



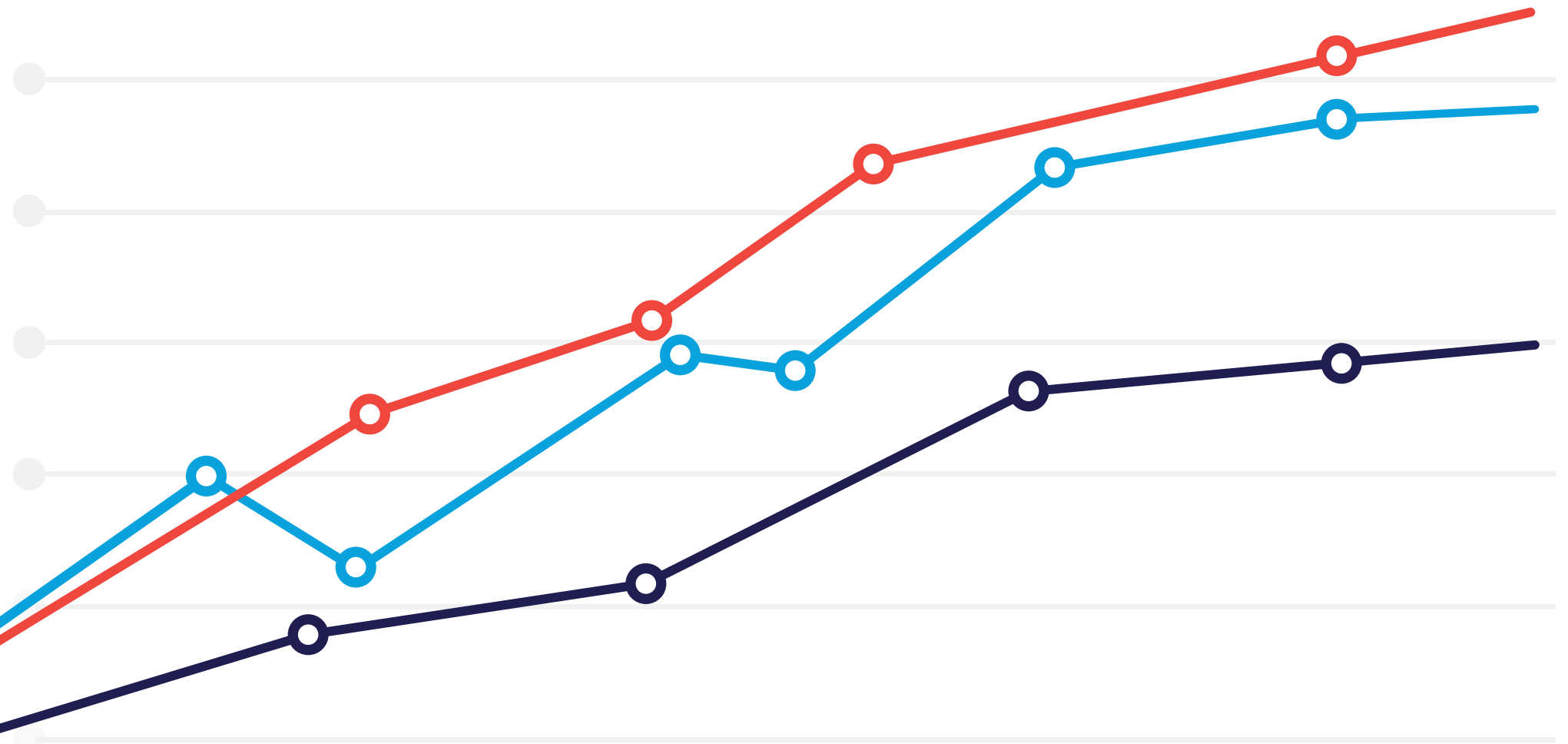
ADVANCE
EDUCATION

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF
YOUR ENROLLMENT DATA

ADVANCE EDUCATION WHITEPAPER

Abstract

You're sitting on a very precious resource that can mean the difference between drastically underperforming enrollment numbers or holding steady – or better – during an enrollment cliff in the number of college students.



