OPEN LAB Graduate Admissions for Graduate Programs

Metropolitan State University of Denver

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September 21, 2020

Grad Lab
Office of Social Work Student Services, Finance & Administration
Department of Social Work
College of Health & Applied Sciences

Introductions

- Meet the presenter
- Meet the attendees

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Goals for this session:

- Explore the admissions funnel and consider both graduate program-wide and program-specific phases of the graduate admissions funnel.

- Identify methods of optimizing the admissions funnel to improve future yield rates and inform predictive analytic enrollment management.

- Review and identify resources and tools to support your admissions funnel to include Slate.
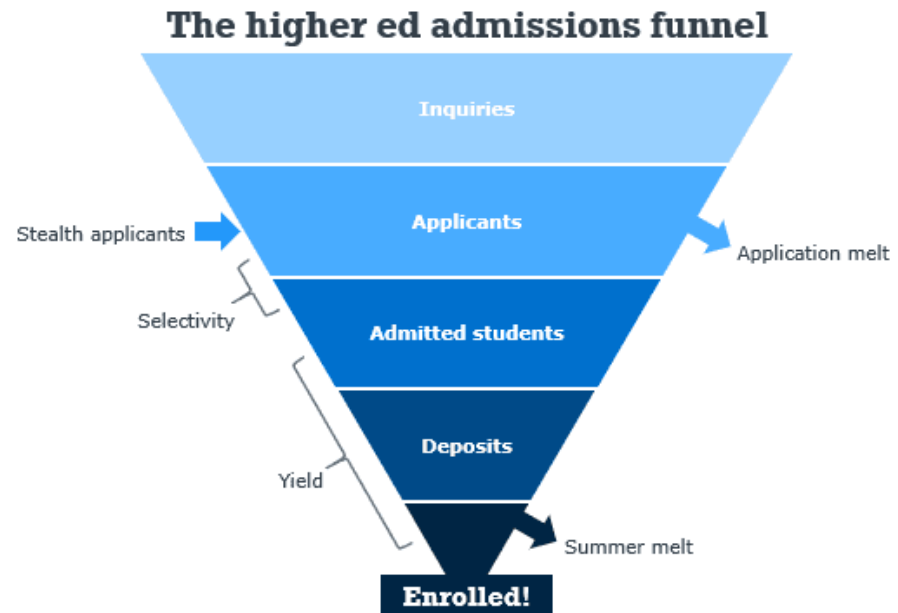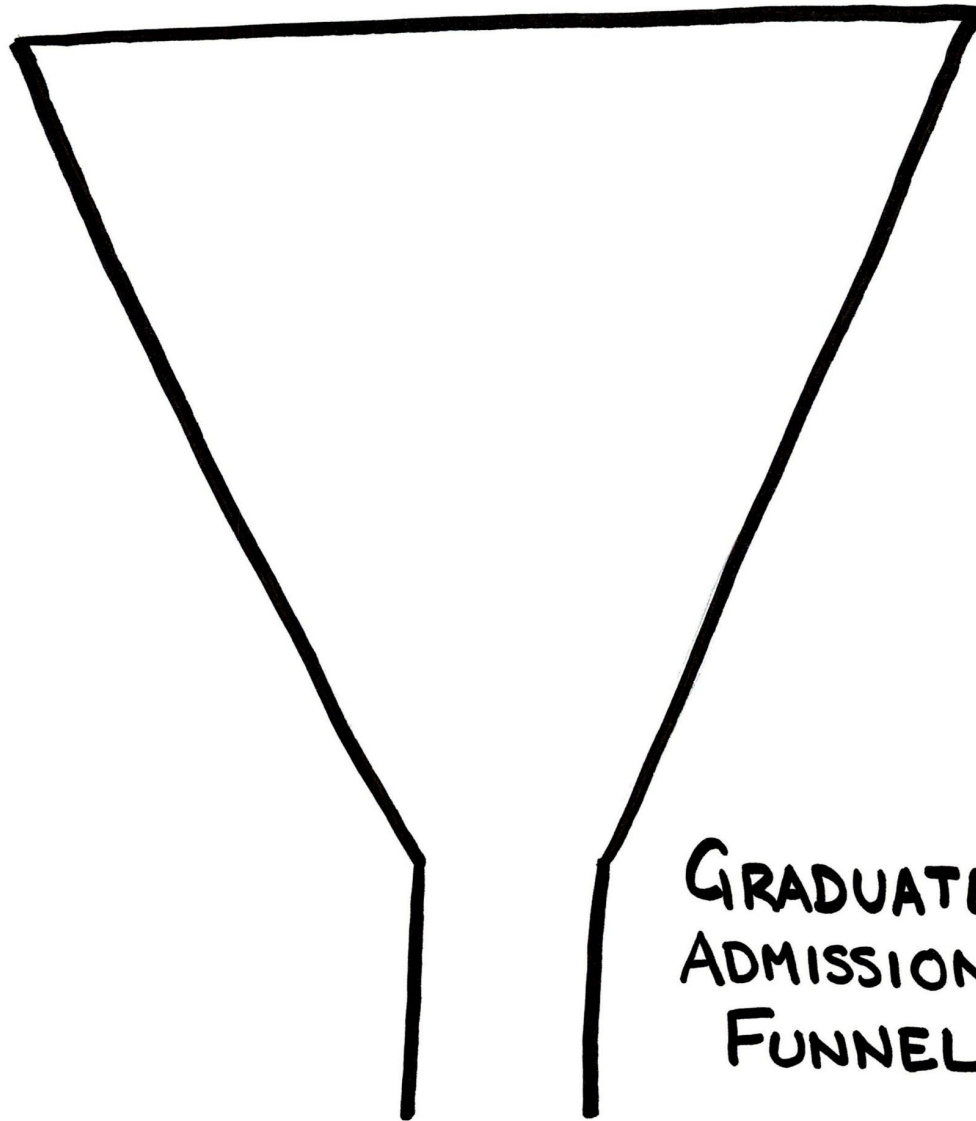
Graduate Enrollment Management
