



ABHE Annual Meeting

High Performance Admissions Teams
February 2026

Dave Burke: President

19 years at Azusa Pacific University

Final 12 as Admissions Director and Senior Admissions Director

5 years at Credo as Associate Vice President for Enrollment
Solutions

Joined Fuller Higher Education Solutions in January 2022 as Vice
President

Launched Legacy Higher Ed in January 2024

Admissions Truths – The REACH Process

R.E.A.C.H.

Recruit – Where are we finding well-matched students, and how are we drawing their interest?

Engage – How do we personalize & customize their journey and match their interests with who we are?

Admit – How effectively do we move students through the admissions process and celebrate their acceptance?

Convince – What have we done to make our institution as compelling to each student as possible?

Host – How effective are our promotion and programs related to hosting prospects on campus?

Breaking Down R.E.A.C.H.

Recruit

Where are we finding well-matched students, and how are we drawing their interest?

- Top-of Funnel Investments/Search
- Outreach Travel
- External Partners/Feeders
- Advertising Efforts
- Referrals
- Website

Engage

How do we customize and personalize their admissions journey and match their interests with who we are?

- Counselor Relationship
- Digging into the Details
- Introducing other voices
- Parents as Partners

Admit

How effectively do we move students through the admissions process and celebrate their acceptance?

- Productive versus Persistent Pursuit
- Motivating the Moms
- Evaluating Obstacles
- Celebration Time

Convince

How compelling is our institution to each student when yield season arrives?

- Maximizing on Motivations
- Solving and Signposting
- Promoting Value Propositions (see next slide)

Value Proposition

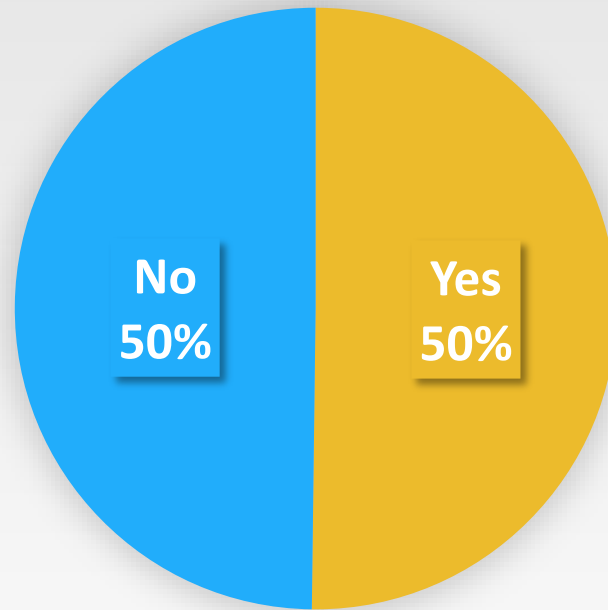
Definition

A value proposition is a declarative statement that explains why a customer should purchase your product or service. It clearly explains what differentiates you, or makes your offering “unique,” and why you are the best choice on the market. (Clearvoice – October 2022)

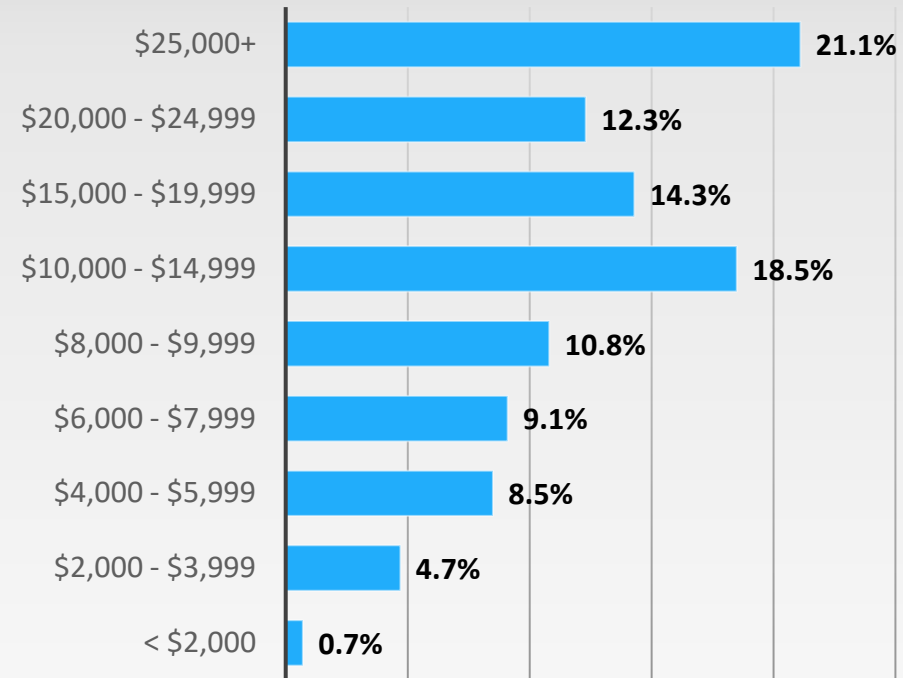
- Your VP is what you do that differentiates you from competitors.
- Your VP is who you ARE, not who you want to become.
- A strong VP is essential in the current enrollment landscape.
- Ideally, CCU admissions staff would have multiple value propositions ready depending on student interests/characteristics.

