International student recruitment requires the pillars of research, resources, and budget to produce an effective and sustainable process. In many cases, these three pillars are not fully accessible or possible. Below are recruiting options for a community college aiming to develop an effective international student recruitment plan with a budget of $30,000.

The main goals are: increasing international student enrollment, increasing brand name recognition in target regions/countries, increasing awareness of the benefits of a community college education and exploring new markets. Defining a recruitment strategy is imperative at any scale, but more so when limited in such a competitive landscape. The five strategies defined to support this recruitment plan include: community partnerships, partnerships with education networks, educational agents, in-house recruitment programs development, and digital marketing.
# BUDGET SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Initiative</th>
<th>Projected Cost</th>
<th>Projected Activity</th>
<th>Anticipated Outcomes (KPIs)</th>
<th>ROI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Partnerships</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>College Fairs, workshops, counselor information sessions, transfer fairs</td>
<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Lead generation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in enrolled students</td>
<td>University partnerships, articulation agreements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in applications and enrollments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Partnerships</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>Workshops, college fairs, advertising, purchase leads</td>
<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Lead generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Increase in applications and enrollments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-Party Agent</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-House Recruitment Programming</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>Workshops, college fairs, advertising, purchase leads</td>
<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Lead generation</td>
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<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Increase in applications and enrollments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
<td>Workshops, college fairs, advertising, purchase leads</td>
<td>Increase in applications</td>
<td>Lead generation</td>
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<td>Increase in applications</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Year Institution
Annual Recruitment Budget: $30,000

For more information on these services, please visit https://gatewayinternational.org/gateway-leadership-institute-s2022/
According to IIE’s Open Doors report, as of the 2020-21 school year, higher education institutions reported a 68% increase in international student enrollment, year over year. International students attending community colleges have been quite the opposite. As the rest of the nation sees a rebound, community colleges saw a 24% decrease in enrollment from international students, year over year. As visa offices catch up on processing, travel restrictions lift, and the world unifies in seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, institutions are hopeful that this trend will change direction.

Like most community colleges, international students come for various different reasons in comparison to larger 4-year institutes. These reasons vary from lack of language proficiency, therefore needing additional English classes to then transfer, or simply affordability. A large number do plan on transferring to another college, sometimes within the current state. The options become vast when considering where to go and how to get there. This leads us to partnerships as a recruitment strategy. The Office of Articulations and Partnerships maintains articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities where students may transfer to complete their bachelor’s degree. The average annual tuition cost for an international student is $6,340.

**RATIONALIZES**

1. **Establish and Nurture Community Partnerships**

It will be important for the community college to partner with a variety of organizations of the local, regional, national and international levels. These partnerships can create exposure, brand awareness, and help to develop a pipeline of international student leads. When it comes to community partnerships, it is recommended to explore opportunities with local high schools and colleges/universities located throughout the state.

Along with targeting students in different international markets, community colleges should take advantage of international students that are living in the United States. Researching demographic information and contacting high schools with large international populations can create a strong pipeline of applicants. Community Colleges can work with the high schools to create programming for international students including application and financial aid workshops at little to no cost.

It is recommended that the community college seek out articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities in the state where they are located. Articulation agreements will allow students to easily transfer from the community college to the four-year institution. It will be important for the community college to identify popular academic programs among international students including STEM and business majors.

In addition to articulation agreements that allow for ease of transfer, it’s also recommended to explore 2+2 partnerships with four-year institutions. This will provide a guarantee to international students that if they begin their studies at the community college and meet defined academic requirements, they will be guaranteed admission to the partner university. This type of program could be favorable to international students and provide academic assurance when going through the visa process.
2 Education Partnerships

There are a wide range of education partners that the community college can partner with to promote the school and attract international students to the campus. In researching a variety of resources, it’s recommended that the community college partner with EducationUSA on a national level. EducationUSA is a U.S. Department of State network of over 430 international student advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories. The network promotes U.S. higher education to students around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, and current information about opportunities to study at accredited post secondary institutions in the United States. EducationUSA also provides services to the U.S. higher education community including professional development and recruitment events.

Along with EducationUSA, it’s encouraged that the community college partners with advocacy consortiums such as the American Association of Community Colleges and Study USA (state-specific). AACC is the primary advocacy organization for the nation’s community colleges. The association represents more than 1,000 2-year, associate degree-granting institutions and nearly 12 million students. The Study USA State Consortiums are grassroots organizations of colleges and universities that are dedicated to promoting international education. It includes advertising opportunities and partnership opportunities with higher education institutions throughout the state. Finally, we would recommend the community college explore partnerships with organizations that promote the United States as a study destination for international students. There are a variety of services that charge a fee to promote the community college and generate leads. At a minimum this type of service would cost around $2500.