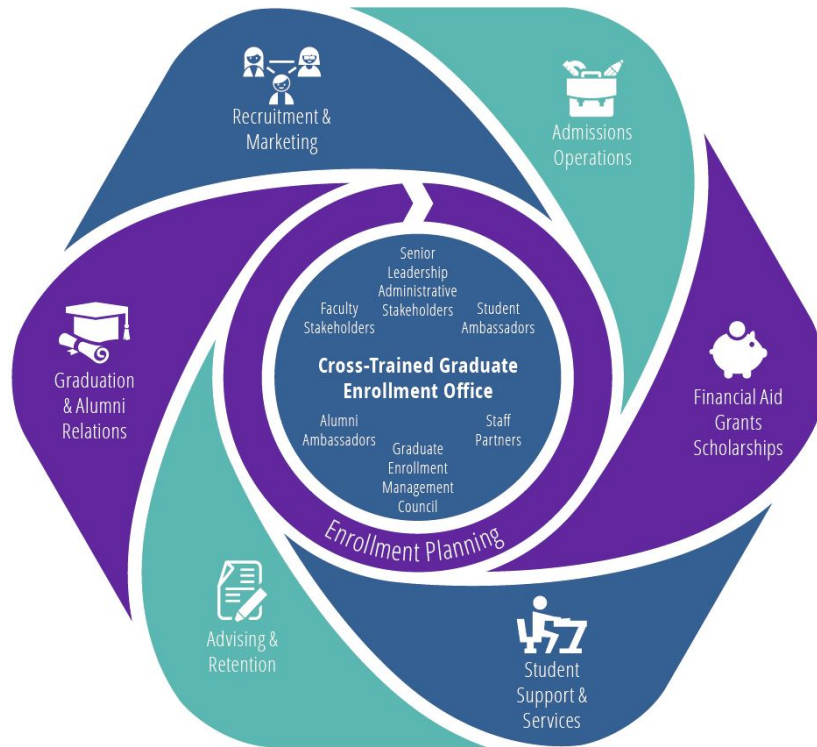
- Graduate Enrollment Management (GEM)

- Building your GEM community is critical
    - Shared language
    - Mutual understanding of processes
    - Awareness of common challenges faced at the graduate level (within programs and for students)

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Admission Funnel Basics

- There's no getting around it – the admissions funnel is an integral part of graduate enrollment management

- Benefits of the Admissions Funnel:
    - Recognize factors that make an applicant more likely to attend
    - Identify where to target your energy and resources
    - Supportive of predictive enrollment efforts
    - Advocate for resources using the language to make your case

The higher ed admissions funnel

Inquiries

Stealth applicants → Applicants → Application melt

Selectivity

Admitted students

Deposits

Yield

→ Summer melt

Enrolled!

