

Data Wise Strategies for SIOs: Driving International Enrollment Impact in Turbulent Times

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I am satisfied with the use of data to inform international enrollment strategies at my institution

Rahul Choudaha, Ph.D.

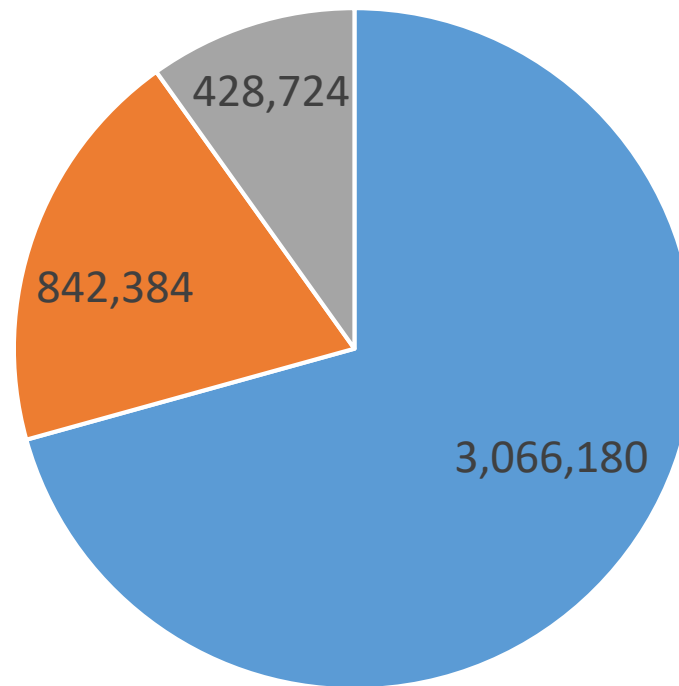
EVP of Global Engagement & Research

Studyportals

rahul@studyportals.com

- Recognized scholar-practitioner scholar practitioner on data-informed internationalization strategies in the context of shifting student mobility trends and evolving transnational education models
- Presented over 100 sessions at professional conferences including AIEA, APAIE, EAIE, and NAFSA.
- Blogs and tweets as DrEducation
- Holds a doctorate in higher education administration from University of Denver

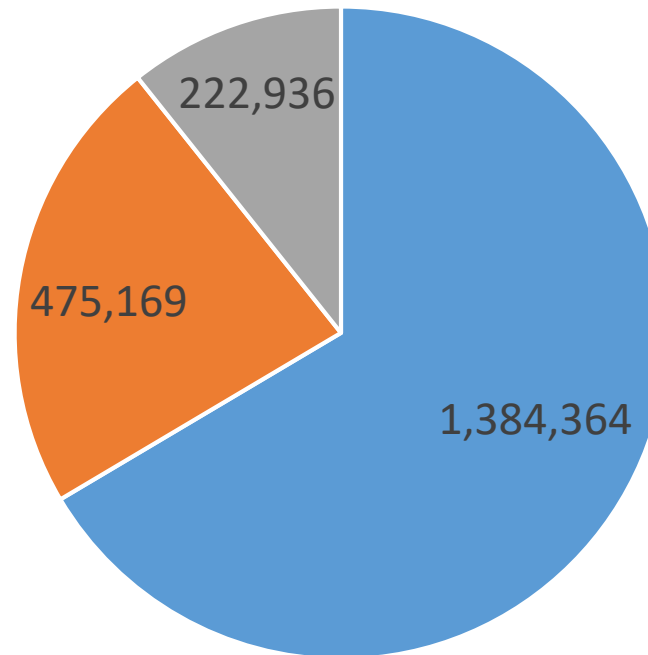
US and UK enroll nearly one-third of all globally mobile students



4.34 million globally
mobile students in 2014
Source: UNESCO

■ Other ■ US ■ UK

US and UK maintained global marketshare despite turbulence



2.08 million globally
mobile students in 2000
Source: UNESCO

2016: turbulence accelerated



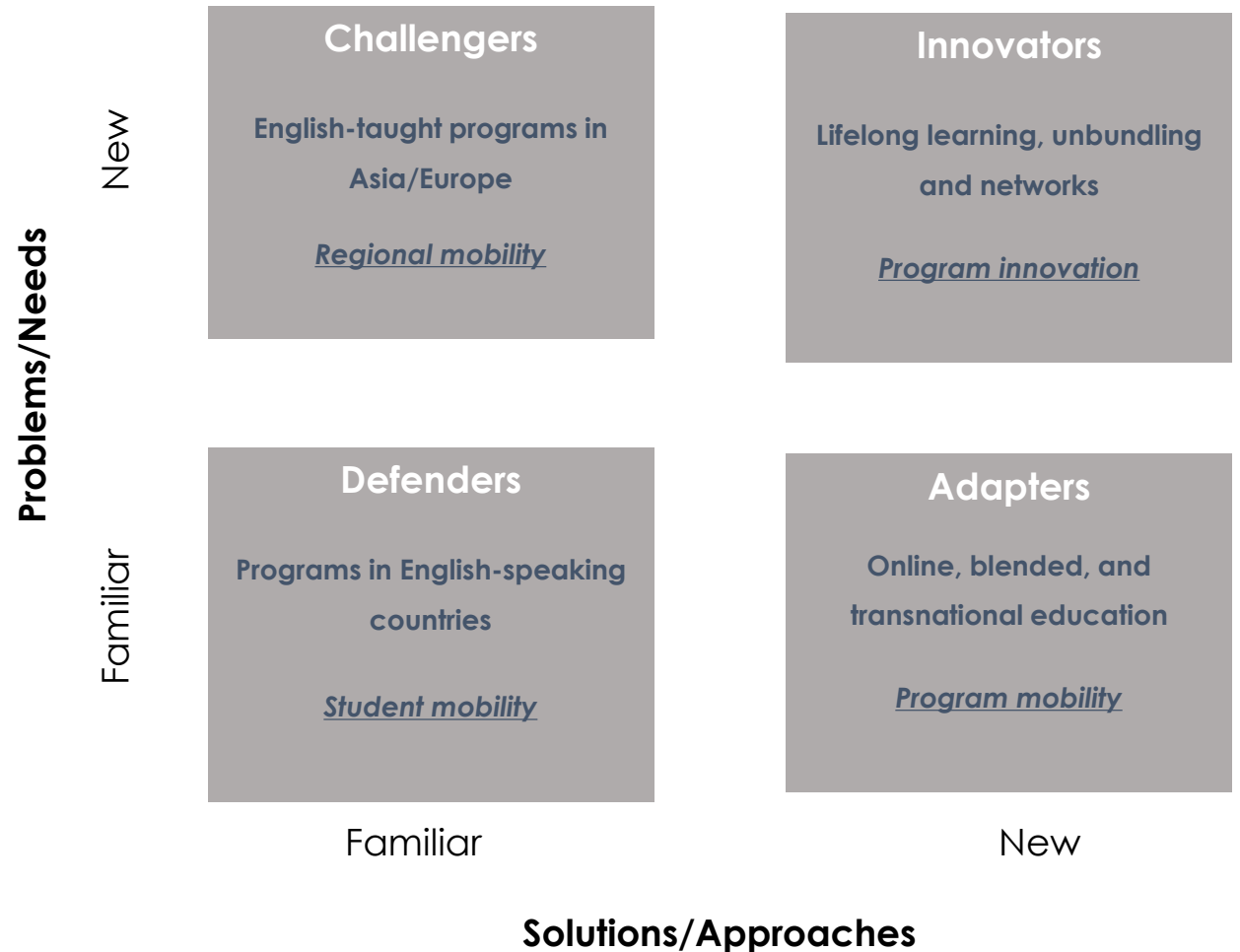
Conceptual framework of global engagement strategies

