Embrace AI to More Efficiently Attract, Engage, and Enroll the Right Students for Your Institution

Content

The Higher Education Market Is Shrinking

Admissions departments today face some of the most important and challenging tasks in higher education. You must educate prospective students about your programs, communicate how you're different from other schools, and support students at every step of the admissions journey, from inquiry to enrollment.

All of this must be done on budget, amidst fierce competition and a rapidly changing student demographic. There is more pressure than ever to engage students and reach enrollment goals with your current resources. To keep the attention of prospective students, you have to try new methods of communication that will enable you to build stronger, more personal relationships with each potential student.

To maintain and grow program revenues, you must increase lead conversions and find ways to personalize and engage both traditional and non-traditional students (part-time, military, parents, etc.) along every step of an increasingly fragmented and complex enrollment journey. The days of higher education relying solely on campus brochures, referrals, and follow-up calls are over.

Digital sales must drive a stronger portion of revenue for schools to maintain student enrollment levels and ensure programs are self-sustaining. Schools that provide the most helpful and personalized guidance through digital channels will be the ones where students are more likely to enroll.

Fewer students are enrolling in colleges year over year. Since 2011, enrollment of undergraduates and graduate students at degree-granting institutions has declined significantly. Explanations for this range from economic instability, a lagging job market, or even shifts in U.S. demographics.[1] According to the Nationa lStudent Clearinghouse Research Center, there are two main reasons for this steady decline:[2]

1. The post-recession job market may be luring students away.

2. The U.S. demographics are shifting. The number of high school graduates is expected to stay largely flat, and then decline due to lower birth rates.

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Competition and Brand Differentiation Are Growing Challenges for Many Schools

Despite the lower enrollment rate, per the NACAC, students are applying to more schools than ever. A third of students now apply to 7 or more schools.[3] Competition is especially fierce for revenue-driving programs like MBAs, online programs, and for international students.

Engaging and enrolling non-traditional students (adult, ex-military, part-time) has become necessary to the bottom line of many schools. Universities are now expanding offerings to meet these students' needs (i.e. short certification programs and online graduate programs).

Your team must meet these students where they are and engage them through an omnichannel approach (email, social, web, career fairs, high schools, direct mail, etc.) to stand out from other schools. Admissions offices are asked to do more with what they have, since most marketing budgets are either remaining flat or decreasing.[4]

Schools must adapt to new student expectations for how they want to be engaged

Generation Z students will soon become the largest higher education market segment. They are an extremely digital-savvy group who like to keep their options open, compare different choices, and expect personalized experiences with each brand they interact with.

Students today have access to more information than ever and are more likely to engage and enroll at schools that meet their brand expectations. Luckily, there is now technology that helps you connect with your students the way they want to be engaged.

> **An Intelligent Virtual Assistant (IVA)** *is capable of having personal conversations with all of your prospective students and identifying the most qualified candidates in an engaging way that feels natural and human. This new method of connecting with students improves the efficiency of your recruiting workflows through automation while helping your school build better relationships with your students.*

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The Prospective Student Journey

Imagine a high school student named Jill who is bombarded with 10 pieces of snail mail and 20 emails from different colleges every week (with most of them going straight into her junk folder). Jill feels overwhelmed by this information and ignores most of it.

When she sees online ads for schools that interest her, she researches them further. She looks up these schools on Google, reads their social media pages, and contacts their admissions departments. But the schools she reaches out to can take weeks to answer questions like "What financial aid packages are available?" or "Which programs will help me build my dream career?"

Jill quickly grows frustrated and distrustful of schools that don't take the time to engage with her, and wishes there was a way to speak with someone on the admissions team through texts or emails whenever a question comes up for her.

Meeting student expectations with personalized student experiences

Prospective college students today are accustomed to accessing information they need quickly and painlessly from various online channels. They're used to getting personalized experiences from technology companies like Amazon and they bring that consumer expectation to other brands they interact with.

