EMERGE EDUCATION

Institutional Growth Assessment



CONTENTS

Executive Summary....1

Marketing Diagnostic....2

- Expand program offerings to increase new female student enrollment....3
- Expand opportunities toward high-growth career fields....9
- Program reduction and strategic alignment....12
- Partner with an agency to create and implement a comprehensive website strategy....16
- Develop and optimize strategic branding, messaging, and content....21
- Optimize organic and military lead generation....35

Recruitment Diagnostic....38

- Strengthen lead engagement with a dedicated call center....39
- Make texting the focus of the marcom strategy....40
- Enhance CRM utilization and data-driven strategies for improved lead management and conversion....41
- Increase collaboration between the admissions and marketing teams to devise high-yield strategies....42
- Place priority on obtaining high-converting referral leads....43
- Optimize the lead-to-enrollment rate across all channels....44

Student Success Diagnostic....45

- Combine the AA and SSR roles into one position....46
- ***Your Institution*** must implement robust, data-driven retention reporting and intervention processes....47
- Foster more connections and opportunities for engagement and collaboration....49
- Re-engage students who are inactive or have stopped out....50
- Provide a partial cell phone bill reimbursement via payroll to employees and have them use their personal phones to text students in the interim....52

Technology Diagnostic....53

- Establish a single source of truth, whereby "all data should be stored in one centralized system....54
- Create a technology ecosystem schema and data dictionary that all users can access....55
- Develop a plan to provide services/support for peak-need periods during non-traditional business hours....56

Conclusion....58

Next Steps....59

Appendices....60

EMERGE EDUCATION

Institutional Growth Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an example that will be customized to you.

Over the course of 45 days, the Emerge Education team conducted our Institutional Growth Assessment, a comprehensive diagnostic of ***Your Institution's*** student lifecycle, examining the journey from awareness to initial inquiry through graduation for all online and residential certificate, associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. The goal of this diagnostic was to identify key factors influencing enrollment trends, retention, and overall student success while uncovering opportunities for optimization across marketing, admissions, academic support, and student engagement.

Our methodology included a thorough analysis of institutional data, stakeholder interviews, website and digital presence evaluation, lead source performance assessment, and a review of marketing and enrollment strategies. We also examined student retention patterns, academic support structures, and program-level insights to provide a holistic view of the student experience. Additionally, we did a diagnostic on processes across all functional areas to identify efficiencies, bottlenecks, and opportunities for improvement within the student journey.

Throughout this process, we collaborated closely with ***Your Institution's*** marketing, admissions, student success, and IT teams, all of whom were highly knowledgeable, forthcoming, and transparent. Their insights and willingness to share data and feedback played a crucial role in shaping our findings and recommendations.

This example represents marketing, recruiting, and retention recommendations to enhance Your Institution.

MARKETING DIAGNOSTIC



Summary

To assess the effectiveness of ***Your Institution's*** marketing efforts, we conducted a comprehensive evaluation. Our Institutional Growth Assessment diagnostic began with in-depth interviews with key marketing stakeholders to gain insights into current strategies, campaign execution, lead generation efforts, and perceived challenges. We also performed a detailed website and digital presence evaluation, analyzing user experience (UX), site navigation, messaging alignment, page engagement metrics, and conversion optimization to determine how effectively the website supports prospective student inquiries and applications.

In addition to qualitative insights, we conducted a rigorous data analysis of marketing performance metrics, including lead volume and conversion rates across paid and organic channels. We examined historical trends to identify shifts in prospect interest, engagement, and enrollment patterns. Our diagnostic also included a process review, mapping out key workflows related to lead capture, nurturing, and handoff to admissions to identify inefficiencies or bottlenecks that may impact enrollment outcomes. By integrating stakeholder perspectives, digital analysis, and data-driven insights, we developed a holistic understanding of ***Your Institution's*** marketing ecosystem and identified key areas or strategic improvement.

Your Institution has a strong foundation in marketing outreach, but there are key opportunities to refine its strategy for greater impact and enrollment growth. Our analysis identified ways to expand market reach, attract a more diverse student body, and position ***Your Institution's*** programs to align with high-demand career fields. Additionally, optimizing lead generation, strengthening branding and messaging, and improving website user experience (UX) will enhance engagement and conversion rates. The following findings and recommendations outline a strategic approach to broadening ***Your Institution's*** reach, improving its digital presence, and ensuring that marketing efforts drive measurable enrollment success.

Comprehensive Assessment

Findings #1-#2

Market Opportunity and Challenges for Your Institution

Your Institution has developed a robust program portfolio that effectively serves its core audience of military personnel and first responders through dedicated Learning Partner initiatives. Additionally, its business, leadership, and education programs broaden ***Your Institution's*** reach to a wider audience.

To further enhance ***Your Institution's*** appeal to female students, marketing strategies should highlight the aspects of ***Your Institution's*** programs that align with women's career priorities and life circumstances—such as flexibility, career advancement opportunities, social impact, and supportive learning environments—while leveraging its established online delivery model. Studies on female student motivations indicate that women often seek education that accommodates their schedules, provides clear career outcomes, and supports their roles as caregivers or working professionals.*

*Source: See Appendix B for full source list.

Your Institution's suite of online and residential programs enables ***Your Institution*** to offer a diverse range of degrees that cater to these key student segments. As part of the Emerge Education review, we conducted an in-depth analysis of ***Your Institution's*** existing programs, enrollment trends, degree conferrals, competitive market positioning, and labor market demand to identify opportunities for program expansion.

Finding #1: Program offerings do not properly align with the growing female demographic.

Currently, only 37% of ***Your Institution's*** student population is female. However, national and institutional data indicate that at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, women represent the majority of students in higher education—especially among adult and online learners.

Recommendation #1: Expand program offerings to increase new female student enrollment.

Your Institution has successfully built strong programs targeting predominantly male-dominated fields, such as the military (approximately 82% male) and firefighting (approximately 91% male). However, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Lumina Foundation, and IPEDS, women constitute 58% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. and approximately 60-65% of working adult (non-traditional) undergraduates. To expand its student reach, ***Your Institution*** should consider additional degree programs that align with high-demand career paths and attract both female and male students.

Below is a breakdown of recommended degree expansions by program level.

Associate's Degree Recommendations

Your Institution should consider expanding its Associate degree offerings to attract more female students while integrating industry-recognized certifications that enhance graduates' employability in high-demand fields. Incorporating certification components within associate programs provides immediate career value while creating pathways to ***Your Institution's*** bachelor's degrees, further strengthening students' long-term career opportunities.

Based on current workforce trends and ***Your Institution's*** strengths in online education and career-oriented programs, the following Associate degree recommendations align with both industry needs and existing bachelor's degree pathways at ***Your Institution***:

Associate of Arts in Medical Assisting (Certified Medical Assistant - CMA Certification)

- **Rationale:** Medical assisting is a fast-growing field, with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting 16% job growth (2022–2032)—much faster than average.
- **Program Benefits:** This degree combines practical medical skills with the CMA certification, making graduates immediately competitive in the healthcare job market.
- **Pathways to Bachelor's Degrees:**
    - B.S. in Healthcare Management
    - B.A. in Organizational Leadership: Healthcare Management
    - B.A. in Psychology: Healthcare Management
    - M.A. in Mental Health Counseling

Associate of Arts in Psychology (Mental Health Technician - MHT Certification)

- **Rationale:** Psychology is a female-dominated field, with over 75% of psychology graduates being women. This program prepares students for entry-level mental health support roles, a growing area given rising mental health awareness.
- **Industry Demand:** The Psychiatric Technician/Assistant field is projected to grow by 9% (BLS, 2022–2032).
- **Program Benefits:**
    - Equips students with a combination of theoretical psychology knowledge and practical mental health care skills.
    - Appeals to students seeking purpose-driven careers in mental health services.
- **Pathways to Bachelor's Degrees:**
    - B.A. in Psychology (Emphasizing Applied Psychology and Counseling Foundations)

Associate of Applied Science in Health Information Technology
(Registered Health Information Technician - RHIT Certification)

- **Rationale:** It provides a data-driven and technical approach to healthcare, preparing students for administrative and IT-related roles in the medical field.
- **Industry Demand:** The Medical Records & Health Information Specialist field is expected to grow by 8% (BLS, 2022–2032).
- **Program Benefits:**
    - Strong job stability with growing demand for medical data management professionals.
    - Provides a technical career path that supports healthcare innovation and efficiency.
- **Pathways to Bachelor's Degrees:**
    - B.S. in Healthcare Management (Covering Healthcare Systems, Policy, and Administration)

Potential Additional Healthcare-Focused Associate Programs (with Industry Certifications)

- **A.A.S. in Radiography** (ARRT Certification - American Registry of Radiologic Technologists)
- **A.A.S. in Respiratory Therapy** (ASRT Certification - American Society of Radiologic Technologists)
- **A.A.S. in Dental Hygiene** (RDH Certification - Registered Dental Hygienist)
    - **Pathways:** All these programs could align with ***Your Institution's*** Bachelor's degrees in Healthcare Management and Organizational Leadership: Healthcare Management.

Associate of Arts in Social Work Assistance (With an Industry Credential, if a Bachelor's Program Is Added)

- **Rationale**: Social work is another highly female-driven field, with many students seeking roles in community-based services.
- **Potential Future Pathway:** If ***Your Institution*** adds a B.A. in Social Work, this associate program would serve as a feeder program for it.

To increase the career value of ***Your Institution's*** current Associate programs, consider integrating industry-recognized certifications, including:

- **A.A. in Healthcare Management** - Add Certified Medical Billing & Coding Specialist (CBCS) Certification to improve job marketability.
- **A.A. in Communications** - Add HubSpot Content Marketing Certification to strengthen digital marketing skills and career readiness. This would create a seamless pathway to the B.A. in Communications.

Bachelor's Degree Recommendations

Our bachelor's degree recommendations for ***Your Institution*** focus on high-growth fields where women are well-represented or increasing in participation, offer strong employment prospects, and align with ***Your Institution's*** career-oriented, online education model. Research shows that women often gravitate toward careers with social impact, flexibility, and stability—key motivators supported by workforce studies. BLS (2022–2032) job growth projections guide these selections, ensuring that ***Your Institution's*** programs align with industry demand.

These proposed programs will enhance ***Your Institution's*** academic portfolio, complement existing strengths in Psychology, Healthcare Management, and Business, and broaden its appeal to female students.

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)

- **Rationale:** Over 80% of social workers are female, drawn to roles emphasizing advocacy, helping others, and community impact. Social work is a credentialed field with strong job growth.
- **Industry Demand:** 11% job growth (2022–2032), adding 57,800 jobs, fueled by mental health, substance abuse, and aging population needs.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
  - Could build on a proposed A.A. in Social Work Assistant, creating a seamless associate-to-bachelor's pathway.
  - Complements the B.A. in Psychology, sharing coursework in human behavior, ethics, and social services.
  - CSWE (Council on Social Work Education) accreditation would enhance program credibility and transferability.

Bachelor of Science in Health Informatics

- **Rationale:** Bridges healthcare and technology, preparing graduates for in-demand roles in health data management, informatics, and analytics.
- **Industry Demand:** 16% job growth (2022–2032), adding 6,500 jobs. Over 90% of medical records professionals are female, making this an attractive degree.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Extends the proposed A.A.S. in Health Information Technology (RHIT certification track), providing a clear degree pathway.
    - Complements the B.S. in Healthcare Management with a strong technical focus on informatics.

Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources Management

- **Rationale:** HR is 70% female, appealing to those interested in people management, workplace culture, and organizational development.
- **Industry Demand:** 6% job growth (2022–2032), adding 44,000 jobs due to business expansion and compliance needs.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Builds on the B.S. in Business Administration (HR concentration) by formalizing HR as a standalone degree.
    - Creates a degree progression from the existing A.A. in HR (SHRM-CP certification alignment).

Bachelor of Science in Public Health

- **Rationale:** Over 70% of public health professionals are women, drawn to its focus on community wellness, prevention, and health equity.
- **Industry Demand:** 7% growth for health educators and community health workers (2022–2032), with an additional 27% growth for epidemiologists.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Complements the B.S. in Healthcare Management by adding a population health emphasis.
    - Ties into the B.A. in Psychology and proposed healthcare associate degrees.

Digital Marketing Concentration (or B.A. in Digital Marketing)

- **Rationale:** Women make up over 60% of marketing professionals, drawn to roles in brand management, digital media, and analytics.

- **Industry Demand:** 6% job growth (2022–2032) for marketing managers, with increasing demand for digital marketing expertise.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Could be offered as a concentration within the B.S. in Business Administration or as a standalone B.A. in Digital Marketing.

Your Institution could integrate Google Analytics, Meta Blueprint, and HubSpot certifications for added value.

Master's Degree Recommendations

Our master's degree recommendations for ***Your Institution*** are designed to build upon both existing and proposed bachelor's degree programs, extending students' educational pathways into graduate-level study in high-growth, dynamic career fields. These recommendations are also intentionally aligned with fields that are female-friendly, targeting industries where women are well-represented or experiencing increasing participation. The proposed master's programs will strengthen ***Your Institution's*** academic portfolio and provide natural progression opportunities from bachelor's degrees in social work, psychology, public health, and business/technology, further supporting student retention and career advancement.

Master of Social Work (MSW)

- **Rationale:** Over 80% of social workers are women, drawn to careers in advocacy, mental health, and community impact. An MSW provides clinical licensure pathways for career advancement.
- **Industry Demand:** 11% job growth (2022–2032), adding 57,800 jobs, driven by mental health and aging population needs.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Builds on the proposed B.S.W. and A.A. in Social Work Assistant, creating a full academic pathway.
    - Complements the B.A. in Psychology, offering a therapy-focused progression.

Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology

- **Rationale:** Over 75% of psychology professionals are female. Counseling appeals to women's empathy-driven strengths, with telehealth and private practice opportunities providing flexibility.
- **Industry Demand:** 19% growth for counselors (2022–2032), adding 71,500 jobs.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Builds on the B.A. in Psychology, preparing graduates for licensure as LPCs.
    - Ties into the social work programs, offering a clinical therapy focus.

Master's in Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology

- **Rationale:** 50-60% of I-O psychologists are female, attracted to roles in HR consulting, leadership development, and organizational training.
- **Industry Demand:** 10-15% annual growth in I-O roles, driven by corporate needs for talent management and other social initiatives.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Builds on the B.S. in Business Administration - I-O Psychology concentration.
    - Supports HR and leadership roles with a focus on workplace psychology and organizational behavior.

Master of Public Health (MPH)

- **Rationale:** Over 70% of MPH professionals are female, drawn to roles in policy, education, and community health leadership.
- **Industry Demand:** 27% growth for epidemiologists, plus strong demand for health educators and administrators.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Extends the proposed B.S. in Public Health, creating a clear degree pathway.
    - Ties into Healthcare Management and Psychology programs.

Cybersecurity Leadership Concentration (MBA or M.A. in Organizational Leadership)

- **Rationale:** While women currently represent only 25% of cybersecurity professionals, participation is growing due to remote work flexibility and leadership opportunities.
- **Industry Demand:** 32% growth for information security analysts (2022–2032), adding 53,200 jobs.
- **Alignment with *Your Institution*:**
    - Complements the MBA and M.A. in Organizational Leadership with a tech-focused leadership specialization.
    - Pairs with a proposed B.S. in Cybersecurity, creating a management pathway.

New Program Strategic Benefits for Your Institution

- **Increased Female Enrollment:** Programs align with fields where women are overrepresented, helping ***Your Institution*** attract more female students.
- **Industry-Aligned Pathways:** The integration of certifications enhances employability, providing immediate career opportunities while supporting long-term academic progression.

- **Strengthened Online Offerings:** These associate programs reinforce ***Your Institution's*** expertise in online education, catering to working adults and non-traditional students.

By implementing these new program recommendations, ***Your Institution*** can effectively address the issue outlined in Finding #1 by offering programs that better align with the interests of the growing female student population. These additions will enhance the overall value of ***Your Institution's*** academic offerings, improve career outcomes for graduates, and further solidify ***Your Institution's*** position as a leader in career-focused online education.

Marketing Strategies to Attract Female Students

To maximize ***Your Institution's*** appeal to female students and build upon the newly proposed female-friendly programs, it is essential to incorporate high-impact, women-focused messaging into all marketing and outreach efforts. By consistently emphasizing these key messages—such as career advancement, flexibility, support, and alignment with personal and professional goals—***Your Institution*** can significantly increase engagement and enrollment among its female audience (additional messaging and marketing details are expanded upon in Findings #4 - #6).

- **Flexibility:** Promote ***Your Institution's*** online format for work-life balance.
- **Career Outcomes:** Showcase job placement rates, salary potential, and advancement opportunities.
- **Supportive Community:** Highlight personalized advising, peer networks, and mentorship.
- **Storytelling & Representation:** Feature female student/alumni success stories.
- **Social Impact:** Market programs that help communities and create change.
- **Scholarships:** Increase visibility of Chantell Cooley Women in Leadership Scholarship.
- **Healthcare Partnerships:** Expand learning partner outreach to healthcare institutions.

These program expansions and marketing strategies position ***Your Institution*** to directly address the issue identified in Finding #1—attracting more female students—while also providing enhanced, career-aligned academic pathways that meet evolving workforce demands.

Finding #2: Opportunity to align program offerings with fast-growing industries.

There is an opportunity to further expand ***Your Institution's*** reach into fast-growing IT and business programs that prepare students for high-demand, high-paying careers. These additions would align with ***Your Institution's*** current program strengths and target markets while addressing critical gaps in its academic offerings related to essential, future-focused career pathways.

Recommendation #2: Expand opportunities toward high-growth career fields.

To broaden its reach and further strengthen its strong male representation—particularly within military-affiliated students and established learning partner channels—***Your Institution*** should consider expanding its degree offerings in high-demand fields. The focus should be on programs with strong job growth, industry certification options, and alignment with ***Your Institution's*** online, career-focused mission.

