Reflections From 2020

NYU ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
Dear Colleagues,

In an unprecedented year for industries around the world, higher education was dealt a set of challenges and setbacks that seemed, in many moments, insurmountable. After a year of nearly constant innovation, it’s an honor and a privilege to share with you our lessons and reflections from an enrollment cycle we’ll never forget.

I attribute our ability to weather the storm to our mantra: Students first, keep it simple, and communicate effectively. It’s not a new concept for NYU—in fact, I’d like to think we’ve always operated with that guidance. However, recommitting to those guiding principles allowed us to lean into change: to listen, learn, evolve, and remain fluid by design.

NYU is a uniquely global institution. As you’ll soon discover, using our global presence as a unifying factor helped steady the ship in times of worldwide turmoil. But there was more than the pandemic at play. The reignition of a social justice movement and the emergence of Black Lives Matter served as an opportunity for our leaders to reaffirm and elevate the value of, and our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in all corners of our institution.

Whether you’re an enrollment management colleague or serve another role in our industry, I hope you’ll take from this report the importance of acting upon core values. Why? Because our students expect that of us, especially in times of crisis. When we stick to our values, our staff rise to the occasion and exceed expectations.

The tactics and reflections in this report are specific to NYU, but I invite you to consider the important lessons you learned under incredible circumstances. As the pandemic begins its descent, many of these lessons will become mainstays in enrollment management best practices long after we remove our masks. Let’s continue to act swiftly, innovate boldly, and collaborate openly with a student-centric perspective.

Thank you for your interest and your support. Here’s to continued learning.

Onward,

MJ KNOLL-FINN
Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success
REFLECTION ONE

STRENGTH OF A GLOBAL NETWORK
We strive for a seamless, culturally vibrant student experience here and around the world. In the face of a pandemic, 2020 pushed us to rethink what it means to be a global university. We felt the tension between providing our distinctive “NYU experience,” which emphasizes connectedness regardless of the miles that stretch between us, and prioritizing the health of our community across the world.

As the year progressed, a clear lesson emerged: We cannot become siloed. The only way we’d succeed in supporting students during a global pandemic was with a unified and flexible approach. No matter where we are across the globe, we are one NYU community—and we learned how all of our efforts must reflect this idea.

Our global teams collaborated at new levels as they reimagined critical in-person admissions events for a new virtual world. We tackled new challenges and found creative ways to communicate the dynamic energy of NYU through new channels and media. The lessons and reflections from 2020 continue to guide our events this year and give us a playbook to iterate upon in future cycles.

**United Enrollment Management Efforts Provide Connectivity and Consistency Across the Globe**
As we prepared to start the spring term, cases of a new virus began in Wuhan, China — just ~ 700 KM from NYU Shanghai. Immediately, the Shanghai campus began discussions with local authorities and NYU leadership about the possibility of beginning the term late and/or fully remote. Little did we know that this was the start of something much bigger and our proclivity for both flexibility and consistency would prove essential to our efforts.

One process we immediately had to define was a way for our students to persist and take classes closer to home at one of our global sites around the world. The Office of Global Programs spearheaded this effort called “Go Local” and it has become one of the most important and innovative programs this year, allowing our international students to study at an NYU global campus or site during the pandemic.

For Enrollment Management, the pandemic created a significant disruption to our admissions processes. We brought our global admission and marketing teams together to create processes that reached our Chinese applicants and encouraged them to take action.

With new processes that had to be entirely virtual, we focused on three main objectives:

1. Evaluate candidates for preparedness and English language ability
2. Showcase the many assets of NYU Shanghai
3. Create a sense of community and engagement

Our NYU global community became a source for ideas and support during this first foray into new processes and virtual events. These early moments in Shanghai required out-of-the-box innovative thinking, collaboration with colleagues, and reliance on the skills and ingenuity of a diverse global team.

Tap the Global Network

It is standard NYU practice to place enrollment staff around the globe to serve students and be responsive to the communities in which we’re located. Prior to 2020, we had no idea how this structure would help us during a global pandemic.

97% of NYU Shanghai students finished the Spring 2020 semester.
The Impact of Virtual Candidate Weekend

Since our campus in Abu Dhabi opened 10 years ago, we’ve invited a diverse list of high-achieving students from all over the world to participate in Candidate Weekend on campus.

