

The **ADMISSIONIST**

Spring 2020

by **LIAISON** 

**REFLECTING
BACK**

COVID-19 | TRAVEL BANS | PAPER APPLICATIONS

**PLANNING
AHEAD**

ONLINE ADMISSIONS OFFICES | BIG DATA | NON-TRADITIONAL APPLICATION MATERIALS



Reflecting Back, Planning Ahead in Uncertain Times



First and foremost, my thoughts are with those affected by COVID-19 in the U.S. and around the globe. At Liaison, ensuring the well-being and safety of our teams, clients and communities is our top priority, while maintaining the highest level of service to our clients. Our robust technology and culture of flexibility enable our staff to efficiently and effectively perform their routine work remotely while also tailoring our approach as needed to meet your specific ongoing needs.

Although this year has been unlike any other that we have experienced, I am convinced that the power of our community — both in higher education and in the world at large — will propel us to better times.

I also want to remind you that Liaison is uniquely positioned to help you address some of the biggest challenges and opportunities that arise regardless of current events. For more than 20 years, through hurricanes, blizzards and now the current pandemic, Liaison has offered **uninterrupted admissions services** to graduate and undergraduate programs through our Centralized Application Services (CAS™). There has never been a time when the availability and reliability of your admissions office were so important — and Liaison will continue to be available to help your institution thrive.

The insightful articles in the following pages will inspire you to think of new ways to identify and accomplish your most important goals, ranging from improving your international recruiting strategy to onboarding a CAS to “unraveling the mystery” of students' and applicants' experience hours... and more.

As usual, you will also find additional articles highlighting success stories about Liaison's highly regarded tools designed to improve your class-building efforts, including EMP™, Time2Track™ and on-demand webinars.

As you await the next quarterly issue of *The Admissionist*, please also remember to visit Liaison's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources for Admissions Offices at liaisonedu.com/coronavirus to find more helpful guidance.

On behalf of all of your colleagues at Liaison, I wish you, your teams and your loved ones, health and safety. Please continue to take every precaution as we all work together to find solutions to our shared challenges.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Haddad". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

George Haddad
Founder and CEO

IN THIS ISSUE

04

Higher Ed by the Numbers

24

Liaison in the News

EDUCATION

13

Lessons Learned: 3 Ways Liaison's On-Demand Webinars Give You a Competitive Advantage

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

12

Why Cal State East Bay Chose NursingCAS™ to Replace Its In-House Application Service

TECHNOLOGY

06

Unraveling the Mystery of Experience Hours and Relative Outcomes

10

When CIOs Speak, Liaison Listens

20

Getting Ready to Onboard Your CAS™: Lessons Learned From Those Who Have Been Here Before You

RECRUITMENT & ENROLLMENT

07

Yielding in 2020 and Beyond With NACAC's Code of Ethics Changes

08

CAPCSD Grows a Community With CSDCAS™

14

6 Considerations for Moving Admissions Processes Online

16

Higher Ed's Tale of Two Decades: What Can the Last 10 Years Tell Us About the Next 10?

22

Does Your School Employ Best Practices for Effective Graduate Student Recruitment Communication?

27

Top Seven Recommendations for Improving Your International Recruitment Strategy

HIGHER ED BY THE NUMB3RS

The best way to view current trends in the most meaningful context is to compare them with past developments and future expectations. In this edition of Higher Ed by the Numbers, we're looking back — and looking ahead — to gain deeper insights into current news and events in the world of higher education.



OVERALL COLLEGE ENROLLMENT DIPS TO A 10-YEAR LOW, BUT SOME TYPES OF SCHOOLS SEE INCREASES

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported that fewer than **18** million students were enrolled in U.S. colleges in the fall of 2019 — the lowest number in the past **10** years. That amounts to a year-over-year decline of more than **231,000** students, or **1.3%**. However, some types of schools reported higher enrollment totals. For example, private nonprofit institutions with at least 10,000 students experienced a **2.7%** increase; the number of dual-enrollment students at public two-year colleges also rose. Four-year, for-profit schools reported the biggest drop, as measured by the percentage of the student population. Public two- and four-year schools also saw the number of new enrollees decline, as did private nonprofit institutions. Enrollment numbers also varied by region. The largest enrollment growth occurred in Utah (**4.9%**), Arizona (**1.8%**), Georgia (**1.5%**) and Kentucky (**1.5%**). The biggest declines were in Alaska (**-10.6%**), Florida (**-5.3%**) and Arkansas (**-4.9%**).

Source: *Education Dive*



MOST MILLENNIALS VALUE THEIR COLLEGE DEGREES, BUT MANY HAVE REGRETS ABOUT CAREER PLANNING

Most millennial graduates “value the education that they received,” believe their degrees prepared them for the workforce and would not change their decision to go to college, according to a recent study. Yet a “large minority... hold some reservations” about how well their education prepared them for their

careers. While **61%** said they would recommend the school they attended, more than **33%** said their schools “over-promised and under-delivered” their ability to prepare students for jobs after graduation. Not all survey respondents placed all the blame on their schools, though: only **40%** said they took full advantage of their schools’ career planning services, **58%** regretted not taking advantage of internship opportunities and **69%** acknowledged not having done sufficient career planning before accepting their first job after graduation. Source: *eCampusNews*



FEWER AMERICANS — PARTICULARLY YOUNGER ONES — THINK COLLEGE IS IMPORTANT

The number of Americans who think a college education is “very important” has fallen to **51%**, from **70%** as recently as 2013. According to a report on new Gallup Poll data, younger survey respondents were less likely to see the value of going to college, with just **41%** of those aged 18 to 29 saying it’s important. That’s down from **74%** in 2013. In addition, “opinions were split by race, gender and political party.” Women, Democrats and black and Hispanic Americans were more likely to say college is important, compared with men, Republicans and white respondents, respectively. Source: *Inside Higher Ed*



STUDENTS WILL NOW HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THEIR DEBT

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the release of a new resource, called the “Informed Borrower Tool,” designed to allow individual students to see exactly how much student debt they have accumulated before taking on additional loans. Today, approximately **45** million borrowers owe in excess of **\$1.5** trillion in student loan debt; their default rate is greater than **10%**. “This is unlikely to make a significant dent in students’ debt burdens,” said Bill DeBaun, director of data and evaluation at the nonprofit National College Access Network. “But... it will keep borrowers aware of what they’re taking out and what they’ll be expected to pay back.”

Source: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



ENROLLMENT REMAINS ESSENTIALLY FLAT AT PRIVATE NONPROFIT COLLEGES

An analysis of National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) data reveals that enrollment at private nonprofit colleges remains steady, despite the recent closings of several such institutions. Researchers attribute most of the past decade’s “lost enrollment” to the shuttering of for-profit schools. School closings and consolidations caused the number of private nonprofit colleges to fall from **1,960** in **2017** to **1,930** in 2018; at least **nine** met the same fate in 2019. In **2018**, Moody’s Investor Services predicted that up to 15 would wind down operations annually by 2019 or 2020. According to the report based on NCES data, enrollment at private nonprofits, which has been on the rise every year since “at least” 2004, climbed from **4.27** million students in 2017 to **4.28** million in 2018. In 2014, 3,630 for-profit colleges enrolled almost 2 million students; by 2018, **1.27** million students attended one of the country’s **2,790** for-profit institutions.