Associate Degree Recommendations

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Data Analytics

- **Certification:** Microsoft Certified: Data Analyst Associate
- **Industry Demand:** Data analytics is one of the fastest-growing fields, fueled by the expansion of big data and business intelligence.
- **Growth Projection:** 35% increase (2022–2032), adding 59,400 jobs (BLS).
- **Career Pathways:** Graduates can pursue roles as junior data analysts or business intelligence assistants, with pathways to ***Your Institution's*** BS in Cybersecurity or Business programs.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Logistics and Supply Chain Management

- **Certification:** Certified Logistics Associate (CLA)
- **Industry Demand:** Logistics roles continue to grow due to e-commerce and global trade expansion.
- **Growth Projection:** 8% increase (2022–2032), adding 15,300 jobs (BLS).
- **Career Pathways:** Graduates can enter roles as logistics coordinators, warehouse supervisors, or supply chain analysts, with progression into ***Your Institution's*** BS in Business Administration or Organizational Leadership.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Robotics and Automation Technology

- **Certification:** Certified Robotics Technician (CRT)
- **Industry Demand:** The demand for robotics and automation technicians is increasing with the integration of automation across industries.
- **Growth Projection:** 4% growth (2022–2032) for electro-mechanical technicians, with robotics-specific growth anticipated at 10–15%.
- **Career Pathways:** Graduates can work as robotics technicians or automation assistants, with further study opportunities in business or technology fields.

Bachelor's Degree Recommendations

Bachelor of Science (BS) in Data Science

- **Industry Demand:** Data science is one of the most sought-after fields, providing graduates with versatile career opportunities in business intelligence, cybersecurity, and analytics.
- **Growth Projection:** 35% growth (2022–2032), adding 59,400 jobs (BLS).
- **Salary Potential:** $70,000–$100,000 annually, with strong advancement potential.
- **Alignment:** Can be offered as a standalone program or a specialization within Business or Organizational Leadership.

Bachelor of Science (BS) in Computer Science

- **Industry Demand:** Strong demand for computer science professionals in software development, artificial intelligence, and IT management.
- **Growth Projection:** 15% growth (2022–2032), adding 233,000 jobs (BLS).
- **Career Pathways:** Roles in software engineering, AI development, IT management, and cybersecurity.
- **Alignment:** Complements ***Your Institution's*** cybersecurity and business programs; potential graduate pathways include an MBA with a project management focus.

Bachelor of Science (BS) in Supply Chain Management

- **Industry Demand:** The supply chain industry continues to evolve, requiring educated professionals with strategic and analytical skills.
- **Growth Projection:** 8% growth (2022–2032), adding 15,300 jobs (BLS).
- **Career Pathways:** Careers in logistics management, operations planning, and procurement.
- **Alignment:** Could be a standalone degree or a specialization within Business Administration or Organizational Leadership.

Master's Degree Recommendations

Master of Science (MS) in Cybersecurity

- **Industry Demand:** Cybersecurity threats are escalating, requiring leadership and specialized expertise in data protection and security strategy.
- **Growth Projection:** 32% growth (2022–2032), adding 53,200 jobs (BLS).
- **Salary Potential:** $120,360 median pay, with leadership roles exceeding $150,000.
- **Career Pathways:** Cybersecurity analysts, security consultants, and Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs).
- **Alignment:** Builds on the BS in Cybersecurity, offering career growth opportunities.

Master of Science (MS) in Data Science or Data Analytics

- **Industry Demand:** AI, machine learning, and big data are driving demand for advanced skills in data science.
- **Growth Projection:** 35% growth (2022–2032), adding 59,400 jobs (BLS).
- **Salary Potential:** High earning potential with strong remote work flexibility.
- **Career Pathways:** Data architect, AI specialist, business intelligence analyst.
- **Alignment:** Complements proposed BS in Data Science, Computer Science, or Cybersecurity programs.

Strategic Benefits of Program Expansion

Financial Growth & Sustainability

- Expanding IT, data science, and logistics programs aligns with high-growth, high-paying careers, attracting career-switchers and professionals looking for upskilling opportunities.
- Programs requiring minimal infrastructure investment (leveraging online delivery) provide a high return on investment.

Strengthening *Your Institution's* Reputation & Enrollment

- Offering cutting-edge, high-demand degrees that position ***Your Institution*** as a leader in career-driven education.
- Attract new market segments while reinforcing ***Your Institution's*** strong military and online student base.

Operational & Strategic Alignment

- Most programs can leverage existing faculty expertise in business, technology, and cybersecurity.
- IT and logistics fields provide opportunities for new corporate partnerships and workforce development collaborations.

Finding #3: Increase efficiency through *Your Institution* program reduction.

As part of ***Your Institution's*** comprehensive program evaluation, Emerge Education conducted an in-depth analysis of the institution's existing degree offerings. ***Your Institution*** has an opportunity to increase institutional efficiency and better allocate resources by phasing out underperforming programs that show consistently low enrollment and limited career relevance or student demand. By strategically evaluating academic offerings and discontinuing programs that do not align with workforce needs or student interest, ***Your Institution*** can redirect efforts toward high-growth areas. This reallocation will strengthen program quality, improve return on investment, and support sustainable enrollment growth in fields with strong market potential (as previously outlined in Finding #2).

Recommendation #3: Program reduction and strategic alignment.

Your Institution program review included a close examination of program-level enrollment trends, current and projected labor market demand, and the degree to which each program aligns with ***Your Institution's*** broader strategic goals, including career relevance, target audience appeal, and institutional mission. The purpose of this evaluation was to identify both high-performing academic areas and those in need of improvement or potential phase-out. This data-driven assessment provides the foundation for targeted program development, marketing strategy, and resource allocation. Below is a summary of the current degree categories and corresponding student enrollment by program as of Q3 2024, offering a snapshot of ***Your Institution's*** current academic portfolio performance and the Emerge-recommended program reductions.

Program Breakdown by Program Category (all degrees)	Enrollments
Business	478
Communications	34
Criminal Justice	69
Cybersecurity	214
Diversity & Inclusion*	7
Education	114
Emergency Management	191
Fire Science	136
Health Care Management	72
Homeland Security	44
Human Resources*	14
Liberal Arts*	5
Occupational Safety	385
Organizational Leadership	320
Psychology	210
Public Relations	8
Sport Management*	5
Undergrad Certs	9
Grad Certs	5
Non-Degree Seeking & Transient	63
Total Students (as of Q3 2024)	2,378

*Associate degree (and certificate) only

Based on this complete assessment, the following programs present challenges in terms of market demand, resource allocation, and long-term sustainability. A more detailed faculty and course review would be necessary to determine the financial impact of any program reduction. However, at a high level, we recommend the following actions to optimize resources and enhance program effectiveness.

Programs Recommended for Elimination

Liberal Arts (AA Degree): While this degree aligns with ***Your Institution's*** bachelor's programs, it lacks industry demand and credentialing opportunities. With only five enrolled students, the program struggles to attract students and does not offer a clear career pathway. Eliminating this program would reduce marketing, student services, and operational costs.

Diversity & Inclusion (AA Degree): This program has seven students enrolled and is offered only at the associate level. Career pathways for Diversity & Inclusion degrees—particularly in an online adult-learning context—are limited, with mixed job market data. Given the low enrollment and uncertain career demand, we recommend discontinuing this program.

Public Relations (BA Degree): With only eight enrolled students, the standalone Public Relations degree lacks market viability. Given the evolving landscape of PR—now heavily integrated with digital marketing and communications—this program could be merged as a concentration within the Communications degree.

Sport Management (AA Degree - Online): With five enrolled students, this associate degree lacks sufficient demand in the online adult market. While maintaining the on-campus bachelor's and associate programs may be necessary for traditional students, we recommend discontinuing the online associate degree to conserve resources.

Programs Recommended for Strategic Realignment & Enhancement

Human Resources (AA Degree): Currently offered only at the associate level, this program has 14 students enrolled. However, it aligns well with ***Your Institution's*** Business and Leadership programs and the proposed stand-alone HR bachelor's degree. To increase viability:

- Strengthen marketing efforts targeted toward female professionals, given the high representation of women in HR roles.
- Enhance program value by emphasizing SHRM certification preparation, a highly recognized credential in the field.

Communications (AA & BA Degrees): This program category has potential but must adapt to industry trends.

To increase its competitiveness:

- Integrate the HubSpot certification to provide digital communications skills aligned with employer demand.
- Expand the program's digital marketing and social media focus to better reflect market needs.

By implementing these strategic program changes, ***Your Institution*** can optimize resources, strengthen enrollment potential, and better align its academic offerings with career-oriented demand.

Emerge recommends a deep-dive competitive analysis and review of selected degree programs to eliminate/adjust.

Proposed Program Next Steps: Research & Competitive Analysis

To support competitive and sustainable new program launches or program discontinuations, Emerge recommends conducting a comprehensive research initiative for new or discontinued degree programs at ***Your Institution.*** This initiative would include:

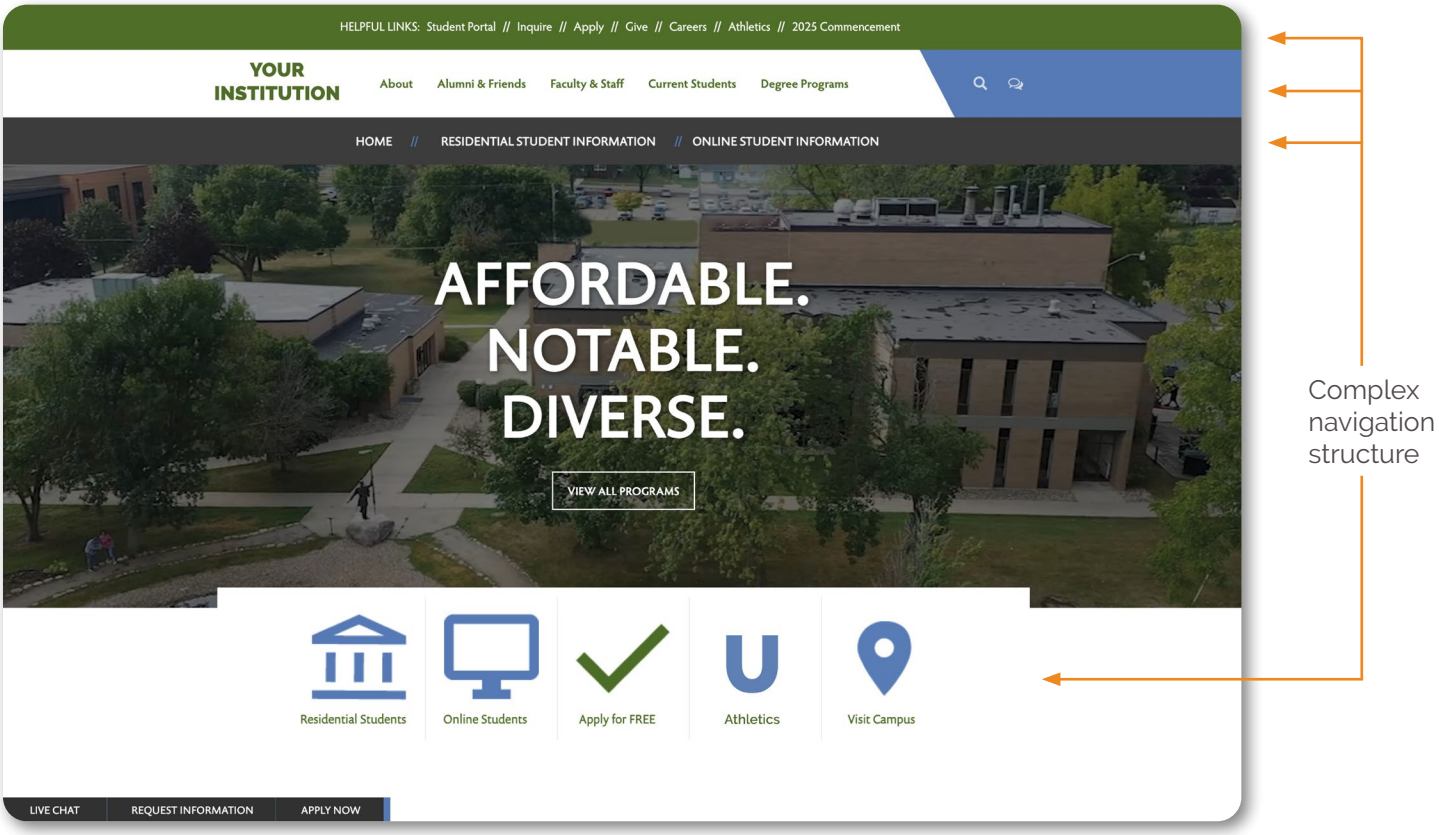
- **Competitive Landscape Analysis:** Identifying peer institutions and market positioning.
- **Course Development Recommendations:** Best practices and industry-aligned curricula.
- **Industry Certifications & Partnerships:** Exploring collaboration opportunities with tech and logistics firms.
- **Marketing & Enrollment Strategies:** Targeted messaging to attract students in key demographics.

By strategically expanding its associate, bachelor's, and master's degree offerings in high-demand fields such as healthcare, IT, business, and logistics—and by phasing out underperforming programs—***Your Institution*** can strengthen its market position, drive meaningful enrollment growth, and reinforce its reputation as a leading provider of career-focused education.

Finding #4: Inefficient and confusing website user experience (UX).

The primary objective of ***Your Institution's*** website should be to function as a high-performing lead generation tool strategically designed to attract, engage, and convert prospective students. Every page should be optimized to guide visitors seamlessly through the enrollment funnel, with clear calls to action, intuitive navigation, and compelling content that drives conversions. However, the school's website presents several challenges that impact user experience and brand perception, including a complex navigation structure, hidden/buried calls-to-action, unclear identity, and not adequately highlighting two of ***Your Institution's*** largest student segments.

The complex navigation structure and cluttered menus make it difficult for prospective students to quickly find relevant information, while key calls-to-action are buried below the fold, reducing engagement. This lack of a clear, structured user journey increases friction in the decision-making process, reducing the effectiveness of the website as a recruitment tool. The homepage should more clearly direct users through to their appropriate journey.



Additionally, there are lingering misconceptions in the market—including within ***Your Institution's*** primary recruitment region—about ***Your Institution's*** identity and status. Some prospective students and community members still perceive it as a two-year institution, while others continue to reference its sale, despite the transition occurring over two years ago. To counter these outdated perceptions, it is essential that ***Your Institution*** clearly communicate its identity and strengths through strategic engagement and interactive experiences.

Your Institution serves diverse student populations, yet its website does not adequately reflect or prioritize its largest segments—military students and learning partners. When programs targeting adult women or female career-changers are fully developed, ***Your Institution*** should also ensure that its digital presence speaks directly to this important and growing demographic. (Refer to Recommendation #1.) As reflected on the website and reinforced in our conversations with the AVP of Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach at ***Your Institution*** and the Vice President of Operations, Marketing and Outreach the Vice President of Operations, Marketing and Outreach, military students make up 40% of the student body, yet there is no prominent call-to-action or dedicated section for them on the homepage. Similarly, the learning partners program, which accounts for 30% of ***Your Institution's*** student population, is not given the prominence it deserves on the website. Currently, the main learning partners page for prospects is simply a long list of 1,800 organizations, making it difficult for prospective students from these partners to understand the benefits of the program or how to take the next step.

Recommendation #4: Partner with an agency to create and implement a comprehensive website strategy.

An experienced firm can help ***Your Institution*** both create and implement a comprehensive website/UX strategy designed to streamline the user journey and improve conversion rates. Our team can develop a detailed plan to optimize the website's structure, enhance engagement opportunities, and tailor messaging for key audiences, such as military-affiliated students and learning partners. Whether we execute these changes on ***Your Institution's*** behalf or provide a strategic roadmap for the internal teams to implement, we are committed to improving the online experience and driving higher student engagement. By simplifying navigation, improving CTA placement, and integrating multimedia and interactive content, we will create a seamless, compelling user experience that better guides prospective students through their decision-making journey.

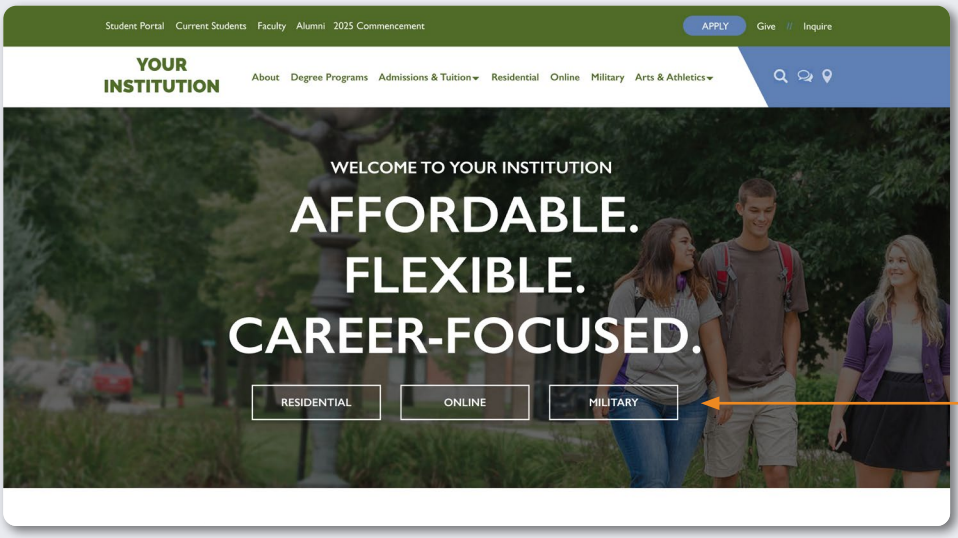
A thorough plan would include the following:

A streamlined user experience on the website

A well-structured, intuitive website is essential for guiding prospective students through their decision-making process. The current user journey on ***Your Institution's*** website could be streamlined to reduce friction and ensure that visitors can easily find key information related to preferred modality, programs, military-related content, and learning partner information in prominent, high-performing placements. Simplifying navigation, improving the clarity and even location of calls-to-action, and ensuring that each page has a clear purpose will enhance usability and drive higher engagement. Additionally, leveraging strong design choices—such as compelling imagery, consistent branding, and strategic use of white space—can make landing pages more visually appealing and help hold the attention of prospective students.