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Graduate Admissions Funnel

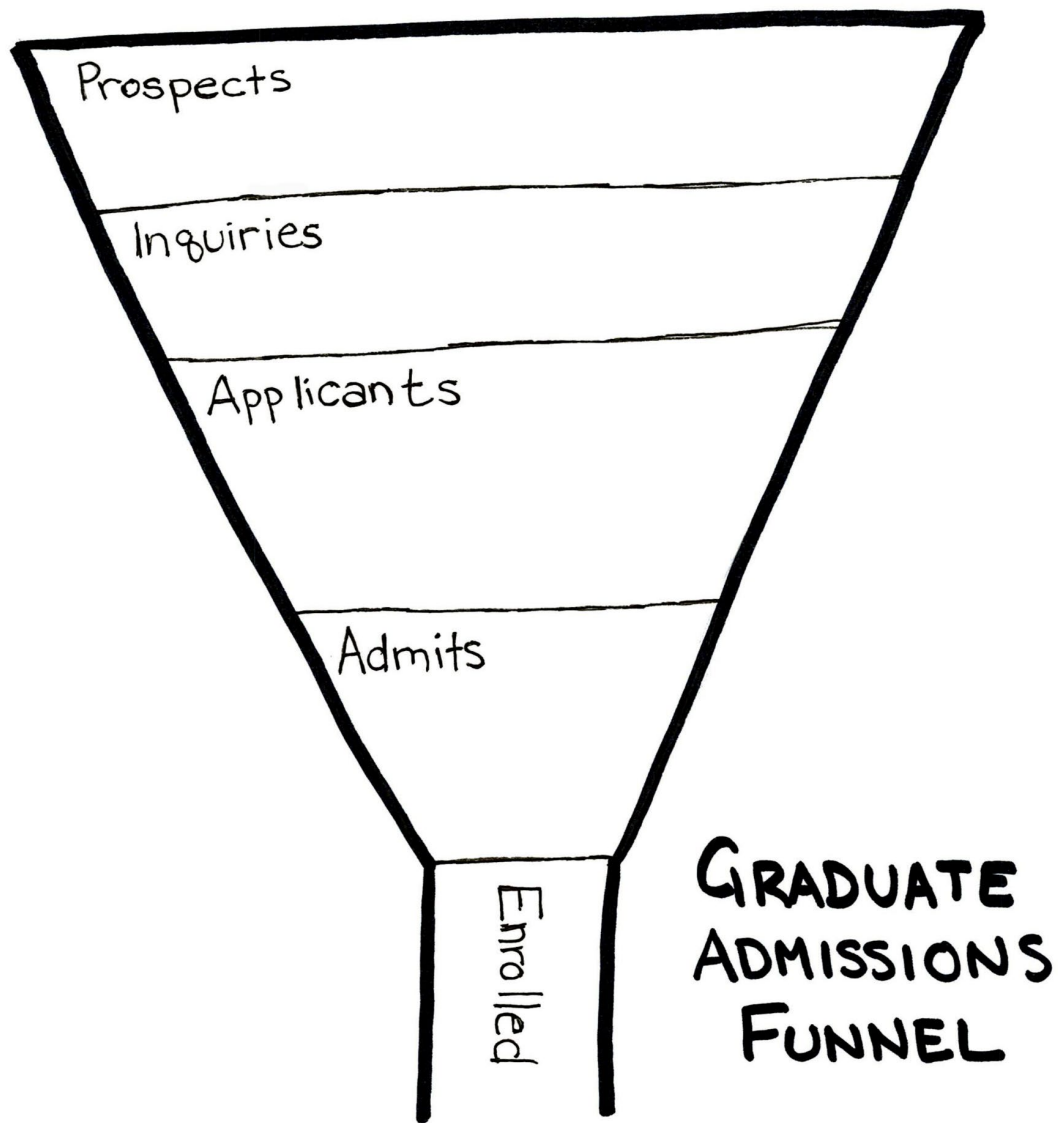# The Graduate Admissions Funnel

