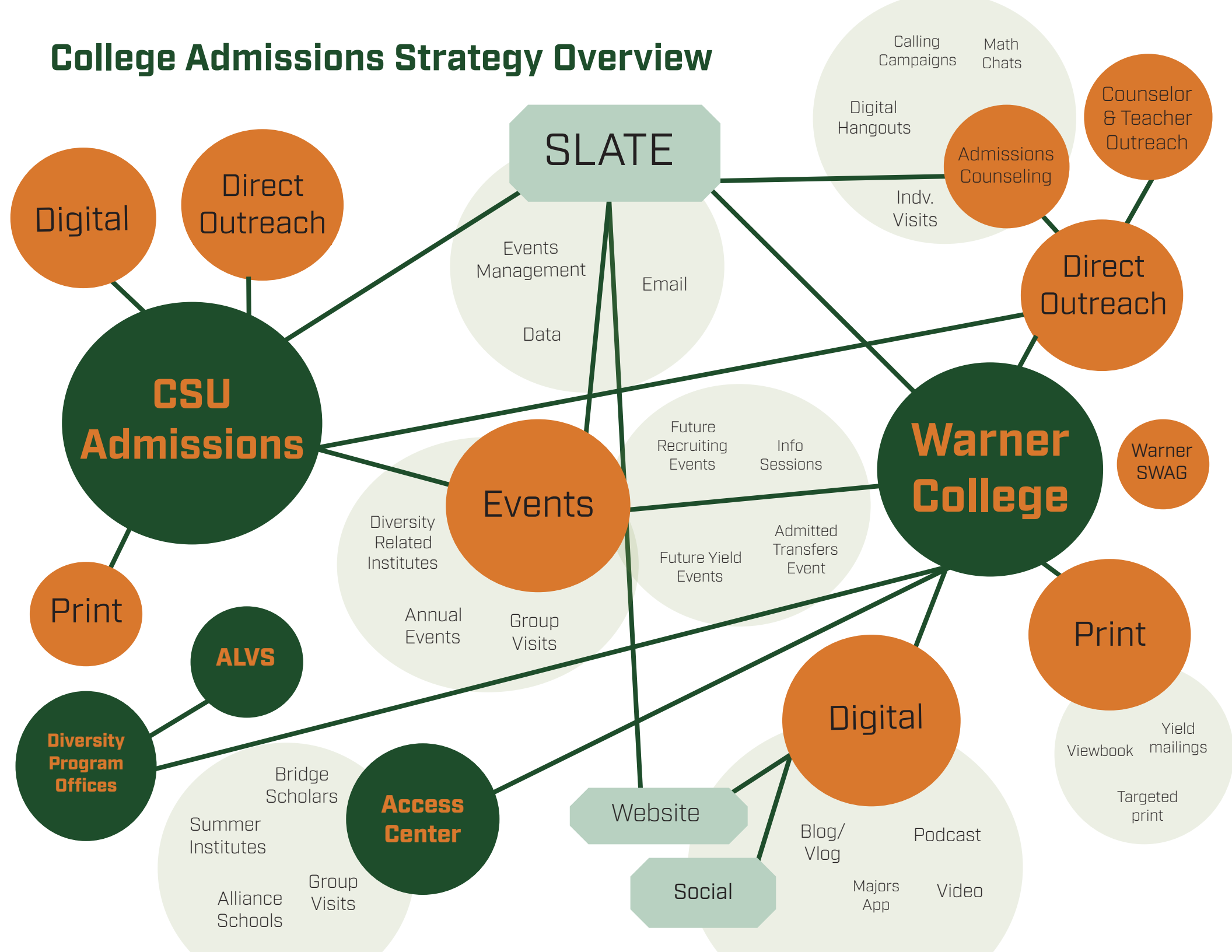


College Admissions Strategy Overview



Warner College Undergraduate Admissions Strategy

Draft for review – distributed June 2019

Timeframe: Implement beginning with Fall 20 recruiting cycle (August 19 start)

Summary

- Admissions goals vary across programs but generally fit into three broad categories 1) Growth Oriented 2) Sustain and 3) Emphasize Expectations
- There is general agreement about increasing the proportions of underserved populations, first generation, and low-income student populations within the undergraduate programs
- There is a need to establish a more robust College admissions system to supplement CSU structures – this is the primary aim of the first phase of the plan
- With regard to admissions, the College Recruitment and Engagement Coordinator needs to play marketing, outreach, and admissions counseling roles simultaneously
- The College intends to be intentional in filling gaps in communications with students to support their decisions and find a good fit and welcome them to the College
- Intentional effort is needed to address distribution of new students among majors to support programs that experience attrition and capacity challenges as well as those that are in need of students
- The College needs to partner with departments to create means to address natural resource knowledge gaps among potential students and their influencers
- The College will seek partnerships with departments to pilot efforts to incorporate into the ongoing strategy

Introduction

This plan defines admissions counseling and recruitment functions carried out by the College Recruitment and Engagement Coordinator to support undergraduate program goals and needs.

