The Peter S. Bryant Marketing & Recruitment Excellence Awards

Presented at the 2018

Ruffalo Noel Levitz National Conference

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2018 Winners

Barry University

Bates Technical College

Weber State University

Awarded by

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Barry University
(Miami Shores, Florida)

- **Yvette Brown Koottungal—Vice President for Enrollment & Digital Strategies**
- **Roxanna Cruz—Associate Vice President, Recruitment and Admissions**
- **Michel Sily—Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Marketing**

Barry University is a four-year private institution located in Miami Shores, Florida that enrolls 7,400 students. With a Catholic liberal arts heritage, the university offers more than 100 programs, from bachelor's through doctorate degrees.

In 2015, there was indication on campus that current recruitment practices weren't serving the university as well as they could. The president asked Vice President for Enrollment and Digital Strategies Yvette Brown Koottungal to head up a council to create a plan that would boost enrollment.

"We were looking at initiatives—process improvements, marketing automation, staff augmentation, any low-hanging fruit that we could get done, and through conversations with that council, the question was, 'Where do we go next?'" Brown Koottungal said. The council answered by turning to Ruffalo Noel Levitz for an outside perspective.

Thinking outside the box

Barry University began using RNL Demand Builder, Advanced FinAid Solutions, and recruitment consulting with RNL in the winter of 2015-16 with a goal of getting the fundamentals right. This put them on a path to create their first annual marketing and recruitment plan and a solid communications flow. A robust email program for freshman and transfer students was created through custom email consulting. Concurrently, the campus transitioned to using a CRM that would better suit their needs.

"We were changing a lot of processes for people who were used to doing things the old way, and trying to be supportive of the new team that we had out and about. It was pretty hectic for a while," Brown Koottungal said.

The old call center was transformed into an engagement center to work with admissions in a new way, and the university went from having one open house per year to more than 15 types of on-campus events. Using data, the team found better ways to attract sophomores, juniors, and seniors earlier and reach a higher yield through on-campus programming and engagement.

"We were able to really brainstorm and create a plan of the future—to bring our recruitment practices to the 21st century," said Roxanna Cruz, associate vice president, recruitment and admissions.

A year into the process, the university implemented ForecastPlus to further support recruitment efforts. Most recently, they conducted a lost student analysis as well as a curriculum analysis. In addition, campus saw cumulative positive effects over time through the purchase of sophomore and junior names.

"During the many conversations with RNL, we were constantly being challenged to think outside the box and explore ways to attract and engage with students. It was a good process to go through because it gave us the confidence to move forward with some of these big ideas and big initiatives," Cruz said. "With the [RNL] partnership, we were able to stay on track and really accomplish things that may have taken us out of our comfort zone."

Notable achievements

As a result, the university has seen larger admit pool and a double-digit increase in deposits. Other success include:

- A 69 percent increase in freshman enrollment from 2015 to 2018 (from 394 to 664 students).
- A 98 percent increase in total applications (from 6,101 in 2015 to 12,063 in 2018).
- Freshman admits more than doubled between 2015 and 2018, from 1,678 to 3,558 (a 112 percent increase).

Going forward

The current focus is on forward-thinking strategic planning—to engage in more meaningful conversations with stakeholders about where the university is headed next. With RNL, the team is navigating more strategies that engage the campus community and set Barry University up for future success.

"This is very different from your standard relationship, where somebody gives you a plan and they disappear for a while," Brown Koottungal said. "It's active, it's ongoing. RNL provides us with actionable data that we use throughout the recruitment cycle to assess the need for any adjustments to meet goal."

Bates Technical College
(Tacoma, Washington)

- **Kym Pleger—Director of Admissions and Marketing**

Bates Technical College is a two-year public institution that offers more than 50 associate degrees, academic certificates, and industry certifications. Located in the highly competitive, saturated urban environment of Tacoma, Washington, Bates is one of five community and technical colleges in the county alone, in addition to multiple state and private colleges nearby.

Consistent with nationwide technical college trends, enrollment had declined due to a stable local economy and lack of students coming back to school for job training. The college, as well as the state, had seen a 3-5 percent decline in FTE. Combined with Bates' need to boost FTE to compensate for a program area that was not sustainable to meet institutional goals, the college was presented with huge challenges.

Data to make a difference

Bates began work with Ruffalo Noel Levitz in 2016 for recruitment consulting and marketing analysis. "We knew that we were facing some serious enrollment challenges and needed help from experts throughout the nation," said Kym Pleger, director of admissions and marketing. "And, we really wanted to be sure that we did our due diligence in taking a good look at our practices at the college, and making changes where we knew we could make a difference."

"We had several different goals. One was that we knew we were going good work, but we couldn't measure that work," Pleger said.

