

From Interest to Enrollment

Marketing at Each Stage
of the Student Journey

Meet Your Presenter



Kyle Stichtenoth's focus is working with companies throughout the Southeast on cross platform integrated solutions to best reach their most valuable audiences and grow their business.

Kyle works with clients to identify the most effective audience solutions using search marketing, social media marketing, targeted display advertising, email marketing, video, print media and more.

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Agenda

From Interest to Enrollment Marketing at Each Stage of the Student Journey

Part 1: **Who Are Today's Students?**

An overview

Part 2: **Capturing Their Attention**

How great content cuts through the noise

Part 3: **Getting On Their Short List**

Close the deal by knowing what they really want

Part 4: **Following Up, Staying Engaged**

Retain the students you have and create ambassadors

Part 5: **Conclusion and Questions**

Do Colleges *Really* Need to Market Themselves?

Mentioning “marketing” in relation to higher education used to be taboo. That’s not how colleges thought of themselves. But there’s a shift that’s taking place. And it’s healthy. Colleges are becoming more sophisticated in segmenting their markets. It’s not advertising. It’s thinking carefully about your programs and the people who attend them, and then making sure your message matches the audience.

—Michael Lofstead, education consultant
and web strategist



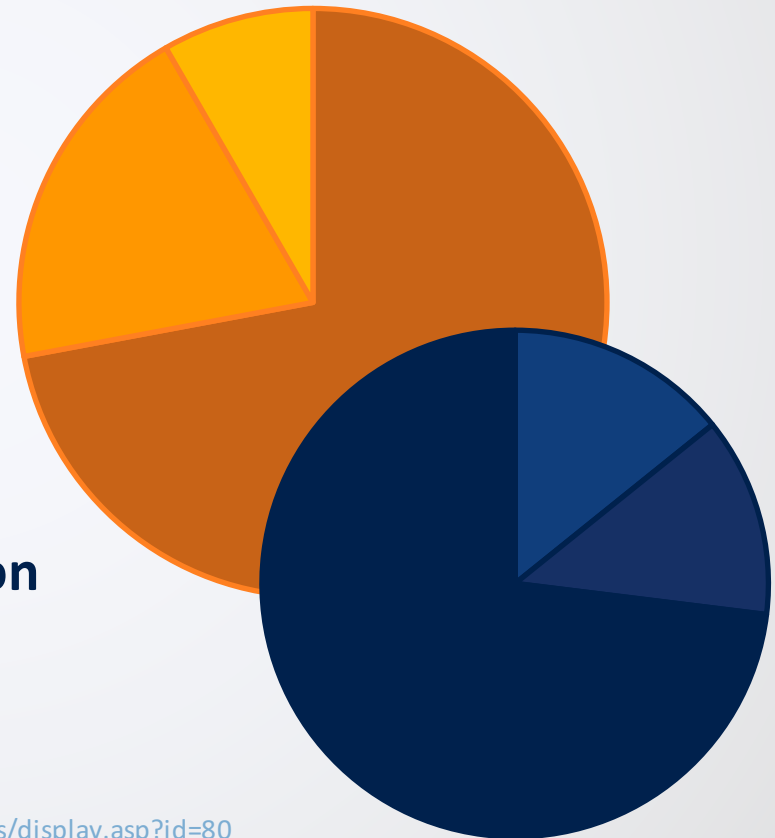
The Student's Journey

Part 1: Who Are Today's Students?

The Student Body at a Glance

Total U.S. enrollment (undergraduate & graduate): **20.4 million**

- **Public: 14.7 million**
- **Private nonprofit: 4 million**
- **Private for profit: 1.7 million**
- **Classroom only: 14.9 million**
- **Online only: 2.6 million**
- **Classroom and online: 2.9 million**



Portrait of Generation Z



- Born 1998 to present, 69 million strong
- The fully digital generation—no knowledge of life before the Internet
- Average 3-plus hours per day staring into a screen

