mail: 56%
- I would rather read brochures sent to me in the mail than looking at a Web site: 44%

However, this did not translate into a preference for e-mail over mail:

- I would like to receive e-mail messages from people at a college or university on my list: 34%
- I would like to receive information in the mail about a college on my list: 66%

Students also showed a preference for receiving phone calls over instant messages:

- I would like to have an instant message chat with a representative from a school on my list: 35%
- I would like a phone call from a representative of a school on my list: 65%
How I feel about using new technology

There were no significant differences in the use of cell phones, text messaging, and instant messaging by students considering community college.

Sixty-six percent (66%) said they own a cell phone, with 81% of that group indicating their phones had text messaging capabilities. Sixty-two percent (62%) said they use instant messaging. In each case, the majority of respondents said they were receptive to schools contacting them by cell phone, text message, or instant message:

- **Would you consider taking phone calls on your cell or mobile phone from a college representative?** Yes 56%
- **Would you consider accepting text messages from a college representative?** Yes 52%
- **Would you consider sending an instant message to a college representative through a school’s Web site?** Yes 73%
- **Would you consider reading and responding to an instant message from a college representative if he or she noted that you were online?** Yes 83%

When I want to hear from you

Students considering community colleges want to receive information about campuses when they are beginning their searches. But they also want to continue talking with you—on the phone and online—throughout the recruitment process. We asked these students a series of questions about the kinds of communications they prefer and when they prefer them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Before applying</th>
<th>After applying</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sending a brochure or letter to me in the mail</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending me an invitation to visit campus</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailing me general information about the school</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailing me a personalized PDF brochure</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about academics</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about financing and scholarships</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about student life and activities</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling me to talk about athletic programs</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting me to participate in an online chat session</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging with a school representative</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruit my family, too

Respondents who were considering attending community college showed a high level of familial involvement in the college selection process. Nearly two-thirds showed some level of family assistance with college research and paperwork:

I'm doing all the research and paperwork on my own: 35%
My parents or family are helping me with some of the research and paperwork: 59%
My parents or family are doing most of the research and paperwork: 6%

For students who indicated assistance from their families, 68% said their families used the Internet to research schools, while 28% said they used e-mail to communicate with schools on behalf of the students.

Given this high rate of involvement and use of the Internet to research schools, institutions should consider targeting some of their e-communications directly at parents, family members, or other decision influencers.

How I'm different from students going to four-year colleges

With most of the questions, there was little statistical difference between respondents who expressed interest in community colleges and those who did not. Here are a few areas where their responses did differ.

1) What's most important to me on a Web site?

Cost of attendance and academic programs are very important to all students. But there were some significant differences between students considering community college and those who were not when asked an open-ended question, "What is the most important information you need to find on a site?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Considering community college</th>
<th>Not considering community college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic program information</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition/cost/fees</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given these responses and the importance of price and assistance information mentioned elsewhere in the study, it's imperative for community colleges to make this information readily available on the Web for students. Likewise, for four-year institutions trying to enroll students who are considering community college, cost will likely be a very significant concern for these students. Be sure your Web site and other e-communications programs address this.
2) What do I consider myself, a future or prospective student?
One interesting difference between the two groups was their response to the following question:

When looking for information on a college Web site, are you more likely to click a button that says...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Considering community college</th>
<th>Not considering community college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prospective students</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future students</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While “Admissions” is a strong guide for both sets of students, their different responses to “future” and “prospective” were statistically significant. This shows the importance of researching your target audience. Subtle differences in language can make your e-communications initiatives more effective. The more prospective students identify with the language of your Web site, the more they can identify with your institution.

3) How do I prefer to learn about your school?
The two groups of respondents also had very different reactions to a forced pair question about receiving information via mail and e-mail versus visiting campus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Considering community college</th>
<th>Not considering community college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like seeing information in the mail, online, and in e-mail messages about schools on my list.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to go to the campus and talk with people to learn about a school.</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With students who are considering community college, the campus does not appear to be as big of a draw. Your communications flow needs to provide the information these students are seeking. For four-year institutions, the campus visit may not be enough of a draw to students considering community college.
Conclusions

High school students considering community college did not exhibit many differences from students who did not show interest in attending community colleges. More than anything else, they want to know how much it will cost to attend and what programs are offered. They showed a high usage of new communication methods and a willingness for colleges to use those methods to contact them.

