



RNL ONE Engagement Center Case Study

“It’s amazing” what’s happening at Texas State University

Freshman enrollment climbs 45.7 percent in five years while fundraising pledge dollars increase 105 percent from student-staffed calling program
Texas State University is the first public university in the United States to use the RNL ONE Engagement Center from Ruffalo Noel Levitz as a joint call center for both enrollment management and fundraising goals

With record enrollments and fundraising pledges pouring in, Texas State has had much to celebrate in recent years. The university has risen to become a first-choice for students in Texas and its undergraduate enrollment has swelled to make it the fourth-largest university in the state. At the same time, the university’s fundraising results from its student-staffed calling program have reached new record highs.

The university’s partnership with Ruffalo Noel Levitz began six years ago with inquiry-generating search management services for enrollment. This provides the enrollment team with lists of qualified inquiries and allow admissions staff to focus on inquiry follow up.

The partnership expanded to include support with managing inquiries, generating applications, and then equipping a 30-member student phone team to assist year-round with both enrollment and fundraising outreach. Texas State is the first public university to use our RNL ONE Engagement Center as a joint call center for both enrollment management and fundraising goals.

“We’ve had a phenomenal upward trend in terms of donors. We have more donors now than at any time.”

DAN PERRY | AVP, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

TEXAS  STATE
UNIVERSITY[®]

See the outcomes inside...

Enrollment outcomes

Here is what Texas State has accomplished with its enrollment through fall 2015:

- 45.7 percent growth in freshman enrollment over the past five years, from 3,930 to 5,727 freshmen.
- Quality has been maintained during the growth. Nearly half of entering freshmen, 48 percent, rank in the top quarter of their high school class, and nearly 90 percent rank in the top half of their class.
- Freshman diversity has steadily increased to 49 percent minority enrollment, including new highs for Hispanic and African American students.
- Overall enrollment for the university has broken records 18 years in a row, reaching a current high of 38,006 students.

“We’ve been able to help bring Texas State into the forefront as an option for prospective students.”

STEPHANIE ANDERSON | AVP FOR
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT



Fundraising outcomes

The university’s student phone team and RNL ONE Engagement Center have set new records since the phone team was established three years ago:

- 26 percent increase in overall donors, rising from 9,144 in 2012 to 11,525 in 2015.
- 105 percent increase in total dollars pledged via the student phone team, from \$178,220 in 2012 to \$365,127 in 2015.
- 53 percent increase in specified pledges from the student phone team, rising from 2,088 in 2012 to 3,189 in 2015.
- 34 percent increase in the student phone team average gift amount, rising from \$85.35 in 2012 to \$114.50 in 2015.
- Credit card gifts have increased from 36.5 percent in 2012 to 50.1 percent in 2015, an increase of 13.6 percentage points representing \$182,929 in instantly fulfilled pledges.
- 14 percentage point increase in the overall fundraising program’s contact rate for phone calls, rising from 46 percent to 60 percent, accomplished through the data cleaning services of Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

Going forward, Texas State plans to seek continued growth in both areas, pushing its fundraising and enrollment beyond current levels.

Case study published with the
permission of Texas State University

Read comments from an enrollment leader at Texas State

“The enrollment numbers are amazing. Through focusing on an academic message, we’ve been able to help bring Texas State into the forefront as an option for prospective students. We always had the academic strength and programs, but now we’re being recognized. This past year, our applications hit a record 27,000 for incoming freshmen.

“Our call center has been hugely successful. It began when I got together with our new VP for advancement and we took advantage of an opportunity—we both are revenue generation for the university. So we formed a joint call center between advancement and enrollment management. Instead of two separate centers, we have one manager to manage all the resources.

“We believe we have a real benefit with our student callers who have experience in advancement/fundraising as well as enrollment management. So when we are asking an alum for a donation to a scholarship fund, the students can say, ‘I was just talking to a student the other night who can’t afford college unless they get scholarships.’ We can also tell a prospective student about the high commitment of alums to make sure scholarships are available. The message and the stories go back and forth.

“Over time, we have come to see Ruffalo Noel Levitz as a member of our staff—it’s like having a full-time consultant as a staff member. Our weekly statistics go to their staff as well as our staff. When I am reporting class and goals, I include them because they are part of our success. Every other week we do a conference call about where we are with the call center. It’s a dialogue and a relationship with lots of back and forth.

“I’m impressed with the data I get from Ruffalo Noel Levitz. It helps drive our decision making. One thing I like about them, in particular, is they have the breadth of knowledge that comes from working with other schools, so you know if you are on the right track. If you are doing this alone, you don’t know—is this good or isn’t it? I’m also impressed that Ruffalo Noel Levitz wants to work with us to try new things. They are willing to try things that stretch their comfort level as well as ours.

“I can’t thank them enough for all the guidance and assistance.”

Stephanie Anderson
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of
Undergraduate Admissions
Texas State University

Read comments from a fundraising leader at Texas State

“We’ve had a phenomenal upward trend in terms of donors. We have more donors now than at any time. We are seeing 20 percent year-over-year growth in our alumni association membership. We have also seen 70 percent growth in our family association. The real growth comes from building the base of donors, and the call center has been a major component of that.

“In our first year after we added the call center, we beat our best year within the prior four years, and in our second year, we exceeded our best by 1,000 donors. It helped us achieve our most successful fundraising year ever in fiscal year 2015.

“We manage the portion of the call center specific to fundraising. There is some distance with the enrollment side—we set our own goals, objectives, and work with the staff separately. It has gone super-smoothly. In some ways we would never know we were doing a joint center other than the affordable cost and space benefits of sharing it with another division.

“The collaboration happens through Ruffalo Noel Levitz and the call center manager—they have done a great job of listening to what we wanted to do. We have an annual focus with targets on where we want to be at the end of year, while admissions is more time sensitive. Having a joint call center gives the flexibility to ramp up and increase volume at certain key push times. There are high times and low times—students in admissions can be pulled over for a special project for one week, or a special push.

“One benefit, strategically, is that our manager hires and trains through the same process, whether for fundraising or admissions. All students go through fundraising calling first. They have to make the ask. This is the hardest calling you can do. We learn who is going to be more effective at fundraising, and who is more comfortable doing admissions which is a bit more of a soft approach. It has worked really well to hire jointly across the programs. Some students come in and feel they will like admissions better, but then find they are drawn to fundraising. Sometimes our seasoned fundraising callers want a break and can mix it up a bit with admissions.”

Dan Perry

**Assistant Vice President, University Advancement
Texas State University**

Learn more

Call **800.876.1117** or email [**ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com**](mailto:ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com) to find out how you can reap the significant, long-term benefits of combining your enrollment and fundraising hubs with the **RNL ONE Engagement Center from Ruffalo Noel Levitz.**