



Innovation and Sustainability for Graduate and Online Programs

Ruffalo Noel Levitz National Conference 2023

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Meet Your Presenters



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Session Overview

- Changes in higher education, and what is driving those shifts
- How are institutions responding
 - Marketing, Program Development, Student Success
- Three institutional examples
 - Brown University, Neumann University and Saint Peter's University

A person wearing a blue button-down shirt is shown from the chest down. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand near a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

The market is shifting, what is your biggest challenge?



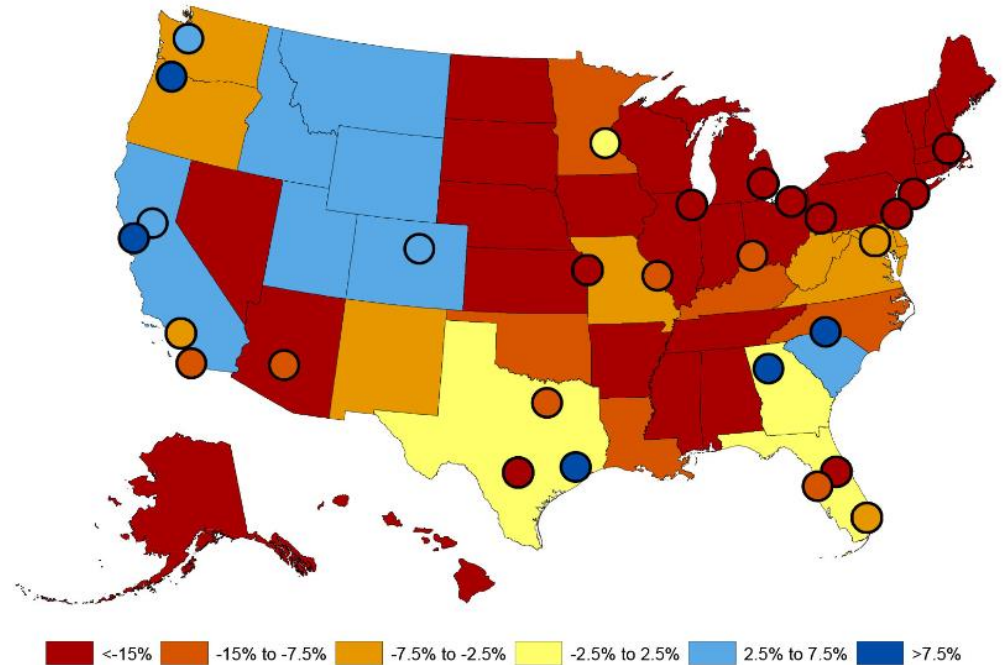
National Enrollment Shifts and Trends

Nationwide Forecasted Enrollment Declines

< -15%

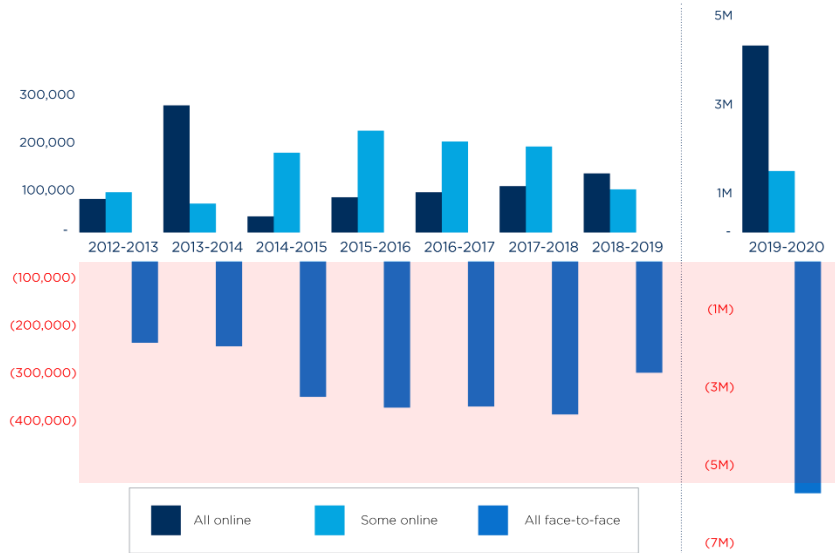


Midwest & the North East among hardest impacted regions



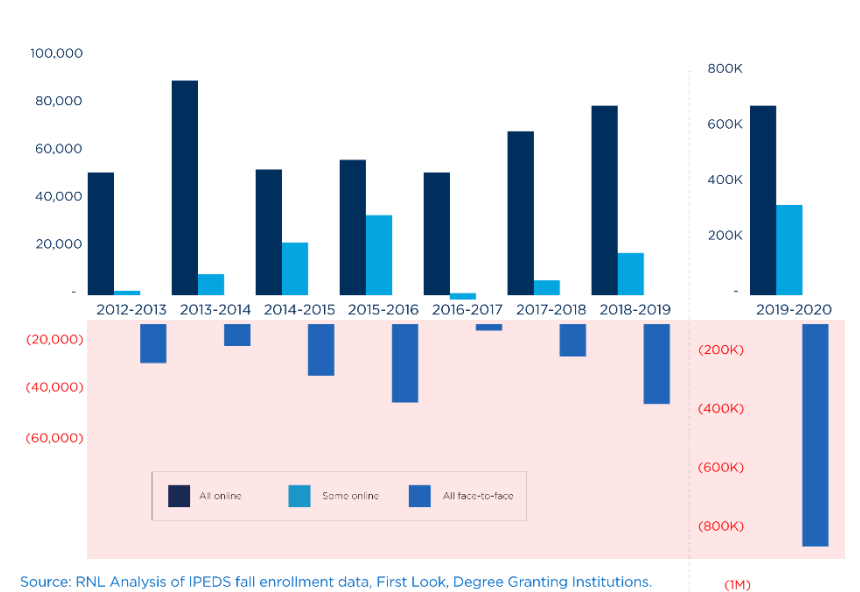
Online education has become “mission critical” for most institutions seeking to grow