Your data, even the smallest bits you have at your fingertips, can be the key to unlocking ideas that **can change the health of your university's enrollment, help you better serve the students you recruit, and point you toward ways of expanding your admissions pipeline to bring in students who will benefit from the programs at your school.**

As a higher education professional, you care about

students, student outcomes, a thriving academic community, and the reputation of your programs and institution. And yet, by unlocking critical insights from your data, you can have very real, measurable, and boast-worthy results from the insights. Think of your enrollment data as pieces of information that can be studied through different lenses, evoking new ideas, cold hard facts, and prompting you to investigate further.

We are swimming in a sea of data all around us, but it seems complicated to tap into that resource to improve outcomes.

You are not alone if you don't know where to begin or are puzzled about how to get the most out of your enrollment data. Most higher education administrators and marketers have no training in data analysis.

What Can Your Enrollment Data Do?

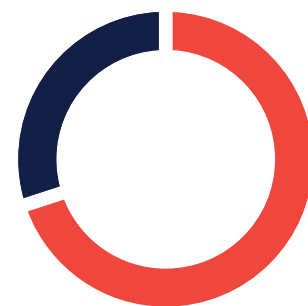
- Increase your applicant pool
- Improve your enrollment yield
- Solve one of the biggest challenges for college marketers: **who are my targets?**
- Motivate staff toward a concrete goal
- Encourage and smooth cross-departmental collaboration
- Track your progress and the success of your efforts
- Yield insights about easily fixable problems in your organization
- Provoke new ideas that will help your institution grow
- Help you retain students
- Better define different prospective student pools
- Justify your budget requests to the administration

What's Wrong With the Way We've Always Done It?

Although we have seen enrollment nationally stabilize slightly in the fall of 2022 after pandemic swings, contracting enrollment will continue to be a problem for the next few years. Many smaller colleges are still struggling to keep their applications up, and using the old methods to find students is no longer effective. Legacy marketing included lots of direct mail with broad targets, which is expensive and increasingly less effective. Our student survey found that over 70% of students do not respond to physical mail sent to their homes.



Colleges now need to reach students where they are, which includes **social media, email, and video.** But without knowing who you are trying to reach and where they are, you can't get your message in front of them. This is where your data begins to show you the way toward more effective targeting.



Over 70% of students do not respond to physical mail



First Steps with Enrollment Data

There is no day like today to start using your data to drive your campaigns going forward. Whether you have only the bare bones of information, or a complete dashboard of options to plug in, your data is highly beneficial.

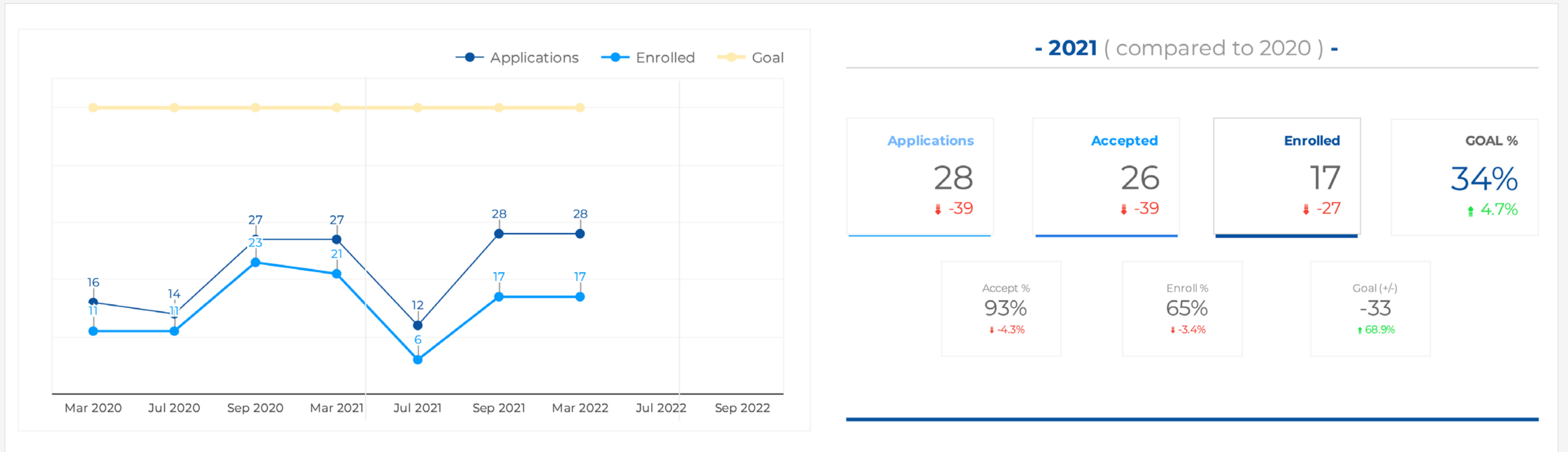
In the very first stages of analyzing your data, we would ideally look at three data points:

- 1. NUMBER OF APPLICANTS**
- 2. NUMBER ACCEPTED**
- 3. NUMBER ENROLLED**

Step 1

- ✓ **Number of applicants**
- ✓ **Number accepted**
- ✓ **Number enrolled**

We can visualize this data in a scorecard format that will look something like the following:



Admissions, marketing, deans, and administrators can then begin to understand where your numbers are today. With a couple of years of previous data, we can also look at trends, though we will have to work around the disruptions of the pandemic, which may have distorted the numbers.

Understanding your conversion rates among stages within the students' enrollment journey is foundational to making optimizations within your team. With this crucial data, the conversations can take many forms among different stakeholders, giving you a basis for looking deeper.

With just these simple numbers, you can begin to build marketing goals and strategize about optimizations using information to drive your efforts. Then, working with experienced educational data analysts, your campus team can develop the insights that will make your next steps more explicit and targeted.

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For example, let's say we have low conversion rates with students that have been accepted, but not yet enrolled. **Getting accepted students to enroll requires consistent, effective communication and engagement strategies.** We need to be sure internal teams are maintaining communication through emails, phone calls and social media to remind accepted students of upcoming enrollment deadlines, financial aid resources, housing opportunities or to schedule a campus visit.



- AMANDA RAMBO-JACKSON,
SOUTHEAST SALES DIRECTOR



Getting More Sophisticated with Data

After you realize the impact of using the bare minimum of data to propel your marketing, you can layer in other data points to become savvier and more targeted among enrollment stages. With more information, you can identify your best prospects and concentrate your efforts on these likely applications. Your next set of data can include the following:

- 4. NAME**
- 5. PHONE NUMBER**
- 6. LOCATION**
- 7. EMAIL ADDRESS**

With these additional data points, we can design more sophisticated multi-channel campaigns targeting your ideal students. Not only can you apply relevant messaging to put in front of ideal audiences, but you can also include prompts at critical times to trigger them to complete their applications or enroll if they have been accepted. 1:1 marketing messages bring the power of personalization and integrate that with automation to communicate most effectively with students. With more information, you can design more intricate strategies to prioritize communications with the most probable enrollees.

Step 2

-  **Name**
-  **Phone number**
-  **Location**
-  **Email address**

Mining Your Data for Maximum Effectiveness

Once you have refined targeting of prospective students, you can also develop models of ideal students that are look-alikes to the ones in your programs. Some additional data points that can be helpful include:

- 8. AGE**
- 9. INTENDED MAJOR**
- 10. WHAT HIGH SCHOOL THEY ATTENDED**

The graph to the right is an example of the types of insights and campaigns that can result from the full use of your enrollment data.

Step 3

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Intended major
- ✓ What high school they attended



People tend to think of data as technical and static, but how we use data in enrollment strategy is highly creative. The numbers tell us stories that provoke our most innovative, effective, and efficient ideas, laying the path for new and better ways to lay out your campaign infrastructure.



ANY PIECE OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION CAN BE A GAME-CHANGER.

“There are so many things in the world – we’re looking for anything that might prove valuable,” notes AMG Higher Ed’s Joshua Swindle.