When prospective students feel engaged, they stay in your funnel longer and are more likely to take the next step toward enrollment. Students today are attracted to schools (and businesses) that care about them as individuals. To meet new student expectations, your school will have to fully leverage the power of digital technologies.

> **Artificial intelligence** gives you a simple way to provide personalized touchpoints that engage students at every step of their enrollment journey.

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Are you ready to take the next step in your decision?

Typical student considerations

Not now - I'll look at this later.

I'm ready! How are you different?

What else should I look at?

Type a message...   Send

Why Personalize Your Student Conversations?

Your prospective students may have vastly different needs and life circumstances. Asking questions through one-on-one conversations will give you insights into where these students are along their admissions journey, and will address possible objections and provide the information they need to take the next step toward a decision:

- **"Not now - I'll look at this later."** You've worked so hard to get interested students into your funnel. So why let them drop out now? Students (and especially non-traditional students) fall out of your admissions funnel for all kinds of reasons. This doesn't mean they have given up on your school. You need to re-engage potential students who have shown interest in the past to find out whether they're ready to continue on their admissions journey again. Schools today must find a way to stay top of mind and engage students personally to build trust and convert these student leads into enrollments.

- **"I'm ready! But how are you different?"** Brand differentiation has become synonymous with consumer experience in our world today. Inquiry, application, and enrollment are all important milestones along your students' journey. Communicating and clarifying your unique program offerings to the right student at the right time can accelerate the path toward enrollment. But making a personal connection to advance each lead (before they go somewhere else!) is often too expensive for admissions team budgets. You must master digital efficiency to stand out from other schools and motivate your best prospective students toward enrollment.

- **"What else should I look at?"** Schools that thrive in the future will have to become more effective at cross-selling. With thousands of programs available, the average student may not know which programs are best for them. Using the right cues to intelligently suggest other opportunities to help students make the right choice can make all the difference in positioning your school as a trusted partner along the enrollment journey. These cues include student interest in financial aid packages, academic programs, geography, student demographics, campus housing, extracurricular activities, alumni connections and flexible learning opportunities. But gaining a centralized, real-time view into these cues across all of your student prospects can be a manual and labor-intensive task.

> So how do you engage your future students in a scalable way at each step of their enrollment journey? How can you stand out and compete against other schools for a shrinking student market? How can you **re-engage** potential students, **accelerate** your best prospective student leads, and become more effective at **cross-selling**?

The Power of an Artificially Intelligent (AI) Admissions Assistant

The journey from inquiry to enrollment can be a long, winding and confusing path for many students. Choosing the right program can feel overwhelming, and students deserve to get the best information along the way.

We understand how confusing it might be to adopt the newest marketing technologies to help your students make informed decisions. So we built an **Admissions AI Assistant powered by intelligent automation** that is easy to set up, use and maintain.

> With our Intelligent Virtual Assisants, you can now give all your prospective students the help they need to make one of the most important decisions of their lives.

Leveraging the help of an help of an Admissions AI Assistant lets your school personally connect with your prospective students in an engaging, consistent and persistent manner that won't use up your entire marketing budget or all of your time. The Conversica artificial intelligence technology is a tireless and and diligent Admissions AI Assistant that works autonomously to **personally reach out to and engage with 100% of your leads**. So you can clarify your programs offerings to prospective students and guide them along their respective journeys.

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Transform the Admissions Experience with the Perfect Admissions AI Assistant

The Conversica Sales AI Assistant makes it easy to engage your future students and scale high-touch, personalized outreach so you can enroll more students and grow program revenues.

Your AI-powered Admissions Assistant:

- Allows you to get to **know each student** by asking the right questions and contacting every prospective student with a human touch to build a relationship through email or text messaging. Your students will appreciate the personalized attention they get, and will see your school as a trusted partner who cares about them.

- Interprets responses from prospective students to personalize the admissions experience and provide natural, human interactions within each conversation while **monitoring the student's intent**. Your students will be engaged automatically by our technology, and an enrollment officer on your team will be notified the minute our AI detects that someone is ready to move to the next step in their enrollment journey.