It culminates input from College stakeholders (College leadership, department heads, faculty, and academic success coordinators), and CSU partners Admissions, Adult Learner and Veteran Services, and the CSU Access Center. This plan sets forth tactics spread across three phases that coincide with the primary phase of upcoming recruiting years, 20-21, 21-22, and 22-23.

The strategy builds on CSU Admissions processes and deepens the College's partnership with that office. Leveraging existing communications tools for prospective and admitted students allows College to play a role in influencing potential student's decisions and introduce itself to begin establishing community and affinity with students prior to their arrival on campus. A primary aim of this effort is for students and their support networks to perceive CSU/Warner College as a supportive institution, invested student success in whatever form success takes for them.

Warner College has experienced significant undergraduate program growth over the past five years (14% from F14 - F19), which has outpaced CSU's overall growth during that same period. (8% from F14 – F19) This growth has not been evenly distributed throughout the College however, with overwhelming concentrations of new students entering the college in the Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and Ecosystem Science and Sustainability majors (up 44% and 53% respectively over the same timeframe).

Meanwhile, other majors in the college remain 'found' majors, relying heavily on internal and external transfer students for inputs. A primary aim of College admissions efforts is to impact this distribution (for new first year students primarily) by intentionally increasing understanding of curricular expectations and raising awareness of possible alternatives potential students may not have considered due to the general lack of natural resources awareness.

This strategy will be continuously evaluated with opportunities for experimenting and assessment driving toward emphasizing activities that:

- support students selecting Warner College programs and ultimately, enrolling in the program that best fits their needs with a good understanding of the expectations and potential outcomes of those programs
- Diversifying our student body
- Help build general awareness of NR fields and careers among students' decision-making support networks

Opportunities and challenges

College Admissions Counseling and Yield:

Distribution of incoming students -

Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and Ecosystem Science and Sustainability typically dominate first year students' attention. While not every major in the College is in a place where growth is a primary objective, and that trend is likely to remain persistent, stronger equity-minded communications in both recruiting and yield phases as well as expectations setting may have a positive impact on this distribution. Additionally, the majority of UG majors in the College are interested in sustainable growth, and those programs of highest need will be where pilot efforts in recruiting phases are emphasized.

During conversations with College stakeholders, the goal orientation of College UG majors fell into three categories: 1) Majors to grow 2). Majors to sustain 3) Majors to emphasize curricular expectations

Majors to Grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and Rangeland Stewardship • Restoration Ecology • Natural Resource Tourism • Geology • Watershed Science 	Receive the highest marketing/admissions counseling emphasis from the College. Pilot efforts with programs of high need.
Majors to Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Dimensions of Natural Resources • Natural Resource Management 	Receive some marketing emphasis/admissions counseling, but not as strong as growth-oriented majors.
Majors to Emphasize Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology • Ecosystem Science and Sustainability 	Pro-active, admissions counseling efforts employed, but won't be completely excluded from marketing.

Support student’s decision making early, and consistently

The College has the means to have targeted/intentional conversations with students that can begin as soon as the recruitment stages and continue through orientation and on-boarding to help them find their best fit in the College or at CSU as soon as possible.

Recruiting

The NR knowledge gap – a ‘found-majors’ phenomenon

Natural resource majors are not generally well-known, particularly among people who haven’t known someone with first-hand experience in a natural resource field. These issues are persistent across natural resources educational contexts despite growth and emphasis on Green STEM fields. This results in heavy reliance on transfer students. Emphasizing effort around new students finding a good fit as soon as possible is advantageous to both students and the College. A focus on education and awareness building for high school counselors and science teachers is also intended to address this challenge.