It’s an opportunity for us to assess student preparedness while allowing students to assess their interest in NYU. After three live events in Winter 2020, our fourth event was impacted by the pandemic.

We had to shift the entire experience to a virtual format while still delivering an impactful experience for students and insights for admissions staff. Sound familiar? Early lessons from Shanghai gave us a road map for how to handle Candidate Weekend.

Technology and firewalls: Not every country gives people full access to the internet. Our technology teams collaborated with partners in Shanghai, Abu Dhabi, and New York City to create the technical platforms that provided access to all students.

Time zones: All of a sudden, we weren’t flying students into a single time zone. We needed some events to be asynchronous while still building connections through synchronous events. We needed to hold these at a reasonable time for all students to participate.

We quickly built an event platform to host our live virtual events, and produced and curated videos to highlight the campus, student life, and academic experience for students. Students had the full schedule on their portals, and they could pick how to be involved in specific community events.

NYU ABU DHABI CANDIDATE WEEKEND

We successfully and quickly pivoted to virtual to yield the Class of 2024.

4%
Admit rate for Fall 2020

78%
Yield rate for Fall 2020

+9%
Increase in yield for students who attended virtual Candidate Weekend (over in-person) event
REFLECTION TWO

VALUE OF DIVERSITY
NYU and Enrollment Management have long been dedicated to access and academic excellence, and we believe education is the engine of democracy and social mobility. We also have long known and been committed to the strength of a diverse community and have spent years working with prospective students across the U.S. and the globe to ensure they saw higher education and NYU as a possibility for their future. This longstanding commitment and growing network of support for students from underrepresented communities was one of our greatest strengths as we entered into this moment of crisis that particularly impacted our most vulnerable students and families.

We considered how to keep crucial inclusivity efforts running in a virtual world to ensure there wasn’t a gap in access. Two of note are the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) at NYU, which is a state-funded, pre-college enrichment program for Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Alaskan Native, or American Indian and economically disadvantaged White or Asian middle and high school students; and the Community College Transfer Opportunity Program (CCTOP), which is a scholarship and assistance program for students transferring from partnership community colleges into NYU.

2020 shed a bright light on the inequities and injustice that exist across the U.S. Students, families, and communities are now demanding new actions, promises, and safe spaces for all students, especially Black, indigenous, and those of color. We reflected on the ways that we must continue to work for change and how we demonstrate our commitment to justice in our communities. Where we could, Enrollment Management made an effort to not simply look inward, but to begin to reach beyond our team and into the community around us.

Our Graduate Marketing & Admissions Consulting team convened a faculty-driven training and discussion with more than 100 people on the unintended impact of implicit bias in graduate and professional admissions.

Our Marketing team led a Storytelling Summit, featuring James McBride, NYU distinguished writer in residence, which focused on representation and inclusive storytelling efforts.

Overall the program was great. I interacted with other students, I worked on science projects, had college virtual visits to science programs, and got academic preparation, which would allow me to succeed on the SAT Exams.”

Science and Technology Entry Program Participant
For the 2021–2022 academic year, NYU received a record number of more than 100,000 applications, cementing us as leaders among our peers in attracting academically talented and diverse students. In a year when there were fears about decreases in applicants from historically underrepresented groups, NYU saw increases in all of our historically underrepresented groups, as well as first-generation college goers.

For 2020–2021, we boosted spending for student veterans, which extended support to 6.4% more students.

We witnessed that when you act upon your core values, you can build genuine trust across your communities and achieve great success. Prospective and current students expect this level of integrity; they are always paying attention to what you say and what you do. We know our work is far from over, but we’re committed to identifying ways to eliminate racial, social, and economic injustices.

**INCREASE IN APPLICANTS FROM 2020 TO 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FALL 2020</th>
<th>FALL 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYU IN NEW YORK CAMPUS</td>
<td>100,131</td>
<td>100,131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NYU IN NEW YORK CAMPUS ADMITTED STUDENT PROFILE**

- Admit rate: 13%
- Under-represented students: 29%
- International: 19%
- First Generation: 20%
- SAT Composite: 1540 (Median)
- Countries: 102 countries

FALL 2021 CYCLE APPLICATIONS (ALL CAMPUSES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32,620</td>
<td>33,760</td>
<td>37,982</td>
<td>47,102</td>
<td>65,594</td>
<td>75,541</td>
<td>94,178</td>
<td>100,131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEASURING STAFF CULTURE AND DIVERSITY**

For the second year in a row, we issued a division-wide survey to help our leaders understand the culture within our office and prioritize our ongoing initiatives to create an inclusive, diverse, and equitable work environment.