-**Defenders:** Familiar programs delivered in English-speaking countries through student mobility

-**Adapters:** Familiar programs delivered through new capabilities of online, blended, and transnational models

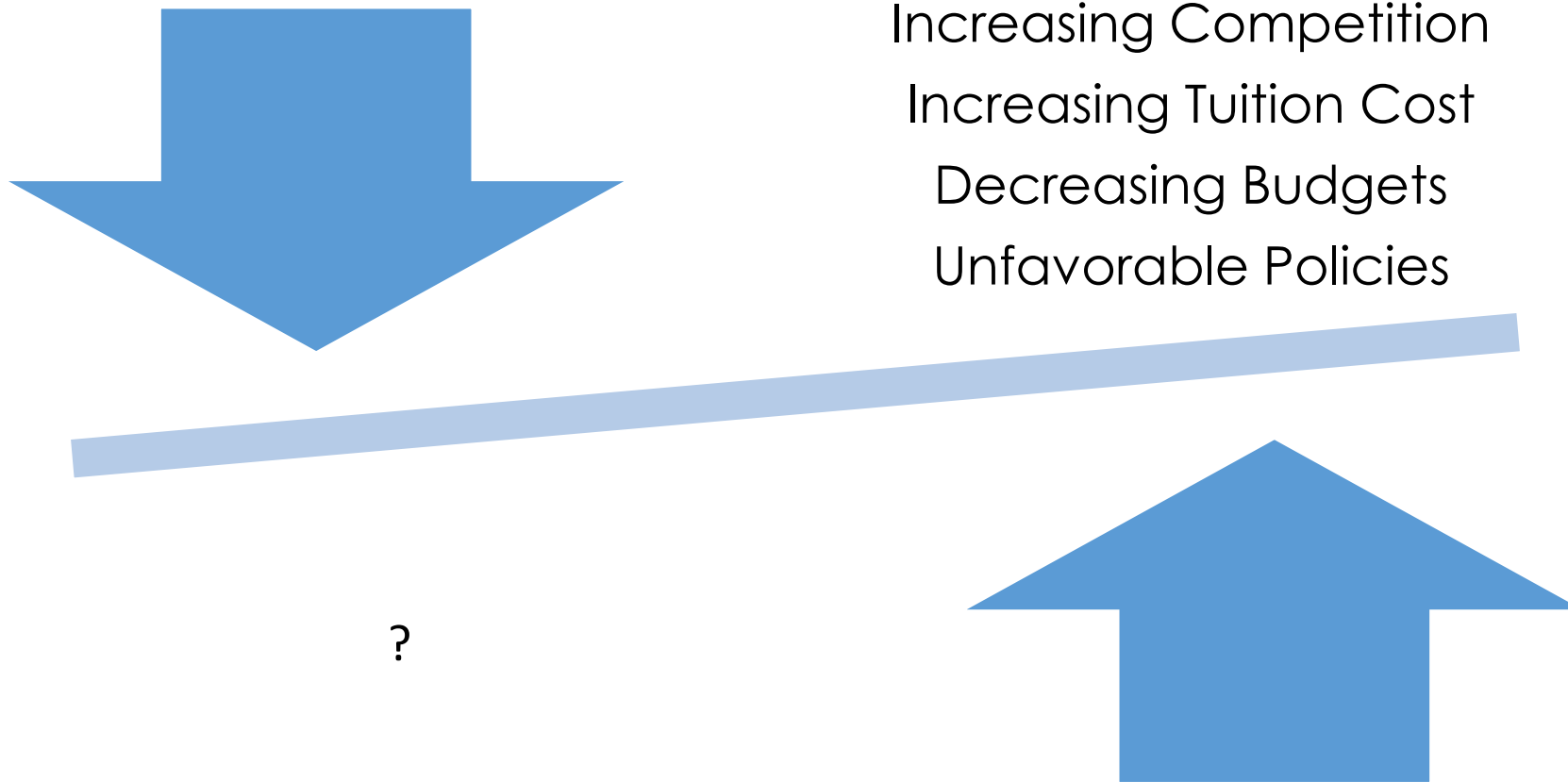
-**Innovators:** New programs delivered through new capabilities of lifelong learning, unbundling and networks

