

Goshen College builds a solid foundation with enrollment strategy



About Goshen College

Goshen College is an affordable, nationally recognized, private Christian liberal arts college in northern Indiana known for leadership in intercultural and international education, sustainability, and social justice.

Solutions used

- RNL Advanced FinAid Solutions
- RNL Recruitment Consulting
- RNL Demand Builder
- RNL SMART Approach
- RNL Strategic Enrollment Planning

About RNL Complete Enrollment

RNL Complete Enrollment gives you the most advanced platform for meeting big enrollment management challenges. It delivers the research, data, expertise, analytics, and technology to sustain success across all areas of enrollment.

Opportunity

In 2014, Goshen College had faced five years of declining enrollment and net revenue when their vice president of enrollment management left. Admissions staff turnover was high, and the team began looking for a solution to remedy the situation.

“When I think back to that time, it was kind of a crisis moment for us,” said Jodi Beyeler, director of communications. “We had a very broken foundation—our processes, our data, our communications flow, training. Everything was in disarray.”

Partnership

After weighing the options, the team decided to bring in Ruffalo Noel Levitz to provide guidance and direction to the new cross-divisional leadership team (made up of admissions, financial aid, IT, communications, and marketing directors), hoping for a long-term solution to build internal capacity and empower staff.

Goshen began their work with Ruffalo Noel Levitz in 2014 with RNL Recruitment Consulting to get them on the fast track to success. It was an intense year of rebuilding their foundation, eventually adding assistance with student search. The next year, the college decided it was time to invest in RNL Advanced FinAid Solutions, RNL SMART Approach, and RNL Demand Builder in order to cultivate their inquiry pool.

Being one of the few Mennonite-affiliated colleges in the United States, Goshen found that their main competitors were actually not primarily other Mennonite-affiliated institutions, but rather colleges and universities—especially publics—within 100 miles of campus. Changing that perspective gave Goshen a new mindset for recruiting. Now, Goshen is working to grow diversity, reaching an increasing number of Latino/a students.

No single strategy has been the complete solution for Goshen, but rather incremental changes over time, including:

- Building a positive and supportive team, and providing training whenever necessary to help Goshen work together across campus.
- Investing resources in search and financial aid strategy;
- Hiring a director of marketing, who has been critical to marketing efforts;
- Leveraging industry-leading sales and marketing automation systems to improve business processes and data quality; and
- Improving reporting and analytics to support recruiting and marketing strategy.

A successful initiative

Goshen's openness to change and dedication over the past few years has led to the following results:

- A 37 percent increase in first-year applicants over three years (860 in 2014 vs. 1,176 in 2017).
- A 56 percent increase in admitted first-year students over three years (482 in 2014 vs. 752 in 2017).
- A 35 percent increase in the number of enrolled first-year students since 2014 (159 in 2014 vs. 215 in 2017).
- Growth of the percent of overall traditional undergraduates who are Latino/a from 13 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2016 (with expectations for further growth this year).
- A healthy 38 percent net tuition revenue increase over two years.

With optimism and high morale, the Goshen team enrolled their largest incoming class in eight years to their goals for 2017 while maintaining class profile.

"In this process, we have torn down some of the silos that are common in higher ed and on our campus," Beyeler said. "Bringing together leadership to solve the same problems has been really important, especially in becoming more data-informed. RNL reminds us that good things are ahead, and that has been very encouraging. They've been partners in the process and given a helpful outside perspective that we don't have ourselves—especially on where we stand in the larger landscape."

KEY RESULTS

56% INCREASE
IN ADMITTED FIRST-YEAR
STUDENTS 2014-17

34% INCREASE
IN ENROLLED FIRST-YEAR
STUDENTS 2014-17

38% INCREASE
IN NET TUITION REVENUE
OVER TWO YEARS

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Jodi Beyeler
Director of Communications
at Goshen College