



# 2014-2015 State of CRM Use in Higher Education Report

# Foreword

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) periodically undertakes research projects to keep ourselves, and the higher education community in general, informed about relevant current and emerging practices. The aim of this survey was to measure the extent of ownership of Constituent (or Customer) Relationship Management (CRM) applications at U.S. higher education institutions and to assess their impacts on practice, policy and staffing. We intend for the results of this survey to serve as a benchmark for trends on this topic.

The survey and this report were made possible by underwriting from Hobsons<sup>1</sup>. The underwriting included services to review the draft survey for clarity, provide CRM functionality and use expertise, provide feedback on the draft analysis, and design expertise for the presentation of the results. Hobsons also sponsored the survey incentive for our respondents, which consisted of two free registrations at any AACRAO conference for the 2014-2015 conference year.

We would also like to acknowledge the 603 U.S. enrollment management and admissions professionals who responded to the survey. Without their willingness to share their time and expertise, this report would not have been possible.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hobsons.com/>

# Content

## **Contents**

### **Foreword**

### **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction and Survey Methodology**

### **CRM Ownership and Use**

Considering a CRM

Own and Use at Least One CRM

Use by Department or Function

Use in Years by Department or Function

Level of Use by Department or Function

CRM Supported Methods of Communication by Department or Function

### **CRM Measure of Success and Roadblocks**

Perceived CRM Level of Use and Maximized Use of Functionality

### **CRM Use Influence on Practice, Staffing and Policy**

Influence on Practice Efficiency

Influence on Staffing

Institution-Wide Communications Officer and/or Communications Committee

Influence on Policy

### **CRM Data Sharing and Use of Data**

Data Sharing with Student Information Systems

Data and Institutional Planning

### **Closing and Recommendations for Practice**

CRM Selection and Implementation Guidance

Recommendations for Maximizing CRM Use

### **Appendix A: Survey Cover Email and Instrument**

### **Appendix B: Overall CRM Use Success by Institution Size, Region and Type**

### **Appendix C: “Other” Roadblocks to Maximizing the Use of the CRM**

### **Appendix D: Title of Senior Communication Officer Position**

### **Appendix E: Reporting Line for the Senior Communications Officer Position**

### **Appendix F: Policy Changes as a Direct Result of Implementing a CRM**



# Executive Summary

Student lifecycle relationship management has been defined in one UK study as “The ways in which learning providers organise their connections with students over the lifetime of their association<sup>2</sup>.” One impetus for this survey was an interest in gaining an understanding of how institutions use CRMs to manage this student lifecycle. We also wanted to determine if the assertion in a recent article<sup>3</sup>, which stated that many institutions simply use their CRM to send email to prospective students, is an accurate description of the scope of current CRM use. We further sought to gain an understanding of how and to what degree the use of a CRM impacted practice efficiency, institutional policy, manpower needed for processes and the use of data for planning. The survey was intended to be CRM provider-neutral so respondents were not asked to indicate which CRM they use.

## From our data, we observed the following:



**64%**

reported using at least one CRM

**42%**

of those institutions who do not have a CRM are considering one



<sup>2</sup> [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/jos/slrn\\_report.pdf](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/jos/slrn_report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Editorial/Magazine-Features/Schools-Need-to-Rethink-Their-CRM-Approaches-91513.aspx>



A CRM is most likely to be used to support admissions and recruiting following by alumni/development.



Few institutions are using their CRM to provide student lifecycle management support.



Only one-third of users have all of the data they need for analysis and planning imported into their SIS.



A majority of users (59%) indicated that their institution has been “moderately successful” in the overall use of the CRM.



The most reported roadblock to “maximizing the use” of the CRM was having time to learn and implement, closely following by having the people to do the work.



Most reported that practices are easier and take less time than before the implementation of the CRM.



On the other hand, most reported that more people were now involved in the related business process than before the CRM was implemented.