Additionally, we suggest creating three distinct entry points on the homepage, clearly labeled and visually prominent: Online, Residential, and Military. Each pathway should lead to a dedicated landing page tailored to the unique needs, messaging, and decision-making process of that audience. By streamlining the user journey in this way, ***Your Institution*** can improve engagement, reduce friction, and ensure that prospective students quickly connect with the information that best aligns with their educational goals.

Below, we provide a mockup of some of these enhancements to the homepage. Please note the streamlined menus for easier navigation and simple design choices that break up large blocks of text.



Sticky navigation allows users access to the main menus even while scrolling.

Three streamlined audience entry points.

More opportunities for engagement

To further engage prospective students, we recommend incorporating interactive and multimedia content that allows them to experience ***Your Institution*** firsthand and build a deeper connection with ***Your Institution***.

1. A strategic video initiative would allow ***Your Institution*** to showcase its unique personality, academic strengths, and supportive community. Featuring testimonials from current students and alumni can provide authentic perspectives on ***Your Institution's*** experience, helping to build trust and emotional resonance. Additionally, featuring video messages from Dr. Alsop and other key faculty members can humanize the institution and reinforce ***Your Institution's*** commitment to student success.

2. Another opportunity to differentiate ***Your Institution*** is by offering sample online lecture content, giving prospective students a firsthand look at the learning experience and faculty engagement. These enhancements will create a more dynamic and compelling website experience, increasing prospective students' confidence in choosing ***Your Institution***.

3. Implementing an AI-driven chatbot will significantly enhance ***Your Institution's*** ability to engage with prospective students by providing instant, 24/7 support. Unlike a standard chatbot with limited functionality, an AI-driven solution can dynamically pull information from across the website to answer a wide range of questions about programs, admissions, financial aid, and student life. This ensures that users receive accurate, relevant responses at any time, reducing friction in the inquiry process and keeping prospects engaged even outside of business hours. Additionally, an advanced chatbot can personalize interactions based on user behavior, guiding students through their decision-making journey more effectively. By offering continuous, intelligent support, ***Your Institution*** can create a more seamless and responsive experience that increases inquiries and improves conversion rates.

Tailoring UX and Messaging for Key Audiences

To create a more user-centric experience for the largest online student segments, the website's navigation, layout, and messaging should be adjusted to better address the needs and expectations of these key audiences.

Military

Given the importance of this audience, ***Your Institution*** should ensure that military-specific information is easily accessible through clear navigation and highly visible entry points. For example, including a link to the Military Overview page prominently in the main site navigation ensures that, that segment of users can access the necessary information quickly and easily from any page on the site. ***Your Institution*** should prioritize placing calls-to-action (CTA) and request-for-information (RFI) forms more prominently on these pages. Currently, the only action opportunity appears at the bottom of the page and lacks specificity. We recommend tailoring these CTAs to the audience by encouraging users to connect directly with a Military Service Representative, making the next step clear and more relevant to prospective military students.

Additionally, while the current military pages provide straightforward, factual details, they lack compelling marketing language that reinforces the value of an education at ***Your Institution*** for service members. While maintaining a direct and professional tone, these pages should also highlight the Military-Friendly badge at the top of the page, a success story or testimonial, and ***Your Institution's*** commitment to military-friendly education.

Learning Partners

A more strategic approach for marketing to this segment would be to rebuild the ***url*** page for a more streamlined and strategic user experience. Examples include:

- Value propositions right at the top of the page—explain to prospective learning partner students why they should become an online student at ***Your Institution*** through their organization.
- Feature the largest and most engaged segments—such as fire companies that fuel enrollment in fire science programs—at the top of the page, with clear messaging about how these partnerships support career advancement.
- Success stories and testimonials from students who have pursued degrees through their employers should also be prominently displayed, reinforcing the program's value and encouraging further participation.
- Consider breaking the list into categories by organization type or by region.

By improving the UX and infusing more targeted, persuasive messaging, ***Your Institution*** can better engage these critical student segments and drive increased conversions.

Finding #5: There are a number of opportunities to address new enrollment growth for *Your Institution*.

Objective: Increase enrollment across ***Your Institution's*** existing programs by leveraging current strengths and expanding student pipelines.

Analysis: Emerge Education assessed factors driving enrollment demand, focusing on ***Your Institution's*** degree conferrals. According to 2023 IPEDS data (the latest available):

- ***Your Institution*** awarded 973 degrees across all programs.
- 741 degrees (76%) were in core areas: Business, Psychology, Occupational Safety, Fire Science, and Emergency Management.

These fields represent ***Your Institution's*** strongest assets, reflecting student interest and market relevance. Building on this foundation offers a clear path to boost new enrollment.

2023 *Your Institution's* Associate Degree Conferrals v. the US by Degree (IPEDS)

Degree Programs	*Your Institution* 2023	US 2023
Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	2	229,781
Business Administration and Management, General	16	56,241
Psychology, General	15	17,944
Early Childhood Education and Teaching	6	6,792
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	4	6,415
Speech Communication and Rhetoric	2	4,124
Health/Health Care Administration/Management	3	2,179
Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration, General	9	800
Occupational Safety and Health Technology/Technician	23	520
Sport and Fitness Administration/Management	1	398
Homeland Security	2	191
Fire Services Administration	23	131
Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management	14	116
Organizational Behavior Studies	1	109
Business/Corporate Communications, General	4	12
Intercultural/Multicultural and Diversity Studies	7	11
Grand Total	132	327,787

2023 *Your Institution's* Bachelor's Degree Conferrals v. the US by Degree (IPEDS)

Degree Programs	*Your Institution* 2023	US 2023
Business Administration and Management, General	1	137,064
Psychology, General	76	116,692
Biology/Biological Sciences, General	5	77,935
Elementary Education and Teaching	6	29,635
Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	36	29,263
Speech Communication and Rhetoric	26	25,834
Business/Commerce, General	114	25,307
Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration	3	12,771
Health/Health Care Administration/Management	24	12,445
Sport and Fitness Administration/Management	12	11,285
Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General	2	8,596
Music, General	1	7,421
Physical Education Teaching and Coaching	2	4,581
Secondary Education and Teaching	2	3,692
Creative Writing	2	3,311
Music Teacher Education	1	3,263
Public Relations, Advertising, and Applied Communication	2	3,115
Organizational Behavior Studies	50	1,827
Occupational Safety and Health Technology/Technician	103	1,336
Foods, Nutrition, and Wellness Studies, General	7	1,248
Homeland Security	14	1,245
Crisis/Emergency/Disaster Management	58	1,236
Fire Services Administration	57	1,148
Nursing Practice	1	813
Critical Infrastructure Protection	35	307
Grand Total	640	521,370

2023 *Your Institution's* Master's Degree Conferrals v. the US by Degree (IPEDS)

Degree Programs	*Your Institution* 2023	US 2023
Business Administration and Management, General	8	104,829
Health/Health Care Administration/Management	19	13,364
Educational/Instructional Technology	2	6,787
Organizational Leadership	139	6,781
Adult and Continuing Education and Teaching	33	656
Grand Total	201	132,417

Recommendation #5: Develop and optimize strategic branding, messaging, and content.

Recommendation 5A: Your Institution's Online Adult Student Branding Campaign

Objective: Establish a unified, compelling brand message for ***Your Institution's*** online adult audience (25+, balancing work/family) that spans website, ads, social media, content, brochures, and all media, driving enrollment in existing and new programs.

Rationale: ***Your Institution's*** brand identity lacks a strong, unified presence across its marketing efforts, beginning with its website—the primary marketing vehicle. While ***Your Institution's*** team has clearly defined unique value propositions, these differentiators are not consistently or effectively conveyed on the website, making it difficult for prospective students to understand what sets the institution apart. This disconnect extends to other marketing channels, leading to fragmented messaging and missed opportunities to reinforce ***Your Institution's*** strengths. A more intentional and strategic approach to brand identity is needed to ensure that ***Your Institution's*** positioning is clear, compelling, and seamlessly integrated across all touchpoints. Strengthening this foundation will not only enhance brand perception but also improve engagement and conversion rates.

Key Branding Themes:

1. **Flexibility** - 100% online programs tailored for busy adults managing work, family, and education.
2. **Career-Relevant Education** - Degrees aligned with high-demand jobs (e.g., 35% growth in Data Science, 19% in Counseling, BLS 2022-2032) and career advancement.
3. **Affordability & ROI** - Competitive tuition and strong salary outcomes (e.g., $120K in Cybersecurity, $103K in Supply Chain).
4. **Supportive Learning Environment** - Dedicated advisors, faculty, and student services designed for adult success.

Core Messaging: "Advance Your Career on Your Terms with ***Your Institution Online***"

Why It Works:

- "Advance Your Career" emphasizes jobs and promotions, a top adult priority.
- "On Your Terms" highlights flexibility, addressing life-balance needs.
- "***Your Institution Online***" anchors it to ***Your Institution's*** accessible, online identity.

Additional Messaging Options:

- "***Your Institution Online:*** Your Career, Your Way"
- "Your Path to a Better Career—Flexible, Online Degrees"
- "Advance with ***Your Institution***—Online Education That Fits Your Life"

Program-Specific Messaging:

- **Business:** "Lead with Confidence—Online Degrees in Supply Chain and Leadership (8%/6% Growth)"
- **Psychology:** "Impact Lives—Online Counseling Degrees (19% Growth)"
- **Criminal Justice:** "Serve and Protect—Online Degrees for Justice Careers"
- **Emergency Management:** "Prepare for Crisis—Online Degrees with Purpose"
- **IT (Proposed):** "Secure Your Future—Online Cybersecurity/Data Science (32%/35% Growth)"

Benefits of Consistent Messaging

Brand Clarity: Positions ***Your Institution*** as *the* online choice for adult learners, reducing confusion and building trust.

Targeted Appeal: Meets adult needs—flexibility, career ROI, support—driving applications in Business, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Emergency Management, and beyond.

Scalability: Applies to Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's levels, unifying current and proposed programs (e.g., IT, healthcare).

Market Edge: Differentiates ***Your Institution*** from competitors (e.g., SNHU, Capella) by owning the "career-on-your-terms" niche.

Implementation Plan

1. **Update Marketing Materials**
   - Revise website, brochures, ads, and social media to reflect core themes and tagline.
   - Ensure consistency across all touchpoints (e.g., "Advance Your Career on Your Terms" on every page).

2. **Targeted Program Messaging**
   - Develop specific pitches for key programs (e.g., Psychology: "Help Others, Help Yourself"), aligning to job growth stats.
   - Highlight certifications (e.g., CySA+ for IT) where applicable.

3. **Prioritize Testimonials**
   - Feature written and video success stories from adult learners (e.g., "I Earned My Business Degree Online While Working Full-Time").
   - Include diverse voices (e.g., parents, career-switchers) to broaden appeal.

4. **Content Development**
   - Launch blogs (e.g., "Top Jobs with a Psychology Degree") and guides (e.g., "Adult Learner's Guide to Online Education") to boost SEO and organic traffic.
   - Embed CTAs (e.g., "Start Your Degree Today") across all content.

Your Institution should adopt a new, consistent branding framework like "Advance Your Career on Your Terms with ***Your Institution Online***" to reverse enrollment declines, boost its market presence, and leverage its strengths in online education. This approach targets female and male adult learners, as well as military students, by delivering a clear message centered on flexibility, career relevance, and affordability—driving applications in core programs such as Business, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management, as well as in emerging fields like IT and healthcare. By enhancing digital visibility through SEO—potentially increasing organic traffic by 50-100% (HubSpot, 2024)—and building on 76% of 2023 degrees in high-demand areas (IPEDS), ***Your Institution*** can maximize ROI, outpace competitors like SNHU, and reinforce its military-friendly identity, ensuring long-term growth and relevance in the expanding online education market.

Recommendation 5B: Military Branding Campaign Proposal

Objective: Strengthen ***Your Institution's*** brand identity among military-affiliated students (active-duty, veterans, and spouses) to reverse declining military enrollment, maximize market presence, and reinforce its commitment to military education.

Key Branding Themes:

1. **Flexible, Online Programs**
   - Designed to fit active-duty schedules and civilian transitions, offering 100% online learning with no campus visits required.

2. **Maximized Military Benefits**
   - Full support for Tuition Assistance, GI Bill®, Yellow Ribbon, and credit for military training to reduce costs and accelerate graduation.
   - 10% tuition discount.

3. **Career-Driven Degrees**
   - High-demand fields like Cybersecurity, Business, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management are aligned with military skills and civilian job growth (e.g., 32% for Cybersecurity, BLS 2022-2032).

4. **Supportive Learning Community**
   - Dedicated military advisors, veteran alumni networks, and personalized support tailored to military needs.

Core Messaging: "***Your Institution***: Flexible, Affordable, Military-Ready Education"

Messaging Framework: Why Your Institution?

Your Institution's military branding must answer "Why ***Your Institution***?" with clear, consistent points across all channels:

- "A Proven Military-Friendly Institution" – ***Your Institution*** offers flexible online degrees, transfer-friendly policies, and dedicated support for military students.

- "Recognized for Military Excellence" – Designated a Top School for military education, participating in ArmyIgnitED, GEM, and AU-ABC, with a five-star Air Force portal rating.

  "Maximizing Benefits for Career Success" – Ensures military students leverage Tuition Assistance, GI Bill®, and credit transfers to graduate faster and affordably.

- "A Trusted Partner for Military Careers" – Committed to helping service members, veterans, and families advance with career-focused education and exceptional support.

Execution: Embed these messages in the website, brochures, social media, and ads, using the military-friendly logo prominently for instant recognition.

Additional Steps

1. **Enhance url.com Presence**
   - Update ***Your Institution's*** profile url with stronger messaging and a direct link to ***Your Institution's*** site to capitalize on this platform's visibility.

2. **Military Testimonials**
   - Develop video testimonials from current students across military segments (active-duty, veterans, spouses), e.g., "How ***Your Institution*** Fits My Deployment Schedule."

3. **Webinar Series**
   - Record live webinars (e.g., "Using Military Benefits at ***Your Institution***") and embed them on the military landing page for evergreen content.

4. **Dedicated Military Support Messaging**
   - Highlight trained military-friendly advisors on all materials (e.g., "Call Our Military Team Today") to build trust and accessibility.

5. **Ongoing Content Strategy**
   - Produce military-focused content:
     - Blogs: "Top 5 Degrees for Military Transitions"
     - Videos: "A Day as a Military Student at ***Your Institution***"
     - Guides: "Your GI Bill® Roadmap at ***Your Institution***"
   - Aim to boost SEO rankings and organic reach with regular updates.

Implementation Plan

1. **Dedicated Military Landing Page**
   - Create a user-friendly page with clear messaging, success stories, and a lead capture form (e.g., "Get Started with Your Benefits"). Optimize for SEO with keywords like "online degrees for veterans."

2. **Military Success Stories**
   - Produce video and written testimonials from active-duty, veteran, and spouse students, showcasing career outcomes (e.g., "From Service to Cybersecurity").

3. **Strengthen Partnerships**
   - Enhance ties with military-friendly organizations (e.g., url.com) to promote ***Your Institution's*** offerings and link back to its site.

4. **Promote Designations**
   - Display military-friendly logos (e.g., Top School, Yellow Ribbon) prominently on the website, brochures, and ads.

5. **Webinars**
   - Host live and recorded webinars on topics like "Enrolling with GI Bill® at ***Your Institution***" or "Military to Civilian Careers," embedding videos on the site for ongoing access.

6. **SEO Optimization**
    - Target military education keywords (e.g., "best online degrees for military," "veteran-friendly universities") through ongoing content to boost organic traffic.

Strategic Rationale

Your Institution has a strong legacy of serving military students through its online model, military benefit programs, and recognized designations. However, declining military enrollment signals a need for a revitalized brand identity. This campaign:

- **Reverses Trends:** Targets military-specific needs (flexibility, benefits, careers) to recapture this audience.
- **Maximizes Presence:** Leverages partnerships and SEO to dominate military education searches.
- **Reinforces Commitment:** Positions ***Your Institution*** as a leader in online military education with tailored support.

Investing in this military branding campaign will position ***Your Institution*** as the premier choice for military-affiliated students seeking flexible, career-driven education. By enhancing messaging, leveraging partnerships, and boosting SEO, ***Your Institution*** can reverse enrollment declines, expand its market reach, and solidify its leadership in military education—all while aligning with its online identity and high-growth program expansion.



Proposed Branding Approach

Emerge Education proposes a comprehensive branding and messaging framework for both online adult and military students. This includes:

Messaging Framework: Unified themes (flexibility, affordability, career success) tailored to military and civilian audiences.

Campaign Elements: Updated website, social media (LinkedIn, Facebook), paid search, brochures, and email content, with military focus integrated throughout.

Creative Development: Military-friendly logo placement, video testimonials, and SEO-driven content to enhance visibility and engagement.

Branding for Additional Audiences

Learning Partner Students – These students enroll at ***Your Institution*** through partnerships with their employers or organizations, often benefiting from tuition discounts. However, ***Your Institution's*** branding does not currently highlight this advantage in a compelling way. To better engage these students, ***Your Institution*** should emphasize the benefits of the learning partner program, such as affordability, career-aligned education, and flexible learning options. This messaging should be prominently featured on the website, in targeted outreach campaigns, and in marketing materials designed specifically for partner organizations. Additionally, simplifying the process for learning partner employees to understand and access their benefits will enhance engagement and enrollment.

