



Improving University of Virginia Incoming Class with a Personalized Student Search Campaign

After completing an institution wide branding exercise to streamline central themes and improve marketing messages and design, the University of Virginia (UVA) was looking for a student search solution to leverage the resources it already had to create an effective and engaging campaign.

“With UVA going through a rebrand, the timing was perfect to build on that foundation and help them create a campaign they would love and one that would perform brilliantly,” reflects Whiteboard’s Jonathan Epstein. “Our job is to learn all of the unique selling points and cast them in the most compelling way possible to reach the type of students that will thrive at the university.”

Looking to improve its outreach to new, qualified student applicants, the admission team wanted to better communicate the institution’s high value, particularly to students of color and their parents. They needed a high-quality, effective search campaign created within a short time frame.

“Whiteboard’s teams really care about what they are doing and created something to fit our personality and our goals. It was not a one-size-fits-all campaign.”

**DOUG HARTOG, SENIOR ASSOCIATE
DEAN OF ADMISSION**

Approach

Whiteboard knew UVA needed a deeply customized campaign that personalized the university’s unique and powerful story for prospective students. Whiteboard identified UVA’s key themes and audiences and segmented the language and communication flow accordingly.

“Whiteboard told us, ‘We’re going to listen to what you feel you need, match it with your brand identity, provide our best strategic recommendations, and tell a great story.’ And that is exactly what they did,” says Hartog. “They didn’t plug us into some template that works for someone else.”

“That speaks to the wonderfully talented people at Whiteboard, from design and copyediting to communication, leadership, and management,” Hartog continues. “Their team takes ownership and is thoughtful and thorough in everything they do. And they quickly turned around anything that arose throughout the year.”

Results

The UVA admission team has taken immense pride in how multiple stakeholders embraced the campaign. “The search campaign was one of the first places we implemented the new branding. It is the gateway that starts the life cycle of a student here, from prospective students to graduates,” says Hartog. “We met both the high expectations of our central communications team and ours in the admission office. Everyone was really happy with what we launched — and we’re extremely happy with how it’s evolved and, particularly, with how it’s performed.”

“Whiteboard’s search campaign improved the quality of the incoming class,” says Hartog.

“We have the largest and most diverse class in the history of the institution. We have 424 first-generation college students enrolling, the second largest number of African Americans enrolling, and the Virginia yield is strong.”

“Whiteboard cares a great deal about the University of Virginia and that makes for a really nice working relationship — which tends to breed success,” adds Hartog. “And the results are there to show the investment is worth it.”

100-to-1 return on investment

Four times more applications generated in **2018** compared with **2017** among in-state Virginians and out-of-state students of color

Double the conversion for fall '18 among in-state Virginians and out-of-state students of color

84% of all deposits engaged with the yield email campaign.

70% of all deposits engaged with the campaign at the highest levels.



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