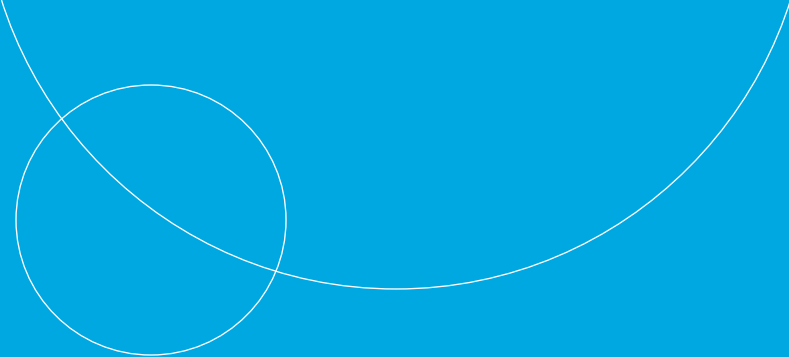rnl national conference
leading ai innovation
empowering higher education

Digital Lead Generation Strategies for Terminal Degrees

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Today's Topics

- Graduate versus undergraduate motivations

- Understanding the digital marketing landscape for terminal degrees

- Building a DLG strategy

- Leveraging your full-funnel data

Graduate versus undergraduate student motivations and concerns
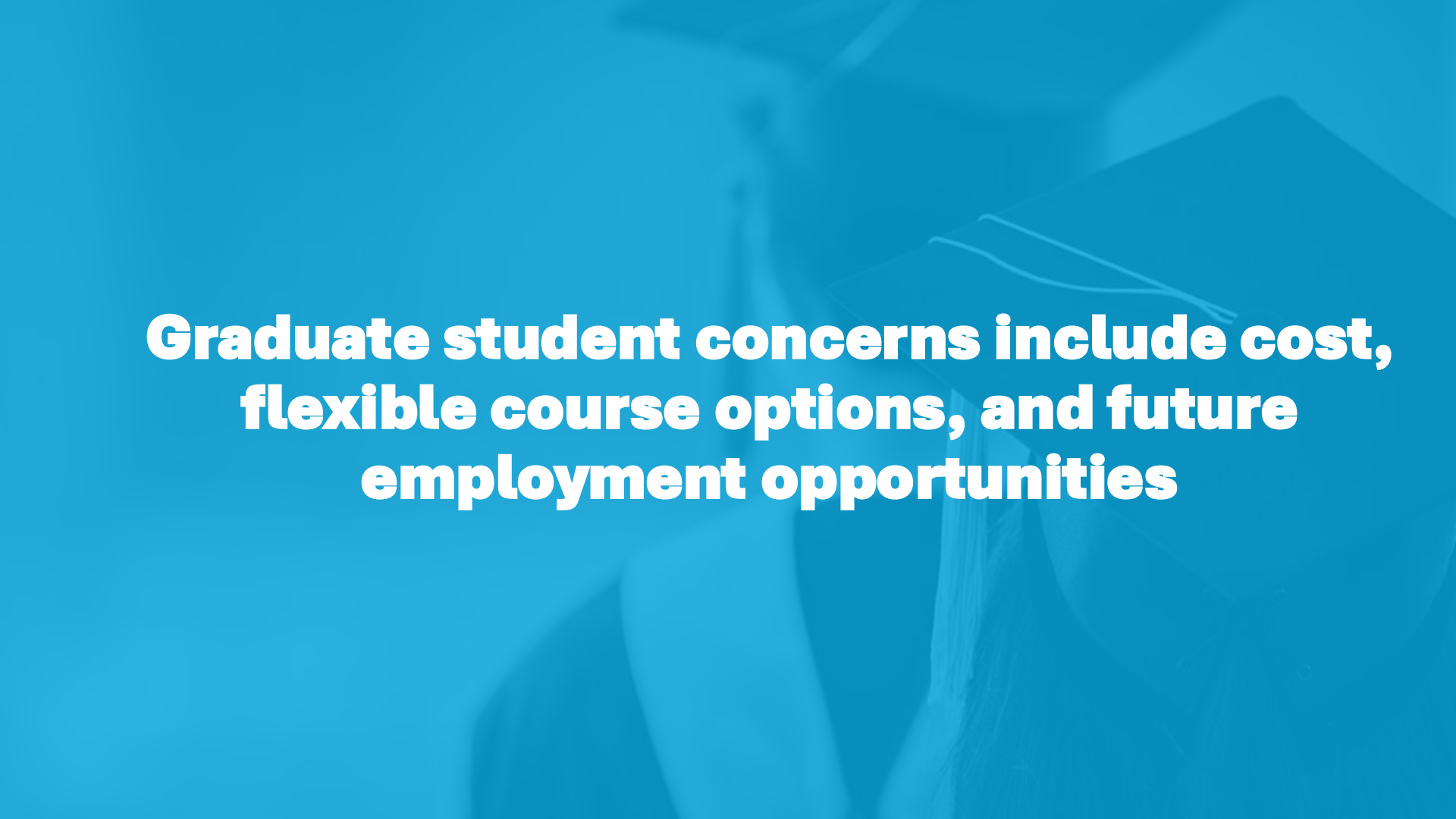
1