Community College/Transfer Students – Transfer students from community colleges represent a valuable pipeline for enrollment. The online marketing team estimates that around 80% of online students have "some prior college" or "some college, no degree." Yet, ***Your Institution's*** brand positioning does not strongly convey why it is the ideal next step for this segment of students. Many prospective transfer students are looking for an institution that provides a seamless transition, maximizes credit transfer, and offers strong academic and career support. ***Your Institution*** should highlight its commitment to transfer-friendly policies, showcase success stories of students who have successfully transitioned, and create dedicated resources—such as a clear transfer credit evaluation tool and personalized advising—to streamline the process.

Recommendation 5C: Strategic Content Investment for Online Visibility and Military Outreach

Objective: ***Your Institution*** can elevate its online presence and enrollment by investing in a consistent, targeted content development strategy to enhance search engine optimization (SEO) and organic traffic. This approach will create valuable resources for prospective students—adult learners and military personnel—while amplifying reach across social media, email campaigns, and recruiter follow-ups, driving leads in business, healthcare, IT, emergency management, and psychology programs.

Strategic Rationale

Your Institution's fully online model and strong programs cater well to adult learners and military transitions, but its digital visibility and content strategy are currently underdeveloped. A strong example for ***Your Institution*** to emulate is Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). SNHU has established a reputation for its highly effective content strategy, creating SEO-optimized content that clearly communicates the value of career-focused, flexible education. They leverage a variety of content channels, including blog posts, webinars, videos, and podcasts, to engage prospective students and strengthen their digital presence.

Likewise, a robust content strategy will:

Increase Organic Traffic: 93% of online journeys start with Google (Search Engine Journal, 2023), and SEO-driven content can boost traffic by 50-100% in a year (HubSpot, 2024).

Target Key Audiences: Content tailored to adult learners (e.g., "Online Business Degrees for Working Professionals") and military students (e.g., "Using Your GI Bill at ***Your Institution***") will attract high-intent prospects.

Maximize ROI: Highlighting high-growth fields (e.g., Cybersecurity, 32%; Nurse Practitioner, 38%, BLS 2022-2032) and salaries ($120K-$126K) enhances appeal with minimal ad spend.

Build Authority: Positioning ***Your Institution*** as a leader in online and military-friendly education strengthens trust and conversions.

Key Benefits

1. **Drive Traffic and Enrollment** – Optimized content (e.g., blogs, guides) can rank for searches like "online IT degrees for veterans" or "best emergency management programs," increasing visits and applications. Military-specific pieces (e.g., "Top Cybersecurity Jobs for Veterans") tap into this niche, boosting tuition revenue.

2. **Leverage High-Growth Programs** – Content showcasing outcomes in fields like IT (Data Science, 35% growth), healthcare (MSN, 38%), and business (Supply Chain, 8%) draws civilian and military adults, aligning with career goals and maximizing program ROI.

3. **Own the Online and Military Niche** – ***Your Institution's*** 100% online delivery and history with military/ first responders (e.g., five-star Air Force portal rating) can dominate searches like "best online degrees for military." A $50K-$100K annual investment (writers, SEO tools) could yield 5-10x returns in organic leads, outpacing paid ads.

4. **Enhance Brand Trust** – Stories (e.g., "From Service to Psychology: A Veteran's Path") and analyses (e.g., "The Future of IT Careers") boost SEO metrics (click-throughs, dwell time) while establishing ***Your Institution*** as a credible, supportive choice for adult and military learners.

Strategic Actions for Your Institution

Invest in a content team or agency to produce 20-30 pieces annually, including:

- **Blogs:** "Why Veterans Excel in ***Your Institution's*** IT Programs"
- **Articles:** "Why Earn an MBA?"
- **Landing Pages:** "Online MBA: Advance Your Business Career"
- **eBooks:** "Military to Civilian: Your Career Guide"
- **Videos:** "A Day as an Online Student at ***Your Institution***" (with transcripts)
- **Infographics:** "35% Growth: Data Science Jobs"
- **Success Stories:** "How ***Your Institution*** Fit My Deployment Schedule"
- **President and Faculty Engagement:** Feature videos and articles from the President and faculty highlighting Why ***Your Institution***?—including thought leadership content on key industry trends and program-related topics that showcase expertise and strengthen ***Your Institution's*** academic brand.

Execution:

- Optimize with tools like Ahrefs or SEMrush for keywords (e.g., "online degrees for military," "best cybersecurity programs").
- Add a "Resources" section to the website for ongoing content.
- Target 50% traffic growth in year one, leveraging link-building and site structure improvements.

This strategic content investment positions ***Your Institution*** as a digital leader, driving organic growth and enrollment in its high-demand programs. By targeting adult learners and military personnel with valuable, SEO-optimized content, ***Your Institution*** can enhance visibility, generate higher-quality leads, and achieve long-term impact—starting now.

Recommendation 5D: Corporate and Community College Transfer Outreach

Objective: To rejuvenate and expand ***Your Institution's*** enrollment pipeline by strategically engaging corporate partners and community colleges, creating a sustainable pathway for working professionals and transfer students to access ***Your Institution's*** programs.

Corporate Outreach Strategy

Current Overview and Industry Standards

Your Institution must increase the number of enrollments generated per learning partner. With over 700 active partnerships listed on ***Your Institution's*** website (and potentially as many as 1,800), only 30% of ***Your Institution's*** 1,066 new 2024 enrollments—approximately 320 students—came through these partnerships.

Industry benchmarks (SHRM, Lumina and others)* suggest much greater potential:

- Low Engagement: 0.5%–1% of a partner's employees enroll annually
- Moderate Engagement: 1%–3%
- High Engagement (with tuition benefits and outreach): 3%–5%

In terms of enrollment per corporate partner:

- National Online Universities (e.g., SNHU, UAGC, Capella): 5–30 students/year
- Regional/Moderate Brand Schools: 2–10 students/year
- Smaller/Less Active Partnerships: 1–3 students/year

Goal: A modest target of 2 enrollments per year per partnership would yield 1,444 new students, significantly increasing enrollment impact.

Rebrand the Learning Partner Program

Rebranding ***Your Institution's*** Learning Partner program presents a strategic opportunity to better communicate its value, purpose, and benefits to corporate and organizational audiences. The current name, while functional, lacks the emotional and professional resonance needed to stand out in a competitive higher education landscape. A refreshed, more compelling name can reinforce ***Your Institution's*** commitment to workforce development, signal modernity and innovation, and more clearly convey the mutual value of these partnerships. Ultimately, a well-chosen name can elevate brand perception, boost engagement, and drive greater enrollment from employer-affiliated learners. Some examples to consider:

- ***Your Institution*** Advantage Network
- ***Your Institution*** Workforce Alliance
- ***Your Institution*** Education Partnership Program (WEPP)
- ***Your Institution*** Works
- NextStep @ ***Your Institution***

Growing Enrollments through Marketing & Outreach

- Utilize ***Your Institution's*** new branding to appeal to organizations seeking flexible, career-relevant, military-friendly education with a high ROI.

*Source: See Appendix B for full source list.

- Highlight differentiators: 10% partner discount, family member eligibility, learning partner scholarships, and dedicated recruiters.

- Launch updated industry-specific partner web pages. For example, a firefighter-focused page with the message "#1 Educational Partner for Firefighters," including:

    - Industry testimonials
    - Webinars
    - Featured programs
    - Discount and scholarship messaging

- Include partner engagement tools like:

    - Easy contact form and phone number
    - "Become a Partner" button
    - Intranet referral incentives
    - Consistent email outreach, webinar invites, and content updates
    - Live or virtual educational events

Workforce Development & Upskilling

- Co-develop learning pathways with partners based on skills gaps and training needs

- Expand existing certificate offerings and develop new stackable credentials that lead to degree pathways

- Partner with HR departments to embed ***Your Institution's*** courses into corporate learning ecosystems

New Partner Growth

- Focus expansion in current verticals (e.g., cities, fire departments, law enforcement) with a target of 5 new partners per year

- Enter high-growth industries like healthcare (3.9% hiring growth in 2023) and IT

Your Institution has significant untapped potential in its corporate and government partnerships. By scaling engagement, promoting tuition benefits, and aligning programs with workforce needs, ***Your Institution*** could realistically generate 1,000 to 2,000 new students per year from these partnerships within three to four years.

Community College Transfer Outreach Strategy

Why Target Community Colleges?

Community colleges represent one of the most strategic growth opportunities for transfer-friendly universities like ***Your Institution***. These institutions serve a high volume of motivated learners who are actively seeking affordable and flexible pathways to complete their bachelor's degrees. In Iowa alone, there are more than 82,000 students enrolled across the community college system. Many of these students complete associate degrees in fields directly aligned with ***Your Institution's*** offerings, making them ideal candidates for transfer. By building a clear, supportive, and branded transfer experience, ***Your Institution*** can capture market share, increase enrollments, and solidify its reputation as a seamless and student-centered transfer destination—both within Iowa and in other key states.

Establish *Your Institution's* Brand as a Transfer Destination

Similar to the rebranding opportunity for the Learning Partner program, ***Your Institution*** should launch a branded online and on-campus transfer portal—such as "***Your Institution*** Pathway Express"—to create a clear, inviting, and student-centered entry point for community college students. This initiative would streamline the transfer process, reinforce ***Your Institution's*** commitment to transfer student success, and elevate its visibility as a transfer-friendly institution. With a strong brand identity, the portal can highlight benefits like guaranteed admission, transfer credit pathways, dedicated advising, and early access to ***Your Institution's*** resources—making it easier for students, especially from the 82,000-strong Iowa community college system, to see ***Your Institution*** as their next step.

Other possible names:

- ***Your Institution*** Bound
- Bridge to ***Your Institution***
- Elevate to ***Your Institution***
- ***Your Institution*** Transfer Journey

Messaging the Program

- Emphasize guaranteed admission through existing articulation agreements
- Feature a simple 3-step process: Apply→Credit Evaluation→Enroll
- Develop dedicated content and advising services tailored to the transfer student journey
- Build program-specific roadmaps aligning associate degrees with ***Your Institution's*** bachelor's programs

Dual Enrollment & Early Access Programs

- Allow community college students to enroll in ***Your Institution's*** courses before completing their associate degrees
- Provide tuition incentives for early transfer commitments
- Offer dedicated scholarships and financial aid for community college transfers

Community College Partnership Marketing

- Co-brand marketing materials with colleges
- Host virtual and in-person transfer fairs and webinars
- Implement digital campaigns targeting students seeking degree completion options

Implementation & Expected Impact

Implementation Timeline

- Phase 1 (0–3 months): Identify target partners, begin outreach, and prepare marketing assets
- Phase 2 (3–6 months): Finalize partnerships, launch pilot programs, and start promotion
- Phase 3 (6–12 months): Expand outreach, assess impact, and refine approach based on feedback

Expected Enrollment Growth

- Corporate-sponsored enrollments to grow 15–25% in Year 1
- Community college transfer students to grow 20–30% over two years
- Strengthened brand awareness among working professionals and academic institutions

By implementing a focused corporate and community college outreach initiative, ***Your Institution*** can significantly expand its enrollment pipeline, better serve working adults, and position itself as a leader in workforce-aligned and transfer-friendly higher education.

Emerge recommends a corporate/community college outreach plan for both corporate and community college that aligns with ***Your Institution's*** ethos and resources.

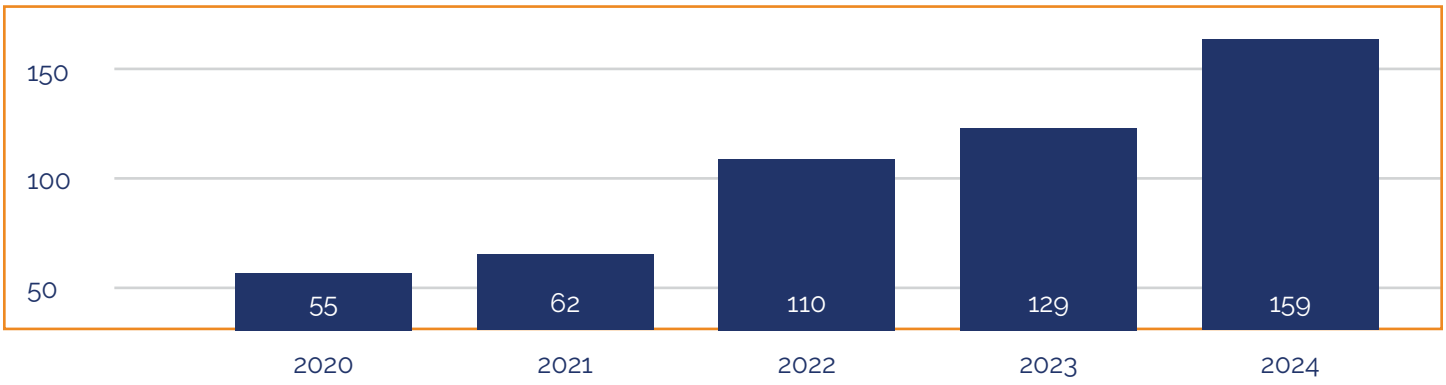
Finding #6: Opportunities to optimize lead generation strategy.

Our deep analysis of ***Your Institution's*** lead and enrollment data over the past three years has provided valuable insights into the performance of various lead sources. This analysis, made possible through data generously provided by the AVP of Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, allowed us to assess trends, identify strengths, and uncover potential areas for improvement. We reviewed all primary and secondary lead sources, evaluating their effectiveness in generating inquiries and, more importantly, converting those inquiries into enrolled students.

Encouragingly, Paid Digital, the naming convention ***Your Institution*** uses for this lead source, has demonstrated strong and consistent performance, requiring no immediate adjustments. Lead volume for this source has remained steady, increasing incrementally, and its new enrollment volume continues to increase year-over-year. In fact, since 2020, new enrollments have improved by 189%. Another notable point, ***Your Institution's*** paid digital conversion rate stands at approximately 3.5%. According to Unbounce, a marketing research firm, the industry average conversion rate for Google Ads is 3.9%, highlighting ***Your Institution's*** strong ability to generate awareness and effectively convert traffic.* This performance reflects a well-optimized strategy and the expertise of the teams managing these campaigns. Their strategic efforts have ensured that this channel effectively attracts and converts prospective students.

*Source: Unbounce.

New Paid Digital Enrollments 2022-2024

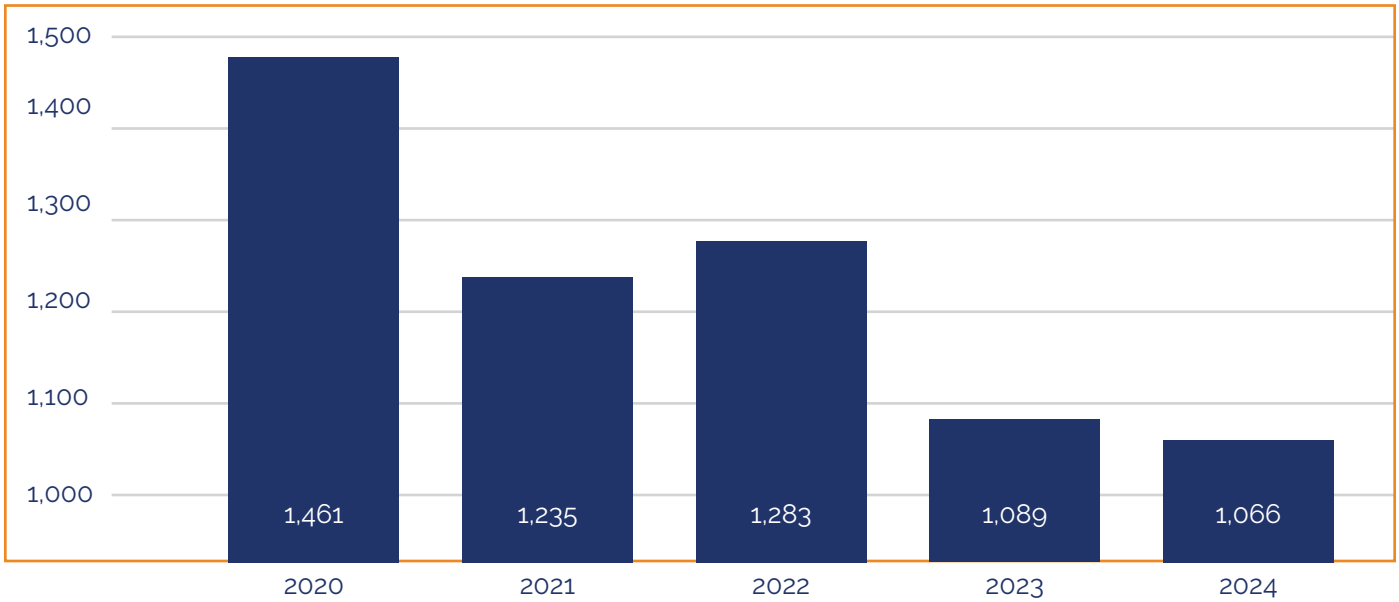


While no major changes are needed, it is important to note here that we identified a $28,000 increase in ***Your Institution's*** paid search spend from 2023 to 2024, reflecting a 4% year-over-year rise in costs. This is a trend we have been experiencing for several years, and it is inevitable that these costs will continue to rise. Therefore, it will be imperative for ***Your Institution*** to optimize other channels that can help offset those rising costs. Please see the accompanying recommendations below for Emerge's suggested course of action.

Though Paid Digital is performing well, our analysis of lead and enrollment data across all sources and channels has highlighted a concerning trend. Although total lead volume has increased year-over-year from 2022 to 2024—driven largely by Organic, Paid Digital, and Purchased Leads—new enrollments have declined significantly.

From 2020 to 2024, new enrollments have dropped by 27%, indicating a disconnect between lead generation and conversion that warrants further attention.

New Online Enrollments 2022-2024



We identified two lead sources, **Organic: Internet Search and Outreach: Military,** that show a concerning and consistent decline in lead-to-enrollment conversion rates. These trends suggest inefficiencies or gaps that may be impacting the enrollment funnel, warranting further investigation and strategic intervention. In the following sections, we will outline these areas of concern and provide targeted recommendations to help ***Your Institution*** improve lead quality and conversion rates for these channels.