Top Levels – Building Demand
- Prospects
- Inquiries

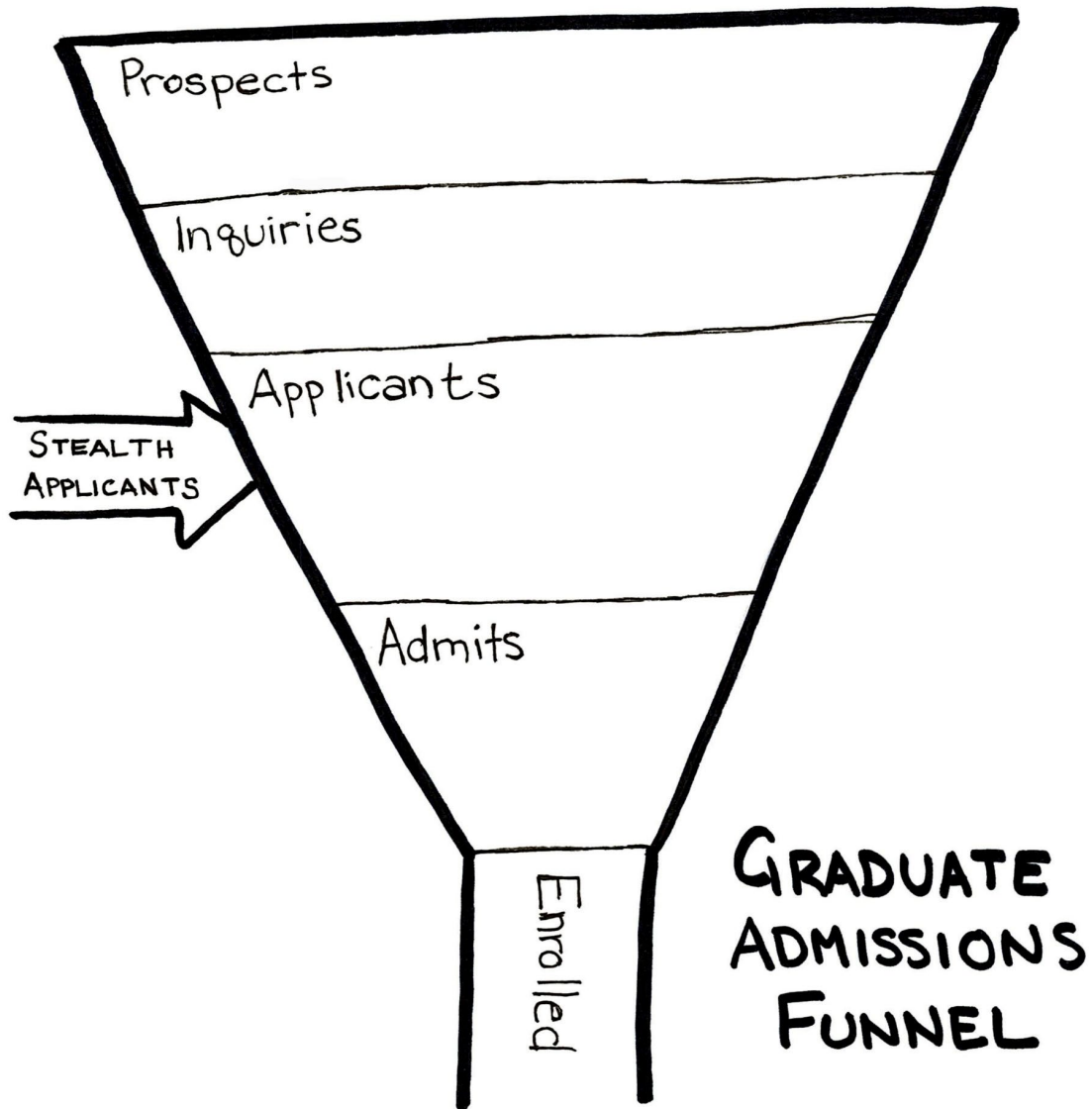**Middle Levels– Cultivating Applicants**
- Applicants
- Admits

