

Tech Snacks: Collaboration with Recruiting

While we've continued to see a downward trend in the area of higher education in the United States, a heavy area of focus is recruiting efforts. Amid state spending cuts, rising tuition, and public scrutiny of higher ed, competition for prospective college students is high. How can we sustain interest in Northern's programs and continue attracting students? What kind of messaging are we sending to prospective students and how can faculty and staff have a hand in the process?

Recruiting Trends in Higher Education

Most of us are aware of the declining enrollment in recent years, whether at Northern or across the board, efforts to get students through our doors are evolving significantly.

College Recruiting Climate:

- Decline in enrollment in recent years across the US
- Traditionally MSUN has been a regional college, however:
 - Fewer graduates each year = fewer students attending college
 - Declining population across the Hi-Line
 - 9,500 Montana high school graduates
 - Roughly 5,500 take the ACT and/or attend college
 - 25 Montana colleges and out-of-state colleges competing for 5,500 students
- Northern can't solely rely on being a regional school

Prospective Students:

- Students with high anxiety
- Desire for instant gratification
- Hesitant to make decisions out of fear of making the wrong long-term decision
- Apprehensive about college - good job market with higher wages in which college might not be necessary to attain those jobs.
- Lack of college readiness

A Collaborative Approach to Recruiting at MSUN

Collaboration with recruiting has always been essential at Northern, but with decreasing enrollment here and nationally, those efforts are valued more than ever in an evolving higher education climate. There are many ways for faculty to collaborate with recruiting on our campus.

Opportunities for Collaboration:

- **Campus/Faculty Visits:** A crucial starting point to building relationships with prospective students is their first visit to campus. Being able to meet with faculty creates trust, connection, in-depth program details, allows students to ask questions, and overall gives them their first taste of Northern. What would you expect from a campus visit? Whether from a student or parent/guardian perspective.
- **Communications with Students:** As prospective student communications are being regularly updated, there's always a chance for faculty to provide their direct program insights that are essential to understanding all that a student can get out of that program. With our new communication tool, Reach CRM (replaced Radius), communications being built are in need of faculty input.
- **Sharing Information with Recruiting Team:** If you have the opportunity to communicate with students that aren't funneled through the recruiting office, reach out to a recruiter for additional communication. Getting them set up for a tour, meeting with student support resources, or even working with alumni students to feature their post-graduate success as a positive outcome of your program.

- **Joining Recruiting Team on the Road:** Have you ever wanted to go chat with students directly? There are always opportunities for faculty to join in on recruiting visits, whether directly to a high school, career fair, transfer fair, etc.
- **Marketing:** If there are cool things happening in your classroom, put in a request to showcase that through video, photo, social media, etc. These direct program shots are a great way to visually connect with all students, prospective or not, of what your program is doing in the classroom, especially if that classroom environment evolves during the semester.
- **In-House Recruiting Opportunities:** With events like TekNoXpo, SOAR/Advising, and CAmPus Visits especially, there are many opportunities within campus to contribute to recruiting and retaining students outside of the recruiting office. Students take a lot of value from connecting directly with professors in their chosen program before their college journey begins.

Inform us of any recruiting – Please do inform Jessica if you plan to recruit on your own (both for coordination purposes and so that she can get you materials).

By combining our efforts, we can provide a comprehensive picture of MSU-Northern to prospective students and their families. All faculty have been added to the *Collaborative Recruiting MSUN* Microsoft Team, where you can access the current [Recruiting Schedule](#).

Tips for talking to prospective students

- It's always important to remember that prospective students are often nervous around faculty, especially for the first time meeting you. Use humor to make them comfortable, chat about their interests, ask engaging questions etc. Don't expect them to know much about what they want to do.
- Rather than reiterating the academic guide, tell them what's exciting about your field, why it's relevant to their home region, what other students have done with the degree, etc. If you have industry experience, hit on that experience of what students could be doing after they graduate outside of what's on their academic guide.
- Don't forget to mention pre-professional pathways that dovetail well with your program (pre-law, pre-med, pre-PA, pre-PT).
- Share images of your students in action with hands-on work, research projects, conference trips, etc.
- Give them your card and any swag you might have! If you've created something cool in-house and have extras, a small giveaway to prospective students is a token to remember their Northern experience.
- Emphasize Northern's small class sizes, career pathways, and employer relationships that align with Montana's economy and key industries.

MSUN Recruiting Team

MSUN has almost an entirely new Recruiting staff for the 2024-2025 academic year. For questions about recruiting and how you can get involved, you can contact:

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