



# Nudging Students Through the **Academic Life Cycle**



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# INTRODUCTION

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An important question we hear from prospects and customers is “In this digital world, will I ever speak to students in person again?”

The short answer is yes. The long answer has two parts. First, we’ve found research indicating students, particularly those in Gen Z, like to automate simple tasks but prefer in-person interactions for more complex exchanges such as making major decisions, evaluating financial aid options, or discussing issues involving emotional and mental health.

Second, the exchanges that are focused around simple tasks are the basis for the creation of the Signal Vine platform. Using our platform, researchers established empirical evidence that texting students, in combination with providing advisor support, can replicate in-person attention, improve student engagement, and help administrators and advisors reach their goals. Our Blended Messaging® approach was designed with the idea that you can automate simple tasks and replies to your students, while easily identifying the messages that require a more individual and often in-person approach.

Signal Vine’s campus-wide messaging solution transforms the way organizations engage with students and employees. Built on the principles of behavioral economics, the platform combines text messaging with data analytics to deliver highly personalized and interactive experiences. Proactive text nudges sent through the platform are a powerful driver of positive results, ranging from college matriculation and persistence to improved employment outcomes.

Visit [www.signalvine.com](http://www.signalvine.com) for more information, or follow [Signal Vine](#) on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

# OCCASION FOR THE RESEARCH

In our ebook, [Nudge Technology and Higher Education: Harnessing Behavioral Economics to Improve Student Outcomes](#), our goal was to help higher education leaders understand how technology paired with behavioral economics can guide student decision making for the better. We defined nudge technology, outlined principles for adopting it, and identified case studies. If that first look included background for the why and how, then this ebook represents the practical steps for deploying those principles to text students.

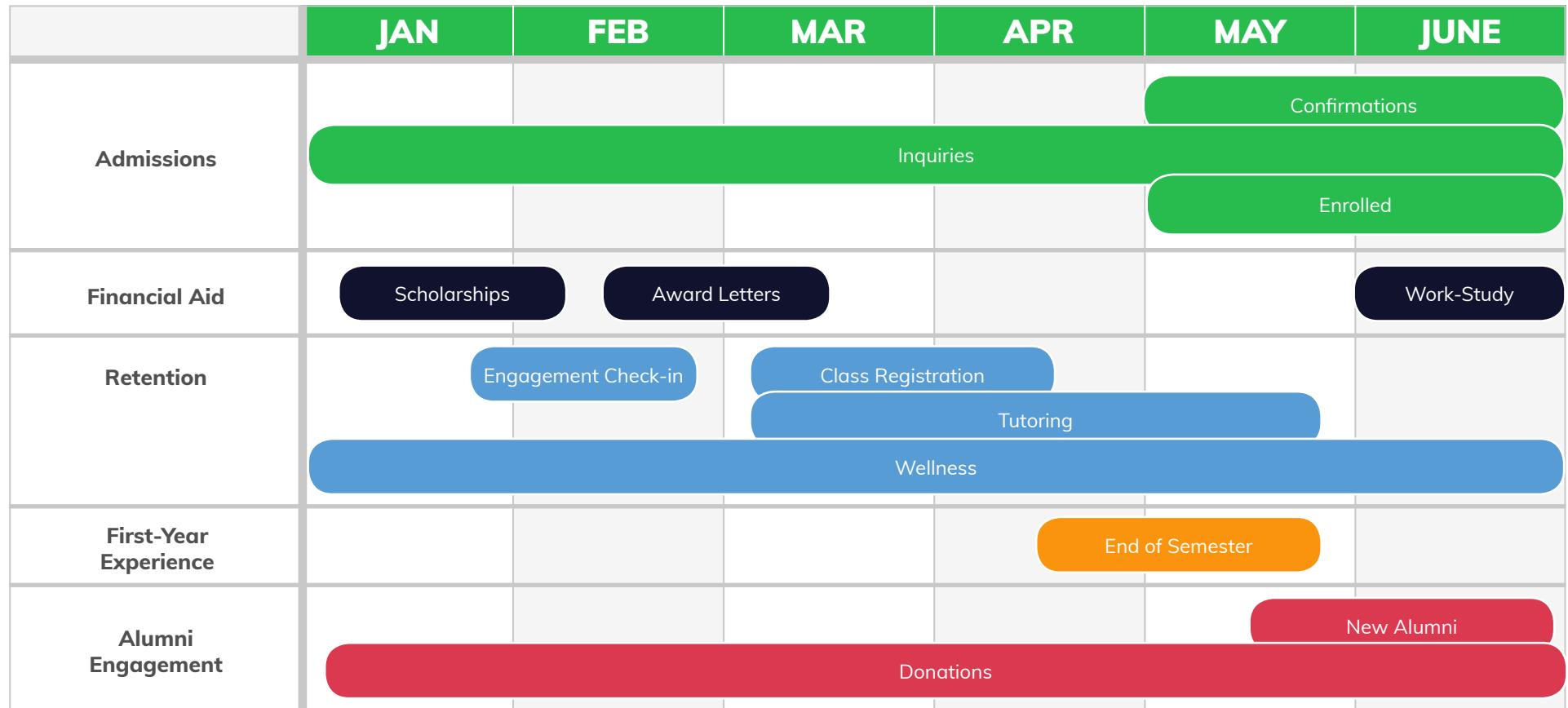
Our goal is to help higher education leaders to move beyond the theoretical agreement on the power of a digital nudge , overcome those last lingering concerns, and begin texting students. But we recognize this can be daunting. We've heard a few questions such as:

- How do you enter the digital world of someone who might be much more adept than you?
- What types of activities should you text about?
- How long should the messages be?
- How often do you text?
- How do you text so many students and still get responses?

