Best Practices in Communicating with Adult Learners

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• William Fritz, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Penn State World Campus

• Margaret Bacheler, Director of Continuing Education, Penn State Brandywine
Best Practices from World Campus

Prospects and Applicants
# World Campus Student Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Learners</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA Residents</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
World Campus Largest Enrolling Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS in Business (825)</td>
<td>Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in Homeland Security (672)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS in Business Administration (581)</td>
<td>MPS in Human Resources and Employment Relations (660)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS in Nursing (535)</td>
<td>MPS in Supply Chain Management (423)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS in Information Sciences and Technology (448)</td>
<td>Master of Public Administration (319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS in Criminal Justice (434)</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration (291)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Through the Funnel

Prospect → Applicant → Offer → Enroll
Prospect to Applicant
Applicant to Offer

Applicant → Offer
Offer to Enroll
Best Practices from Brandywine

Orientation Through Graduation Phase
Adult Learner Overview

• Adult learners enrolled in Degree Completion Program in Business (BSBUC)- Collaboration with Berks, York, Abington Campuses
  • Seven week accelerated BSBCC courses offered in a hybrid format

• Ideal Student
  • Has completed 45-60 college credits
  • Is highly motivated to complete their undergraduate degree
  • Professional experience relevant to the application of the learning objectives
  • Program attractive to veteran students, mothers of teenagers, and PSU reenrollments
Picture of Accelerated BSB Students
Goals of the Communication Process

• Building Self-Confidence
• Addressing Imposter Syndrome
• Overcoming Math Anxiety
• Admissions outreach
  • Designated transfer counselor
  • Multiple touchpoints throughout the admissions funnel
  • Attention to detail for transfer credit equivalencies and course substitutions
• Developing the Identity as a Student- getting excited about joining the PSU family
Becoming a Penn State Student

• Transfer orientation
  • In-person and virtual opportunities
  • Covers academic concerns and logistical one: PSU ID cards, parking pass, access accounts, etc.

• Program concierge model - a case management approach to follow the student through the inquiry phase to the graduation phase

• Campus-based single point of contact

• Readiness to Learn video - to explain the accelerated course format and reinforce the competency of professionalism
Communication Best Practices

Year 1 Communications
• Building their student identity
• Multiple touchpoints for advising- beginning to get them to focus on ownership of their degree audit
• Myth busting- Adult students are “needy” what they call about, isn’t what it is really about...
• Adult related activities- veterans luncheon

Year 2 Communications
• Building their professional identity
• Advising through upper-level classes
• Internship prep
• Career Services Workshop
• Graduation prep
  • Academic
  • Social
  • Emotional
Future Programming Ideas

My Wish List for the Future:

• Building their identity as a researcher
• Expanding Career Services workshop to include alumni networking
• Embed a career coaching model into the program
• Adult Student Ambassadors
• Student Testimonials video
Harrisburg communications – prospective phase

• Receive email via listserv and respond with canned response to encourage more questions and eventual application
• What does your campus do?

Wish List

• More thorough follow up (prospective to pdacc)
• More adult services on campus (i.e. adult lounge, adult support and adult student events/activities)
• Mentoring program
Questions, Comments, Suggestions???

• Contact information

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