Notes: ***Your Institution*** categorizes multiple channels under the Organic lead source, with Internet Search standing out as both the most concerning and the most impactful. Although it has seen a significant decline, optimizing this channel has the potential to drive more cost-effective, high-intent leads. By strengthening Internet Search, ***Your Institution*** can offset the rising costs of paid channels, creating a more balanced and sustainable lead generation strategy.

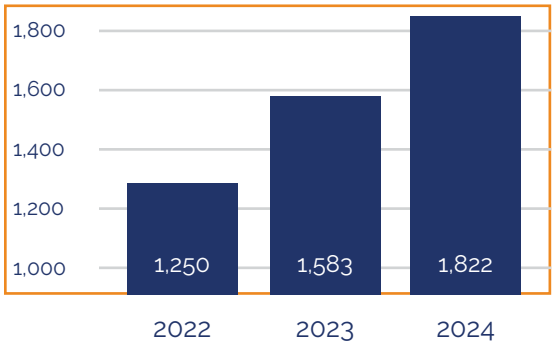
Additionally, we have used two different reporting models to analyze the data. The first follows a cohort-based approach, tracking leads that converted within a specific time period, in this case 2022 to 2024. The second focuses on enrollments during a five-year time period from 2020 to 2024, regardless of when the leads were originally generated. This distinction allows us to assess lead conversion effectiveness and overall enrollment trends separately.

Organic: Internet Search

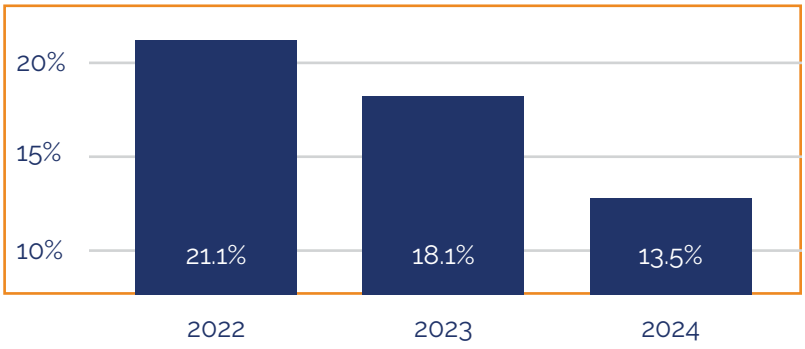
Organic search leads are generated through search engines like Google and Bing. They have historically been among the highest-quality sources for student inquiries industry-wide, often yielding the strongest conversion rates because they come from prospects who are actively searching for relevant programs and topics. However, while our analysis of ***Your Institution's*** data reveals a promising increase in leads year-over-year, it also illustrates a steady and concerning decline in the lead-to-enrollment conversion rate.

Analysis of the cohort model: Over the past three years, ***Your Institution*** has seen a steady increase in lead volume, with a 45.8% growth from 2022 to 2024. **While this upward trend in lead generation is promising, the conversion of these leads into enrollments has faced a significant decline.** In 2022, Internet Search leads converted at 21.1%, dropping to 18.1% in 2023, and further declining to 13.5% in 2024. While it is important to note that some of the leads generated in Q4 of 2024 are still in the pipeline and may convert over time, the overall downward trend suggests strategy or process issues that should be addressed.

Organic: Internet Search Leads 2022-2024



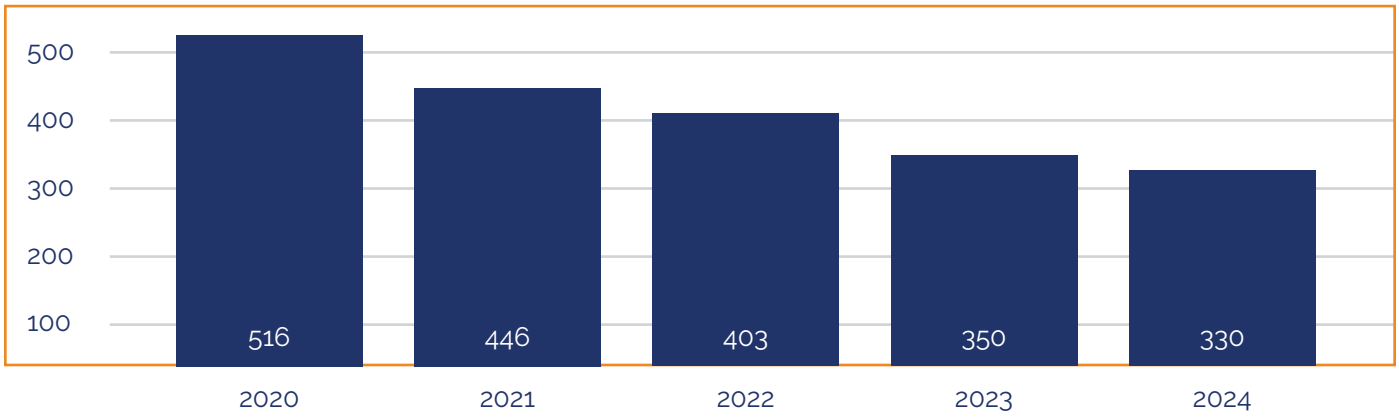
Organic: Internet Search Lead-to-Enrollment Rate 2022-2024



Analysis of the enrollment model: Going back to 2020, this trend is again substantiated as we see a steady decline in enrollments from Organic channels. **From 2020 to 2024, new enrollments from Internet Search have declined by 36%, dropping from 516 in 2020 to 330 in 2024.**

We have also identified a **significant decline of 48.1% in new Organic: Referral enrollments** over the same period. In the Recruitment Diagnostic section of this report, we provide recommendations for optimizing this critical lead source.

New Organic: Internet Search Enrollments 2020-2024

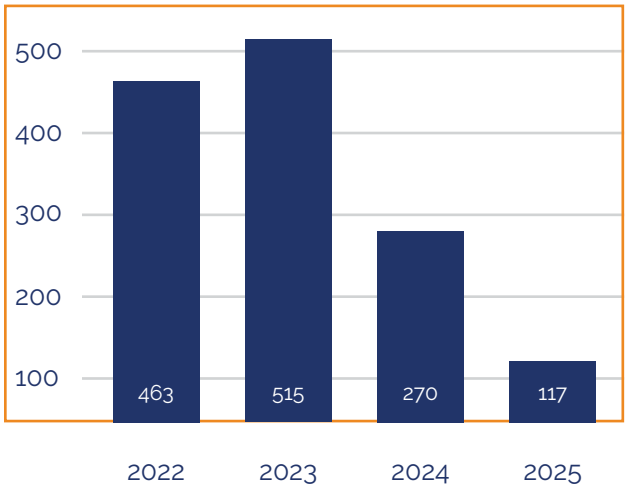


This analysis suggests that the right prospects may not be finding their way to the website, a misalignment between messaging and intent, gaps in follow-up engagement, or even website and user experience challenges that create friction in the decision-making process. It also highlights the critical role of a well-executed search engine optimization (SEO) strategy, not just to increase visibility but to attract the right audience. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring that ***Your Institution*** maximizes the potential of this valuable lead source. Without a targeted approach to SEO and content, ***Your Institution*** risks missing out on prospective students who are the best fit for its programs. This analysis underscores the urgency of refining lead generation strategies, optimizing recruitment efforts, and strengthening brand positioning to ensure better enrollment rates.

Military

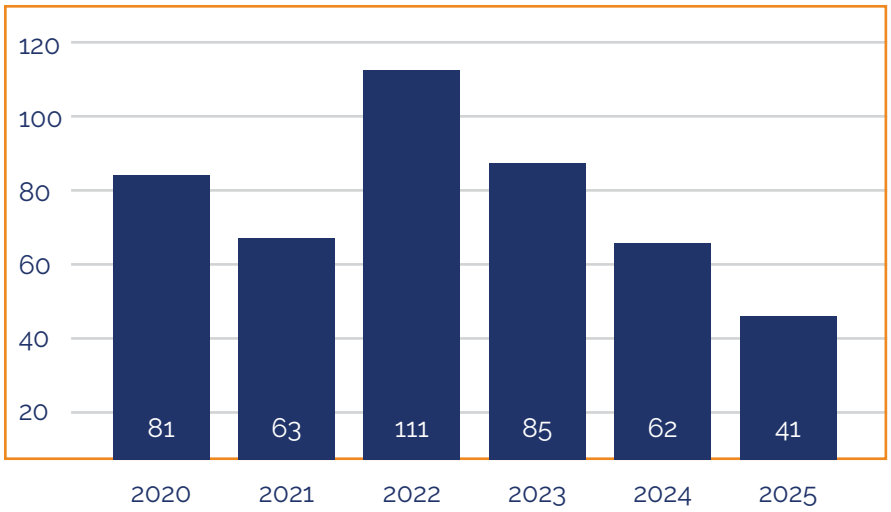
Outreach: Military, the naming convention ***Your Institution*** uses for this lead source, presents a different but equally important challenge. This source is just one of many that draws in the Military population, but over the past five years, ***Your Institution*** has experienced a general **year-over-year decline in both leads and enrollments,** signaling a need for strategic intervention. This is particularly concerning given that over 40% of ***Your Institution's*** student body is military-affiliated, making this audience a cornerstone of ***Your Institution's*** enrollment strategy. Even when we take into consideration lead lag time, there is a shrinking pool of military prospects, which ultimately threatens long-term stability and growth.

Outreach: Military Leads YoY



Analysis of the cohort model: From 2022 to 2024, lead volume has been decreasing each year, reducing the pipeline of prospective students. If this trend persists, ***Your Institution*** is projected to generate only 117 leads in 2025—significantly limiting its ability to sustain or grow enrollments.

Outreach: Military Enrollments YoY



Analysis of the enrollment model: Similarly, from 2020 to 2024, enrollment numbers have consistently trended downward, reflecting broader challenges in student acquisition and conversion. This decline is expected to continue into 2025, with current pacing projections estimating just 41 enrollments for the year.

These trends could point to a number of possible reasons, including:

- Quality of traffic due to misalignment between messaging and intent
- Gaps in follow-up engagement due to recruitment turnover, training and/or experience or perhaps the communication strategy employed,
- Website and user experience challenges that create friction in the decision-making process.

It is important to also note here that the increase in Organic leads but accompanying decrease in enrollments **may partially stem from *Your Institution's* transition away from Columbia Southern University,** which may have introduced operational disruptions such as employee turnover, loss of institutional knowledge, changes in lead sourcing, or inconsistencies in lead nurturing and communication. This period of change warrants a deeper dive by ***Your Institution*** to fully assess the extent of its impact on recruitment and enrollment outcomes. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring that ***Your Institution*** maximizes the potential of this valuable lead source. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring that ***Your Institution*** maximizes the potential of these valuable lead sources.

Recommendation #6: Optimize organic and military lead generation.

To sustain and expand military enrollments, it will be essential to reverse the downward trend in lead volume while improving conversion efficiency. Our recommendations will focus on expanding targeted outreach, strengthening ***Your Institution's*** military brand identity, optimizing landing pages and digital campaigns, and deepening engagement with military-affiliated organizations. By proactively increasing lead flow and reinforcing ***Your Institution's*** appeal to service members, ***Your Institution*** can better support this critical student population and secure continued enrollment success.

Recommendation 6A: Organic Lead Optimization

To reverse the decline in organic lead conversions and to help offset the growing expenses of paid lead sources, we recommend implementing a comprehensive organic content strategy paired with a robust SEO plan. Optimizing organic lead flow is essential, as it provides a sustainable and cost-effective source of prospective students. By strengthening SEO, content strategy, and website engagement, ***Your Institution*** can reduce its reliance on paid channels while maintaining a steady pipeline of high-intent leads.

Organic Content and SEO Strategy

Emerge recommends that ***Your Institution*** partner with an SEO expert/agency to ensure that prospective students find relevant, compelling content that aligns with their search intent while also optimizing website performance to drive engagement and increase conversions.

A good organic content and SEO strategy would include:

- **Optimized Marketing Copy** – Ensure messaging across all marketing assets aligns with prospective students' intent by incorporating targeted keyword strategies and compelling, informative content. (See Findings/Recommendation #4 for more details)
- **Refined Value Propositions** – Clarify and consistently communicate ***Your Institution's*** unique differentiators, addressing key audiences, learning partners, and transfer students. (See Findings/Recommendations #4 for more details.)
- **Website Enhancements** – Streamline site navigation, improve the visibility of calls-to-action (CTAs), and create more intuitive lead capture forms to reduce friction in the inquiry process. (See Findings/Recommendations #3 for more details.)
- **High-Value Organic Content** – Develop SEO-driven articles and resources that highlight ***Your Institution's*** strongest programs, reinforce brand identity, and attract prospective students through organic search. (See Findings/Recommendation #4 for more details)

Other recommendations include:

- A dedicated internal team member to manage ***Your Institution's*** content management system (CMS). The person in this role should be strategic and have some web-building skills, but not necessarily be a developer.
- Strengthening lead nurturing strategies, including email and retargeting campaigns for organic leads, ensuring personalized, relevant, and timely follow-ups that guide prospects toward enrollment.

See Recommendation #4C for more on SEO strategy.

Recommendation 6B: Military Lead Source Expansion

Given that military-affiliated students comprise over 40% of ***Your Institution's*** student body, the decline in military lead and enrollment volume presents a significant long-term risk. To counteract this trend, we recommend:

- Strengthening partnerships with military bases, veterans' organizations, and military transition programs to create more direct recruitment pathways. Increase presence at military-focused education fairs, military conferences, and online communities, focusing on efforts that have historically driven enrollments.
- Ensuring that ***Your Institution's*** unique value to military students is clearly articulated across all marketing channels.
- Optimizing dedicated landing pages that highlight key differentiators, such as military-friendly policies, tuition assistance, and specialized support services. Tailoring calls-to-action to encourage prospective students to connect directly with Military Service Representatives.

By leveraging a strategic combination of a robust SEO and content strategy, enhanced organic lead generation, targeted outreach, and a strengthened military recruitment approach, ***Your Institution*** can reverse declining trends and better serve its military-affiliated student population. By focusing on these efforts, ***Your Institution*** will not only stabilize enrollments but also lay the foundation for sustainable growth in these critical areas. With a well-executed plan, ***Your Institution*** can optimize its lead generation channels, ensuring consistent, high-quality leads and increasing conversions across all segments.

Additional Marketing Best Practices

Automate lead re-engagement campaigns

To improve efficiency and optimize conversion rates of database leads, we recommend that ***Your Institution*** implement an automated communication strategy for prospective students who have been in the pipeline for 12 months or longer. Currently, re-engagement efforts are inconsistent, which can result in missed opportunities to convert interested prospects. By automating follow-up through a combination of emails and text messages, ***Your Institution*** can ensure timely and consistent outreach, keeping ***Your Institution*** top of mind for prospective students. Additionally, establishing a structured quarterly drip campaign will provide ongoing touchpoints with relevant content, reinforcing key value propositions and encouraging prospects to take the next step in the enrollment process. This approach will help maximize engagement while reducing manual workload for the admissions and marketing teams.

Prevent spam on lead forms and applications

Our analysis of organic leads over the past three years revealed a significant spike in "Internet Application" leads, specifically in June and early July 2024. Upon further investigation, we determined that this was an anomaly. To prevent similar occurrences in the future, we recommend implementing verification measures on lead forms and applications to minimize the risk of receiving large volumes of invalid or spam data that drain resources if it has not yet been done. Implementing a captcha system can help filter out automated bot submissions, while a honeypot field—an invisible form field designed to trap bots—can further reduce fraudulent entries. These verification steps will enhance data quality and ensure that recruitment efforts remain focused on legitimate prospective students.

Re-engagement of students who have stopped out

We recommend leveraging targeted marketing efforts to support the re-engagement of students who have stopped out. Collaborating closely with the student success team, these efforts can include personalized messaging, strategic re-entry campaigns, and tailored assets—such as email sequences, landing pages, and social media ads—that speak directly to this audience. While the student success coaches lead the outreach, coordinated marketing initiatives help ensure consistency, brand alignment, and greater impact. For a more detailed overview of the re-engagement strategy, please refer to Recommendation #4 in the Student Success Diagnostic.

Improve marketing efficiency through a centralized partnership with one external provider

Your Institution would benefit from centralizing its external marketing efforts with a single, trusted partner to streamline its strategy, reduce fragmentation, and maximize impact. By focusing on one partner, ***Your Institution*** can ensure consistent messaging, more efficient budget allocation, and a unified approach across all marketing channels. According to a 2020 HubSpot report, organizations that centralized their marketing efforts saw a 20% increase in lead generation efficiency compared to those using multiple vendors. With a dedicated partner, ***Your Institution*** can implement cohesive, data-driven campaigns that target the right student segments, ultimately improving conversion rates and reducing marketing costs. This approach also allows for better tracking and optimization of performance, ensuring that marketing dollars are spent more effectively and producing a higher return on investment.

RECRUITMENT DIAGNOSTIC



Summary

At the time of this diagnostic, ***Your Institution*** is in a transition period from an out-of-date proprietary CRM to a new system that will streamline recruitment processes and the sharing of information between teams and departments. In the meantime, due to the ineffectiveness of the old system, access to accurate data has been difficult to obtain.

Emerge's recruitment team was impressed with the interactions they had with ***Your Institution's*** online recruitment team. The staff were engaged in the process and provided transparent and honest feedback to our questions regarding process, structure, policy, practice, technology, and more.

Your Institution is at a critical juncture in its enrollment strategy, requiring a modernized approach to effectively engage prospective students, streamline internal operations, and strengthen its brand identity. Our findings highlight key areas of improvement, from improving communication strategies and optimizing lead-to-enrollment rates to enhancing CRM utilization and fostering interdepartmental collaboration. By addressing these opportunities, ***Your Institution*** can build a recruitment model that is both scalable and competitive in an evolving higher education landscape.

