

TargetX and Nazareth College

Nazareth College Exceeds Enrollment Goals by Reducing Melt and Increasing Yield with TargetX Schools App

Challenges: Nazareth believed in the importance of building an online community, but needed the strategy and tools to make it a reality

When Rebecca Stapley joined the Nazareth College team as the Assistant Director of Multimedia and Public Relations, she launched an intense focus on building online student community.

Why? Engaged students become enrolled students.

“The biggest goal is yield — getting students to deposit and enroll,” says Stapley. “We know that students are much more likely to yield if they have a connection to each other and a sense of community.”

She’s right. Research shows that if a student has a connection with at least nine students after being admitted, they are 93 percent more likely to enroll. These digital natives also like to be able to access that community when and where they choose — on mobile devices, as well as desktops and laptops.

Stapley was eager to launch a mobile-first online community that would allow accepted students to test the waters at Nazareth, connect with other students, and learn more about the school and culture within a private space that was moderated. This allowed her to put student workers front and center in the conversations.

Stapley says, “I think anyone doing effective marketing knows that accepted students aren’t interested in what the admissions counselor or resident life director are saying. They want to hear from other students. Our online community needed to make that easy.”

Solutions: TargetX Schools App allows Nazareth to convene a powerful online community, leverage student ambassadors, and target priority prospectives based on enrollment intelligence



Nazareth College at a Glance

Private college located in Pittsford, NY

Founded in 1924

Approximately 2,800 total students

Offers 60 majors

Home of the Golden Flyers

TargetX Solutions

Schools App

Goals

Nazareth College needed a private, online network for admitted students that:

- creates a sense of community and a “safe” space among accepted students;

- is a high-impact alternative and complement to email;

- offers enrollment intelligence that predicts which students are most likely to matriculate;

- and, ultimately, increases student yield and reduces melt.

Today, Nazareth College uses the TargetX Schools App as a messaging tool that complements their email and social media campaigns, while driving the powerful community building essential to capturing student deposits.

Schools App is an online community that has the best features of established mobile networks to retain the familiarity and ease of known interfaces, while eliminating unwanted distractions, advertisements, and non-members. Through Schools App, admitted students are able to converse with each other anywhere, at any time, based on multiple search criteria. For admissions staff, the private community ensures that only invited students are participating and gives them the opportunity to target messaging and nurture specific segments of students to increase overall yield.

Stapley says Schools App allows accepted Nazareth students to “get to know one another and the college without having to commit — just yet.” Without pressure, students making their college enrollment decision can search and connect with other admitted students based on criteria like hometown or state, get a feel for the school through group conversations and posted questions, and ultimately, decide if they are a good fit. At the same time, Nazareth staff have a captive audience with whom to share targeted content and strategic messaging to nudge them in the right direction.

Oftentimes, existing students are a school’s best brand ambassadors. Schools App makes it easy to put student workers front and center. At Nazareth, Stapley monitors the conversations happening in the Schools App community, while empowering student workers to answer questions and drive conversations. If a question is not answered promptly, Stapley can easily and privately nudge her student workers or if she so chooses, answer herself.

Stapley says that the “number one job of student workers in Schools App is to make other students feel accepted and like they belong. So, even if they don’t have the answer to their questions, it doesn’t matter, they’re connecting them with someone who does, but more importantly they’re saying, ‘I see you, I hear you, I’m here’. It matters so much.”

Though the building of student community is valuable in and of itself, the ultimate goal is getting admits to campus. And when an institution is small, it’s not always easy to focus on every admitted student, which is why Stapley particularly appreciates the Schools App analytics and enrollment intelligence that color codes students based on their likelihood of enrollment and offers easy-to-download reporting.

“I give the analytics and enrollment intelligence a huge gold star,” she says. “It’s so hard — especially for schools of our size who are really enrollment driven — to tap in digitally to predict yield. Schools App removes the guesswork, showing in green, those students who are likely to deposit; in red, those, who no matter what we do, are probably not going to commit; and in yellow, those who are on the fence, and therefore, the students we should really focus our attention and messaging on.”

After deposits, the Nazareth team shifts to using Schools App to keep student melt low by maintaining the sense of community, and of course, answering the inevitable questions about roommates!

Results: Nazareth exceeds enrollment goals and reduces melt with help of Schools App

In the last two years, Nazareth College has exceeded enrollment goals, which Stapley says, “is a great problem to have.” They have also reduced student melt. She credits Schools App as an integral component of their winning strategy.

Beyond the all-important numbers, Stapley is warmed by the anecdotal evidence of success from students. She often hears stories from prospectives who met on Schools App and attended a campus visit together or enrolled at Nazareth and became roommates.

“When I hear stories like that, I know we are doing something right,” she laughs. “That relationship-building is invaluable.”

