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The Leader in Graduate Enrollment Management

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2024 GEM Summit

Building Effective Partnerships in Recruitment

A Blended Approach of
Centralized and Decentralized Collaboration

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Overview

- Overview of Graduate Admissions at UC

- Understanding Centralized vs. Decentralized Strategies

- Exploring UC's Blended Recruitment Model

- Wrapping Up – Benefits, Actionable Steps, and Encouragement for Adoption

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Evolution of UC's Graduate Recruitment Strategy

November 2021
Graduate admissions shifted from the Graduate College to Enrollment Management.

Summer 2023
Introduction of additional staff and strategic vision targeting domestic student recruitment and marketing.
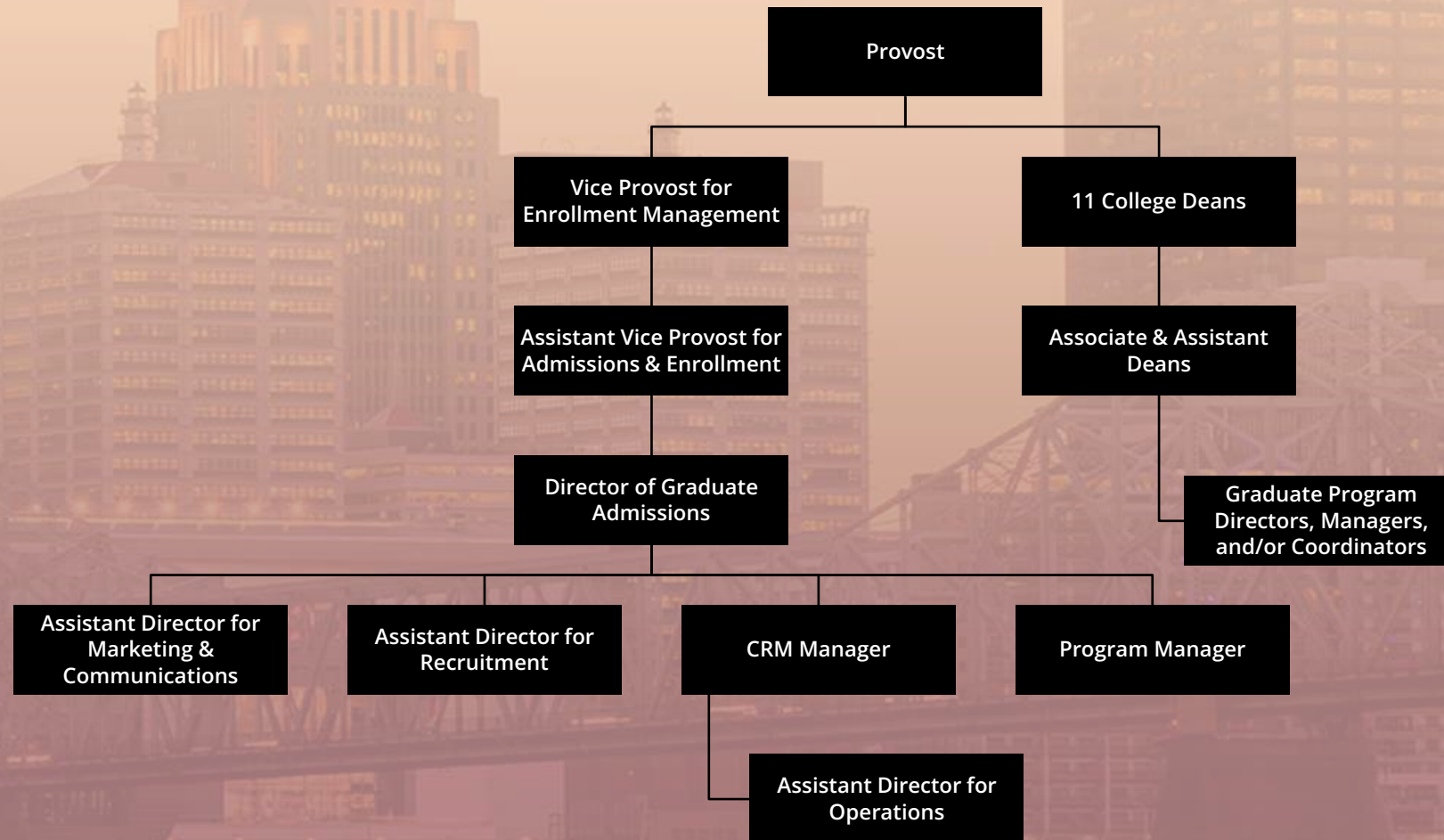
Summer 2022
Expansion of staff to enhance application procedures & communication strategies.