Source: *Education Dive*



INCREASING AND “NEW FORMS” OF COMPETITION TOPS THE LIST OF HIGHER-ED LEADERS’ CONCERNS FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, researchers working with the American Council on Education and the Georgia Institute of Technology asked nearly **500** public and private higher education leaders to identify which market trends will have the biggest impact on their institutions in the next five years. Most — **62%** — said, “increasing/new forms of competition for prospective students.” The list of **top-five** concerns also includes declining traditional-age student population (**59%**); increasing nontraditional student population (**39%**); declining federal and state financial support (**38%**); declining public confidence in the value of higher education (**27%**) and; geopolitical uncertainty affecting international students (**23%**).

Source: *Huron Consulting Group*



STUDENTS IDENTIFY THEIR MOST- AND LEAST-REGRETTED MAJORS

Job-seeking college graduates who majored in English or foreign languages are most likely to say they regret what they chose to study (**42%**), due to “impractical, limited job opportunities.” Those who majored in math or computer science are the least likely to regret their majors, with just **13%** citing “stressful industry, limited job opportunities.” Second on the list of most-regretted majors is the sciences (**35%**), followed by education (**31%**), social sciences/law (**29%**) and communications (**27%**). The second least-regretted majors are business and engineering (both **16%**), followed by health administration/assisting (**18%**). Three majors register a **19%** regret rate: community/family/personal services, health sciences/technology and repair/production/construction.

Source: *CNBC*



LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES PROVIDE THE BEST RETURN ON INVESTMENT — EVENTUALLY

Researchers at Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce who analyzed factors, including the cost of a degree and graduates’ future annual earnings, have determined that a degree from a liberal arts college provides the best return on investment — in the long run. They found that the “median return on investment for a liberal arts college degree is **40%** below other colleges **10** years after graduation. But after **40** years, the ROI on a degree from a liberal arts college is **25%** higher than all other colleges.” That may be due to the fact that the perceived value of the degree becomes more apparent over time and that liberal arts graduates are more likely to have skills employers value, such as those related to critical thinking and communication. Researchers also found that “liberal arts colleges with a high percentage of students with STEM majors tend to have higher ROIs because those students typically have higher earnings once in the labor market.”

Source: *CBS News*

Unraveling the Mystery of Experience Hours and Relative Outcomes

These days, it's not enough for colleges and universities to have a tool that simply allows students to document what they're doing in the realm of civic and community engagement.

You also need to be able to capture information about what those students are actually learning through their community-based work as active agents of change in society.

That was the thinking that inspired Compact2Learn, a joint project launched by Liaison and Campus Compact, a national coalition of more than 1,000 colleges and universities "committed to the public purposes of higher education" and "build[ing] democracy through civic education and community development."

Striking the Right Balance

"From the outset, we sought to create a tool that balances customizability — so that it can look and feel and speak in the language of particular institutions — with a certain degree of standardization," said Andrew Seligsohn, Ph.D., president of Campus Compact. "That way, the information it gathers can provide a base

of data that will then allow us to ask field-wide questions that matter to everyone."

"In the simplest terms, Compact2Learn is a web-based software tool for capturing student civic engagement and learning outcomes," Seligsohn explains in Liaison's new on-demand webinar, "**Introducing Compact2Learn — Capture Student Civic Engagement & Civic Learning.**"

"Compact2Learn provides an opportunity within your organization, and across organizations, to standardize data collection in ways that enable real learning about what kind of activities are having what sort of impact," he said.

Learning More

During the webinar, Seligsohn is joined by Maggie Wilkerson, Liaison's vice president responsible for Time2Track,

You can watch Liaison's on-demand webinar, "Introducing Compact2Learn — Capture Student Civic Engagement & Civic Learning" at go.liaisonedu.com/compact2learn

Liaison's online tool for tracking, verifying and managing education-related experiences.

Together, they explain:

- How students log details of their experiences and activities in Compact2Learn.
- How to make sure you capture the data that matters most to your program.
- How to create your own custom assessments that complement Compact2Learn's standard features.
- How you can export data captured by Compact2Learn into other information systems on campus.
- How schools can ensure that student activities are verified by site supervisors and course instructors.
- How students can upload their Compact2Learn reports to e-portfolios — and how they can download them to keep with their personal records after graduation.
- How early adopters can use Compact2Learn with small groups of students rather than immediately roll it out to their entire institution. ■

Yielding in 2020 and Beyond With NACAC's Code of Ethics Changes



Over the past decade, identifying, recruiting, engaging and yielding students has become more challenging than ever. Recent revisions to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP) don't make the roles of admissions professionals any easier.

Specifically, the organization recently struck these provisions from its CEPP:

1. "Colleges must not offer incentives exclusive to students applying or admitted under an early decision application plan."
2. "College choices should be informed, well-considered and free from coercion."
3. "Colleges will not knowingly recruit or offer enrollment incentives to students who are already enrolled, registered, have declared their intent or submitted contractual deposits to other institutions."
4. "Colleges must not solicit transfer applications from a previous year's applicant or prospect pool unless the students have themselves initiated a transfer inquiry."

Many experts in higher education believe that these changes will have a multitude of implications and express concerns that they may even lead to student "poaching." Whether your institution is large or small, public or private, well-funded or financially challenged, the new realities of a more competitive admissions landscape are undeniable.

How to Adapt to the NACAC Changes

Liaison's recent webinar, "**Yielding in 2020 and Beyond Within the NACAC Changes,**" brings together the vice president of enrollment at a Roman Catholic university, the executive director of enrollment at a public research university's polytechnic campus and the dean of admissions at a private university for a candid discussion about the effects of these changes.

Together, these higher education leaders describe how to develop new enrollment marketing strategies to keep your institution competitive, covering:

- What these revisions mean for the future of yield.
- Expectations of Generation Z during the college search process.
- Personalization in communication flow and outreach.
- The importance of highlighting the value proposition in financial aid packages.
- How they've increased their annual class size by 12%.
- The implications of tuition discounts, freezes and resets.
- How to implement a student-centric search strategy (rather than a school-centric strategy).
- How to leverage data to make more efficient name buys at the front end of the search process. ■

You can download "Yielding in 2020 and Beyond Within the NACAC Changes" by visiting Liaison's on-demand webinar home page at www.liaisonedu.com/insight_type/on-demand-webinars/.

CAPCSD Grows a Community With CSDCAS™



Before Megan Woods assumed the role of director of Centralized Admissions at the Council of Academic Programs in Communications Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) in 2018, the organization relied on an internal advisory board to oversee its Liaison-powered online admissions portal, CSDCAS™, the Centralized Application Service (CAS™) for Communications Sciences and Disorders programs.

Her role was created, Woods explains, so CAPCSD would have “a focused staff member to think strategically, make contacts and put new programming into place” in order to recruit more academic programs into its CAS and better serve them after enrollment. Since then, the number of programs participating in CSDCAS has increased to over 65%, and CAPCSD has been able to significantly enhance its efforts to help audiology and speech pathology programs achieve key enrollment goals, including those focusing on diversity initiatives and holistic admissions practices.

Woods recently spoke with *The Admissionist* about her organization’s top priorities and offered insights into the role CSDCAS plays in helping to achieve them.

Liaison: Could you elaborate on CAPCSD’s goals in general and for CSDCAS in particular?

Megan Woods, CAPCSD (MW):

Providing leadership and collaboration for all of our programs is central to CAPCSD’s mission. We want to offer innovation and quality for audiology and speech pathology programs across the country. Offering CSDCAS is a great way for us to enable them to work together on their common goals, to share data on important trends and to make it easier for students to be able to reach out to them. With that in mind, one of CAPCSD’s biggest goals has been to increase member participation in CSDCAS from universities offering such programs. The more programs we have in CSDCAS, the richer our data is, and the richer the community is. That allows us to make the best strategic decisions for the profession overall. Related goals include providing quality resources about admissions best practices, student resources and application processes.

