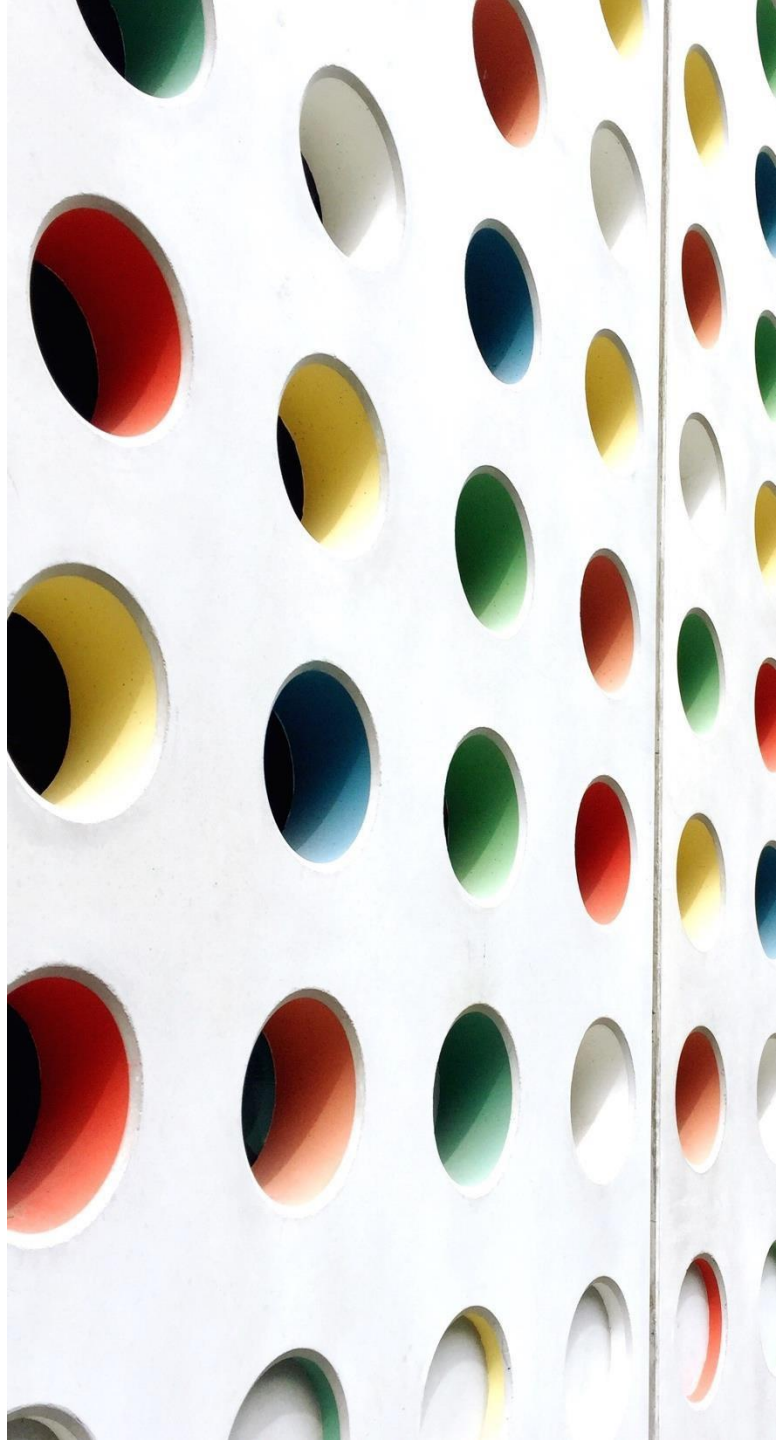
Recruitment and Engagement: Strategies, Tips, and Tricks

Presented By:
Aimee Julian and Brittany Boston
Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support

icsps

Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support,
Illinois State University, College of Education



What to expect in the next few minutes

A bit of evidence-based practices - EBP

Strategies and tips to increase recruitment & engagement

Nod your head, smile, and scratch down a note

Tip for Recruiting!

Get Excited and
Challenge the Status Quo!

