

From Awareness to Enrollment: A Strategy for Driving Student Commitment



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Strategy

CSUCI Has Strong Assets – But They Are Not Fully Visible to Students

The Landscape

- Lower brand awareness in a crowded CSU & UC ecosystem
- Strong outcomes exist but are under-communicated
- First-gen audiences need clarity and reassurance



The Opportunity

- Strong identity: community and belonging
- Proven outcomes: high social mobility ranking, career pathways
- Programs that enable experiential learning



Belonging and Outcomes Must Be Positioned Together

Find Your Place. Build Your Future.

- **Place → Feeling like you belong**
 - Students need to see themselves here
- **Future → Knowing it leads somewhere**
 - Career outcomes, mobility & ROI
- **Bridge emotion → outcome**
 - When students feel they belong, they're more likely to commit

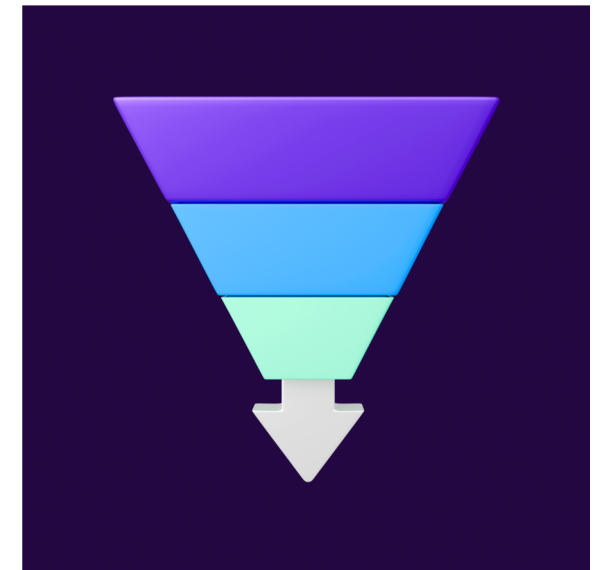
Starr T. ('24 BS Business, '25 MBA)



"CSUCI, it's my home."

The Goal is to Move Students Efficiently Through the Funnel

- Increasing qualified awareness
 - Reach students likely to apply and enroll
- Improving funnel conversion
 - Reduce drop-off and move more students to the next step
- Strengthening yield
 - Convert admits into committed students



Messaging & Audience

Students Need Different Messages at Each Stage

Stage

- Awareness
- Engagement
- Conversion

Message Focus

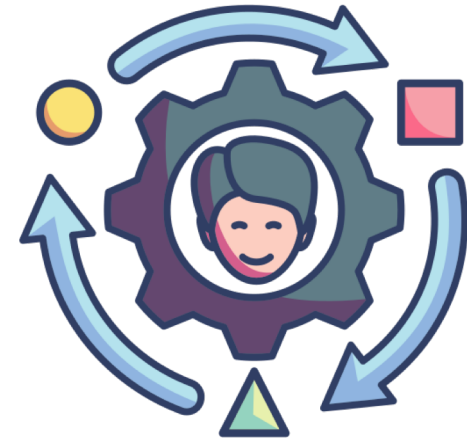
- *"Do I belong here?"*
- *"What can I study?"*
- *"Am I ready to commit?"*

Tone

- Emotional: Leads with identity and student voice
- Informational: Provides academic clarity and outcomes
- Reassuring: Reduces uncertainty and reinforces value

Enrollment Growth Depends on Guiding Students Through Each Funnel Stage

- Five stages define the student journey (process)
 - Prospect → Inquiry → Applicant → Admit → Enroll
- Three stages guide marketing strategy (messaging)
 - Awareness → Consideration → Decision
- Strategy bridges both models
 - Moving students forward while meeting them where they are



Top Funnel: Be discovered

Content

- Social and video storytelling
 - Real student voices and lived experience
- Search and early exploration content
 - Answer questions students ask before they know Channel Islands
- Paid campaigns expand reach
 - Go beyond organic channels

Themes

- *"Where do I fit?"*
- *"What kind of experience do I want?"*
- *"What's possible for me?"*