In particular, CAPCSD sees CSDCAS as a tool that will enable us to become a

leader in supporting diversity and holistic admissions initiatives, which we’ve been working on for years. It definitely fits with our mission. You can’t increase the number of underrepresented students enrolled in your program without increasing the size of your applicant pool. So, for us, that starts with CSDCAS.

By looking at the data CSDCAS provides, for example, I was able to determine that underrepresented minorities typically start their application process later and are less likely to complete it. That insight inspired us to take a closer look at how we can improve communications and offer more services and resources to encourage them to apply.

Liaison: What strategies have you found to be most effective in recruiting new programs, and how do you overcome objections?

MW: Historically, we’ve had a lot of success with peer-to-peer recruiting conducted by our advisory committee members, some of whom are giants in the field.

For example, I identified every non-participating program that is eligible to participate in CSDCAS and asked committee members if they knew people working at those universities. The committee members, in turn, contacted those peers and asked them to stop by our booth at conferences we were attending. Almost all of them responded positively because it was a connection they already had. They were happy to sit down and hear what we had to say. Even hearing the reasons why they can’t participate can be very valuable. Sometimes there’s pushback from administration. Maybe they like the system they have. Or they don’t want to invest the resources. Or the IT department is overwhelmed with other projects. That knowledge allows us to create more resources to address pushback and potentially overcome objections.

Our recruitment efforts have also benefited from the fact that almost every new program that has just started immediately comes to us, as do a lot of small programs with limited visibility. They want to be a part of CSDCAS because of the exposure it offers. I have feedback from students who say they only applied to programs that were in CSDCAS because it

was so much easier for them. They didn’t even look at other options. When programs start to hear things like that, they don’t want to be left out.

With bigger programs, the most successful recruiting strategy I’ve seen involves getting somebody on the faculty to advocate for CSDCAS. Having somebody on campus who believes in the CAS — even if they’re not the ultimate decision-maker — and providing them with resources and tools for making the case has been very effective.

Liaison: What other resources have you identified as helpful in boosting member participation and student enrollment?

MW: We recently conducted a student feedback survey. They want more resources on how to prepare good applications and how to prepare themselves well for graduate school. So, we’re putting together a series of videos on those topics as part of our resource center for students. We’re also going to put together resources for advisors on how to help students through the CAS process. A lot of schools aren’t familiar with these best practices, and they want to understand them.

For programs, the data that CSDCAS provides is a great recruiting tool because it highlights the benefits you can receive by being part of this community. Data allows you to look deeper into important trends and make well-informed presentations to your administration about implementing new goals and strategies. We recently published our first applicant data report, and we received very positive feedback from both current and potential participating programs. Having this data available really allowed us to change the conversation around the benefits of CSDCAS.

Liaison: What else would you like to say about your experience with CSDCAS?

MW: Once people understand the benefits of participating, they really want to get involved. During our most recent effort to recruit members to serve on our advisory board, we received 18 applications for just three open spots. It’s the most competitive volunteer opportunity that CAPCSD has. I think that says a lot. ■

When CIOs Speak, Liaison Listens

That's Why Our APIs Do the Work (Not Your Team)

Rather than burden CIOs with yet another new system, a Centralized Application Service (CAS™) does exactly the opposite. Liaison handles everything from needs assessment to implementation, security, up-time assurance and more. With that in mind, this issue of *The Admissionist* features the first in a series of articles highlighting CAS benefits and ease-of-use for IT staff.

WebAdMIT™ is the administrative backend for Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS). Whether you use it with a CAS or with another solution, Liaison has created application programming interfaces (APIs) to ensure that we make your existing processes more efficient and serve your specific customer needs.

Liaison's proprietary CAS API facilitates the transfer of data from Liaison's platforms to any of your existing systems with minimal input from campus IT professionals.

The cloud-based CAS API:

- Supports on-demand and event-based delivery of applications, documents and other CAS data to your external review and workflow systems.
- Serves as a single integration point for all of an institution's CASs across academic disciplines.
- Utilizes JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) and configurable Comma Separated Values (CSV) file formats for maximum inter-system compatibility.
- Features state-of-the-art security protocols and measures that comply with various data formats and security standards.
- Allows for flexible API user roles for school- and CAS-level access.
- Features a dedicated prelaunch environment to test changes before going live.
- Offers sample code (Java, Python) to jump-start your integration project.
- Supports zero downtime deployments through Kubernetes.

Scott Barge, manager of systems architecture and integrations for the Information Services and Technology department at Cleveland State University, explains that CAS stands alone in the realm of data integration.

"Liaison not only takes in the admissions application, but they take in all of the materials that support the application directly — like transcripts, test scores, recommendation letters, portfolios and essays," he said. "On top of that, a CAS arms program directors with the ability to

take the information they've gathered and make an admissions decision right within Liaison's single-portal system."

The WebAdMIT API

Anne-Francoise Robin, a systems analyst for academic information systems at Drexel University, said the school has successfully integrated three different instances of WebAdMIT with Slate, its existing admissions technology solution.

"WebAdMIT's exports and lists let us extract fields needed for the exact populations needed," she said. "Our programmer put in place scripts to retrieve the data via the WebAdMIT API and place it on the Slate SSH File Transfer Protocol (SFTP). We also have automated document import. The integration allows for department review within WebAdMIT and central admissions review and decision rendering within Slate."

When the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University implemented SOPHAS™ [the CAS for public health programs] in 2006, the School utilized its existing PeopleSoft application staging tables and load process to map the SOPHAS fields to corresponding PeopleSoft fields.

"At that time, our application review process was completed using a paper application file," recalls Angel Hurston, a business analyst at the Rollins School.

Rollins implemented OnBase for online application review in 2013, and in 2016 the School introduced Slate. Today, application data is exported from WebAdMIT on a weekly basis and imported into Slate, and then exported from Slate to PeopleSoft.

"Overall, we have had a great experience with all three of our implementations with SOPHAS application data — PeopleSoft, OnBase and Slate," Hurston said. "Having the custom export layout files made it easy for us to determine which fields required translate values. With the Slate implementation, we were able to add fields to capture SOPHAS/organization-specific data and include PeopleSoft values in the export file that would translate to

the PeopleSoft values. Since we collect additional data that is specific to Emory, having the custom fields has allowed us to collect the data with the application, eliminating the need to follow up with applicants later in the application process."

At Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), where the central admissions office supports over 130 distinct graduate programs, Director of Operations Lisa J. Dougherty reflects that "it was imperative that we were able to quickly update our student information systems with data from the Liaison UniCAS™ product," referring to the version of the CAS that provides a unified view of enrollment efforts across an institution.

Given that VCU's technology services staffers were already stretched in supporting the hardware, software and network systems for the entire University, Dougherty said it "made sense to look for a vendor solution."

She credits CAS API with enabling seamless integration with VCU's document and record management systems.

"Using CAS API, our data is available to us daily. We're quickly able to dispatch with potential duplicated records, and automatically link and load images," said Dougherty.

Liaison partners also love how quickly they see the results of critical integration work.

"Some of our colleagues are still waiting on their application portals from other vendors," said Donald B. Thomason, dean of Graduate Health Sciences at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center. "We are extremely thankful for the prompt attention we received from Liaison."