2024 Objective
Expand efforts into international graduate student recruitment.

Structure of Graduate Admissions at UC

Provost

- **Vice Provost for Enrollment Management**
  - **Assistant Vice Provost for Admissions & Enrollment**
    - **Director of Graduate Admissions**
      - **Assistant Director for Marketing & Communications**
      - **Assistant Director for Recruitment**
      - **CRM Manager**
        - **Assistant Director for Operations**
      - **Program Manager**

- **11 College Deans**
  - **Associate & Assistant Deans**
    - **Graduate Program Directors, Managers, and/or Coordinators**

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Collaborative Structure

- Post-restructuring, the Graduate College and Graduate Admissions operate under distinct leadership yet collaborate continuously.

- The Graduate College concentrates on the academic and overall student experience, including retention.

- Graduate Admissions prioritizes recruitment, application management, and student yield while collaborating with university partners.

- UC's blended graduate recruitment strategy reflects a commitment to centralized, efficient admissions while embracing a global perspective.

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Setting the Stage
Understanding Centralized vs. Decentralized Strategies

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Current Challenges in Graduate Recruitment

Competitive Landscape

Increasing competition among institutions and internally for a diverse pool of candidates.

Resource Constraints

Limited budgets and resources necessitate efficient and effective marketing and recruitment efforts.

Changing Demographics

Student demographics and preferences shift, requiring more personalized recruitment strategies.

Digital Evolution

The rapid evolution of digital marketing tools and platforms requires ongoing adaptation and learning.

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Centralized Approach

PROS

Consistency
Centralized control ensures uniform strategy and messaging across recruitment and marketing efforts, maintaining branding and communication consistency.

Efficiency
Centralization of resources and decision-making leads to streamlined processes, reduces duplication of efforts, and maximizes resource utilization.

Data Management
Centralized data collection and analysis improve the tracking of recruitment metrics and trends, facilitating informed decision-making and targeted outreach.

Cost-Effectiveness
Pooling resources and leveraging economies of scale can lead to cost savings in marketing materials, advertising, and other recruitment activities.

CONS

Lack of Flexibility
Centralized models may need help to adapt quickly to changing market conditions or the specific needs of individual departments or programs.

Limited Local Knowledge
Centralized offices lack the detailed understanding of local or niche markets that individual departments or programs have, which can affect the effectiveness of recruitment efforts.

Potential for Bureaucracy
Centralization can introduce bureaucratic hurdles and delays in decision-making, impacting responsiveness to emerging opportunities or challenges.

Overlooked Opportunities
Centralized approaches may miss unique opportunities or audiences specialized decentralized units could better identify and target.

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Decentralized Approach

PROS

Tailored Approaches
Decentralized units can customize recruitment and marketing strategies to their department's or programs' specific needs and characteristics, potentially improving engagement and conversion rates.

Empowerment
Decentralization empowers individual departments or programs to take ownership of their recruitment and marketing efforts, fostering accountability and ownership.

Agility and Innovation
Decentralized units are often more agile and responsive, allowing quicker adaptation to market changes and emerging opportunities.

Local Expertise
Decentralization leverages local or specialized knowledge of target audiences and market dynamics, enhancing recruitment effectiveness.

CONS

Inconsistency
Decentralized models can lead to inconsistencies in branding, messaging, and the quality of marketing materials across various departments or programs.

Fragmentation
Fragmentation of resources and decision-making authority can cause disjointed or conflicting recruitment strategies, diluting overall effectiveness.

Duplication of Efforts
Lack of centralized coordination may result in duplicated efforts and resources, leading to inefficiencies and wasted resources..

Resource Constraints
Smaller departments or programs might need more resources or expertise to effectively conduct recruitment and marketing activities, resulting in disparities in attracting prospective students.