TABLE 2: UNDERGRADUATE YEAR-OVER-YEAR FALL ENROLLMENT CHANGE BY FORMAT



Source: RNL Analysis of IPEDS fall enrollment data, First Look, Degree Granting Institutions. Retrieved April 2022.

TABLE 5: GRADUATE - YEAR-OVER-YEAR FALL ENROLLMENT CHANGE BY FORMAT



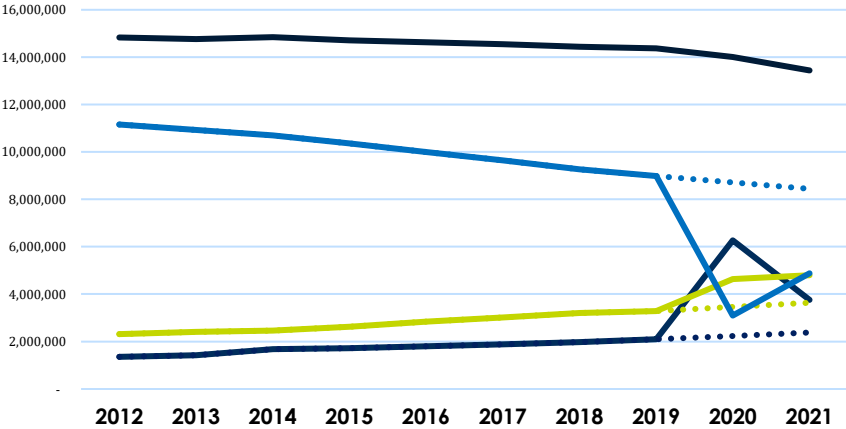
Source: RNL Analysis of IPEDS fall enrollment data, First Look, Degree Granting Institutions. Retrieved April 2022.

Enrollment Trends and Format Choice

(With and Without the Pandemic)

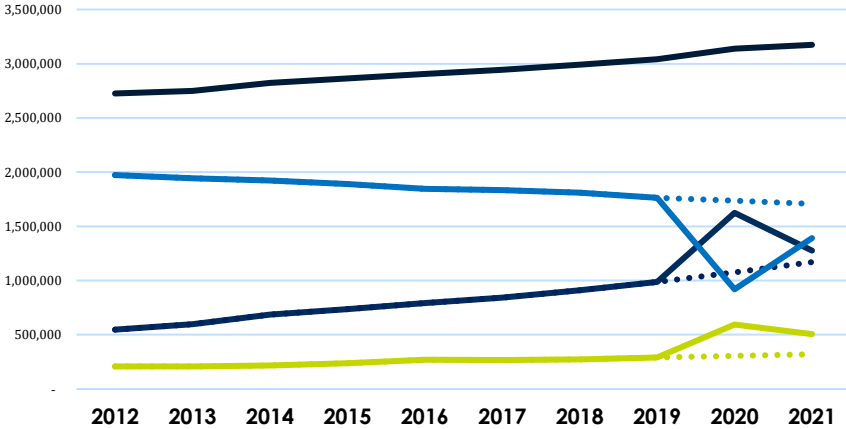
At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, fully online and fully classroom students are now at near parity. Is this the future of higher education?

Undergraduate



- All Online
- Some Online
- All F2F
- Total
- All Online (No Pandemic)
- Some Online (No Pandemic)
- All F2F (No Pandemic)

Graduate



- All Online
- Some Online
- All F2F
- Total
- All Online (No Pandemic)
- Some Online (No Pandemic)
- All F2F (No Pandemic)



Source: RNL Analysis of IPEDS Fall Enrollment Snapshot data. (U.S. degree-granting institutions of at least two years.)

