

Increasing Conversions Through Web Optimization

Learn how one university attracted new students by expanding their online offerings. While market research showed there was interest and a growing audience for these online programs, the university wasn't getting the traffic they needed to these new website pages - and the traffic they did receive wasn't converting.

Learn how this school optimized their website to improve user experience, increase web sessions and raise the number of web conversions to grow their enrollment.

INSTITUTION TYPE:
Private religious university

TOTAL ENROLLMENT:
Approximately 2,000

LOCATION:
Midwest



KEY TAKEAWAYS

64%
increase in web users moving from homepage to program pages

35%
increase in web conversion rates

13%
increase in new website sessions

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Create a positive website user experience
- ▶ Increase website conversions
- ▶ Improve website performance

SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Restructured site architecture
- ▶ Streamlined page navigation
- ▶ Search engine optimization
- ▶ Website optimization
- ▶ Improved user experience

SITUATION

To uncover why this university was experiencing lower-than-expected web traffic and conversions, Collegis investigated their website performance and soon discovered the problem. Over the years, the school's website had expanded, organized based on internal needs and not on how a student might search for information or navigate the site. This made the site fragmented and full of friction for users — high bounce rates, low time spent on page and poor placement in search results.

As with many schools, our partner didn't have experts on staff to diagnose the root cause of this issue or effectively fix the problem. In short, the university knew their online prospects weren't finding the right information to convert, but they didn't know what to do about it. They needed someone who understood complex web navigation and had the resources to fix it.

To identify where and why prospective students were getting hung up or confused on the website, Collegis performed a full website audit. Our experts tested the user experience to find and remove the barriers that were inhibiting the website — typically a university's most valuable marketing tool — from performing.

The primary issues were:

- ▶ **User Confusion with Site Architecture:** programs and modality were organized by the university's internal processes, not by how a user seeks out the information. This made it difficult and frustrating for a prospect to find what they needed.
- ▶ **Duplicate Pages:** because information was organized under modality silos, some programs had multiple pages of nearly identical information. This duplicate content caused search engines to distrust it and lowered the position in search engine results pages (SERPs).
- ▶ **No Program Finder:** program pages often contain the most sought-after information on a college's website. These pages were difficult to find and scattered throughout the site rather than presented in a cohesive manner that allowed people to sort and search for specific programs.

Collegis Education has been invested in the success of our higher ed partners for over 20 years. Our services are informed by our first-hand experience as industry pioneers. With our help, schools leverage their data and technology to pursue strategic outcomes like enrollment growth; anytime, anywhere learning; and a sustainable future.

RESULTS

To increase web traffic and conversions, Collegis implemented the following:

- ▶ **On-Page Content Optimization:** degree and program pages were redesigned to increase consistency, visibility and conversions. Many had been thin on content, making it difficult for search engines to understand the value of the page and why they should make it visible as a search result.
- ▶ **Improving Calls to Action (CTAs):** Placement of CTAs within the application conversion path on the homepage and program pages made it simpler for prospects to apply and request information.
- ▶ **Foundational and Technical SEO:** improvements were made to basic website functionality, such as simplifying navigation, correcting 404 errors and redirects, addressing site speed, and improving folder structure and breadcrumb navigation to drive additional relevancy and authority — and improve visibility within SERPs.
- ▶ **Local SEO:** simply establishing a consistent name, address and phone number across the website gave search engines confidence to understand who our partner is, what they do and where they are located. Following these actions, all programs can now be seen in one place, making it easier to find and compare degree programs. Additionally, from the homepage the top three visited sections became the Program, Graduate and Undergraduate sections, going from 14.1% to 23.1% of people moving from the homepage to the program pages.

How does your web optimization strategy measure up?

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