Primary motivations for graduate enrollment

Motivation by age

MOTIVATION	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
To change careers	9%	18%	19%	20%	14%
To advance my career	85%	75%	73%	67%	54%
Personal reasons	7%	7%	8%	13%	32%

76% To advance my career

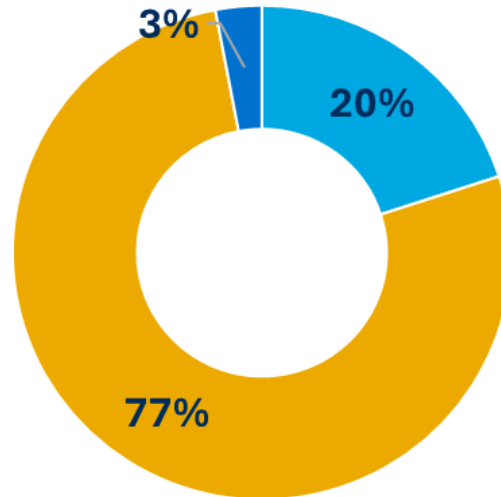**8%** Personal reasons

16% To change careers
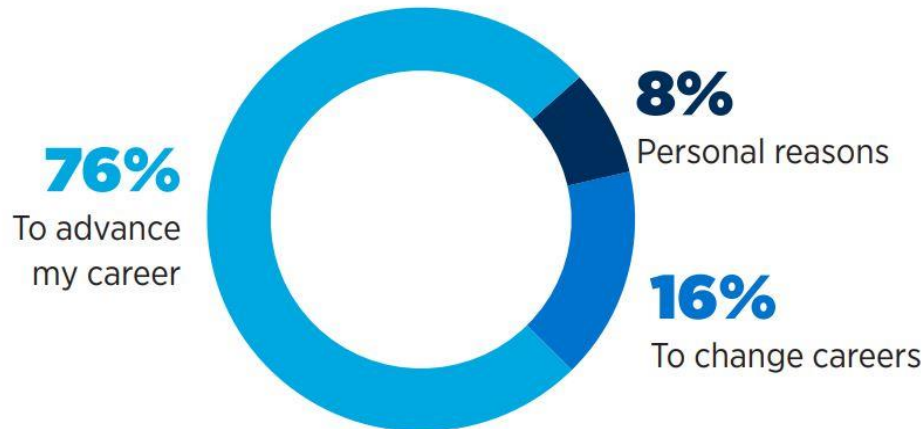
76%

of graduate students are motivated to enroll to advance their careers.

Graduate student concerns include cost, flexible course options, and future employment opportunities

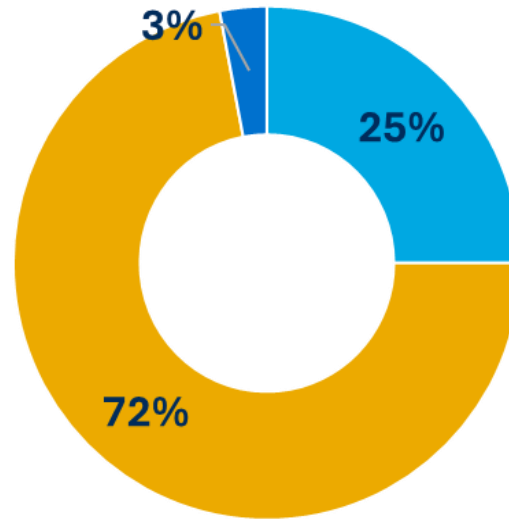# How important is cost to graduate students who are not yet enrolled?

