

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY
Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 2018-2023
Recruitment Council Recommendations - DRAFT

Appropriate and sustainable enrollment numbers are critical both to the success of HSU students and to the financial stability of the University as a whole. The Recruitment Council is proposing three major goals to achieve suitable targets for recruiting new students. We believe that these goals, combined with the goals of the Retention Council, will create a lasting sustainable, appropriate enrollment for HSU over the next five years.

Recruitment efforts will continue for all incoming students types (out of state, international, graduate, etc.) but the following goals, strategies and tactics have been prioritized for the purposes of this iteration of the strategic enrollment plan. Adjustments to the target numbers for the incoming class will be made annually upon review of the enrollment needs of the university and take into account annual graduation rates and retention rates.

Each strategy outlined below includes references to budget implications, benchmark measurements, and groups that will need to be consulted. These are guesstimates and/or suggestions at this time and may or may not be the appropriate designation as we move toward detailed planning and implementation. Reported numbers and percentages within the report are found on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness data dashboards.

1. Increase the number of new freshmen students to 1321 from 1210 in 17/18 AY with an emphasis on enrolling California students.

○ ***Invest in and promote Learning Communities for all incoming freshmen.***

Students who develop a relationship with their peers and campus within their first few weeks of starting school are much more likely to be retained from first to second year. Through the strong connections fostered in the structure of learning communities, the institution will be able to provide opportunities for relationship within a student's academic discipline.

- Develop learning communities for every college and undeclared majors.
- Pursue sustainable funding sources for learning community start-up costs (GI 2025 or grants).
- Institutional definition of what qualifies as a learning community and a rollout plan related to the academic program and recruitment.
- Umbrella Learning Community website with separate pages for each community; coordinated and consistent marketing so options for the various communities can be communicated to admitted students.

Budget Implications: Major budget commitment to colleges to start up, sustain, and market developed learning communities.

Benchmark Measurement: Increased retention, lower academic probation rates and higher academic achievements.

Groups to Consult: College Deans and Associate Deans, Housing, Vice Provost, Admissions, Academic departments, College Deans, and OIE.

○ ***Develop and Recruit by academic meta majors.***

Provide prospective students the opportunity to indicate a meta-major choice that would encompass a cluster of majors in a related field of study. This will allow for targeted academic

advising for specific programs and simplify the process of declaring a major down the road. It is anticipated that this could help reduce the number of major changes throughout a student's academic career.

- Develop meta majors with Vice Provost and College Deans. Analyze Sankey data by academic program to help determine needed clusters.
- Develop a marketing strategy for each cluster which could include videos, websites, social media ads, and printed materials.
- Send a letter to high school and college counselors explaining the pathways for their students interested in meta-majors.
- Consider developing learning communities around the meta majors.

Budget Implications: Reallocation of department and college marketing dollars.

Benchmark Measurement: Possible increase in under-enrolled majors and a decrease in major change requests. Students are able to make more informed decisions about programs and coursework in advance of declaring a major.

Groups to Consult: Vice Provost, College Deans, Marketing & Communication, Department Chairs, and Admissions.

○ ***Acquire and nurture strategic freshmen prospect lists.***

Identifying Prospective students is a critical part of recruitment. Creating novel and effective ways to expand the reach to prospective students would ensure that the institution's target market is contacted during the recruitment funnel.

- Organize a collaborative team for purchasing prospect lists to ensure best strategic use of resources.
- Invest in website or mobile app contracts that will generate interested leads (such as College Fair, Hobson's Naviance, Niche, etc.)
- Increase relationships with high school counselors through the utilization of Hobson's Naviance software (already purchased) and in-person school visits.
- Work with OIE to analyze data that will help identify name buy and targeted marketing strategy.
- Efficiently manage data for all lead generation opportunities (physical and electronic).

Budget Implications: Possible investment in new digital lead generation. Continued budget allocations for purchasing prospect leads.

Benchmark Measurement: Higher applicants levels, increased material and visit requests, and potential higher yield numbers.

Groups to Consult: Provost, College Deans, Admissions, Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), and Marketing & Communications.

○ ***Invest in the development of Pre-Majors for specific academic programs.***

Currently, CSU-eligible applicants who do not meet impacted major requirements must either change their major to a non-impacted one or attend a different school, which lowers the institution's ability to meet enrollment targets. Changing majors skews the data and advising for students who eventually want to change back to their original applicant major. Pre-majors (as previously developed and utilized with the nursing major) allow CSU-eligible students to attend with the goal of getting into their intended major and gives departments essential planning data for future program capacity. Additionally, pre-major students would receive appropriate advising for their future major.

- Using Sankey diagram data, identify what pre-majors are needed to keep admitted students interested in attending. Start with impacted majors: Biology, Botany, Environmental Science & Management, Social Work, Wildlife, and Zoology.