"With Liaison's help we were able to not only launch a new application for our 60 graduate programs within about five weeks, but we quickly began to see results as well," echoes Sean D. Pitzer, associate director of Graduate Admissions at St. Cloud State University, which experienced a 19% increase in applications during the six weeks after it went live with GradCAS™ [the CAS that allows a student to apply to multiple graduate degree programs through a single application]. ■



Why Cal State East Bay Chose NursingCAS™ to Replace Its In-House Application Service

By the time the nursing department at Cal State East Bay needed a new online application service to replace its original in-house system, admissions officials there were already well aware of NursingCAS™, Liaison's online Centralized Application Service™ designed specifically for nursing programs.

"We had some challenges with our previous system," said one Cal State East Bay nursing admissions staff. "We had a lot of demographic information and questions that we kept adding to it in order to do reports and research. Those requirements, plus the number of applicants, got to be too much for our in-house system. They recommended switching to a system that could support a large volume of data."

"We already knew we wanted an online application, and we already knew about NursingCAS because other CSU programs were using it. Also, our department chair felt confident in NursingCAS because it's affiliated with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). So, we felt like it was the best match for us."

Getting Up and Running

Given the wide array of robust features and tools in NursingCAS, there was a lot to learn at first.

"Liaison's customer service was very responsive," she adds. "I had a lot of help from them. I did all the online training, too, which was

also very helpful. We really didn't have any major challenges. We needed an online application. We wanted to be able to collect a lot of different data on our students, and we wanted to be able to customize questions. That was all available in NursingCAS."

The Cal State East Bay nursing program also uses NursingCAS to retrieve and report demographic information — such as the ethnicity, age and gender of students — as required by the California Board of Registered Nursing. It also provides data for grant proposals and faculty research projects that evaluate and improve the program's admissions process.

More Data, Better Communications

"NursingCAS gives us a big snapshot of our students and where they come from," the admissions official said. "It helps us understand trends and keep track of who's applying, who gets in and how we're admitting people."

"I'm very impressed by — and grateful for — the amount of data you can manage in NursingCAS and the different ways you can search for and message your applicants. The automatic scoring in the system has also helped make our process faster and more efficient. And our notification process is definitely much faster with NursingCAS."

"I think as more and more campuses adopt NursingCAS, its benefits will be apparent to everyone." ■





LESSONS LEARNED



3 Ways Liaison's On-Demand Webinars Give You a Competitive Advantage

Liaison's library of on-demand webinars now includes more than two dozen offerings that your admissions office can rely on to stay current with important industry trends, gain new insights into recruitment strategies and get the most out of Liaison's admissions technology.

Here are three reasons to take advantage of Liaison's on-demand training webinars today.

Reason 1: They Fit Your Budget.

Generally speaking, conferences are expensive, and online certifications require a potentially significant financial investment. Still, anybody in an admissions role stands to benefit from affordable, ongoing education. That's why our on-demand training courses are free to Liaison clients. The only thing you need to invest in these sessions is your time — and you can expect to see a return on that investment in ways you may never have thought possible.

Reason 2: They Fit Your Schedule.

Since some learners prefer the engaging nature of live training, we offer a full range of live sessions. But we also recognize that you're busy, so you won't necessarily be able to make it to a session that takes place on a Thursday afternoon. That's where our on-demand training comes in. Each webinar can be completed in less than one hour, so you can even fit them in over your lunch break if needed.

Reason 3: They Meet You Where You Are.

Liaison's training and educational webinars are focused on increasing the knowledge and skills that are most applicable to your everyday work. When you complete a webinar, you're ready to apply what you learned on the job that day.

If you're looking for insights into how COVID-19 has reshaped the U.S. higher education landscape, check out **"Coronavirus and Beyond: Managing Global Crises on Your Campus."** Are you interested in learning about how to improve your recruiting and admissions strategies? You could get started right now, with **"Build a Better Class on a Budget"** or **"Effectively Sharing the Value of a Student Financial Aid Package."** If you're curious about how recent trends could affect your recruitment strategies, then check out **"Part-Time MBA and Online MBA Trends: What's Changing, Who's Being Innovative and What's Happening in the Future?"** and **"Foresight is 2020: Bring Focus to Your Next Student Search."** There are dozens of other webinars covering additional topics as well.

Be sure to visit www.liaisonedu.com/insight_type/on-demand-webinars/ for easy access to all of Liaison's on-demand recorded webinars. It takes just a minute to gain access, but the insights you'll gain will endure. ■

Learn more and
register at

academy.liaisonedu.com

6

**considerations for
moving admissions
processes online**

How enrollment can benefit from the cloud

This article originally appeared in University Business.

By Rick del Rosario, associate vice president of enrollment management solutions at Liaison

The all-encompassing coronavirus crisis is causing professionals and institutions across industries to shift gears. My recent experience at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) was no different.

After originally planning a presentation on general challenges in graduate school enrollment for that March 5-7 event, my company's team instead led a session on disruption—a topic that is becoming more relevant by the day, as a growing number of colleges and universities cancel in-person classes and operations due to coronavirus concerns.

Given many higher education institutions' reliance on international enrollment and its associated tuition revenue—particularly from China, which accounts for 33.7% of America's international students, according to the latest Open Doors enrollment survey—the current pandemic demands a pivot. An effective new approach could entail not only a greater emphasis on online courses, but also a move toward cloud-based processes in admissions.

6 considerations for using the cloud

Indeed, the days of the brick-and-mortar admissions office are seemingly on hiatus. What happens when no staffers are present in the office to review an application file that was in progress? Does that prospective student's application end right there? What does that mean for enrollment numbers and institutional revenue in the 2020-21 academic year?

Institutions can no longer afford delays in an increasingly competitive marketplace where students expect immediate and personalized responses. During the CSGS conference, I offered the following six insights:

1

Do not stop reviewing applications solely because the admissions office is closed. Although not every staff role in an admissions operation can be seamlessly transitioned to a remote work environment, cloud-based services can help institutions to process applications as well as to grow and shape enrollment without relying on paper.

2

With dwindling budgets and resources, admissions teams cannot afford to lose staff to extended sick leave, for instance. While they grapple with all facets of the coronavirus fallout, institutional staffers simply do not possess the time or resources to devote to manual application processing.

3

Going paperless in admissions can help alleviate institutions' administrative and technological costs.

4

Cloud-based application services can help boost enrollment by increasing schools' visibility and exposure among broader and more diverse applicant pools. While the coronavirus threatens the state of international enrollment, intensifying the recruitment of domestic applicants is important—whether that outreach focuses

on out-of-state students, those living in more remote regions of an institution's own state or underserved populations.

5

Bolstering domestic enrollment means that despite the uncertainty surrounding international enrollment, institutions will have a better chance of maintaining their financial health.

6

Thoughtful and timely communication to applicants and accepted students is paramount, especially during a time of crisis. It is incumbent upon institutions to nurture applicants by ensuring that prospective students—not just enrolled students—know about any relevant developments surrounding the coronavirus on campus. Such transparency is not only a strategy to boost enrollment; it is simply the right thing to do.

If the coronavirus outbreak has taught the higher ed sector anything so far, it is to expect the unexpected for the foreseeable future. While campus operations continue to shut down for the remainder of this semester, institutions need to stay ahead of the curve by assuming that this public health crisis will also threaten next year's enrollment numbers. This is not pessimism; it is realism and practicality.

Admissions and enrollment efforts that prioritize efficiency as well as more sophisticated interaction with applicants can help institutions weather the coronavirus crisis. ■

HIGHER ED'S TALE OF TWO DECADES:
**WHAT CAN THE LAST 10 YEARS
TELL US ABOUT THE NEXT 10?**



If recent events have taught us anything about planning for the future, it's that the biggest obstacles we encounter are capable of emerging without warning or precedent.