-**Challengers:** Familiar English-taught programs delivered in new destinations in Asia/Europe



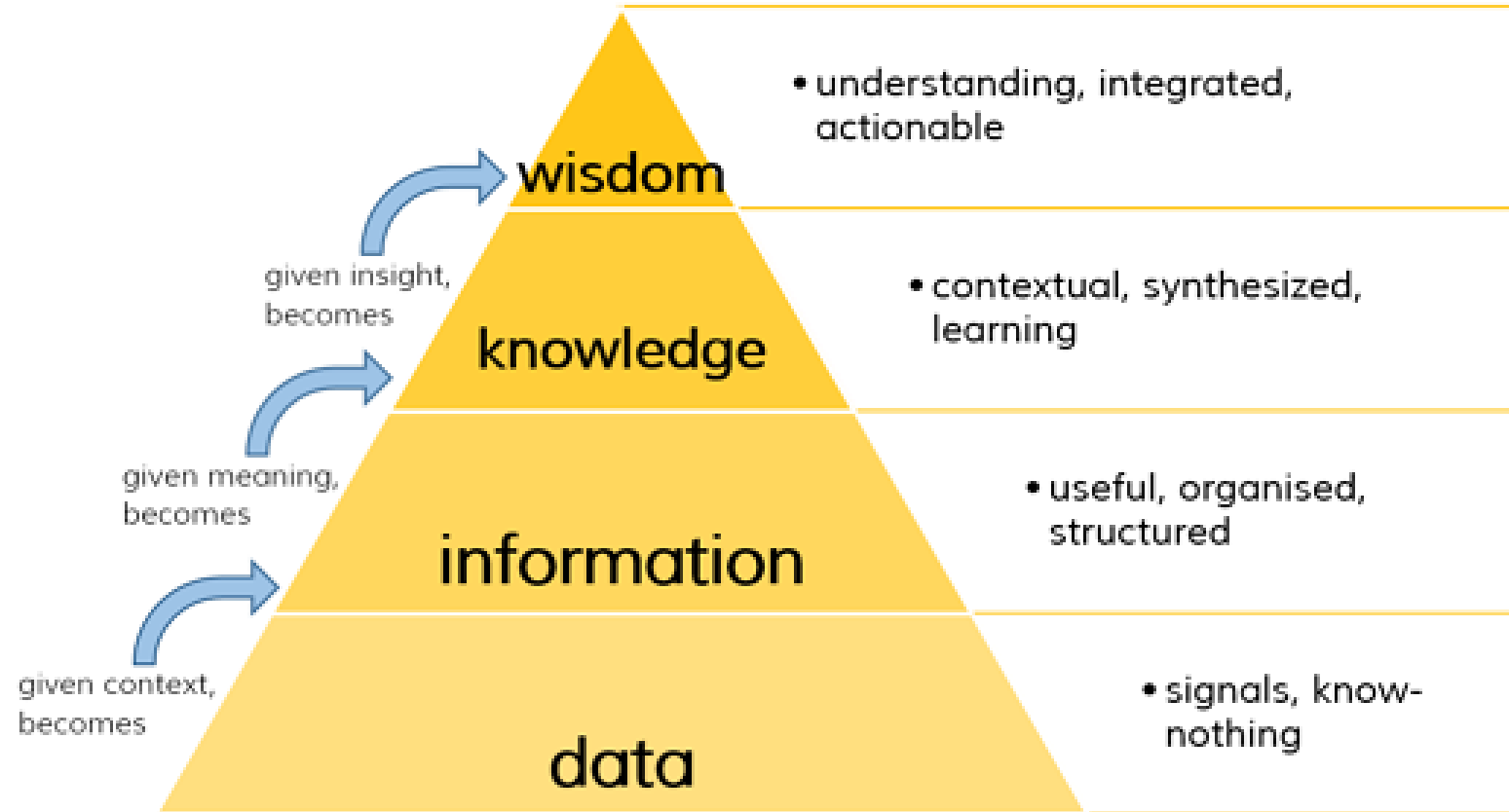
Choudaha, Rahul & van Rest, Edwin (2018). Envisioning pathways to 2030: Megatrends shaping the future of global higher education and international student mobility. Studyportals. bit.ly/Megatrends2030

How to sustain int'l enrollment growth and diversity?



Data informed decisions can help achieve goals

- Asking the (right) questions
- Working with (perfect) data
- Making the (informed) decision
- Improving the (continuous) process



Source Ian Saunder (2015) the source of business intelligence

Ian Thomson

Head of International Recruitment & Partnerships at University of Glasgow

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University of Glasgow



- Worked in Higher Education in Scotland for nearly 25 years, mostly in recruitment and marketing.
- Previously Headed up recruitment at The Glasgow School of Art.
- Past chair of the Scottish Universities International Group.
- Presented at numerous conferences including; NAFSA, EAIE and APAIE