To begin the process, the college reorganized segmented departments, ultimately resulting in the creation of a functional admissions office. All areas related to outreach, recruitment, marketing, CRM, and admissions now fall under one umbrella so that Bates can track the student pipeline from prospect through their first day of class and beyond.

Next was the launch of a new CRM, which had a positive effect campuswide. The college established data baselines for student recruitment, which helped them determine numbers of new and returning students along with prospects to create an accurate enrollment funnel.

"It was really difficult at first," Pleger said. "I think higher education, and maybe community colleges in particular, can be averse or slow to change. There were a lot of nay-sayers in the beginning. Now, we've really come a long way and are much more willing to have the difficult conversations, knowing that we're not pointing fingers at each other, but that we all want to work together toward common goals of helping students succeed. I think people are really proud and they are breathing a sigh of relief, like, 'Okay, we made it. We made it through the really tough parts. Now how can we fine tune and keep moving forward.'"

Notable achievements

Bates has seen increases across multiple areas, most notably in FTE and headcount on a quarterly basis in their career training programs. The college has achieved the following:

- A 19 percent increase in fall-over-fall new-student FTE and 9 percent increase in new-student headcount from 2016 to 2017.
- A 37 percent increase in winter-over-winter new-student FTE and 15 percent increase in new-student headcount from 2016 to 2017.
- A 7 percent increase in spring-over-spring new-student FTE and 2 percent increase in new-student headcount from 2016 to 2018.

Going forward

More goals and strategies are on the horizon for Bates, as they continue working to boost their FTE numbers through recruitment and retention consulting.

"We're now shifting, not just to recruitment, but now starting to take a good look at retention, and it's opened a door for us in terms of really being able to analyze our efforts and start to set direction and set goals," Pleger said. "We never had a retention plan, and so we are starting to develop one this year. We're really pleased with where we are, but we still have a lot of work ahead of us."

Weber State University
(Ogden, Utah)

- **Bruce Bowen—Associate Provost, Enrollment Services**
- **Scott Teichert—Director of Admissions**

Weber State University is a four-year public university located in Ogden, Utah. The university enrolls more than 27,000 students and offers 225 certificate and degree programs and 14 graduate degrees.

With new campus goals to increase the number of out-of-state students, the university was looking to supplement the incoming student class with a fresh approach to their already ambitious recruitment and retention plan.

Planning for a big success

Weber State began work with Ruffalo Noel Levitz in 2016 for strategic enrollment planning and recruitment consulting. The university initially focused on new, out-of-state markets. Through the strategic enrollment planning process, the university saw the opportunity to make a broader impact and immediately began using RNL Demand Builder for search, RNL Applicant Cultivator, RNL Forecast*Plus*, Advanced FinAid Solutions, TrueCost Calculator, and RNL Digital Dialogue. Drawing on their strong regional footprint, Weber State wanted to ensure that students both enroll and persist to graduation.

"We've always been committed to having affordable tuition here at Weber, and in order to keep our tuition affordable, we knew that we had to adjust the mix of students, so that our in-state students still have strong access and our out-of-state students have access to the incredible opportunities here, too," said Scott Teichert, director of admissions. "So when we first started, we were really trying to figure out how to increase the number of out-of-state students. But what that conversation also dove into is, what are our value propositions for our in-state students as well? What are we doing, not only to get them in the door, but to keep them here at the institution?"

The university created initiatives for out-of-state students that helped campus see how the out-of-state demographics fit into the broader institutional mission and vision. The team also took a hard look at their financial aid offerings and revamped all of their scholarships. Thinking more like a private institution was also beneficial when developing initiatives. The data-centered approach to financial aid, combined with retention strategies, brought quick success for campus.

Notable achievements

Weber State's efforts paid off both in-state and out-of-state. Since 2017, the university has accomplished the following:

- According to current point-in-time analysis, a 36 percent increase in out-of-state freshman admits and a 12 percent increase for in-state freshmen.
- According to current point-in-time analysis, a 57 percent increase in out-of-state freshman enrollments, and an increase of 5 percent in-state.

Going forward

Weber State plans to continue finding new ways to use data. "The questions that we've been working through with RNL when it comes to data-driven decisions have been a game changer for us, because now we really are looking at the analytics to make important campus-wide decisions," Teichert said. "The ability to look at things as interconnected pieces has been really helpful for us as a campus. It's not just the admissions office facing the world. We're all connected to each other."

Seeing that connection has helped campus to understand the bigger picture, creating momentum for future initiatives. "I think, if I could alleviate anyone's fears, what I appreciated more than anything else with our particular RNL team, is that they've really, honestly tried to understand the nuances of our own campus," Teichert said. "We all are champions of each other's successes. It's been really refreshing, working with RNL, because I think they all understand that it's all interconnected, and I've really been impressed that RNL's success is directly tied to our success."