

Improving Undergraduate Recruitment and Enrollment at Marquette University

Marquette University has historically met its enrollment targets year after year, a remarkable feat in the competitive world of student recruitment. Sustaining this successful track record and growing enrollments were critical goals for Dr. Michael R. Lovell when he arrived as president in July 2014.

Together with his administration, Dr. Lovell sought to analyze the bigger picture of student success, including student attrition and retention, improved outcomes and on-time graduation rates. This comprehensive approach led to deeper evaluation of Marquette's enrollment strategy and more thoughtful consideration for understanding the types of students who could succeed and thrive at Marquette. To identify these students, the administration looked to answer the following questions:



What types of students thrive at Marquette?



How did Marquette's offerings align with student interests?



How well was Marquette competing with its peers in terms of costs, programs and student support?



How could Marquette better use its institutional financial aid resources to better meet student needs?

Enhancing the undergraduate enrollment strategy required valuable input, support and buy-in from stakeholders across campus. With competing goals for enrollment embedded in the university, Marquette realized it needed to focus on a strategic approach to align schools in terms of class composition for the future, given competition in the market. Marquette also needed to think about its academic portfolio from a university-wide perspective: Which programs should grow? Which should be maintained? And, how should Marquette attract its best-fit students?

The Student Lifecycle: From Recruitment Through Graduation and Beyond

"We needed someone externally who could help us recognize trends that were happening across the university," explained Linda Salchenberger, the former associate provost of academic planning and budgeting at Marquette who led the initiative with Huron.

To kick off the partnership, Huron asked deans critical questions about the student body of the future. The goal? To raise awareness of the competitive nature of

enrollment management and its impact on the entire university. These conversations provided important context for university leaders to use as part of their enrollment planning process.

Huron analyzed five years of Marquette's undergraduate enrollment data and looked at trends in its eight colleges. Using Huron's tools, the administration assessed comprehensive information such as student and demographic profiles and desired majors. With insight into the undergraduate program, Marquette considered important enrollment factors such as:

- Student retention
- Class profile (including quality, diversity and composition)
- Overall net tuition revenue

"Based on this comprehensive analysis of the data, Huron advised we recruit students from beyond Illinois and Wisconsin and increase our focus on recruiting Hispanic students," Salchenberger explained.

To implement this strategy, consensus from university leaders on a path forward was necessary. This led to the decision that the university open a new office in Minneapolis and continue to expand its recruiting footprint. As a result, the diversity of Marquette's 2016 freshman class was higher than ever.

Marquette also shifted from a one-size-fits-all recruiting model (using purchased lists and email blasts) to relational recruiting. By enabling a CRM, the recruitment team can now target individuals and deepen these relationships over a period of time. With greater visibility into labor market trends, the administration can also define which university programs to highlight in the student recruitment process.

Additionally, Huron recommended an organizational restructuring, which included changing reporting relationships to better coordinate student services and retention. This new structure involved creating a new position: vice provost for enrollment management, who would:

- Coordinate all enrollment strategies
- Review undergraduate recruitment strategies
- Better engage colleges in recruitment and retention efforts
- Implement a CRM for undergraduate and graduate enrollment

Marquette also focused its recruiting efforts on each student type (international, transfer, undergraduate, graduate, etc.) to ensure appropriate attention and customized outreach, allowing the university to have greater visibility into the entire recruitment process. Leadership buy-in was key to the engagement's success.

Achieving Sustainable Success

Contextualizing Marquette's position among its peers helped the university develop a more strategic approach from enrollment strategy to positioning its academic portfolio. The partnership boosted awareness about why enrollment and retention are so important to the university — even if they don't affect an individual's day-to-day responsibilities.

"I don't think we would have broken the silos without the help of Huron," said Salchenberger. "The kind of awareness we have about enrollment and how important it is wouldn't have been possible."

Achieving enrollment goals is a collective effort. When everyone is invested in finding the best students for the incoming class, everyone wins — as a weak first-year class is the entire university's problem. Huron helped Marquette promote and extend this culture of awareness, starting with academic leadership.