Bottom Levels – Optimizing Yield
- Enrolled

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Graduate Admissions Funnel

- Prospects
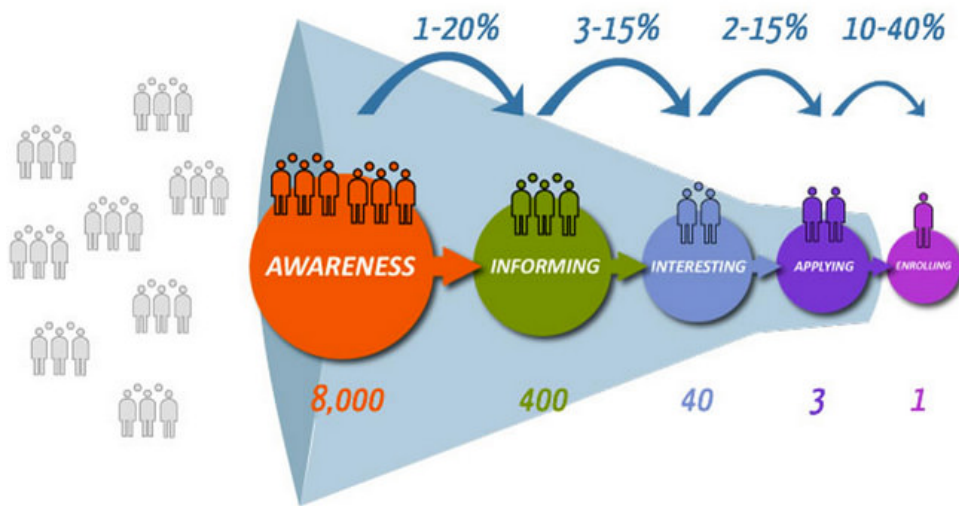- Inquiries
- Applicants
- Admits
- Enrolled

Beware Stealth Applicants!

- Stealth Applicants – folks who start or submit an application without prior inquiry

- Not included in the inquiry to applicant conversion rate

- Included in the applicant to admit conversion rate

- How do they fit into your funnel?

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Graduate Admissions Funnel

- Prospects
- Inquiries
- Applicants
- Stealth Applicants
- Admits
- Enrolled

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Example Funnels with Conversion Rates

- Prospects – 5,000
- Inquiries – 500 *(10% conversion rate)*
- Applications – 100
  - Inquiry Applications – 60 *(12% conversion rate)*
  - Stealth Applications – 40
- Admits – 75 *(75% accept rate)*
- Enrolled – 25 *(33% yield rate)*

Why Care About Your Funnel?

Identify Conversion Points
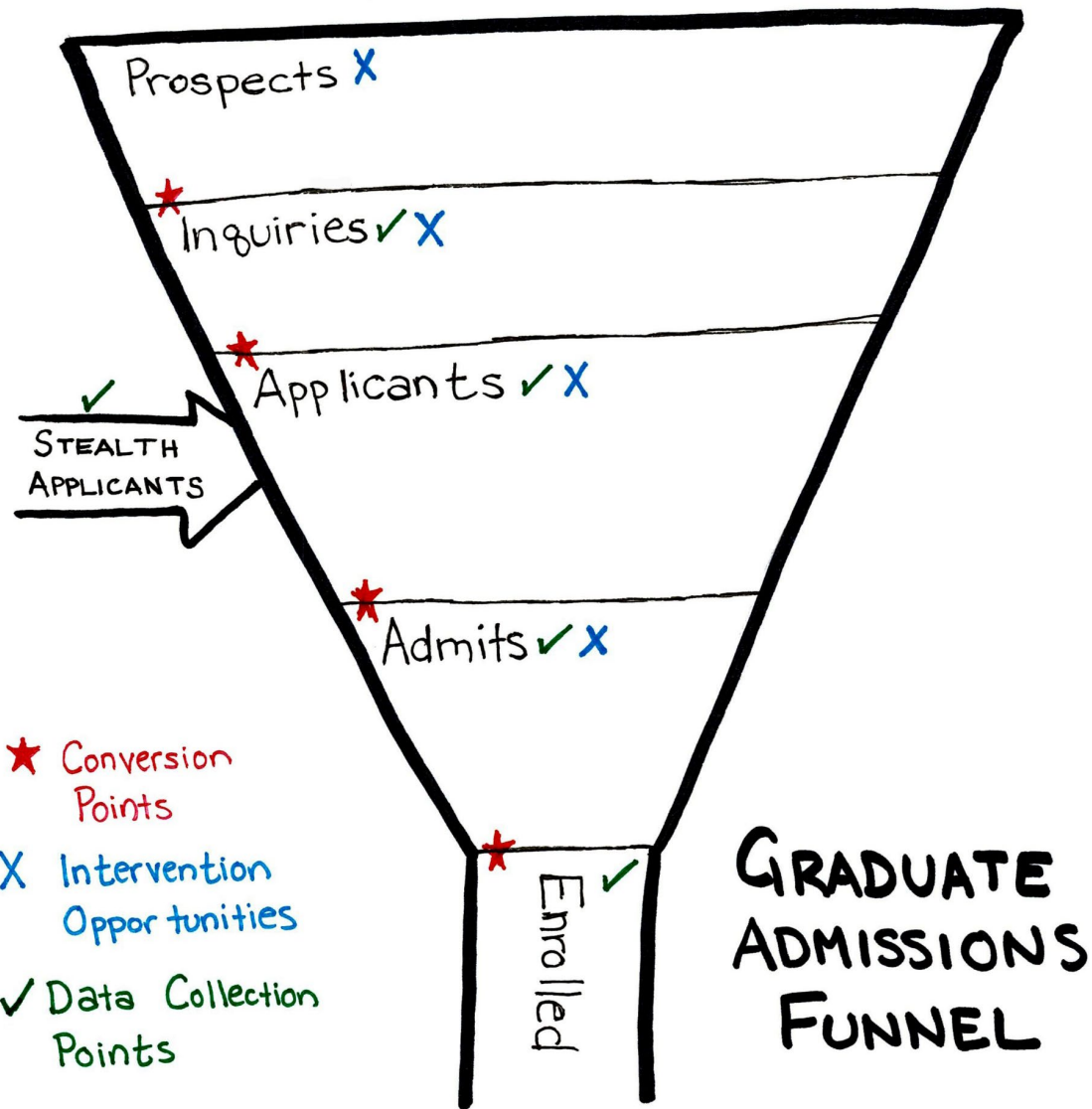
Locate Opportunities For An Intervention

