

Increasing Net Tuition Revenue by \$400K with ZeeMee

Overview

Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cornerstone University is a Christian college with a small, close-knit student community. Cornerstone had created Facebook groups to interact with admitted classes but found steady drops in engagement in recent years. Still, Cornerstone wanted to connect with students and to foster strong relationships in order to help increase yield and lower melt.

Challenges

- Cornerstone University saw that students melted at a high rate despite having paid deposits.
- Although Cornerstone ran contests and used other creative approaches to boost engagement on Facebook, student participation rates steadily declined.
- The admissions team recognized that it needed new approaches to building community and connectedness to keep students engaged throughout each stage of the admissions process.

Solution

In December 2018, Cornerstone University deployed ZeeMee to reach its fall 2019 cohort. Under the guidance of its admissions team, the university built a community of hand-picked current students as ambassadors and influencers.

According to Lisa Link, Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Cornerstone University, launching ZeeMee was “the best thing we could have done.”

During the first few months, Cornerstone’s community grew every day, and the student-created videos have provided a behind-the-scenes look at everyday life. For students who were admitted but had not yet decided on a college, those real-world glimpses of campus happenings proved to be invaluable.

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ZeeMee works because it’s a very organic way to showcase all of the positive reasons why students should check out your college. That’s what students today want,” explained Link. “I don’t believe that they want to be receiving a sales pitch every time they interact with the college; they want to know what is happening behind closed doors. What ZeeMee does is open up the doors to say: ‘Here we are. Here is a day in the life.’”

Students are using ZeeMee to meet their future classmates and build friendships, and Link noted that they’ve even had a student commit to Cornerstone without ever having visited the university. When an admissions counselor asked why she made that decision, the student said that she had made friends through ZeeMee and from those connections she knew that Cornerstone was where she needed to be.

“We’re looking for ways for all students to build those types of connections,” said Link. “We realize how much students are engaging through videos and experiences. Videos on ZeeMee are a great way to meet them where they are.”

ZeeMee has also helped incoming students stay in touch throughout the summer before their freshman year. Through the app, students are connecting, growing relationships, and making plans to get together during orientation. Many students are eager to meet classmates they have gotten to know through ZeeMee in person—and to start their new college adventures surrounded by strong friendships.

Results

74%

Deposited students engage on ZeeMee

10x ↑

Increased yield for ZeeMee users

\$400K+

Gained in net tuition revenue

In its first year of using ZeeMee, Cornerstone saw more than 15,000 chat messages in its public channels, and after just one admission season, the app had delivered compelling results. Among students who used ZeeMee, the melt rate was just 7%, compared to a non-community melt rate of 23%, helping to deliver on Cornerstone’s primary goal of decreasing its melt rate.

Additionally, 74% of deposited students downloaded the app and started engaging with one another. The university also saw an increased yield of 10x of those who joined versus those who didn’t, resulting in a gain of over \$400k in net tuition revenue (NTR) with ZeeMee.

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After looking at all the ways our melt was better than in years past, I can say with confidence that ZeeMee has positively helped in that area. In fact, it was the most significant piece of the puzzle that was missing,” said Link.

Link also affirmed that ZeeMee is an ideal tool to keep up with the changing communications needs of today’s students. Each admissions cycle brings in new challenges and higher student expectations. By using ZeeMee to help deliver on students’ desire for authenticity, community and a human connection, Cornerstone University has positioned itself as a student-focused innovator—and a leader that is ready for the future.