Institutional Context

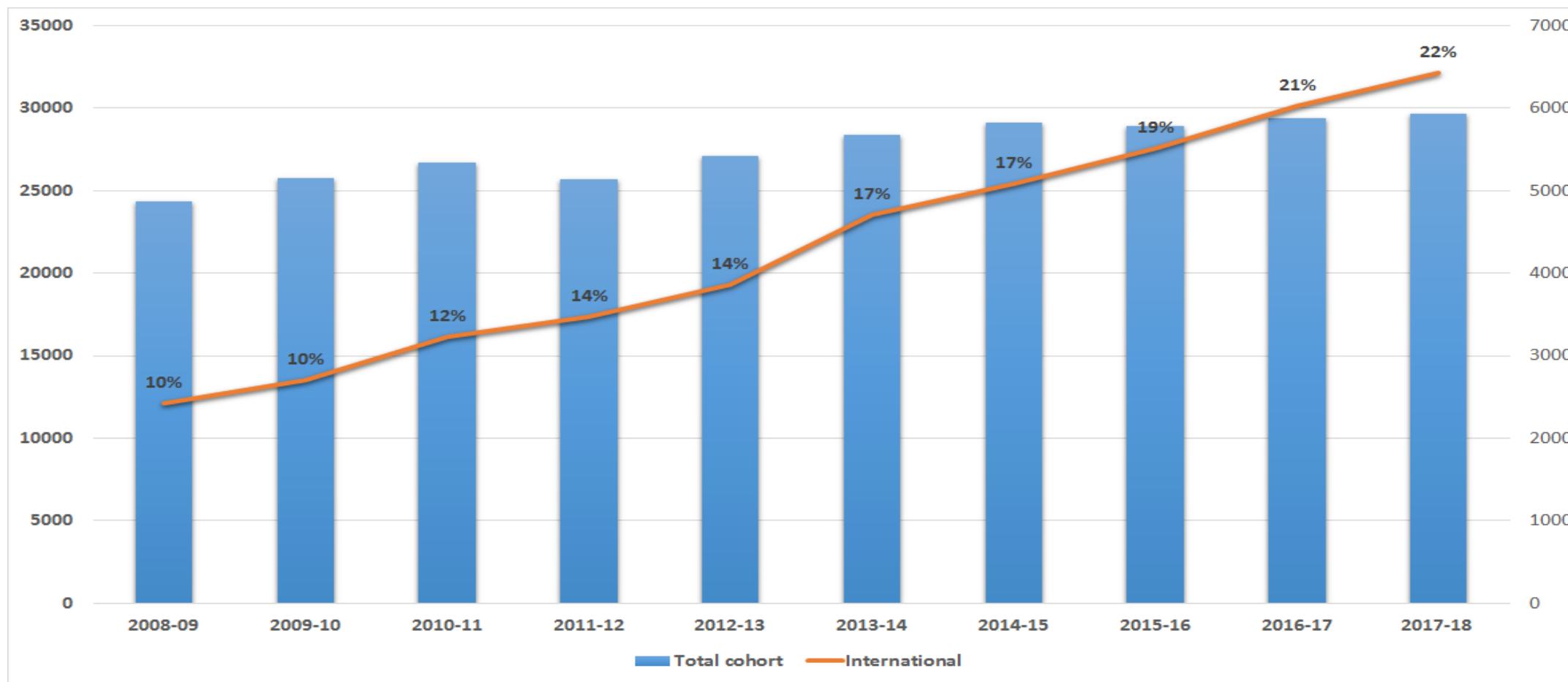


- Public comprehensive University
- Founded 1451
- Fourth oldest English speaking University in the world
- Over 29,000 students studying in Glasgow
- Over 140 nationalities represented on campus
- World Top 100 ranked University (THE and QS)
- Situated in one of the world's friendliest and dynamic cities
- First Internationalization strategy in 2010 (current 2015 – 2020)

Institutional Context: Total Cohort v International Growth



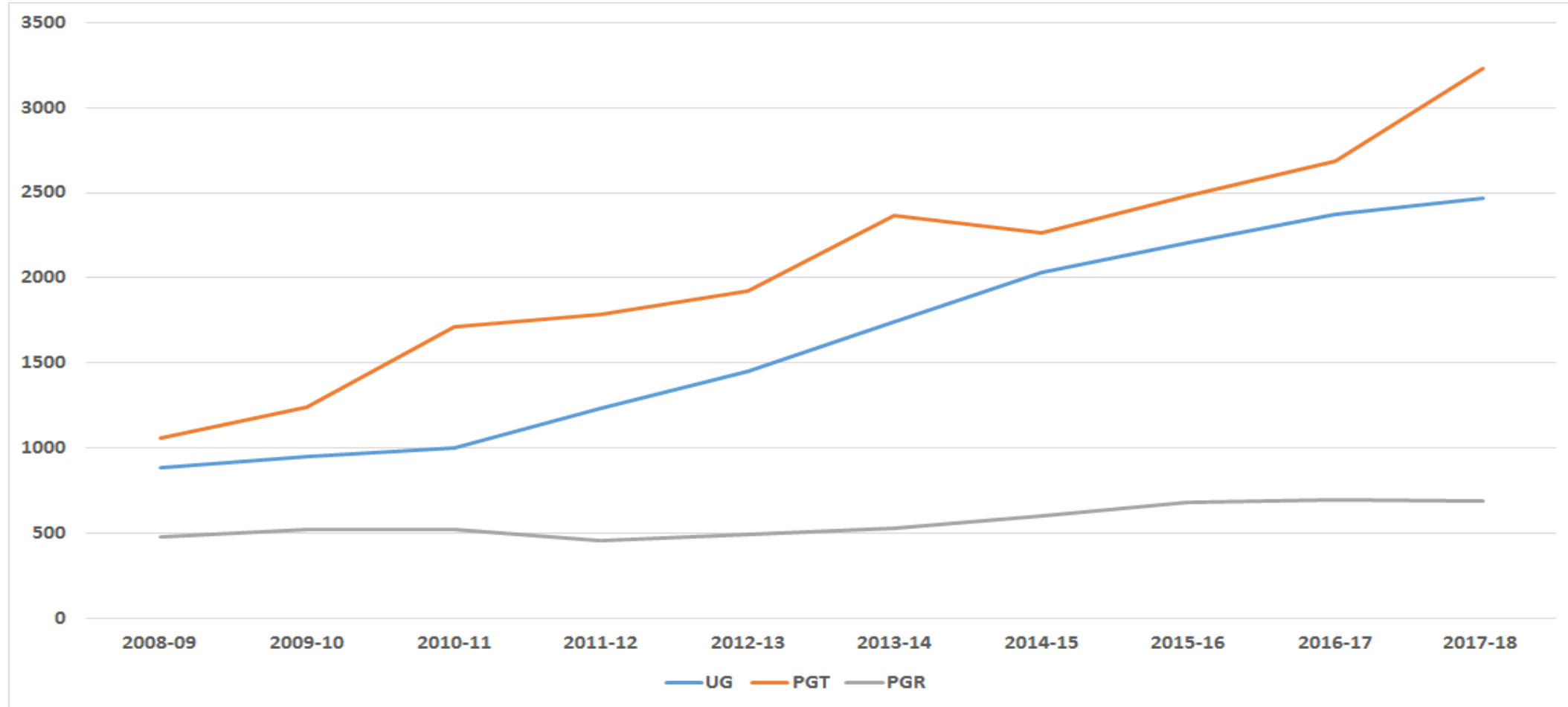
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Institutional Context: International Growth at UG, PGT and PGR Levels



