



## **Key audiences and messaging regarding Tuition Paid as a Worthwhile Investment**

**A supplement to the presentation at the RNL National Conference 2020**

### **Building the case when you are recruiting students (and their families)**

- Be sensitive to cost and financial aid being top factors in the decision to enroll.
- Emphasize the quality of the education you are providing and the unique opportunities that you offer.
- Share the stories of your current students and successful alumni.
- Be aware of sticker shock issues and be intentional in communicating what the actual cost of going to college is.
  - Use Net Price Calculators

### **Re-enforcing the messages while the students are currently enrolled (and sharing with the families)**

- Restate the value, at least annually (when tuition for the following year is announced), with messages from the President.
- Be able to explain, in percentages, where the tuition dollars go. Share the big picture of your budget allocations and reflect the percentage of dollars for key expenses like personnel and facilities.
- If your tuition is going up, be ready to explain why the extra dollars are necessary and how the student experience will be improved.
- Remind students of everything they have access to on your campus: Room and board, recreational facilities, Wi-Fi, library, top quality faculty and facilities (think about anything that would have value or a fee in the “real world”.) These messages are especially important when students are registering for classes or when tuition payments are due.
- Help the students to see the long-term picture of success, by actively giving them chances to interact with alumni
  - Track and publish employment outcomes for graduates
  - Track and publish graduate/professional school placement rates for undergraduates at four-year institutions and transfer rates for two-year college students to four-year institutions

- Invite alumni on campus to share their successes in person
- Use social media to highlight student success, educational quality, etc.
- Photos of alums in front of the signs where they work or go to grad school are in place in the career center – a tangible visual of what graduates of the college are doing with their degrees
- Conduct price sensitivity research to assess how students feel about your cost to attend
- Regular communications for families
  - Monthly parent newsletter sent via e-mail
  - Weekly updates from departments that the student is involved in (example music department)
  - Social media: Regular Facebook updates, Twitter, Instagram
  - Letter from the Parent Council regarding activities and topics of interest
  - Quarterly alumni magazines
  - Personalize email regarding child being on the dean's list
  - Letter from the President in January regarding activities/highlights from the year, and announcing the tuition for the following year (advance notice on the fees while framed in the context of the good things happening on campus. Effective way to prepare the family for the increase, while reinforcing the value of the college education).
  - Be mindful of the multiple communications students are having with parents on a DAILY basis.
- Send students off feeling positive so they want to maintain engagement with the college
  - Reflections of their college experience during the senior year
  - Celebrations around graduation

### **Continue to share these messages with recent alumni**

- These are the students who are dealing with the bulk of their student debt before they have had a chance to reach successful points in their career.
- Keep them feeling positive about their experience and keep them engaged with the college in the early years.
- Help them to connect with other alumni in their area for networking.
- Collect and document their outcomes – employment and graduate school details.

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