Address lack of racial and ethnic diversity in UG population from traditionally marginalized communities, specifically, Latinx and African American students

Natural Resource fields and the College’s undergraduate populations are generally dominated by a very narrow demographic segment of society. The College is committed to addressing this disparity for a number of reasons, including ensuring the future sustainability of natural resources management and associated fields in the face of changing demographics nationally.

Capitalizing on the CSU/College’s veteran success with Veterans

Warner College has the highest proportion of veterans than any College at CSU at 6%. We intend to capitalize on this by intentionally marketing to veterans to increase this proportion. Veterans represent a diversity of perspectives that are beneficial to the College community and tend to be highly focused, successful students. Additionally, due to the diversity of the military

this approach may have a positive impact on addressing all the underserved audiences the College is interested in attracting.

Target audiences

Incoming new students – Initially, emphasis on new students will entail establishing systems to drive yield and play a stronger admissions counseling role. Growing from there, tactics to target students with an interest in environmental sciences/participation in HS environmental sustainability clubs and emphasizing recruiting at science-based/technical HS, and Alliance partnership schools will develop. Materials targeting these populations need to appeal to GenZ and mitigate general lack of natural resources fields and careers, be generally equity minded, and not create undue confusion across cultural boundaries.

Internal transfers and undeclared students - The ‘found-nature’ phenomenon of natural resources programs is persistent and entrenched. Efforts to introduce the College to current CSU students will continue to be an important input for college programs, particularly those that are growth-oriented and interested in being sustained.

External transfers - Students from other institutions, particularly those starting their College careers at Community Colleges are high value recruitment targets for the College. Their interests are typically different from incoming new freshman and should have specific messaging addressing the needs they have based on their prior experience in collegiate programs.

Student Veterans – new and transfer - CSU is continually rated for high quality offerings to veterans and invests in supporting this population. Targeted messaging and collateral for this audience should be developed in coordination with CSU AVLS offices to ensure our materials are effective and in keeping with equity-minded communications for veterans.

Traditionally underserved racial and ethnic demographics - The College’s strategic goals include diversifying UG student populations. Specific efforts to target these demographics (specifically Latinx and African American populations) will require leveraging of existing campus relationships partnerships and assistance from the incoming College Director of Diversity and Recruitment programs. Targeted messaging and collateral for this audience should be developed in coordination with college and campus resources for diversity and inclusion to ensure materials are effective and in keeping with equity-minded communications.

Student Influencers and Gatekeepers

Student parent/guardian/extended support network – A student’s support network typically plays a significant role in their college decision making. Messaging directed at students often also goes to their support network. Additionally, due to age, in some cases, social media or other advertising is best targeted to support network members to attempt to raise their awareness of natural resources fields in support of their interests of helping their students plan.

High school counselors and science teachers – These individuals act as trusted information sources for potential first-year students and have a significant impact on program and potential career awareness.

Beginning with schools in/around Fort Collins, in Denver, wider Front Range areas start to develop and foster relationships both with guidance counselors and science teachers. This effort will require leveraging of existing campus relationships partnerships and assistance from the incoming College Director of Diversity and Recruitment programs particularly with regard to Alliance Partnership schools and schools with demographics that can assist with the College's interest in diversifying student body.

Recruitment and Yield Tactics

Leveraging SLATE – student recruitment CRM

SLATE is an undergraduate recruitment customer relationship management database utilized at CSU. Integrating SLATE adds to prospective students' records giving both Admissions and the College richer data and opportunities for assessment. There are several integration steps the College has taken or will take to utilize SLATE to our advantage. Establishing strong systems and interaction with SLATE is an important aspect of Phase 1 of this plan.

Inquiry form integration

Prominent inquiry form placement throughout digital platforms and channels drives leads into SLATE. Leads generated through College-specific systems and those where students have expressed explicit interest in College programs are available for direct marketing.

Email platform

SLATE is the best primary means of communicating with prospective students during the admissions process for broad-based and targeted recruitment, yield, and orientation preparation opportunities

Warner College admissions-based events management

College recruitment and yield events are managed through SLATE including sign-ups, event communications, and follow-up. Individual student visits are managed through SLATE including sign-ups, event communications and follow-up.