Like other students, those considering community college want to have access to information electronically. They still show significant interest in print materials, but they want to be able to find information about campus programs, tuition, and aid online. They also were much less interested in traveling to campuses to seek out that information, preferring to receive it via mail, e-mail, and the Web.

In the end, both two-year and four-year campuses can capture the interest of this group by answering three key questions on the Web: How much will it cost to attend? How much aid can I receive? And what programs can I study? Make sure your Web site answers these questions as quickly and effectively as possible.
Building an E-Recruitment Network
Connecting With College-Bound Seniors in the Era of MySpace

The growing influence of the Internet on recruitment has "flattened" the traditional funnel. Students are turning to the Web for information on colleges and universities—and they are not limiting their searches to campus Web sites. Social networking sites have become strong sources of supplemental insights with images, profiles, and content generated in the authentic voices of the students, campus faculty and staff, and alumni.

More and more students are not making first contact with campuses until the students apply, leaving colleges and universities with precious little time and data to build the kind of connection that leads to enrollment. How can campuses adapt to this new e-recruitment paradigm?

The E-Expectations series has been tracking the online behaviors and expectations of college-bound high school students for several years. Each year, the study asks these students what they are doing on and what they want from college Web sites. But new variables have crept into these expectations. The explosion of online social networking—such as blogs, MySpace, and Facebook—have shifted what teens expect from college Web sites. The shift toward later contact in the enrollment funnel has also altered the relationship with admitted students, pushing colleges to make the kinds of connections with admitted students that they were making earlier in the funnel.

Last year's E-Expectations survey tracked the responses of students in the class of 2007 as they transitioned from junior to senior year. This report examines the responses of more than 1,000 college-bound students near the end of their senior years. The survey was conducted by Noel-Levitz, James Tower, and the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA).
Social networking and e-recruitment: "hot" or "not"?

Teenagers have flocked to social computing networks. According to the Pew Center study of online social networks among American teens, 55 percent of all teenagers who are online use social networks like MySpace or Facebook, with 64 percent of 15-17 year-olds creating online profiles in these networks.⁴ Teens use these networks to send private messages to their "friends," as well as post more public messages in the form of comments on user profiles or blogs. The use of friends allows these teenagers to establish rapport with others in their networks.

This model has opened up the door to "Friendenomics," the use of marketing and advertising on social networking sites by organizations to promote their products and services. Rather than simply advertising, this marketing method establishes a relationship that’s more like two friends interacting and less like a business talking to a customer.⁵

What does this mean for e-recruitment? We asked students what they thought about social networking and campus Web sites, couching the responses in their own terms as hot or not:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>Would again (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Would like to (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you looked for a school on your list on MySpace or Facebook?</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you created a profile that describes your interests for other prospective students to read, like MySpace or LiveJournal?</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you used MySpace or Facebook to connect with current students from a college on your list?</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you read a blog written by a current student?</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you read a blog written by a faculty member?</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

¹ Lenhart, Amanda, and Mary Madden, Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks: How Teens Manage Their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace (Washington: Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2007), 11.
² Never Ending Friend, research project commissioned by MySpace, Isobar, & Carat, April 2007, 21-22.
While there appears to be a segment of the prospective student population interested in connecting with colleges through social networking or blogs, there is not an overwhelming demand for them. Campuses should continue to focus on their own Web sites and perhaps consider social networking as a supplemental e-recruitment activity.

**Keep e-recruiting your accepted students**

Like traditional recruitment programs, many e-recruitment efforts try to gather information about students and push them to apply. However, as more students use the Web to research colleges anonymously—the “secret shopper” trend—growing numbers of them are not making first contact with campuses until the application stage. This “flattening” of the enrollment funnel means that, when campuses accept these students, they have not made the kind of personal connection they normally would have. Furthermore, admitted students want online access to information such as class registration and billing.

