Key Indicators of a Strong, Successful Enrollment Strategy: 
*Edison State and Blackboard Student Services Case Study*

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*Edison State Community College*

Emily Ward, Executive Director of Strategic Development  
*Blackboard Student Services*
Session Objectives

1. Examining the changing landscape of the new student learner
2. Highlighting lessons learned and best practices across recruiting, retention and advising and the importance of workforce development
Examining the Shifting Landscape of the New Student Learner
Today’s Learners Span
5 generations

- **TRADITIONALISTS**: pre 1946
- **BABY BOOMERS**: 1946 to 1964
- **GEN X**: 1964 to 1979
- **MILLENNIALS**: 1980 to 1995
- **GEN EDGE/Z**: 1996 to TBD

Numbers:
- 75M: TRADITIONALISTS
- 80M: BABY BOOMERS
- 60M: GEN X
- 82+M: MILLENNIALS
- TBD: GEN EDGE/Z
Considering new or soon-to-be students of all ages

Objective: Better understand the needs and preferences of the new adult learner

- Are we still communicating with the right tools and messages?
- Have we made the right investments in technology and outreach?
- Are our systems set up to support these generations?
- Do we have the best services in place to care for students?
- Are our processes and approach in need of a makeover?
Key Factors

Outcomes

Being realistic about preparing for the future and understanding what it is going to take to succeed and thrive

Messaging

Recruiting learners will require hyper-custom communications and transparent information about pertinent details

Services

Offering both high-touch and digital options that mimic the highly adaptable services found outside of education
Millennials are more likely to say they are not using their degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Yes, I am taking full advantage of my degree</th>
<th>Yes, I am taking advantage of my degree somewhat</th>
<th>No, I am not really using my degree</th>
<th>I do not have a degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mil-Y</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mil-M</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mil-O</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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</table>
Young Millennials are much more likely to return to college

- **Yes, very likely**: 63% (Millenials Y), 46% (Millenials M), 28% (Millenials O), 15% (Gen X)
- **I plan to go back to school someday but not in the next few years**: 26% (Millenials Y), 25% (Millenials M), 36% (Millenials O), 30% (Gen X)
- **No, I am not planning on returning to college**: 11% (Millenials Y), 29% (Millenials M), 36% (Millenials O), 55% (Gen X)

Legend:
- Yes, very likely
- I plan to go back to school someday but not in the next few years
- No, I am not planning on returning to college
Affordability is by far the top attribute in selecting an institution

CITE AFFORDABILITY AS MOST IMPORTANT IN CHOOSING AN INSTITUTION

Survey Results: All Respondents, By Generation

What are the most important factors or attributes that you will consider when deciding on a college or university?

- Affordability: 66%
- Convenience: 24%
- Overall reputation and ratings: 31%
- Size of the institution: 12%
- Caliber of faculty: 18%
- Program offerings: 47%
- Campus life: 14%
- Sports & Extracurriculars: 6%
- Career placement rates: 25%
- Location: 41%
- Availability of online: 25%
- Other: 3%
Financial aid services are viewed as most important to student success and completion

59% Cite financial aid services as most important to success

53% Say academic advising and support are most important

But, those services score the worst in terms of experience across all generations

32% Report financial aid services are the most negative experience at college

25% Report career services as the most negative experience at college
PILLARS OF ENROLLMENT GROWTH

- Strategic Planning & Research
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Workforce Development
Strategic Planning & Research
Strategic Planning

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR GROWTH
Program Viability: findings

GREATEST OPPORTUNITY for GROWTH

- Finance
- Business Intelligence
- Data Analytics
- Health Admin. /Mgmt
MISSION STATEMENT

Edison State Community College provides the learning opportunities, support service and commitment that enable students to complete their educational goals and realize their dreams.
Proposed programs are evaluated and ranked by national potential.

The Guided Pathways student success model provides an ideal framework for our career-focused approach.

Ohio has provided robust resources to assist community colleges, allocated by student success measures.

Edison State receives about 3% more in state funding based upon performance measures in contrast to pure enrollment numbers; funding about 50% of our operating budget.
“Education is the key to equality and to opportunity... and everyone—no matter where they were born or who their parents are—deserves the chance to succeed, to get a good-paying job, to raise a family comfortably and to be secure in their future.”

GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
Recruitment & Retention
Strategic Messaging APPROACH

BRAND
Mission, Vision, Values

TARGET AUDIENCES
Segments and Personas

MESSAGING PILLARS
Career Outcomes, Experience, Schedule, Location, Quality

OVERALL MESSAGING THEME

PROGRAM MESSAGING
Benefit for target audience

MARKETING & MEDIA
Outreach Channels and Media Mix
Expectations are high for follow-up

If you left a voicemail for or sent an email to a college or university, how quickly would you expect to receive a response?

Survey Results: All Respondents

- **Within 4 hours**: 15%
- **Within 2 days**: 17%
- **Within 24 hours**: 55%
- **Within a week**: 10%
- **Over a week later**: 3%

**70%** Expect a response to a request for information, a voicemail or an e-mail within 24 hours.
Speed-to-Contact

*Positively impacts propensity to enroll*

![Graph showing Speed-to-Contact](chart.png)
Success Coaching

Approach

Career Objectives

Courses & Curriculum

The Student Experience

Enrollment & Financial Planning

Admissions Qualifications

Goal setting and Exposing obstacles
Career and program exploration
Financial obligations and resources
Personal obligations and time management
Self-guided decision making and commitment
Putting your RECRUITMENT MESSAGING to work

- Tackle affordability by talking about Return on Investment
- Make it easy to find program specifics
- Highlight reputation and accolades where you can
- Consider alumni, affinity partners, and employees a recruitment channel
- Keep your website current and mobile-friendly
- Respond quickly and thoroughly through all channels
Edison State: 5-Year Headcount

Headcount

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4450</td>
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Year  
Linear (Year)
### Edison State: 5-Year Full-Time Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>UG</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>554</td>
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<td>942</td>
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<td>816</td>
<td>907</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>885</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>954</td>
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**Full Time Equivalent**

(Total Annual Hours/30)
Blackboard campaign averaged 9 individual touch points per final registration, a number impossible by Edison State alone.

