

7 Effective Faculty-Delivered Student Recruitment Strategies



Not sure how to effectively engage faculty in student recruitment?

The seven proven strategies described in this paper are designed to help you focus on faculty-delivered student recruitment with clarity and confidence. If executed well, the recommended strategies will enhance (1) faculty/student connections, (2) student awareness of academic programs and related student opportunities, and (3) conversion rates. Furthermore, some would argue that faculty interactions with prospective students lays the groundwork for improving retention once enrolled.

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Tips for Engaging Faculty

Remember that faculty recruiters are volunteering their most precious asset--time. Use their time productively.

Create a win-win scenario. Ask faculty to engage in a recruitment activity that leverages their personality, passion, and knowledge-base.

Show that their contribution to the recruitment effort mattered. Provide data demonstrating the "fruits of their labor." Recognize their contribution in a meaningful way.

1 Faculty are the content experts of your institution's academic programs, yet they seldom have the marketing resources or skills to transform their expertise into information that distinguishes their offerings from those of competitors and compels prospective students to take a second look. Dedicate time to interviewing faculty with the goal of identifying three to five selling points for each program. Utilize these selling points in promotional materials, web pages, etc.

2 Faculty are the personification of your institution's educational product. They have

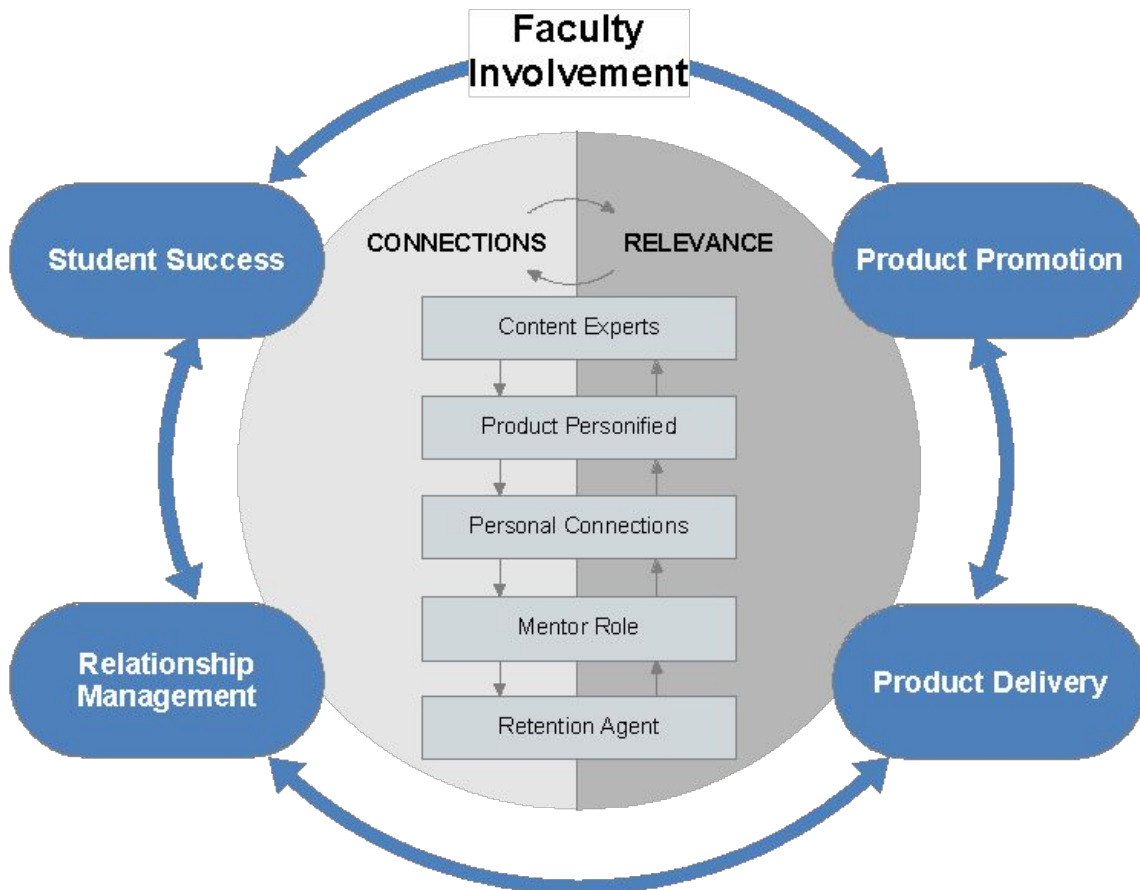
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the potential to bring academic programs to life--making them dynamic and real. In order for faculty to achieve this objective, you must place them in front of interested students (e.g., on-campus interviews, area receptions, information sessions, open houses) and position faculty for success (e.g. related training, the right venue, tools to enhance the encounter).

3 No internal constituents are more influential over the college decision-making process than your faculty. While the information they provide does influence prospective student decisions,

the personal connections they make are exponentially more powerful? Meaningful relationships are typically not forged through a single encounter, such as through school-sponsored events. There must be a sustained period of interaction between a faculty member and a potential student for a relationship to be born. Utilize technologies such as blogging, authenticated web chat, Instant Messaging, and social networks like Facebook to create the conditions for such a relationship to develop.

4 Another strategy for creating relationships that influence college



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choice is mentoring. Ideally, mentoring focuses on the educational, career, and life goals of the prospective student. Such a mentoring relationship can be forged through rolling advising occurring in person, on the phone, or online soon after the student has been admitted to the institution. Another approach to mentoring prospects involves coordinated contacts throughout the recruitment cycle culminating at orientation.

5 Faculty can initiate the journey toward student success prior to enrollment by engaging future students in learning activities. Visiting college classes, participating in webinars, promoting effective learning strategies, summer readings, bridge programs, early college, academic camps, and the like can begin the transition from dependent to independent learner.

6 Ultimately, the personal relevance of academic programs is what attracts students to an institution. Too often, program reviews are designed to fulfill a requirement, justify a program's existence, or maintain the status quo. Institutions that engage in this ritual with an eye toward market demand and learner preferences and needs will be significantly better positioned to recruit students than those who do not. Program innovation, in terms of curriculum and instructional delivery, that is learner-centered elevates an otherwise common program offering to a competitive, compelling solution to learner needs.

7 Finally, faculty must be trust agents of the institution--providing accurate, timely information. In an age of consumer skepticism, earned trust is an invaluable attribute. Prospective students will only trust the message if they trust the messenger. Simply claiming to have a "quality" program with "excellent" faculty is not enough. You must prove it. Proof points such as student and graduate testimonials, third party validation, and supporting outcome data (e.g., satisfaction studies, graduation rates, employment rates, acceptance rates to graduate and professional schools) must be delivered by trusted faculty.

Without question, student recruitment efforts void of extensive faculty engagement yield minimal results. In the end, the institution likely will be disappointed with enrollment results and faculty may not be teaching students that are the best fit for their programs. However, busy faculty must be convinced that their engagement in recruitment is not only in the best interest of the institution but also impacts the quality of teaching and learning. Absent a survival imperative, faculty must be courted to engage. You must effectively answer for them the question: "What's in it for me?" This is not a self-centered question as much as it is a question of prioritizing their commitments and time.

Be smart and strategic in seeking faculty engagement in student recruitment. Know your audience and what motivates them to take action.