Financial Aid: Enrollment Impact

Would you have enrolled with more aid? (Non-metrics)



How much more aid would you have needed?



Host

How effective are our promotion and programs related to hosting prospects on campus?

- Not just “if”, but how, what, who and when?
- Comprehensive Promotion Principles
- Get with the (Parent) Program
- Research, Review and Refine

Your R.E.A.C.H. Response

Reflect on the components of a strong REACH culture on your Admissions team

- What is one area YOU can positively impact your institution's REACH impact in your job?
 - (Try to think beyond your official responsibility set, i.e. job description)

R.E.A.C.H.

Recruit – Where are we finding well-matched students, and how are we drawing their interest?

Engage – How do we make them the hero of their journey and match their interests with who we are?

Admit – How effectively do we move students through the admissions process and celebrate their acceptance?

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How We “Win” in Recruitment

Foundations for Recruitment Success

- Make every student feel *known* and *valued*
- Consistency in advocacy – you're on *their team*
- Get. Them. On. Campus. (And care about what happens on the visit)
- Find *their* focus points
- Make parents *feel like partners* throughout the process
- *Responsiveness* is the glue to their interest level

Effective Admissions Counseling

Be Transformational vs. Transactional

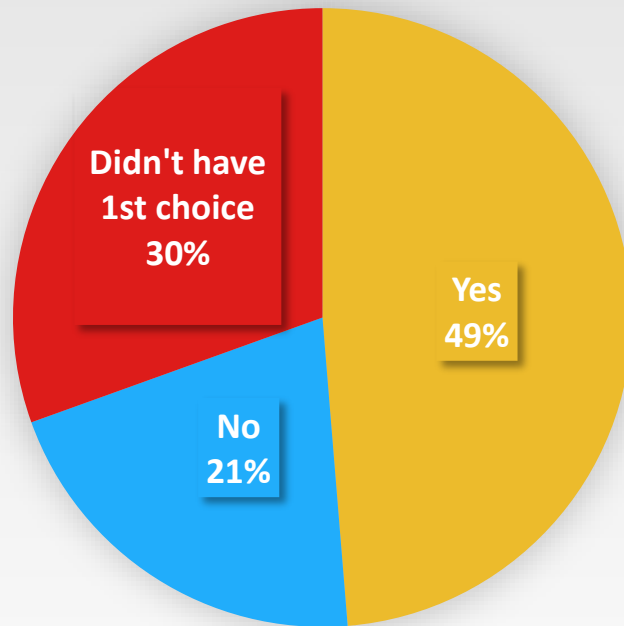
“At the end of the day people won’t remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel.” Maya Angelou

“Your smile is your logo. Your personality is your business card. How you leave others feeling after an experience with you becomes your trademark.” Jay Danzie

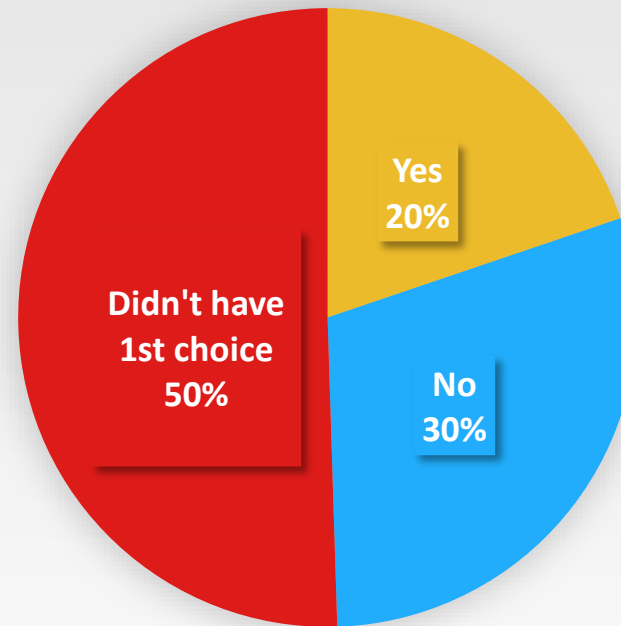
- Balance story telling with facts/statistics
- Be intentional with relationship building – students *and* parents
- Make the student the “hero” of the story
- Bridge the gap between the admissions process and the student experience by engaging campus partners during the recruitment process
- Persistence without a purpose is counter-productive

College preference at time of application

Was our college your first choice when you applied?
(Matrics)



Was our college your first choice when you applied?
(Non-matrics)



Admissions Counselors Understand Relationships

Recruiter

- Trained on *responsibilities*
- College fairs
- School/Church visits
- Calls, Emails and Texts, Oh my!
- It's about the numbers and goals
- Volume mentality
- Box-checking task-management

Professional Admissions Counselor

- Trained on the *role*
- Territory manager
- Data-informed territory strategies
- Sense of purposefulness
- Moves Management focus
- Thoughtful value proposition work
- It's about the numbers, goals AND relationships

Team Conversation Opportunity

Consider the following:

Evaluating the characteristics displayed on the previous slide:

- Which elements from each side best describe how your counseling staff (and/or you specifically) is currently performing its recruitment and counseling duties?