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Data - Institutional Context



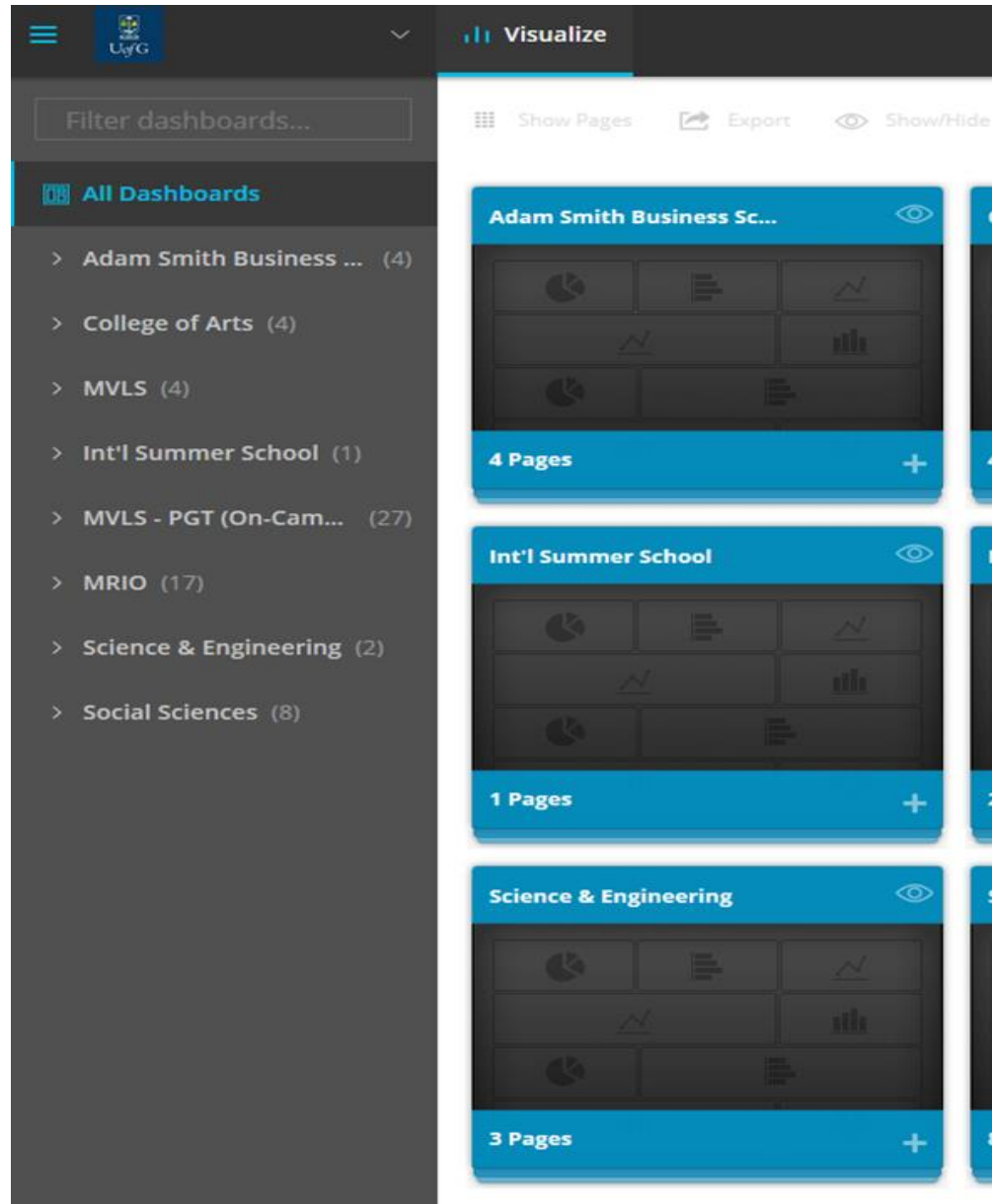
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External Data Sources:

- HESA, HEIDI+, British Council HESD, OECD, Agents, Independent Marketing Analysts

• Internal Data Sources:

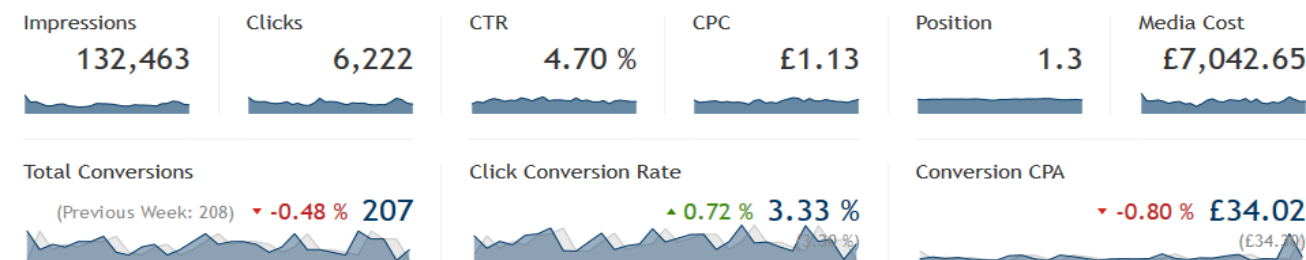
- QlikView, MyCampus, BOnline, Admissions



Live Reporting

- Online reporting tool provided by our media buying agency SMRS
- Allows us to track, measure and modify all digital marketing spend
- Used by central marketing team and College Recruitment and Conversion Managers
- One Master dashboard provides overview of all digital activity
- Setup can be configured specifically for individual campaigns