When asked about sites specifically for admitted students, 57 percent of respondents said they had seen such sites. Here are the features they saw and how much they valued them, or how many would like to see these features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Feature</th>
<th>Have seen this feature?</th>
<th>Found it valuable</th>
<th>Would like to see this on your site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to a campus portal to see information about class registration, billing, financial aid, and my account</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online application status check</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online forms/services to send in housing contracts and meal plan selections</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online events to connect with current students</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online events with admissions staff</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special online tours for admitted students</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online form to submit deposit</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online events to connect with faculty</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online events to connect with other admitted students</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to read profiles of other admitted students</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to create a personal profile to share with other admitted students</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly, many accepted students want to conduct the “business” of enrolling: selecting classes, managing their payments and financial aid, and handling their housing. Events that can help foster stronger connections with accepted students also resonated with the majority of the respondents.

Given the increase in making first contact with students at the application stage, it is also a good idea to keep collecting data from these students on an accepted student site. You can use that data to continue communicating and making connections with these students, increasing their chances of moving toward enrolling.

**E-communications trends**

Along with social networking, high school students have flocked to new communication mediums such as instant messaging and text messaging. This year, 79 percent of respondents said they owned a cell phone (with 85 percent noting their cell phones could receive text messages) and 62 percent said they used instant messaging. How receptive were they to colleges and universities employing these technologies for recruitment, and how did the most recent responses compare to previous E-Expectations respondents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Class of 2006</th>
<th>Class of 2007 Juniors</th>
<th>Class of 2017 Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you consider sending an instant message to a college representative through the school’s Web site?</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you consider reading and responding to an instant message from a college representative if he or she noted you were online?</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you consider taking a call on your cell or mobile phone from a college representative?</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you consider accepting text messages from a college representative?</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the receptivity to these communication methods is down from the previous year, the majority of students are open to instant messages and cell phone calls from college personnel. Even with text messaging, it may be worth it to ask students if they wish to opt in to text messaging. If your e-communications program does not already incorporate these methods, you should strongly consider adding them.

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*Note: this question was phrased “Would you send an instant message to a college to ask a question?” for the Class of 2006 survey.*
Attitudes toward college Web sites

How important is the Web to students' college searches? How does the quality of your site affect their interest in your campus? Several survey items examined these attitudes. First, in the same ratio as last year's survey, the majority of respondents expressed a preference for accessing materials via the Web as opposed to print materials:

- I would rather look at a Web site than read brochures sent in the mail: 57%
- I would rather read brochures sent to me in the mail than look at a Web site: 43%

Students also responded to a question about the quality of a school's Web site and how it affects their interest in that campus:

- If the school I'm considering doesn't have an effective Web site that answers my questions, I'll probably drop it from my list: 15%
- I prefer to go to the Web site for information, but if it is a school I really like, I'm willing to call them or read brochures to get answers to my questions: 68%
- The Web isn't really my first resource for research on schools. The quality of a school's site doesn't really matter to me: 17%

The top ten online activities on college Web sites: rate your institution

The following tables show the activities students completed most frequently on college Web sites. For those that did not complete the activity, the survey also asked if they would complete these activities if given the chance. Does your campus Web site offer these options to students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Have done this</th>
<th>Have not</th>
<th>Would they could</th>
<th>Offered by your campus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submitted a form online to receive more information in the mail or e-mail</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed an admissions application online</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewed a virtual tour</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed a financial aid estimator form</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed a tuition cost calculator</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested a campus visit by completing a form</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read profiles of faculty</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mailed a faculty member</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read profiles of current students</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered information about your interests to see a personalized Web page</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The virtual tour response showed a large gain from last year’s responses, when only 35 percent of students said they had completed this activity. Completing financial aid and tuition estimators remained two of the most desired online tasks.