+12 Percentage point increase in staff strongly agreeing with the statement: “The leadership of my department encourages diversity and inclusion.”

+7 Percentage point increase in staff strongly agreeing with the statement: “My department respects and values individuals drawn from different backgrounds.”
Expansion of the MLK Scholars Program

When University and Enrollment Management leadership discussed how to affirm and strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars Program was a natural choice for expansion. Enrollment Management’s Office of Student Success was tapped to manage the program alongside the Office of Global Inclusion.

For over 30 years, MLK Scholars have represented NYU’s shining examples of scholars, leaders, and changemakers. In 2020, we doubled the size of the program starting with an additional investment of $6 million.

The Office of Student Success was a perfect fit to co-manage the program, given the combination of Enrollment Management’s central role in student recruitment and retention, and long history of work in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

MLK SCHOLARS

Retain on average at 96%, 2 percentage points higher than their peers

Graduate faster with a 4-year graduation rate 4 percentage points higher than their peers

DOUBLED FUNDING FOR PROGRAM

2019

2020

60 STUDENTS FROM EACH CLASS

Registrar as Ally and Advocate

The University Registrar is an essential office for students, especially for course and academic records. But with an institution of our size, the Registrar must be sure it’s working for each and every student. This year, that meant improving inclusivity by adding comprehensive gender identifications, pronouns, and name pronunciation for students to customize across platforms.

6,441

Students have reported information about their pronouns

3,677

Students have recorded the pronunciation of their names
NYU's College Access Leadership Institute (CALI) celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2020. It also held the first-ever virtual version of the Institute. High school students from California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas attended CALI—many of whom will be the first generation in their families to attend college and are from historically underserved and marginalized communities.

Program graduates become certified College Access Ambassadors and are required to act as mentors and advisors in their high schools by conducting their very own college application workshops—thereby reaching and educating thousands of college-seeking students every year.

We leveraged technology to run the week-long institute—incorporating lessons, break-out sessions, and speakers, and we gauged students’ responses in real time. This allowed us to make immediate changes, which drove the success of the program.

**Transition Key College Access Programs Online**

The NYU Community and our esteemed faculty have supported thousands of young people in middle and high school in New York City, across the U.S., and around the world on their journey to college. What was missing was a collective strategic approach to ensure we could share important resources and practices as a way to develop strong pipelines to college.

In 2019, we constructed a new team in Enrollment Management that brings together all of the 100+ pre-college programs that NYU offers. We now work across the University to collaborate on program efficacy, expansion, and best practices. At the same time, this unit also connects with partner organizations that support middle and high school students in finding the right college or university. Collectively, these efforts make important contributions to the industry that will equip students to tell their stories more effectively.

COVID-19 put an exclamation mark on the importance of maintaining support for our vital access programs. The new team became the hub of support and a central decision-making office in a time of crisis.

**THE COLLEGE ACCESS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TRANSITIONS TO AN ONLINE FORMAT**

NYU’s College Access Leadership Institute (CALI) celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2020. It also held the first-ever virtual version of the Institute. High school students from California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas attended CALI—many of whom will be the first generation in their families to attend college and are from historically underserved and marginalized communities.

Program graduates become certified College Access Ambassadors and are required to act as mentors and advisors in their high schools by conducting their very own college application workshops—thereby reaching and educating thousands of college-seeking students every year.

We leveraged technology to run the week-long institute—incorporating lessons, break-out sessions, and speakers, and we gauged students’ responses in real time. This allowed us to make immediate changes, which drove the success of the program.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE THINK HIGHER ED CAN SHOW UP FOR COMMUNITIES.**

**I am just so happy, motivated, and inspired because we get to speak to a diverse range of students from NYU and see how successful they are. As a ‘first gen’ and being Hispanic, I’m used to seeing predominantly one race that succeeds, especially in my current school, so seeing this makes me believe in myself.”**

Viviana Luna,
2020 NYU CALI student

**READ ABOUT HOW NYU CALI PUSHED A PROMISING STUDENT, KACHI, TO APPLY—AND GET ACCEPTED—TO THE COLLEGE OF HER DREAMS.**

**NYU Pre-College Access Programs served**

20

**NYU Pre-College Access Programs served**

10,600

**students in 2019-2020**
We transitioned the full cohort of College Advising Corps (CAC) to support students in virtual settings. In “normal” times, recent college graduates are placed in New York City-area high schools and help students plan their paths to college.