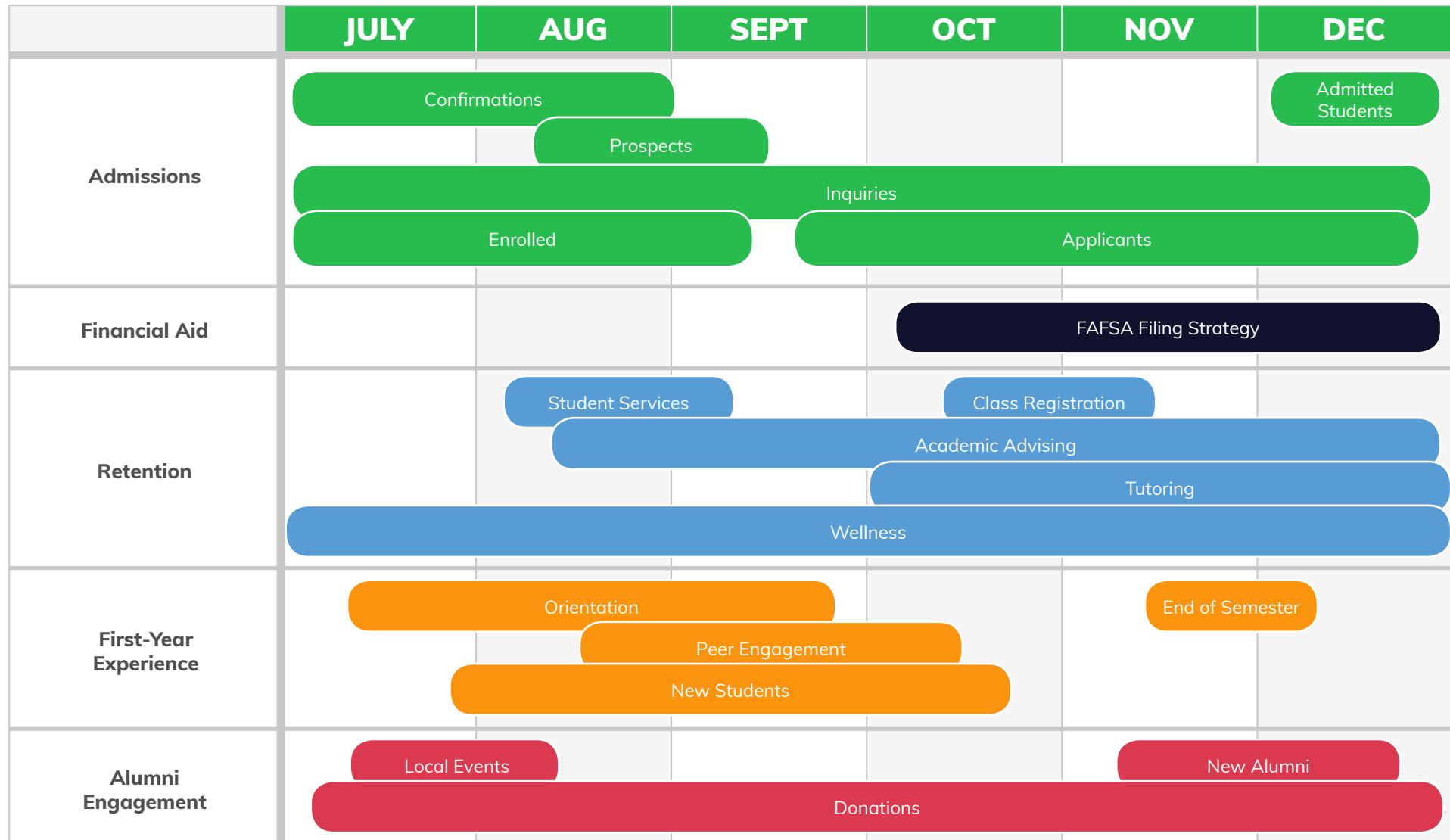
We've set out to help you answer those questions in the report that follows. We've assembled ideas for texting students across higher education departments by aggregating ideas from our Customer Success and Implementation teams. This is by no means comprehensive, but rather a representative example of the types of messages you might send. Our Customer Success team stands ready to provide full technical and messaging support to help you along the way.

We hope you'll find the ideas and tips that follow helpful in getting you started and generating new ideas for reaching students. Please reach out to your Customer Success representative to talk through ideas or to craft a comprehensive communication plan for your institution.

# TEXTING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC LIFE CYCLE



# TEXTING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC LIFE CYCLE



# ADMISSIONS TEXTING

Recruiting students is costly, and with increased competition from other institutions along with changing student and workforce demographics, it is increasingly important to reach your prospective students where they operate most. Our platform makes it easy to send messages to large numbers of prospective students while automating replies where it makes sense and flagging messages that require individual attention. In the pages that follow, we've collected some of our best practices for texting students through the admissions funnel. In addition, we've assembled some example text messages to help you think about what to say, who to say it to, and when to send your text messages.