3 Agents/In-Country Representatives

Agents or In-County Representatives will work on behalf of the community college to recruit students and assist with the application and visa processes. It will be important for the community college to identify target markets for international applicants. Popular countries for international recruitment include India, China, and Vietnam.

The average tuition of community college for international students is $8,200. Agents typically charge 15% of first-year tuition per student or $1,230 per student. It will be important for the community college to identify the number of international students they are able to take in each year, given various factors such as campus support, ESL programming, and housing.

In-Country Representatives are typically employed through a third-party vendor. The representative is based in a specific country and does recruitment work on behalf of the college or university. At a minimum, this model would cost the community college around $80,000.

With such a small budget, it would be recommended that funding for an agent(s) or In-Country Representative would come from a different department.

4 In-House Recruitment Programming

It is imperative to utilize diverse virtual recruiting opportunities, such as virtual fairs, webinars and workshops, independently or collaboratively with a partner(s), e.g., 4-year colleges and universities, or a study state consortium. Virtual recruiting also allows us to:

- Explore new regions and test the market for community colleges without the cost associated with in-person travel.

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Case Study #1

Email Campaigns

Developing an email campaign for prospective students to nurture leads at every step in the admissions process is key to staying high-touch and converting leads to applications, and ultimately enrollment.

Email campaigns can be carefully crafted once and adjusted periodically for content updates. Most agile CRM systems have an email drip campaign system that can be utilized. Other options that exist are mailing systems like MailChimp at zero to low cost. Having an automated email system alleviates staff time and allows for your prospective students/parents to still have contact and reference important information.

Digital Marketing

Unlike many other forms of advertising, digital media is trackable and therefore provides a tangible return on investment.

Facebook (including Instagram) is a cost-effective and ideal channel for this effort (depending on the country determined). Facebook is utilized by 37% of the world’s population, making it one of the largest utilized channels, surpassing YouTube and just under Google. The structure of this campaign would focus on brand awareness/traffic generating, and lead generation. Before getting started, in-depth market research is required to determine the ideal country/region and persona to target.

The cost includes fees for an outsourced agency:
- Initial market research/insights and campaign pre-launch work: creative/content development & translation: $8,000 - $10,000
- Media plan: Brand awareness/traffic campaign and lead generation $10,000
- Nurture campaign: Email drip campaign and/or WhatsApp (Free)

For more information on these services, please visit https://gatewayinternational.org/gateway-leadership-institute-s2022/
Using the current strengths to position the college for the prospective students will be ideal for a community college in this position. Using in-house developed materials like webinars, one-sheeters, and student life updates makes for great social content that can be further promoted with a paid campaign. Insights from the paid campaign results can be further utilized in the future for organic (free) strategies.

**Budget Summary**

Despite their effectiveness, it is not feasible within a budget of $30,000 to utilize the following strategies because of the significant cost associated with them:

- Country Offices & Representatives
- Independent Recruitment Contractors
- International Education Fairs/School visits
- Frequent Partner Fly-in Campus Visit

**Key Performance Indicators**

- Number of international students enrolled
- Home country for enrolled student
- Number of leads generated from digital marketing campaigns
- Prospects’ interactions with digital marketing campaigns: E.g., drip campaigns (unique) opens and (unique) clicks or response to call to actions

**Recommendations**

Given the challenges of a small budget and being a community college that is located in the middle of the United States, it’s recommended that the majority of the budget be used on digital marketing. Through digital marketing, the community college will be able to cover the most ground in terms of outreach in a cost effective manner. Leveraging partnerships on the local, regional, national and international levels will help support and supplement the digital marketing efforts. A small investment will need to be made in these partnerships, especially on the national and international levels.

Grass-roots programming with educational entities in and around the community college will also be important to the success of recruiting international students. Market research into the international communities near the community college will help shape programming and targeted local efforts with high schools and affinity groups. Partnerships with four-year institutions will help promote brand awareness, create a pathway for international students and enhance the credibility of the community college.

Each case study should be a downloadable PDF. Each PDF should be similarly designed, structured and framed. Each should have a footer.

For more information on these services, please visit [https://gatewayinternational.org/gateway-leadership-institute-s2022/](https://gatewayinternational.org/gateway-leadership-institute-s2022/)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With sincere gratitude to the generous sponsorship of the following organizations, Gateway was able to offer the Spring 2022 Gateway Leadership Institute and produce these case studies focused on international enrollment management. These inspiring organizations are truly committed to preparing the next generation of international education leaders.

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