Comprehensive Assessment

Finding #1: Gaps in lead engagement and follow-up efficiency.

Our analysis revealed inefficiencies in lead engagement, with many inquiries not receiving timely follow-up or consistent multi-channel communication. The current process relies heavily on admissions counselors, limiting their capacity to focus on high-value prospects. Strengthening engagement through a dedicated call center will ensure a more systematic and responsive outreach strategy, improving conversion rates and overall recruitment success.

Below are a few observations made while shopping ***Your Institution***:

- Communications contained weak calls-to-action.
- Emails lacked personality and personalization and came across as "canned."
- We did not receive any text messages.
  (Please refer to Finding and Recommendation #2 for more detail on this topic.)

Recommendation #1: Strengthen lead engagement with a dedicated call center.

We recommend that ***Your Institution*** enhance its outreach efforts by implementing a structured and efficient call center strategy. A dedicated call center will ensure timely, consistent, and high-touch engagement with prospective students, increasing conversion rates while allowing admissions counselors to focus on high-value interactions, such as guiding qualified applicants through the enrollment process.

Strategic call center services typically include:

- **Proactive Lead Engagement:** Every new lead receives a structured call, text, and email cadence to maximize engagement. This approach is particularly effective in improving conversion rates for paid digital search leads.
- **Speed-to-Lead Optimization:** Prioritize rapid response times to new inquiries, following industry best practices to engage prospects within minutes, dramatically improving conversion rates.
- **Automated Communications:** Implement automated email workflows to ensure consistent follow-up while freeing up admissions counselors to focus on personalized interactions.
- **Re-Engagement of Aged Leads:** Implement a structured outreach strategy for older inquiries, ensuring that past prospects who may still be considering enrollment are nurtured back into the pipeline.
- **Appointment Scheduling for Admissions Counselors:** Call center representatives can qualify leads and schedule one-on-one appointments with admissions counselors, allowing them to focus on deeper, high-value conversations.
- **Inbound Call Handling:** Ensure that prospective students reaching out by phone always speak with a knowledgeable representative rather than being sent to voicemail or experiencing long wait times.
- **Surveying and Feedback Collection:** Gather insights from prospective students on their enrollment experience, allowing ***Your Institution*** to refine its approach based on real-time data.

By leveraging outsourced call center expertise, ***Your Institution*** can establish a scalable, high-performing call center operation that increases efficiency, improves outreach, and drives enrollment growth.

Finding #2: Inconsistent or lack of use of texting in communications with prospects.

Due to ongoing technical issues with the texting vendor, RingCentral, ***Your Institution*** has been without consistent text capabilities for many months. Once the transition to JRM is complete, the online recruitment team will gain access to Twilio, a more reliable and sophisticated text platform. As traditional methods like email and phone calls no longer dominate communication channels, it is increasingly important to engage with prospects through their preferred mode of communication. Industry data and Emerge's expertise show that text messaging is one of the most effective ways to connect with prospective students, as they are significantly more likely to respond to a personalized text than an email or phone call.* This shift underscores a broader trend toward digital-first engagement and reinforces the need for universities to make texting a central component of their enrollment strategy.

*Source: *ModernCampus.com*

Recommendation #2: Make texting the focus of the marcom strategy.

- Prioritize texting as the primary outreach method for prospective students, as it yields higher engagement rates than email or phone calls. This ensures timely responses and keeps students actively engaged in the enrollment process.
- Use the CRM to send personalized, automated text messages based on a student's inquiry stage, interests, and next steps. This reduces manual workload while maintaining meaningful, timely communication.
- Equip the team with guidelines for effective text messaging, including response time expectations, tone, and compliance considerations, to maximize conversion rates while maintaining a professional and engaging approach.

Finding #3: *Your Institution's* recruitment team is currently unable to leverage its internal systems for meaningful data analysis.

Data-driven decision-making can significantly improve student enrollment. By using data to understand student needs, preferences, and trends, institutions can improve outreach and support services, ultimately leading to increased enrollment and student engagement. For example, one institution saw a 192% increase in student appointments after implementing a data-driven communication strategy.*

Your Institution's team shared that the enrollment funnel and other historical enrollment data are unavailable due to the transition from the previous business partner. The absence of this historical data not only proved to be a significant disadvantage to the Emerge team, preventing us from offering properly informed substantive recommendations for optimizing the enrollment funnel, but it also limited the institution's ability to make informed, data-driven, and student-centric decisions.

Apparently, the former SQL server containing the historical admission funnel data is completely inaccessible to ***Your Institution's*** team. The team described this as "flying blindly," as they are using manual conversions in Excel spreadsheets for forecasting, enrollment projections, funnel conversions, budgeting, and enrollment goals. It was described to the Emerge team as a manual process that lacks sophistication, essentially going from "being data rich to being data starved…and doing things manually using hammer and chisel, duct tape, and WD40."

The systems used were described as "homegrown and proprietary." When ***Your Institution*** moved to new ownership, the systems were no longer supported. A new "Omega" instance was created, leaving the college responsible for all updates and enhancements, in addition to the complete loss of data.

The college works with a third-party vendor described as "limited in their scope and what they can do" to make systems run seamlessly. One example provided involved a corrupted student record that took 25 days to resolve through outreach to the prior ownership group.

We cannot overstate how debilitating the absence of historical admissions and enrollment data is for an institution that relies upon continuous improvement to track lead acquisition, time in the funnel, time to application, application to enrollment, and matriculation data.

*Source: Ellucian

Recommendation #3: Enhance CRM utilization and data-driven strategies for improved lead management and conversion.

To maximize the effectiveness of the new CRM system to be launched in June and improve enrollment outcomes, ***Your Institution*** should invest in processes and native functionalities that fully leverage the data and features within the CRM.

- As a top priority, we recommend that ***Your Institution*** secure additional internal expertise or work with an outside vendor who can provide stronger resources and a greater sense of urgency.
- Hire a CRM administrator who will train managers to become super users and the admissions team to leverage relevant data.
- Create dashboards within JRM to help counselors focus on leads with higher desirability and probability of conversion.
- Utilize the customization functionality in JRM to add a layer of sophistication to the existing messaging.

Once these items are completed, the management team can:

- Determine the average length of time in the enrollment funnel and strive for continuous improvement by setting monthly goals.
- Set weekly goals based on counselor activities (calls, texts, emails, events, etc).
- Customize, personalize, and have strong calls to action in text messages and emails.

Your Institution's leadership should continue to make every reasonable effort to procure the historical data, even if this would involve a raw data dump from the former server. Failure to procure the institution's historical data should not be acceptable to management. Porting this critical business intelligence from the previous partner should have been a key focus during the transition period.

Finally, the new JRM system should fix the multi-step process that an admissions counselor takes to email a student. After pulling lists and additional reports, the information for the email is compiled and sent in yet another system. The efficiencies of the new JRM will significantly free up admission counselors' time for more meaningful outreach and connection with their book of business.

Finding #4: It appears that the marketing and recruitment teams operated independently of each other, creating inefficiencies.

The Admissions and Marketing teams have complementary but not necessarily coordinated recruitment strategies. A few key examples illustrate this lack of collaboration:

- The marketing and recruitment teams do not meet regularly to align on goals or priorities.
- Marketing campaigns are not consistently shared with the recruitment team, leaving counselors unaware of what messaging students may have received.
- The recruitment team does not systematically share real-time insights or trends they're observing in the funnel, which limits marketing's ability to respond with timely or targeted campaigns.

A full-funnel strategy is essential for maximizing lead generation and conversion rates in today's competitive higher education landscape. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) estimates that when marketing and recruitment are aligned, they experience "a 10-20% increase in application conversion rates."* Currently, the marketing and admissions teams have complementary strategies in place, but these efforts are not fully coordinated to achieve optimal results. Without tight alignment across the funnel—from initial awareness to enrollment—valuable opportunities can be lost, and prospective students may encounter a disjointed experience that weakens conversion potential.

Recommendation #4: Increase collaboration between the admissions and marketing teams to devise high-yield strategies.

Marketing and recruitment efforts are inherently interconnected—what marketing does directly influences the quality and volume of leads, while insights from the recruitment team should inform and refine marketing strategies to ensure continued alignment with prospective student needs.

By aligning their strategies and working collaboratively across the entire enrollment funnel—from awareness through conversion—***Your Institution's*** marketing and recruitment teams can create more cohesive, high-yield efforts that seamlessly guide prospective students through each stage of the process. We recommend that the teams:

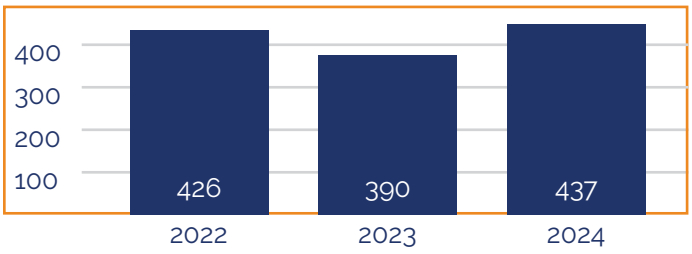
- Meet monthly to discuss trends and opportunities to develop new campaigns to achieve enrollment and revenue targets.
- Develop and promote unified messaging, particularly around brand identity. (Please refer back to Marketing Recommendation #4A.)
- Increase sharing of upcoming marketing campaigns and admissions blitzes.
- Share enrollment goals by start date.
- Create a feedback loop of trends and observations from all stages of the funnel.
- Host coordinated events like virtual open houses for target segments and automatic acceptance events.

This unified approach will ensure that both teams are focused on the same goals and leveraging their efforts to increase engagement, conversions, and ultimately, enrollment.

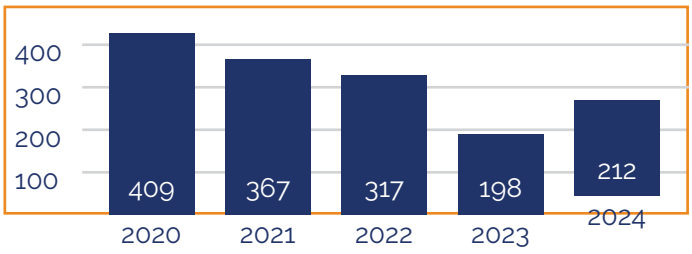
Finding #5: By their own admission, *Your Institution's* team has not placed enough importance on their referral program.

Referrals are the most valuable source of leads. In our analysis, we identified a positive trend in Referral lead volume from the 2022 to 2024 cohorts. **However, when examining overall new enrollments from 2020 to 2024, a steady and concerning decline of 48.1% emerges.** In fact, from 2020 to 2024, new enrollments from Referral leads have decreased by 197 students. Given that Referral leads typically convert at a higher rate than other sources, optimizing this channel presents a significant opportunity to counteract declining enrollment trends and improve overall yield.

Referral Leads YoY 2022-2024



New Referral Enrollments YoY



*Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Recommendation #5: Place priority on obtaining high-converting referral leads.

Your Institution has the framework for a very robust and rewarding referral program called Refer a Warrior. The program features six gift levels dependent on the number of students generated from the referrer. *Your Institution* should strive to generate 60-80 referrals per month according to industry standards.

Strategic Referral Plan Action

Emerge recommends that the recruitment team re-prioritize this program by developing a strategic plan that not only increases student referrals but also maximizes their conversion into enrollments. This initiative is crucial to offsetting the dramatic decline in referral enrollments over the past five years and ensuring a stronger, more sustainable pipeline of incoming students from this source.

The strategic plan should include:

- Best practices for rebooting the referral program.
- Training for the admissions team in best practices for obtaining referrals.
- Reward structure for the admissions team to boost morale and promote employee retention, including contests among admissions team members (within the appropriate confines of the incentive compensation rules, of course).
- Formalized employee evaluation process to include referral goals and set a cadence.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for integrating referral opportunities across key touchpoints, including email communications, the website, student portals, and social media, ensuring maximum visibility and ease of participation.

Finding #6: We see a decreasing lead-to-enrollment rate across a number of lead sources, including some of the highest converting, like Organic.

While the Marketing section (Finding #6) provides a more detailed breakdown of declining lead-to-enrollment rates, it's important to note that optimization is not solely a marketing function—it requires shared ownership and active collaboration between recruitment and marketing teams. Recruitment plays a critical role in moving inquiries through the funnel, and the effectiveness of counselor follow-up, communication strategy, and lead prioritization directly impacts conversion outcomes. To reverse this downward trend, both teams must coordinate efforts around messaging, lead quality, and engagement tactics to ensure every prospect receives timely, personalized, and persuasive touchpoints.

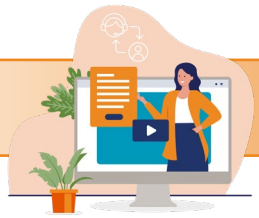
Recommendation #6: Optimize the lead-to-enrollment rate across all channels.

Emerge recommends that ***Your Institution*** develop or outsource the development of a comprehensive plan to streamline and enhance the recruitment process, ensuring that every lead is effectively nurtured from inquiry to enrollment. This approach should be tailored to maximize efficiency, improve prospective student engagement, and drive measurable enrollment growth.

Below is a sample plan:

- **Recruiter Training Enhancement** – While ***Your Institution*** already has a recruiter training program in place, Emerge recommends building on this foundation with advanced best practices in lead conversion and student engagement.
- **Personalized Communications Plan** – Develop a tailored communication plan for nurturing leads based on their specific needs and interests. This might include personalized emails, phone calls, and targeted content to keep them engaged and informed.
- **Qualifying Process** – Implement a data-driven qualifying process to effectively move leads from Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) to Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs). This ensures that your admissions team focuses its efforts on the most promising candidates, maximizing conversion rates and optimizing resource allocation.
- **Automation Plan** – Assess the lead nurturing journey to determine which communications should be automated for efficiency and which should remain personalized for maximum impact. By strategically balancing automation with human touchpoints, ***Your Institution*** can streamline workflows, enhance engagement, and ensure that prospective students receive the right message at the right time. This would be particularly helpful in the re-engagement of leads after 12 months in the pipeline.

STUDENT SUCCESS DIAGNOSTIC



Summary

The online Student Affairs team is composed of six academic advisors and six student services representatives, plus managers for both areas. They are following best practices and utilizing available resources to assist students systematically at specific touchpoints throughout their life cycles.

The team is relatively young and mostly new to ***Your Institution***, with one or two exceptions who have substantial institutional experience and perspective.

At the time of this consultation, ***Your Institution*** is transitioning to a new CRM/SIS meant to streamline processes and integrate functional areas. Its implementation is expected to remove obstacles to student retention by advancing and streamlining at-risk student identification and interface. Currently, the process is impeded by the lack of crosstalk among disparate systems. Compounding the problem, the Ring Central platform for texting between students and advisors has been disabled for an extended period. Texting is the most efficient means of interaction; the Ring Central failure is seen as a major barrier. These technical shortcomings are being reported as primary handicaps to efficient interaction with students and are a source of frustration in Student Affairs.

Student caseloads per Academic Advisors (AA)/Student Services Representative (SSR) are estimated at 500-700. An examination of this ratio may reflect an inability for the AA/SSR to establish and maintain the depth of relationship that, particularly an undergrad, may need to foster a sense of belonging with the school. Further, while the differentiation of roles between AA and SSR is defined in their descriptions, a marriage of these roles may eliminate enough redundancies to allow more frequent and enhanced communication with each student, moving away from exclusively crisis-driven intervention to more routine interactions with a larger number of students. An associated benefit would be increased attention to stopped-out students, monitoring their absence, and encouraging a plan for their return to active status.

Persistence and retention should be positioned as a key business strategy that occupies a place in the mission of every employee for whom students are constituents. The Student Affairs leadership does not see evidence of this universal buy-in at ***Your Institution***, especially in the behavior of many instructors.

A cohesive team approach to retention is possible. At ***Your Institution***, a vital vehicle to deliver it is lacking. According to directors, communication between staff and faculty is irregular and sporadic. A regularly scheduled, mandated virtual meeting schedule between the two groups would normalize the retention mission, increase collaboration, and serve at-risk students more urgently and thoroughly.

Instructors should view AAs and SSRs as allies and vice versa. Faculty can be viewed as the "point of the spear"; they have the most frequent and immediate interaction with students by way of reacting to their discussion posts and commenting on their assignment submissions. Spending a few minutes every few weeks working in concert with Student Affairs would be a worthwhile endeavor aimed at student retention but, as important, student well-being.

On the topic of gathering student feedback on courses and professors via end-of-course surveys, the most experienced advisor, Debbie, reported that she frequently experiences incongruity between what a student will tell her about a particular professor's habits and what that same student will state on their course satisfaction survey. Noting that many times a student will encounter the same professor repeatedly, this conflict is being attributed to the student fearing retaliation if they are candid with their complaints when completing the survey. Therefore, the AA, when attempting to advocate for the student, has no tangible evidence to support the student's assertions.

Surprisingly, no mention was made of leveraging alumni relationships as a retention tool. Exposing students to first-hand accounts of their predecessors' struggles and ultimate success stories is a proven and inexpensive means of sustaining their engagement and fostering realistic goal setting.

Comprehensive Assessment

Finding #1: The Academic Advisor (AA)/Student Services Representative (SSR) to student ratio is too large.

- The student caseload for each AA and SSR is too large to enable effective monitoring of and response to students' academic performance. This results in over-reliance on automated reports generated through SIS.
- Blackboard and the SIS are not integrated and do not communicate reliably, severely hampering SA efforts. The Director of Student Affairs says, "(The SIS) is cumbersome. It is not bringing us all the students we need to get in front of." The regularly generated Student Struggling Report is, therefore, viewed as flawed and unreliable.