Mid Funnel: Clarity and Fit

Content

- Personalized email and follow-up
 - Based on interest and behavior
- Program-level content
 - Majors, outcomes, careers
- Virtual events and Q&As
 - Direct access to people and answers

Themes

- *"What can I study here?"*
- *"What will this lead to?"*
- *"Can I see myself here?"*

Bottom Funnel: Conversion

Content

- Financial aid clarity
 - Cost, aid, ROI transparency
- Peer validation
 - Student stories and admitted events
- Clear next steps
 - Deadlines, deposits, action

Themes

- *"Can I afford this?"*
- *"Is this the right choice?"*
- *"What do I need to do now?"*

Channels

Digital Channels Drive Discovery and Intent

- Website as conversion hub
 - Program pages tied to outcomes
- Search captures active intent
 - Paid search and organic SEO
- Social drives discovery
 - Student voices and lived experience



SEO Connects Channel Islands to Active Student Intent

- Align with real student questions
 - "Best colleges near LA," "psychology careers"
- Create entry points into the funnel
 - Show up during early exploration
- Guide users from search to decision
 - Discovery → program → admissions

Direct Channels Reinforce Messaging and Drive Action

- Email drives personalized follow-up
 - Behavior-driven communication
- Print builds awareness and credibility
 - Billboards, transit, counselor materials
- Events create human connection
 - Open houses, tours, student interactions



Each Channel Plays a Distinct Role in the Funnel

- Awareness
 - Social and print expand reach
- Consideration
 - Search and website support evaluation
- Conversion
 - Email and events drive action

Messaging Must Balance Student and Family Priorities

- Students (Gen Z and first-gen)
 - Authenticity and belonging
- Families
 - Outcomes, costs, security
- Shared priority: trust
 - Messaging must align across both



Engagement Should Continue Before Students Arrive

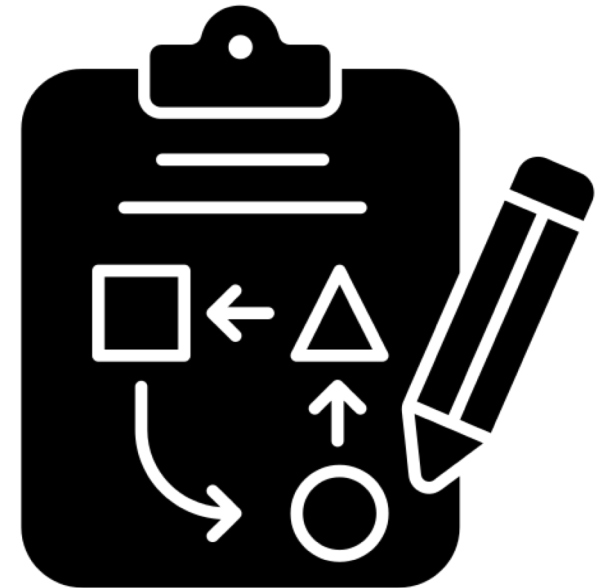
- Setting expectations early
 - First-year experience, transition support
- Building connection before arrival
 - Pre-enrollment communication and touchpoints
- Tracking belonging and engagement
 - Surveys and behavioral signals (website visits, clicks, engagement)



Execution

Clear Planning Keeps Campaigns Aligned and On Schedule

- **Macro: Timeline**
 - Align with the recruitment cycle (fall awareness → spring conversion)
- **Mid-level: Content Production**
 - Monthly themes (belonging, academics, outcomes)
- **Micro: Communications Calendar**
 - Weekly sends/posts tied to milestones



Collaboration Keeps Messaging Accurate and Relevant

- Admissions shares where students get stuck
 - Drop-offs, questions, objections
- Recruitment shares real student feedback
 - What resonates in conversations
- Marketing and PR align the story
 - Consistent messaging across channels



Campaign Phases Align with How Students Make Decisions

- Phase 1: Awareness push
 - Broad reach and brand visibility
- Phase 2: Engagement nurture
 - Build trust and provide detail
- Phase 3: Conversion push
 - Drive applications and deposits

