

# COVID-19 and the

# Enrollment Funnel

The college journey will be substantially different going forward, thanks to the coronavirus. Students' daily lives are disrupted, and based upon their experiences, their new attitudes and concerns may persist long after social distancing eases.

Likewise, college enrollment teams had to make immediate policy and program adjustments, and their experiences suggest that longer-term retooling of strategies and tactics is also necessary. With all of this disruption, is the path to college irrevocably altered?

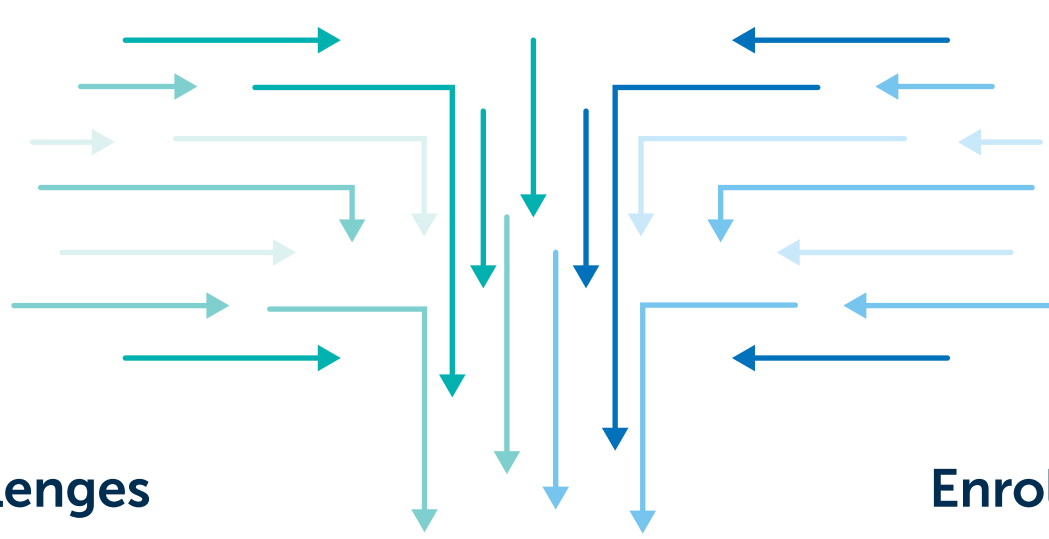
Discover new approaches to address the changed recruiting environment and heightened concerns shared by students and enrollment leaders in this infographic.



## Student and Family Challenges



## Enrollment Leader Challenges



### Awareness

How do I get information on schools?

#### Student concerns

- I can't travel to visit colleges
- College fairs and visits are cancelled
- I can't meet with my high school counselor or admission counselor in person
- I don't have an easy way to learn more about my academic interests and the student experience on campus

What will be my best college fit?

#### Student concerns

- My family's financial situation has changed for the worse
- My family doesn't want me to go far away
- I'm worried about getting sick or family members getting sick
- How do I make up for missed learning to be ready to succeed in college?

### Consideration

Do I have what I need to apply for admission?

#### Student concerns

- I might not have grades or credits from the second semester of my junior year
- My scheduled SAT and ACT test dates were cancelled, and I don't have scores
- I'm not sure what is required to apply

Will I be a competitive candidate for admission?

#### Student concerns

- My spring sports and activities evaporated
- I couldn't participate in summer activities to enhance my application
- I need advice on my college application essay
- Does applying for financial aid hurt my chances for admission?

### Decision

How do I make a decision with so many uncertainties?

#### Student concerns

- I'm not sure if I want to travel so far away
- Would it be better to start off at a community college rather than go to a four-year college?
- I'm not sure how I feel about a school I've never seen in person
- I want to hear from current students about residence life and social opportunities on campus
- I want to talk with faculty members in my area of interest to fully understand my opportunities

How will I be able to afford college?

#### Student concerns

- What are the deadlines to apply for aid and scholarships?
- I need help understanding my academic scholarship and financial aid award
- I'm not sure how to apply for loans
- I'm worried that I won't be able to finish college in four years if the pandemic crisis continues
- I don't know what payment plans are available

### Search

How do I attract qualified prospects?

#### Potential tactics

- Offer virtual campus tours
- Optimize the website for easy self-navigation
- Admission counselors hold daily virtual information sessions
- Clearly articulate brand differentiation to stand out
- Create online events covering academic and student life

What messaging adjustments make sense?

#### Potential tactics

- Share scholarship opportunities and financial aid processes with students and parents early and often
- Focus on value and student outcomes as return on investment and financing options
- Clearly articulate it is a privilege to serve the family and the additional steps taken to keep students safe and healthy

### Application

How do I increase applications?

#### Potential tactics

- Consider changing application requirements to remove unnecessary barriers (e.g., make tests optional or allow self-reported test scores and GPA)
- Communicate updated application requirements in multiple formats
- Reassure students that your admissions team understands their current challenges

How can I reach applicant families?

#### Potential tactics

- Host live social media events to answer academic and student life questions
- Craft tailored messaging about academic and need-based scholarships to promote FAFSA filing
- Offer one-on-one virtual meetings with admission counselors

### Yield

How do I deepen engagement with admitted students and parents?

#### Potential tactics

- Create virtual opportunities for students to "fall in love" with your school
- Craft personalized messaging directly relevant to the students' motivations
- Offer multiple opportunities to connect with faculty, current students, and alumni
- Understand and address the decision criteria each student/family is using
- Re-recruit committed students through census day and beyond

How do I address families' financial concerns?

#### Potential tactics

- Run an ongoing FAFSA completion campaign with virtual assistance
- Send out timely financial aid award notifications that are easy for families to understand
- Connect admission and financial aid staff directly with parents to talk through their questions
- Provide multiple opportunities to learn about payment plans and the loan application process