## Learn more about texting students in these stages:

Prospects

Inquiries

Applicants

Admitted

Confirmed

Enrolled

## Enrollment and admissions leaders are using Signal Vine to:

### Manage the admissions funnel

Communicate with students at the right time with the right message.

### Nudge applicants at the right time

Remind applicants about upcoming application deadlines and orientation dates.

### Engage with students

Connect admitted students to admissions counselors and peer mentors through the entire student life cycle.



# Admissions: PROSPECTS

The path to college starts way before students sit down to fill out an application. Students begin conducting online research and talking to their peers early on in the process. Admissions teams have a fantastic opportunity to reach these students just as they start their research.

**What:** Admissions staff can guide student decision-making by early outreach via text. Sending prospects targeted messages with links to informational sessions, research, and distinguished alumni can have a big impact at this stage.

**Who:** Marketing teams are reaching out to potential applicants.

**When:** Begin early in the decision-making process in a students' sophomore and junior years and continue to the beginning of their senior year of high school.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Kevin, this is Sarah from Signal Vine University. We're hosting an info session for students in your area on April 20th. You can register here: [signalvineu.edu/infosession](http://signalvineu.edu/infosession). Hope you can join us!

Can I get in with my GPA?

Potentially, we look at other factors as well. Would you like to speak with a counselor to learn more?

Yes, I'd like know before going to the session.

Sure, please schedule a time using this link:  
[signalvineu.edu/counselorschedule](http://signalvineu.edu/counselorschedule)

## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Personalization will have a big impact with students who aren't familiar with your institution. Try to incorporate as much known data as possible into your conversations. Use major, location, interests, or behavior when possible.
- To effectively engage this large group of students, use Signal Vine's Blended Messaging® approach to automate outreach where it makes sense, while quickly flagging the responses that need your attention.

# Admissions: INQUIRIES

Admissions offices get student inquiries all year long. When students express interest in your organization, it's another chance to extract more personalized information and allow students to opt in to your texting program.

**What:** Use your student inquiry forms to pull relevant data (including mobile numbers), so you can add students to your texting program. Keep the messages personalized and utilize information from your CRM in the message content.

**Who:** Admissions counselors are messaging with students who have expressed an interest in the institution, or even responding to students who have opted in to an admissions texting program.

**When:** As students express interest, integrate texting into your communication plans. Use responses to gauge interest and ensure students meet deadlines. Typically the best time to communicate with these students is April through December.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Elizabeth, thanks for your interest in Signal Vine University! We're hosting virtual info sessions for students interested in business this Friday at 2pm. Register here: [signalvineu.edu/businesssession](http://signalvineu.edu/businesssession)



Actually, I'm more interested in economics now.

No problem, our information sessions for economics can be found here: [signalvineu.edu/economicssession](http://signalvineu.edu/economicssession)



Great, I'll see if I can join.

Hope you can join us. Please don't hesitate to schedule with our counselors as well at: [signalvineu.edu/counselorscheduling](http://signalvineu.edu/counselorscheduling)



## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- In order to be compliant, you don't need explicit opt-in permission. You can text students who have given mobile numbers as long as you give a clear way to opt out! Also ensure this CRM field is connected to your texting platform.



# Admissions: APPLICANTS

Getting someone to this point in the admissions funnel is a feat in itself, but the work is not done! College applications tend to be confusing and lead to questions and uncertainty. Once the texting channel is open, most applicants will reach out with their questions via text, so get the entire team trained on Signal Vine to have the biggest impact.

**What:** Send prospects reminders about the application deadline and check if they have any questions. Follow up via text with any applicant who has an incomplete application to ensure they can send over the missing pieces.

**Who:** Admissions officers are communicating with students throughout the application process, from when applicants first begin their application until they have been submitted.

**When:** Begin texting during the application process from September through December.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Mark, congratulations on submitting your application to Signal Vine University. Don't forget we need your ACT score by Feb. 1st for consideration.

Oh, I've taken it, how do I submit it?

You can submit using this link:  
[signalvineu.edu/actsubmission](http://signalvineu.edu/actsubmission)

Great, thanks. I'm looking forward to hearing back.

Great, we'll start communicating acceptance notices in April.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Nudge applicants about important application requirements.
- Include deadlines to create a sense of urgency.

# Admissions: ADMITTED

Many college-bound students (especially first-generation college students) don't realize that getting accepted is only the first step. If they got into more than one school, they have a decision to make, and your admissions team is on the front line.

**What:** Congratulate students on their acceptance to your institution and send this group reminders about Accepted Student Day so they can start to picture themselves attending your institution next semester!

**Who:** Admissions staff, and/or marketing teams, are reaching out to admitted students who have yet to confirm their acceptance.

**When:** Text students beginning after admittance, typically December through April.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi David, this is Kim from SVU. We're getting ready for freshmen orientation-here are some of the events we are hosting [signalvineu.edu/events](http://signalvineu.edu/events).

Interesting, when do I need to confirm?

Deadline to confirm is June 20th. We hope to see you on campus and at orientation.

Thanks I have just a few more questions though.

Sure, please schedule time for us to review those.

Ok will do.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Send admitted students information about student life to drive interest.
- Ensure your admitted student messages and requests sync to your CRM so that your institution can continue to craft tailored messages throughout the student life cycle.

