



# How One VB Client Went From \$2M Deficit to \$60M Surplus As They Innovated Enrollment

---

Value Based (VB) is a boutique consulting company innovating Higher Education with its Enrollment Methodology (EM). The Enrollment Methodology is based on an ethical and relational selling process known as consultative or value-based selling. Institutions utilizing EM find the personalization of aligned admissions and marketing messaging, processes and best practices bring in higher tuition revenue and better-fit students. Here's how one client university utilized the Enrollment Methodology and Value Based coaching to innovate, going from layoffs and a \$2M deficit to a \$60M surplus in three years.



## GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

George Fox University (GFU) is one of the top Christian universities in the United States (ranked in top-tier for “Best National University” and “Best Colleges” by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Forbes*). It serves over 4,000 students in four Oregon locations with 40 undergraduate majors to choose from. Offering six adult degree programs, seven seminary degrees, and 13 master’s and doctoral degrees.

## ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

---

1. Implement a customized sales methodology for Admissions that conforms to GFU and Higher Education’s ethics and culture.
2. Implement a relational sales methodology that GFU’s enrollment team could buy into and adopt 100% to increase each Counselor’s yield by representing the value GFU offered students in a natural and authentic way.
3. Improve the Admissions team’s ability to listen to what prospective students truly need and articulate the value of, and how, GFU will meet those needs.
4. Establish a process that will produce measurable and sustainable increases in yield that can be demonstrated in executable action (doing) not just temporary “head” knowledge (knowing).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the months following their Value Based training and coaching, GFU experienced it's largest enrollment on record and continued to top these results for the five years following.

George Fox University's Rob Westervelt (then the VP of Enrollment and Marketing) along with Lindsay Knox (Director of Admissions) were tasked with increasing enrollment with a reduced marketing and admissions budget. They knew they had to innovate, fast. Their out-of-the-box approach led them to engage Value Based to train their Counselors on a value-based, consultative sales approach to Admissions Counseling. process. The VB team, Rob and Lindsay created a GFU Enrollment Process Map that was a combination of their current admissions processes enhanced with the 33 Value Based Enrollment Methodology (VB EM) Best Practices. This document became the blueprint for the design, delivery, coaching and reinforcement of a customized GFU & Value Based process to help them reach their desired enrollment goals, which happened to require an increase never attained in the history of the school. The results twelve months and beyond the launch and implementation of the VB EM was a yield twice that of the previous year with 5 consecutive, record breaking Freshman classes since then.

## Since Implementing the Value(s) Based Enrollment Methodology GFU has:

- Enrolled 6 Consecutive Record Freshman Classes
  - Increased Their Admissions Counselor Average Yield From 78 to 144 Enrolled Students
  - Increase the School's Cash Position from a \$2M Deficit to a \$60M Surplus.
- 

## GFU CHALLENGES

---

1. Facing staff layoffs and serious budget shortages there was pressure to bring in more students and tuition revenue with less budget.
2. Leadership felt their Admissions team needed to be more intentional and discover the "best fit" prospective students early in the enrollment cycle so as to optimize and steward their time with the "best fit" prospective students.
3. Marketing and Admissions wanted to discover and better articulate GFU's value and why it's worth the investment to attend.
4. Leadership wanted to add ethical, consultive sales best practices to their Counselor's ability to advise and counsel prospective students. Best practices like: Listening more than speaking; Better listening to qualify for "best fit"; Discovering and articulating GFU's value proposition; and How to differentiate their university from others being considered.

## FULL STORY

GFU didn't have an established enrollment process or training course for onboarding new Admissions Counselors. They were also getting increasing push-back and objections on the cost to attend.

The GFU leaders engaged Value Based to help them integrate value-based or consultative sales processes with their existing advising and counseling processes. GFU needed help to discover, create, articulate, and make available (to the entire university) a messaging knowledge base of value statements for their distinctives and differentiators. They also needed help to create messaging specifically for prospective students who were comparing them with other universities.

*“The fastest and cheapest way for a college or university to increase tuition revenue is to invest in sales training for their Admissions Counselors ”*

*-ROB WESTERVELT  
Chief Strategy Officer  
George Fox University*

---

“The ultimate reality is that the economic and financial picture of the institution is far better today than it has ever been. Over a period of several years we’ve been able to generate approx \$60M in cash to help sustain the future of the institution.”

*-Robin Baker*

*President*

*George Fox University*

---

The Value(s) Based Enrollment Methodology appealed to Rob, Lindsay and each of the Admissions Counselors because it was not only tailored for Higher Education but it was further customized for GFU’s specific needs. The GFU Admissions team learned to articulate the unique value of the GFU degree programs and service offerings to the different segments of their demographic and psychographic markets. It also provided a framework that allowed their counselors to integrate the 33 VBEM Best Practices with their established advising and counseling skills. Further, the curriculum’s holistic design and approach allowed them to do it in a natural and authentic way without compromising who they were. Now, years later, the methodology has become a strategic and significant part of their culture.

To fund the investment in the VBI engagement and in their enrollment team, GFU reallocated money they were spending on search advertising that brought them many inquiries but wasn't resulting in enough applications. Rob and Lindsay felt it was a mistake for the school to invest so much in promotion and lead generation and so little in equipping and training their "front line representatives" who were responsible to bring in millions of dollars of tuition revenues. Their investment paid off big: starting the year after implementing the *Value(s) Based Enrollment Methodology*, **GFU experienced 6 consecutive years of record freshman classes**. The first three of the six years the average yield per Admissions Counselor almost doubled from 78 to 144 enrolled students and the school moved from a \$2M deficit to a \$60M surplus.

"The average yield of our Admissions Counselors grew from 78 to 144 enrolled students over the course of three years after implementing the Value(s) Based Enrollment Methodology".

*-ROB WESTERVELT  
Chief Innovation Officer  
George Fox University*

---

Since implementing the VB Enrollment Methodology and training, GFU has continued to build the 33 Best Practices into the culture of the school, not limiting it to the Admissions department.

The result to date is seven consecutive years of meeting or exceeding enrollment goals.

Additionally, the knowledge base continues to develop, empowering GFU staff across campus to have complete confidence in the values GFU offers.

## SUSTAINED RESULTS

---

GFU has a proven and predictable enrollment process that is used in new Counselor onboarding as well as refreshers for experienced staff.

Increased the proficiency of each Counselor in 33 VBEM Best Practices.

Admissions staff consistently articulates the value of a GFU education decreasing cost-related challenges and objections.

GFU continues to develop a value-based messaging knowledge base that marketing, admissions, and other departments can use when interacting with prospective students.

Seven consecutive years of meeting or exceeding enrollment goals.





Clients using our marketing and enrollment strategies to increase net tuition revenue include colleges and universities of all sizes, ranging from small private colleges to public universities.

For more information, [click here](#) to schedule a consultation with a Value Based Consultant.