PAID SEARCH



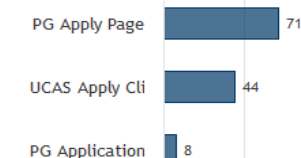
Timeline

Impressions Clicks Total Conversions



Application Related Actions

Total Conversions



Conversion Breakdown

Campaig...	PG Appl...	Email Enq...	UCAS Ap...	PG Appli...	PG Pros...
	Total C...	Total Conv	Total Co...	Total Co...	Total Co...
PAK - Scholars...	31	25	22	5	3
PAK - Masters ...	14	9	--	1	4
PAK - Universit...	13	11	7	1	3
PAK - Postgrad...	5	2	1	1	2
PAK - Undergr...	4	6	8	--	--
PAK - Scholars...	3	1	5	--	--
PAK - Masters ...	1	1	--	--	--
PAK - UK Stud...	--	1	1	--	1
PAK - Universit...	--	2	--	--	--
Total	71	58	44	8	13

1 - 9 of 9 items

Popular Keywords

Clicks



- Allows us to track a range of defined conversion points including submitted applications, prospectus downloads and open day registrations
- Able to track View Through Conversions (VTC) as well as Click Through Conversions
- Used for A-B testing of creative messaging and optimises best performing creatives
- Has allowed us to be more flexible with marketing spend and adjust creatives and or platforms accordingly

Challenges/Trends with International Enrollment



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Who is UoG comparing ourselves with and why?

- Country trends
- UK HE institutions
- Scottish HE institutions
- Russell Grp Institutions
- Ivy League/Uof8/Uof15

Student Channels

- Direct - 32%
- Agents - 49%
- Pathway Provider - 19%
- Government Sponsors (7% of total international population)

Challenges/Trends with International Enrollment



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- Overseas government policy
- UK Government policy (Immigration)
- Scottish Government policy
- Regional conflicts
- Development of courses taught in English
- Word of mouth
- Return on Investment (internships/career opps)
- Temptation to lower standards
- Internal structures and resources (staff and consumables)

Role of Data/Insights in informing decision



"What do you do with all the data you have gathered"

- Set realistic targets
- Manage diversification
- Identify trends (course development)
- Work with overseas governments/institutions in priority fields
- Become proactive NOT reactive
- Invest in new modes of delivery; TNE/ODL/partnerships 2+2, 3+1 etc.
- Prioritize subject areas for expansion
- Engage with your priority markets (staff investment?)

Lessons Learned (do's and don't)



- ❖ No one-fit solution - each market is different (different channels)
- ❖ Do not put all your eggs into one basket
- ❖ Do not live off past reputation
- ❖ Consult your stakeholders (they know best)
- ❖ Brand awareness – what are your communication channels
- ❖ Incentivize with targeted scholarships
- ❖ Invest in your recruitment and marketing operations
- ❖ Word of mouth is everything (one bad experience!!!)

You can never have too much data – it's how you segment and analyze it
There are students out there for every type of institution

Brandon M Boulter

Assistant Dean for Marketing, Admissions,
Enrollment Services at Johns Hopkins
University - Advanced Academic
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LinkedIn [brandon_boulter](#)

- Enrollment and marketing practitioner with over 18 years of experience
- Consults private and public institutions on international target markets, strategy, brand messaging, and online program enrollment management and development.
- Recognized Enrollment Management and Marketing Engineer.



Institutional Context

- Johns Hopkins University:

- THE GOOD

- Comprehensive Research – Private Non-Profit
 - Highly selective
 - Undergraduate, Graduate, Doctoral Programs
 - 6 physical campuses in Maryland, 1 in Washington DC, 3 international campuses including Singapore, China, Italy, and we are online.
 - Enrollment = 5,326 Undergraduate and 14,848 Graduate

- THE BAD

- Decentralized - little international cooperative enrollment management and planning
 - 10 Academic Divisions with differing needs and goals

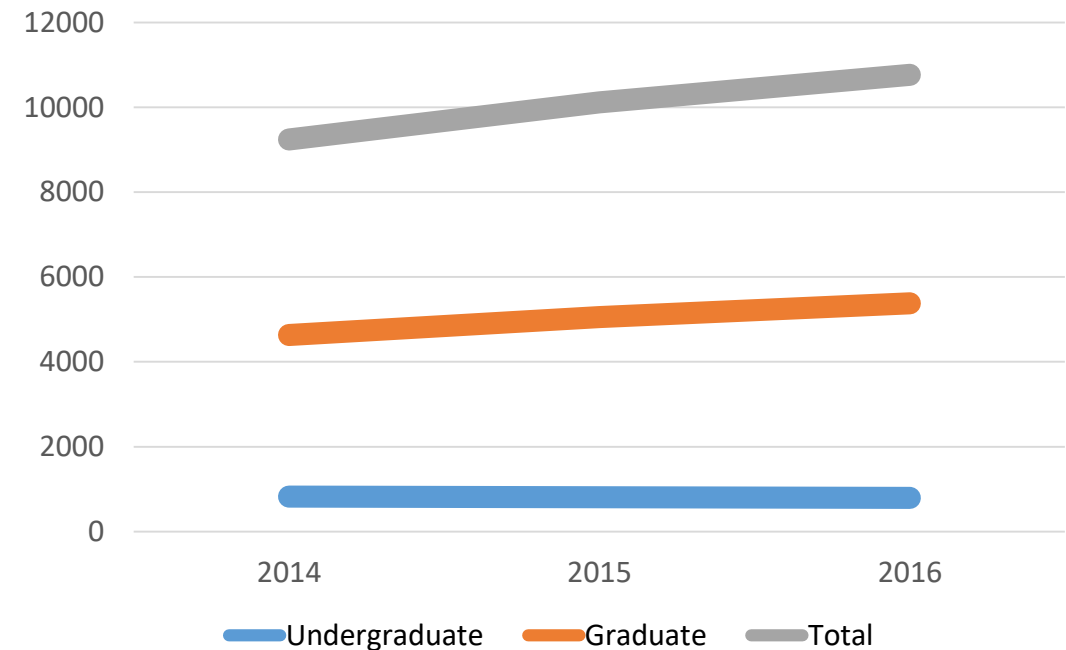
Institutional Context Cont.

