



TEXAS TECH  
UNIVERSITY.

# TTU ACHIEVES RECORD ENROLLMENT WITH SALESFORCE



## SETTING A TARGET FOR FORMIDABLE GROWTH

Growing enrollment from 30,000 students to 40,000 is a very ambitious goal by any standard. When Texas Tech University (TTU) launched a strategic plan to do just that in the span of 10 years, its recruitment teams may have had some reservations at first but they were not deterred.

Achieving such a mission would require taking a very close look at TTU's recruitment, admissions and marketing practices – and the technology that supported their work. TTU also needed to carefully consider the student experience and how they could accomplish rapid growth while maintaining the quality education and strong sense of community they were renowned for.

TTU's undergraduate admissions team realized that the biggest obstacles they faced were data management and the CRM they were using. They had deployed three separate CRM products in less than eight years. Each one presented new layers of obstacles that made it difficult to access the student data they needed and make progress toward their recruitment and communication goals.

“We were working for the system instead of the system working for us,” said Jamie Hansard, Vice President for Enrollment Management, who oversaw one of the recruitment teams when TTU began its Salesforce journey.

“The systems we had were not intuitive, efficient or user-friendly and there was no automation or ability to put the marketer in the driver's seat, and that's what we needed.”

## A FLEXIBLE AND SCALABLE SOLUTION

After assessing their situation, TTU's enrollment team realized they needed a flexible CRM solution that could scale and handle large volumes, automate tasks and get communications out on a consistent basis. They also needed capabilities to target and personalize communications and give recruitment teams greater visibility into the student life cycle and empower them to make data-driven decisions and improve how they work.

“Once we understood the challenges impeding our progress, we were able to move quickly to find the product that best served our needs, which was Salesforce,” said Hansard.

Within months, TTU began migrating data to Salesforce and partnered with TargetX to launch the new recruitment solution. In less than nine days of launch, they were sending out marketing communications emails.

Recognizing that a robust data set was essential for broader success as an institution, the enrollment team included key departments, such as the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office, in the initial implementation. TTU's upper administration soon

learned of new capabilities achieved with Salesforce and all current student, faculty and staff data were migrated and added to the mix.

## A MOMENT OF TRUTH

Fast forward to the COVID-19 crisis and the importance of having a versatile and dependable communications platform came into clear focus for TTU. Salesforce quickly became the go-to tool for all COVID-19 related communications going out to students, parents, staff and faculty. Salesforce enabled TTU to keep the channels of communication open with their community and keep a close watch on how important messages were being received and understood.

“During that difficult time, it was critical for us to be nimble and flexible and to be able to get communications out quickly in a way that was on brand and well-received – and Salesforce helped us do that,” said Julian Olivas, Director of Communications and Marketing for the Division of Enrollment Management.

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE TO ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE

Managing the pandemic experience was a strong success for the enrollment team and TTU’s communicators as a whole. The achievement motivated TTU to make the move to Marketing Cloud and drove other key departments to adopt Salesforce including International Admissions, the Office of the President as well as TTU’s Graduate School and academic colleges.

In the span of two years, including the pandemic, TTU increased the volume of its digital communications by 200%. It boasted record enrollment rates and in 2020 it easily surpassed its goal of 40,000 students. TTU also reported record retention and graduation rates, including a first-year retention rate of 87.6% and a six-year graduation rate of 63.3%.



Texas Tech University surpassed its goal of **40,000 enrolled students**



TTU increased the volume of its digital communications by **200%**



The university had a first-year retention rate of **87.6%**



It also had a record six-year graduation rate of **63.3%**

“As we started utilizing Salesforce, we were able to change the narrative on how we approached recruiting and admissions communications as well as our internal processes and practices,” said Olivas.

Using Salesforce, TTU was able to target and segment constituents by population set and move from a one-size-fits-all marketing approach to highly personalized communications and messaging. Salesforce also helped TTU carry out A/B testing to track engagement levels and pinpoint exactly the impact, timing and readership of its messages.

“We’ve been able to take this 40,000 plus population and really drill down to make it about each student and their individual experience,” said Hansard.



## MAKING THE SYSTEM WORK FOR ITS USERS

Salesforce was also instrumental in transforming internal processes. TTU's recruitment teams now use Salesforce on a daily basis and can pull reports, access dashboards and analyze a wealth of student data on demand.

Admissions counselors have improved their effectiveness as territory managers and are making data-driven decisions about where best to invest their time and effort. Automation has helped eliminate many time-consuming manual processes, which has freed up more time to focus on personalizing experiences, making stronger connections with prospective students and working to strengthen the TTU community.

**“** Everything we do now is driven by data and Salesforce is just that much more user-friendly and understandable,” said Olivas. “We’re making the system work for us and its revolutionized the way we work.”

TTU's enrollment success story relied on wide-scale collaboration and making recruitment and admissions an inclusive priority for academic colleges and departments campus-wide. It was Salesforce's connectivity that helped these individual business units be active participants in the strategy. It also gave them the visibility to understand their impact and outcomes, alongside new capabilities to optimize their resources and funding efforts.

**“** The more folks that we bring into Salesforce and who can see the magic of it, the more excited they become about the recruitment experience,” said Hansard. “Our ultimate goal is to have one CRM system with functional users working together in one system.”

## QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

As it was breaking enrollment records, TTU was at the same time focused on enhancing the student experience and was using Salesforce to increase diversity and improve overall educational quality.

Through segmented communication, TTU began identifying and communicating with prospective students on a personal level earlier in the recruiting process. This helped attract more honors college students and recruit a record number of Presidential Merit Scholars and National Merit Finalists.

In five years the number of Presidential Scholars grew from 1,733 to 3,966 and National Merit Finalists increased 10-fold to 72. In 10 years, the university saw a six-fold increase in Black students and an eight-fold increase in Hispanic students. It also became one of the only Research I universities in the country that is also designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

**“** It doesn't matter who you are, you can find community here. Salesforce has allowed us to scale the VIP experience through communication and has let us communicate the many opportunities available to students,” said Olivas.

Summarizing TTU's experience with Salesforce, Hansard said,

**“** We've had record success in a lot of different places and a lot of that can be attributed to Salesforce. It will definitely play a very large role in the future of Texas Tech.”