Neutral: somewhat important, neutral or somewhat unimportant

3%

20%

77%

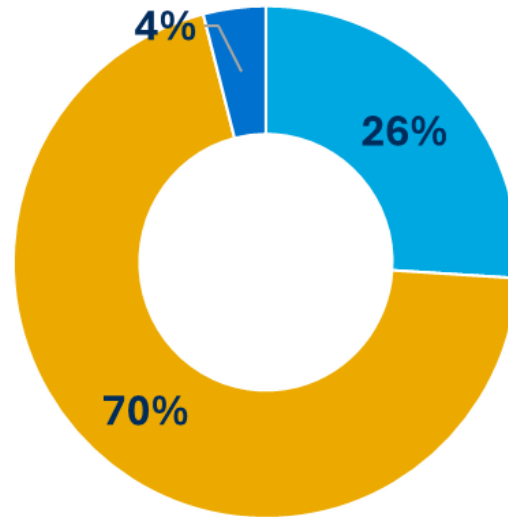■ Neutral   ■ Important or Very Important   ■ Not Important

How important are flexible course options to graduate students who are not yet enrolled?

3%

25%

72%

- ■ Neutral
- ■ Important or Very Important
- ■ Not Important

How important are future employment opportunities to graduate students who are not yet enrolled?

4%

26%

70%

■ Neutral   ■ Important or Very Important   ■ Not Important

Graduate students are applying to multiple programs

To how many schools/programs did/will you apply?

33%	**40%**	**17%**	**10%**
1	2	3	4 or more

Number of schools applied to by format

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	ALL ONLINE	PARTIALLY ONLINE	ALL CLASSROOM
1	27%	40%	32%
2	44%	39%	34%
3	20%	13%	17%
4 or more	9%	7%	17%

Undergraduate priorities in 2022 vs. 2024

PRIORITIES (ALL STUDENTS: STUDENTS PICKED TOP 2 PRIORITIES)	2022	2024
A job offer upon graduation	49%	63%
Specific skills for the workplace	65%	59%
To have fun on campus	28%	31%
Networking abilities	18%	23%
I'm doing this because it is expected of me	6%	6%

60% of prospective undergraduate students wonder if college is worth the time, money, and effort (2024)

Undergraduate concerns

- Undergraduate students are most interested in kickstarting their career or advancing their skills

- Many students are concerned about the cost of college

- These concerns increase as students get closer to attending college

73%
I don't know if I can (or my family can) afford college

93%
I'm concerned about the cost of college

Student motivation trends for terminal degrees

JD Trends in Motivation

What's changed in the last decade?

High-paying salaries, prestige and furthering career goals were at the top of the list for why students wanted to go to law school **over a decade ago.**

In 2010, less than 50% of first-year law students said contributing to the public good strongly influenced their decision to attend.

Other influences include financial stability, prestige, and career advancement.

70%

Of students reported social justice, helping others, or lifting their community as the main drivers for them to attend law school. (2022)

PharmD Trends in Motivation

Wide range of career paths

Flexible working hours & job security

To make an impact on people's health & well-being

MD Trends in Motivation

Stimulation, interest, and engagement

Financial security

Career opportunities and career advancement

What do they all share in common?