Student expectations have shifted



Need for speed



Rise in consumer mentalities



"Me" centric view of the world



Meaningful connections

NETFLIX

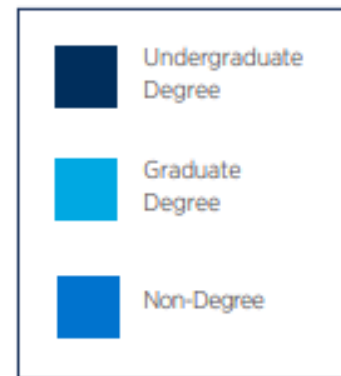
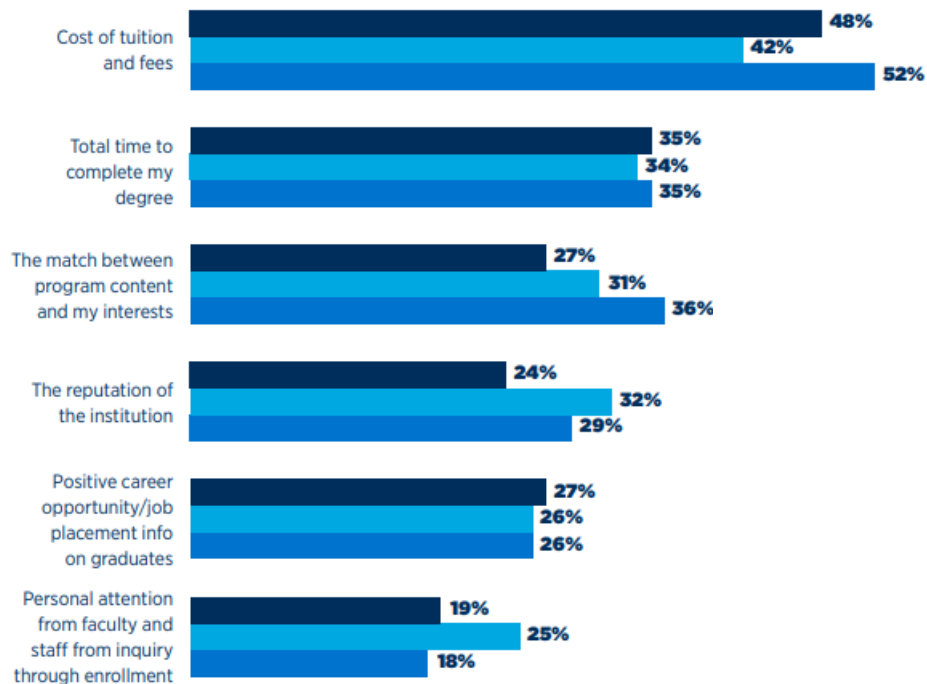


amazon

Online students make their decisions based on cost, time and THEN content match.

TABLE 26: MOST IMPORTANT ENROLLMENT FACTORS

(Respondents chose their three most important factors.)



Adult students demand timely response to inquiries

TABLE 31: EXPECTED RESPONSE TIMES AFTER FIRST INQUIRY	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Personalized email			
Immediately	27%	19%	17%
Within 3 hours	21%	20%	20%
Within a day	29%	26%	33%
More than 1 day	23%	36%	30%
Text message			
Immediately	27%	24%	20%
Within 3 hours	25%	27%	35%
Within a day	25%	23%	25%
More than 1 day	23%	27%	21%
Phone call			
Immediately	29%	24%	25%
Within 3 hours	19%	20%	20%
Within a day	26%	26%	28%
More than 1 day	26%	31%	27%

Those 45+ years of age are more willing to wait...