With regard to other communication activities such as e-mailing current students or downloading podcasts, students responded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Have done this</th>
<th>Have not</th>
<th>Would if they could</th>
<th>Offered by your campus?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read profiles of alumni</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled out a form to get a personalized viewbook PDF</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mailed current students from the site</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewed a podcast or vodcast (video podcast)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in an online chat event</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloaded a podcast</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribed to an RSS or XML feed</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those responding that they had done these activities mirrored the ratio of last year’s responses. However, the percentage of “would if I could” responses declined in every instance.

**Five strategies to take away**

1) Social networking can be a great resource on your Web site

High school students have certainly embraced social networking in large numbers, both as a method to communicate with friends, meet new virtual “friends,” and even interact with businesses. Having a presence on sites like MySpace or Facebook could be very beneficial for your recruitment program. However, you should still focus the majority of your efforts strengthening the experiences prospects have on your campus Web site.

Also, consider adding a social networking feature to your own site. Many schools opt to do this at the accepted/yield stage and create password-protected environments to allow students to complete business transactions as well as connect with their future classmates.

2) Let students know what college will cost

Over the years of the E-Expectations survey, students have indicated that they come to college Web sites to obtain a wide range of information about schools. But the number one thing they want to know is how much college will cost. Students have repeatedly ranked tuition cost calculators and financial aid estimators as the top two activities they wish to complete on college Web sites.

3) Expect the “lurkers” and work to keep them exploring

Understanding that more and more prospects will put off direct communication with you until after they’ve narrowed their list of schools will help you redirect your efforts in two significant ways:

First—make sure that your site gives these students plenty of evidence that they should
engage with you through application or campus visit. Make certain that each of your major/program descriptions is enticing and allows them to “meet” the individuals who teach and have selected this program.

Second—backfill your communications flow. If you don’t get contact information until students have applied, they may miss key benefit messages and information points if you don’t include some of the communications that typically only appear in the conversion stage. Reinforcing messages about affordability, value, outcomes, and student fit are essential elements in your electronic yield communications flow and on your accepted student site.

5) Experiment and evaluate

With new technologies emerging on a daily basis, there is an overwhelming array of options for you to advance your e-communications efforts. Pick an opportunity that fits with your institution and market and begin a pilot program. Test the concept with real students before you start out. Take “before” and “after” photographs and measurements. Review the results and check back in with your users. You’ll be able to make an informed decision on next steps and gain some valuable insight into the specific habits and preferences of your prospective student and decision-influencer markets.

4) Keep incorporating new communications technologies into your e-recruitment plans

Even though this year’s group of E-Expectations respondents showed a downturn in using instant messaging to communicate with colleges, 60-70 percent said they would be willing to send or return an instant message to college personnel. Furthermore, nearly 60 percent indicated a willingness to take cell phone calls from colleges.

While respondents did not show as much interest in student and faculty blogs, 90 percent of students that did read college blogs said they would do so again. Blogs are a simple, affordable way to make more personal connections with students and give them a chance to interact in comments. Don’t miss these opportunities to create extra interactions that can strengthen the desire to enroll.
Navigating Toward E-Recruitment
Ten Revelations About Interacting With College-Bound High School Students

They're out there. Looking at your Web site, making instant decisions about whether to remain an anonymous Web visitor or make contact with your campus. They are today's high school students, and they are turning to the Web in increasing numbers when they are searching for college.

But what do these students seek when they land on a college home page? What information do they want first? How much content do they want online? And do they want the e-experience to extend beyond the Web page, to instant messages, chat rooms, and text messages on their cell phones?

Noel-Levitiz, James Tower, and the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA) recently conducted a survey of 1,000 high school juniors, from all regions of the United States, economic backgrounds, and academic abilities. Here are 10 findings about how they use the Web, opportunities for interaction, and the validity of traditional recruitment tactics such as publications and campus visits.
1. Who’s online? Nearly everyone

Almost half of the students surveyed (49%) said they were online every day, and 80% were online once per week or more.

Students from the Northeast were the most likely to be online every day (56%), with the South (49%), West (46%), and Midwest (44%) next in everyday use. Males were also more likely to be online daily (54%) than females (44%).