# Admissions: CONFIRMED

The decision has been made, but the work of the admissions team is far from over. There are still some key dates and deadlines that students have to complete to cross the finish line and get to campus.

**What:** Remind these students about the enrollment deposit deadline and make sure they understand what comes next.

**Who:** Admissions counselors are reaching out to students who have accepted offers of admission but who have yet to officially enroll or make a deposit.

**When:** Begin texting after their confirmation and before enrollment, typically through the summer months until enrollment for fall courses.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Sasha, this is Dan, your counselor. Do you have any questions about your financial aid deadlines?

Yep, I'm not sure what I need to submit, when?

Happy to help. Here is a link to the scheduled deadlines: [signalvineu.edu/deadlines](http://signalvineu.edu/deadlines). I'm happy to talk about your specific situation over the phone if you'd like?

Thanks, I would like to talk over the phone.

Sure just let me know what time works for you.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- What may seem like a quick financial aid decision can be daunting for students. Break down complex financial details into simple steps for students.

# Admissions: ENROLLED

At this point, a student's high school career is ending and they're ready for the next step: college! This transition period is when some students fall through the cracks because they don't know where to go for support.

**What:** Text your students over the summer and give them the support they need to get to campus. Send over details around orientation, registration, and move-in, and get ready for questions.

**Who:** Admissions staff, and other departments such as financial aid, are communicating with students from the time they enroll until the time they officially matriculate.

**When:** Text these students through the summer months until fall courses begin.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Todd, this is Jill at Signal Vine University. We're excited to welcome you to campus! I'm including your schedule for orientation and registration. Any questions?

I don't think so, ready to start!



I didn't expect that but enjoyed it, lol!

Glad I could make you laugh.  
Looking forward to seeing you soon!

## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- As students enroll, counselors should begin thinking about retention. That may sound daunting, but simple steps like using MMS for GIF replies or infographics can make a difference. Just don't go overboard!

# FINANCIAL AID TEXTING

Connecting students to financial aid resources is a main driver for both enrollment and retention success, but it can be challenging to convey complex financial information. Proactively sending out information around deadlines and next steps will help your staff focus on those students and parents that need individualized assistance. That's why using text nudges to simplify and break down complex tasks into more manageable messages is the most effective strategy. Using a text messaging platform will ensure those messages reach students at the right time with the right message.

## Learn more about texting students about these topics:

Scholarships

Award Letters

Work-Study

FAFSA Filing Strategies

## Financial aid leaders are using Signal Vine to:

### Simplify complicated financial aid questions

Nudge students to apply for scholarships and other financial aid opportunities to increase enrollment and help students persist.

### Help reduce student loan defaults for high-risk borrowers

Send new loan applicants the right messages so they make informed decisions regarding their student loans and can reduce borrowing.

### Improve persistence with financial aid nudges

Create a higher education financial aid texting program to manage FAFSA deadlines and to improve persistence.



# Financial Aid: SCHOLARSHIPS

One of the biggest challenges incoming and current students face in their college career is the financial burden. Scholarships can make a huge impact, but a lot of students don't know where to find these scholarship opportunities or how to apply for them.

**What:** Text students to remind them of scholarship and renewal deadlines. Doing so will nudge your students to complete these tasks.

**Who:** Financial aid officers are messaging with students who have started or completed a scholarship application. They also might reach out to students with loans or grants, or high-achieving students, who might be interested in need-based or merit-based scholarships.

**When:** Begin texting at the start of the new calendar year, January and February. Scholarship deadlines are usually in late spring, so the sooner students submit their applications, the better.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Courtney, this is Lee. The 2018-19 scholarship application is live! Apply here: [signalvineu.edu/scholarshipapp](http://signalvineu.edu/scholarshipapp). Do you have any questions?

Yah.

Happy to help! What questions do you have?

How much money am I eligible for?

Scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Your award will depend on your academic performance and extracurricular activities.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- A proactive messaging campaign will amount to higher application yields by the scholarship deadline.
- Text students when the application opens. As a nudge, text a reminder 3-10 days before the deadline.
- Include a link in the text that will serve as a call to action.

# Financial Aid: AWARD LETTERS

Financial aid is a complex process, and understanding the award letter is a large piece of the puzzle.

**What:** Send students informative messages about accepting their financial aid award letter. Be prepared to walk students through their letters and explain what it all means.

**Who:** Financial aid officers are communicating with students who have applied for financial aid.

**When:** Begin texting in the spring, March through April, as the decision deadline to enroll is May 1st.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Matt. You should receive your award letter soon. Send me a photo of your letter once it arrives if you have any questions.

Thanks, do you know the exact date I should expect it?

It looks like it should arrive anywhere from 4/10 to 4/15.

Thanks!

You're welcome. Let me know if you don't see it by 4/17.

## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Encourage students to send photos of their letters if they have questions. This will make the process more efficient for both sides.
- Let the students know that you're there to answer any questions they may have about their award letter.

# Financial Aid: WORK-STUDY

Students who participate in federal work-study programs see higher persistence rates, increased likelihood of completing a bachelor's degree, and higher rates of employment after graduating.

**What:** Text students to inform them about work-study opportunities and answer any questions they may have.

**Who:** Financial aid teams are messaging students to increase awareness of work-study opportunities and communicating with work-study recipients to answer questions.

**When:** Begin texting around June, after they have received their award letters.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Work-study assignments are now available online. Go to [workstudy.edu](http://workstudy.edu) to find out where you'll be working!



