

## CASE STUDY

# How University of Denver Strengthened its Strategy with an Improved Value Proposition

## BACKGROUND

The University of Denver (DU) is a private research university in Denver, Colorado. Founded in 1864, it is the oldest independent private university in the Rocky Mountain Region of the United States.

## OPPORTUNITY

**DU needed a clearer value proposition to stand out in an increasingly competitive higher ed landscape**

Amid heightened competitive pressures in higher education, the DU leadership team knew they needed to develop a clearer message about what differentiates DU to be in the best position to attract the next generation of students, staff, and funding. DU had spent several years advancing its student experience across the university, but value messaging remained siloed across schools, departments, and audiences.



## KEY RESULTS

- ▶ Launched **new strategy anchored on three core brand themes** to build market awareness and differentiation
- ▶ Leaders **learned to identify marketable strengths** for a stronger value proposition
- ▶ Core **brand elements embedded into all messaging** across campus

## SOLUTION

**EAB's Strategic Advisory Services team helped DU leadership identify core differentiators and how to communicate them**

DU's senior leadership visited EAB's Washington, DC office for a two-day workshop, and took part in virtual and on-campus sessions with EAB focused on identifying the most unique and marketable aspects of their institutional brand.

## IMPACT

**DU launched a new strategy anchored on three core brand themes**

DU developed a unique value proposition that anchors on three core brand themes: Research for the Public Good, the 4-Dimensional Student Experience, and Two Campuses, One University. These brand elements are now embedded into every marketing and communications campaign across the university and have been central to efforts to attract and engage Gen Z audiences.

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**“Working with EAB has been a real inflection point for our strategy and thinking about what makes DU stand apart.”**

Dr. Jeremy Haefner, Chancellor  
University of Denver

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# How DU Revitalized its Student Value Proposition

## DU'S DIFFERENTIATION SWEET SPOT

The differentiation sweet spot is **the intersection of audience needs and institutional capabilities**—and importantly, in a space difficult for competitors to copy.

DU found their sweet spot with three core brand themes that are **part of every marketing and communications outreach** to current and prospective students:

- **Research for the Public Good:** R1 research status, focusing on liberal arts and social science research
- **Two Campuses, One University:** Access to both an urban and mountain campus
- **4-Dimensional Student Experience:** Multi-dimensional, adventure-driven education



## FIND YOUR INSTITUTION'S DIFFERENTIATION SWEET SPOT

Move from generic claims to clear differentiators that demonstrate how your institution meets student, staff, and community needs in ways others can't. EAB's **Principled Differentiation Workshop** will help team build four capabilities critical to compete in today's market:



### Develop Target Personas

Do you understand the true motivations of target students and their families?



### Stress-Test Current Viability

Are your value propositions durable and defensible?



### Identify Marketable Strengths

Can you definitively articulate why students choose your institution?



### Prioritize, Promote, and Enhance Student Value Proposition

Are you allocating appropriate resources and effort toward top differentiation strategies?

► Find out how EAB can help your institution stand out at [eab.com/advisory-services](https://eab.com/advisory-services)