+45: **41%**

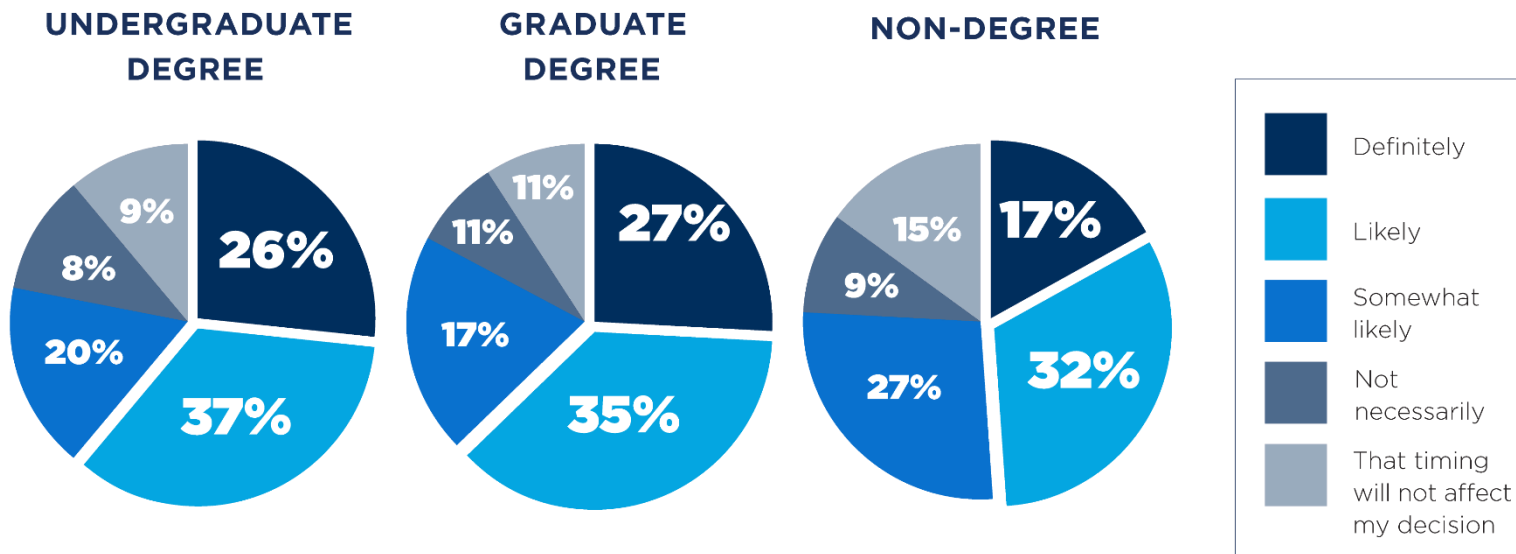
+45: **36%**

+45: **48%**



Inquiry response time impacts enrollment

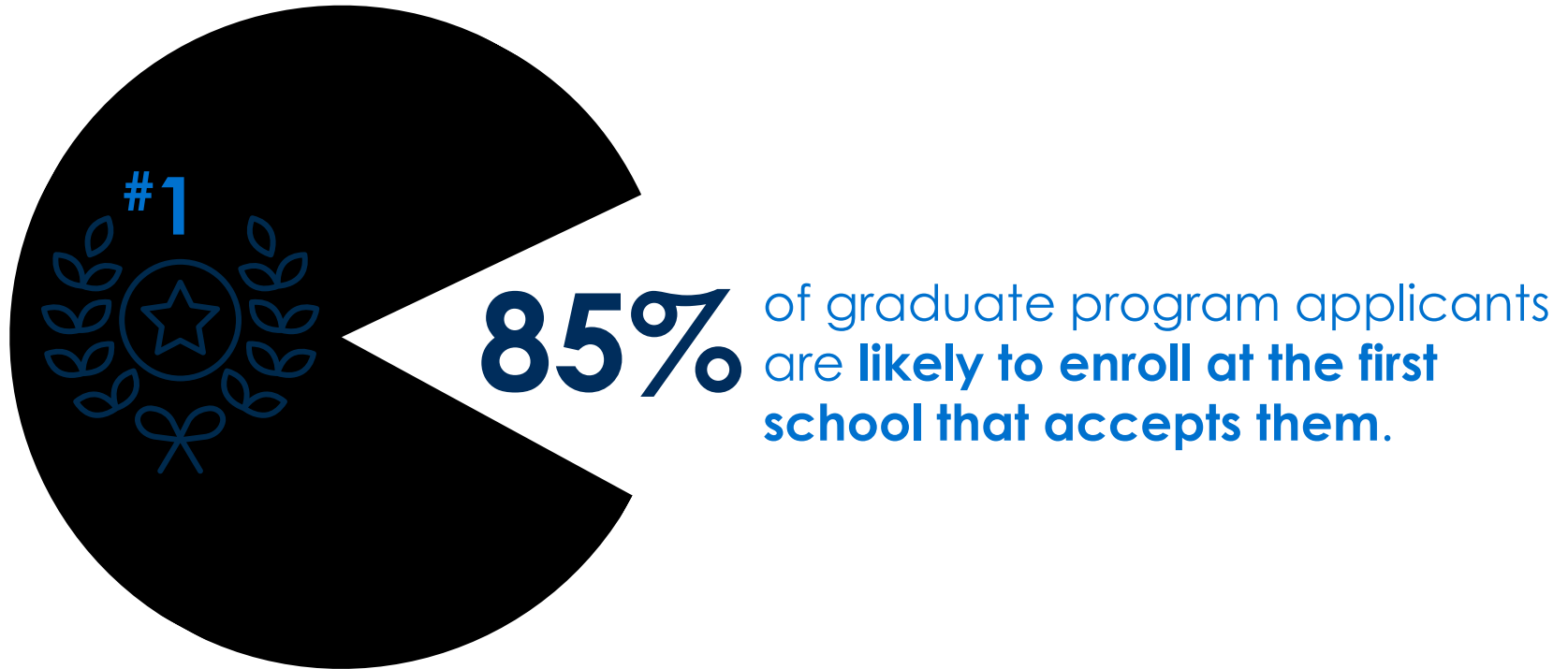
TABLE 36: LIKELIHOOD OF ENROLLING IN PROGRAM THAT RESPONDS FIRST TO INQUIRY



Adult students expect timely admissions decisions

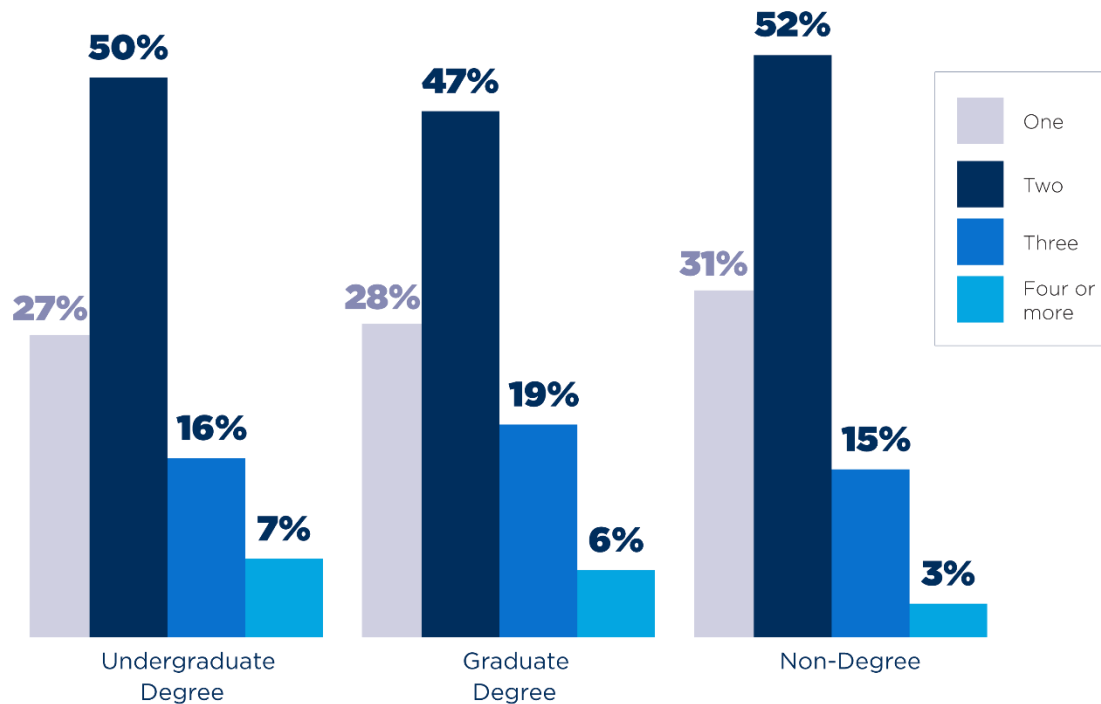
TABLE 38: EXPECTED TIME TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Within 24 hours	11%	15%	8%
1-3 days	34%	29%	32%
4-7 days	30%	27%	31%
7-14 days	18%	19%	20%
14-21 days	5%	7%	6%
Longer than 21 days	2%	3%	3%