Is it possible to change my work study?

You can submit a request to change your work study here: [signalvineu.edu/workstudyrequest](http://signalvineu.edu/workstudyrequest). Keep in mind not all requests are granted.



Thank you!

You're welcome!



## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Sending texts 5-10 days before application deadlines will result in higher yields.
- Leverage your student data to ensure only students who receive FWS get these messages.
- Include an infographic or meme to enhance your informational text!

# Financial Aid: FAFSA FILING STRATEGY

This process can be very complicated for students who are filing for the first time and/or who don't have resources and assistance to complete the process.

**What:** Send reminders when the FAFSA opens and nudges to those who haven't completed it.

**Who:** Financial aid offices are communicating with students who are completing or have completed the FAFSA.

**When:** FAFSA opens in October and closes at the end of June. Text these students throughout that time period.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Mark! As of today you can now file for the FAFSA. Let me know if you have questions.

Do you know when I have to complete it by?

It will close at the end of June.

Okay, thanks. I may have questions when I get started.

That's what I am here for!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Create an internal bank of frequently asked questions and answers so that you can quickly respond to common texts.

# RETENTION TEXTING

Retaining students through graduation is a significant challenge. This year, the Chronicle for Higher Education estimated that only 61% of the students who started college three years ago have been retained. Some of the major issues include fit, student support services, advising, and inadequate communication. These are exactly the issues that a text message program for on-campus services can address. By coordinating communication among different groups vying for student attention, administrators can improve retention rates and have a positive impact on the student experience.

**Learn more about improving retention by texting students about:**

- Engagement Check-In
- Class Registration
- Student Services
- Academic Advising
- Tutoring
- Wellness

**Retention leaders are using Signal Vine to:**

## Improve student retention

Create timely, personalized messages in a scalable way to improve student engagement and retention.

## Identify the students who need additional help

Quickly identify which students need additional support with flagged replies in the Signal Vine platform.

## Engage students in a scalable way

Use information from your CRM to create personalized text messages to large groups of students.

# Retention: ENGAGEMENT CHECK-IN

Checking in during the semester is a great way to continue to build relationships. It provides a great opportunity for students to surface any concerns and connect with staff.

**What:** Send a quick check-in message to see how everything is going and let students know you're there.

**Who:** Academic advisors and/or peer mentors are checking in with their advisees and mentees.

**When:** Text these students at the beginning of the calendar year, January through February, as this is the start of a new semester and is a great time to check in and see how things are going.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Max. It's your advisor, Jess. It's the start of the new semester so I wanted to check in and see how you're feeling. Anything I can help with?

I actually am having a hard time finding campus activities that I enjoy.

That's understandable. Would you like to schedule an appointment so we can review some ideas?

Sure.

Great! Call 800-555-555 to set up your appointment. See you soon!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- If you haven't texted this student in a very long time, it's a good idea to reintroduce yourself. It's possible they haven't kept their messages.
- When a student asks for help, take action immediately by getting them the resources they need.

# Retention: CLASS REGISTRATION

Registering for classes is always a process, but first-year students may need more guidance. Be proactive and reach out to students who have academic holds on their accounts or need additional resources around course registration.

**What:** Use data from your CRM and send personalized messages around account information and class registration.

**Who:** Academic advising offices are reaching out to all students before and after class registration. This includes newly enrolled students.

**When:** Depending on the semester, the best time to text for registration is March through April or October through November.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Tom, this is Lisa, your advisor. Course registration opens on Monday at 7am. Did you know you have an academic hold on your account?



I did not.

That's okay, I can help with that. Stop by my office today or tomorrow and we can take care of it.



Where is your office again?

300 North St. Before you stop by, check out the course offerings on the registrar's website here:  
[signalvineu.edu/courses](http://signalvineu.edu/courses)



### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Leverage your student data to ensure that each class receives relevant registration information.
- Send a reminder text 3-5 days before registration. A second nudge text on registration day can also be helpful!

# Retention: STUDENT SERVICES

Use your Student Services department to keep students engaged and active on campus.

**What:** Send students nudges reminding them about upcoming activity fairs, advising appointments, and other relevant events.

**Who:** Staff from Student Services, Student Affairs, and Advising departments are communicating with all enrolled students.

**When:** Begin texting at the beginning of the school year, August through September, when students arrive on campus.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Beth! Are you ready for midterms next week? We have lots of study tips and guides for de-stressing here: [signalvineu.edu/studytips](http://signalvineu.edu/studytips).

Do you want to connect with a tutor?



Yes, I'd like to find a tutor.

Happy to help. You can choose your tutor from the list on our portal using this link.

[Signalvineu.edu/tutorsupport](http://Signalvineu.edu/tutorsupport)



Thank you.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Sending out tips and resources in web links and infographics around midterms and finals times will help students to develop their study techniques.
- Many institutions follow an informal rule to not text students more than 3-5 times per month, to protect the power of their outreach.



# Retention: ACADEMIC ADVISING

Use texting to connect students to resources from all over campus on their phones. Texting can be used for advisors to answer questions and send information about easy tasks that don't involve a face-to-face meeting.

**What:** Advisors can text their students to set up face-to-face meetings to answer questions that are more complicated.

**Who:** Academic advisors are communicating with advisees.

**When:** The best time to text these students is leading up to their first year, and then throughout their whole college career.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Morgan, this is Michelle, your academic advisor. Do you have any questions about your class schedule?