Collect Data Points For Predictive Enrollment Modeling

Customize your funnel to your process

Building Out the Funnel

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Graduate Admissions Funnel

Prospects ✗

Inquiries ✓ ✗

Applicants ✓ ✗

Stealth Applicants ✓

Admits ✓ ✗

Enrolled ✓

★ Conversion Points
✗ Intervention Opportunities
✓ Data Collection Points

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Personalize Your Funnel

- Start brainstorming how to personalize the funnel for your program

- Are there additional conversion points specific to your program within the standard framework?

- What types of interventions are right for your program and prospective students and when should they occur?

- What data do you want to collect?

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Graduate Admissions Funnel

Prospects — Focus on increasing awareness. X Direct Email Campaign. X MarCom ads + partnerships.

Inquiries — submits info request form. X MSW Preview Day. ✓ Complete Profile Form.

Applicants — Stealth Applicants. Started Application, Submitted App, Complete App. X Email Nudges.

Admits — Intent to Enroll. Reg-a-Palooza X. Calling X Campaign. Deferrals.

Enrolled — Registration X Checks.

★ Conversion Points
X Intervention Opportunities
✓ Data Collection Points

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Prioritize & Build It Out

- What data points can you start collecting now?

- What interventions can you implement this cycle?

- What needs to wait to be built out in the future?

- If you have multiple admissions cycles annually, you will have folks in different phases of the funnel for different start terms
  - Different interventions might work better for different cohorts
  - Make sure to track each cohort's data separately
  - Align your funnel with your timeline, cohort dependent

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Optimize the Funnel

Admissions Funnel – responsibility of the admissions unit

Broad

Individual

Leads/Prospects

Inquiries

Applicants

Stealth Applicants (Did Not Identify)