- Works around the clock to ensure follow up and track your enrollment team's follow-through to **ensure no potential student ever slips through the cracks** or falls out of your funnel due to lack of engagement. Our technology gives you a simple, centralized view into your team's workflow and progress.

- Adapts to your own unique use cases. You can **customize your Admissions AI Assistant's workflow to fit your school's needs**. Whether it's reengaging, upselling, cross-selling, pre- and post-event outreach, or qualifying leads until they are ready to speak to an admissions representative, you will get to define the way you want to use AI to support your marketing efforts and provide better experiences to your prospective students.

In our world today, higher engagement drives higher enrollments. Your prospective students are expecting personalized brand experiences, and the schools that meet them where they are will be the ones they remember and engage with. The experience of the consumer is now the differentiator for brands everywhere.

> Our Admissions AI Assistant is here to help you scale personalized interactions and adapt to a rapidly changing marketplace without needing to hire any new employees. With artificial intelligence, you can show prospective students you care about them and give the right answers at the right time—all of the time.

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Technology That Is Simple and Easy to Use

The Conversica Admissions AI Assistant is up and running in days, not months. It integrates seamlessly into your team's existing workflows and can be customized for your use cases. And the Conversica team will be with you every step of the way to make sure you're making the most of this newest member of your team.

You won't ever be overwhelmed by the number of leads you have to personally connect with since you will have an an Admissions AI Assistant with infinite bandwidth to talk to all of them. Your prospective students will no longer drop out of your funnel due to lack of engagement. Personalized conversations will happen in the background 24/7 at your future students' convenience, and you will get notified when a student is ready to talk to someone on your team and take the next step toward enrollment.

> Our Intelligent Virtual Assistants technology analyzes hundreds of millions of previous messages and dynamically generates responses that will keep your future students engaged.

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How the Los Angeles Film School used an Admissions AI Assistant to increase engagement, enrollments, and revenue

The Los Angeles (LA) Film School is a private college offering career-focused programs in Film, Recording Arts, Music Production, Game Production & Design, Animation & Visual Effects, and Entertainment Business.

### The Struggle with Consistently Engaging Leads

The LA Film School generated most of its leads from paid and social search campaigns, but was having trouble increasing inbound lead conversions through more persistent and consistent engagement. The school had a policy in place where its Salespeople were supposed to follow up seven times in seven days with each prospect. But the reality was that each Salesperson only averaged 1.6 attempts in seven days, due to limited human bandwidth and capacity. The team just didn't have the resources to follow up with all leads often enough to increase conversions.

Along comes Stephanie, the Admissions AI Assistant

The LA Film School decided to give an Intelligent Virtual Assistant from Conversica a try and named the newest member of their team Stephanie. They began to leverage her unlimited bandwidth to persistently and consistently engage with 100% of their inbound leads. If staff doesn't reach an applicant within 7 days, Stephanie now automatically follows up with the applicant for up to 10 personal touches.

Results

After the school started using the Conversica Admissions AI Assistant, The LA Film School experienced a **33% increase in lead engagement**. This has led to an increase of more than **$29 million in additional revenue** for the school. Stephanie has now worked over 621,000 of their leads and counting.[5]