Source: “Emerging Theme Radar: What if I told you...”, December 2, 2015, <http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/pages/macroeconomic-insights-folder/what-if-i-told-you/report.pdf>; “Everything You Need to Know About Generation Z,” February 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-generation-z-born-in-the-digital-age-2015-2>

They Are

- **Practical** – 79% want internships/professional experience; 85% want to learn skills like financial planning
- **Uncertain** – 82% say finding the best college for them is an obstacle; 63% cite the application process
- **Entrepreneurial** – 63% want to study entrepreneurship; 72% would like the option to design their own major

What They Expect from College

Then

- Four years and ivy-covered walls
- A life experience
- A college degree

Now

- Specialized programs
- Return on investment
- A path to a career



Portrait of Non-Traditional Students



- Age 25 and older
- Fastest growing educational demographic making up 47% of student population on campus
- Balancing multiple demands
 - Works full-time or part-time
 - Commuter
 - Veteran
 - Has dependents other than a spouse/partner

Source: <http://www.back2college.com/library/faq.htm>

They Are

- **Lifelong Learners**

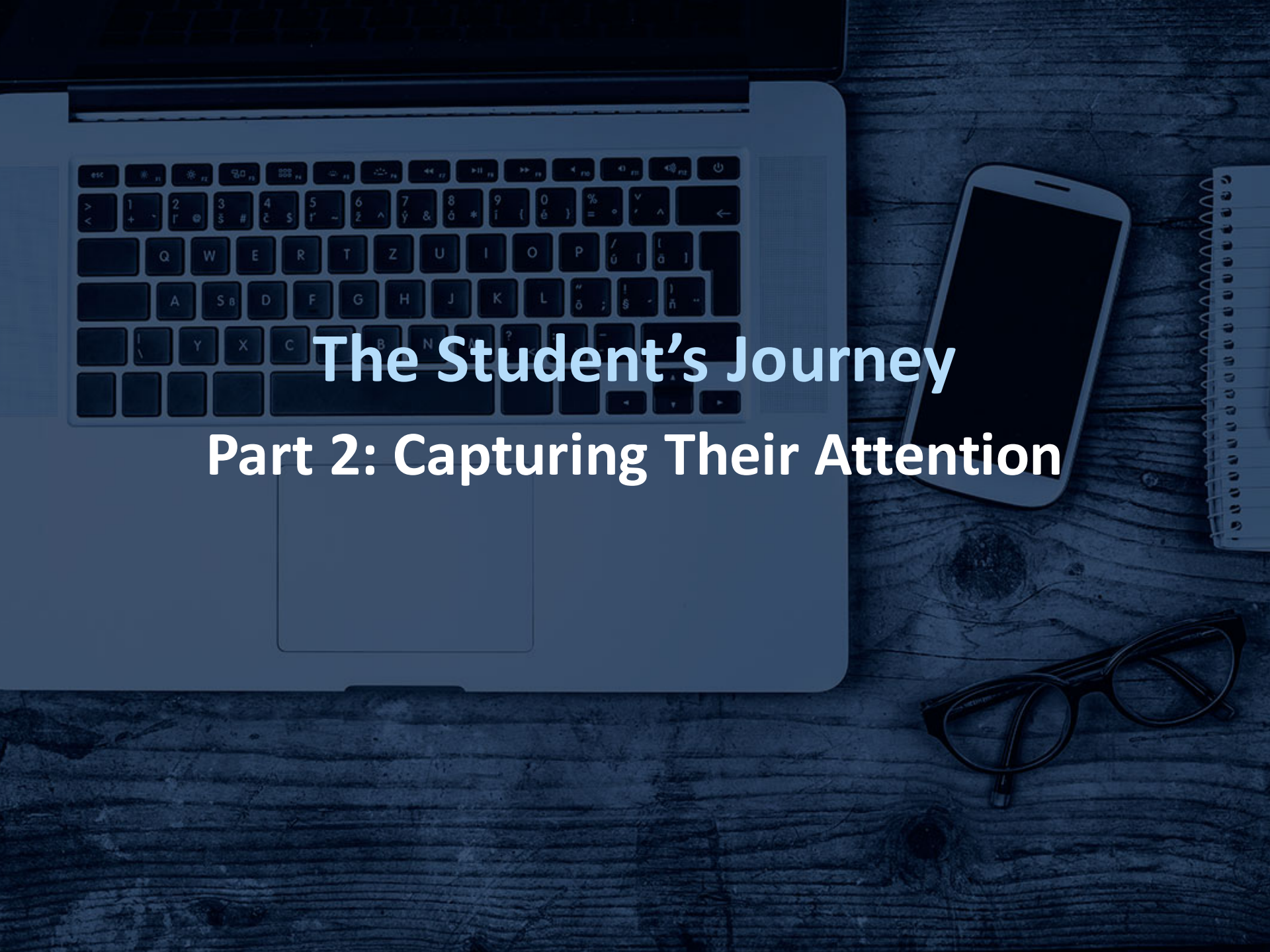
- **Personal:** 74% of adults participate in activities that advance their knowledge about something of personal interest
- **Professional:** 63% of working adults are looking to advance their career