A desire to make change or help people

The opportunity for advancement and stability

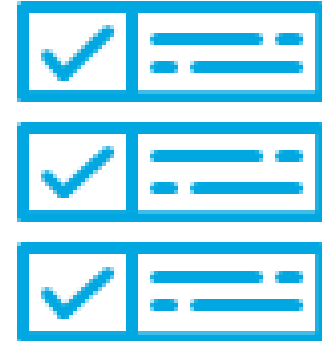The prestige associated with the career

The digital marketing landscape for terminal degrees

2

Setting the scene: a competitive landscape

Students

- Test scores for the LSAT, MCAT, or PCAT

- Undergraduate GPA and prerequisites

- Application best practices

- Discourse around the admissions and selection process

Institutions

- Competitive digital marketing space

- Pressure on career outcomes and access to experiential learning

- Institutions' academic reputation frequently dictated by rankings

How to win

Yielding the right students

- Address student motivations and concerns

- Inspire a sense of belonging through your brand messaging and digital strategy

- Showcase student success stories

- Focus on your speed to lead

- Foster connection

65%

Of graduate students indicate that a personalized response is important or very important when considering a program.

Building a DLG strategy

3

Measuring effectiveness in digital marketing

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR MARKETING SPEND?	SMALL	MID-SIZE	LARGE
Meeting enrollment targets	87%	85%	74%
Number of leads	55%	69%	71%
Quality of leads	55%	65%	56%
Cost per lead	35%	44%	53%
Net revenue targets	32%	29%	21%
Happy stakeholders (faculty, administrators, etc.)	29%	29%	41%

Know what your KPIs are before launching your digital lead generation campaign(s)!

71%

Of large institutions said number of leads was how they
assessed effective marketing spend.

Identifying goals for DLG

- **Start with Awareness:** Before applications and enrollment, how many people need to know about your program? Define your target audience and estimate the reach you need to achieve your goals.

- **Data-Powered Insights:** Uncover the potential in your program by analyzing past enrollment data and competitor strategies. Look at what competitors are doing and student trends outside of your programs. This can help set realistic benchmarks and informs your goals.

- **Understanding the Conversion Funnel:** Not everyone who sees your program, or even fills out form will apply. We analyze historical conversion rates to estimate how many need to be aware, fill, out a lead, and actually apply to generate enough applications for your enrollment goals.

- **Work Backwards for Success**: Start with your desired enrollment number. Using conversion rates, we determine the budget required to generate enough leads and applications, ensuring you reach the right audience with the right message.

Competitive Analysis

Understanding how you stand out in the market

- **Deep Discovery:** We go beyond the surface of your existing programs.

- **Beyond the Obvious:** We don't just ask you what you know about your students.

- **Research Powerhouse:** We don't stop at your program. We utilize a multi-pronged research approach:

  - ○ **Keyword Research**

  - ○ **Social Listening**

  - ○ **Market Trends**

Let's talk budget.

- **Data-Driven Approach:** We leverage extensive data from past client campaigns across various program types (IT, Business, Healthcare, Engineering) to establish average Cost-per-Lead (CPL) benchmarks.

- **Budgeting Foundation:** Using historical data.

- **Beyond Averages:** We understand averages are just a starting point.

- **Multi-Channel Optimization:** We go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach.
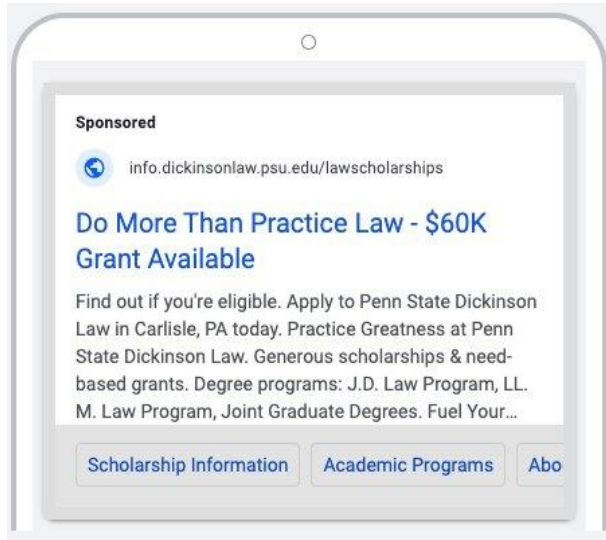
RNL Partner Success

4

What does it mean to constantly optimize?

Continuous Improvement for Peak Performance

- **Never-Ending Optimization:** We don't set your campaign and forget it.

