

# Rapport and Relationships: Effective Communication with Graduate Students

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# Rapport: What is it? Why it is important?

- Rapport: Defined as “a relationship characterized by agreement, mutual understanding, or empathy that makes communication possible or easy” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- Enhances credibility (Zhang, 2014)
- Improves connection (Campbell et al., 2003)
- Helps form relationships (Macintosh, 2009)



# Rapport: How do we build it?

- Appearance
  - 7 seconds
  - 1 second or less
- Relatability (Macintosh, 2009)
- Knowledge (Zhang, 2014)
- Humor (Tatum, 2021)
- Active Listening
  - Engage with the student
  - Try to understand what they want



# Relationships: Why and How?

- Building blocks of Enrollment
- Built in Four Stages
  - Recruitment
  - Inquiry
  - Application
  - Conversion
- Strong relationships with potential students will translate into happy enrolled students



# Cold Calling: Good or Bad?

- Associated with negative effects and behavioral changes (McDonald et al., 2021)
- Major worries:
  - Loss of Phone number
  - Selling of Information
- Major Behavioral Changes:
  - Not Answering Unknown Numbers
  - Opting out of communications



# Cold Calls vs. Emails

## Calls

- Time Sensitive
- Availability
- Difficult Tracking
- Follow up
  - “Phone Tag”



## Emails

- Not Time Sensitive
- More availability
- Easy tracking
- Easy follow up



# Recruitment Phase

- Early on
- Typically at Events
- Conditioning
  - Students should associate a friendly face with the institution
  - Will help create positive feelings about the institution
- Encourage students to submit RFI/Application



# Contingency

- Contingency is the degree to which a consequence can be connected to an action or decision.
- Content of Messaging
  - Relevant to what student asked or initiated
  - Quick Response
- Important



# Contiguity

- Contiguity is the time between an action and a consequence.
- Response Time
  - Quick Response
  - Within 24 hours
- Timing of messaging is crucial



# Extinction and Extinction Bursts

- Extinction
  - Removing the reward pattern from a behavior over time.
- Extinction Burst
  - Eliciting a response by randomly providing a reward after some time.



# Inquiry Phase

- Still Early
- Captures unsure students
- Conditioning (Both Classical and Operant)
  - Messaging is important!
  - Should be friendly and engaging
  - Also, should be relevant, concise, and timely
- Encourages students to pursue an application



# Example



Good Morning Future KSU Owl

Thank you for your interest in Kennesaw State University and the Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering and Engineering Technology! We are excited to help you get started on your journey towards your new degree! Thank you and welcome to Owl Nation!

Acquired by Kennesaw State University in 2015, Southern Polytechnic State University became the Marietta Campus of Kennesaw State. This campus is also now home to the Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering and Engineering Technology. This college host a wealth of engineering programs from many different backgrounds in the engineering field. From robotics to civil engineering, there is a program for everyone looking to continue in this field.

For more information regarding admission, the information for your Graduate Admissions Counselor is provided below or [click here](#) to view information about our programs.

Graduate Admissions Counselor

Tyler Mueller

Phone: 470-578-7007

Email: [tmuelle5@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tmuelle5@kennesaw.edu)

Apply Now!

International  
Requirements

**LAUNCH**  
the new version of your career.



# Application Phase

- Student has now submitted the application.
- Messaging starts to change
  - Becomes more transactional
  - Can still be engaging
  - Should still be relevant, concise, and timely
- Reminding and encouraging students to complete their submissions



# Examples



**KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
THE GRADUATE COLLEGE  
*Office of Graduate Admissions*

Good Morning Future KSU Owl,

My name is Tyler Mueller, and I am the Graduate Admissions Counselor assigned to the Coles College of Business the Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and the Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as your prospective program. I just wanted to take the time to tell you a little about myself. I graduated, Magna cum Laude, with my Bachelor's Degree in Psychology in 2018. I then went on to pursue my Master's degree in Experimental Psychology and graduated again in 2020. I began my position here at Kennesaw State University in August of 2022. Outside of the office, I really enjoy watching movies, listening to music, and spending time outside. I wanted to say thank you for your interest in Kennesaw State University and good luck in your admissions process. I will be your main point of contact throughout your journey to become a part of our university. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me. I would be more than happy to address any questions or concerns I can, or point you in the right direction for additional help. You will receive an email later today with more information about the application process. Thank you again and welcome to Owl Nation! Have a great day!

Tyler Mueller  
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Graduate College - Admissions

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[X](#) [f](#) [@](#)

# Examples



Good afternoon Future KSU Owl,

Thank you for applying to Kennesaw State University. We are processing your application. Please check your [application portal](#) for missing documents. **The Coles College of Business requires a resume and transcripts for all of their programs.** Please reach out to your school and have the school send transcripts directly to KSU [ksugrad@kennesaw.edu](mailto:ksugrad@kennesaw.edu) (\*please see mailing address below if your school does not send electronic transcripts). **We are required to receive a transcript from every school you have attended, regardless of transfer credit appearing on a later transcript. For a transcript to be official, it must come directly from your school to KSU.**

For information on the process for international transcripts, [click here](#).

If you are sending a physical transcript by mail, please have it sent to the following address:

Kennesaw State University  
Office of Graduate Admissions  
3391 Town Point Drive  
Suite 1700  
Kennesaw, GA 30144

Your individual program may have additional requirements. Please find your program below to view anything else you may need to submit.

## Coles College of Business Programs:

**Master of Business Administration:** No additional requirements for this program

### **WebMBA:**

- Two professional letters of recommendation
- Two years of work experience (listed in resume)

### **Executive MBA:**

- Five years experience (listed on resume)
- Two professional letters of recommendation
- Interview with the program

### **Master of Accounting \*:**

- A Letter of Interest
- Optional Letters of Recommendation

\* An interview with the program may be required.

### **MS Information Systems:**

- Personal Statement
- List of three **professional** references

**Digital Financial Technology:** No additional requirements for this program.

### **MS Healthcare Management and Informatics:**

- Personal Statement
- **Two Optional** Letters of Recommendation

Additional information can be found on the [requirements page](#).

## **Additional Requirements for International Students:**

A test of English proficiency may be required for admission. KSU accepts the following tests and minimum scores.

- TOEFL: 80
- IELTS: 6.5

There are waivers available for the English test. To see the waiver policy and request form, [click here](#).

For any other questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [tmuelle5@kennesaw.edu](mailto:tmuelle5@kennesaw.edu). Have a great day!

Kind regards,

Tyler

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<https://kennesawgrad.university-tour.com/index.php>



# Conversion Phase

- Student has been accepted.
- Messaging Changes Again
  - Becomes less transactional again
  - Excited and welcoming the student
  - Remains relevant, concise, and timely
- Should make the student want to enroll
- Idea of extinction becomes less important at this phase



# Key Takeaways

- Building relationships and rapport with individuals helps attract students
- All phases of the enrollment building process are important
- Messaging is important

Questions or Comments?

# References

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