

120+

Digital Engagement Strategies for Incoming Students

Currently, it's more important than ever to cultivate a sense of belonging and connection with incoming students, as colleges and universities face several new threats to their incoming class. To combat the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, institutions must develop new and creative ways to engage students through orientation and across the summer. We have organized over 120 virtual engagement strategies in seven key areas.

Seven Key Areas:

- Build affinity and sense of belonging
- Drive engagement with academics
- Engage parents and family members
- Facilitate virtual campus experiences
- Foster peer connections
- Offer service opportunities
- Provide career exploration opportunities

Building Affinity and Sense of Belonging



- "Drive-In" for campus gear and swag pickup
- Institution-themed coloring contests
- Mail out campus swag (postcards, T-shirts, giveaways)
- [Mascot chat or livestream](#)
- Orientation packets and yard signs sent to incoming students
- [Virtual campus jigsaw puzzles](#)
- [Virtual care package](#)
- Alumni outreach to students based on common interests
- Building and/or touring your college campus on Minecraft
- Campus legends/traditions module or webinar
- [Competition between orientation groups for completed orientation activities](#)
- Alumni Ask Me Anything (AMA) webinar
- [Alumni welcome calls](#)
- Alumni welcome video series
- "Health Tip of the Day" Instagram posts
- Instagram hashtag for incoming students
- Instagram story templates
- Social media quick polls to get students excited about return to campus (e.g., Vote for a premium dinner in the dining hall)
- Student influencer Instagram pages
- Twitch livestream sessions led by orientation leaders, featuring rotating campus guests
- Email campaign highlighting virtual events for incoming students
- Phone campaigns conducted by current students to welcome new students
- Radio show or podcast focused on what incoming students need to know
- Student Podcast: A Day in My Life
- Video series: "What Being a _____ Means to Me"
- [Virtual Student Experience Portal](#)
- Campus Zoom backgrounds



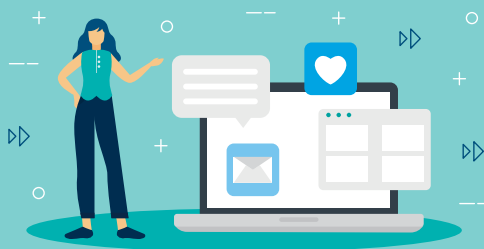
Drive Engagement with Academics

- Major-specific webinars for incoming students
- One-credit virtual summer class for incoming students
- Popular classes lecture series
- Texting campaign for incoming students about upcoming academic events
- Video series spotlighting academic experiences
- Virtual campus library tour
- Virtual tutoring sessions/workshops
- AMA session with campus librarian
- Faculty meet-and-greet webinars
- Faculty one-on-one mentorship opportunity
- One-on-one academic advisor sessions
- Virtual “study buddies” (pair students to meet)
- Virtual faculty office hours
- Virtual writing workshops and exercises

Engage Parents and Family Members



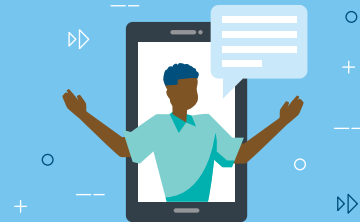
- “Safety on campus during COVID-19” AMA with senior university administrators for admitted students’ parents
- Facebook live orientation sessions offered in multiple languages
- Facebook Live Parent Council meetings
- Modules on college experience for first-gen parents
- Phone campaign for parents
- Parent-champion-organized events like Zoom Happy Hours
- Facebook groups for parents of incoming students
- GroupMe or text-chat groups for parents of incoming and current students
- Virtual Family Feud competition
- Virtual introduction to campus career services for parents



Facilitate Virtual Campus Experiences

- Campus a capella group concert series
- Championship game watch night
- Esports intramural leagues
- Esports tournaments
- Outside speaker event with virtual AMA
- TikTok dance competition
- Virtual cook-along with dining hall
- Virtual activity fair
- Virtual art gallery/showcase
- Virtual club meetings or coffee hours (e.g., Black Student Union, Campus Republicans/Democrats, etc.)
- Virtual concert/talent show
- Virtual meditation class
- Affinity group virtual meet and greets (e.g., Black Student Union, LGBTQ+ organization, First Generation Student Union)
- Google Maps virtual student life tour
- Livestream workouts with rec sports or athletics coaches
- Post-orientation surveys and quizzes
- Student services virtual information sessions
- Virtual trivia
- Virtual workout classes
- Website “Easter egg” hunt
- Virtual mental health support groups
- Virtual religious services
- Zoom bake-alongs

Foster Peer-to-Peer Connections



- “Coffee & Convo” sessions with student leaders
- “Pour the Tea” hot-topic discussions
- Chat box staffed by student employees or volunteers
- Connect cohorts of students who will share living/learning community or residence hall floor
- Connect cohorts of students who will share their first-year seminar class
- Hobby webinars led by current students or staff
- Housing-specific orientation groups and virtual activities
- Individualized outreach from orientation leaders
- Interest-driven orientation meeting groups
- “Letter to my future self” writing activity and share-out
- Region-based student affinity groups
- Ted Talk-inspired conversations
- At-home scavenger hunt
- Contest with bookstore gift card or similar prizes
- Kahoot! livestream games
- Multiplayer games via Jackbox
- Pet photo competition
- Virtual bingo
- Virtual board game night
- Virtual book/article club
- Virtual dance parties
- Virtual jeopardy
- Virtual paint classes
- Virtual speed meet-and-greet for incoming students
- Orientation leader Instagram live AMAs
- Recipe exchange



Offer Volunteer/Service Opportunities

- “Be My Eyes” volunteering opportunity to help visually impaired students
- “Virtual” blood drive
- Service-themed Instagram campaign
- Translators without Borders volunteering
- Volunteer to live-caption webinars or meetings for peers
- 7 cups virtual volunteering
- ‘Mascots...Give Back’ campaign- Students and alumni post blogs about how they’ve helped their local communities
- Project Gutenberg volunteering
- Service opportunities from local organizations

Provide Career Exploration Opportunities



- Alumni career day video or webinar
- Alumni Career Paths virtual panel webinar
- Instagram takeovers for alumni: “Day in the Life of...”
- StrengthsFinder online assessment and follow-up conversations
- One-on-one career advising sessions
- Produce career spotlights focused on recent graduates
- Q&A webinar with career center director
- Spotlight recent internships carried out by current students