- **Seeking knowledge** – Personal learners cite the following sources for education: publications (58%), clubs (35%), conventions (30%), courses (25%), and online courses (16%)

- **Driven** – Professional learners reference the following reasons for furthering education: learn job skills (55%), need certification (36%), get a raise (24%), get a new job (13%)

What They Expect from College

- **Flexibility** – in time, and location, for course completion and access to student services
- **Accelerated Learning** – degrees designed to be completed in a shorter time frame
- **Individualized Programming** – highly customized coursework to align with career goals and prior learning



The Student's Journey

Part 2: Capturing Their Attention

The Plugged-In Student

Then



Now



Lost in (cyber)Space

31m – US internet users who will only go online via a mobile device in 2016

198 – Number of minutes North Americans age 16-24 spend on mobile devices daily

98 – Percentage of text messages opened compared with 20 percent of emails

65 – Percentage of monthly Facebook users who use it daily

Source: eMarketer, “US Internet Users Rely on Mobile Devices for Digital Access”, March 2, 2016, <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/US-Internet-Users-Rely-on-Mobile-Devices-Digital-Access/1013649#sthash.XlZAxw7r.dpuf>; Statista, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/295148/us-teen-mobile-internet-users-by-age/>; Mobile Marketing Watch, “SMS Marketing Wallops Email with 98% Open Rate and only 1% spam, <http://mobilemarketingwatch.com/sms-marketing-wallops-email-with-98-open-rate-and-only-1-spam-43866/>; DMR Facebook Statistic Report (January 2016), <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/downloads/facebook-statistics/>

The Expanding Content Megaphone



It's a Crowded Digital World



Search results:

Search term

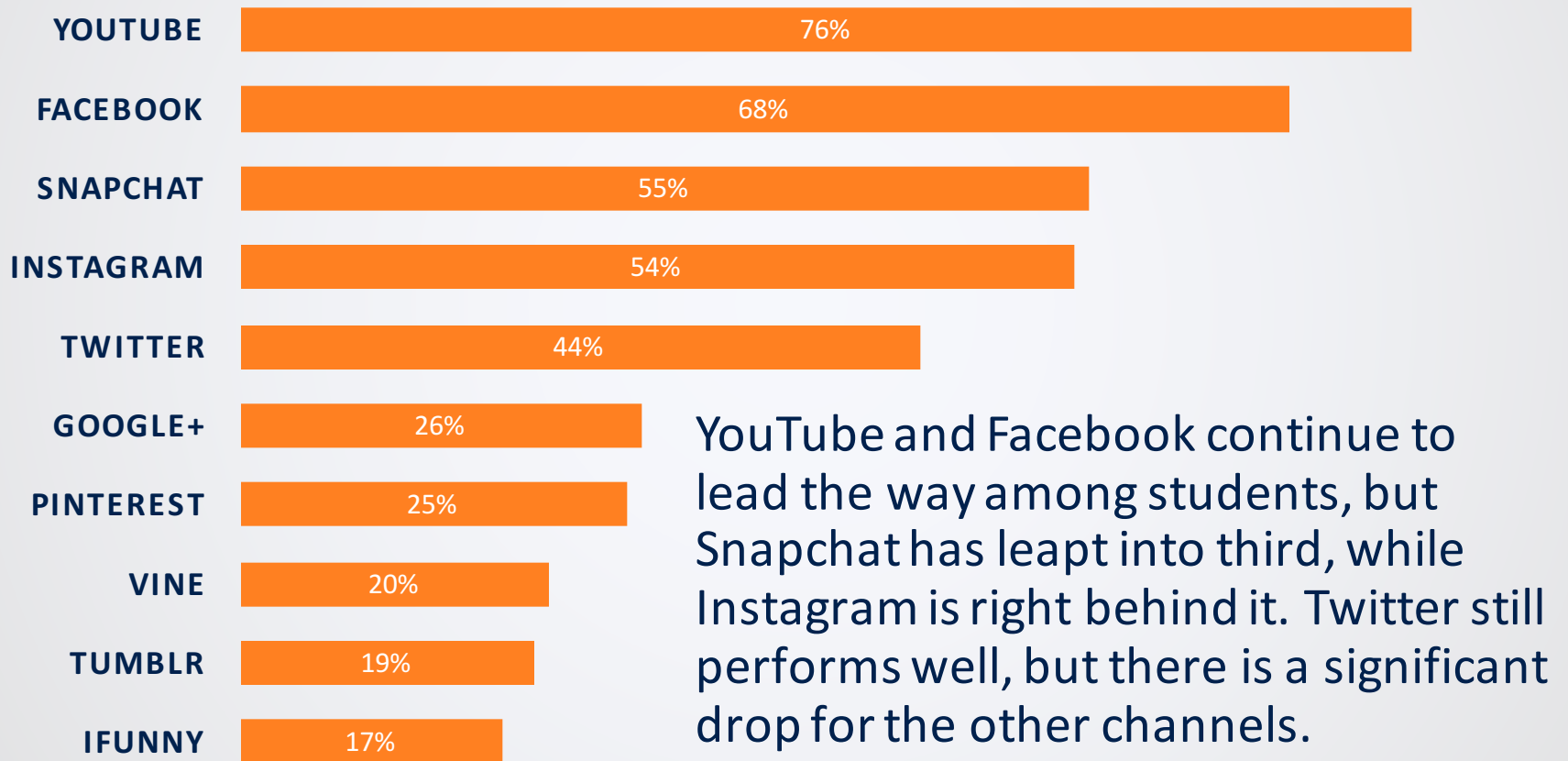
Number of results*

- College 2.4 billion
- College search 1.7 billion
- Online college 1.5 billion
- Best colleges for me 1.2 billion
- Graduate degree 458 million
- Best colleges in the East 135 million
- Best colleges for computer science in the West 43 million
- Affordable colleges in the Midwest 431,000

*Google, as of April 2016

Where to Find Them on Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS USED AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK BY STUDENTS



Source: Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2015 E-Expectations Report, average percentage of responses from juniors and seniors, <https://www.ruffalonl.com/papers-research-higher-education-fundraising/2015/2015-e-expectations-report>

Your Content Strategy

Don't just wing it. Address these key areas:

- **Your goals** – What are your overall objectives in creating content?
- **Your plan** – How will you ensure each piece of content furthers those goals?
- **Your resources** – Do you have the appropriate staff to create and distribute great content?
- **Your partners** – What external help might you need to fulfill your goals?
- **Measurement** – How will you define and measure success (and course correct) as needed?

Ways to Reach Today's Students



Sees your school

Does online search

Reads blog about programs

Watches video

Schedules campus visit

Visits your social page

Sees student life infographic

Visits your website

Reads about student success stories

Four Ways to Make Your Content Hit Home

#1 Design for mobile

Optimize your content for **both large and small screens**, if you can. But if you must choose one or the other, go with mobile. Content designed to look great on a larger screen may be unreadable on a Smartphone—where your prospective students spend so much of their time.