Events – Admissions Led

Event	Audience	Function	Timeframe	College Involvement
Discover CSU	High School Juniors and Seniors	Awareness Building, Recruitment	December, February, April	Discover CSU supports students in the earliest stages of considering College. This is often the first time these prospective students are on campus. The goal of this early-stage effort is to create positive memories and connections with potential students and move them into the funnel and toward application. Warner College activities include an academic experience (student panels, workshops, and presentations), participating in an academic fair, and tours with student ambassadors.
Choose CSU	High School Seniors	Yield	December, February, April	Choose CSU supports students further along in the College decision-making process. This is often the last time these prospective students will engage with us on campus. The goal of this later-stage event is to provide essential resources to support these prospective students in this decision-making process and drive them toward application and/or yield them. Warner College activities include major counseling with student ambassadors, an academic experience, workshops in Sherwood Forest and Smith building, and engaging in Admissions-led receptions and tours.
Honors Student Visit Day	High achieving high school students, different levels	Recruitment, Yield	February	Honors Student Visit Day shows the Honors Student experience at CSU to prospective high-achieving students. Research, academics, and campus resources are showcased. The goal of this event is to increase interest in College majors and make meaningful connections. This is achieved through: presentations, student panels, and a workshop.

Transfer Student Visit Day	Prospective external transfer students	Recruitment/Yield	November, February, April	This event supports potential transfer students in considering CSU and understanding their next steps. is another way to provide resources to support these prospective students in the next steps to coming CSU and the college. College activities include presentations and student panels.
Military Visit Day	Prospective active duty military and veterans	Recruitment/Yield	October or November	This event supports prospective students that identify as active duty and military veterans. The goal is to showcase CSU to these students and highlight resources for their population. The programming for this event is: a campus tour, visiting the academic colleges, and a football game. No Colleges currently participate in this event specifically, however, the College is actively seeking a part in this engagement with Admissions.
Counselors Visit Day	Denver and Front Range HS Counselors	Awareness and relationship building	November	Counselors Visit Day helps high school counselors better understand the: programs, opportunities, and the culture of Colorado State University. The goal of this event is to develop relationships with counselors and their schools and increase awareness of our programs. Additionally, the College is actively working with Admissions to increase engagements with HS Counselors, including adding tracks for counselors and teachers to some Discover and Choose Events.
College Fairs	Prospective first-year students	Awareness building, recruitment	October, November, April, and June	College Fairs help increase awareness with prospective students. The goal is to make connections with students and encourage them to visit CSU and the academic college they desire. Typically, these are tabling engagements.

Events – College-led

Event	Audience	Function	Timeframe	College Involvement
College Information Sessions	Internal Transfer Students	Recruitment	September, October, February, April	Student Ambassadors will table on the plaza or flea market to build awareness and to drive traffic to periodic College information sessions highlighting Warner College majors and minors. The goal of these events is to create awareness among prospective internal transfer students at CSU. These will begin in September of 2020.
NR Days Transfer Student Visit Day	Admitted Transfer Students (both local and otherwise)	Yield	April, during NR Days	Admitted transfer student visit day will take place during NR Days in April, this a chance for our transfer students to make connections with current Warner College students and begin building community. Activities include NR Days events, student panels, and a reception with current students. A pilot of this event occurred in April of 2019.
NR Days Admitted Student Visit Day	Admitted first-year students (both local and otherwise)	Yield	April, during NR Days	This event will help admitted first-year students better understand the College and begin to find community, facilitating yield. Activities include, NR Days events, student panels, and a reception with the admitted students and current students. This event has not yet taken place. A pilot will occur in April 2020.

Access Center events/partnerships

Partnering with the Access Center provides a means of attracting broader racial and ethnic demographics into the student body due to the makeup of the populations they tend to serve. There is also potential to grow the College's populations of first generation and Pell-eligible students through this effort, groups that are also important to ensure access for.

Access Center Group Visits

Utilize school group activities menu to provide programming for established Access Center Group Visits. Work with Access Center to create opportunities for group visits once menu of options is well-established and tested.

Leverage relationships at Alliance Partnership Schools

Work with Access Center to build on established relationships with administrators, teachers, and counselors at Alliance Partnership Schools, particularly along the Front Range, Eastern Plains, and Denver. Attend school visits and loop into marketing to school counselors/teachers.

Future Opportunities:

Consider opportunities for offering courses for bridge scholars' summer program; build upon existing partnerships including Summer Institute with ESS/GEO

College Content Marketing

The College leverages platforms and channels (SLATE Email; Website; Social Media) to distribute content marketing undergraduate programs, that generates leads, and supports student's decision-making. These efforts are intended to complement ongoing, generalized Admissions efforts.

College website

The College webpage serves as the primary means of raising awareness and providing specific information about College undergraduate programs.