- **Data-Driven Decisions:** By constantly monitoring campaign data, we identify areas for improvement and make strategic adjustments.

- **Program-Specific Tweaks:** We understand that each program has unique needs.

Penn State Dickinson Law

Sponsored

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Scholarship Information | Academic Programs | Abo

Ad copy that addresses JD student motivations with "do more than practice law" + an attractive scholarship hook

Ad group variation that can identify "juris doctor" searches from "law degree" searches, etc. and allow us to favor patterns that are most effective and negate things that *don't work*.

Indicators of success

May 2023-April 2024 Performance:

- 1,429 conversions

- 769,740 impressions

- 10,856 clicks

- 1.41% CTR

- 13.16% Conversion Rate

- $19 CPL

Mercer University PharmD

Seasonal keyword research that allows us to maximize the budget when there is more opportunity for impression share.

Compelling headline copy that addresses PharmD motivations

Increased share of budget that goes towards highest intent channels without compromising clicks or lead volume

Indicators of success

May 2023-April 2024 Performance:

- 1,038 Conversions

- 975,050 Impressions

- 20,745 Clicks

- 2.13% CTR

- 5% Conversion Rate

- $48 CPL

Mercer University Law

Best performing ad on Meta in May 2024 includes ad copy that addresses JD motivations

Robust target audience strategy that considers *multiple* student interests to refine an audience efficiently

Appropriately exclude users who have already moved beyond this stage of the funnel

Indicators of success

**May 2023-April 2024 Performance:**

- 655 Conversions

- 973,143 Impressions

- 13,210 Clicks

- 1.36% CTR

- 4.96% Conversion Rate

- $36 CPL

A Dynamic Approach for Market Changes

- **Market Fluidity:** We understand the education landscape is constantly evolving. Our strategies adapt to market trends, ensuring your program stays relevant and attractive to prospective students.

- **Experience Pays Off:** With extensive experience across diverse program types, we leverage historical data and ongoing optimization to refine our approach, consistently yielding better results over time. This is also why long-standing clients may see better results.

- **Tailored for Today:** Again, We don't rely on static methods. Deep program discovery combined with data-driven optimization ensures your strategy remains dynamic and effective in today's ever-changing market.

Quick tips for inquiry nurturing

- Inquiry nurturing for grad students: the need for speed

- Graduate students are more likely to want to interact with a recruiter or counselor than a faculty member during their search.

- How easy is it for a student to speak to an advisor or recruiter?
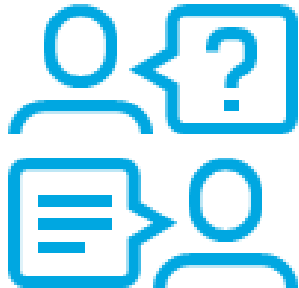
86%

Of graduate students expect to hear from programs of interest within 24 hours.

Leveraging your full-funnel data

5

42% of marketers said they do not have visibility into the performance of their leads within the funnel.

Envision Dashboard: full-funnel reporting with RNL

The Envision Dashboard's capabilities include:

✓ Assess performance by channel and program

✓ Evaluate market demand by program

✓ Understand market investment by program

45% of higher education marketers report that **conversion rate analysis** (tracking conversion rates at various stages in the recruitment funnel) is the most effective tool or method to enhance the success of their current recruitment strategies.

Working backwards from down-funnel data

Attainable, shared goals lead to…

An efficient DLG strategy that can be optimized using…

Down-funnel data to understand your audience and adjust your goals

How to win

Analyze where students get stuck in the funnel and adjust your strategy accordingly.
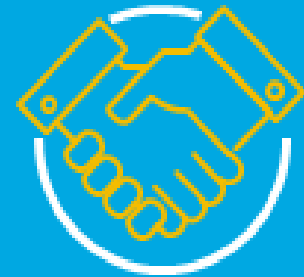
Benefits of investing in a full-funnel approach

Finding out what works best!

✓ Track the number of stealth applicants

✓ Determine what ads and platforms produce the highest **quality** lead, not just the most leads, and re-invest budget there

✓ Dive deeper into your budget allocation

✓ Full-funnel insights tell us that it's not a one size fits all!

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scan here