

Communication Strategies Meeting Summary

Thursday, September 24, 2015

1. Can we use communication strategies to reach adults through their children?

- Yes because children are impressionable
- Center the message around the importance of going to college to the children so they will encourage their parents
- Children can help with language barriers with adult Hispanic population
- Possibly model a program after the successful “stamp-out smoking” program targeted at 4th and 5th graders. As a result, children took the program home to their parents and parents quit smoking.

2. Can we reach underserved children through their parents?

- Yes in recruitment parents are a captive audience
- Parents sometimes hear and understand the recruiter’s message clearer than the students
- Parents can encourage their children to take college credits in high school
- Public relations through community outreach – tailgate parties, etc.
- Build personal relationships

3. For generations of many Arkansas families, education has not been seen as important. Can this culture be changed to engrain the importance and value of education for all Arkansans? If so, how?

- Message that college is accessible and there is a way
- Outreach programs targeted to middle schoolers – example: Pulaski Technical College’s Arkansas Scholars Program partners with chambers and local school districts and targets 8th graders to encourage 95% attendance, make “C” average and take common core to be college ready.
- Try to get face-to-face time to explain need of something beyond high school education in the workplace – example: certificates for certain skill sets
- Stress importance of early awareness
- Communicate what is available to the community and tap into what will make them feel successful
- Communicate options other than 4-year and associate’s degrees
- Introduce children to college campuses through camps, etc.

- Advertise when new industrial jobs are available in the area and how institutions can provide the skills needed for those job opportunities
- Make available job positions and earning potential by degree
- Website - post career options and salaries available
- Provide steps to success in obtaining degree by starting with a 9 or 18 hour certificate to show it is possible and that success may encourage them to continue to obtain a 30 or 60 hour degree
- Show there are options to pace it out by starting with one class a semester – 9 hours
- Need for bundling different types of certificates to encourage building of skill sets – smaller chunks of training - example: CNA students going on to become LPNs
- Turn barriers into motivators especially with adults – three main reasons adults do not go to school: family, job responsibility and money. Turn those three reasons into reasons to go to school and communicate how we can help.
- Statewide campaign for K-12 teachers to motivate and encourage children that they are “college material” and reinvent notion that some are made for college and some are not
- Need support of businesses to provide incentives for their employees to go to college
- Communicate need for programs such as technical programs, etc. not just bachelor’s and associate’s degrees
- Take a look at nontransferable degrees because they are not working
- Marketing strategy – commercials of people showing how they obtained their associate’s degree or technical certificate while working full time; have guest speakers explain how to juggle family, full time work and college
- Marketing strategy for two groups of people to reach – those that have the will but do not know how to do it and the other group that does not have the will
- Have a two-fold marketing message - “if you have the will, we will help you find a way”
- Show availability of resources and how to access them
- Aggregate website – maybe from ADHE – a resource website to provide information on scholarships available to adult learners and returning students along with a list of college friendly companies
- Tangible jobs - have local and state chambers provide list of companies and jobs available and skills needed for those job opportunities
- Show end result and take the guess work out of it – map out a plan before student begins their journey

4. What is the most effective way to close the education gap?

- Advertising strategy focusing on what is available to help “break the cycle” – example: national online universities advertise how to get that promotion, or a welding certificate or a master’s degree
- Focus on retention and enrollment
- Be more accommodating as far as location of classes
- Be with them throughout the process and show how it can actually happen
- Manage time – how to message positively to the 25-54 age group management of their time
- Prevent dropping out – find out why and ways to prevent it
- Start at a young age – get the underserved population on campus and give them a positive experience and something to relate to so they want to come back
- Target all audiences in all directions
- Familiarity – post videos featuring local advisors
- Message that the reason to go to college is to do something you want to do, not something you have to do
- Awareness of online programs
- eVersity – some are waiting to see what happens with that program

5. Who should deliver the messaging?

- Have successful alumni tell their story
- Messaging should start at young age (3rd, 4th, 5th grades) so higher education has value and meaning to them
- Change the perception through all out marketing blitz
- Career coaches
- Advertising on TV to bring awareness of programs available in Arkansas
- Targeted digital online marketing - target by demographics, career interests, financial goals and geography
- Pop-up ads on websites
- Reach potential students through mail outs, facebook, twitter, newspapers, instagram
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education to be a central location and a resource for all Arkansans
- Identify those in your area with skills who could use additional training to obtain a certificate which could help them get higher paying jobs
- Identify and target those with some college hours
- One website by region – example: NW Arkansas website - several institutions got together with information on degrees and programs available by institution in their region and put that information on one website

- More transparency with fellow colleges – share with students information and programs other colleges have available that may not be available at your college
- Nontraditional recruiters and mentors on campuses that students can relate to and identify with and to guide them until graduation
- Partner with industrial companies willing to hire people, and they may be willing to help sponsor advertising – example: oil and gas industry provided scholarships

6. Can we create a communication plan without new money? If not, how can we fund a communication plan?

- Cannot reallocate marketing resources
- Inability to hire faculty to teach
- Lack of classroom space
- Need for market research study to find potential students by income and age
- Scarborough Media Audit – free marketing research for Little Rock market
- Need for internal communications as well as external communications to keep students we have
- Career pathways model towards every student that walks on the campus could be helpful to reach the goal