

# Articulating Your Institution's Value(s):

Four Critical Steps To Increase Enrollment

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## IDENTIFY YOUR CORE VALUES

Use this simple methodology to enable your admissions and enrollment departments to review and confirm your institution's core values — and even identify new ones if necessary.

### GATHER THE TEAM

- 7-12 staff members
- Combination of both new and seasoned employees
- Draw from all departments and experience levels
- Meet for two one-hour sessions with a break in-between

### FACILITATE BRAINSTORMING

- Select a facilitator as leader
- Use whiteboard and begin documenting what are or should be the core values
- Welcome and honor all contributions

### POLL NEWER EMPLOYEES

- Ask newer staff members what made them want to work at (and attend, if they are alumni) your institution
- Ask what they experienced or saw at your institution they didn't see at others.
- Ask them what they've heard from others about your institution.

### POLL SEASONED EMPLOYEES

- Ask seasoned staff why they remain at your institution.
- Ask what inspires or excites them and gets them up in the morning, ready to go to work.
- Solicit one or two cornerstone values they believe your institution was founded and/or operates on.

### INVITE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Once everyone's contributions are on the whiteboard, begin discussing them among the group and distilling them down if necessary.

### RANK THE VALUE STATEMENTS

- At the conclusion of the meeting, take a photo of the whiteboard and transfer to a spreadsheet.
- Share the spreadsheet with all group members and ask them to prioritize the list within each of the school's constituent groups: students, spouses, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, etc.

### COMPLETE YOUR VALUES LIST

- Collect everyone's rankings, tally the data, reconvene the group, and share the results.
- Whittle the list down to your top 10 essential, non-negotiable values that best represent your institution.

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## ESTABLISH VALUE FOR OFFERINGS

When discovering and establishing value for your institution, there are at least two main perspectives to consider:

1. INSTITUTION'S PERSPECTIVE - What are the distinctives (solutions) our institution offers that we believe attract students and their constituents?
1. PROSPECT'S PERSPECTIVE - What do students and their constituents want from the institution they choose to attend?

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## CREATE YOUR LIST OF VALUES

Now, put your two lists side by side, matching the prospect students/constituents issues with the institution's solutions: THEIRS vs. OURS. This exercise answers the question:

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## ARTICULATE BOTH THE VALUES & VALUE

Clearly articulating those values is proven to translate directly into increased enrollment, contributions, and gifts. This is a personal process, so your teams will need to find ways to *personalize* those values.

Make each applicable value personal to the student/constituent's needs by categorizing each value statement according to the type of value it provides or delivers.

Ask if each value statement delivers one or more of the three value types:

- Financial
- Experiential
- Image value

Do this with each value state for the student and/or constituent needs. Create a values matrix for all the value statements.