

University of Idaho

CollegeWeekLive Results:

- Enrolled 120+ new students met at CWL
- Met 1,400+ prospective international students
- Significantly reduced travel costs

College: University of Idaho

Location: Moscow, Idaho

Size: 12,500 students

The University of Idaho (UI) is a nationally-recognized research institution, offering one of the best educational values in the Pacific Northwest. As one of the nation's land grant research universities, UI was founded to ensure all citizens have access to a high quality education.

The opportunity

The University of Idaho recruits equally among first-generation students as well as those students who have an academic tradition in their household. "This presents incredible challenges for communicating in a way that resonates with all different students," said Cezar Mesquita, Admissions Director for the University of Idaho. "We need the right message at the right time."

For example, getting first-generation students to consider college is often difficult. In fact, Idaho has the lowest college continuation rate in the country. "Many students write off the idea of college early on," said Mesquita. "We need to close the information gap to help champion students to succeed in college and beyond." Likewise, the university was looking to expand its reach beyond areas they could travel to.

In addition, the admissions team saw the value in expanding reach to more parents of prospective students. "Parents are the greatest influencer on students' college decisions, perhaps even more so for first-generation students," Mesquita said. "It's our job to show them how their children can earn a degree and then come back to the community and contribute in a significant way."

The solution

The university's admissions team saw an opportunity to participate in virtual college fairs and online chat sessions at CollegeWeekLive to forge a meaningful connection with high school students and their parents. Through these channels, prospective and admitted students can communicate online with admissions officers and current students to gain a better understanding of the educational and cultural experiences that the university offers.

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Admissions Director

Even more importantly, they have a convenient, stress-free way to connect with the university throughout the enrollment process. If a student has a concern or hits an obstacle along the way, they have an easy way to reach out. “It’s crucial to engage with students and their families in relevant ways,” Mesquita said. “When we reach out to first-generation families, for example, it’s important to connect with them early, and be very inclusive and collaborative.”

The online sessions at CollegeWeekLive have also been ideal for customizing messages for different student segments. For example, the admissions office can host a webcast that informs international students about what’s involved with preparing for life at a U.S. university and host a separate event to help first-generation freshmen and sophomores learn early on about the value of college. By proactively addressing the very specific questions and concerns of each group, the university is able to form stronger bonds with prospective students and their families.

The university is also realizing the benefits of leveraging CollegeWeekLive’s partnerships with nonprofit organizations to educate students about college and scholarship opportunities. “Admissions officers can’t go it alone,” said Mesquita. “There are so many resources out there that can help us to deliver information as a public service, whether we’re walking students through completing the FAFSA or showing them the different pathways to college.”

To that end, UI participates in online events such as Paying for College Day and the Univision Virtual College Fair, which feature live presentations from the U.S. Department of Education, the CollegeBoard, and other organizations who are dedicated to helping students and parents prepare for college. Most importantly, events like this expose high schoolers to peers who have achieved success as a result of earning a degree.

UI is also using online communications to enhance more traditional outreach activities. Recently, the school hosted a hybrid online/face-to-face event for admitted students. Some students visited campus while others logged in from home to watch live webcasts with the university dean, the director of advising, and several faculty members. “This gave us broad geographic reach,” said Mesquita. “Students who connected with us online found it very welcoming, and said they felt like they were right in the room with us.”



“CollegeWeekLive gives us a way to communicate in a meaningful way with our international admitted students.”

Cezar Mesquita
Admissions Director



The results

In a single year, the admissions office met 5,600 new prospective students – and many of their parents - through online events such as CollegeWeekLive’s All Access Day, international student college fairs, and specialty events such as Paying for College. Many of these students chose UI as their top school. In addition, the university has been receiving invitations from high school counselors in Idaho and Washington to participate in online meetings with their students. “Online meetings reduce our travel costs significantly,” said Mesquita.

The admissions department uses CollegeWeekLive as much more than a lead generation tool. It has been a way to re-engage students in their database and to inspire admitted students to enroll. For example, IU recently hosted a webinar in Portuguese, specifically for their admitted Brazilian students. “These webinars are a big part of our yield strategy,” said Mesquita. “They give us a way to communicate in a meaningful way with our international admitted students.”