The NYU CAC serves 70 high schools—three times larger than the second-largest CAC chapter—and more than 6,800 students.

Ms. Villalpando is among the best NYU College Advising Corps College Advisors that we have worked with, as she has such a depth of knowledge and profound skill set in terms of advice. Whatever training NYU is providing to help facilitate this program throughout their partnering high schools should continue in the future.”

John Parkinson, Grover Cleveland High School Queens, NY

NYU CAC STUDENTS

79% Receive free or reduced-price lunch

67% Have submitted college applications
REFLECTION THREE
LISTEN, COLLABORATE, INNOVATE
Innovation in higher education can be slow moving. These efforts are often hamstrung by “we’ve-always-done-it-this-way” attitudes and the sheer complexity of widespread institutional change.

Changes spurred by both the pandemic and broader shifts in the college ecosystem are pushing higher education into unknown territory. As an industry, we face:

- Massive disruptions to college search and campus visits, leading to fewer numbers of students in inquiry pools;
- Hundreds of thousands of students unable to take the SAT and ACT; and
- Increased competition for the same pool of applicants as colleges are already beginning to brace for the “enrollment cliff,” which says that between 2025–2029, the college-age population will decrease by about 15%.

This is our reality for the future. We can either resist them or we can lean in. At NYU, we choose to lean in.

So much of the work we do in enrollment management relies on communication. We communicate across our various offices and to students, faculty, and leadership. Many of those stakeholders also communicate with one another. At NYU, that adds to up to a lot of messages circling our orbit during any given week.

Through the experience of a worldwide health crisis, we learned that communication is a conduit to transform existing ways of recruiting and retaining students. Even internally, we saw a difference with intentional communications as we underwent a massive effort of stakeholder alignment and formed a “Communicators team” that met twice a week throughout 2020.

At NYU, we use our complexity and volume to our advantage. In a time where quality virtual engagement is now an expectation, we leverage this demand to adopt new ways of supporting students. The disruption we encountered in 2020 has paved the way for bold, fresh ideas.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH CRISIS TO GROWTH

From September 2020 through January 1, 2021, NYU’s Undergraduate Admissions Office received approximately 140,000 emails.

50%

Increase in emails to the NYU Office of Undergraduate Admissions
In July 2020, we noticed fewer inquiries from prospective students compared to the prior year. We set out on a mission to close this gap through new digital strategies and niche lead generation efforts to grow the top of our funnel. Through targeted advertising on social media and optimizing our student search campaigns, we focused on attracting students who we know we can serve well: underrepresented groups and high-achieving students.

But the top-funnel inquiries only tell part of the story, and while they are a leading indicator of our ultimate application numbers, a large percentage of applications are ultimately “stealth applicants.” These applicants, who never opt in to our communications or make themselves known to us, were once a mystery to enrollment managers, but over the past several years, we’ve leveraged technology and survey data to understand them better. What we know now is that students research and consider colleges just like their “inquiry” peers. In 2020, we knew that to shore up our application volume, we had to serve these students despite their efforts to avoid detection. We did so through distinctive storytelling and a robust search engine optimization strategy, so that as students sought college information, they found NYU-specific information.

Within weeks of canceling our in-person campus visit operations, we partnered with colleagues across the University to build and launch a first-in-class virtual tour for prospective undergraduates. Our virtual events grew to encompass daily info sessions, regional events, open houses, “Ted Talks” and sample classes, and curated events that targeted niche subject matter that are difficult to offer through an in-person environment.

We also live-narrated virtual graduate school tours. Our grad student tour guides gave live, customized, graduate, and professional school tours of our campuses using Google Earth.

This year leveled the playing field for applicants, since institutions across the country are not offering in-person campus visits during the pandemic. Going forward, we plan to utilize a strategic mix of virtual and in-person recruitment events so all aspiring students have opportunities to visit our campuses.
The world is mobile. And, for all of us in enrollment management, we know that our target audience—Generation Z—is especially mobile-centric.