Homepage

The primary audiences for the College homepage are prospective students and their influencers. Content directs these audiences to deeper information. Inquiry form is prominent in the portions of the page dedicated to student recruitment.

Future students page

Main landing page for prospective students and their influencers. This page has recently been redesigned and elevated. Inquiry form is prominent throughout this page.

Majors pages

Each undergraduate major has a templated webpage with in-depth information covering program offerings. Inquiry forms are present on these pages.

Departmental UG program pages

Departments have created individual landing pages to provide information about their program offerings holistically. Need to identify means of placing inquiry forms into these pages.

Admitted student's portal – under development

A private webpage provided to the College's admitted. Intended to serve as one-stop shopping for supporting their completing the admissions process with the intention of demonstrating the College's commitment to supporting students, driving yield, and delivery of critical orientation-related messaging.

Student-focused pages

A suite of pages throughout the website including the Career Center webpages, student org webpages, pages related to HIPs (internships, UG research, field courses etc.), First Generation Resources pages, and more.

Email Marketing

Audiences: 1) Prospective Students (any type – recruiting/counseling) 2) Admitted Students (yield-focused) 3) Veterans (specific messaging) 4) Counselors/Teachers (*outside of SLATE*)

Recruitment (pilot some effort here in P1 on highest need growth majors)

Use SLATE to identify students potentially interested in highest need majors and pilot efforts to drive their decisions toward those majors.

Yield

Use SLATE to drive yield with College welcome emails. In future phases, explore departmental welcome emails.

Email Content types

- College community/feel/emphasis on HIPs
- Majors-related content
- Resources for students
- Student-life related content (podcasts, feature stories)
- Connecting with College – social media, visits, news
- Process oriented/welcome messaging

Veteran Specific

- Processes for utilizing benefits
- Majors-related content
- Veteran testimonials

Content Marketing for Counselors/Teachers

Content types (Awareness building)

- Majors-related content
- NR career content
- Podcasts

Content Types (providing value – passive awareness building)

Lesson plans/classroom activities for teachers

- Environmental Science activities – partner with ESS in parallel to their dept. marketing efforts to develop, package, and distribute branded classroom activity content to science teachers

Social media marketing

College social media raises awareness and generates interest in College UG programs and engages students in digital community. A variety of content supports these efforts to drive traffic toward content warehouses (in case of podcast/news content) and/or future students pages on College website.

Instagram is currently the best platform to demonstrate Warner Community vibe and values to future students. YouTube is highly valuable for potential student audiences and needs more emphasis. Facebook is more valuable to reach potential student's networks and parents.

Both branded Warner College content will be useful across along with sharing Admissions produced content. Eventually, advertising aimed at parents/gatekeepers will be utilized via Facebook. Some advertising opportunities may also present themselves via YouTube for prospective student audiences.

Marketing Collateral

Marketing pieces to support overall College recruitment and admissions counseling efforts. In Phase 1 of the plan, this area is a significant emphasis.

College SWAG

The College maintains a suite of general and targeted promotional items and SWAG that help support College Admissions efforts.

Physical

Suite of new admissions marketing materials

- College viewbook (with strong ties to digital components)
- Yield/Admitted Students collateral (evaluate potential in context of digital components)
- Materials for school teachers/counselors (posters, career emphasis pieces)

Admitted student mailings

- Welcome to college glossy piece
- Admitted student 'hand'-dana

- “Ticket” to MC 1st year student experience

Examine potential to partner with Richardson Design Center on packaging design to tap builder culture; create a touchstone for social shares/affinity building/make the College stand-out.

Digital

Videos

Major’s Explainers

Major’s explainer videos that highlight a student in the major and feature a faculty member discussing the program of study and career outcomes.

Targeted career themed videos

Following identification of NR job themes, create content highlighting various programs to engage in to get to those jobs – Ex. Work with wildlife theme video discusses various programs of study that support wide array of jobs working with wildlife, rather than a singular focus on wildlife biology.

Content supporting joining the Warner Community

Data from admitted student’s portal and admissions counseling efforts will help identify topics to produce simple ‘help’ video content around. In this effort, we’ll emphasize current students as hosts.

Podcast

Entitled, “Tune into Nature” this effort is a partnership between the College and KCSU Fort Collins. “Tune into Nature” highlights current students’ experiences in Warner College students. The episodes will be released on a bi-weekly basis per semester. Available on iTunes, Soundcloud, Spotify, and other podcast platforms. These will also be distributed via email to prospective students and College social media.