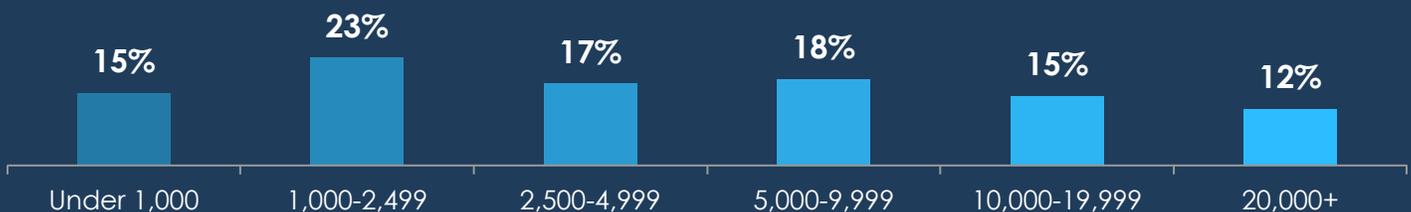


# Introduction & Survey Methodology

In a July 2014 EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) report<sup>4</sup>, the authors defined a CRM system as “Strategy, business processes, and software for managing and enhancing an institution’s interactions with customers, such as current and prospective students, alumni, faculty and staff; and current and prospective donors.” They also stated that “CRM systems are the second most rapidly changing core system area in higher education.” This survey was designed to gain a further understanding of how U.S. higher education institutions use their CRMs (if they own one or more). Ideally a CRM is used to support practices across the entire student lifecycle and the CRM data is used to support the institution's understanding of student enrollment choices and success. We intended that the results of this survey would constitute the basis of our understanding of how fully institutions have implemented their CRM. We also wanted to gain an insight into the types of impediments institutions face in attempting to use their CRM(s).

The 603 survey respondents represented a wide variety of institutional types<sup>5</sup>, sizes, regions and institutional affiliations/control. Institutional size was evenly represented from under 1,000 students to over 20,000 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Respondents by Institution Size

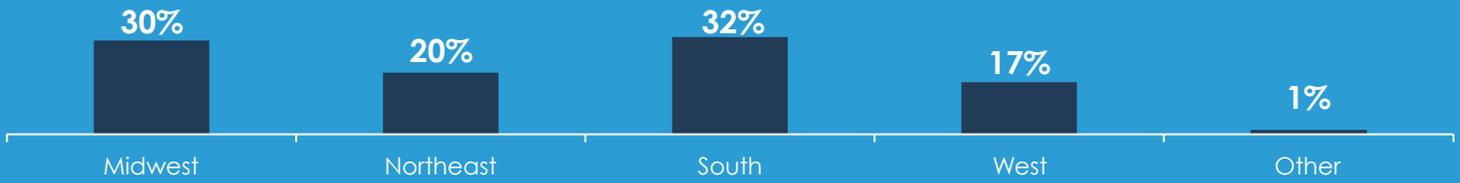


<sup>4</sup> Lang, Leah, and Judith A. Pirani. “Maximizing Institutional Relationships with CRMs.” Research bulletin. Louisville, CO: ECAR, July 31, 2014. Available from [www.educause.edu/ecar](http://www.educause.edu/ecar)

<sup>5</sup> The institution types are condensed from the 2010 Carnegie classifications. Institutions were classified as Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s based on the primary degree offering. An institution was classified as a Research University if the institution had high or very high research activity regardless of the primary degree offering. Lastly, institutions that had a special focus, such as medical schools or centers, faith-related institutions, law schools, tribal colleges, and so on, were classified as Special.

Regions were assigned using the four primary U.S. Internal Revenue Service region designations (Midwest, Northeast, South, and West). Respondents from the Midwest and South represented 62% of total respondents (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Respondents by Region



The nine “Other” region respondents represented Guam (1), Puerto Rico (6), and two unexpected international respondents from the Dominican Republic (1) and the United Kingdom (1). Associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s institutions accounted for 72% of respondents (Figure 3).