Application/acceptance response time impacts enrollment



You are competing with more than inertia

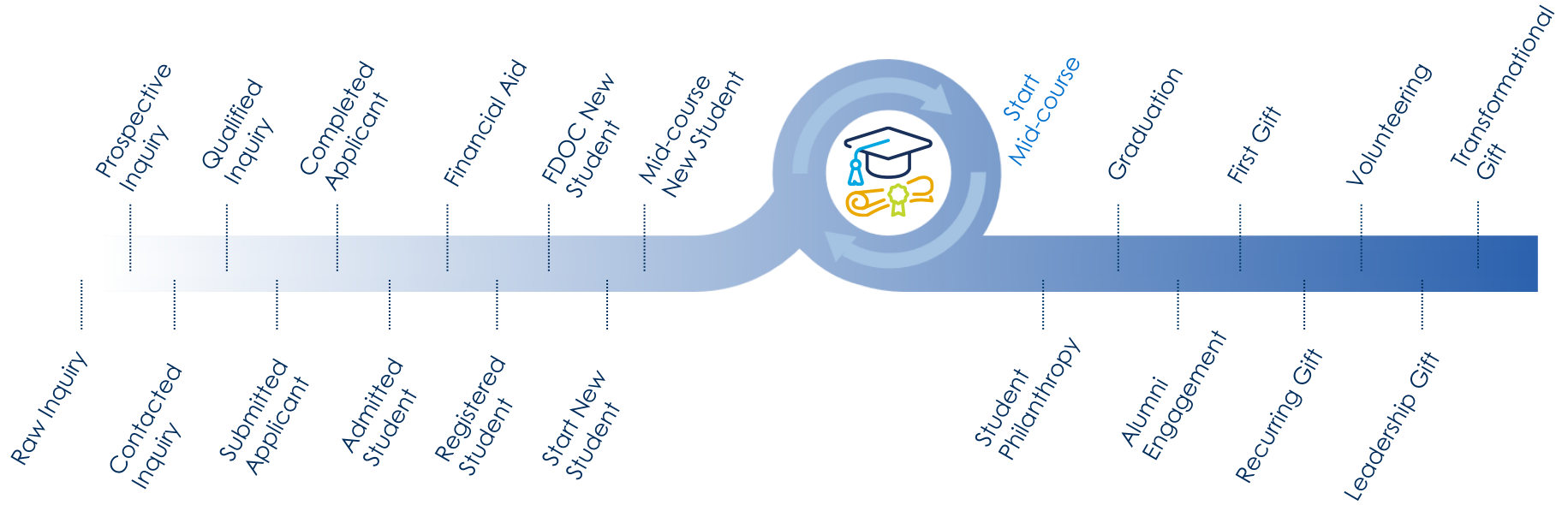
TABLE 30: NUMBER OF ONLINE PROGRAMS CONSIDERED



Having the right programs is fundamental for success

- **Leveraging secondary data** can be very powerful...if used in a strategic manner.
 - Compare programs
 - Compare regional trends with national patterns
 - Compare competitive situation to employment outlook
- **Recent past CAN inform the immediate future**
 - Student demand lags behind employer demand by as much as 8 years.
 - Institutions that are still thinking that they have 2+ years to mount new programs will lose to more nimble institutions
- Focus research on **where growth is happening**: online? classroom?
- Gain intelligence on **specific competitors** so you can **differentiate**
 - Don't differentiate through a long cumbersome program name

We must consider speed at every stage of the student lifecycle



Expertise and Insights, Analytics and Surveys

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is a white text question.

What is the largest driver of success in the graduate/online recruitment space?