Amanda Rambo-Jackson added, “It steers conversations in places you wouldn’t imagine. **Partnering with experienced professionals can help you unlock the value of your enrollment and CRM data.**”



To fully realize the value of your CRM data, exporting the whole data set can allow data professionals to visualize the significant drivers of enrollment. The possibilities include zip codes, particular cities, specific feeder high schools, age, and so many more. With any scrap of information you have, we can identify a characteristic that will help us create custom audiences for your marketing and find out how to reach them.

Attribution and ROI

The return on investment (ROI) for colleges is the enrolled student. In most advertising, we look at how many people have seen an ad (impressions) and engaged with it to determine if the strategy is working. But with higher education, the ROI is in seeing an increase in students. For instance, if we target a specific designated market area (DMA) and see enrollment numbers from that DMA increase the following semester, we can see what is working.

Using data helps to not only see your targets more clearly, but it allows us to track what works best. Staying within budget and using your dollars effectively will get you results in enrollment without blindly sending out messaging, much of which lands in front of uninterested eyes. With data tracking, we move your budget to the areas that yield the most payoff in enrolled students, getting you more of the desired results: enrollments.

One of the biggest rewards department chairs, deans, and marketing departments see from the use of data is the insights and trends that guide more thoughtful decision making. Administration wants to understand how to impact enrollment numbers, which are the lifeline of the college, and one way to get those students into your school is to elevate your marketing strategy – without it, the school could fail.

Marketers can use clear data visualizations that result from plugging in the numbers to make college presidents and even boards of trustees stand up and take note – your efforts will work if you have the tools you need. Then, as you begin to see your data-driven marketing work, you can show this to the people who control the to get them to understand your need and give you the support to keep the college healthy.



Why Outsource Your Enrollment Data Analysis?

When participants at UPCEA's Marketing, Enrollment Management, and Student Success conference were polled on their top three concerns, they were:

- 1. LIMITED BUDGET**
- 2. UNDERSTAFFING**
- 3. SELECTING TARGET MARKETS**

*Partnering with experienced digital marketers can address all those problems **and more.***

Limited Budget: With your limited budget, you must ensure every dollar counts by targeting students most likely to enroll in your programs. Data helps you spend your budget more wisely. In addition, the data graphics that come with partnership help you make a case for increases in your budget to the higher-ups.

Understaffing: This is a problem throughout higher education right now—there simply are not enough good candidates to hire, and there often isn't enough budget to hire the number of people you could use to market your school effectively. When you partner with a marketing agency, you expand your capabilities. You have no onboarding, and you get people to help you who have experience in exactly what you need to have done—modernizing and targeting your marketing to get your enrollment up.

Selecting Target Markets: Sometimes, it's hard to see the bigger picture when you are so far inside your own job. Having a team with a broader view of enrollment marketing helps you expand your vision of who your best students may be and where to find them. Using data analysis allows you to see your target prospects from different perspectives, giving you a direction for effective marketing that brings the right students to your university.



Partnering with experienced digital marketers can address problems such as

LIMITED BUDGET

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SELECTING TARGET MARKETS

and more.

The Upshot

Your CRM (customer relationship manager, i.e. Salesforce) and enrollment data are a treasure trove, full of insights that will help you to define your target students and effectively market the unique qualities of your programs to them. If you haven't yet unlocked the value of your data, let us help you uncover the insights that will fill seats in classes and make your team look like a hero to administration. 🎓

Let's grow your student enrollment, **together.**

We believe any effective marketing campaign begins with thoughtful and powerful storytelling. Our first goal as a marketing partner is to understand your story and what makes you special.

Once we understand who you are, we can build a strategic marketing plan to tell your story in the best way on the best platforms to reach your ideal audience. Compelling stories paired with a strategic plan drive great results, and we have a track record of doing just that.

Partnerships with traditional four-year universities, community colleges, and technical and career schools, we help institutions level up marketing strategies for student recruitment as well as alumni outreach.

Like what you see? Want to know more? [Let's talk.](#)

Thank You.



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