According to the AAs, they do not have time to check on each student's grades and depend on an unreliable report, called the Student Struggling Report, to identify at-risk students. Therefore, students are missed when it comes to potentially receiving the support they need for success. While the AAs and SSRs have good practices and resources in place to deal with student issues as they arise, they do not have the time or ability to be very proactive due to the student load and reporting issues. According to industry best practices, the ideal student to advisor ratio is somewhere between 200-300 students per advisor.* Studies have shown that lower ratios contribute to student success and retention, and high caseloads are an ongoing obstacle to improving advising. In a regression analysis, it was found that decreasing the caseload by 100 students could increase retention rates by one percentage point.**

Finding #1A: Lack of differentiation of responsibilities between AAs and SSRs.

This may cause some confusion among students regarding which support person to approach with each of their particular issues. It can also create redundancies in student support efforts.

- There is a lack of differentiation between duties of AAs and SSRs. There appears to be some overlap. Administratively, this could result in task redundancies. From the students' perspective, it may also create some confusion about whom to approach when they are experiencing a particular issue.

Recommendation #1: Combine the AA and SSR roles into one position.

This allows for redistribution of the student caseload to roughly 208 students per advisor. Students could be redistributed not only based on numbers but by student needs, such as a higher student load of graduate students, as they are typically not as high-touch as undergraduates. From personal experience, Bill and Sara have done both jobs in one role and found it easy to maintain their student load while providing an excellent level of student service across advising and support needs. In fact, we feel this enriches the relationship with the student and provides a higher level of service because of being a one-stop shop for all of a student's needs. Having a 360 degree view of the student's experience leads to a higher level of trust from the student, being knowledgeable in these multiple functional areas.

The very start of the student life cycle is a tenuous period. Prospective students are more likely than ever to encounter obstacles they are ill-equipped to manage, including general uncertainty about starting a new experience. Further examination should be conducted in the process of shepherding a prospective student from acceptance, through registration, into and through the initial drop period in their first classes. If that person exhibits doubts during this time, they should already have a single "coach" they can contact with whom they feel they have a relationship. During this period, consistent proactive outreach to the student from this "coach" is recommended to fortify their engagement with the college.

Combining the AA and SSR roles will allow for a more proactive advising approach instead of a reactive one. Industry best practices indicate that student success staff intervention needs to be organic and proactive. For example, one college saw an increase in their overall retention rate of 3.8% in less than two years.*** By centralizing advising and support functions under a single role, ***Your Institution*** can ensure that students receive timely, personalized support throughout their academic journey, fostering stronger relationships and improving overall retention.

*Source: *eab.com (1),* **Source: *Tyton Partners,* ***Source: *eab.com (2)*

Finding #2: Current processes for supporting students are hindered by reporting inefficiencies, the absence of key data views, and unrefined risk triggers—resulting in delays, misidentification, and missed opportunities for timely intervention.

When data systems are fragmented or incomplete, student support teams are forced to rely on manual workarounds and unhelpful data, which not only slows response times but also introduces the risk of human error.

- For example, it has been difficult for the student services team to address students who have not progressed. According to direct feedback from the supervisor and training coordinator for Student Services, the current manual process of tracking and engaging stopped-out students supplies staff with incomplete or inaccurate information. Because of these system imperfections, time and effort are expended on creating a manual list from attendance records of active students who have been unenrolled in classes for a period of four to eight months. SSRs are expected to devote an average of two days per academic term to calling, emailing, and texting this population.

- We also learned that total enrollments per academic year are tracked term-by-term and not on an overall basis. Additionally, total enrollments are measured by the number of terms each student enrolls in as opposed to an individual student. For example, there were 13,200 total enrollments in 2020, but no clear understanding of how many unique students this represents. That data was only accessible upon consulting a separate marketing report. While 'total enrollments' is a helpful metric for identifying enrollment trends, to get an accurate retention percentage, best practice indicates to count by individual.

Equally concerning is the unreliable identification and reporting of at-risk students due to a cumbersome SIS (albeit systems that are currently in the process of being replaced). Currently, Student Affairs (SA) indicates these catalysts for a student to appear on the Student Struggling Report:

- No Blackboard logins within the first three days of the term

- No Blackboard logins for 14 consecutive days

- Projected final grade of "F" with at least 25% of the course completed

Even if the Student Struggling report was reliable, these triggers, particularly the 14 straight days of absenteeism, do not create a fine-enough screen to catch many students in time to allow them to recover quickly in their classes, even with intervention. For context, fourteen days represent one quarter of the term. There is too much of a time delay in the parameters of the report if a student goes without logging in for two weeks before they appear on the report. If AAs were able to check courses daily/weekly, then this would be caught much sooner.

Recommendation #2: *Your Institution* must implement robust, data-driven retention reporting and intervention processes.

Standard Retention Reporting

Effective student retention efforts start with accurate, accessible, and actionable data. Institutions should establish real-time reporting dashboards that integrate data from the student information system (SIS), learning management system (LMS), and advising platforms. These dashboards should provide clear visibility into key indicators such as course attendance, academic performance, login frequency, and communication history. Best-in-class retention strategies also leverage predictive analytics and risk-scoring models that help prioritize outreach based on a student's likelihood to persist, enabling staff to focus time and energy where it matters most.

Standard reports that should be built and regularly disseminated to relevant stakeholders:

- At-Risk Student Report
- Stop-Out and Unregistered Students Report
- Midterm Grade and Academic Performance Report
- Course Attendance and Participation Report
- Registration Pipeline Report
- Academic Progress Report
- Coaching and Advising Touchpoint Report
- Outreach Activity Tracker
- Caseload Distribution Report

For student success strategies to be truly effective, reporting must go beyond an overview perspective and be built by clearly defined student segments. Segmenting reports by degree level, student status (full-time vs. part-time), military affiliation, etc., allows the student success team to identify distinct patterns, challenges, and opportunities within each population. Tailored insights empower more effective outreach, improve resource allocation, and ensure that interventions are aligned with the unique needs of each student group.

At-Risk Student Identification

To improve the timely identification and intervention of at-risk students, the student success team should consider refining the triggers used to flag students on the Student Struggling Report. The current criteria, such as a 14-day absence from Blackboard or a projected final grade of "F," are too broad and result in delayed identification of students who may still have time to recover.

Your Institution must implement more granular and proactive triggers, such as:

- Monitoring participation on a weekly basis.
- Tracking assignment completion.
- Incorporating early behavioral indicators.

Additionally, while the SIS system is in the process of being upgraded, interim solutions such as manual weekly checks of course progress can help bridge the gap and ensure that students who need attention are identified early, giving the student success team more time to provide meaningful support. As mentioned in Recommendation #1, a lower student caseload will allow for additional time to check student grades and progress in courses on an individual basis, negating the need to rely solely on the Student Struggling Report. It should be manageable to check classes manually on a weekly basis (at minimum) with a smaller student load in conjunction with balancing other duties. By fine-tuning the reporting criteria and ensuring consistent monitoring, ***Your Institution*** can better align interventions with student needs and improve retention outcomes.

It is critical that ***Your Institution*** have more organized and robust retention and "re-enrollment" efforts in place to be successful. This effort must include a plan for regular outreach attempts and a means of keeping detailed records of those attempts and their outcomes. The SSR's objective must be to reengage, build or sustain rapport, and act as their advocate and liaison, building the appropriate bridges that will enhance the student's prospects of persisting.

Finding #3: Lack of relationship between student success staff and faculty.

There is no direct communication between AAs/SSRs and faculty. Instead, a ticketing system is relied upon to report student-faculty issues. Another big concern is that students report being afraid of retaliation if they are honest with their feedback about their professors on end-of-course surveys.

- SA efforts would benefit from purposeful collaboration between faculty and the AA/SSR team. Instructors need to buy into the retention mission and accept responsibility for being an important catalyst for student retention.

Recommendation #3: Foster more connections and opportunities for engagement and collaboration.

Faculty and student success staff need to be on the same page about how to best support students. Open and direct communication about issues within courses needs to occur so that students feel validated and are not afraid to raise issues. Start by arranging a luncheon to have an open discussion with faculty about what student issues they perceive. Share the Student Struggling Report with faculty to open a dialogue about student progress. Once the new systems are integrated and you have better reporting capabilities, consider a report similar to the example below, compiled manually on a weekly basis by Emerge for one of our partners:

Account Name	Program of Interest	Class Name	Class at Risk Reason	At-risk Details	Class Comments	At-risk Tier	Outreach (Action)
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Project Management	INFO 562 53	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M1 - Quiz 12/20 M3 - Quiz 6/20 M4 - Quiz 10/20	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	INFO 562 53	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 15/20 M3 - Quiz 7/20, Case study 70/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Finance	INFO 562 54	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M1 - Quiz 11/20 M2 - Quiz 11/20 M3 - Quiz 7/20, Case study 70/100 M4 - Quiz 15/20	3 - High Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	INFO 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M3 - Quiz 6/20, Case study 75/100 M4 - Quiz 10/20	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	INFO 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M3 - Quiz 0/20 M4 - Quiz 7/20	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Human Resource Management	INFO 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 13/20 M3 - Quiz 5/20, Case study N/A	1 - Low Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Finance	INFO 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 15/20 M3 - Quiz 0/20, Case study 75/100 M4 - Quiz 15/20	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MS, Business Analytics	INFO 570 31	Missing Assignments	Personal - Health	M1 - all work missing except Quiz and 58% of video a M2 - no work submitted M3 - no work submitted, M4 - no work submitted, IN denied, rec med W/D	3 - High Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student - Faculty Ref
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Business Analytics	INFO 570 50	Missing Assignments	Undisclosed	M2 - Assignment 0/100, Discussion 0/100 M4 - Assignment 0/100 M5 - Assignment 0/100	3 - High Risk	Multiple attempts made – no reply
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Finance	MGMT 567 44	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Discussion 0/100, Test 42.31/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Needs to Contact Student
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Human Resource Management	MGMT 570 50	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M4 - Discussion 60/100 M5 - Discussion 10/100, Journal 0/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Needs to Contact Student
[redacted]	MS, Digital Marketing Analytics	MKTG 562 47	Missing Assignments	Undisclosed	M4 - Assessment 71/100 M5 - Discussion 0/100	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 47	Low/Poor Grades	Personal - Poor Time Management	M2 - Quiz 4/10; Text Analysis 55/100 M5 - Discussion 75/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 55	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Text Analysis 70/100 M3 - Assessment 70/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Project Management	MKTG 562 56	Missing Assignments	Undisclosed	M5 - Discussion 0/100	1 - Low Risk	-
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 56	Missing Assignments	Technical Issue	M4 - Assessment 0/100 M5 - Discussion 0/100	3 - High Risk	Student Connected w/ Faculty
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 68	-	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 6/10 M4 - Assessment 55/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 7/10; Text Analysis 70/100 M3 - Assessment 0/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Text Analysis 60/100 M4 - Assessment 65/100 M5 - Discussion 77/100	1 - Low Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA with a Concentration in Human Resource Management	MKTG 562 68	Low/Poor Grades	Undisclosed	M2 - Quiz 5/10; Text Analysis 50/100 M3 - Assessment 0/100	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Contacted Student - No response
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 563 51	Missing Assignments	Personal - Poor Time Management	M1 - Discussion incomplete M3 - Assignment 0/100; Discussion 0/100 Connect w/student, recommended WD	3 - High Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
[redacted]	MBA (No Concentration)	MKTG 563 62	Missing Assignments	Personal - Poor Time Management	M4 - Team 0/100	2 - Moderate Risk	SSC Connected w/ Student
Grand Totals (22 records)							

This report looks at grades and performance in each class and includes the perceived reason for the low grade, the student's given reason for the low grades, the missing/low grade assignments affecting their overall percentage, the tier of risk associated (3=high risk, failing, any grade under a 70%; 2=moderate risk, 70-75%; 1=low risk 76-79%), and the outreach action taken. This provides faculty with the opportunity to view the report and provide additional insights, as well as the chance to have a dialogue with the faculty about individual students' performance. A tool such as this is important for fostering that connection between student affairs and academics to make sure they are on the same page with supporting students.

Encourage AAs/SSRs to directly contact faculty with questions about grades, policies, etc. and to advocate on behalf of a student (when appropriate). **Recommend that instructors offer non-required Zoom meetings with students so they have the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues, other than just providing office hours, and record them and email out to class afterwards.** This personalizes the student-faculty connection and gives AAs/SSRs another option for students to solve problems (as in, it makes it harder for the student to say "I can't connect with my professor").

Finding #4: ***Your Institution*** **faces critical enrollment and retention challenges, with declining student numbers and retention trends.**

Your Institution is experiencing significant challenges in student enrollment and retention. The current estimated retention rate of 56.7% falls well below industry benchmarks, signaling potential concerns around student persistence and satisfaction. Since the 2020–21 academic year, total enrollments have declined by 26%, and the number of enrolled students has dropped by 32%, with a 107% increase in the number of students lost. While there has been a modest improvement in enrollments per student—from 3.2 to 3.6—indicating stronger engagement among retained students, the overall trends highlight an urgent need for strategic intervention to stabilize enrollment and improve student success outcomes.

Fiscal Year	Total Enrollments	Total Enrolled Students	Number of Students Lost
2020-2021	13,200	4,070	313
2021-2022	11,658	3,709	490
2022-2023	11,088	3,459	605
2023-2024	10,755	3,238	590
2024-2025 YTD	9,811	2,756	648

Enrollment and Retention Analysis

Emerge has identified that ***Your Institution's*** **estimated student retention rate stands at 56.7%** significantly below industry benchmarks*

Since the 2020-21 year, ***Your Institution*** has experienced:

- **26%** decline in total enrollments
- **32%** drop in total enrolled students
- **107%** increase in total number of students lost

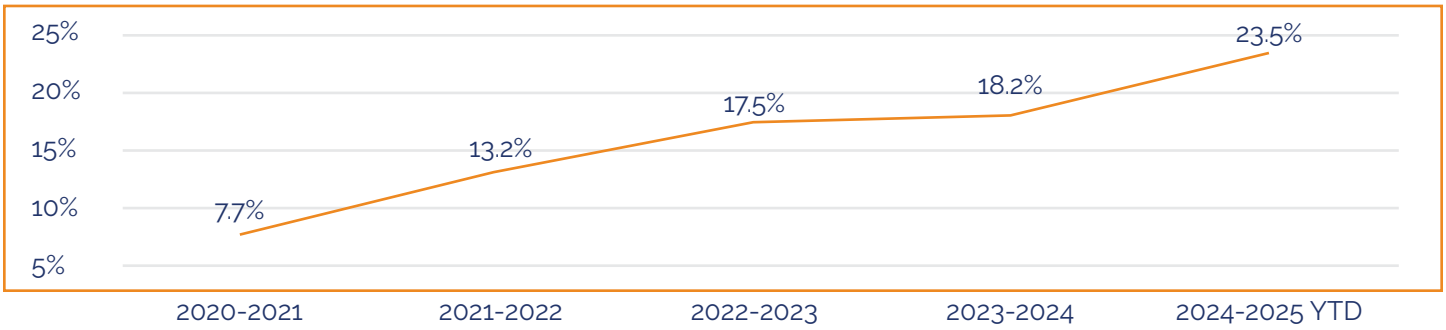


On a positive note, the average enrollments per student have risen from **3.2** to **3.6**, indicating stronger course engagement among retained students.

Recommendation #4: Re-engage students who are inactive or have stopped out.

While a portion of the decline in total enrollments and enrolled students can be attributed to a decrease in annual new student enrollments—as previously outlined in the marketing diagnostic—data provided by the Director of Student Affairs reveals a noteworthy trend: the number of students who stop out each year has consistently decreased since the 2020–21 academic year. **This group of former students represents a valuable opportunity for strategic re-engagement.** Having already experienced ***Your Institution's*** academic environment, culture, and offerings, they constitute a warmer audience with a demonstrated interest in completing their education. Targeting this population for re-enrollment is not only more cost-effective than acquiring entirely new leads, but also more likely to yield results due to existing familiarity and established connections. Re-engaging stop-out students presents an efficient and high-potential path to reversing enrollment declines and strengthening student success outcomes.

Loss of Students Represented as a Percentage of Total Enrolled Students by Fiscal Year



To address the increase in students lost numbers, Emerge recommends that ***Your Institution*** take the following actions:

- Personalized email campaigns that acknowledge the student's past enrollment, offer support, and highlight flexible pathways for returning. Use a friendly and supportive tone and tailor any next steps to the individual.
- Use SMS reminders with links to take action—schedule a call, complete a short re-enrollment form, or learn more about their program.
- Ask stopped-out students why they left and what they need to return; use that feedback to shape your approach and show them they're heard.
- Have current students or alumni reach out, share encouragement, and provide relatable testimonials.
- Offer limited-time incentives such as tuition discounts, waived reapplication fees, or scholarships for returning students. Streamline the return process to minimize paperwork or friction—Ex: "return in 3 steps."
- Set goals of increasing retention rates to hit industry benchmarks for online/adult-serving educational models:

  Undergraduate

  - 70%–80% retention is considered strong
  - 65% is acceptable, especially for online, adult-serving, or open-access institutions

  Graduate:

  - 80%–85% for professional and master's-level programs over the course of the program*

A few additional considerations for effective stop-out re-engagement:

- Regular outreach to temporarily dropped students should occur at least by the midpoint of each term, unless an ongoing conversation with the student indicates otherwise.
- Email and text messages should include read receipt requests to help track engagement.
- Maintaining a detailed and time-stamped record of each interaction is essential for ensuring continuity and building trust with students across terms.
- Unless a student's response suggests otherwise, communication should be guided by the assumption of when and how the student will return—not if.

*Source: See Appendix B for full source list.

Finding #5: Temporary inability to text with students will have lasting ripple effects on retention as many students do not check their email or answer their phones and rely on texting to communicate.

- The most efficient means of communication with students is texting. Because of technical issues with Ring Central, this method has not been used in over a month.

Recommendation #5: Provide a partial cell phone bill reimbursement via payroll to employees and have them use their personal phones to text students in the interim.