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the field of college admissions was grappling with profound new changes, challenges and opportunities. While some changes, such as the widespread adoption of increasingly sophisticated enrollment technologies and practices, have been welcomed with near unanimity, others have led to consternation and uncertainty.

In an attempt to shed light on the past — and the future — of college applications, admissions and enrollment trends, this article summarizes some of the biggest developments of the past 10 years in higher ed. It also shares the forward-looking insights of two admissions professionals with more than 50 years of combined experience identifying and pursuing their institutions' most important class-building goals.

Here's what we've seen...

In addition to this year's life-changing COVID-19 developments, the following topics have been inspiring thousands of conversations on campuses in recent years:

The Rise of Big Data in Recruitment and Admissions

Gone are the days of relying solely on one-size-fits-all, purchased lists of prospective students. Instead, institutions now use a number of carefully considered data points to collect and buy information that identifies the exact students who will be the best fit for their institutions. And rather than deliver the same generic messages to every student via email or the U.S. Postal Service, schools can now use tools such as HigherYield™ (powered by the Educational Testing Service and Liaison International) to conduct targeted, personalized “omnichannel” campaigns across a variety of platforms.

While some higher ed marketers may have been slow to adopt these new approaches at first, it is no longer possible to deny that they have the potential to help them do a better job of recruiting promising prospects and increasing the yield of accepted students.

The Focus on Holistic Admissions Practices

One of the most interesting conversations in admissions during the past decade has revolved around the subject of holistic review. For example, one landmark study found a statistically significant correlation between the use of holistic review and increased campus diversity.¹

Since then, however, a series of high-profile legal cases have challenged the notion that factors like race and ethnicity can be considered when evaluating potential students. From 2013's *Fisher v. University*

Rather than deliver the same generic messages to every student via email or the U.S. Postal Service, schools now have the benefit of being able to conduct targeted, personalized “omnichannel” campaigns across a variety of platforms.

of Texas to Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, this is an issue that promises to shape conversations around college admissions well into 2020 and beyond.

New Approach to Standardized Testing

As other application components gained new prominence, many admissions departments began to change the way they looked at standardized test scores. This represented another facet within the greater trend of using several data points to identify the students who will fit in best, rather than trying to rely on a one-size-fits-all indicator.

To keep all of your school's options open, Liaison's CAS™ (Centralized Application Service™) provides institutions with the opportunity to collect standardized test scores as well as non-traditional application materials, giving you the best of both worlds as you assess applicants and make decisions.

The Introduction of Non-Traditional Application Materials

Technological advances over the past 10 years have seemingly transformed nearly every facet of American life, including the way admissions professionals do their jobs. For example, art and design programs have benefited from the ability to quickly and easily access prospective students' work in a digital format. Additionally, barriers to face-to-face interviews have been lessened with increasingly reliable and ubiquitous video conferencing platforms. For example, schools like the University of Miami's Frost School of Music have found that Liaison's SlideRoom™ technology facilitates more comprehensive review strategies designed to complement their school's holistic admissions priorities. SlideRoom opens up the application process to more non-traditional materials. That not only increases application volume but also supports a more collaborative decision-making process.

In addition, the process of moving college applications away from paper and toward digital platforms has been a long but fruitful transition — and has achieved near-universal adoption in the past decade. Going digital lessens costs associated with materials and storage, facilitates communication between individuals and departments and reduces information siloing.

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More Questions About the Value of Higher Education

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the past decade's strong economy and job market have amplified concerns about the potentially significant costs of post-secondary education and caused some people to believe the allure of earning a diploma or an advanced degree is now diminished. That, in turn, has inspired growing concerns about being able to attract best-fit students into the classroom.

That's why it's more important than ever to remind potential applicants about the long-term value of earning a degree. Consider the facts: Economists at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation pointed out that a liberal arts degree is still worth the cost. While it may not garner as much income as an engineering degree, it still leads to economic mobility and profitability. Their study showed that the top degree obtained by those who study at a non-liberal arts school is engineering, but the rest of the STEM degrees awarded are from liberal arts colleges. In terms of economic payoff, more than 60% of the liberal arts graduates surveyed found themselves in the top two quintiles of income.²

What to look for in 2020 and beyond

It's impossible to overstate the uncertain nature of the higher education landscape as we enter a new decade. Will “Free College” prevail politically? Will international applications continue to plummet? How will changing demographics related to age, gender, race and socioeconomic status impact colleges and universities in the years to come? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, however, it's imperative to continue sharing outlooks and listening to others whose experiences have given them deep insights into what the future might hold.

The Importance of ROI

"Today's students and applicants want to understand the return on investment (ROI) they'll get from a college education," says Keith Mock, Ed.D., an associate vice president of enrollment marketing at Liaison. Before joining Liaison, Mock worked at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama for 26 years, including 10 years as vice president of enrollment management. "We've got to be able to tell them, 'If you're looking to do this, here's what your experience at our university will look like — and here's what you're going to get out of it.'"

Dale Seipp, Jr., DBA, also an associate vice president of enrollment marketing at Liaison, believes that refocusing on how to articulate the value of a college education will also inspire more schools to rethink how they structure their educational offerings. Prior to Liaison, Seipp worked for 29 years in enrollment, marketing and financial aid at three institutions — Linfield College, George Fox University and Warner Pacific University.

"I think a college degree will look very

different in the next decade," he says. "The way schools value all of their different pieces and how they put them together, from certificates and associate degrees through graduate programs, it's going to change. The combination of degree structure and the type of program a school offers is going to be a key issue in higher ed. It's going to come down to jobs, and it's going to come back to ROI. Keep in mind, too, that the only part of the population that's growing is the non-traditional student segment. How are institutions going to adapt in ways that those students expect and not force them back into the old traditional frameworks?"

Seipp adds: "I think that the personalization and customization of messages is going to be really key in helping students get to the information they want. It will also be important to continue simplifying the application process in as many ways as we can, for students and for institutions. To be able to process and mine data to more effectively engage students in the recruitment process is going to be

"Today's students and applicants want to understand the return on investment (ROI) they'll get from a college education."

key as well. Having good analytics will be mandatory for every institution. The entire life cycle of a student's education is going to become increasingly important as we think about the opportunities to engage them more effectively."

"At the core of everything we've talked about is communication," Mock says. "And that's what Liaison is all about, communicating." ■

¹ The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. "Holistic Admissions in the Health Professions: Findings from a National Survey," 2014.