Four Ways to Make Your Content Hit Home

#2 Consider keywords carefully

When advertising for keywords on Google or other search engines, recognize that a busy nurse seeking an advanced degree will use different search terms from a prospective undergraduate. Target different content to the likely searches for each type of student.

Four Ways to Make Your Content Hit Home

#3 Eliminate friction

Avoid overly clever wordplay and coy messaging that takes three clicks to get to a punch line. These approaches may be perfect for a print magazine, but online they just create friction that may drive impatient visitors away. Concentrate on clear, direct language focused on the visitors' needs.

Four Ways to Make Your Content Hit Home

#4 Offer appropriate calls to action

The goal of content is to drive enrollment. But a call to “Apply now” may be too much, too soon. Few prospects are going to apply based on an initial internet search. Instead, feature calls to action that guide them to further information and ways to more deeply explore what you offer.

A black pushpin is pinned to a map of the Buffalo, New York area. The map shows various locations including Buffalo, Tonawanda, and Cheektowake. The pushpin is positioned over the Buffalo area.

The Student's Journey

Part 3: Getting on Their Short List

Show Them Value

Students today want to know what they're getting out of this purchase.

—Brendan Mernin, founding tutor
with Noodle Pros

Students are *Focused on Results*

Nanodegrees – Highly targeted “microcredentials” that prepare them for specific jobs in tech or business.

The Rise of Community Colleges – No longer a last resort, rising quality and low cost make these schools an increasingly popular option.

Online U. – A quarter of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students take at least some of their courses online. Of these students, more than half are full-time online.

Blended Learning – Combining the best of face-to-face and online learning in individual courses. Online students periodically meet face-to-face with students, and traditional in-person courses supplement the curriculum with online material.

Your Content Should...

Highlight areas where you are uniquely equipped to prepare students for specific careers or destinies. Instead of presenting yourself as all things to all students, understand at a visceral level what you do best, and communicate that.

How Two Colleges Do It

Western Governors University and **Southern New Hampshire University's College for America** are two high-profile examples of competency-based education schools. Students enrolled in these formal programs work closely with those in support roles (e.g., academic coaches, coordinators, advisors, mentors) to build and establish their knowledge and skills. Courses are designed with specific learning outcomes or goals, and students are assessed through a combination of tests, projects, presentations and other activities, but without the traditional structure of lectures and class time.



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Is Electrical Engineering right for me?

What do electrical engineers do?

This picture shows a senior project presentation that highlights applications of Field Programmable Gate arrays to perform signal processing on radar system signals.



Electrical engineers study and apply the physics and mathematics of electricity, electronics, and electromagnetism to both large and small scale systems to process information and transmit energy. To do this, electrical engineers design computers, electronic devices, communication systems, test equipment, electric power networks, and improve systems through problem solving techniques.

What kinds of jobs and projects can I work on?

The electrical engineering field encompasses several sub-disciplines including: electrical power systems, control, electronics, microelectronics, signal processing, biomedical instrumentation, wireless and wireline communication systems, measurement instrumentation, integrated circuit design, software engineering and computer design. As an electrical engineer, you can work in the offices, labs, or industrial plants of various industries including: the manufacturers of electrical components and computer equipment, industrial machinery, medical and scientific instruments, transportation, communication, computer related sectors, the federal government, electric utility and engineering consulting firms. The projects you may work on can range from designing a telecommunication system or the operation of electric power stations to the lighting and wiring of buildings, the design of consumer electronics, and the electrical control of industry machinery.

How much money will I make?