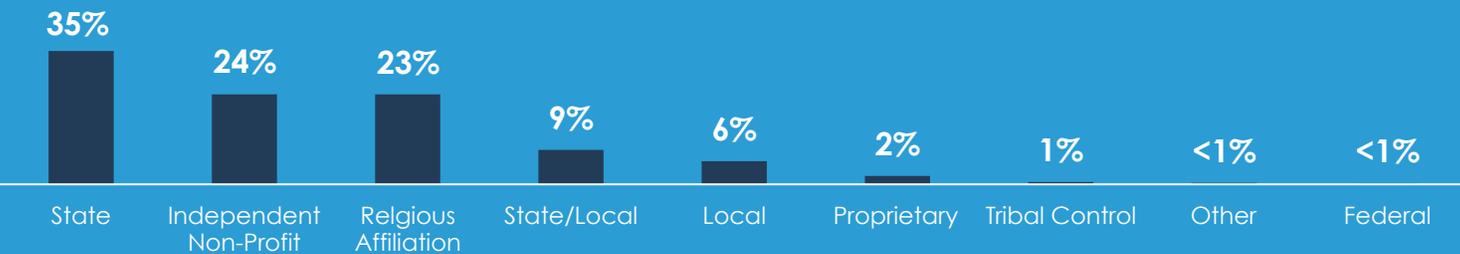
Figure 3: Respondents by Institution Type



Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Thirty-five percent of institutions were state controlled (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Respondents by Institutional Affiliation/ Control



Note. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The survey and email invitation (Appendix A) were sent electronically using the FluidSurveys<sup>6</sup> platform to all 2014 Higher Education Directory<sup>7</sup> members who have a *position manpower code* equal to *Director of Enrollment Management* or *Director of Admissions*. This selection criterion generated 3,776 valid email addresses. The overall response rate was 16% (n=603). This response rate was possibly influenced by the fact that the survey email introduction and title may have given the impression that it was intended only for institutions who already own a CRM. The survey was open to responses from July 8 to July 31, 2014. Reminder emails were sent both to those who started the survey but did not complete it and those who had not started the survey.

<sup>6</sup> www.fluidsurveys.com  
<sup>7</sup> http://www.hepinc.com/

The survey platform supported dynamic flexibility in the questions asked of respondents. That is, not all respondents were asked all of the questions. Instead, based on the respondents' answers to each question, some subsequent questions were either shown or suppressed. Further, we did not require respondents to answer all proffered questions; respondents were free to skip questions. Given these two factors, the number of responses for any given question may vary. For those who completed the survey, a completion incentive was provided in the form of eligibility for one of two random drawings for an AACRAO conference registration for the 2014-2015 conference year.

The survey content consisted of a two-branch question set differentiated on whether or not an institution owns and uses at least one CRM. If respondents reported owning and using at least one CRM, the remaining survey content included the following:

- CRM use by institutional department or function (e.g., admissions, recruiting, student life, etc.)
- CRM and Student Information System (SIS) data integration
- Perceived measure of institutional success in using the CRM
- Roadblocks to maximizing the use of the CRM
- Post CRM implementation impact
  - Measures of practice efficiency changes
  - Measures of practice complexity changes
  - Measures of staffing changes
- Use of CRM communication methods by department or function (e.g., email, text, chat, etc.)
- CRM data sharing with SIS and use of data for institutional planning

If the institution reported not owning or using a CRM, respondents were asked to indicate if a CRM was being considered, and if "Yes," for what departments or functions. Finally, the responses were analyzed using a combination of the descriptive statistics from the FluidSurveys platform and Microsoft Excel pivot table and chart functionalities.



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# CRM Ownership & Use

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The first part of the survey served to differentiate respondents who own and use a CRM, from respondents who do not own and use a CRM. This second group of respondents was further differentiated by whether or not their institution is considering a CRM at this time. Respondents whose institutions do not own and use a CRM for any purpose were asked to answer, at most, these three questions:

- Does your institution use a CRM for any purpose?
- Is your institution currently considering the purchase of a CRM?
- Please indicate which units or departments are considering a CRM. Check all that apply.

