



Marist College

Leveraging Data Science, Analytics, and Research to Make More Informed Decisions

There are plenty of reasons why Marist College has been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Time*, *The Princeton Review*, and *Barron's Best Buys in College Education*. With 50 academic programs, a top 10 study abroad ranking, and a technology infrastructure that would make most Fortune 100 companies envious, it's clear why Marist has become one of the leading colleges of the arts and sciences in the nation.

Nestled on the banks of the Hudson River, Marist is just 70 miles north and a short train ride away from New York City. This easy accessibility to the City has helped it build a "domestic study abroad program" called Marist in Manhattan which allows students to gain practical knowledge through internships, while continuing to earn their degrees.

Want to actually study abroad? They have that covered too. Marist has a campus in Florence, Italy and is the only U.S. College or University offering full four year bachelor degree programs. Live, learn, and earn an American bachelor's degree from a highly-respected college in the center of one of Italy's most-loved and historic cities.

Back on its New York campus, Marist is known for its gorgeous setting, updated and well-cared for grounds, and safe environment. Most importantly, its commitment to excellence in education, a pursuit of higher human values, and dedication to the principle of service make it the kind of college you'd want your kids to attend.

Challenge

- Make program innovation decisions easier
- Leverage more and better data throughout enrollment funnel process

Solution

- Encoura™ Data Lab
- Eduventures Research® from NRCCUA®

Benefits

- Made recruiting roles more efficient and effective
- Defined a number of new programs using Eduventures for market research
- Sunsetting programs that were not performing well

Perhaps that's why Sean Kaylor, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communication at Marist College found it easy to stick around even after he graduated. "My parents had it easy," Kaylor quipped, "They dropped me off at Marist my freshman year, and I never left." That's no joke. After graduating, Kaylor went on to become Assistant Director of Admissions and then spent the next several years climbing the career ladder until reaching his current position.

Full Enrollment Funnel Analytics

Having a unified team is a great start, but it doesn't change the fact that college and university leaders are consistently under pressure to meet (or exceed) recruiting goals, while also ensuring the students they accept are a good fit and will thrive at their school. Further complicating the landscape are technology



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A Unified Team

With that kind of history with one institution, Kaylor was uniquely positioned to fully understand what Marist had to do to remain competitive in the market. However, he also knew that he needed all of the different groups on campus to be united in their strategic planning and decision-making. A team was formed to ensure all of the various groups were in alignment.

Kaylor described, "I serve on a Program Development Committee with our CFO, Executive Vice President and Academic Vice President. We're tasked with making sure that we're identifying alternate revenue streams, ensuring our existing portfolio is still in high demand, and/or that we're finding ways to differentiate our portfolio. We're also in charge of building awareness and managing the brand as we penetrate new markets. This teamwork ensures that the key decision makers are in concert and following a strategic plan."

solutions that may drive up applications, but reduce the actual number of students that will enroll. This makes the importance of accurate predictive modeling crucial.

Kaylor noted, "The use of predictive analytics started a while ago, so we adopted its use to rank our inquiries to better determine what leads to go after. It also helped us better select the names we purchased. But that's the tip of the iceberg."

Just identifying a list of students with a higher likelihood of enrolling is great - no question. But how do you predict who will actually follow through and enroll? How do you encourage that behavior throughout the entire enrollment funnel? And how do you ensure that the students you admit are those who will thrive and graduate from your institution?

Kaylor said, "What NRCCUA is doing now with Encoura Data Lab bridges that gap. They can help schools use data through the recruitment and enrollment funnel so we can make better decisions along the entire path."

Early on, Kaylor was part of a focus group that went out to see some of the early plans for the Encoura Data Lab before it was even called by that name. Out of that experience, Kaylor said, “That was a few years ago, but I remember it well. I came back to the office, went to my colleagues and said, ‘Stop what you’re doing - I know you’re busy, but you need to go to NRCCUA’s office in Kansas City and see what they’re building.’”

In prior years, Marist had purchased student profiles from NRCCUA, but their attention was piqued further by the company’s directional shift. NRCCUA’s transition from data vendor to technology platform partner, delivering funnel visualization, advanced analytics, and actionable insights, is helping college and university enrollment offices be more strategic throughout their entire recruitment process.

Kaylor said, “What NRCCUA has done in terms of innovation and in the way they have reshaped and redefined themselves is extremely exciting and allows us to do our jobs more effectively and efficiently. I fully expect Encoura Data Lab to help us decide which high schools to visit, new geographic areas to target and ultimately assist with admissions decisions.”

Market Research, Check

In addition to leveraging the data science and analytics in Encoura Data Lab, Marist has relied on Eduventures Research to assist their program development team with new program identification and vetting, as well as determining which programs needed to be sunsetted.

Now part of NRCCUA, one of Eduventures’ areas of expertise is in helping universities develop, launch, and assess new academic programs. Because predicting the supply and demand for a program area is a complex

endeavor, there is always risk in program development. One way to mitigate risk is through a strong market assessment that takes multiple factors into account.

Kaylor described, “We’ve used our relationship with Eduventures to vet a lot of the new program opportunities we have considered. Essentially, they do the market research for us. They have been the starting point for several of the successful new programs that are now in place at our school. Also important, the Eduventures team has helped us make the difficult decision to close down programs and sites that were no longer producing.”

Evolutionary

Once known primarily as a list company, NRCCUA has spent the last several years focused on how to best help college and university enrollment and admissions offices deliver the best experiences for students. By building a technology platform that gives these schools the ability to leverage data science, advanced analytics and institutionally-focused research, the company has transformed itself and how the industry manages its recruitment process.

Likewise, Kaylor’s impression of NRCCUA has evolved as rapidly as the company itself. He concluded, “I’ve encouraged a number of people to invite NRCCUA to their campus. I really think you have to see it to appreciate its power. But for me, the most significant thing I’ve noticed is how much NRCCUA has changed in recent years. Enrollment professionals who haven’t taken a look at NRCCUA in a few years are in for a big - and very pleasant - surprise.”