- Create academic advising plans for pre-major students. Update the course catalog as necessary.
- Identify the potential positive and negative effects to the campus budget.

Budget Implications: Better planning of future resources needed for impacted and growing academic majors. Reallocation of faculty time to develop pre-major pathways.

Benchmark Measurement: Increased applicant/enrolled rates. Higher retention and graduation rates for pre-major students.

Groups to Consult: College Deans & Associate Deans, Academic Departments, Admissions, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Admissions, and Vice Provost.

○ ***Increase local freshmen yield to 35% from 28.5% in the 17/18 AY.***

There is a need to build and coordinate local recruitment activities. Local students may have more access to housing and family support than out-of-area students, which means they may exhibit a higher retention rate than other students. Additionally, the Chancellor's office mandates Admissions offices to focus on their local service area. Since the number of graduating seniors will fluctuate over the next four years, focusing on the yield rate is better than a specific applicant number.

- Bring back Fall Admissions Day or incorporate the instant admissions component into Fall Preview. This is a big yield tactic for local high schools.
- Purchase all local prospect names annually regardless of SAT score or strategic parameters.
- Develop a local-specific communications plan with strategic language geared towards local barriers to attending the local university.
- Invest in local-specific scholarships to help support local students attending our institution. Promote scholarship opportunities in communications.
- Collaborate with Early Outreach to increase coordination of local yield efforts.
- Develop an institutional program to help HSU faculty visit high schools or meet with local students visiting campus.

Budget Implications: Reallocation of marketing and recruitment resources. Increase investment and development of scholarship resources. **Benchmark Measurement:** Increased number of enrolled local students.

Groups to Consult: Admissions, Marketing & Communications, OIE, and Humboldt County Office of Education.

○ ***Focus recruitment of prospective freshmen from the most impactful and strategic schools in CA.***

Traditionally, the Admissions Office attends every high school and community college fair they can have someone attend. However, it would be a better use of resources to attend fairs at high schools that produce students who enroll and retain. Additionally, counselors' time can be freed up to do full weeks of high school visits and presentations in the best areas for enrollment and retention.

- Work with OIE on an algorithm of successful regions (retention, yield, applications, enrollment, retention, etc.)
- Update the strategy for college fair attendance annually based on successful regions.
- Invest in high impact visit practices and training for counselors.

Budget Implications: Improved travel and recruitment resource allocation.

Benchmark Measurement: Increased applicants and enrolled students. More strategic and direct communication with counselors.

Groups to Consult: Admissions and OIE.

2. Increase the number of new transfer students to 1056 from 946 in 17/18 AY with an emphasis on enrolling California students. Specifically, an upper division transfer student goal of 853 and a lower division transfer student goal of 153.

- ***Invest in and develop a (one-stop) transfer advising center on campus to help recruit, support, and retain new transfer students.***

Currently, the only support transfer students receive to help them transition to HSU and navigate the institution is through orientation. They are assigned a major advisor through the online registration tutorial when they register for classes, but transfer students may need more than academic support.

- Develop a presentation specifically for community college students and one specifically for those at high schools who plan to go to community college first.
- Invest in physical space on campus and personnel to support transfers.
- Invest in a transfer-specific resource website with academic and support services on it including a cost of living calculator to help prepare students for the financial costs they'll be facing. Develop transfer guides to compliment the website.
- Develop a series of skillshops for transfers specifically relating to the transitional needs of upper division and lower division transfer students.
- Create a viewbook/travel brochure and possibly other materials specifically for transfer students.
- Help connect incoming students to the basic needs initiatives on campus.
- Build out a communication plan for admitted transfer students addressing key needs/questions before they arrive.

Budget Implications: Marketing and design charges for website and presentation, 1-2 new staff positions or re-assigned staff members, office space set-up and facility needs, and equipment. Estimated ~\$100,000 to \$175,000.

Benchmark Measurement: Higher retention and graduation rates for new transfer students at all levels. Less major migration for transfer students.

Groups to Consult: Provost, Admissions, Registrar's Office, Academic & Career Advising, OIE, Academic Colleges and Marketing & Communications.

- ***Identify and analyze potential feeder community colleges and increase frequency of visits at their feeder high schools.***

We know transfer students don't come directly to HSU from high school for a variety of reasons, it is still important to recruit these high school students so they use their community college time to work towards a path to our institution.

- Identify top feeder community colleges to Humboldt State University.
- Identify top feeder high schools to those feeder community colleges.
- Mention the potential for part-time jobs while talking to prospective transfer students.
- Connect with the Academic & Career Advising Center to have Handshake (the program for job postings) available earlier in the admissions process for new students. Possibly allow access starting in May.

Budget Implications: Staff time and better use of recruitment travel resources.