Students are *Worried about Money*



- **67% concerned about affording college**
- **64% concerned about getting a job**
- **72% feel stressed about personal finances**
- **Just 22% always follow a weekly or monthly budget**

The good news:

- 81% see college as necessary for the career they want
- 78% believe they'll one day be able to support themselves financially

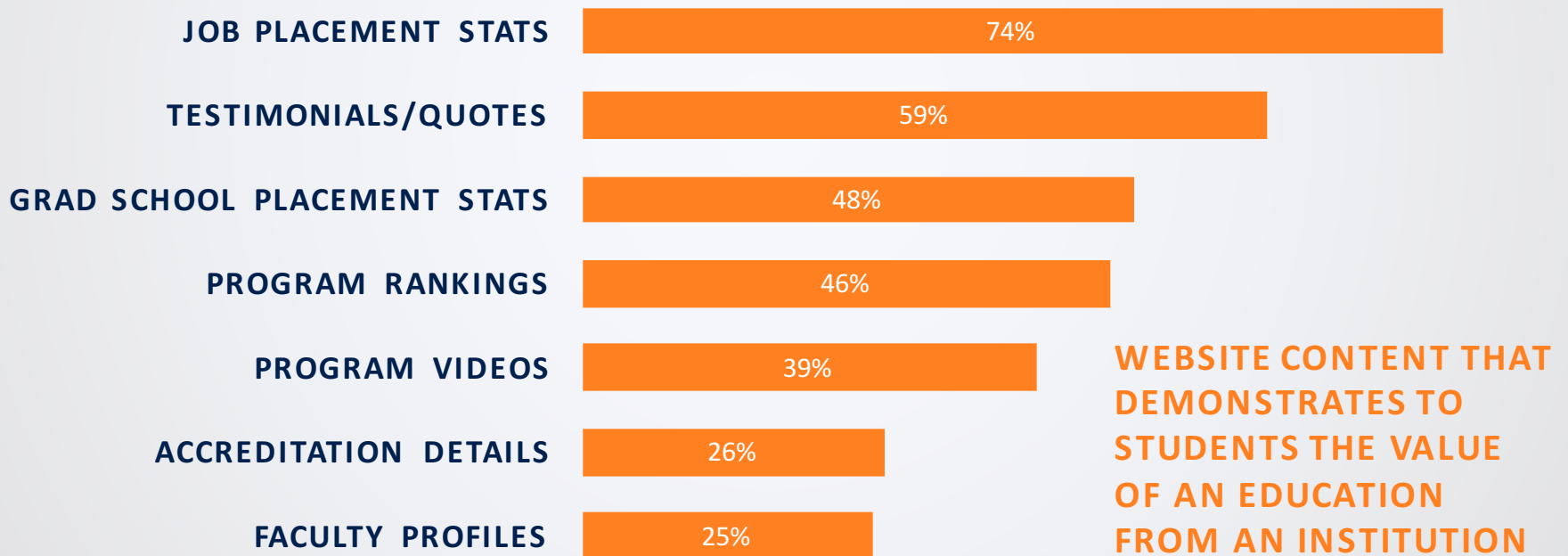
Sources: Northeastern University Portrait of Generation Z survey, 2014,

http://www.northeastern.edu/innovationsurvey/pdfs/Innovation_Summit_GenZ_Topline_Report.pdf;

National Student Financial Wellness Study: Key Findings Report <http://cssl.osu.edu/posts/documents/nsfws-key-findings-report.pdf>

Your Content Should...

Stress the value you create. If you offer a great education at bargain rates, make sure that message resonates loud and clear in your content. If your tuition is on the high end, stress the long-term benefits, such as starting salaries of your graduates, or admissions to graduate school.



Source: Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2015 E-Expectations Report, average percentage of responses from juniors and seniors, <https://www.ruffalonl.com/papers-research-higher-education-fundraising/2015/2015-e-expectations-report>

How One College Does It

University of Richmond in Virginia, while a high-cost, elite college, delivers value through abundant financial aid and grant packages that put it on par financially with almost any other public college in the state. Combine that with one of the highest four-year graduation rates in the country and you've got a good fiscal bet.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{COST}}{\text{RETURN}}$$

COST
[Annual Education Cost - (Grants + Scholarships)] x Years to Graduate

RETURN
Annual Expected Salary - Annual Loan Repayment

Students are... *Eager to Serve*

Celebrate opportunities for them to help those in your state or area, through course work or volunteering.

- **26.4% of teenagers 16-19 volunteer for charitable causes.** Later in life, nearly 40% of college graduates will volunteer.