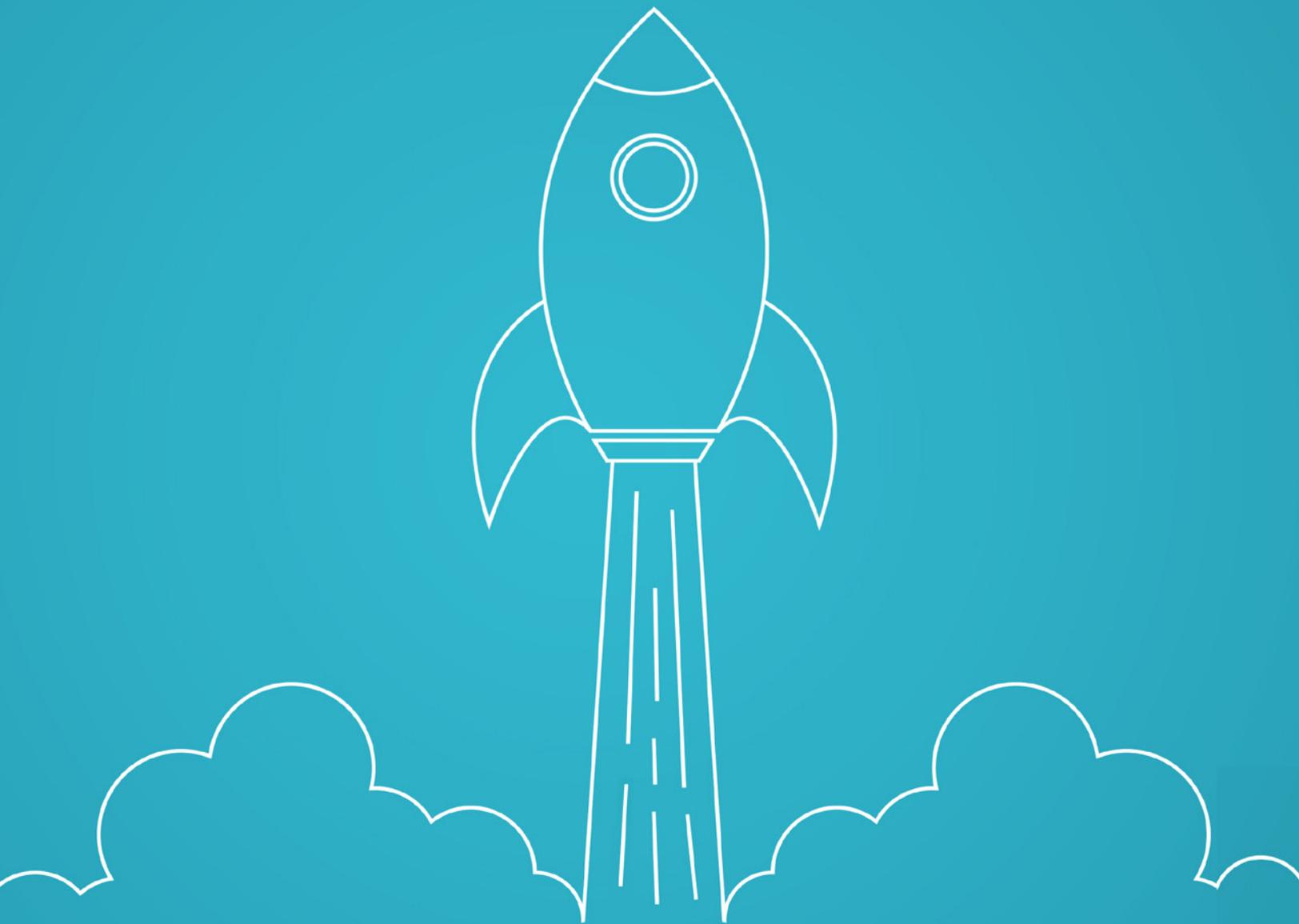
² Inside Higher Ed. "The Economic Gains (Yes, Gains) of a Liberal Arts Education," February 15, 2019.

"I think that the personalization and customization of messages is going to be really key in helping students get to the information they want. It will also be important to continue simplifying the application process in as many ways as we can, for students and for institutions."



Getting Ready to Onboard Your CAS™ :

Lessons Learned From Those Who
Have Been Here Before You



Department leaders across higher ed are often wary when it comes to tackling new integration projects considered essential by admissions professionals, such as implementing a Liaison Centralized Application Service (CAS™).

Yet all you need in order to ease their fears and overcome objections is a simple two-step strategy based on identifying your shared goals.

First, you need to establish the technical capabilities and availability of IT on your campus. Is IT a tiny office with one or two people fully booked into the foreseeable future, a robust team with too much on their plates or a dedicated integration group that specializes in this kind of project?

Next, you need a proper framing of the problem to keep the scope of the work manageable. That requires pulling together stakeholders — graduate program managers, IT, admissions and others with a vested interest — to answer three questions:

1. How much data do you need out of the CAS — a few fields, a number of fields or every piece of data and document loaded by every applicant?
2. How real-time does it need to be — a few times a year, daily, weekly or absolutely real-time?
3. Which applicants do you need to move — every single individual who has started an application, just the people who have decided to enroll or something in between?

Benefits for Everyone

While the overall goal is to use a CAS to give greater visibility into your programs and thereby increase the yield of applicants, a secondary goal is to reduce the amount of work done by the central admissions office. It also gives you the option of putting more control into the arms of individual academic units during onboarding, while simultaneously introducing long-term efficiencies for the IT department.

“I had to have something that required minimal ongoing support from computer services,” said Dr. Julie Masterson, Missouri

State University’s associate provost and dean of the Graduate College. “It wouldn’t work for us to have a system that was going to have to require that someone from computer services tweak it; I had to have a tool that could be configured and managed from my unit. GradCAS™ [Liaison’s CAS™ for graduate programs that are not affiliated with a national CAS] is the solution that met all those requirements. Computer services has to do the initial data transfer from WebAdMIT™ [the admissions management backend of Liaison’s CASs] into our student information system, but once they figure that out, we can take over.”

Relying on Internal Resources

Then there are institutions on the other end of the resource spectrum, where the IT organization considers itself best suited to undertake data integration work. That’s the case with Cleveland State University, which has participated in three CASs in specific graduate programs (physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech and hearing).

The University, which “tends to trend down a path of full automation,” was looking to top up its CAS usage by implementing common applications in every graduate program offered by the Ohio institution, according to Scott Barge, manager of systems architecture and integrations in the Information Services and Technology department.

The first priority was piloting a data integration project for six psychology programs offered by the University. The work entails pulling the data out of Liaison and mapping it to specific SIS data points, moving the data into the SIS and then automating the processes currently handled manually: flagging whether applicants have been denied or admitted, when they’ve matriculated and whether acknowledgement, admission or deny letters have been sent out.

Instead of having to go into multiple campus systems to look at applications and

supporting documents, program directors “will be able to go into the CAS and see everything they need to make an admissions decision,” said Barge.

How Cleveland State Onboards a New CAS

The implementation process at Cleveland State for each of its CAS integration projects follows seven broad steps:

- Setting up the CAS, including customizing application questions and laying out reporting needs;
- Identifying data elements for export;
- Handling data mapping between the CAS and the receiving application and transforming the appropriate data into acceptable formats, covering CSV to XML and JSON to XML;
- Doing a business process review to answer questions on how the application is currently received, what happens after an applicant applies, what checks and other processes are in place and what happens on admission or denial;
- Performing the PeopleSoft integration for data related to the admissions application, residency, emergency contact, citizenship and visa status, education data, etc.;
- Accomplishing the OnBase integration for documents and images, such as recommendation letters, test scores and transcripts; and
- Decoupling the existing processes and updating websites and marketing material to reflect the new admissions procedures.

Ultimately, integrating a CAS on campus is best accomplished with the dual support of IT and admissions. There are plenty of subject-matter experts sitting next to you or in the building across campus who can share their perspectives about important data and business considerations. Remember that engaging every stakeholder about your shared goals early in the process is the key to a successful onboarding and integration strategy. ■



Does Your School Employ Best Practices for Effective Graduate Student Recruitment Communication?

Results from the 2019 NAGAP Inquiry Response Project

Regardless of the size or location of their institutions, graduate admissions professionals are united by the need to attract and enroll best-fit applicants faster and more effectively in a highly competitive and uncertain environment. In addition to the challenges posed by high recruitment costs, budget constraints and declining application volumes, many admissions professionals are operating in a vacuum, unsure how to gauge the success of their efforts and unaware of the strategies other schools are using to reach high-value students first.