Hi. Yes I do. I'm not sure what counts towards my major and what doesn't.

Happy to help. How many classes do you have questions about?

All 5.

Why don't you set up some time to schedule an in-person meeting? You can do so here:  
[signalvineu.edu/advisingmeetings](http://signalvineu.edu/advisingmeetings)

Will do. Thanks!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Schedule reminder text messages for delivery 3 days, 1 day, and/or 1 hour before your advising appointment.
- Using your CRM, you can pull in personalized information like GPA, major, year, etc.
- College students are more likely to respond after 10am and around lunchtime. Schedule your text messages accordingly.

# Retention: TUTORING

Adjusting the workload and content of college classes is challenging for a lot of students. Tutoring centers and services tend to be underutilized because students don't know they exist.

**What:** Check in with your students throughout the year to connect them to resources that will help them achieve success in their classes. Continue to nudge students about tutoring opportunities to help them gain confidence, help them pass courses, and encourage them to take more courses.

**Who:** Academic advisors and peer mentors are reaching out to students who may benefit from tutoring or students who are actively working with a tutor.

**When:** We recommend texting tutoring opportunities throughout the entire year, especially to students who need it most. You may also text these students around important exam dates, like midterms, finals, and any other significant exams.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Michelle! I noticed that your GPA has decreased this semester. I can help connect you to tutors that could help.



Thank you! That would really help, I have been struggling with calculus this semester and am really nervous about the midterm coming up.

We have amazing tutors who specialize in calculus. Here is the number to schedule an appointment: 808-555-2222.



Thanks, going to call today!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Grabbing information like GPA from your CRM will help your messages be very targeted and personalized. When you call out the specific course these students need help with, they will be more encouraged to try and get help.



# Retention: WELLNESS

College is a big transition for most students, and it is important to let them know that someone is there if they need help.

**What:** Check in with your students about their overall well-being. Topics could include homesickness, mental health, physical health, drug abuse, relationships, etc.

**Who:** Academic advisors or peer mentors are communicating with their advisees and mentees.

**When:** It is important to do wellness checks throughout the entire year. Students should know that they have someone to connect with if they are struggling.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Kate! I wanted to check in and see how things are going. I know that you transferred here recently, and that transition can be tough for students.



I'm glad you reached out. I have actually been struggling a lot. I am very homesick and have been thinking about dropping out.

I am sure this is a tough time for you. I am in my office and free until 6pm. Do you want to stop by and talk in person?



That would be great, I'll head over at 3pm.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- If a student asks for help, make sure you take immediate action. You want the student to know that you are a resource that they can rely on especially when they need it the most.
- For students who have asked for help, we recommend following up with them to check their state of mind.



# FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE TEXTING

On average, a third of freshman students will not return to school. Instead, one-eighth will transfer out, and others will move to the workforce, which is why it's increasingly important to create compelling, peer-enabled freshman-year programs. These programs are becoming central to institution retention and enrollment rates. A well-managed communication plan can help students fit in, feel engaged, meet the deadlines needed to register, and complete financial aid requirements. We've outlined some of the most compelling text message initiatives that our customers are using to improve their first-year experience programs.

## Learn more about our first-year experience use cases:

New Students

Orientation

Peer Engagement

End of Semester

## First-year experience and student services leaders are using Signal Vine to:

### Set students up for success

Ensure students are engaged early so that they feel connected and engaged.

### Extend freshman orientation

Use text nudges to extend freshman orientation principles throughout the year.

### Create peer connections

Connect freshman students to advisors and upper-class peers to facilitate relationships and belonging.



# First-Year Experience: NEW STUDENTS

For many students, college is a big transition. Text first-year students early on to make them feel like part of your community.

**What:** Craft a message campaign that begins early to allow your students to ask questions during orientation, course registration, and the first weeks of the semester as they get settled in.

**Who:** First-year teams, advisors, and/or peer mentors are reaching out to enrolled students who have not yet started classes or who have recently started classes.

**When:** Begin texting in the late summer, after they have enrolled, and into the beginning of the semester, August through October.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Heidi, this is Olivia. Can you believe classes start in 2 weeks? How are you feeling? I am here to help with your transition to SVU. You can ask me anything.

I'm pretty nervous to be honest.

That is totally normal. I felt the same way when I started. Did you enjoy your orientation session?

Yah I did, I made some friends.

That's fantastic, Olivia. You will settle in just fine to SVU! Check out this fun video on what to expect throughout the first week on campus: [signalvineu.edu/campuslife](http://signalvineu.edu/campuslife)

## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Check out our blog post “[5 Ideas for Texting First-Year Students](#)” for more helpful tips.
- Send 2-3 messages over the summer. You do not want to send too many. Let your students enjoy their time off!
- As the semester begins, sending 2-3 messages each month will prove effective.



# First-Year Experience: ORIENTATION

Encourage your students to attend your school's orientation sessions by texting them.

**What:** Text students reminders about packing lists, schedules, and fun tips to maximize their time at orientation. Have fun with these messages - creativity is key!

**Who:** Orientation teams or first-year teams are communicating with enrolled students before, during, and after orientation.

**When:** Begin texting before the start of the school year and up to orientation.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Bobby, this is your counselor, Carly!  Your new student orientation session begins this Friday at 2PM. Do you know what to bring? Are you excited?