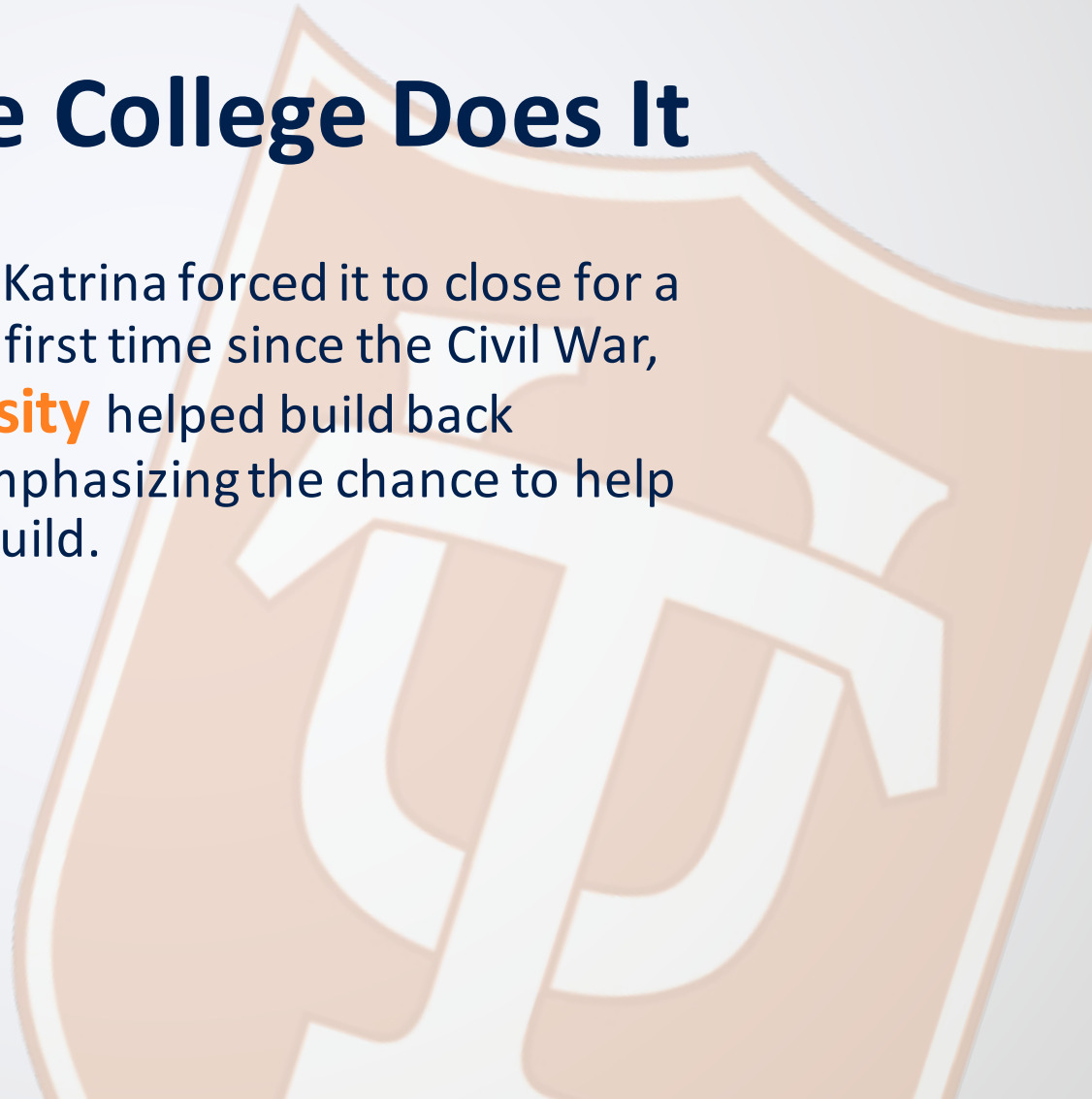
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

Your Content Should...

Highlight efforts by your institution to be a conscientious citizen of your community, and the world.