Completed Applications

Accepted

Enrolled

Matriculated

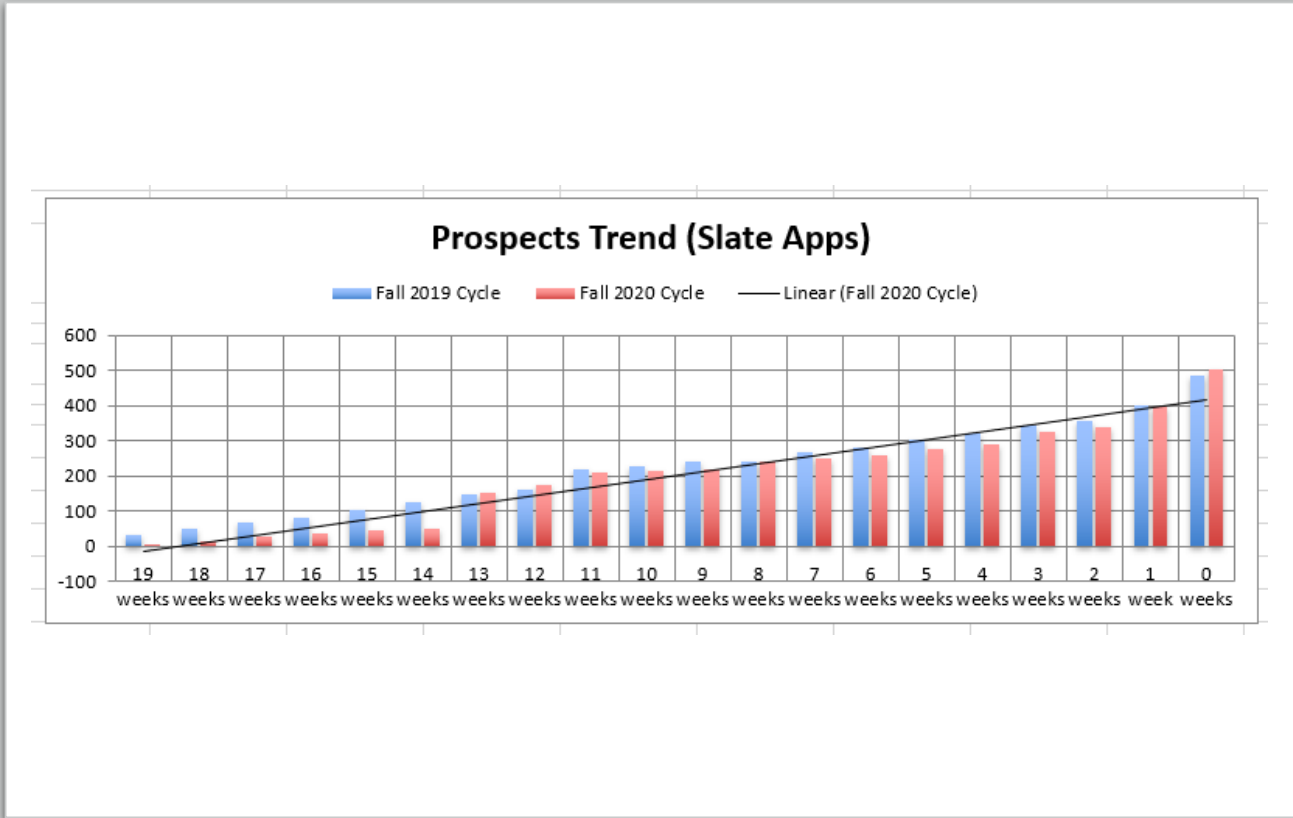Marketing and recruitment emphasis

Operational and follow-up emphasis

- Your funnel should drive your decision making – proper funnel management equals results

- Obtain student feedback to improve your funnel management

- Three ways to increase your output:
  - Increase the size of the inquiry pool (widen the top of the funnel)
  - Increase the conversion rate at various points (keep the funnel from narrowing as quickly)
  - Combine both strategies

Tracking Data Over Time

Tracking Data Over Time

Tracking Data Over Time

Historical Data Tracker – template will be available!

Takes time to collect historic data and identify key data points in your funnel

Goals can be established based on an understanding of your individualized conversion rates and funnel

Work backwards – admissions is a big part of reaching goals each year

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Tools for Funnel Management

- Always be engaged in funnel management and tracking this data

- Slate is a tool that can help you manage your funnel, but is not the only tool!

- Look at:
  - What information is available?
  - What pieces of information are important?
  - How can I segment this data?
  - What can be automated via my tools versus what do I need to manage hands on?

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Resources to Learn More

- [Successful strategies for recruiting adult, online, and graduate students](#) (from NAGAP 2019 Annual Conference)

- [The enrollment funnel: Better results start with the prospects you already have](#) (from ICEF Monitor)

- [Overlooked inefficiencies in admissions that can impact yield](#) (from AACRAO)

- [The 5 key stages of college enrollment – and which metrics to track during each](#) (from EAB)

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Q & A