



Canisius College

Scoring a Winning Class

One of the top regional institutions in the Northeast, Canisius College is a small, masters-level, private university located in North-Central Buffalo. As one of 27 Jesuit, Catholic colleges in the country, it proudly offers its students a liberal arts curriculum and experiential learning opportunities with the principles of excellence, service, and leadership. While studying at Canisius, students are encouraged in their intellectual, ethical, and spiritual growth.

Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Justin Rogers, describes how in addition to receiving a holistic education, Canisius students have the rare experience of benefiting from a similar student-faculty ratio of a smaller school, while also enjoying the thrill of Division 1 athletic teams. “Our students thrive in this environment and have a plethora of academic opportunities. Examples include: our accounting students consistently score at the top of the New York State CPA exam, we offer arts and sciences specialty programs that are only offered at a handful of institutions, and our professional sports partnerships provide exclusive practical experiences for our sports management students – including working in national production with ESPN 3.”

Another unique feature of Canisius is its extraordinary location. The campus is closely connected to the urban environment, while Niagara Falls and Canada are almost in its backyard.

Challenge

- Create brand recognition in new geographic markets
- Make better-informed decisions using quantitative metrics
- Surpass recruitment numbers from past years to hit goals

Solution

- Encoura™ Data Lab
- Smart+™ Predictive Model

Benefits

- Valuable part of innovative strategy that led to Canisius surpassing its recruitment goals
- A predictive model that highlights students most likely to enroll
- Easy-to-use enrollment platform with quality student data
- Informed enrollment partner committed to Canisius' success

Getting the Name Out

Despite its strong academic programs and a unique campus setting that would appeal to many students, Canisius is a name that is often unfamiliar to residents outside the Northeast. Rogers, with a long tenure of admissions experience in both public and private college settings, came to Canisius four years ago and soon began implementing a strategy to confront the specific challenges that prevent widespread knowledge of the institution. He explained that, like other small private colleges, “Competition, demographics, and understanding net costs are things by which we are consistently challenged.”

Demographically, Rogers cited that the graduation growth rate of high school students in New York and most of the Northeast falls below the national average,

the nation’s largest, free college and career planning program - was one of his starting points for facing this challenge head-on. “I immediately saw value in my partnership with ACT | NRCCUA thanks to its Smart+™ Predictive Model. It gives me a clear picture of which students are most likely to enroll – even in markets where Canisius is less recognized.”

The Smart+ Predictive Model forecasts which prospective students are likely to enroll in an institution with eight times more accuracy than previous models. One of the reasons why Smart+ is so valuable to enrollment leaders like Rogers is that they can run the model to see enrollment scores before choosing which student names to buy, saving time and money by strategically focusing their efforts on most-likely-to-enroll students. With the Smart+ Predictive Model, Rogers can essentially assign quantitative metrics to students’



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limiting the quantity of students ready to begin post-secondary studies. For those who do graduate, the number of schools that saturate the northeast can feel overwhelming, and Canisius can seem like another fish in an ocean of options.

Canisius is well respected among the Jesuit community and among residents of the region. However, Rogers explained, “The challenge I’ve had is to try to find the right-fit students in markets where I don’t have the same brand recognition as I do in the Western New York area and other primary markets.” His partnership with ACT | NRCCUA - an organization that connects colleges and universities to high school students through

enrollment likelihood; then, he can give this information to his staff so they can strategically prioritize their outreach.

To expand brand recognition of Canisius outside its immediate area, Rogers narrowed down the students in his tertiary markets using Smart+. As the team worked to expand brand recognition, one of the areas that became a target was Western Pennsylvania. “We were able to focus on all stages of recruitment from search to outreach to yield, which led to great results. In our tertiary markets, we saw an increase in students who not only recognized our brand, but applied.”

Widespread Innovation

Canisius enjoyed further success this year when Rogers and his team approached their enrollment goal head-on by being innovative across the board with their recruitment efforts.

Their strategy was multifold: incentivize campus visits, optimize the timing of financial aid packages, analyze their traditional vs. digital marketing efforts, and enhance staff training. Rogers shared how Encoura™ Data Lab also played a key role in their cutting-edge approach. “Encoura Data Lab played a big role in our strategy as well. It informed our decision-making and helped us search for and find better prospective students for our institution.”

Encoura Data Lab is an enrollment management technology platform that combines student intelligence data, advanced

at my fingertips whenever I want to have a preliminary understanding of where I am at this time,” he explained.

Rogers especially appreciates Encoura Data Lab’s data visualization tools that make quick, detailed data analysis possible. “ACT | NRCCUA has great tools that make very clear what I need to be paying attention to in the recruitment cycle. Everybody has a dashboard and data tools these days, but what ACT | NRCCUA is bringing to the table goes far beyond any other tools currently out there.”

With its innovative actions across campus and close student data interaction, Canisius has seen clear results. Rogers can proudly share, “This year we did very well. It’s the first time we exceeded our goal in the last few years, and we are very excited about that.”



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analytics, and education-specific research to guide higher education institutions in executing effective recruitment strategies. The tool allows users to search and segment data for millions of students across the nation to identify and analyze target markets. It also allows interaction with enrollment data from all of an institution’s sources in one place, enabling enrollment leaders to best evaluate their recruitment funnels.

As a leader who enjoys analyzing data, Rogers spurred an evolution in how Canisius searches and connects with prospective students. He has been making progressive changes by diving into the student data firsthand. Being able to easily work independently with the data and get an accurate picture of how students are moving through the funnel at any time is important to him. “I have Encoura Data Lab

Partners Who Empower

Similar to the teamwork across campus that brought creative solutions to Canisius, Rogers is quick to credit an off-campus source who also contributed to the recent recruitment success at the university.

“One thing I found very valuable was my relationship with the team at ACT | NRCCUA,” Rogers shared. He specifically highlighted his appreciation of the preparation and individualization that he observes each time he works with the Encoura Enrollment Services representatives who regularly walk with him through Encoura Data Lab. “I work with a number of service providers, but I have to give credit to the ACT | NRCCUA team for its level of service.”

He emphasized how his ACT | NRCCUA team is familiar with his school's specific situation each time they meet - something unique from other vendors he has encountered. "When I get on the phone with my team from ACT | NRCCUA, I know they have spent time looking through the data. I don't have to spend the first 15 minutes updating them. We can jump right in and get to the important data in the visualization tools where we can see trends and shortfalls."

Enhancing Enrollment Processes For All

Having worked with ACT | NRCCUA for years in different capacities, Rogers explained how there are potential benefits in that partnership for any institution. "Encoura Data Lab has a lot

to offer and I would imagine most enrollment managers would find value in it." He has experienced the strength of the partnership and has seen great results at Canisius. "Since I first became a director, our strategy continues to evolve and increase in effectiveness with ACT | NRCCUA and Encoura Data Lab. It certainly has helped with movement through the funnel." He plans to continue to utilize Encoura Data Lab and Smart+ to enhance the recruitment efforts at Canisius in future years.

With ACT | NRCCUA's enhanced tools and invested enrollment services team that effectively contribute to an institution's creative recruiting strategies, this is a partnership he would encourage any college to consider. "I definitely think ACT | NRCCUA is offering something that's fresh, new, and worth investigating if you're an enrollment manager in today's world."