We did not ask respondents to indicate if their institution owns a CRM that is not used. Consequently, there may be a subpopulation of polled institutions that fall into this category who are thus not represented in this report.

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## Considering a CRM

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42%

Among the 36% of respondents who do not currently own and use a CRM, slightly less than half (42%, n=91) are considering one at this time.

Respondents considering a CRM were asked to indicate which departments or functions they hope to support with a CRM .

Based on the responses, only two institutions are considering a student lifecycle management solution (one that supports the full spectrum of a student from prospect to alumni). Recruitment and admissions were the predominant reason for considering a CRM for the remainder of those respondents (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Respondent Count Considering CRM by Department or Function

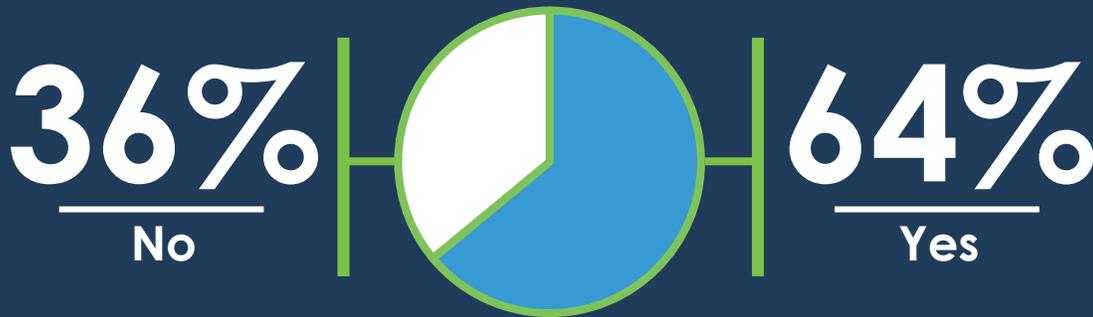


Note. Respondents were asked to select all applicable departments or functions.

## Own and Use at Least One CRM

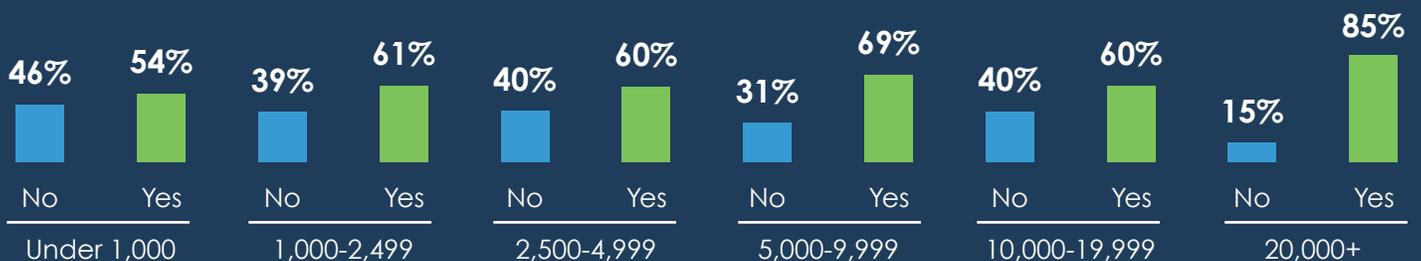
The same ECAR report mentioned above found that in FY 2012/13 “56% (n = 525) of U.S. institutions had some type of CRM system in place” this represented an increase of 19% from FY 2010/11. We found that percentage has increased again this year. Almost two-thirds (64%, n=385) of respondents reported that their institution owns and uses at least one CRM (Figure 6), and 238 of those own more than one.