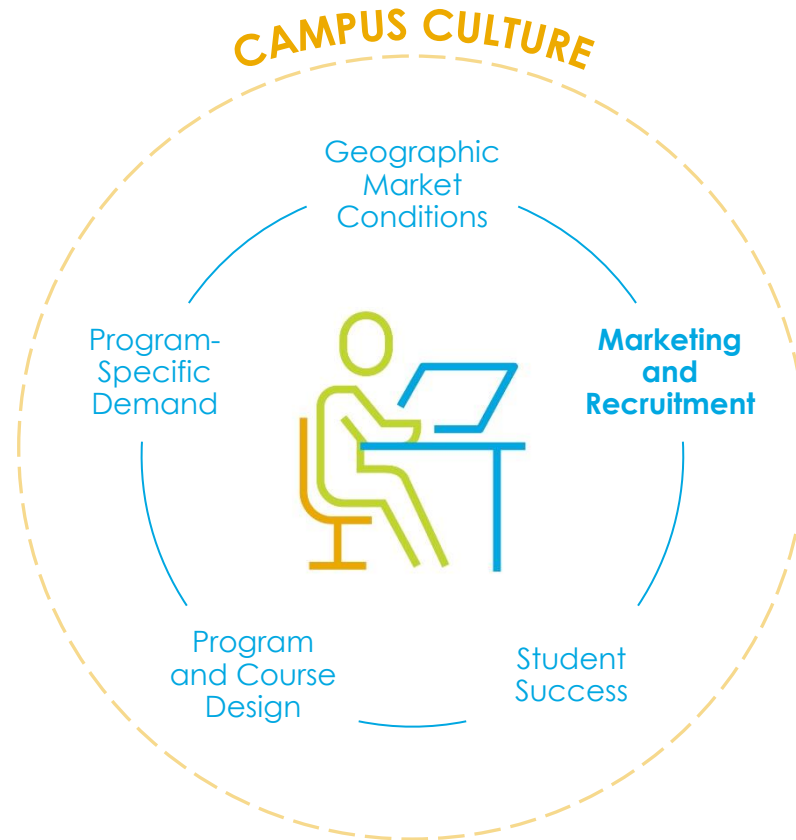
Brown University Story

The Brown University Story

A digital approach to enrollment growth

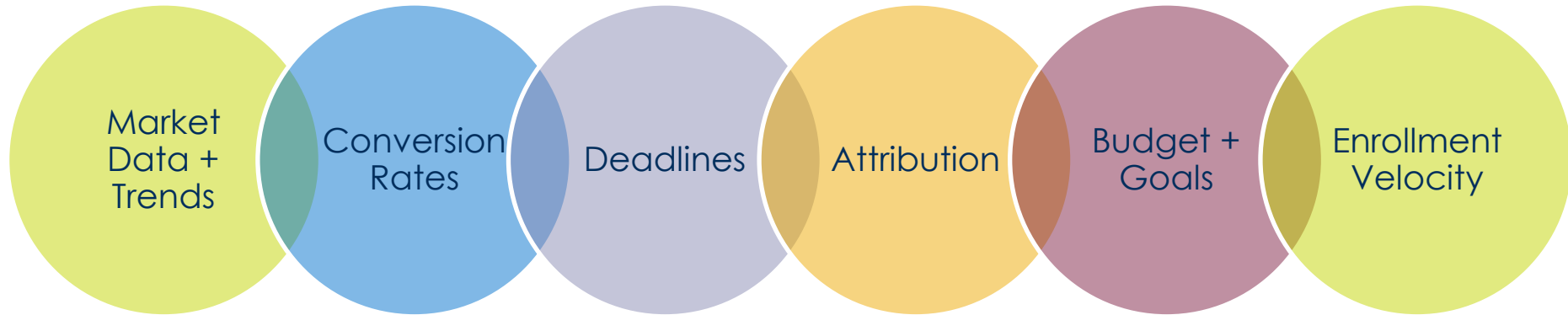


Factors Influencing Enrollment



Understanding the Digital Space

Working backwards to develop an enrollment-focused marketing strategy



Pacing and Performance

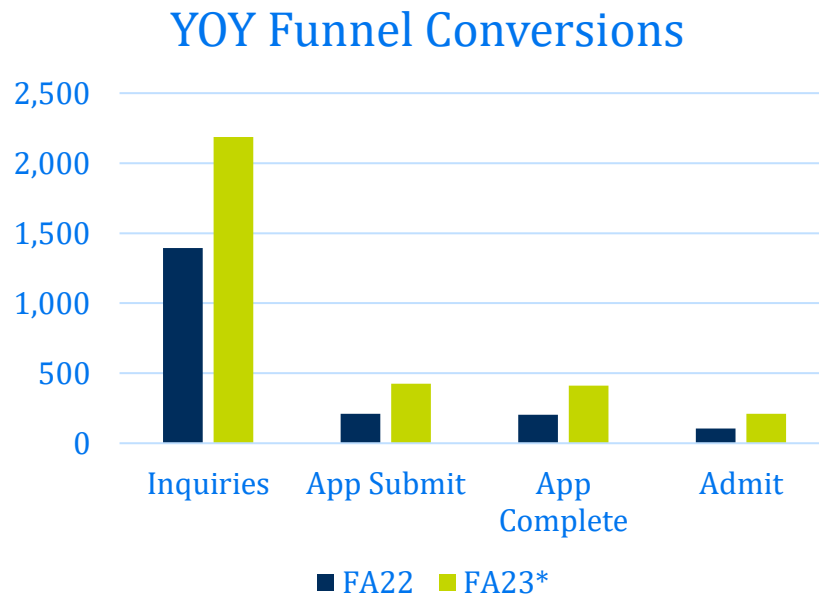
Rationale and justifications supporting planning and recommendations

Learning 1: Marketing campaign focused on a foundation of paid search and paid social centering on brand awareness.

Learning 2: The Brown student audience is extremely engaged + responds highly to incentivization.