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Why Blend?

Blending centralized and decentralized strategies represents a proactive approach to higher education recruitment and marketing challenges. This synergy enhances the effectiveness of recruitment efforts and ensures a cohesive and authentic engagement with prospective students.
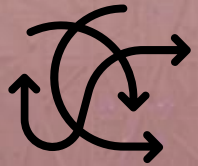
Strengths of Both
Leveraging the efficiency and broad reach of centralized efforts with the authenticity and specificity of decentralized approaches.

Resource Optimization
Allocating resources more effectively by utilizing centralized tools for broad strategies while focusing decentralized efforts on targeted outreach.

Flexibility & Adaptability
The blended model offers the flexibility to adapt to broad and niche markets with appropriate messaging.

Comprehensive Engagement
Ensuring a holistic narrative that captures the full spectrum of opportunities and experiences available to prospective students.

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Key Objectives of the UC Model

1. Enhance consistency and efficiency in recruitment and admissions processes.

2. Foster synergy and innovation through diverse departmental contribution.

3. Tailor recruitment strategies to the unique needs of each program while maintaining overarching strategic coherence.

4. Maximize resource utilization and minimize duplication of efforts across departments.

5. Adapt and respond effectively to changing academic landscapes and student needs.

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Impact of the UC Model

- Improved recruitment efficiency and effectiveness.

- Enhanced sense of community and collaboration across the university.

- Strengthened institutional resilience through diversified and adaptive strategies.

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Collaboration in Action

Regular Meetings & Communications

- Monthly graduate admissions meetings with all graduate program stakeholders (deans, faculty, program directors, coordinators, etc.)

- Weekly newsletter distributing key updates and information to all graduate program stakeholders.

- Regular check-ins with marketing/communications and recruitment personnel.

UC CINCINNATI

Graduate Admissions Weekly Updates
April 8, 2024

Hi Ryan,

This week's update from graduate admissions includes a recap of last week's monthly meeting mostly focusing on application updates, access to the annual application updates form, and announcement of the opening of Fall 2024 CPP Stacks for new students.

Graduate Admissions Updates Meeting Recap
The PowerPoint slides from this month's meeting are attached. The main focus of this meeting was to prepare programs to make updates to their admissions application for Fall 2025-Summer 2026. Some reminders are:

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Collaboration in Action

Campus Wide Events & Workshops

Bearcat Blend

Bearcat Blend is a collaborative all-day workshop designed to enhance graduate program recruitment, communication, and marketing strategies through interactive workshops, panel discussions, specialized sessions, and networking opportunities.

Bearcat Blueprint

Bearcat Blueprint is a Graduate Recruitment Summit focuses on sharing best practices and ideas to maximize recruitment dollars, developing a shared recruitment strategy and calendar, and how graduate admissions can support programs to ensure maximum impact and efficiency.

Bearcats Beyond Bachelors

Bearcats Beyond Bachelors is a recruitment event designed with informational sessions, presentations, and a graduate program fair tailored for current UC students, faculty, and staff to explore all graduate degrees, certificates, and professional programs.

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Implementation of the Blended Model

Build Relationships

- Focus on developing strong, trust-based relationships with colleagues in different programs and colleges.

- Encourage open communication and collaborative problem-solving to enhance team cohesion and effectiveness.
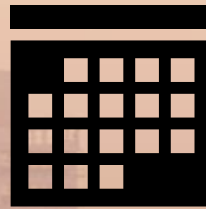
Schedule Regular Check-Ins

- Establish a routine of periodic meetings with representatives from each college to ensure ongoing alignment and address any emerging issues.

- Use these sessions to track progress, share best practices, and adjust strategies.

Encourage Input & Collaboration

- Actively seek and value input from all stakeholders to foster a sense of ownership and engagement.

- Implement feedback mechanisms that allow team members to contribute to decision-making processes and strategy development.

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Leveraging Champions – Engaging Stakeholders

Collaboration with Marketing & Communications

- Strengthen partnerships with marketing and communication departments within each college to ensure unified messaging and cohesive branding across all platforms.

- Share resources and tools to enhance the effectiveness of outreach and promotional activities.