This is likely the most cost-effective way to resume text communication on a short-term basis. Or, consider using Google Voice for texting in the interim, though you would first have to have Google Workspace for business so this may not be a viable option. If you already have Workspace, you can add Google Voice for $10 per person per month, up to 10 users.

Additional Recommendation:

- New students take a three-credit orientation course simultaneously with their first term course load. The opportunity exists to develop a similar student success course, complete with a variety of convenient links and resources to which students have access throughout their active tenure.

Best Practices in Student Retention

Information provided for ***Your Institution's*** residential student population indicates a 65% retention rate across all programs. Based on industry data showing that online students are 8.3% less likely to complete their programs than on-campus students, **we estimate that *Your Institution's* online student retention rate is approximately 56.7%.*** However, this remains an estimate, as the online student affairs team was unable to provide specific retention data due to the widely recognized challenges with data access across systems and departments.

Once ***Your Institution's*** new systems are fully implemented and data is accessible across departments, Emerge recommends developing a best practices retention plan to strengthen student success and long-term enrollment stability. This plan will include recommendations for standard reporting to track key retention metrics and a comprehensive student analysis leveraging the newly available data. Additionally, we will evaluate critical retention factors such as student quality, the effectiveness of current retention efforts, and the potential need for additional services to maximize student persistence. At this stage, these factors remain unknown, but once the systems are live, our team can provide a data-driven approach to improving student retention outcomes.

*Source: thirdway.org

Please refer to Appendix C for additional resources that ***Your Institution's*** Student Affairs team might find useful.

TECHNOLOGY DIAGNOSTIC



Summary

The Technology Group aimed to assess ***Your Institution's*** systems related to data flow, storage, and communication across the student lifecycle—from lead to enrollment to retention. The goal of the Institutional Growth Assessment diagnostic was to identify opportunities to streamline communication, reduce process inefficiencies that drain resources, and implement best practices to improve conversion and student success.

Emerge's technology team conducted in-depth discussions with key stakeholders, including the Vice President of Enrollment (Residential Programs), Associate Vice Presidents (Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach), and the Manager of Institutional Technologies. These conversations provided valuable insights into current systems, challenges, and areas for optimization. Based on these findings, we developed strategic recommendations to enhance data management, improve system efficiencies, and strengthen communication workflows for both online and residential programs.

A well-integrated technology infrastructure is critical for supporting enrollment, retention, and student success. ***Your Institution's*** current systems, while in transition, present both challenges and opportunities for streamlining operations and improving efficiency. Our assessment identified gaps in data consistency, system communication, and support structures that impact the ability to effectively manage student information throughout the enrollment lifecycle. Additionally, with the adoption of Jenzabar JRM and J1, it is essential to establish clear system definitions and standardized processes to maximize the effectiveness of these tools.

In the following sections, we outline key findings related to ***Your Institution's*** technology systems and provide strategic recommendations to enhance data management, improve communication workflows, and optimize system performance. These recommendations focus on creating a more unified and efficient technology ecosystem, ensuring that the right data is accessible to the right people at the right time.

Comprehensive Assessment

Finding #1: ***Your Institution*** **has outgrown the use and interoperability of its proprietary platform, Omega, used specifically as the CRM + SIS for online programs.**

Your Institution lacks a unified, cloud-based CRM and SIS solution with native connectivity or robust integration to other systems across residential and online program areas, which has led to data invisibility and fragmentation, process inefficiency, challenging and labor intensive data plumbing, and inflexibility to pivot quickly if a process breaks.

Some of the current specific challenges that result include, but are not limited to:

- Inability to adapt existing Radius automated email campaigns and inability to add new ones since CSU?/***Your Institution's*** IT support was discontinued.

- Supplemental stand-alone platforms are used to offset the lacking functionality of Omega:
    - Zoho - a cloud-based software suite used to email active students.
    - Constant Contact - a digital email and marketing platform used to send marketing campaign emails to online program prospects and leads.
    - Mongoose - a messaging solution used to communicate with residential students (per the AVP of Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, unsure at this time if it will continue to be used once the Jenzabar Communications suite is in place).
    - Twilio - a cloud communications platform used to communicate via sms with leads and prospects, and of which Jenzabar Communications is powered by.
    - RingCentral - a cloud VOIP system used as a call and texting solution to communicate for online programs.
- Manual process to extract data and upload to Zoho or Constant Contact when intending to send email from these platforms.
- Zoho has no connectivity to Omega or Radius, so communication isn't readily visible to constituents (Per the AVP of Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, "Hands down the biggest obstacle that we have is not having these external communications, these promotions and these communications to existing students recorded in Omega").
- Zoho and Constant Contact email open and link click tracking is only in those systems and disconnected from the CRM, where engagement is key, unless data is manually exported/imported to CRM, where records reside.
- Constant Contact has no connectivity to Omega, so communication isn't readily visible to constituents.
- Reliant on a nightly SFTP data file from Constant Contact to a third party who sends acceptance packet communications, postcards, printed pieces, and other collateral materials.
    - There are no analytics available.
    - Data that is extracted for the SFTP ages until the next extraction, so the recruitment team cannot pivot to change/update/stop communication until the next SFTP file is shared.
- Reporting is challenging and, in some instances, broken, because data is stored across multiple disconnected systems or systems that cannot be altered, like Omega, which necessitates the use of a supporting tool like Microsoft's Power BI.
- RingCentral texting has been experiencing service-wide issues for many weeks with no identified solution other than transitioning to the Jenzabar Communications platform or another temporary system (Per the AVP of Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, "We have entire departments that can't text because of a RingCentral issue, and RingCentral keeps telling us they're working on it." Also, per the Vice President for Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, "They're working on it. It's elevated to the highest level, but we still can't text. And it is causing major disruptions to production…").

Recommendation #1: Establish a single source of truth (SSOT), whereby "all data should be stored in one centralized system."*

It should be accessible to everyone in the organization, which ensures consistency and accuracy across all operations. With that in mind, optimize the use of Jenzabar platforms and systems interconnectedness by ensuring the use of native integrations, where possible, or robust connectors or custom integrations with other platforms in use. This will help to maintain a cohesive technology ecosystem.

Having a centralized system or robust interconnected system and platforms that include maintaining a technology ecosystem schema and data dictionary of the architecture will help to:

- Limit duplicates as seen across your current multi-CRM and other systems architecture.
- Greatly improve communication across stakeholders as all lead, prospect, applicant, and student communications/engagements will be visible in one system.
- Minimize or reduce confusion, miscommunication, and process inefficiency.
- Maintain data accuracy and quality.
- Improve the efficiency of reporting.
- Ensure greater adaptability of systems long-term.
- Simplify maintenance by reducing risk and downtime.
- Improve engagement with leads, prospects, applicants, and students and ultimately, lead to greater persistence and success.

Finding #2: No plans exist to create a standardized database schema or consistent system definitions, which can lead to data inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and challenges in integration across platforms.

Recommendation #2: Create a technology ecosystem schema and data dictionary that all users can access.

Your Institution is currently in the process of a multi-year launch of new internal systems, including Jenzabar JRM and J1. To ensure that there is a standard definition and understanding of internal systems, ***Your Institution*** should "create a technology ecosystem schema and data dictionary. "[A] technology ecosystem is [a] collection of tech solutions a company uses to run its business, and how these solutions connect with each other."** The schema "is essentially a blueprint of the logical layout of a database, outlining how data is organized and structured."*

> The importance of a database schema lies in its ability to outline the logical layout of a database and keep data organized. It helps users identify which tables, columns, and relationships exist between objects, enabling them to efficiently access, query, or modify data. A well-defined database schema also improves the accuracy of data, as it reduces the chances of incorrect information being entered into the database. Additionally, it helps to ensure that users are not able to access or modify sensitive information which they should not have access to. The most successful organizations leverage tools across the modern data stack that make building and leveraging these schemas incredibly seamless.*
>
> - ThoughtSpot, an AI for business intelligence firm

*Source: ThoughtSpot.com, **Source: HubSpot.com

Finding #3: Lack of services/support for both online and residential areas after traditional business hours or 5 PM.

- Chatbot customer service and phone rotation end at 5 PM.
- Extended shift pilots were offered during the week until 7 or 8 PM and on Saturdays.
- Per the Vice President for Online Operations, Marketing, and Outreach, "We had to pay that individual more because of the extra hours and we just were not successful with converting individuals after that time frame".

Recommendation #3: Develop a plan to provide services/support for peak-need periods during non-traditional business hours.

- Leverage an AI tool by first comparing Jenzabar's always-on AI and natural learning processing-powered chatbot functionality to other top market AI tools, which empower leads, prospects, applicants, and students to get answers on their own.

Consult Expert Support to Maximize ROI on AI Investments

As the landscape of AI tools continues to evolve rapidly, selecting and implementing the right solution can be complex. Partnering with an expert in enrollment strategy and technology integration can help ensure that your investment delivers measurable impact and aligns with institutional goals. A strategic partner can:

- Conduct a tailored evaluation of available AI tools to identify the best fit for ***Your Institution's*** needs, goals, and budget.
- Provide implementation support and staff training to maximize adoption and long-term effectiveness.

  Offer ongoing performance analysis and optimization strategies to ensure the AI solution continues delivering strong ROI and supports key recruitment outcomes.

- Capitalize on the use of RingCentral VoIP functionality by training and enabling staff to accept incoming calls and texts using the RingCentral mobile app on personal or ***Your Institution's***-provisioned cell phones and devices after hours and customize existing functionality to manage effectively:
  - Call forwarding
  - Call queues/groups
  - AI Assistant
  - Custom answering rules
- Offer flex-time to full-time exempt staff to assist in coverage.
- Utilize a tiered support model with federal work-study student employees handling tier-one services.

Additional Technology Best Practices

Strategic Data Migration Planning
With the implementation of new systems, ***Your Institution's*** data migration process will be a critical factor in maintaining data integrity and historical comparability. Migration is not simply a matter of archiving old data and moving forward with new records—decisions regarding which data sets are migrated versus archived will have long-term implications for reporting, trend analysis, and operational efficiency. Without a strategic plan, gaps in historical data could make it difficult to draw accurate comparisons or track long-term enrollment trends. Emerge recommends that ***Your Institution*** develop a structured data migration strategy that ensures seamless integration while preserving access to key historical insights.

Standardized and Automated Reporting Framework
When the Jenzabar Recruitment Manager (JRM) is fully implemented, ***Your Institution*** will need a set of standardized reports to track key performance indicators and optimize decision-making. These reports should be automated to provide real-time insights into lead conversion, enrollment funnel progression, campaign effectiveness, and admissions counselor engagement. Additionally, with the planned implementation of Jenzabar One (J1) as the new student information system (SIS) in the Summer of 2026, ***Your Institution*** will have access to a separate set of insights focused on student records, academic progress, retention, and overall institutional performance. By proactively defining and building reports within both systems, ***Your Institution*** can ensure that leadership, admissions, and student affairs teams have access to consistent and actionable data at every stage of the student lifecycle. We recommend that ***Your Institution*** prioritize designing a reporting framework tailored to its unique goals, ensuring that teams have the right data at their fingertips to drive continuous improvement across marketing, recruitment, enrollment, and student success initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Your Institution has a strong foundation in its marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts, driven by experienced leadership and dedicated teams. The marketing team demonstrates a **high-level of expertise**, strategically managing multiple channels and prioritizing those with the highest return on investment. Their commitment to data-driven decision-making ensures that marketing efforts are continually evaluated and optimized for effectiveness, allowing them to adapt to an evolving higher education landscape.

Beyond marketing, the recruitment team has built a well-structured training program that equips staff with the skills needed to effectively engage prospective students and guide them through the enrollment process. Their **ability to connect with students, understand their needs, and provide clear guidance** plays a critical role in converting inquiries into enrollments. Similarly, the retention team consists of compassionate and dedicated professionals who are committed to student success. Their proactive approach to student support helps foster engagement, improve persistence, and create a positive academic experience. These strengths provide a solid foundation for addressing current enrollment challenges and refining future strategies to sustain growth.

However, despite these foundational strengths, the challenge lies in converting prospective students into enrolled students at a sustainable rate. In fact, there has been **a concerning 27% decrease in new enrollments from 2020 to 2024.** The data also suggests that *Your Institution* is facing a significant retention challenge. Our estimates point to an **online retention rate of 57%,** leading us to conclude that *Your Institution* is losing a substantial number of students each year. Notably, the number of students moved to inactive status has steadily increased—from 313 in the 2020–2021 academic year to 648 in the 2024–2025 academic year—reflecting a troubling upward trend that underscores the urgency of addressing student persistence and re-engagement efforts.

This combination of declining enrollments and increasing attrition presents a critical issue for *Your Institution's* long-term sustainability. **The challenge appears to be twofold: *Your Institution* is not only struggling to generate enough new enrollments to offset the higher attrition, but *Your Institution* is also not retaining enough of its current students to make up for the lack of new enrollments.** These deficits at both ends of the student lifecycle underscore the need for a strategic, integrated approach that addresses both the top-of-funnel recruitment processes and the downstream retention efforts to stem the current trend.

In conclusion, the findings of our Institutional Growth Assessment diagnostic point to a need for *Your Institution* to **prioritize both recruitment and retention in its strategic planning.** While the increase in lead volume is promising, the continued decline in enrollments, coupled with the high attrition rate, indicates that the institution must focus on improving both the quality of leads and the student experience throughout the lifecycle. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, *Your Institution* can build a more sustainable model that not only attracts more prospective students but also ensures that they remain engaged and enrolled throughout their academic journey.

It has been our privilege to do a diagnostic *Your Institution's* Online Student Lifecycle.

NEXT STEPS

Following the findings and recommendations presented in the Institutional Growth Assessment: Comprehensive Online Student Life Cycle Diagnostic Results, the following next steps are proposed to transition from insights to action and determine future collaboration opportunities:

1. ***Your Institution's*** **Internal Review and Debrief**

    - Provide ***Your Institution's*** leadership and operations teams with time to review the complete diagnostic findings and recommendations outlined in this report and listed in Appendix A.

    - Schedule a collaborative debrief session between Emerge and ***Your Institution's*** stakeholders to discuss key observations, answer questions, and clarify proposed strategies. Suggest April 18 (pending ***Your Institution's*** review time needed).

2. **Prioritization & Strategic Planning**

    - Facilitate a working session (as desired by ***Your Institution***) to begin prioritizing recommendations based on institutional capacity, strategic alignment, and potential impact.

    - Identify immediate opportunities, long-term strategies, and areas where additional analysis or planning may be needed.

3. **Proposal Development for Implementation Support**

    - If ***Your Institution*** elects to engage Emerge for support in executing recommended initiatives, Emerge will develop follow-up proposals detailing:

        - Scope of work for each area (marketing, enrollment, student success, IT)
        - Project timelines and deliverables
        - Required resources and pricing structure

4. **Optional Pilot Initiative Planning**

    - Discuss potential pilot initiatives ***Your Institution*** may wish to pursue independently or with Emerge support.

    - Define criteria for early success and impact tracking where applicable.

5. **Ongoing Collaboration and Communication**

    - Maintain open channels for continued Q&A regarding the diagnostic.

    - Schedule periodic check-ins, as needed, to revisit findings and determine the appropriate pace and structure for implementation.

APPENDIX A

Comprehensive List of All Recommendations by Functional Area

Please click on the item below to view the related resource.

Marketing Recommendations

1. Expand program offerings to increase new female student enrollment
2. Expand opportunities toward high-growth career fields
3. Program reduction and strategic alignment
4. Partner with an agency to create and implement a comprehensive website strategy
5. Develop and optimize strategic branding, messaging, and content
6. Optimize organic and military lead generation

Recruitment Recommendations

1. Strengthen lead engagement with a dedicated call center and CRM optimization
2. Make texting the focus of the marcom strategy
3. Enhance CRM utilization and data-driven strategies for improved lead management and conversion
4. Increase collaboration between the admissions and marketing teams to devise high-yield strategies
5. Place priority on obtaining high-converting referral leads
6. Optimize the lead-to-enrollment rate across all channels

Student Success Recommendations

1. Combine the AA and SSR roles into one position
2. ***Your Institution*** must implement robust, data-driven retention reporting and intervention processes
3. Foster more connections and opportunities for engagement and collaboration
4. Re-engage students who are inactive or have stopped out
5. Provide a partial cell phone bill reimbursement via payroll to employees and have them use their personal phones to text students in the interim

Technology Recommendations

1. Establish a single source of truth, whereby "all data should be stored in one centralized system"
2. Create a technology ecosystem schema and data dictionary that all users can access
3. Develop a plan to provide services/support for peak-need periods during non-traditional business hours

APPENDIX B

1. **SHRM** "2023 Employee Benefits Survey" (employee tuition usage).
2. **Lumina Foundation** "Workforce Education Report" (2021, partnership enrollment).
3. **EducationDynamics** "Marketing and Enrollment Management Benchmarks 2024" (cost per student).
4. **Training Industry Report** (2023, employer training spend).
5. **World Economic Forum** "Future of Jobs Report 2023" (skills gap).
6. **Grand View Research** "Higher Education Market Size Report" (2023, growth trends).
7. **LinkedIn** "2022 Workplace Learning Report" (employee demand).
8. **Guild Education** "2023 Impact Report" (partnership participation).
9. **MDPI:** *Women and Careers* (2023)
10. **Springer:** *Concept Mapping* (2015), *Influence of Personal Evaluation* (2023)
11. **Canadian Center of Science and Education:** *Contextual Support* (2021)
12. **Frontiers:** *Systematic Review on Career Interventions* (2023)
13. **Washington State University:** *Classroom vs. Online Learning* (2023)
14. **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:** BLS job and earnings data
15. **Lewin Group/HHS:** *Economic Impacts of Caregivers* (2020)
16. **Ruffalo Noel Levitz**
17. **Eduventures**
18. **IPEDS trends**
19. **Council of Graduate Schools:** Completion and Attrition Benchmarks

APPENDIX C

Additional Resources and References

1. What Faculty Members Need to Know About Retention
2. Move the Needle on Student Success

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