"You can't fix a problem with the same thinking that got you into trouble."

"If nothing changes, then nothing changes."

Evidence-Based Practices - EBP

It is crucial to **dispel stereotypes** held by instructors, parents, and/or the learners themselves regarding college opportunities by raising awareness of program opportunities early in the recruitment process.

When using pictures of any student, **show them working – not just watching**.

Include pictures with individuals in context to reduce stereotypes by displaying elements of their personality or identity that are not work-related

Create **relationships with employers** to provide accurate information and facilitate contact with potential speakers and resources.

Be Intentional In Representing ALL Students

Use images of diverse individuals on marketing materials – both online and printed materials.

EBP

Provide services and recruitment campaigns that draw students to programs but do not take actions that single them out.

Use common language instead of professional/bureaucratic terms in promotional materials; if potential students do not recognize the meaning of language do not use it in recruitment efforts.

EBP

When recruiting learners, it is important to use **multiple forms of media to market** to learners and family members since the decision to enroll in any program is often a family decision.

Battle Assumptions be sure your marketing does not assume all nurses are women or all welders are men.

Use **promotional materials that feature photos and testimonials of current learners and graduates** of the programs.

Success stories matter…

Word-of-mouth marketing is a critical—and overlooked—part of recruitment!

Word-of-mouth marketing is a critical—and overlooked—part of recruitment!

Rethink word of mouth – texts, tweets, posts, shares – are all word-of-mouth communication.

Leverage new technology

Find	Find what works for your team and your program.
Start	Start small but start somewhere!
Engage	Engage with potential and current students!

Follow up with Students!

EMAIL STUDENTS FROM LAST SPRING

CALL AND/OR TEXT STUDENTS TO CHECK IN

FOLLOW UP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

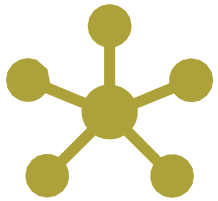
Your webpage is the gateway to your program

Review your website to insure it is…

- ✓ Intuitive
- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Easy to Navigate
- ✓ Designed and inviting for potential students

Does your program have a social media presence?

The three E's of Successful Recruiting!



Engage

Equip

Empower

Ensure there is a clear place to go to get answers?

Now that you have them, how do you keep them?

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

Why do students leave?

- Financial Challenges
- Poor Academic Performance
- Lack of Engagement and Belonging
- Unclear Expectations
- Poor Time Management Skills

They will stay if they feel they belong, and you are invested in them.

INVOLVE THE WHOLE CAMPUS COMMUNITY IN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

Engagement Strategies

Emphasize Student Support Services

Personalized Proactive Advising- highlight academic mentors, coaches, advisors

Flexible Scheduling: Initiate programs that cater to your students' lifestyles, including hybrid or flexible course options that help students attend while juggling work and travel.

One-on-one student messaging and academic support are highly desirable for students—regardless of age, personal background, or income level

Boost Community Engagement

COHORTS, STUDY GROUPS, STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Engagement Strategies

Peer Mentoring Programs: Establish a peer mentorship network where experienced students guide and support younger learners or first-year students.

Virtual Tutoring Centers: Provide online access to tutoring services and resources, giving students more timely assistance regardless of where they're located.

Holistic Wellness Programs: Offer mental healthcare resources and counseling services to support students' emotional well-being alongside the academic journey.

Data-Driven Advising: Use data analytics to identify struggling students early and give personalized support for academic roadblocks.

Work-Integrated Learning: Partner with local businesses and enterprise organizations to create internships and hands-on experiences that bridge the gap between classroom learning through real-world application.

