

Texting Interventions That Increase Student Success

Since the summer of 2012, uAspire, in partnership with Signal Vine, has implemented text-based outreach services to students to support their transition from high school to college and throughout their first year of college.

Randomized control trial evaluations completed by Dr. Benjamin Castleman and Dr. Lindsay Page have found:

- ★ **Texting can be used to mitigate “summer melt”:** *Students who received texts during the summer after high school graduation were statistically significantly more likely to matriculate in college than those who did not.*
- ★ **Information provided via text can enable students to take necessary action:** *86% of students reported that the texts prompted them to complete a task they hadn’t yet done, and 85% reported that the texts informed them about something they hadn’t realized they needed to do.*
- ★ **Students are receptive to ongoing text message support:** *Fewer than 3% of students opted out of receiving regular text messages at any point during the summer-long intervention.*

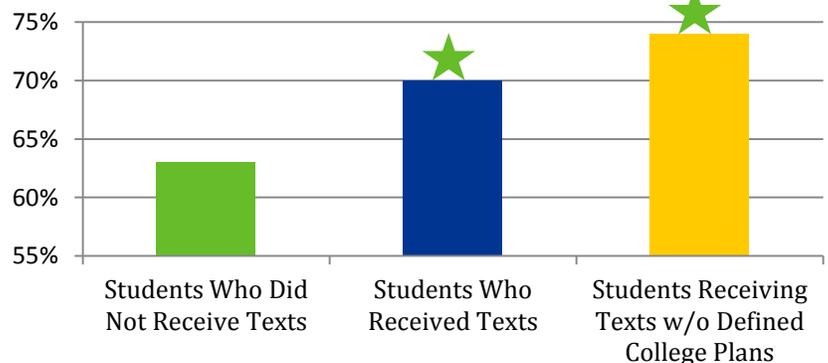
Our Partnership & Impact:

Across the summers of 2012 and 2013, uAspire sent 1-2 customized text messages per week to 2,200 predominantly low-income recent high school graduates using Signal Vine’s online text message platform. The texts were sent to students’ mobile devices and contained important information regarding affordability topics such as financial aid form deadlines, loan options, contact information for relevant offices at their higher ed institution, and the option of requesting a meeting with a uAspire Financial Aid Advisor. The text message content was customized based on students’ intended institutions. Students were able to respond directly via text with their questions. The online platform organized responses by student, allowed advisors to text students back directly via the platform, and kept record of all student-advisor text message exchanges in an easily viewable format. uAspire advisors signed into the platform daily to monitor incoming student responses, answer questions and set up meetings.

Results shown are statistically significant:

- ★ Students who received texts were **7.1 percentage points** more likely to enroll than those who did not receive texts.
- ★ For students without defined college plans, the impact was even bigger: **11.3 percentage points**. These were students who at the end of senior year either didn’t name a school they planned to attend or were still choosing between multiple schools.

Impact on College Enrollment across uAspire's Students in Lawrence & Springfield, MA



The Student Voice: Qualitative Student Survey Results, Summer 2012

A follow-up survey to the students who received text messages during the summer between high school and college in summer 2012 revealed:

- ★ 86% reported that the texts prompted them to complete a task they hadn't yet done.
- ★ 85% reported that the texts informed them about something they hadn't realized they needed to do.
- ★ 70% reported that texts helped make the tasks to enrollment less overwhelming.
- ★ 72% responded that the texts caused them to reach out to uAspire for follow-up help.
- ★ 84% responded that overall, they found the texts useful in helping them get everything done for college.

uAspire's Take on the Value of Signal Vine's Texting Platform

- ★ **Scaling Efficient & Personalized Impact**
Texting via Signal Vine is an incredibly cost-effective and scalable solution – a single advisor can handle a caseload of up to 1,000 students all over the country, compared to up to 300 students in only one city via more traditional in-person advising.
- ★ **Immediate Responses & Progress**
Texting greatly reduces the time necessary to get in contact with students. Students are more responsive to text-based communication than phone calls, voicemails or emails, and we've found we can make progress on important college-related tasks via a text-based conversation.
- ★ **Flexible, Adaptable Partners & Platforms**
Throughout our work together, the Signal Vine team and platform have been flexible and adaptable to meet our evolving needs.

Actual Texting Interaction

Advisor: "uAspire reminder: Fall bill due 8/7. Do u have a good plan for paying ur bill? Need help? Questions about loans? Text us, or visit our walk-in hrs!"

Student: "I saw what my bill is so is that what financial aid takes care of"

Advisor: "Do you know how much your bill is for?"

Student: "3000 & some change"

Advisor: "That doesn't sound like your fin aid has been applied yet. Did you check your email? Check to see if you have any emails from the fin aid office."

Student: "Okay." 7 min later: "I figured it out, they need my transcript"

Advisor: "Ok that makes sense. Once they receive this, the fin aid office may have more papers for you to fill out. Be sure to check your email often and let us know."

Student: "Okay thank you."

Organizational Summaries:

uAspire is a national non-profit organization committed to ensuring that all young people have the financial information and resources necessary to achieve their dreams of higher education. uAspire provides college affordability advising to thousands of students in grades 7-16 across six locations each year and delivers training and ongoing support on issues of affordability to practitioners from schools, charter management organizations, and non-profit organizations nationwide. www.uaspire.org.

Signal Vine, LLC is a technology company based in Alexandria, VA with the mission to extend the reach and impact of organizations with text messaging. The company has developed an enterprise text messaging platform for education organizations to enable real-time, two-way text communications which are enhanced by a data-driven, intelligent messaging engine to motivate action at the right time. Signal Vine believes counselors, advisors, and mentors are the critical drivers of positive outcomes for students, so they designed the platform to expand staff reach, allow for more personalized and real-time digital communication with students than email offers, and enable them to more quickly identify those who need their help the most. The design of Signal Vine's technology is guided by the findings of researchers, the use cases of education organizations, and the behavioral needs of students. www.signalvine.com