To address those questions and concerns, Liaison conducts an annual inquiry response project in which

researchers pose as prospective students online, searching for and then submitting “request for information” (RFI) forms when they are available. In 2019, Liaison reviewed the websites of 517 NAGAP member graduate schools in such a manner and assessed the results based on a variety of criteria.

The goal was to find out how accessible schools were to interested students requesting information, how fast they responded, how relevant their responses were and how many communication channels they used.

The results identify important trends around student engagement. The insights they provide allow admissions professionals to compare and contrast their inquiry-response strategies to those of other schools and to plan strategic changes that will help drive applications and increase yield.

Liaison ultimately identified seven best practices regarding inquiry forms and responses.

Inquiry forms must be:

- **Easy to find.**
- **User-friendly.**
- **Mobile-ready.**

Responses must be:

- **Immediate.**
- **Relevant.**
- **Personalized to each student.**
- **Delivered through multiple channels.**

Including all seven of those features in an inquiry response strategy will allow your school to clearly explain the benefits of its programs and develop a relationship with students based on meaningful information and communications — even before the application stage.

Here are some of the key takeaways you should keep in mind when evaluating the effectiveness of your program's inquiry response initiatives.

Make sure your RFI form is easy to find. Graduate school requires a substantial investment of time and money. In order to clearly explain the benefits of your programs and develop a relationship based on meaningful information and communication — even before the application stage — prospective students must be able to locate your RFI form effortlessly.

What we found:

- 32% of schools had an RFI on their home page; 20% were visible without scrolling.
- Researchers could not locate RFIs for 15% of the schools surveyed.
- The number of clicks required to find an RFI ranged from zero (when the forms were on the school's home page) to seven.

Keep forms user-friendly. Make sure your form makes a good first impression. Keep it short and ensure all of the information it contains is still accurate and up to date. Also, it's preferable not to require the student to create an account in order to access the form.

What we found:

- 120 schools displayed outdated information on their RFI.
- 148 schools asked for a text message opt-in.
- 24 required the prospective student to create an account to get information.

Be mobile-ready. Mobile devices are everywhere. How many students do you know who don't have one? It's critical that your site is “responsive” — i.e., optimized for mobile.

What we found:

- All but two schools had a web page with responsive (i.e., mobile-friendly) design.
- 84% of the RFI forms were responsive.
- 98% of applications were responsive.

Send a dynamic “Thank you.” Have you seen your response page recently? Someone who takes the time to fill out a form is eager to hear more about what your institution has to offer. Don't send a generic acknowledgment of their interest. Provide a dynamic, personalized response based on the information they were willing to submit.

What we found:

- Nearly 62% of schools display a generic “Thank You” message upon submitting the RFI.
- Only 6.3% provided a dynamic, personalized page upon submission.

Be fast. Be first. No one wants to wait for information. Immediate response is key. Your school can't afford to take its time replying.

What we found:

- 6.3% provided an immediate response with a personalized web page.
- Just under half of the schools responded within one hour.
- 16% of the schools did not respond to a submitted form within four weeks.

Make it personal. If a student took the time to fill out the form, they are ready to hear more and engage with you — but do them the courtesy of using the information they have provided.

What we found:

- Over half of the schools responded with messages that used a name plus another factor of interest to the student (usually the academic program of interest).
- 9% used the student name only.

Deliver through multiple channels. It's science. Messages are more likely to reach long-term memory if repeated across multiple channels. Liaison has found that adding digital to a search campaign with print and email can increase response by up to 200%.

What we found:

- Only 5% of schools used at least 3 channels.
- 46% used only email to communicate.
- 2% sent just a single email in four weeks as a response.

In addition, we found that...

- 60 schools offered a chat feature on their home page.
- 54% of schools offered social media links on their home page.
- 67% of schools had a link to an application on their home page.
- The number of emails sent by each school within four weeks ranged from zero to 23.
- 94 print pieces were received in four weeks. Of these, 56 arrived in oversized envelopes, 5 arrived in clear envelopes and 16 were postcards.
- Our “student” received 60 voicemails and 29 text messages over a four-week period from all schools.

To learn more about this study and how to craft effective inquiry reply strategies, contact Dr. Suzanne Sharp, Liaison's executive director of enrollment management consulting, at ssharp@liaisonedu.com. ■

This survey was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIAISON in the

N E W S

In recent months, Liaison personalities and perspectives have been appearing in a wide range of publications that cover important nationwide trends in higher ed. The following summaries provide an overview of those articles.



An Open Letter To B-School Deans on MBA App Declines (Poets & Quants)

Robert Ruiz, managing director of Liaison's BusinessCAS™ community, penned a letter to 50 U.S. business school deans in response to their own open letter in the *Wall Street Journal* to American leaders on the current crisis in international student enrollment. Traditional MBA programs, he said, "are increasingly shuttering their doors amid the rise of specialized master's and online degrees, and the most elite programs are not immune to declining applicant pools. International applications to U.S. business schools dropped 13.7% between 2018 and 2019, according to the Graduate Management Admission Council... Against the backdrop of this chaotic environment, I'm heartened to witness your nuanced understanding of the inextricable education-workplace connection. Higher education can't ignore this nation's looming shortage of highly skilled talent."

He also outlined several principles to "guide our collective actions," ranging from articulating the value of an MBA to rethinking the status quo to using every tool available, including "the wealth of new technological solutions that can address your age-old problems."



Charting a Road Map Toward Greater Graduate School Enrollment (www.tennessean.com)

Judy Chappellear, Liaison's director of association partnerships, wrote that "the recent decline in international student applications and enrollment in graduate schools is nothing less than shocking. If the trend persists, it could have severe consequences not just for graduate schools, but for our employers, skilled workforce and economy as a whole." She asked, "How will it be possible to achieve the goal, shared by nearly half of recently surveyed graduate education management professionals, to increase enrollment by at least 10%?"

She also expressed her belief that "even during chaotic times on campus, graduate education management leaders can take comfort in the existence of technologies with the proven ability to increase enrollment" and noted that "Nashville-based Tennessee State University experienced a 7.5% year-over-year increase

in graduate student enrollments after its graduate programs joined Liaison's Centralized Application Service™ platforms."



Women Make Strides in MBA Classrooms, but Progress Remains Elusive in the Workplace (diverseeducation.com)

Robert Ruiz also wrote an article about the fact that women are still not experiencing a fair share of the benefits they deserve in the nation's boardrooms. He said that although more women are enrolled in MBA programs, "Those gains are not being matched in the workforce in the form of equal opportunity and equal reward. And it's not just women who are being denied the chance to benefit from the skills they possess: Society as a whole suffers when inequity is allowed to persist."

By one measure, he said, only 5.2% of the country's most important CEOs are women. "That's outrageous. It's even more disturbing when you consider the message it sends to all of the young women who are still in high school or college today, pondering whether they should make a significant financial investment to study business management at a graduate level." He asked Erin K. O'Brien, assistant dean and chief enrollment officer for University at Buffalo School of Management, what can be done to accelerate women's advancement and equity in the classroom and corporate world alike. She replied: "Institutions need to place the priority of countering gender and diversity inequity at the forefront of the business school mission, creating both top-down senior leadership and bottom-up workforce and student structures that foster the inclusion of women and underrepresented minorities as leaders."