International Enrollment

- Graduate enrollment counts for nearly 85% of total
- Undergraduate enrollment is shrinking

3 YEAR INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT DATA

Undergrad vs. Grad Enrollment



Division Context

- Krieger School of Arts and Sciences – AAP Graduate Programs

THE GOOD

- Nimble organization able to create new degree programs and concentrations based on partnership and market demand
- Academic Chairs maintain pedagogical control and QA
- Programs offered on-ground and online
- Deep culture built on data analysis driving division direction

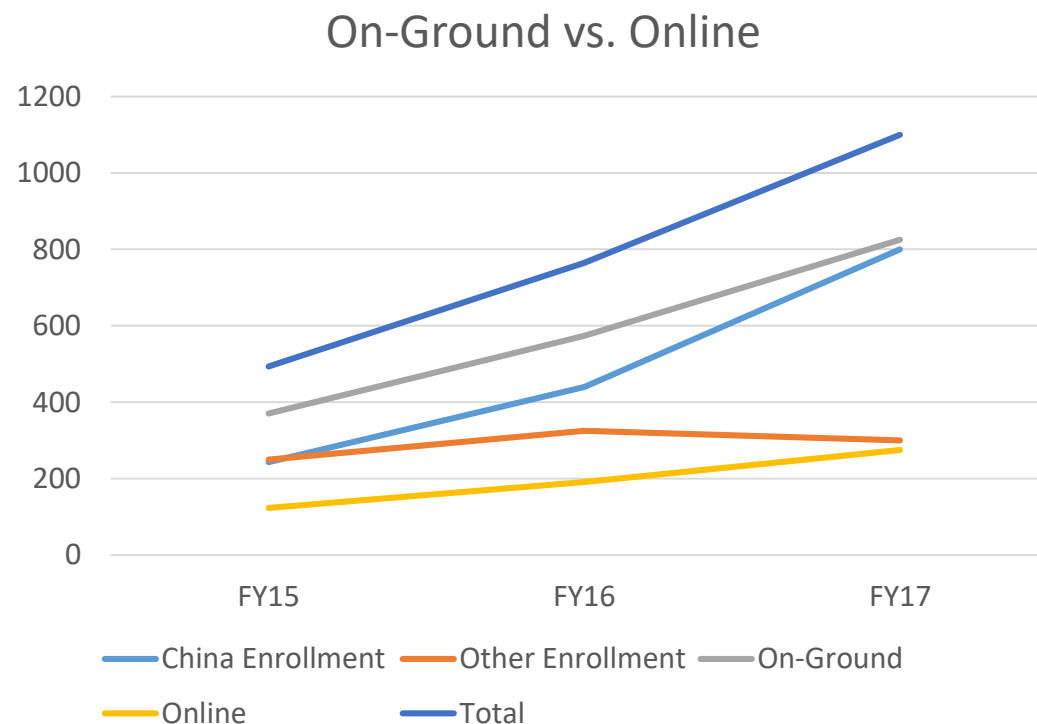
THE BAD

- Little to no cooperative work with other JHU divisions due to decentralized culture
- Minimal staff and budget to tackle large scale initiatives

Division Context Cont.

3 YEAR INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT DATA

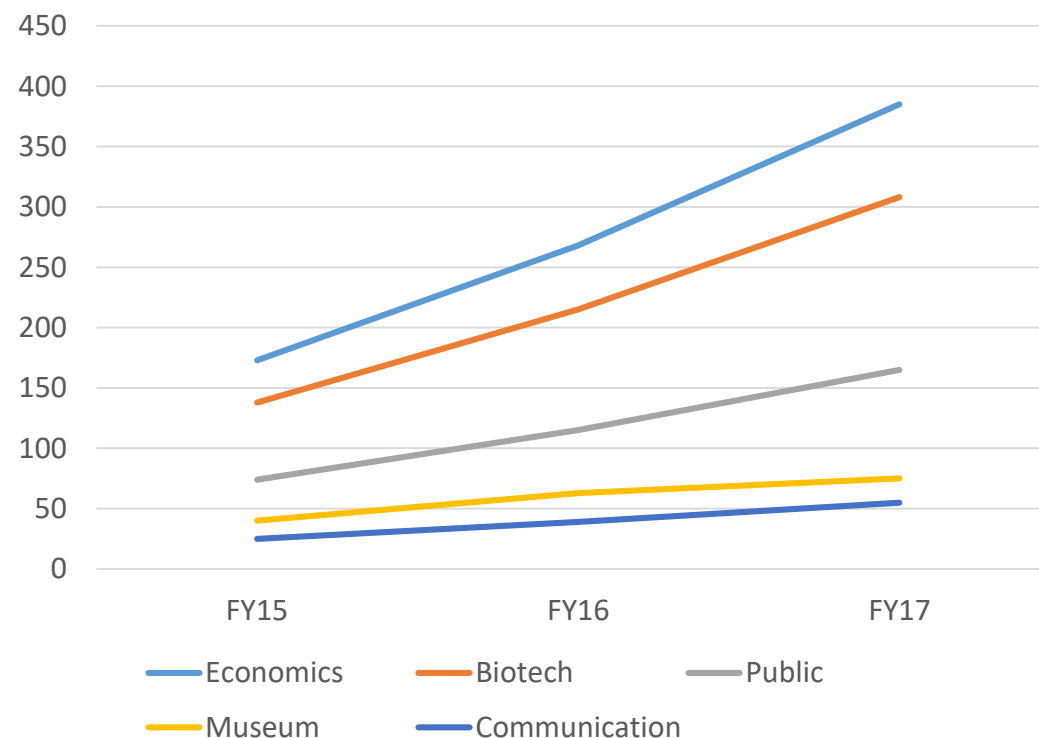
- Chinese enrollment has tripled over three years
- On-Ground enrollment counts for nearly 75% of total
- Online enrollment account for 25% of total



