

## DESIGN Student Outreach and Marketing of Services

---

It's not enough for a college to offer services; it has to make sure that students know what's available and how to gain access. Effective outreach and marketing to students is a challenge for many colleges. And it is a related challenge to market the WFS services to an outside community. As a rule, marketing budgets, whether they are for outside audiences or tied to student outreach, are limited. Moreover, it is not a small task to help students understand and navigate the multiple WFS offerings.

Marketing is more than just raising awareness of available services; it's telling the story in a way that will make the value of this work clear to everyone on campus. A compelling message will help all stakeholders understand that the WFS strategy is essential to student success and is worth adopting and supporting.

In order to ensure the necessary participation in WFS, the planning team will need to clearly articulate the rationale, expectations, commitment and process for the service delivery. Figure out how to say it, and then figure out how to share it.

### **Create an Outreach Strategy**

Begin by identifying the specific population(s) you are targeting with the WFSN services and how and where they connect to student services and other areas of the college. Create a specific outreach strategy that identifies the staff, faculty, venues and platforms in which each population engages and how each person or platform will be involved in outreach to students. The outreach strategy should include how you will engage faculty and staff, a timeline and goals for reaching a percentage of students.

### **Student Marketing Outlets and Formats**

Colleges typically broadcast the availability of WFS services through a variety of outlets, including new student orientation sessions and campus calendar announcements as well as through flyers, posters and message boards strategically placed across the campus.

What formats are appropriate for getting your information out to faculty, staff and students? Consider websites and course catalogs as well as program-specific events, newsletters, brochures — both print and online — and other marketing materials. Put processes in place to share up-to-date information with responsible faculty and staff as well as students and all departments and individuals responsible for enrolling, counseling and advising students.

### **Student Centered Marketing**

The best way to market the WFS strategy is to have students spreading the word themselves. Use concrete examples of how WFS has helped students, including student panels and testimonial-like videos that can be shared on social media. Consider ways to give students a feeling of ownership over the WFS strategy, such as forming a student steering committee that acts as ambassadors for the program. Try marketing to students while asking for

*Working Families Success Strategy  
This work was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions are those of MDC alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Foundation.  
All content © 2013 MDC  
wfsncollegeguide.org*

feedback at the same time; send out a survey that promotes WFS but also asks students to explain their non-academic concerns.

### **External Community Marketing**

A college may want to market to the external community as well, but the type of marketing will depend on what the goals are for reaching beyond the campus. If WFS services are open to the entire community, then the college should market the services available in ways similar to student-focused marketing. If services are available only to students or to a specific population of students, then community marketing should be targeted at potential partners or funders. Make it clear how they could enhance your WFS offerings. The WFS strategy will get more support if the college is able to demonstrate its importance and effectiveness.



### **Key Takeaways**

---

- Develop an upfront and ongoing outreach plan that incorporates a variety of outreach and marketing methods.
- Student marketing is more than just raising awareness of available services; it's telling the story in a way that will make the value of this work clear to everyone on campus.
- Put processes in place to share up-to-date information about WFS to responsible faculty and staff as well as students and all departments and individuals responsible for enrolling, counseling and advising students.
- Consider ways to give students a feeling of ownership over the WFS strategy, such as forming a student steering committee that acts as ambassadors for the program.



### **Examples**

---

Few colleges brand and market their WFS-related support services as being provided through a “Working Families Success strategy.” Several colleges, however, have developed and do promote an alternate high-profile brand identity for their bundled WFS support services.

**Central New Mexico**, for example, actively promotes “CNM Connect” as its overarching, easily identifiable brand identity for a host of bundled, integrated services provided through a variety of formats.

**Skyline College** provides its WFS activities, including a community food bank, through its well-branded SparkPoint Center, which is one of a network of high-profile “SparkPoint Centers” located in community-based settings throughout the Bay Area surrounding San Francisco.

**Norwalk Community College** has named its WFS the “Family Economic Security Program.”



## Tools, Materials, and Resources

---

- Sample Message Box *Tool developed by MDC*
- Sample marketing materials, internal and external *Houston Community College, LAHC, Skyline, Norwalk, Central New Mexico Community College.*
- Sample testimonial media (from students) *Houston Community College, Phillips Community College.*