What Business School Leaders Can Learn From the Dairy Farmers (BizEd)

Shaun R. Carver, assistant dean of Graduate Programs at the University of California, San Diego's Rady School of Management and a Liaison BusinessCAS™ Advisory Board member, wondered what a unifying "Got Milk?" campaign for graduate management education might look like. Today's business school leaders, he said, should borrow a page from the playbook of the American dairy farmers who sought to stem the tide of declining milk consumption by launching their now-famous campaign.

"Just as small-scale dairy farmers don't possess the power to move the dairy market, today's individual business schools in any country don't have the resources or influence to reverse the migration away from traditional MBA programs among the entire population of prospective applicants. But business schools could move the needle if they acted in unison, with an inspired and creative message at the heart of their concerted campaign... Ideally, the messaging behind the initiative would seek to grow students' interest in the discipline across the board, benefiting academic institutions of all sizes and in all countries."

Beyond the Numbers: Where Business School Meets College Football (Poets & Quants)

In late December, Robert Ruiz told readers that, "As a University of Michigan alum and the former director of admissions at that institution's medical school, I'm still reeling from the 56-27 thrashing that marked the Wolverines' eighth straight loss to their college football archrival, the Ohio State University Buckeyes." But he also found inspiration in the spirit of cooperation shared by students and leaders at both schools and said he believes business school leaders can learn from college football fans.

"The beloved 'Iowa Wave,' in which University of Iowa Hawkeye fans wave to

kids who watch the game from the windows of the adjacent children's hospital, has also been adopted by Northern Illinois University Huskie fans. MBA programs, too, can't spurn the implementation of their competitors' effective strategies purely out of pride. In an era when so many fault lines threaten to divide us, we're much better off not only tolerating each other but even collaborating with our rivals... It's time to work together to generate the outcomes that transcend scores and rankings."



Despite Funding Cuts, Kentucky State University Finds New Ways to Do More With Less (The State Journal)

Rick del Rosario, associate vice president of enrollment management solutions at Liaison, wrote that recent budget cuts in Kentucky make that state's outlook for funding higher education appear grim. Yet, on a more optimistic note, he also explains how Kentucky State University recently started using Liaison's Centralized Application Services (CAS™) technology to modernize its admissions process and foster "frequent, thoughtful, strategic engagement and communication with applicants."

Business Schools Must Look at Student, Employer Market (Boston Business Journal)

In this piece, Robert Ruiz argues that graduate management education programs in the U.S. must address the challenge of shrinking applicant pools by eliminating enrollment challenges at their institutions and identifying new opportunities for success.

To read full news articles, visit liaisonedu.com/news

Engineering Education Not Immune to International Enrollment Crisis (tribstar.com)

Craig Downing, Ph.D., is associate dean of Lifelong Learning as well as department head and professor of Engineering Management at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. He also serves as the Advisory Board Chair of Liaison International's EngineeringCAS™. His recent article in the (Terra Haute) Tribune Star discussed the fact that while an international application and enrollment crisis continues to sweep higher education in the United States, engineering programs seem to have weathered the storm better than others. But that shouldn't lull the field into a false sense of security. "Now is not the time for the engineering education community to rest on its laurels, confident that current efforts to attract and communicate with the best students in the world will continue to bear fruit," he said. "It boils down to persuasively communicating the value of academic programs to prospective international students. Academic programs can streamline and facilitate the application experience for international students, particularly regarding the use of innovative digital interfaces. In doing so, institutions must remember to communicate in a fashion that resonates with applicants from outside the U.S., such as those who are in the process of obtaining visas and updating their statuses."



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Tackling an Uphill Climb on Higher Education Enrollment (magicvalley.com)

Prior to joining Liaison International, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Becky White served as

director of recruiting and admissions at Boise State University's School of Nursing. She recently shared her thoughts about how higher education institutions in Idaho and throughout the Mountain West are grappling with not only the challenge of attracting students from across the country, but also boosting in-state enrollment. "My entire career in higher education — spanning campuses in Idaho, Oregon and Alaska — has proven that the sooner a school communicates with applicants and accepted students, the likelier those students are to enroll. No matter where a campus is located, strategic admissions outreach is a central ingredient for robust enrollment. By broadly embracing the paperless revolution in higher education admissions, Mountain West colleges and universities can make significant strides toward stemming their current declines in enrollment. More specifically, introducing a paperless process allows for a student-centered application experience, increasing a school's volume of completed applications by practicing personalized communication in a region whose residents place a particularly high value on relationships and community-building."

How Enrollment Can Benefit From the Cloud (universitybusiness.com)

Rick del Rosario, associate vice president of enrollment management solutions at Liaison International, believes the COVID-19 outbreak could result in an "effective new approach [that] could entail not only a greater emphasis on online courses, but also a move toward cloud-based processes in admissions." Institutions, he said, can no longer afford delays in an increasingly competitive marketplace where students expect immediate and personalized responses. "If the coronavirus outbreak has taught the higher ed sector anything so far, it is to expect the unexpected for the foreseeable future. While campus operations continue to shut down for the remainder of this semester, institutions need to stay ahead of the curve by assuming that this public health crisis will also threaten next year's enrollment numbers. This is not pessimism; it is realism and practicality. Admissions and enrollment efforts that prioritize efficiency

as well as more sophisticated interaction with applicants can help institutions weather the coronavirus crisis."

Read the full article on page 14.



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY
LEAVEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Coronavirus's Implications for Higher Education and Innovation (mercurynews.com)

Dr. Toby McChesney, senior assistant dean of graduate business programs for the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University and chair of Liaison International's BusinessCAS™ Advisory Board, co-authored an article exploring what China's cancellation of GRE and GMAT exams could mean for U.S. universities. "Moving forward, colleges and universities can introduce a number of specific strategies to offset the impact of declining enrollment from China. These include developing closer relationships with local community colleges or smaller colleges that serve large numbers of international students; cultivating and/or subsidizing international student alumni networks, including by sponsoring events where alumni can interact with prospective international students; and expanding recruitment efforts in under-represented countries from an enrollment perspective, particularly Latin America and Africa... Even amid a confounding public health episode which often feels out of academic institutions' control, colleges and universities cannot afford to fall short in the quest to maintain robust international enrollment. Our campuses have an urgent responsibility first to understand the gravity of the coronavirus crisis, and subsequently to implement creative solutions."

**To read full news articles, visit
liaisonedu.com/news**

Top Seven Recommendations for Improving Your International Recruitment Strategy

After growing for decades, the number of international students applying to and enrolling in U.S. undergraduate and graduate academic programs has declined in recent years. As a result, U.S. schools must implement more robust and successful international recruitment strategies if they expect to continue attracting the best students the world has to offer, particularly in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and the uncertainty it created.

With that in mind, the following list identifies seven potential strategies your institution may want to explore as it seeks new ways to boost international recruitment.

The United States remains home to some of the greatest colleges and universities in the world, and international students still want to come here to study. Attracting them to your campus depends in large part on the strategies you use to recruit and support them.

Colleges and Universities Should Consider:

1

Offering financial aid to highly qualified international students.



2

Investing resources in training admissions officers to recognize high-caliber international report cards.



3

Investing in intensive English as a second language (ESL) programs for both domestic and international students.



4

Developing “pipeline” relationships with local community colleges or smaller colleges that serve large numbers of international students.



5

Cultivating and subsidizing international student alumni networks; sponsoring events where alumni can interact with prospective international students.



6

Expanding recruitment efforts in under-represented countries.



7

Developing a social media strategy to increase awareness of the university in target countries.





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