Figure 6: Respondent CRM Use



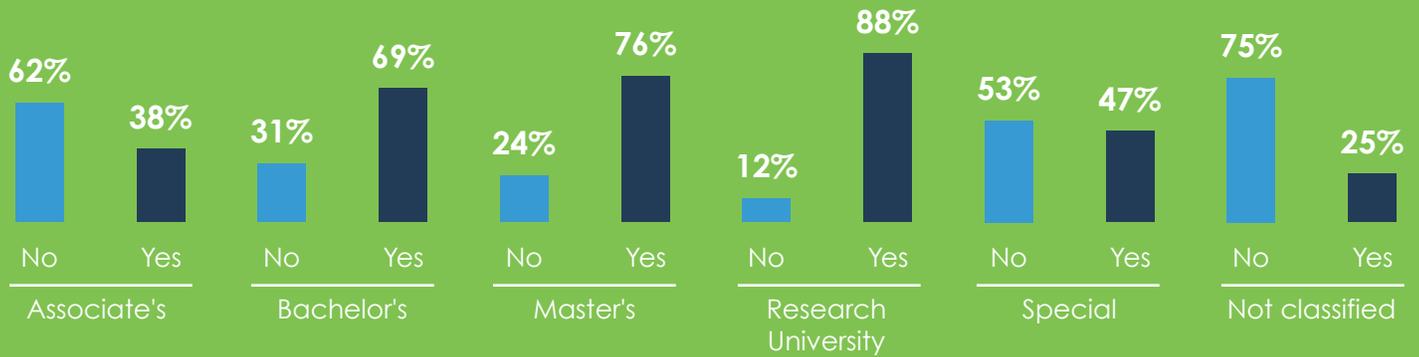
Of those who own and use at least one CRM, 50 were uncertain if their institution owned more than one. Institutional ownership of a CRM appears to be loosely tied to institutional size, with the ownership percentage increasing with the number of enrolled students (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Use of CRM by Institutional Size



Ownership and use did not vary much by region. On the other hand, local or state-controlled institutions were less likely to own and use a CRM (65%) than institutions in other categories; research universities were much more likely than Associate's institutions to own and use a CRM (88% vs. 38%) (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Use of CRM by Institution Type



### Use by Department or Function

We also asked respondents who said they own and use a CRM to indicate which department or functions currently use the CRM to support service to applicants and students. Of the 385 institutional responses, only 11 (3%) reported using the CRM to support the full student lifecycle. For the purposes of this survey, this included the following departments or functions:

-  Recruitment
-  Admissions
-  Advising
-  Student Life Housing
-  Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, veteran's services, etc.)
-  Registration
-  Alumni/Development
-  Career Services

The recruiting and admissions functions were the most highly supported by a CRM with 56% (n=216) of respondents indicating CRM use for both functions. Career Services was the least likely to be supported by a CRM (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Respondent Count Considering CRM by Department or Function



Note. Respondents were asked to select all applicable departments or functions.

## Use in Years by Department or Function

Table 1 shows the number of years, by department or function, respondents reported having used a CRM to support services. Responses were almost evenly distributed across years of use. We assume that those who reported “Don’t know/uncertain” as a response either do not work closely with the department or function in question and/or are not familiar with how long the institution had been using the CRM.

Table 1: Years of CRM Use by Department or Function

	<2 Years	2 to 5 Years	More than 5 Years	Don’t know/uncertain	Respondent Count
Recruiting	23%	33%	42%	3%	218
Admissions	29%	34%	35%	3%	350
Advising	31%	38%	27%	4%	81
Student Life	28%	28%	39%	5%	57
Housing	31%	20%	41%	8%	61
Student Support Services	31%	31%	31%	7%	55
Registration	24%	26%	44%	7%	92
Alumni/Development	16%	29%	33%	22%	203
Career Services/Employment	18%	25%	34%	23%	44

## Level of Use by Department or Function

When queried on their perceived institutional CRM skill level, most identified their skill level as “intermediate” as compared to “just beginning”, “novice”, or “advanced” (Table 2). We hypothesized at the onset of this research that the perceived level of institutional use is positively correlated with the years of use. That is, more years of use equals a more advanced level of perceived use.