- 95% of Gen Z own a mobile device. (Pew Research, 2018)
- More than any other generation, 78% of Gen Z say mobile is the most important device to get online. (GlobalWebIndex and Snap Inc, 2019)
- In parts of the world, many students have no access to a computer and use their phones for every element of communication.

A key part of the mobile strategy uses social media. It allows us to connect to students exactly where they are and in the moment. In 2020, we expanded our presence on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Video is essential for a mobile-forward social strategy, especially in a year when students are not able to visit campuses. Our video content strategy brought student experiences to life. We showed how our undergraduates adapted to remote classes and socially-distanced learning. We also made it a priority to monitor frequently asked questions, and then addressed them through short, digestible clips. This service-oriented approach resulted in deeper engagement and direct communication with prospective and current students. As a result, NYU’s YouTube views grew 38% over the past year, and we saw significant growth in our international reach.

Being mobile-first is both a mindset and a strategy. Without a doubt, it will continue to be a top priority in our recruitment, enrollment, and student support efforts.

We transitioned our 150+ Admissions Ambassadors to the digital space. These undergraduates play a pivotal role in connecting with prospective applicants on social media takeovers, “ask me anythings,” answering phones, and writing content for Meet NYU. Ambassadors use their own voices, and we learned that employing an authentic approach gives prospective students useful insight to what it’s like to attend NYU.

MEET NYU RECOGNIZED BY WEBBYS
Campus tour site, meet.nyu.edu, was named as a Webby honoree in 2020. This dynamic resource gives prospective students admissions advice and insight into life at NYU.

SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE (Y.O.Y.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENGAGEMENTS</th>
<th>PUBLISHED POSTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>243,730</td>
<td>3,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>+92% 467,614</td>
<td>+31% 4,117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ambassador program has not only been the most consistent activity I have held on campus, but has been the one piece throughout all of this craziness that has reminded me that I have a community within NYU regardless of where I am around the world.”

2020 NYU Admissions Ambassador
Text Messaging for Nudge Campaigns

As a way to increase support during COVID-19 and subsequent remote learning, text-based nudge campaigns have proved vital to engage in one-on-one communication with students. Text-based nudging is often designed to help students take decisive actions on task-driven behaviors—like paying a bill, submitting a FAFSA, or meeting a deadline. But for Fall 2020, our Office of Student Success focused less on immediate action. Instead, the goal was to positively influence academic behavior over a prolonged period of time by sending first-year students, as well as students in a large intro-biology course, a series of nudges or “quick tips” that encourage positive behaviors that can lead to academic and personal growth.

Survey results demonstrate how the text messaging campaigns helped our first-year students:
- 96% of first-year students said the text messages made them feel more informed about university resources
- 94% of first-year students said the text messages made them feel like someone cared about their success this semester
- 78% had a positive experience with the texting program

Based on the positive response to this method of text messaging, the Office of Student Success scaled their communication strategy to engage with additional student populations.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW NUDGE CAMPAIGNS IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES DURING COVID-19.

Total messages sent in 2020-2021 academic year (as of 1/29/21)

292,000+

Total students reached

24,000+

First-year students reached

5,472+
REFLECTION FOUR

PUT STUDENTS FIRST
ASK, LISTEN, ACT

To truly listen to our 58,000 undergraduate and graduate students, it requires more than simply providing mechanisms for them to reach out to us. We need to listen at scale. We must have a way to understand their needs, and then distill what we hear into both immediate action for individual students and broader themes that inform ongoing processes.

There’s no question that 2020 provided us with a critical lens to innovate upon our students-first mentality. We found new ways to ask, listen, and act that provided a clear path forward during a time of incredible uncertainty. With more evidence from students, we learned how our solutions are more creative and better aligned to what they need the most.

Our relief program is undergirded by our commitment to equity, diversity, and putting students first. We took action immediately when it became abundantly clear that families faced significant financial stress from the pandemic. The University set up an emergency fund that relied on our own resources, generous donors, and, eventually, federal funds. We responded to students within 48 hours of their request for support. This was a coordinated and extensive effort that included:

- A strategic process for both evaluating need and distributing funds to students so grants were managed well and distributed appropriately.
- Creation of a team within Enrollment Management from Financial Aid, Student Success, Enrollment Technology, and Enrollment Strategy that coordinated personal, timely, and empathetic support for each student request.
- Effective communication to students about how to apply for funds that utilized all student channels including the University website, email, social media, and our student information system.
- Collaboration across our community to share how students could apply for funds with academic advisors, school partners, and Student Affairs.
- Partnership with our development office to ensure we continue to solicit donations to the emergency fund.
- Use of technology and existing forms that are familiar to students, easy to use, quick to build, and allow us to effectively and efficiently collect information for future audits.