 I am so excited to be part of the SVU family! What should I bring again?

We can't wait to have you on campus! You can find the packing list at [signalvineu.edu/packinglist](http://signalvineu.edu/packinglist)

 Thank you so much:)

Of course! Text me if you have any other questions.



### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Keep the excitement high by sending memes, GIFs, videos, and emojis.
- Send a reminder message before their orientation session.
- Check in a few days after the session to see how it went.



# First-Year Experience: PEER ENGAGEMENT

Connect peer mentors to your first-year students to build strong relationships.

**What:** Text students to help them find and get access to different resources, including peer mentors.

**Who:** Advising or first-year teams are communicating with first-year students to connect them with peer mentors. Peer mentors then begin messaging with their mentees.

**When:** Send text messages August through October when students are new to campus.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Grace, this is Jim, your first-year mentor. I wanted to check in and see how you are doing. I was a first-year student not too long ago!

Honestly it has been hard meeting people.

I understand. I had the same problem. Have you looked at any of the campus activities? I met a lot of friends that way.

I did not. Can you send a link?

Here you go: [signalvineu.edu/campusactivities](http://signalvineu.edu/campusactivities)  
Let me know if you have any questions!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- You can use texts to not only remind students of resources, but to gather RSVP information for events, meetings, and workshops.



# First-Year Experience: END OF SEMESTER

The end of the semester is hard for a lot of students, so for first-year students, it's nice to give a little extra engagement to make sure they're doing all right.

**What:** Text students about finals and course registration for the next semester. At the end of the spring semester, nudge them about summer internships.

**Who:** First-year teams, advisors, and peer mentors are reaching out to students who will be returning for the following semester.

**When:** Begin texting near the end of each semester. If it is the end of the first semester, text your students November through December. If it's the end of the second semester, text your students April through May.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Brian, registration for your second semester is Nov 13th. Schedule an appointment with your advisor today.



Thanks. How do I schedule an appointment?

Happy to help. You can go here: [signalvineu.edu/registration](http://signalvineu.edu/registration)



Thanks.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can help with!



## Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Encourage your students to study, and give them motivation to study hard for their finals.
- Sending information about internships for the following semester is a great way to get your students in front of the resources they need to gain applicable job experience.



# ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT TEXTING

An active alumni program is core to your fundraising, community, and enrollment success. Start alumni outreach early (even before graduation) so that you can establish lifelong connections that grow your community. Use text messaging to connect with busy working professionals where they are most likely to read and respond to your messages. Once again, automation is key and allows you to proactively reach large numbers of alumni while identifying responses that require individual attention. Learn more about our alumni engagement use cases and best practices in the pages that follow.

**See our alumni engagement use cases for:**

**New Alumni**

**Donations**

**Events**

**Advancement and alumni engagement leaders are using Signal Vine to:**

## **Engage alumni early in their careers**

Engage alumni early in their careers, shortly after graduation, when they are most likely to feel connected to their alma mater.

## **Follow up on donation commitments**

Manage donation commitments with timely reminders and real-time updates on donation performance.

## **Generate immediate responses**

Message alumni with timely information to generate an immediate response to local events or alumni chapters.



# Alumni: NEW ALUMNI

Create new alumni engagement programs when alumni are most excited. If you continue that relationship, they may give back to your institution.

**What:** Send recent graduates information about job opportunities, and you will continue to build a sense of community.

**Who:** Alumni offices are messaging with students who have recently graduated.

**When:** Begin texting after students have graduated and become alumni. For most, graduation is in the late spring, May through June. For others, it could be at the end of the first semester, November through December.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Maria. Congrats on graduation! We're excited for your success and would like to invite you to join our alumni connection here: [signalvineu.edu/alumni](http://signalvineu.edu/alumni)

Thank you. If I sign up, am I going to get a lot of messages?

No, we'll provide you with the most relevant updates and let you choose what programs you want to receive information about.

Great, just signed up.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Send along a CTA link connecting alumni to resources. This will help them feel like part of the alumni community.

# Alumni: DONATIONS

Make it easy for alumni to donate to their favorite campus programs, and make it fun! Prompt alumni with timely reminders that have real-time information so you can generate responses and meet your fundraising goals.

**What:** Text alumni videos of campus programs, thank you letters from students who benefit from alumni-funded scholarships, and links to donation pages.

**Who:** Alumni offices, highly active alumni, or current students are reaching out to alumni and peers.

**When:** Message alumni about donation opportunities throughout the calendar year, when they are available.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Mike! Signal Vine University is just a few thousand dollars away from meeting our fundraising goal. Have you made a donation? We'd love your support!

Not yet. Can you send the link?

You bet! You can donate today here: [signalvineu.edu/fundraising](http://signalvineu.edu/fundraising)

Thanks.

Thanks for helping us meet our goal!

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Be mindful of alumni who just graduated from your university. It is possible they are still looking for employment. Instead, message alumni who have been out of school for a few years and are most likely employed.
- Do not send a lot of messages about donations—you do not want to bombard your alumni with these requests.
- We recommend sending these types of messages 2 or 3 times per year.

# Alumni: EVENTS

Text former students and create local alumni connections. Higher attendance at alumni events means more opportunities for you to fundraise.

