Using Technology to Promote Access and Graduate Student Success

SUMMER WORKSHOP
COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

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What Factors Promote Access?

- Experiences when prospective students reach out
  - Website
  - Inquiries
  - Starting an application
  - Responses to
    - Phone calls
    - Emails
    - Texts
    - Chat

- Also when we reach out to them
  - Work with GPDs to determine current and aspirational student composition. That will inform strategies for reaching prospects

- Have to fit within our resources
Features of Effective Websites (EAB, 2021)

• Calls to Action in Prominent Locations
• Costs, Admission Requirements, App Deadlines
• Career Outcomes (potential job titles, salaries)
• Program Differentiators
• FAQ section
• As Us Now- Chat feature
Table Discussions

• How do students hear about your programs? What leads then to inquire?

• How much control do you have over webpages and related sites (CRM, App Content, etc.)?

• How could you do an audit to determine effectiveness/desirability of your outward facing assets?
Responding to Inquiries

• Nice to have a CRM system (Slate, EM, others)
• Set automatized messaging that is individualized for each program, tailored to student interests, highlight special features of campus or area, etc.
• Always have the CTA: Start or Continue Your Application
When students start an application

• Ensure the application is straightforward, mobile-friendly, requires only what is necessary

• Set messaging that highlights benefits of program, financial information, etc.

• Always have the CTA: Submit Your Application
Table Discussions

• To what extent are you involved in inquiries, RFIs? How can you maximize your influence?
• To what extent are you involved in the content and response to applications, from start to submission? How can you maximize your influence?
Make an Admission Decision

• The ball is in “our court,” but that means that it is in hundreds of courts, so we often have to encourage, nudge folks to make a timely decision and determine funding offers

• In some cases, students accept the first offer they get

• Tech helps… our application back-end allows quick lists of applications that are ready for a decision, and my Dir of GEM sends out bi-weekly emails to GPDs who have apps ready.
Pick Us!

• Messaging campaign to stay in touch, encourage engagement as soon as student is admitted
  • Provide support re local resources, answer logistics questions
  • Social media groups
• Encourage deposit (for relevant programs)
• Ensure advisor meetings are scheduled
• Messaging to formally accept funding offer (of course adhering to April 15 agreement….)
• Messaging to encourage registration when it opens
What factors promote success?

- Success = Persistence, Completion
- Text Campaigns, “nudges”
  - Signal Vine at MSU
- Degree Completion Plan filed before end of second semester
- Professional development, support services for mental health, financial needs (food pantry, emergency clothing, etc.)
- Oversight of research experiences, advisor-advisee relationships
Know your data

- Informs allocation of resources
- Headcount?
  - Enrollment target for each program
  - Weekly reports… determine percent of ultimate census to know if you are on track
- Applicant pool?
  - Overall quantity as well as diversity
- Admission rate?
  - Are you getting qualified applicants?
  - Are there any effects of gender, race/ethnicity, etc.?
Know your data

• Yield?
  • Percent of admitted applicants that matriculate and enroll
  • Are there any effects of gender, race/ethnicity, etc.?

• Persistence?
  • Unlike F2F FITNIC metrics… what should you use? We use F2F, but all

• Completion?
  • X-year graduation rates…. Choices are 2, 4, 6. We use 6 because proportion of part-time and presence of a few 3 or 4 year programs.
  • Time to degree
Table Discussions

• Do you track Time to Decision for individual programs? If so, what do you do about it?
• How do/can you encourage engagement of newly admitted students?
• What are your data regarding persistence/completion?
  • Pain points/barriers across programs?
  • Specific programs?
  • Strategies… successful and unsuccessful!
CGS Resources

- Recruiting for Success: Inclusiveness Series Volume 1
- Achieving an Inclusive Graduate Community: Inclusiveness Series Volume 1
- Master's Education: A Guide for Faculty and Administrators
- A Policy Statement
- Master's Admissions: Transparency, Equitability, and Diversity
- Joint Degrees, Dual Degrees, and International Research Collaborations: A Report on the CGS Graduate International Collaborations Project

Masterson, Promoting Access & Success, CGS, 7/11/22
Summary and Wrap-Up

• Know best practices and make choices strategically, that are feasible with your resources

• Reach out! JulieMasterson@MissouriState.edu, CGS, regionals, state orgs, etc.