+$100M
Allocated for student relief during the pandemic

+40K
Student requests

48%
Awarded to underrepresented and international students

$15M
awarded to nearly 7,000 students from low-income households via block grants
Reimagine Flexible Semester Options

Given the unique circumstances students faced for the 2020–2021 academic year, we developed flexible semester options. The Flexible Credit Grants are tuition grants that cover up to four credits of tuition and service fees for each semester in which students pursue a lighter course load of 12-14 credits, up to a maximum of eight credits.

The pandemic also provided us with an opportunity to reimagine how we approach summer to support our goals for student persistence and retention. In Summer 2020, we launched a proactive campaign to educate students on their flexible summer options that included personalized outreach, targeted nudges to drive course registration, and other incentives.

Building on the success of Summer 2020, Enrollment Management is leading an effort to enhance summer enrollment that capitalizes on the Flex Grant opportunity for more than 6,000 students. This effort focuses on student persistence for those who may be behind in credits or who want to consider summer to augment their academic interests.

Working alongside the Undergraduate Vice Provost, school deans, Career Services, and Global Programs, Enrollment Management will deploy a robust communication campaign that highlights innovative clusters of courses designed to help students stay on track and prepare them to excel in their careers after graduation.

Use Pulse Surveys to Get the Student Voice

During the Summer 2020, the Office of Student Success designed a series of 90-second “pulse surveys,” called the Student Voice Series that allowed us to gather actionable data regarding undergraduate experiences during the pandemic.

The goal of the series was to:
1. Provide quick insight into the student experience at a time when it was more difficult to understand how they were doing;
2. Allow us to use “real time” information to inform planning across the University; and
3. Ensure interventions could be quickly initiated when students told us they needed support.

Throughout the 2020–2021 academic year, these surveys proved to be an invaluable tool. Building on a strong foundation of engagement, trust, and collaboration, the Office of Student Success partnered with cross-university committees and a network of faculty and staff to leverage survey data to provide holistic support to students.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FLEXIBLE SEMESTER OPTIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

23K+
Total student responses for 4 surveys

1,800
Students received personal outreach from Student Success Specialists

423
Students awarded for total grants of $2,497,888 (as of 2/11/21)
Support Remote Learning Needs

Learners around the world faced a rapid transition to remote learning. This resulted in many students having immediate technology and connectivity needs that significantly impacted their ability to be successful. Teams within and outside of Enrollment Management came together to make it easy to request assistance, work individually with students to assess their technology needs, and offer hardware, resources, or grant funding to support learning in this new environment.

12K

Requests for emergency funding to help with technology or internet needs

Nearly

99%

of requests approved

Persistence Relies on Staying Connected

Like many universities, NYU experienced a significant increase in undergraduate students taking a leave of absence (LOA) for the Fall 2020 semester. Already in the midst of addressing the need to help students stay connected during an LOA, we doubled down on our planning and efforts to enhance our outreach. The underlying goal was to keep students connected to the community by creating points of contact on multiple platforms, in addition to providing a personal point of contact for their questions and concerns as they planned their returns.

To help these students stay connected and prepare to resume their studies in the spring, we coordinated an expansive outreach and support initiative for approximately 1,000 students who took a non-medical leave of absence. 83% of eligible students who were included in the fall outreach efforts are registered, compared to 62% of students who were not included in the initiative.

Three Ways to Connect with Students

1. “Keep Up With NYU:” A centrally developed newsletter for students on leave.
2. Personalized outreach: Conducted via phone, email, and text to keep students connected to us.

Three Ways to Connect with Students

1. “Keep Up With NYU:” A centrally developed newsletter for students on leave.
2. Personalized outreach: Conducted via phone, email, and text to keep students connected to us.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS ON A LEAVE OF ABSENCE.
Cutting through the clutter of emails to get students to listen and take action is an ongoing challenge in higher education. In Fall 2019, we decided that the first step in understanding this problem was to actually see what students received. To that end, we set out on a five-part plan that we are still engaged in:

1. Audit the number of emails a student receives.
   Do you know how many email communications your team sends out to a student during their first academic year? We didn’t, either. So, from May 2019 to May 2020, we decided to embark on a comprehensive email audit. Our team cataloged 7,777 emails resulting in a vast, human-processed data set of email communications from the point of enrollment through the conclusion of a student’s first year.