How One College Does It

When Hurricane Katrina forced it to close for a semester for the first time since the Civil War, **Tulane University** helped build back enrollment by emphasizing the chance to help New Orleans rebuild.





Students are... *Hungry*

CURRENT TOP 5 COLLEGES WITH THE BEST FOOD,
ACCORDING TO CHEGG.COM

1. Bowdoin College

Students love: “The Bowdoin Log”

2. UCLA

Students love: “Chocolate Mousse Bombs”

3. Occidental College

Students love: “Butternut squash ravioli”

4. Virginia Tech

Students love: “Gelato”

5. UMass Amherst

Students love: “Chicken breast schnitzel with chipotle salsa”

Your Content Should...

Highlight areas of campus life, food or otherwise, that will enhance the experience for students who enroll.

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a student is seen from the back, looking towards a group of other students. In the background, several students are gathered around a table, looking at papers or books. The lighting is dim, creating a focused and studious atmosphere.

The Student's Journey

Part 4: Following Up, Staying Engaged

Focus on Retention

Only 59% of students who enroll in 4-year colleges graduate within 6 years.

Even as you market to prospects and alumni, don't let your current students fall through the cracks.

- Keep delivering content about your programs and specialties, just as you did when they were prospects.
- Establish red flags that alert you when a student might be in danger of dropping out.
- Step up your advisory program to give students a path from enrollment to graduation.
- Target content to students who have withdrawn, encouraging them to return.

How One College Does It

Delgado Community College launched an innovative College Coach program and series of focused workshops that serve to help students transition from high school to the demands of college with the assistance of campus leaders. Results show more freshman are continuing to the second semester than were previously. Most importantly, students are learning new skills and gaining confidence through participation in the college's success programs.

Building a Sense of Community

Nothing says community like students spontaneously sharing happy moments online. Find creative ways to encourage them.

How One College Does It

The University of Michigan has built a vibrant, interconnected social media presence that not only pushes out information, but also encourages the involvement of current students and alumni.

Students hashtag their personal Instagram photos with things like **#UMInstagram** **#UMsocial**, in hopes that they will be picked up and posted on official school accounts. The school has an authentic and personal presence that celebrates the community's moments of achievement and appreciation of the school.

- **100,000+ Instagram followers**
- **740,000+ Facebook fans**
- **9,000+ Twitter followers**
- **2nd college on Snapchat**

Creating Student Ambassadors

Enthusiastic students you once relied upon to lead campus tours can be a big help engaging prospects seeking information on social media.

Equip them with:

Rules of engagement

Guidelines for language and conduct that best represent the college

Taking the conversation offline

Ways to move from a public forum to a one-to-one conversation, turning a casual visitor into a recruitment opportunity

Seamless handoffs to the experts

Established processes for putting a prospect in touch with college officials with greater knowledge of details

Closing Thoughts

- **Warm up to marketing.** Guidelines for language and conduct that best represent the college.
- **Be creative with your content.** Try new things. Emphasize video. Make the most of your student ambassadors. Strive to create content that reflects the joy and passion for learning that your most talented professors and students feel.
- **Reach students where they live.** Mailings, phone calls, and college fairs still have their place. But truly connecting with the best prospects means going to the places where they spend most of their time.
- **Focus on your strengths.** Whether it's a cutting-edge biotechnology program or a first-class liberal arts education—help prospective students understand what it is you do best, what makes you different, and why they'll emerge prepared for a successful life.



Alabama Media Group is a digital media company that operates AL.com, one of the country's largest local websites, produces television and video programming, and publishes Alabama's three most prominent newspapers: The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and Mobile's Press-Register, as well as Birmingham magazine and The Mississippi Press-Register. The company also offers digital marketing solutions—including audience targeting, search engine marketing and social media optimization; plus creative services, data analytics and event sponsorships.

Alabama Media Group is part of Advance Local, a leading media company comprised of 12 local affiliated news and information websites that rank #1 among local media in their respective markets and more than 30 affiliated newspapers known for their award-winning journalism. Advance Local is part of Advance Publications, along with Condé Nast and American City Business Journals.

For Further Information:

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