Fifty-five percent of A students used the Internet every day, compared to 47% of B and 44% of C and lower students. Children of parents who attended college were also more likely to use the Web each day—51% compared to 43%.

Clearly, the Web has taken hold with high school students, and these numbers will likely continue to rise. But what are these students doing when they get online?

2. Research, IM, and more research—top online activities

Students are definitely using the information superhighway for information. Three of the top five online activities (not including e-mail) involved research and news:

1. Research for school assignments—91%
2. Instant messaging—81%
3. Research colleges and universities—74%
4. Read news or feature stories—72%
5. Play games—65%

The one-to-one communication of instant messaging was considerably more popular than chat rooms—26% of students said they participated in chat rooms online.

As for blogging, 19% of students claimed to keep a blog, which is more than double the rate among the U.S. adult population (7%). Twenty-four percent of students said they read blogs, which was actually slightly lower than the U.S. adult rate (27%).

3. Make sure you have an inquiry form—top activities on college Web sites

Seventy-two percent of the students surveyed said they had used college Web sites—80% from the Northeast, 71% from the South, 70% from the Midwest, and 64% from the West. What are they doing once they arrive at your virtual campus doorstep?

The most popular activity was submitting an inquiry form—72% of students using college Web sites had submitted a form asking for more information from a campus. Here were the top 10 reported activities:

1. Submitted an inquiry form—72%
2. Completed an online survey—50%
3. Personalized a site—39%
4. Forwarded a page—34%
5. Used a tuition calculator—33%
6. Read a student profile—31%
7. Read a faculty profile—26%
8. Submitted a campus visit request—25%
9. Used a financial aid estimator—24%
10. Completed an application online—22%

Interestingly, despite a heavy use of instant messaging by students (81%), only 6% said they had exchanged an instant message with a college counselor. Are schools missing a new communication opportunity? Several of the following questions indicated yes.

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2“Personalizing a site” was defined as entering information and receiving a unique Web site experience.
4. Show them the money—provide personalized financial aid and tuition information on your site

When asked what activities they would like to do on a college Web site, here were the top responses:

1. Use a financial aid estimator—90%
2. Use a tuition calculator—88%
3. Complete an online application—86%
4. Fill out a campus visit request—84%
5. RSVP for events online—75%
6. Submit an inquiry form—73%
7. Complete an online survey—72%
8. Use instant message with a counselor—70%
9. E-mail a faculty member—70%
10. Read a profile of a faculty member—69%
11. Forward a page—63%
12. Read a profile of a current student—63%
13. E-mail a current student—63%
14. Read profiles of alumni—59%
15. Personalize a Web page—58%

Price and award information are clearly at the top of students’ minds as they visit campus Web sites. They—and surely their parents/guardians—want to know how much school will cost and what their potential aid amounts could be. Having those estimators online could engage students and keep them connected with your site and your school.

While only 22% had completed applications online, 86% said they wished to do so. This group probably had not reached the application submission point yet, but the vast majority reported interest in online submission.

Students also rated the value of various types of information provided on college Web sites, from 1 (not at all valuable) to 5 (extremely valuable). The most valuable information to them (with the mean score listed):

1. Scholarship information—4.63
2. Tuition and fees information—4.61
3. Academic programs/majors—4.53
4. Financial aid information—4.48
5. Careers or internship information—4.28
6. Housing/residence life—4.01

These activity and value results show that students are most interested in information about cost and academics when they arrive at your Web site. This doesn’t necessarily mean that information about campus life, student/faculty profiles, and such are not important. These have emotional impact that balances the “logical” information these students value.

5. Emphasize substance over style

While Web page design has evolved to include animation and flashy elements, students overwhelmingly believe college sites should put content first—and make navigation clear and quick. You should make sure students can find meaningful financial aid, tuition, and academic information right from your home page.

The study revealed content preferences by asking students to choose between a series of paired statements.

