

RNL Academic Program Student Journey projected to increase enrollment in specific major by nearly 20%



About Austin College

Austin College is a small liberal arts college where big things happen. Students and faculty engage in partnerships in learning that allow students to become truly invested in their education. The mission of Austin College is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences in order to prepare them for rewarding careers and for full, engaged, and meaningful lives.

About RNL Student Journey

RNL Student Journey is a trailblazing approach to engaging students. It represents the future of enrollment marketing with student-driven, personalized engagement that is more relevant, more timely, and more effective for today's students. Powered by marketing automation, RNL Student Journey creates a customized, authentic experience through engagement scoring and dynamic responsive messaging, while connecting each stage of the journey to a defined goal for specific populations or outcomes.

Increased competition for top students in key programs

Austin College, a private, four-year liberal arts college, has faced an increase in competition to enroll biology and pre-med students. Historically, Austin College has enjoyed an excellent reputation in the sciences and has been known as the “go-to” school in the region for pre-med. Aggressive positioning from regional and out-of-state universities has caused Austin College to plateau in enrollment from its primary market. It has become increasingly more challenging for Austin College to compete with the incentives competing institutions are offering to target students. How could it reignite the foundation for enrollment growth it once had, all while maintaining quality in its academic profile?

Looking for a new way to grow enrollment in biology

“We have a desire to grow enrollment in an increasingly competitive marketplace,” said Nan Davis, vice president for institutional enrollment at Austin College. While the college was still generating good general interest in enrollment, it was not generating enough interest in biology and pre-med—despite research and internship opportunities, a new science building, and new scholarships and grants for students interested in biology. Understanding that they needed a new, robust strategy to reach their targeted student population, Austin College turned to Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) to engage prospective students for biology and pre-med with RNL Academic Program Student Journey.

“We want to be on the leading edge, and RNL takes us there while being a trusted partner,” stated Davis, on why they partnered with RNL on to achieve their goal.

“ We want to grow enrollment strategically, and RNL Academic Program Student Journey was a great fit. It allowed us to be highly targeted toward a population that is strong academically and persists at Austin College well. It also enabled us to highlight some new key differentiators for us, such as our new science facility, our strong undergraduate research programs, and the outcomes of our biology graduates. ”

—Nan Davis, Vice President for Institutional Enrollment, Austin College

Creating the journey

Powered by marketing automation, RNL Academic Program Student Journey matches the natural flow of student-driven engagement, using relevant dynamic content and engagement scoring to deepen the bond between Austin College’s biology program and prospective students and parents.

RNL Academic Program Student Journey included the following components for Austin College:

- **Integrated Experience**—Emails, text opt-in, digital ads, and landing pages.
- **Real-Time Behavioral Engagement Scoring**, which allows the college to see which students are more engaged as they conduct their explorations.
- **Responsive Interactive Exploratory Hub**—Curates relevant content dynamically based on student choices.
- **Automated Campaign Triggers and Nurture Streams**
- **Parent Engagement**—Includes an interactive Parent Hub and communications.
- **Academic Fit Finder**—A quiz to determine what the student is passionate about and guides the content of their journey.

Based on their experience with other RNL solutions, the Austin College leadership team trusted their partnership with RNL to provide high quality creative assets in line with their brand. Executive Director of Admissions Baylee Kowert reflected, “The creative team did a great job connecting that sense of discovery with our particular brand. We were able to draw students into the journey through their passion in biology and connect that naturally with Austin College.”

Journey results

After running the RNL Academic Journey for just two weeks, Austin College saw immediate results. First, the team noticed a huge uptick in website traffic during the journey. Compared to the same time period in 2016, there was a 122 percent increase in traffic to the correlating academic program pages. Based on engagement scores during the journey, RNL projects that their incoming freshman class for biology majors will increase by nearly 20 percent in 2018, netting an additional \$148,500 revenue in 2018-19 and an additional \$594,000 in revenue over four years.

IMPACT

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FOR INCOMING FRESHMAN
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ADDITIONAL

\$594,000

IN REVENUE OVER 4
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*Represents RNL Academic Program Student Journey projected outcomes.

“The fit quiz and the academic hub offered levels of personalization that mirrored the type of interaction that comes naturally to students. When we engage students that we meet personally, we don’t greet them with a demand that they enroll immediately—that’s disingenuous. We greet them by getting to know their passions and then work to connect those passions to our institution. This RNL Academic Program Student Journey felt like that type of interaction.”

Baylee Kowert

Executive Director of Admissions
Austin College