



Tidewater Community College – Strategic Enrollment Management Overhaul

Background:

Tidewater Community College (TCC) is one of the largest community colleges in the nation. TCC currently serves 43,000 students each year at its 4 campuses and 7 centers. With over 3,000 employees and 150 academic programs, TCC prides itself on providing students with marketable skills that will help them achieve success.

Challenge:

Despite its large enrollment and high quality programs and facilities, the College had no integrated Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) system in place that ensured every prospective student had the same enrollment experience regardless of the campus of their attendance. The campuses acted independently and varied in their enrollment practices. It would not be uncommon for a prospective student to receive one set of information on one campus and a different set of information on another. The College had no centralized system for tracking interactions with prospects so there was a lack of understanding about who had been contacted and by whom. Resource duplication was apparent when multiple College staff were unknowingly scheduled to attend the same recruitment events. Roles were inadequately defined and inconsistently followed. In addition, many processes were completely paper-based and included many hand-off steps, resulting in inefficiencies. The lack of effective follow-up with applicants and inconsistent procedures were believed to negatively impact enrollment numbers.

Solution:

DMACC Business Resources workplacelean consultants worked with TCC leadership to develop the first phase of a new four phase SEM process. Together, the group created standardized processes across campuses for more accurate tracking, reporting and better service to the applicant. This process would ensure efficient identification, targeting, tracking and communication with prospects from first contact through successful completion of an application. To accomplish this, workplacelean consultants used its Launch program to map the current process and helped TCC staff determine which steps could be eliminated or combined to decrease overlap, improve resource allocation and create a streamlined process which was not only faster, but more accurate and that provided a better experience for the student prospect.

Results:

Through the carefully facilitated lean process improvement programs, TCC developed the beginnings of an integrated SEM process, which unified practices across four campuses, reduced staff effort duplication, and tracked interactions with prospective students. Not only is TCC staff more efficient and effective in their roles, enrollment practices are more clear to students. The goal is to increase enrollment. A few of the results include:

- SEM process steps were cut 56% (from 178 inconsistently followed steps to a clean and lean 79)
- Implemented the use of Prospect Tracking System to coordinate recruitment events as well as individual applicant communications
- The number of “handoffs” of application materials were reduced 58% (from 45 to 19)

“Thanks to the SEM process improvements workplacelean helped us identify and implement, TCC’s enrollment practices are now documented and more seamless and efficient than ever before. In the end, our work will improve our service to students.”

– James Toscano, Vice President for Public Affairs & Communications, Tidewater Community College