However, the data indicated the two conditions do not appear to be highly correlated. For example, when analyzed for recruiting, the perceived level of institutional use only appears to be moderately correlated with years of use ( $R^2 = .52$ )

Table 2: Perceived CRM Skill Level by Department or Function

	Just Beginning	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Don't Know/Uncertain
Recruiting	11%	7%	46%	34%	3%
Admissions	12%	8%	46%	33%	1%
Advising	16%	17%	44%	10%	14%
Student Life	13%	33%	35%	11%	9%
Housing	10%	21%	29%	14%	26%
Student Support Services	19%	17%	41%	13%	11%
Registration	13%	11%	35%	36%	4%
Alumni/Development	10%	14%	35%	7%	34%
Career Services/Employment	11%	16%	38%	18%	18%

## CRM Supported Methods of Communication by Department or Function

Respondents were asked to indicate the CRM-supported methods of communication they use to connect with prospective or current students. (Note: students were identified as “constituents” in the survey question). Paper, email and telephone campaigns were the predominant methods reported. Text messaging is used but by far fewer institutions than the more traditional modes of communication.

Table 3: CRM Supported Methods of Communication by Department or Function

	Paper	E-Mail	Text	Chat	Instant Messaging	Telephone Campaigns	Don't Know/Uncertain
Recruiting	174	207	47	40	13	164	8
Admissions	281	326	79	56	20	243	7
Advising	24	52	9	1	2	15	21
Student Life	16	28	5	1	1	6	23
Housing	18	30	2	1	0	7	22
Student Support Services	14	33	7	0	1	5	20
Registration	38	63	7	2	2	24	19
Alumni/Development	56	73	8	3	3	41	119
Career Services/Employment	12	22	6	2	2	9	21



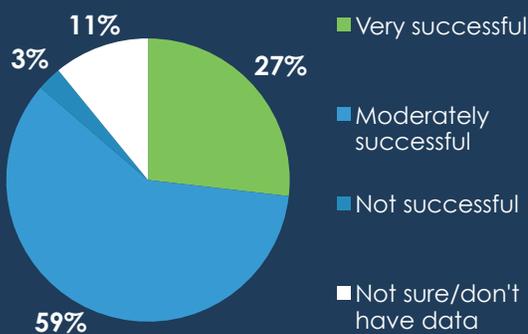
# CRM Measure of Success & Roadblocks

This section of the survey asked respondents to indicate their perceptions about the level of overall success in using the CRM and whether the CRM was being used to its maximum benefit and capability. If they indicated that the CRM was not being used to its maximum capability, they were further asked what the roadblocks were to doing so.

## Perceived CRM Level of Use and Maximized Use of Functionality

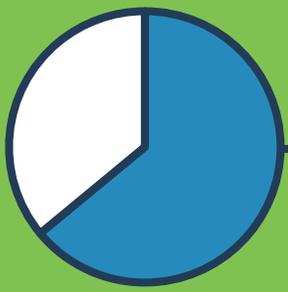


Figure 10: Overall Level of CRM Use Success



A majority of respondents (59%) indicated their perceived level of overall success with their CRM was “Moderately Successful,” and 3% reported their use as “Not Successful” (Figure 10).

Appendix B differentiates this data by institution size, region and type. The disaggregated data shows little difference in success among these variables when compared to the aggregate data. In other words, it appears that the perceived level of overall success is not influenced by institutional size, region, or type.