Partnerships with Recruiters & Faculty

- Work closely with program-based recruiters and faculty to align recruitment strategies with academic priorities and strengths.

- Encourage direct involvement in developing and refining recruitment tactics to tailor approaches to specific student demographics.

Identify & Develop Effective Partnerships

- Identify key individuals within each college who are particularly open to collaboration and have a track record of effective partnership.

- Focus on these relationships to build a network of champions who can advocate for and drive the blended strategy within their spheres of influence.

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Successful Initiatives and Campaigns

Graduate Admissions Viewbook

- Developed UC's first comprehensive graduate viewbook that serves as a vital resource for prospective students, showcasing the breadth and depth of graduate programs across the university.

- Ensures consistent messaging and branding while providing information tailored to diverse student needs.

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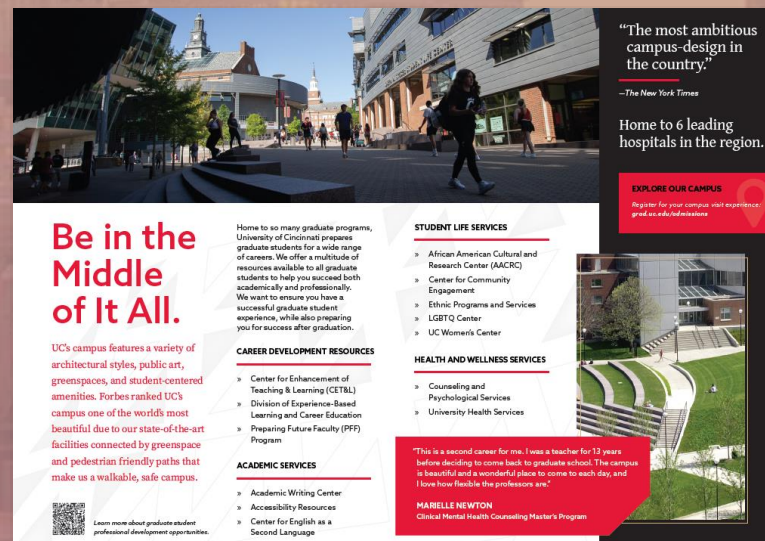
Successful Initiatives and Campaigns

Comprehensive Communications Plan

- Implemented a unified communications strategy that guides all interactions with prospective graduate students from initial inquiry to confirmation.

- Collaboratively designed program specific communications with input from colleges and programs to ensure a consistent message and brand.

- Regular feedback loops established to continually refine and optimize the communication approach.

CINCINNATI

Graduate Admissions at University of Cincinnati

Francesca,

One of the benefits of attending graduate school at University of Cincinnati is our excellent location. U.S. News & World Report ranks Cincinnati as the best city to live in Ohio!

With the university just 1.5 miles north of the heart of downtown

CINCINNATI

College of Medicine

Nicky,

A graduate degree in Industrial Hygiene and Occupational Safety & Ergonomics can open you up to endless possibilities. These programs have a job placement of 98% of trainees prior to graduation in last 10 years.

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Successful Initiatives and Campaigns

Recruitment Workshops and Events

- Organized workshops and events where program representatives and central admissions staff can connect, share insights, and develop joint strategies.

- These sessions facilitate direct communication and alignment between the central admissions office and individual colleges, promoting a cohesive recruitment effort.

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Tools Supporting Blended Model

CRM - Slate

Access Availability
Access is available to all staff involved in graduate admissions, ensuring consistent access to information and tools.

Communications Hub
Centralized and program-specific communications are dispatched through Slate Deliver, maintaining consistent messaging across all levels.

Event Management
Coordinates and manages events at both the program and central levels, facilitating uniformity and efficiency.

Data and Reporting
Acts as a central repository for all admissions-related data, supporting detailed reporting and analytics.

CRM Support
Our office provides dedicated CRM support for Slate, ensuring that issues are resolved, and enhancements are implemented effectively.

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Tools Supporting Blended Model

Teams / Zoom – Enhancing Communications Across Campus

Flexible Communication

- Provides platforms for staff to communicate easily across different locations, whether on campus, hybrid, or remote.