2. Collaborate with partners across the University.
   In partnership with more than 17 administrative divisions across the university, 10 undergraduate schools and colleges, and our two campuses abroad, the team went about the business of creating dummy student accounts to serve as the receptacle of email communications for the audit. On average, our dummy email accounts captured 656 emails each.

3. Quantify key email metrics.
   We identified the volume of email, email address of sender, sender field in inbox, subject line, number of links, number of calls to action, word count, grade-reading level, and read-through time. We also conducted focus groups of students who match the profiles of the dummy accounts we created.

   The data revealed that there are several areas where communications can be strengthened to support the student experience. This resulted in an “Email Essentials” handbook that includes a framework for best practices to communicate with students to help improve the email experience for all of us.

5. Build the case for a better CMS system to help understand the student experience.
   Now that we’ve measured and looked at content, our next step is to look for technical solutions that help us systemically support change to see how our cross-departmental communication may impact our ability to communicate effectively.

One immediate result of this work is that we expanded the channels on which we communicate with students, and we’re relying on email less. For example, we leveraged Student Information System alerts and banners at key periods to meet students where they are for financial aid and registration purposes.

**Use Email Effectively**

**277,383** Average total word count across all accounts **164** Average number of “senders” across the University **656** Average number of emails received per account over a 13-month period

**MEAN WORD COUNT** is roughly equal to the length of Ulysses, with a **RANGE** of Moby Dick to two volumes of The Lord of the Rings:

- Fellowship of the Rings
- The Twin Towers
Reflections From 2020 and Looking Ahead

STRENGTH OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK
UNITED ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
EFFORTS PROVIDE CONNECTIVITY AND
CONSISTENCY ACROSS THE GLOBE

Unification, collaboration, and flexibility helped us to adapt and reimagine how we support our students in a virtual world. We tackled new challenges—together as a global team—and found creative ways to communicate the dynamic energy of our campus through new channels and media. As enrollment managers, we must remember these lessons as we enter a new normal.

VALUE DIVERSITY
USING WELL-ESTABLISHED STRATEGIES
AND CORE VALUES

NYU’s commitment to access and academic excellence manifested in new ways during 2020. We had to consider how to keep crucial inclusivity efforts running in a virtual world to ensure there wasn’t a gap in access. We also reflected on the ways that we must continue to demonstrate our commitment to justice to our students, families, and staff. Our efforts underscored that when you act upon your core values, you build genuine trust across your communities and achieve great success.

LISTEN, COLLABORATE, INNOVATE
COMMUNICATION FROM CRISIS TO GROWTH

Through the experience of a worldwide health crisis, we learned that communication is a conduit to transform existing ways of recruiting and retaining students. We learned that it is indeed possible to remove red tape and cut through bureaucracy when the time calls for it. As we continue to face changes spurred by the pandemic and broader shifts in higher ed, we plan to lean in to moments of adversity and tell our authentic stories.

PUT STUDENTS FIRST
ASK, LISTEN, ACT

We innovated upon our students-first mentality. It was imperative to identify new ways to ask, listen, and act that provided a clear path forward during a time of incredible uncertainty. We learned that with more evidence from students, our solutions are more creative and better aligned to what they need the most. We also learned that this work is never finished; we must continue to take a “beginner’s mindset” to our work and be prepared to respond to the next challenges we face as leaders.
The Division of Enrollment Management works collaboratively under the direction of the Senior Vice President to serve the students of New York University, the largest independent research university in America. The Division’s mission is to attract and enroll diverse, academically promising students; support the academic and social needs of each learner in an inclusive, global environment; and graduate bold innovators who go on to impact society. All enrollment functions, research, and operations for NYU’s schools and colleges in New York, as well as degree-granting campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, fall under the purview of Enrollment Management. While the Division is headquartered in New York City, reporting staff are positioned throughout NYU’s global network.

Enrollment Management Offices
Undergraduate Admissions
Graduate Marketing & Admissions Consulting
Marketing & Communications
Financial Aid
University Registrar
Institutional Research
Student Success
Enrollment Technology
Enrollment Strategy