Communication Principles

Asking Questions the Right Way

Open-ended questions are designed so that they cannot be answered with just “yes” or “no.”

Examples:	How	When
	Where	Why
	Which	Who

Closed-ended questions are phrased so that they can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

Examples:	Is	Do
	Has	Can
	Will	Did

Types of Questions to Ask

Type of Question	Definition/Comment	Example
Closed	A question that is answered with a one-word response, usually "yes" or "no." Information obtained from this questioning is limited.	Have you heard about our university? Did you receive the info packet we sent? Are you applying for financial aid?
Open	A question that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no." Answers to these questions generate a great amount of information.	What do you find most interesting about our university? What are your expectations of the college you will attend? What is most the most important aspect of a college experience to you?
Fact-finding	A special type of closed question that can be answered with a one-word response, other than "yes" or "no." Use this type of question to identify specific information.	What are you interested in outside of academics? What will your major be? Who else do you know that attends our school?
Feeling-finding	An open question used to determine how a student feels about a particular issue, which is a good way to deepen one's relationship with a student. (Avoid getting too personal)	How do you feel about moving away from home? How do you feel about balancing course work with your other obligations? What is most exciting to you about college?
Clarifying	An open or closed question used to confirm or understand the student's perspective. These questions help to quantify the depth of a student's interest in a subject.	Is Economics still your primary major interest? How strongly do you feel about being a teacher?

Types of Questions to Ask – Team Brainstorming Opportunity

Type of Question	Definition/Comment	Example
Closed	A question that is answered with a one-word response, usually "yes" or "no." Information obtained from this questioning is limited.	
Open	A question that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no." Answers to these questions generate a great amount of information.	
Fact-finding	A special type of closed question that can be answered with a one-word response, other than "yes" or "no." Use this type of question to identify specific information.	
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Keys to Effective Listening

Prepare to listen well – Whenever possible, document anticipated talking points and questions in order to free your mind to listen effectively.

Limit your own talking. You can't talk and listen at the same time.

Think like the Student. The student's problem and needs are important...and you'll understand and retain them better if you keep his/her point of view in mind.

Ask Questions. If you don't understand something ... or feel you may have missed a point ... clear it up now or it may embarrass you later.

Don't Interrupt. A pause ... even a long pause... doesn't always mean the student has finished saying everything. Fight the temptation to finish others' sentences.

Concentrate. Focus your mind on what the student is saying. Practice shutting out outside distractions.

Take Notes. This will help you remember important points. But be selective. Trying to jot down everything the student says can result in being left far behind or in retaining irrelevant details.

Listen for Ideas ... Not Just Words. You want to get the whole picture...not just isolated bits and pieces.

Individual/Team Development Opportunity

Commit to one or two of the listening skills mentioned on the previous list that you'd like to focus improvement on (and/or train your staff on), and document that somewhere you can easily reference it.

Look for opportunities in the coming days to exercise the intended new listening habits.

Weekly Plan

The Weekly Plan

Weekly Plan Elements

- Meeting all **communication expectations**
 - Calendar over Quota
- Striving towards **leading indicator (monthly) goals**
- Focusing on **responsiveness**
- Providing **exceptional campus guest experiences...** Every time
- Seeking to **make and deepen connections** around campus for students

Team Conversation Opportunity

How well are we structured in order to pursue an effective weekly plan in our admissions counseling work?

- What components are missing?
- Are there competing demands pulling us from effective work?
- Is there room for creativity and relationship-building?
- Do we have appropriate and effective goal structures?

Summary Thoughts

Summary

- “*People Recruit People*” – your team is your most valuable asset
- Develop advanced communication skills – *questions, listening, etc*
- A strong *value proposition* is essential – equip your team accordingly!
- Develop *professional counselors* versus merely *recruiters*
- *Creativity* within a structured *Weekly Plan* is a powerful combination
- Bring your *passion* to work - everyday



Legacy Higher Ed Services:

Admissions Team Trainings
Enrollment Leader Coaching
Assessments
Enrollment Research
Financial Aid Strategy

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Thank you ABHE Enrollment Leaders!

*May the God of endurance and encouragement
grant you to live in such harmony with one another,
in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may
with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ.*

Romans 15:5-6

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