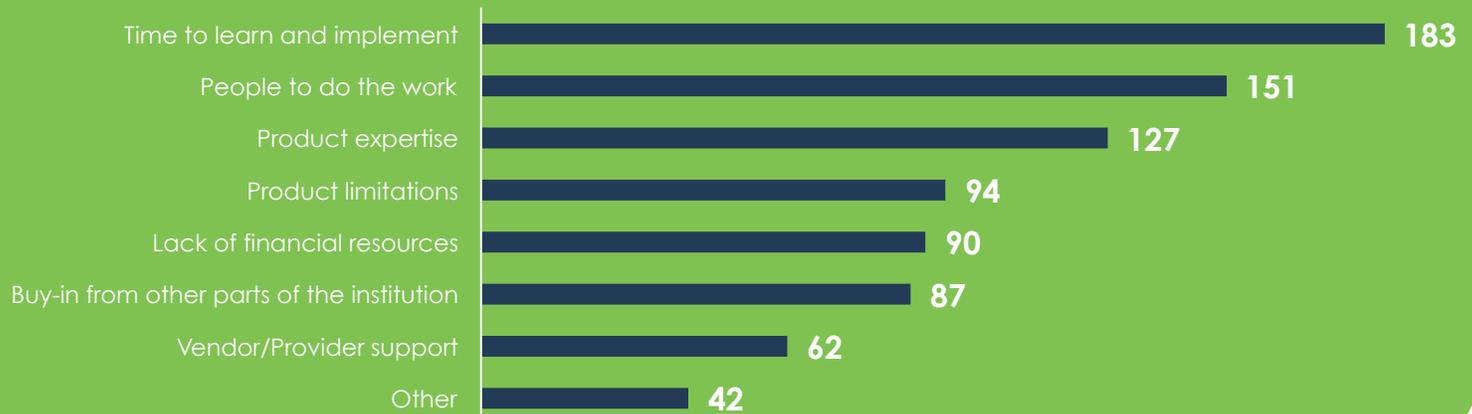
**75%** are not maximizing the use of their CRM.

Three-fourths (75%, n=273) indicated that their institution is not maximizing the use of their CRM. We presented the following list as possible roadblocks to maximizing the use of the CRM, and respondents were able to select as many as applicable to their situation.

- Time to learn and implement
- People to do the work
- Product expertise
- Product limitations
- Lack of financial resources
- Buy-in from other parts of the institution
- Vendor/Provider support
- Other (please indicate)

Figure 11 summarizes the responses. “Time to learn and implement” had the highest number of responses (n=183) and “Vendor/provider support” was the least noted reason for lack of success (n=62). Respondents were also able to list up to two additional reasons. Among several “Other” responses provided, the lack of mobile platform compatibility and lack of ability to link data to the SIS were mentioned as additional roadblocks (Appendix C).

Figure 11: Roadblocks to Maximizing Use of CRM





# CRM Use Influence on Practice, Staffing & Policy

We asked respondents to indicate if the institution has implemented any changes in practice as a direct result of implementing the CRM. Most (82%, n=295) indicated “Yes” that there had been changes in practice as a direct result of implementing the CRM. We further asked if processes/practices had become easier or more complicated, and if there were any staffing changes as a direct result of implementing the CRM. It is generally presumed that a CRM will result in processes becoming faster, easier and needing fewer people. However, the results do not universally support these assumptions. We also asked similar questions about changes in staffing.

## Changes in Practice as result of CRM implementation



## Influence on Practice Efficiency

Practice efficiency was measured on two variables: 1) time to complete processes; and 2) process complexity. Respondents were able to indicate “Don't Know/Uncertain” if they were not sure how practice efficiency has been affected. Positively, and on the whole, three quarters or more of respondents indicated for all departments or functions their CRM-supported processes are both easier and take less time (Tables 4-5).

Table 4: Ease of Practice as a Direct Result of Implementing CRM by Department or Function

	Easier (count)	More Complicated (count)	Easier (percentage)	More Complicated (percentage)
Recruiting	114	27	18%	19%
Admissions	180	47	79%	21%
Advising	29	5	85%	15%
Student Life	13	2	87%	13%
Housing	12	4	75%	25%
Student Support Services	12	3	80%	20%
Registration	30	7	81%	19%
Alumni/ Development	24	4	86%	14%
Career Services/ Employment	9	2	82%	18%

Table 5: Time Spent on a Practice as a Direct Result of Implementing CRM by Department or Function

	Less Time (count)	More Time (count)	Less Time (percentage)	More Time (percentage)
Recruiting	67	23	74%	26%
Admissions	122	32	79%	21%
Advising	15	2	88%	12%
Student Life	9	1	90%	10%
Housing	7	1	88%	13%
Student Support Services	6	1	86%	14%
Registration	20	3	87%	13%
Alumni/ Development	20	3	87%	13%
Career Services/ Employment	6	0	100%	0%

## Influence on Staffing

Somewhat surprisingly, 59% (n=208) responded that staffing changes were made as a direct result of implementing the CRM. Contrary to the responses showing reduction in time needed to complete a process and a reduced complexity of processes, most indicated that **more** staff are involved in the process than before the CRM was implemented (Table 6).