Direct Outreach and Admissions Counseling

Develop relationships and provide support to CSU Admissions Counselors

Leverage existing opportunities and create new opportunities to engage with front-line CSU Admissions Counselors to ensure messaging about College programs is on target.

Individual Visits

Potential students visiting campus is important both in recruiting and yield phases. It is typically a significant determinant (and more data through SLATE will help to refine this assumption) in students’ decisions to attend CSU. This system is already relatively well established, however, improvements in students being able to observe classes will be implemented in 20-21 recruiting cycle.

Student-to-student call-a-thons

Student ambassadors calling admitted students to welcome them to the community and check-in assists with yield and shows support to students in their decision making.

Digital “Hangouts”

The College will examine potential for more digital engagements for current students to communicate with prospective and/or admitted students with the goal of piloting this effort once per semester. Depending on the success of that endeavor, the College is considering additional targeted engagements in this vein for various populations (new, transfer, vets, etc.)

Math Expectations Chats

The College is piloting an admissions counseling-based program to set expectations with students who fall into remedial math test scores, admitted and deposited, in FWCB and ESS

Develop HS outreach strategy focused on high-value HS for target populations

A significant gap currently exists with regard to reaching high school counselors and science to build awareness of natural resources fields, Warner College programs, and natural resources careers.

A strategy specific to this audience will be developed, in particular aimed at developing and sustaining relationships with individuals in Front Range and Denver STEM/Technical Schools and Denver, Eastern Plains, Front Range and Aspen Alliance partnership schools.

Tools for sustaining these relationships and content strategy will be critical in setting this effort up for success. The College hopes to partner with departments to create a suite of branded products (lesson plans/activities) to build awareness among science teachers about natural resources programs and set the College up as a helpful, top-of-mind, resource.

Plan Evaluation

- Ensure individual efforts have evaluation components that tier up to the overall strategy – generally, an initiative will be attempted (with ongoing refinement) across three recruitment cycles before final determination to continue or discontinue can be made
- Track phase progress and regularly report on outcomes to the College
- Annual meetings with departments (Fall) to discuss longer-term outcomes and revisit goals
- Regular engagement with College stakeholders and campus partners while developing specific aspects of the strategy
- Leverage data from SLATE to evaluate specific efforts impacts on supporting student’s through admissions process

Plan Phases

Phase	Timeframe	Actions
Phase 1: Establishing systems, experimenting, and continuing research	SU19 through 20-21 recruiting cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish systems and implement best practices • Identify further opportunities to partner with academic units on UG admissions • Revamp recruitment materials top to bottom • Attempt some trials around redistributing students to address concentration in ESS/FWCB • Attempt trials around email messaging to gain baseline on open rates etc.; • Develop/distribute materials specific for veterans • Research recruitment to traditionally marginalized groups; • Pilot lead-gen activities aimed at growth-oriented majors; • Identify tools to network with counselors/teachers while starting to build relationships with direct outreach; • Develop admissions counseling tools (major pathways tree to guide discussions etc.) • Continue research into audiences and emerging tactics to reach them
Phase 2 – Refining, sustaining, and expanding	21-22 recruiting cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine systems and offerings based on evaluation • Create Dept. admitted student welcome emails • Pre/post orientation messaging • Implement strategies for traditionally marginalize audiences • Develop systems/content for sustaining relationships with counselors/teachers; • Develop app for major finding; • Continue direct outreach to teachers/counselors to build networks
Phase 3 – Sustain and build broader awareness	22-23 recruiting cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue refining systems, media and materials and sustain what is working • Develop plans to implement lead gen recruitment activities more broadly through advertising

2019-2020 Projects

In addition to sustaining existing efforts and producing non-admissions related engagements, the following new projects will support the undergraduate recruitment strategy.

Events	Print Media	Digital Media	Direct Outreach
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement on-campus College Information Sessions 2. Create digital yield engagements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New general marketing collateral (with Spanish translation) 2. Veteran specific marketing materials 3. Yield pieces 4. Admitted student mailings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Admitted student's portal 2. Veteran email campaign 3. Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day in life • Career theme videos • Finish major's videos 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop group visit program menu 2. ID classes for prospective student observation 3. develop admissions counseling tools (major pathways tree to guide discussions etc.) 4. Develop strategy for content marketing to counselors/teachers