Learning 3: To be aggressive in marketing efforts and with a focus on creating as much top of the funnel activity as possible, we removed friction in the application process by including both a RFI and Apply link on our microsite and ads.

Learning 4: Utilizing student trends, average conversion rates, digital spending patterns, and the length of the application widow, we were able to more accurately predict velocity metrics and top of funnel numbers to reach our goals.



*not finalized at the time of publication

Program Success and Sustainability


- Conversions, results, and future partnerships
- Best Practices
 - Multiple Intakes
 - Speed to Lead
 - Understanding conversion rates vs. CPLs and other metrics
 - Partnership relationship strength

51%



Increase in
completed
applications from
FA22 to FA23.



A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand on a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is white text that reads: "What can be a pitfall to success when launching an online strategy?".

What can be a pitfall to success when launching an online strategy?



Neumann University Story

The Neumann University Story

Why the need for change?



Landscape, Road Map, and Mirror



LANDSCAPE

Do you know the terrain will be to travel? A Quantitative assessment of the demand and supply characteristics confronting each program in your market helps you plan for success.



ROAD MAP

Do you know how to navigate the terrain? Qualitative investigation of specific competitors will ensure you can differentiate your program in a crowded market. Differentiation is more than a unique program name.



MIRROR

What do others think of you as a provider? Do your programs align with those perceptions? Surveying your audience(s) will help you understand how you fit into your regional (and wider) market.

Choosing/Prioritizing Programs

Success is rooted in a balance between market demand and institutional strength. How do you order your internal factors?

INTERNAL

Will



Capacity



Culture



Expertise



EXTERNAL

Market Demands

Trends

Expertise



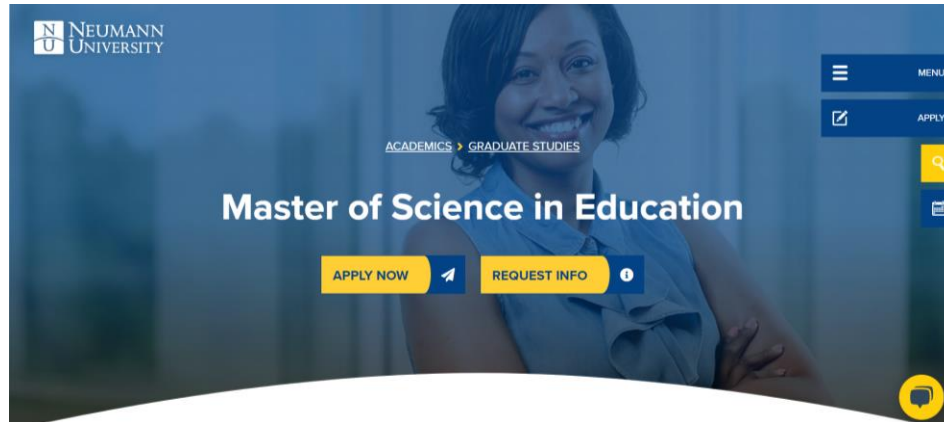
The Neumann University Story

- Vision for the future



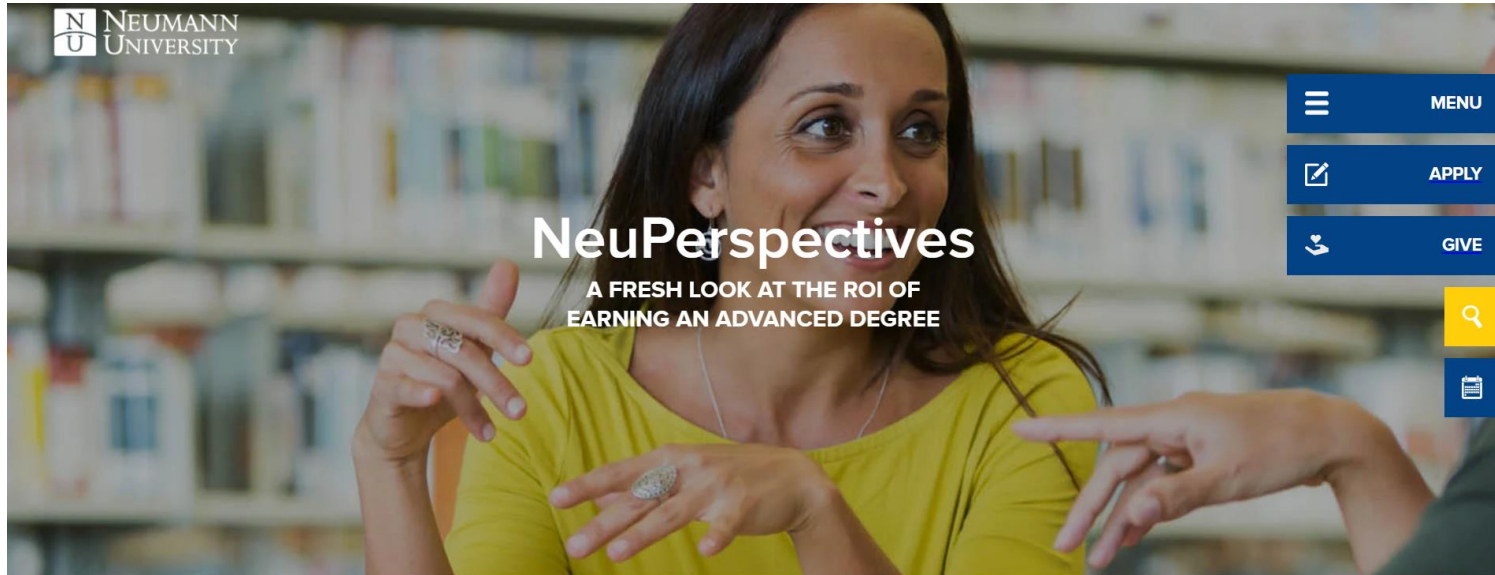
Home > Academics > Graduate Studies > School of Nursing and Health Sciences > M.S. in Nursing Programs

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAMS



The Neumann University Story – Key Learnings

- Leadership change management
- Internal gaps and strategy for enablement



A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and have their left hand near a laptop keyboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is white text that reads: "Does your current student retention model extend to online students' needs?".