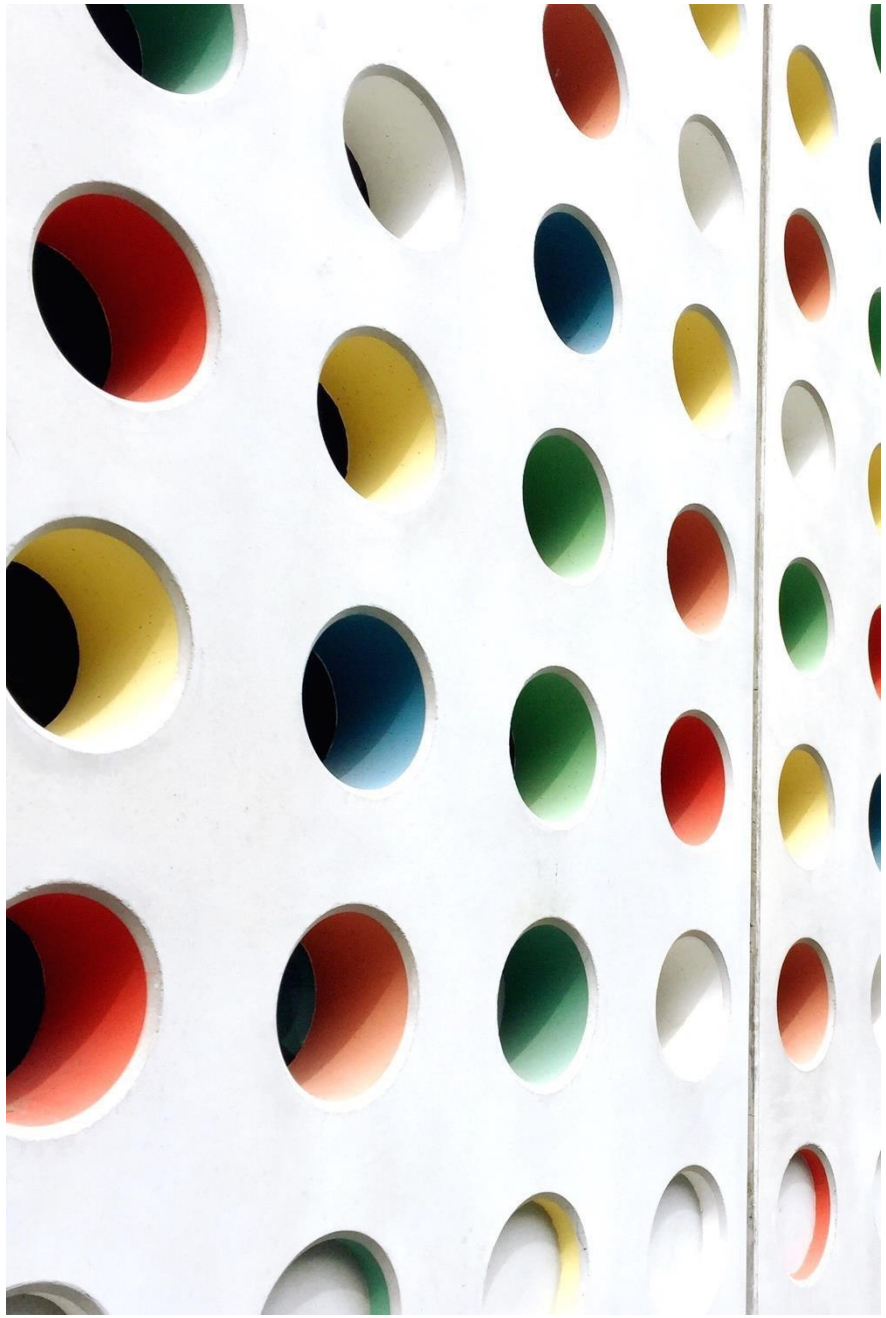
Wrap Around Services

Transportation Support: Provide reliable transportation assistance—such as transit passes, ride-share coordination, or shuttle services—to help students consistently access classes, training, childcare, and essential services.

Food Bank or Community Kitchen: Ensure students have access to nutritious food through on-campus food banks, meal vouchers, or partnerships with community kitchens, reducing food insecurity and supporting student success.

Childcare: Offer affordable, accessible childcare options and referrals so students with dependents can fully participate in their education and training without interruption.

Centralized Resources: Create a single, easy-to-navigate hub that connects students to academic, financial, wellness, and support services, reducing barriers and helping them find assistance quickly.



icsps

Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support,
Illinois State University, College of Education

Thank you.

Presented By:
Aimee Julian and Brittany Boston
Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support
Icsps.illinoisstate.edu