33%

$29M
Additional
Revenue
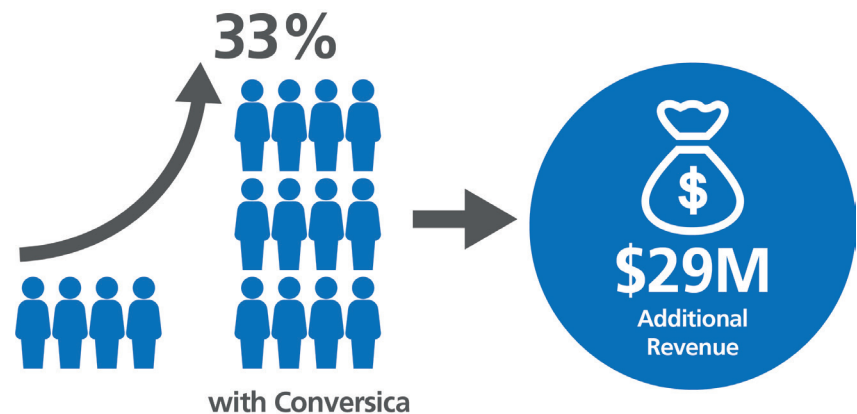
with Conversica

"My peers get confused, they assume maybe Conversica is an auto-responder. But Conversica is definitely not an auto-responder, it's an engagement tool that asks questions, so it is a very natural part of the sales process. I think this is a very powerful approach – 'stop pitching, start asking'. That's what's great about Conversica – it engages the prospect with questions versus 'we've got a deal', or 'a sale is going on', etc. Instead, it's just 'is there anything we can do to help? The beauty of Conversica is it's asking questions and getting the prospects involved in the sales process. I have literally seen situations where the person has completely sold themselves before getting on the phone. By the time the salesperson steps in, the deal is already done – all they have to do is just talk to the person. I would bet my career on Conversica. I love the product. I believe the product is a godsend."

-Ben Chaib, Vice President of Admissions and Marketing, The Los Angeles Film School

Become a Digital-Savvy School of the Future

Schools that embrace artificial intelligence today to engage their students will end up enrolling more students in the future. Start talking to every single one of your prospective students with an Admissions AI Assistant who will work promptly, persistently and politely to find the most ideal applicants.

With the Conversica Admissions AI Assistant, you can:

- **Identify** the right students to talk to and help them apply and enroll in the right program
- **Prioritize** prospective student inquiries so your enrollment officers can be more effective at guiding applicants throughout their journey
- **Engage** applicants throughout the entire process, from inquiry to enrollment
- **Personalize** your communication by treating each prospective student as an individual who you build a relationship with
- **Access** unique insights into your enrollment team effectiveness to optimize your recruiting workflows

Intelligent Virtual Assistants have helped schools transform existing marketing programs into a consistent, scalable, and digital engine of growth. School can leverage AI-powered Admissions Assistant to personally engage 100% of your prospective students and increase enrollments. Embrace the power of AI technology and build stronger relationships with your future students today.

> To learn more or see a demo of our Admissions AI Assistant product works, please contact us at sales@conversica.com or call us at **(888) 778 1004**. We'll show you how you can start engaging and enrolling more students with artificial intelligence.

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Endnotes

1 Garcia, Cardiff. "College Side Hustle." NPR Planet Money, 18 November 2018.

2 Greene, David. "Why Is Undergraduate College Enrollment Declining?" NPR Morning Edition, 25, May 2018.

3 Soodik, Nichola. "*College Choice Overload.*" Inside Higher Ed, 4 December, 2017.

4 Spain, Ashley. "*College admissions budgets - how are they changing?*" RNL Enrollment Management Blog. 23, March 2018.

5 "The Los Angeles Film School Case Study." Conversica, 2016.

About Conversica

Conversica is a leading provider of Intelligent Virtual Assistants helping organizations attract, acquire and grow customers at scale. A Conversica Intelligent Virtual Assistant is an AI-powered, SaaS-based software application that serves as a virtual team member and autonomously engages contacts, prospects, customers, or partners in human-like, two-way interactions at scale to drive towards the next best action accelerating revenue; whether that's scheduling a sales meeting, gauging interest to buy additional products or services, or politely but persistently collecting overdue payments.

Reaching out to over 100 million people on behalf of thousands of companies, Conversica Intelligent Virtual Assistants are built on a proven and patented intelligent automation platform integrating natural language understanding (NLU), natural language generation (NLG), autonomous action chains and deep learning capabilities that engage contacts over multiple communication channels and in multiple languages.

Winning multiple awards including Inc. 5000 fastest growing companies and #6 on Fast Company's most innovative AI companies, Conversica is a portfolio company of Providence Strategic Growth, Kennet Partners and Toba Capital and is headquartered in Foster City, California.