Tools and Systems Empower Execution

- CRM tracks the student journey
 - From inquiry to enrollment
- Project tools keep teams coordinated (Asana, Monday)
 - Coordinate timelines, deliverables, ownership
- Content calendar keeps messaging consistent
 - Right message at the right time



Systems

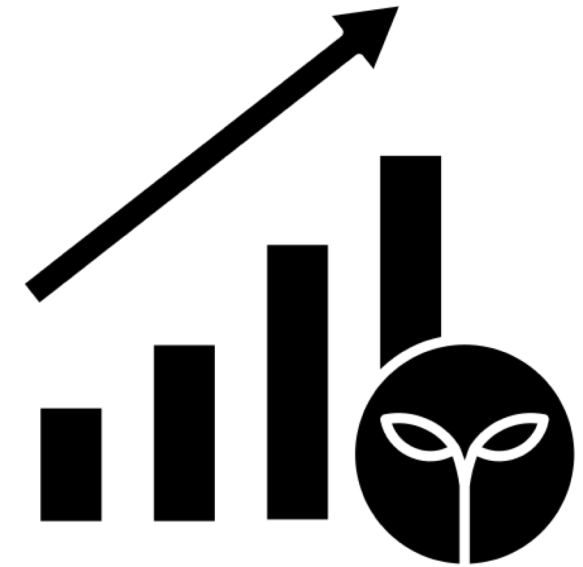
Segmentation & Automation Personalize Student Journeys

- Segmentation defines the audience
 - Funnel stage, interests, behavior
- Automation delivers the message
 - Triggered emails, drip campaigns
- Example journey
 - Inquiry → welcome email → program overview → event invite → student story follow-up

Measurement

Funnel Metrics Show What's Working

- Are we generating real interest?
 - Cost per inquiry (How much we spend to generate each student inquiry)
- Are students taking the next step?
 - Application rate
- Are admits choosing Channel Islands?
 - Yield rate

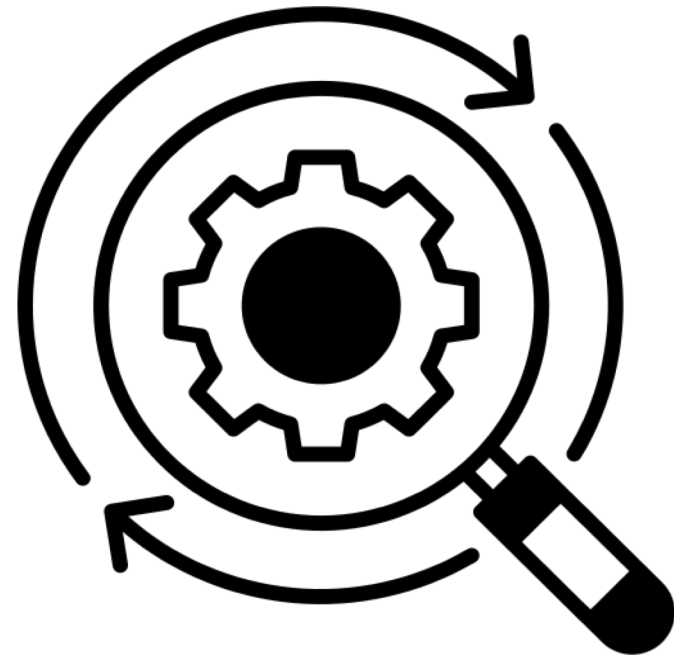


Data Shows Where Students Drop Off

- Strong opens but low clicks
 - Messaging isn't driving action
- Low engagement on social
 - Content isn't holding attention
- Drop-off application flow
 - Process may be unclear or overwhelming

Test, Learn & Improve Over Time

- Test creative and messaging (A/B testing)
 - See what resonates
- Measure behavior (performance data)
 - Clicks, visits, conversions
- Adjust and improve (optimize messaging)
 - Refine what works, drop what doesn't



CSUCI Already Delivers – This Strategy Ensures Students Choose It