Meeting & Collaboration Tools

- Enables virtual meetings and collaborative sessions, essential in maintaining continuity and engagement in a decentralized environment.
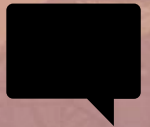
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Metrics & Key Performance Indicators

Enrollment Rates
Monitor changes in application and acceptance numbers annually to measure growth and identify trends in student interest across programs.

Event Attendance & Feedback
Evaluate the success of events managed through Slate by continuously analyzing attendance figures and participant feedback to improve event quality and relevance.

Communication Engagement
Track open rates, click-through rates, and response rates of emails and other communications to gauge effectiveness and adjust strategies as needed.

Program Satisfaction
Use annual surveys to assess satisfaction levels among enrolled students and faculty, focusing on how well the blended model meets their needs and expectations.

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Wrapping Up
Benefits, Actionable Steps, and Encouragement for Adoption

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Benefits of a Blended Recruitment Strategy

Enhanced Reach & Engagement
Leverages diverse tactics for broader outreach and targeted communications, increasing engagement with prospective students.

Flexibility & Adaptability
Allows for rapid adaptation to market changes and customized approaches to meet unique program needs.

Authentic Narrative Creation
Utilizes expertise from programs/colleges for in-depth, authentic content while the central office assists with resources and marketing materials, ensuring relevance and resonance.
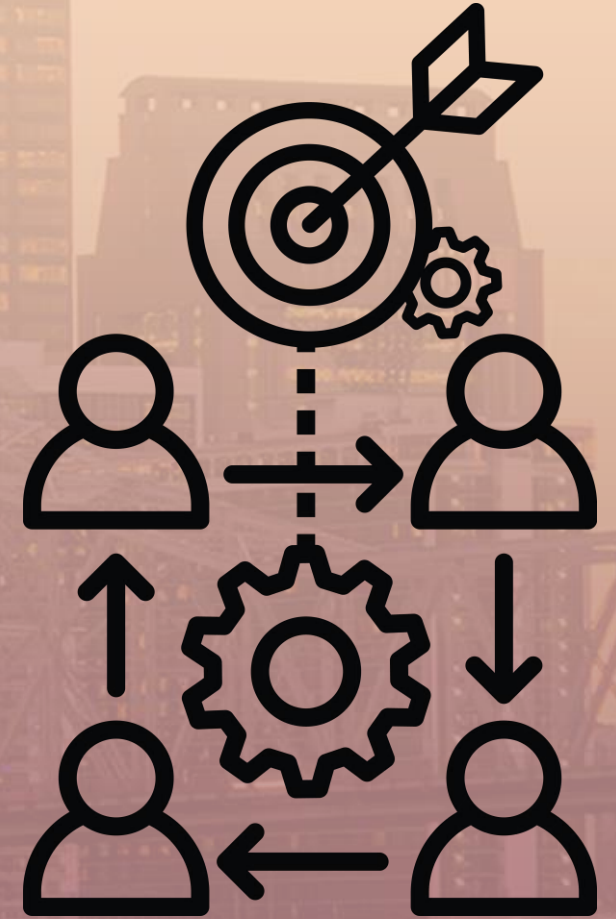
Optimal Resource Use
Combines resources from central and decentralized units to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, reducing redundancy and costs.

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Key Actionable Steps

1 **Assess**
Conduct a thorough review of current recruitment methods to pinpoint strengths and potential integration points for blending strategies.

2 **Implement**
Initiate implementation with pilot areas to test the strategy's effectiveness, using findings to refine approaches before a broader rollout.

3 **Strategize**
Create a comprehensive plan that harmonizes centralized oversight with decentralized execution, ensuring that it aligns with the unique needs of various departments.

4 **Monitor & Adapt**
Continuously monitor the outcomes and impact of the blended strategy, adjusting based on data-driven insights and feedback from stakeholders.

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Encouragement for Adoption

Recognize Benefits
Understand the potential for increased engagement, greater flexibility, and improved resource utilization with a blended approach.

Embrace Innovation
Leverage this strategic shift to foster innovation within your institution, encouraging departments to adapt and thrive in a dynamic educational landscape.

Commit to Continuous Improvement
Allows for rapid adaptation to market changes and customized approaches to meet unique program needs.