Benchmark Measurement: Increase in applied and enrolled transfer students.

Groups to Consult: Admissions, OIE and Academic & Career Advising Center.

3. Increase and maintain ENR/APP% to 11.1% from 10.6% in 17/18 AY. Re-evaluate this 11.1% yield rate annually for strategic capacity adjustments.

○ ***Specific applicant digital presence and social media campaigns.***

- Use prospect lists to increase applications with targeted advertisements.
- Create a parents- and family-specific ad campaign and podcast series to encourage their student to choose HSU.
- Purchase an online platform to use for college fairs, workshops, and live chat functions. Include recruiting for WUE and out-of-state students, as well as California students.
- Work with MarCom to update all department websites so marketing messages, career opportunities, and alumni outcomes for programs are clear and consistent.
- Incorporate SMS messaging as part of a recruitment and Admissions communications plan.
- Target WUE and out-of-state students with social media campaigns.

Budget Implications: Purchase of an online platform for recruitment—approximately \$25,000. Research a variety of options. Allocation of marketing resources for Facebook and Instagram advertisements.

Benchmark Measurement: Increase applicant/enrolled rate. Increase number of confirmed admitted students.

Groups to Consult: Admissions and Marketing & Communications, and OIE.

○ ***Partner with academic departments to make student-to-student call campaigns to all admitted applicants.***

Peer-to-peer interactions are powerful for admitted students trying to make their choice to attend. Coordination with the academic departments to have their upperclassmen reach out to prospective students could help increase yield in programs that have room to grow. Additionally, this is an appropriate way to have the academic departments participate in recruitment efforts.

- Coordinate calls to occur strategically within recruitment cycle and after department chair emails—potentially March.
- Mention department student employment opportunities in chair emails to applicants as part of recruitment strategy.
- Support week-long call sessions for each college and their departments.
- Provide staff and structure between Admissions and the academic departments for each call session.
- Review talking points and scripts prior to the start of calls.

Budget Implications: Staff and student time for calls.

Benchmark Measurement: Increased yield, particularly in lower enrolled academic programs.

Groups to Consult: College Deans, Academic Departments and Admissions, and OIE.

○ ***Reinvestment in California Applicant Receptions (January).***

Continue to grow and enhance the applicant receptions. For most families, this may be the only opportunity they have to speak one-on-one with a University employee during the application cycle. As much as these receptions are about the applicants, they are also very centered around parents and family communication. These receptions should have increased attendance and strong partnerships with a variety of campus departments.

- Begin to include grad students on the invite list. They can benefit from the information provided about campus.

- Specifically reach out to parents and families to educate them about HSU.
- Develop a specific communications plan and marketing materials for parents and family.

Budget Implications: Increase in marketing material resources and staff development time for parents and family content.

Benchmark Measurement: Increased confirmations on applicants attending.

Groups to Consult: Admissions, Marketing & Communications, Forever Humboldt Families, Housing, Financial Aid, Faculty, OIE, College Deans, and Student Affairs programs.

Student Employment and Basic Need Support

In addition to the above-mentioned goals, strategies, and tactics, a recurring theme throughout recent conversations around both recruitment and retention has been increasing student employment on campus. Prospective students are more likely to commit to HSU if they feel confident that they can find a job to assist in paying their educational costs. Students with on-campus jobs are more likely to be retained for several reasons—the greater ability to afford expenses, professional experience, and the feeling of connection to the university and to staff and faculty. “Retention is relationships.”

Currently, students earn almost \$2.5 million each year from on campus jobs. Of that, approximately \$541,000 is covered by the federal government through the Work Study program. The omnibus spending bill passed by Congress in March 2018 increased funding to Federal Work Study (FWS) for 2018-19, and although it is too early to know details, we are hopeful that there will be an increase in HSU’s FWS annual allocation, at least for the coming year. Additionally, student employment, even without the 75% federal subsidy of the FWS program, can assist in reducing operating expenses in various offices on campus, while being mindful of staff positions and union contracts.

HSU currently has a great deal of opportunity for students in the areas of grant-funded internships, fellowships, research assistantships and stipends. More can be done to create awareness of these opportunities that already exist for current and prospective students, and an increase in grant-funded programs can lead to additional student opportunities that are vital to the academic heart of the university.

Because this is an issue that affects every part of the university, more thought should be given—perhaps by an additional group of campus stakeholders—regarding priorities and strategies around student employment and financial support.

Suggestions for 2023-2028 Strategic Enrollment Management Plan:

- Look into a “Returner” or “Finish your Degree” campaign
- Increase Graduate recruitment and conduct a program capacity analysis
- Increase Credential recruitment
- Reassess the local yield rate
- Research new ways to generate more transfer prospect leads
- Increase WUE and out-of-state recruitment