**What:** Send invitations and collect RSVPs via text to boost attendance and accurately plan events.

**Who:** Alumni offices are communicating with former students based on interests or location.

**When:** The timing of these types of messages depends on when local events are happening. We recommend sending a message a month prior to the event, and then a follow-up message as the date approaches.

## SAMPLE TEXT MESSAGE

Hi Juan! Heads-up that SVU alumni are meeting at Rock Creek Park for a cookout next Sat at 2pm- will you join us?

Yep.

Awesome! You can also join our DC standing chapter here: [signalvineu.edu/dcchapter](http://signalvineu.edu/dcchapter)

Cool, thanks.

### Signal Vine Pro Tip:

- Send follow-up reminders leading up to the event.
- We recommend sending the reminder messages at different times throughout the day, instead of the same time each time.

# TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

## ADMISSIONS

### Prospects

- Personalization will have a big impact with students who aren't familiar with your institution. Try to incorporate as much known data as possible into your conversations. Use major, location, interests, or behavior when possible.
- To effectively engage this large group of students, use Signal Vine's Blended Messaging® approach to automate outreach where it makes sense, while quickly flagging the responses that need your attention.

### Inquiries

- In order to be compliant, you don't need explicit opt-in permission. You can text students who have given mobile numbers as long as you give a clear way to opt out! Also ensure this CRM field is connected to your texting platform.

### Applicants

- Nudge applicants about important application requirements.

- Include deadlines to create a sense of urgency.

### Admitted

- Send admitted students information about student life to drive interest.
- Ensure your admitted student messages and requests sync to your CRM so that your institution can continue to craft tailored messages throughout the student life cycle.

### Confirmed

- What may seem like a quick financial aid decision can be daunting for students. Break down complex financial details into simple steps for students.

### Enrolled

- As students enroll, counselors should begin thinking about retention. That may sound daunting, but simple steps like using MMS for GIF replies or infographics can make a difference. Just don't go overboard!

## FINANCIAL AID

### Scholarships

- A proactive messaging campaign will amount to higher application yields by the scholarship deadline.
- Text students when the application opens. As a nudge, text a reminder 3-10 days before the deadline.
- Include a link in the text that will serve as a call to action.

### Award Letters

- Encourage students to send photos of their letters if they have questions. This will make the process more efficient for both sides.
- Let the students know that you're there to answer any questions they may have about their award letter.

### Work-Study

- Sending texts 5-10 days before application deadlines will result in higher yields.
- Leverage your student data to ensure only students who receive FWS get these messages.

- Include an infographic or meme to enhance your informational text!

### FAFSA Filing Strategy

- Create an internal bank of frequently asked questions and answers so that you can quickly respond to common texts.

## RETENTION

### Engagement Check-in

- If you haven't texted this student in a very long time, it's a good idea to reintroduce yourself. It's possible they haven't kept their messages.
- When a student asks for help, take action immediately by getting them the resources they need.

### Registering

- Leverage your student data to ensure that each class receives relevant registration information.
- Send a reminder text 3-5 days before registration. A second nudge text on registration day can also be helpful!

# TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

## Student Services

- Sending out tips and resources in web links and infographics around midterms and finals times will help students to develop their study techniques.
- Many institutions follow an informal rule to not text students more than 3-5 times per month, to protect the power of their outreach.

## Academic Advising

- Schedule reminder text messages for delivery 3 days, 1 day, and/or 1 hour before your advising appointment.
- Using your CRM, you can pull in personalized information like GPA, major, year, etc.
- College students are more likely to respond after 10am and around lunchtime. Schedule your text messages accordingly.

## Tutoring:

- Grabbing information like GPA from your CRM will help your messages be very targeted and personalized. By calling out the specific course these students

need help with, they will be more encouraged to try and get help.

## Wellness:

- If a student asks for help, make sure you take immediate action. You want the student to know that you are a resource that they can rely on especially when they need it the most.
- For students that have asked for help, we recommend following up with them to check their state of mind.lp.

## FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

### New Students

- Check out our blog post "5 Ideas for Texting First-Year Students" for more helpful tips.
- Send 2-3 messages over the summer. You do not want to send too many- let your students enjoy their time off!
- As the semester begins, sending 2-3 messages each month will prove effective.

## Orientation

- Keep the excitement high by sending memes, GIFs, videos, and emojis.
- Send a reminder message before their orientation session.
- Check in a few days after the session to see how it went.

## Peer Engagement

- You can use texts to not only remind students of resources, but to gather RSVP information for events, meetings, and workshops.

## End of Semester

- Encourage your students to study, and give them motivation to study hard for their finals.
- Sending information about internships for the following semester is a great way to get your students in front of the resources they need to gain applicable job experience.

## ALUMNI

### New Alumni

- Send along a CTA link connecting alumni to resources. This will help them feel part of the alumni community.

### Donations

- Be mindful of alumni who just graduated from your university. It is possible they are still looking for employment. Instead, message alumni who have been out of school for a few years and are most likely employed.
- Do not send a lot of messages about donations- you do not want to bombard your alumni with this request.
- We recommend sending these types of messages 2 or 3 times per year.

### Events

- Send follow-up reminders leading up to the event.
- We recommend sending the reminder messages at different times throughout the day; instead of the same time each time.

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If you have questions or want to discuss implementing a texting strategy across the whole academic life cycle, visit:  
[www.signalvine.com/requestlivedemo](http://www.signalvine.com/requestlivedemo)