Change in Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Field of Study per Regional State (2007-12)

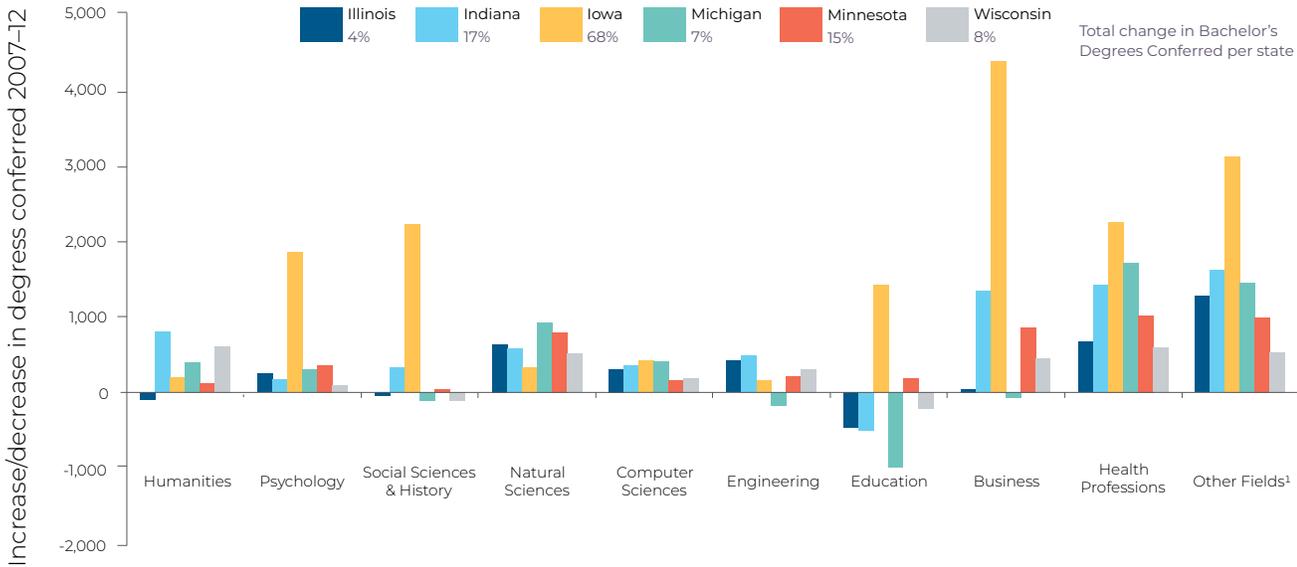


Figure 1: Based on the new student profile, Marquette was able to determine an academic portfolio mix that aligned to student interests and the local economy.²

Enrollment of first-year students has exceeded targets in the years following Marquette’s partnership with Huron. Components of enrollment goals included:

- Diversity
- Academic quality
- Retention that drives total undergrad enrollment
- Net tuition revenue

With a successful enrollment strategy, Marquette has identified its best-fit students and continues to grow and align its enrollment approach with market trends. As a result, recent incoming classes are satisfied with the student experience, leading to better student engagement and retention rates, as well as strong anticipation for alumni support and involvement following graduation.

The Huron Difference

At Huron, we understand that optimizing student success is a higher education imperative. That’s why we’ve made it our mission to develop tailored solutions across every dimension of the student lifecycle — from recruiting and enrollment to graduation and beyond — to help institutions achieve their near- and long-

term objectives. Huron’s experienced professionals offer services spanning strategy formulation through implementation, often working closely with our industry-leading technology partners, Oracle, Workday and Salesforce. As the leading industry advisor, we approach every engagement on the premise that each institution is unique, and therefore, every client solution should be tailored to optimize impact.

1. Other Fields include agriculture, agricultural operations, and related sciences; natural resources and conservation; architecture and related services; communication, journalism, and related programs; communications technologies/ technicians and support services; family and consumer services/ human sciences; legal professions and studies; library science; military technologies and applied sciences; parks, recreation, leisure, and fitness studies; homeland security, law enforcement, and firefighting; public administration and social service professions; transportation and materials moving; and not classified by field of study.
 2. NCEES Data Table 319.30 - Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by field of study and state or jurisdiction: 2011-12.



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