Does your current student retention model extend to online students' needs?



Saint Peter's University Story

The Saint Peter's University Story

Online growth through student retention



Student Success - Saint Peter's University

- Goal to expand into the online landscape for long term growth
- Current resources in place for traditional students not able to scale into online landscape
- Goal of partnership to work with someone trusted and established with online student success model (RISE model)

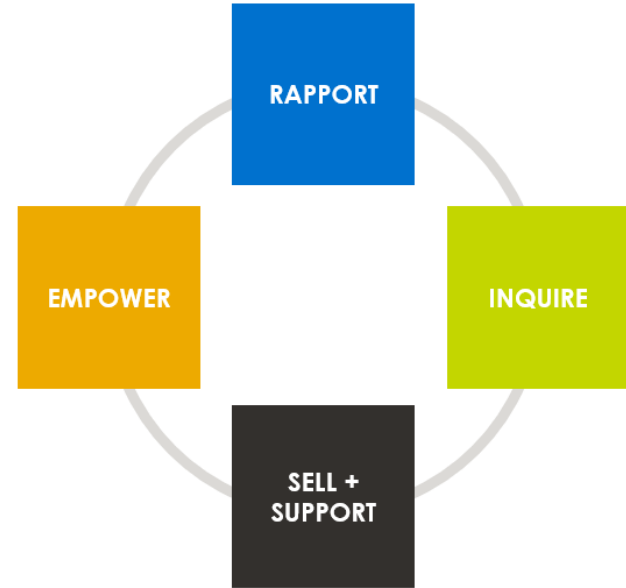
Culture of Coaching + the RISE MODEL

RAPPORT: Establish a strong foundation to build a lasting and successful relationship with each student.

INQUIRE: Ask powerful and thought-provoking questions. Understand the student's core objectives along with their motivations and objections.

SELL + SUPPORT: Help students with guidance, information, process support, and an understanding of specific admissions and program requirements from inquiry to graduation.

EMPOWER: Enable students to take ownership of their own actions, journey, and goals.



Student Success – RISE Model

Retention Rates across Campus Partners

- Enrollment Coaches transition into Success Coaches becoming prospective student's primary contact from admittance through graduation
- RNL Benchmarks across campus partners:
 - 85% Admitted Student to Registered New Student
 - 88.5% Active students enrolled in the next academic period
 - 70% New Start to Graduation Rate



Take aways and
resources

Take Aways

Higher Education is Changing, how will you respond?

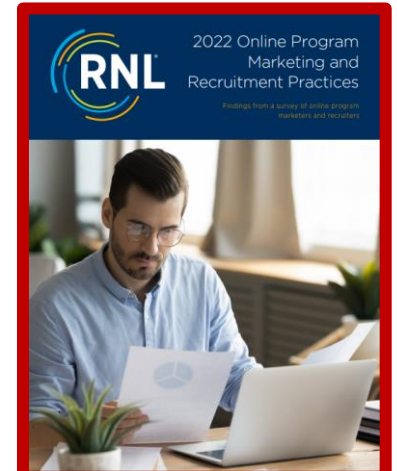
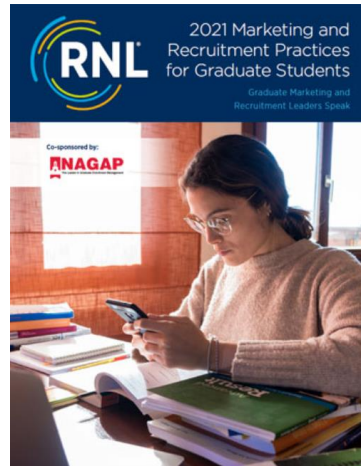
- The market is changing, and universities must as well
 - A growth strategy must include more online programs and modalities.
 - We can't apply old practices to new modalities and expect that they will be successful.
 - Speedy response to initial inquiry, application, and other contact is expected and those who meet those expectations will benefit from increased demand.
- Three institutions' stories address examples of responses to marketing, program development, and student success
- Research resources aid in insights to help guide your institutional strategy
- The panel is available to engage in your questions and discuss topics shared further

Key takeaways: RESEARCH

- A growth strategy must include more online programs.
- Graduate offerings should include a hybrid and/or online option.
- We can't apply old practices to new modalities and expect that they will be successful.
- The pandemic advanced, but did not significantly accelerate, demand for online/hybrid programs – these have been in demand for years.
- Speedy response to initial inquiry, application, and other contact is expected and those who meet those expectations will benefit from increased demand.
- What other takeaways do you have from this session?



RNL's Graduate and Online Reports



Continue the Conversation – Contact Us



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Thank you

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