- College sites shouldn’t be very flashy, but have a lot of great content—61%
- College sites should use a lot of technology and animation—39%

This reinforces the picture of what students are doing—and want to be doing—on college Web sites. They are not looking for a multimedia experience, they are looking for information experience. However, with this pair of statements, there was a big difference between academic levels. Among A and B students, 66% and 61% rated content more important. Among C and lower students, 51% placed technology and animation ahead of content.

- College sites should have a lot of detailed content to read/print—64%
- I want to do more than just read on a college site—36%
Once again, content was much more important. Give students as much as you can to read, print, and digest. But make sure that information is easy to find...

- I want to find answers within just a few clicks from the home page—73%
- I like to explore sites and find unexpected information—27%

While content and navigation are important, these results don't mean students disregard design and visuals. The following answers show that students place value on design—they may just not want to be overwhelmed by too much “flash”:

- Photos are really important on a college Web site—73%
- The photos that are on most college Web sites are staged or fake—27%
- Colleges should look at other sites to get ideas to make theirs more interesting—74%
- I expect college sites to be conservative and low-key—26%

So what's the overall message? 1) Provide great content. 2) Make it easy to find. 3) Offer all this in a visually pleasing manner without going overboard on flashy animation.

6. Get the instant message out

As indicated by the results above, instant messaging is hugely popular with high school students. Many also expressed interest in using instant messaging with colleges.

- Would you send an instant message to a college to ask a question?
  Yes—77%
- Would you be receptive to receiving an instant message from a college?
  Yes—73%

Overall, the data on instant messaging illustrate colleges may be missing a communication opportunity with this technology. Instant messaging is clearly popular with high school Internet users (81%), and large numbers are willing to receive IM communications from colleges. Yet, as indicated earlier, only 6% had actually exchanged instant messages with a counselor. Campuses would be advised to investigate this avenue of communication with prospective students.

7. Call me—at home, on my cell, and via text messages

In one of the more surprising results of this study, students expressed an overwhelming receptiveness to receiving calls at home: 70% said they would be willing to receive a call at home from a college.

Of course, more and more calls teenagers receive occur away from home, on their cell phones. Sixty-seven percent said they owned a cell phone. How did they feel about receiving recruitment calls on their cells?

- Would you be receptive to receiving a call on your cell from a college?
  No—58%
  Yes—41%

While the majority did say no, a strong minority did agree to receive such calls. Text messaging on cell phones showed similar results (82% of cell phone owners said they could receive text messages):

- Would you be receptive to receiving text messages from an admissions rep?
  No—56%
  Yes—44%

Considering the increased use (and acceptance of) cell phones, cell phone calls and text messaging offer yet another new recruitment communication option that most campuses have probably not tapped. While cell calls and text messaging are potentially invasive, they are excellent methods for personal communication with students who have opted in to calls/messaging—perhaps through an inquiry form on your Web site.
8. Who they want to talk to—and when

Students were asked to indicate, from a list, which campus personnel/students they would be interested in speaking with:

1. Admissions counselor—53%
2. Financial aid counselor—53%
3. Current student—46%
4. None of these—42%
5. Faculty member—40%
6. Alumni—35%

Students were also asked at what point during the enrollment process they would be comfortable interacting with campus personnel:

1. Before applying—40%
2. After submitting an application—29%
3. After acceptance for admission—27%

These results, taken with some of the other Web and communications answers, again show that many students place a premium on admissions and financial aid information.

9. Don’t throw out your viewbooks yet

Given the cost savings of electronic communications, many campuses have wondered if they have reached a point where they can discard or at least downsize their more costly printed materials. The answer appears to still be no.

Students specifically answered a forced pair statement on the subject:

• I would rather look at a site than read brochures in the mail—56%
• I would rather read brochures to get details instead of reading them online—44%

Students with A averages preferred print even more (49%) than B (41%) and C and lower students (42%). So, while electronic communications have become favored by the majority of students, print still has a strong foothold and deserves to be part of your communications flow.

10. Human interaction is still important—campus visit results

Even more so than with print communications, the electronic age had not displaced the importance of the campus visit during the enrollment process. When asked if they had visited a college campus for the purposes of getting information, only 10% of students said no and that they didn’t plan to. Forty-four percent said they had visited a campus, and 46% that they planned to in the future.

