

An Insight-Driven Solution to Yield and Enrollment Challenges at Marshall University

Anthology's Enrollment Management service partnered with Marshall to reverse a decline in admit-to-enroll yield, leading to growth in overall enrollment and tuition revenue.



A Higher Education Pioneer in the Mountain State

Founded in 1837 in Huntington, West Virginia, Marshall University is a public, four-year institution with a long history of advancing the public good via innovative education programs. Today, they support more than 10,000 students across 170+ programs, spanning both undergraduate and graduate degrees, all of which are united by Marshall's vision to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit, and fulfills the promise of a better future. Anthology has been proud to work alongside Marshall in pursuit of this vision, including a long-time partnership with our flagship learning management system (LMS), Blackboard®.

INSTITUTION TYPE:
FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC

LOCATION:
HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

STUDENTS:
10,000

ANTHOLOGY PRODUCT:
Anthology Enrollment Management



The Challenge

Declining Yield Was Impacting Marshall's Enrollment Numbers

Even institutions as established and reputable as Marshall have faced enrollment challenges in recent years. Overall college enrollment in West Virginia dropped by 15% in the half decade leading up to Spring 2023, including a 12% decline at public four-year schools.

Much of the discussion around addressing enrollment declines has focused on lead generation at the top of the funnel. While this is an essential component of enrollment growth, its value is ultimately determined by how effectively these prospects are then nurtured through to matriculation. In particular, many institutions are currently looking to address challenges with yield or their conversion from admitted to enrolled students. At Anthology, we are working with a range of partners to improve their yield results and have recently distilled our strategic best practices in step eight of our Strategic Enrollment Management in the Post-Pandemic Era white paper.

In 2022, Marshall's yield dropped to 27%—a decrease of 6% versus the year prior—in a trend that spanned both graduate and undergraduate programs but was particularly marked for first-year students. As well as the challenging enrollment market mentioned above, Marshall was navigating internal staff turnover, inconsistent communication and processes between departments, and a delayed CRM implementation, all of which were impacting their capacity to efficiently nurture students through to enrollment.

"To say we had a hill to climb is an understatement. A lot of our communication had to happen in a manual sort of way, and I think that part of the reason we fell back on yield was due to that."



Dr. Beverly Boggs

*Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services and Director of Financial Aid,
Marshall University*





We had to recognize the generational changes that had occurred, and that one printed letter alone wasn't going to do the job. So we looked for multiple ways to reach out to students and made sure to focus on relationship building.

—Dr. Beverly Boggs

*Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services and Director of Financial Aid,
Marshall University*

Anthology's Enrollment Management service was brought on board in 2023 to provide strategic consultancy on internal processes, improve outreach to students, and reverse the trend of yield decline.

A Two-Pronged Approach to Boost Yield, Borne Out of Student Insight

Understanding student demographics is an essential first step to improving yield. Converting learners requires a detailed understanding of their lifestyle and preferences to best position the institution as a fit for their needs. After reviewing the available demographic data, Marshall and Anthology uncovered two crucial insights:

- As Marshall is located close to the borders of both Ohio and Kentucky, there is a large catchment of nearby students who aren't eligible for in-state benefits—an audience that Marshall calls “Metro Students.” A revision of tuition costs for these learners was essential to make studying at Marshall more compelling.
- Marshall proudly supports many legacy students, which is one of the many reasons why they have a tight-knit learning community and a welcoming family feel on campus. However, improving yield involves engaging students who aren't already convinced that an institution is their best choice, and Marshall needed to employ more communications across a wider range of touchpoints to attract new demographics.

Anthology collaborated with Marshall's enrollment leaders to leverage these insights and improve admit-to-enroll conversion. Starting in April 2023, a two-pronged approach was devised and quickly implemented to impact the upcoming academic year.

- Multi-modal engagement campaigns allowed immediate outreach to admitted students, with direct prompts to take important first steps to complete enrollment—such as attending orientation or paying a deposit. These campaigns were particularly targeted at those who seemed less engaged with the process, particularly freshmen, to ensure they were familiar with the next steps.
- Enrollment coaches then personally contacted admitted students to provide additional support and guidance through the process. This reinforced the importance of orientation and deposits and also went further to facilitate meetings with Marshall's advisors. “Metro Students” were a key demographic for this outreach, which spanned both freshmen and admitted students for graduate programs.

Crucially, these initiatives were done in close consultation with Marshall's admissions and student affairs departments, meaning that students enjoyed a seamless journey through orientation, enrollment, and their initial weeks on campus



Insights Delivered

2023 Enrollment Exceeded All Expectations

Anthology's outreach impacted the enrollment decisions of more than 7,000 students, with a strong frequency of messages across a range of channels to increase the chance of conversion.

Students	Text Messages	Emails	Phone Calls
7,400	8,158	7,635	24,601

This led to a significant boost in yield for freshmen students, growing from 27% in 2022 to 33% in 2023. For those students who received high-touch support from Anthology's enrollment coaches, this increased to a 35.7% conversion rate. Most importantly, this contributed to an additional 212 freshmen enrollments compared with the year prior, or an increase of 13.2%—more than six times the goal of 2% growth set by the institution's leadership. The "Metro Students" cohort, which was a core focus of our partnership, saw a staggering 19.8% year-on-year increase.

"Having those extra touches and building relationships is key to growing enrollment. The help from Anthology to reach out and build relationships made a huge difference."



Dr. Beverly Boggs

Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services and Director of Financial Aid,
Marshall University



Epilogue

The Marshall team recognizes that sustained enrollment growth will require support for these new students through the full lifecycle. The partnership with Anthology is expanding to not just look at opportunities to further increase yield but also to build ongoing relationships with learners to boost retention and completion outcomes.



Are you looking for full-funnel enrollment insight and support?
Contact us today to learn more about how Anthology can help.