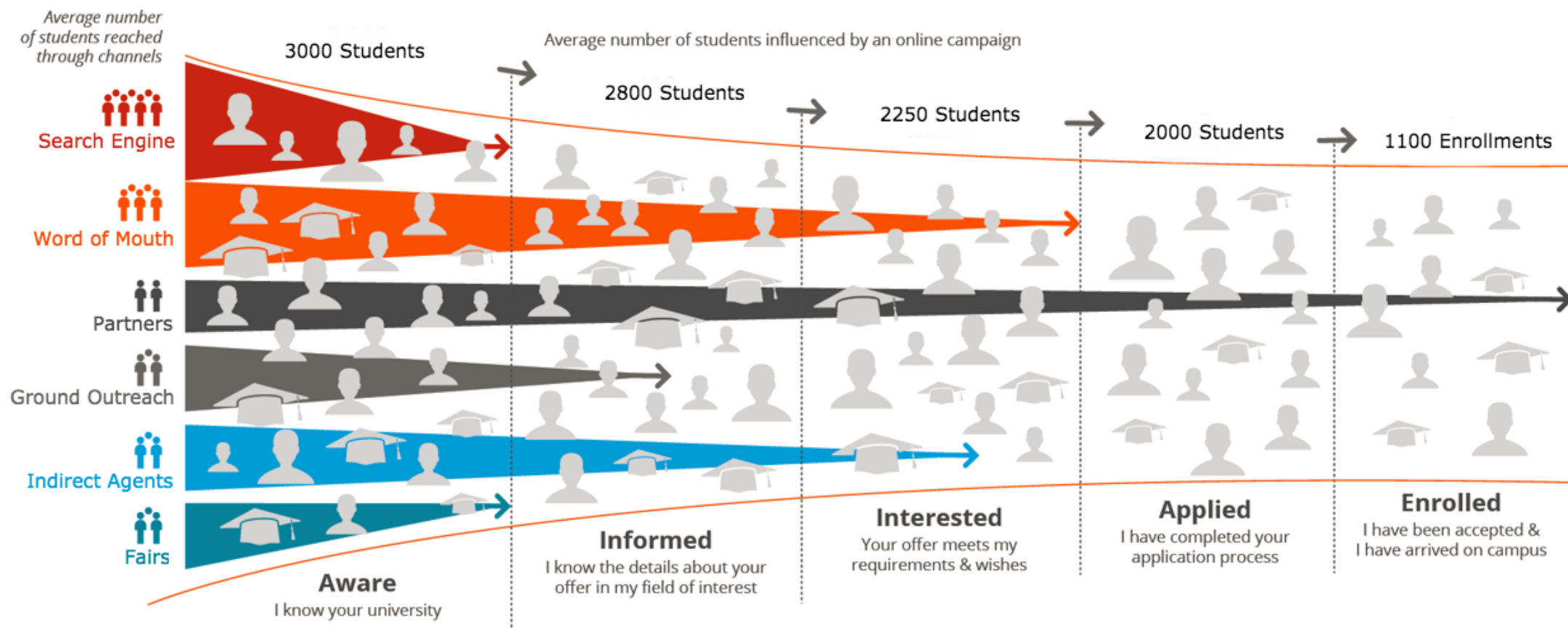
Division Context Cont.

Top 5 Programs

- STEM programs remain top programs
- Public Policy and Administration programs showing promise



International Student Funnel



Data Driven Decision Making

- Key data findings
 - Positive growth in key international markets
 - Key finding: High touch campaigns
 - Dedicated Chinese FTE FY16-FY17
 - Word of mouth campaign
 - Student and alumni listening
 - Negative persistence
 - Key Finding:
 - No correlation between high English language scores and graduate level writing
 - Cultural differences have an inherent impact on student and faculty interaction
- What else did we learn? Students and alumni report that:
 - Applications can be complex, and require a variety of confusing materials that can cause anxiety
 - High touch - personalized efforts increased enrollment by 50% year over year
 - Fewer than 10% of enrollees felt dual language material was an important part of their decision to enroll
 - Student and alumni listening activities resulted in improvements in budgetary support, policy changes, systems, processes, and workflow
 - Partners report: Cooperative academic partnerships are in demand, but require a lot of time and effort
 - Foreign institutions are agile and flexible, but they perceive our bureaucracy as a barriers to growth and partnership

Lessons Learned (Dos and Don'ts)

Don't

- Marketing:
 - Underestimate word of mouth advertising
 - Assume you know what students want
 - Miss opportunities to learn from your current students and alumni
 - Fear failure as you test new market initiatives
 - Apply the same tactics to all international markets
 - Believe that your brand is concrete
- Enrollment:
 - Avoid yield events due to logistics
 - Allow current processes to stand in the way of the student experience
 - Fear failure as you test new market initiatives
 - Misinterpret historical enrollment data and assume future growth
- International Development:
 - Lose face with potential partners by promising immediate action
 - Forget current student and alumni introductions
 - Neglect international rankings

Lessons Learned (Dos and Don'ts)

Do

- Manage your Brand
 - Good Brand = Growing Enrollment
 - Brand loyalty
 - Brand recognition
 - Prestige is important in most markets
 - Poor Brand = Declining Enrollment
- Understand and Convey Outcomes
- Establish Connections and Networks
- Understand Shifting Academic Needs

Questions/comments

- What are the challenges and approaches of leveraging data for international enrollment strategies at your institution? What worked and didn't work?
 - "It is better to be vaguely right than precisely wrong"
 - Gupta & Lehmann (2005) "Managing Customers as Investments"
 - "Measure what you want, not what you can measure."
 - Fioramonti, Lorenzo (2014) "How Numbers Rule the World, The Use and Abuse of Statistics in Global Politics"
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