Of those that did visit a campus, 86% said that the experience increased their interest in attending that school. This number has risen considerably since a previous Noel-Levitz campus visit study, where 70% of college-bound high school seniors said the campus visit increased their interest in attendance.

Conclusion—lessons learned

Clearly, students have embraced technology. While that is unsurprising, this research shows that there are many untapped opportunities for your campus to use the Internet and communication technologies to connect with prospective students. Don’t wait for the data to show that 100% of college bound students want instant messages, text messages, or calls on their cell phones. Do some testing on your own (with permission from the students, of course) to determine the effectiveness of these kinds of communication resources.

At the same time, remember that communication with students is still about information. They are seeking it from you about your campus. Make it easy for them to find the most vital data that influences their decision making. Make sure each communication opportunity offers value to the student, so that you can move them closer and closer to enrollment.

For further discussion or questions, please contact Noel-Levitz

If you would like to discuss the results of the E-Expectations: Class of 2006 survey in more detail, or for questions, please contact Stephanie Geyer, executive consultant at Noel-Levitz. Call 1-800-876-1117 or e-mail stephanie-geyer@noellevitz.com.

About the research sponsors

Noel-Levitz

A trusted partner to higher education, Noel-Levitz helps campuses and systems reach and exceed their goals for enrollment, marketing, and student success.

Since 1973, more than 1,700 public and private institutions nationally at the two-year, undergraduate, and graduate and professional levels have invited a Noel-Levitz consultant to collaborate with them—either individually or through system projects.

James Tower

James Tower provides an unparalleled range of recruitment communications services to enrollment professionals at colleges and universities across the country. These services reach prospective students in a personalized and meaningful way, creating a strong sense of human connection. Among the services are AdmissionsGenie® Web sites, targeted e-mail campaigns, DVDs, virtual tours, and publications. James Tower is a technology and communication solutions company located in North Mankato, Minnesota.

NRCCUA

The National Research Center for College & University Admissions (NRCCUA) is a non-profit education research organization based in Lee’s Summit, Missouri. For over 30 years, NRCCUA has conducted the largest nationwide survey of high school students, which serves as a communications link between college-bound high school students and public and private colleges and universities.

Note: The margin of error (for a sample of 1,000 individuals) is +/- 3%, at a 95% confidence level.
Recruitment Team Budget Items

- DVDs with short 4 minute presentation (or Power Point Presentations).
  
- Cost to produce uniform recruitment material.
  - Folders - out of house: $150
  - Handouts
  - Mail-outs
    - monthly newsletter - e-mail?
    - personal time - 3 hours per year - Aug, Jan, May
  - Cost of tri-fold business cards.
    - In-house estimate for 100. $5.00

- Cost of promotional materials to launch “Employee Appreciation Business Cards”

- Create a summer scholarship program for eligible high school students.
  - Completed soph &jr.
  - Come during summer - $1500
  - Free tuition for 100 level classes during the normal summer schedule.

- Incorporate the latest technology accessible from our website.
  - No materials cost
  - Personal in design & website link

Open house – marketing cost
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Jan-08</th>
<th>Feb-08</th>
<th>Mar-08</th>
<th>Apr-08</th>
<th>May-08</th>
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<th>Oct-08</th>
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<td>Develop Recruitment Plan</td>
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<td>Hold Student Focus Groups</td>
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<td>Develop Master Calendar</td>
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<td>Business Cards-dist. and training</td>
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<td>Design Recruitment Materials for Target Markets</td>
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<td>Create Webpages for target markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design recruitment materials</td>
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Contact the following departments for information about credit classes.

- Academic Support Services - Ext. 224
- Adult Education - Ext. 355
- Business and Technology - Ext. 436
- Career Services - Ext. 307
- Communications, Education, Humanities, and Fine Arts - Ext. 386
- Continuing & Professional Education - Ext. 265
- Enrollment Services - Ext. 267
- Health Professions - Ext. 750
- Math and Science - Ext. 344

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