Edison State had a 14% enrollment increase in fall 2019, compared to increases of 3-5% annually since 2016.

Blackboard recruited students are retained 3% more often than in-house recruited students.

Edison State has had enrollment increases as a result of: increased transfer students from the Career and Technical Center, revised course and certificate names which focus on transfer without loss of credit, & continued pre-apprentice placements.

The Blackboard campaign was one component of an enrollment strategy that generated small increases in: online learning, dual enrollment, career tech transfers, non-credit to credit conversions, short-term certificate scholarships, and paid apprenticeships.
Engagement

- Define target audiences, goals, and benchmarks
- Create messaging and promotional materials
- Conduct multi-channel marketing campaign
- Assist motivated candidates through admissions steps
- Collect feedback via survey from candidates not returning

Target Audiences

- Inquiries: 516
- Incomplete Applicants: 1384
- Prior Students: 1580
Invaluable Student Survey Data

Note: Only prospects that provided feedback are included in these metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS NOT ATTENDING</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chose another school</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academically Unprepared</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/Program Outcomes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal – Family</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Outcomes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking Term Off</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Personal – Financial</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid/Cost Challenges</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule Options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal- Health</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entering Workforce</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Issues</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military Duty</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Academic Experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Financial Aid Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Not Available</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Internet or Computer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Registration Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Invaluable Coach Feedback

Personal Challenges
- Concerns about personal finances
- Time management/planning
- Lack of support network

Institutional Obstacles
- Financial Aid application and processing timeframes
- Transcripts delivery options
- Program enrollment caps, e.g. Nursing
People
Have a team of highly skilled advisors to provide consistent and timely answers

Technology
Streamline and automate processes for advisors and provide self-service to students

Data
Have critical, real-time insight into interactions, student satisfaction, and student risk

Students value PERSONAL support across the lifecycle
And this is reflected in STUDENT RESULTS
Workforce Development
Building a Strong Employer Funnel

Critical Ingredients for Success

- White Space Analysis
- Audience Segmentation
- Defined Marketing Plan
- Strong / Personalized Creative
- Communication Plan Development

- Develop a systematic approach to employer management, taking best practices of student enrollment management and applying them to developing and maintaining your employer funnel.
- Audit current collateral and creative assets to align with the ever-changing workforce demands, using data and insights gained from the employer research.
- Identify and continuously assess key performance indicators (KPIs) at each stage of the workforce development funnel to measure success.
- Incorporate technology to enable tracking and measurement to review partnership success, respond to employer needs and expectations and provide data for further change.
Employer Qualification

In-depth interviews with existing or potential employer partners

Surveys for quantitative and qualitative research

Analysis, report, and write-up of research findings

Interested employers are identified for potential partnership

KEY FINDING
Nearly all respondents were at least somewhat likely to recommend the University’s online programs to employees. Moreover, nearly half of all employer respondents would “definitely” recommend the University.

0 Not at all likely 2 Somewhat likely 9 Very likely 8 I definitely would

"We are finding it increasingly challenging to find qualified people in mid to senior leadership positions, as well as most technical positions. There are simply not enough people being training in these areas. The nexus of leadership and technology is also a concern."
Edison State Embraces the Workforce Challenge

- Career pathways approach at Edison State
- Customized business services
- Sponsored apprenticeship provider
- Short-term certificate grant award
- Learn and earn flexible course planning

“Preparing people of all ages for the workforce and careers are one of the most important things we need to do in Ohio”

CHANCELLOR GARDNER
Edison State believes that if we demonstrate value in our workforce services, then we will have strong enrollment. We reject the notion that community colleges only thrive when the economy is weak.

Our enrollment increases are a result of highly customized education to small cohorts of potential and incumbent workers. We offer highly tailored approaches designed to fit a single business or small group of businesses.

Edison State is a Registered Apprentice sponsor, allowing us to place apprentices in regional positions while completing all the required documentation.

Edison State was successful in lobbying for state funding to support short-term certificate enrollment to students enrolling in programs of 16 credits or less.

Edison State currently engages in education on a national level with Orbis, Hobart Industries, and Cargill.
Edison State

Partnership Priorities

• Partnership with Upper Valley Career Center is a state model

• Veterinary Tech Program is a partnership example

• New program development with Sinclair Community College
Questions to consider

1. How well can you forecast your enrollment funnel term-to-term based on data collected and analyzed?

2. How are you customizing or accelerating personalization and choice for the new learner?

3. How should you adapt the way you reach and support students today based on these preferences?
Community colleges are the embodiment of the American Dream and that dream is still alive in Ohio! Our mission is to open the gates to college by removing barriers, particularly financial barriers. State funding and teaching-focused campuses enable Edison State to offer small classes, high quality faculty, and the SAME college content for courses at a dramatically low cost!

EDISON STATE PRESIDENT - DR. DOREEN LARSON
THANK you

Learn more:
www.blackboard.com/studentservices
www.edisonohio.edu/