Table 6: Count of Staffing Changes Associated with the Implementation of CRM by Department or Function

	Fewer staff involved in process	More staff involved in process	Change in position responsibilities	Change in position classification	Change in compensation	Don't know/uncertain	Total
Recruiting	5	52	33	25	25	11	96
Admissions	18	77	53	40	40	3	141
Advising	5	4	1	0	0	10	21
Student Life	3	0	3	1	1	15	23
Housing	2	5	3	0	0	18	26
Student Support Services	0	3	2	1	1	15	21
Registration	7	11	10	6	6	11	37
Alumni/Development	2	7	5	2	2	53	67
Career Services/ Employment	2	1	4	2	2	12	19

The sample sizes associated with the question on staffing are too small to make any generalization about the impact of a CRM on staffing; however, there is some interesting data to be noted. For recruiting, 62% of respondents indicated a change in position responsibilities and 54% indicated that more staff are involved in the process. For admissions, almost three quarters (73%) indicated a change in responsibilities. Other departments or functions were less likely to report a change in responsibilities as a direct result of the implementation of the CRM.

### **Institution-Wide Communications Officer and/or Communications Committee**

In response to whether the institution has identified a single senior-level position as responsible for all communications, 57% (n=198) of the 348 respondents answered "Yes". Whether this position existed did not vary much by institutional size. Only institutions with greater than 20,000 students were slightly more likely (69% vs. 55% on average for all other sizes) to report having a senior communications officer. Position titles varied from a director level to vice president (Appendix D) and many reported directly to the institution's president (Appendix E). The average starting salary for this position was \$92,550 (n=101), with a low of \$30,000 and a high of \$300,000. The reported high salary could not be confirmed so this data must be viewed with a bit of skepticism as to its accuracy.

Two-thirds (67%, n=234) indicated that their institution has an institution-wide communications committee. Smaller institutions were much less likely to have a communications committee than larger institutions (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Institution-wide Communications Committee by Institutional Size



## Influence on Policy



20%

Just 20% (67 of 344) of respondents indicated that the implementation of a CRM resulted in a change in institutional policy.

When asked to briefly describe the nature of the institutional policy changes as a result of CRM implementation, 48 chose to provide open ended (free form and voluntary) input. Some indicated the CRM influenced data management. Others commented on more centralized and standardized communications tracking and control. The full list of responses is included as Appendix F.



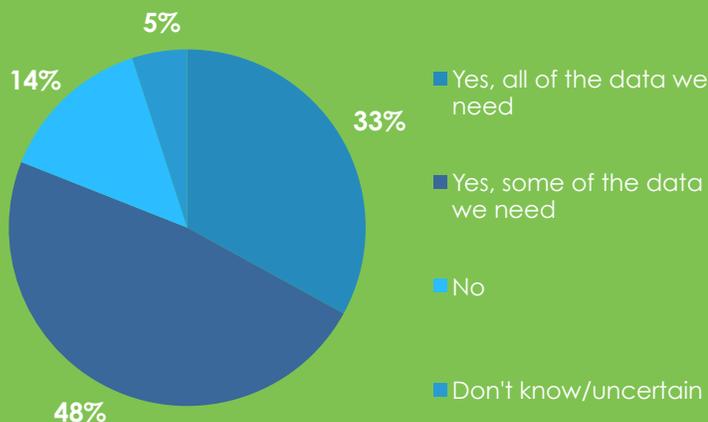
# CRM Data Sharing & Use of Data

A 2010 Ovum report on CRMs stated that “The linkage between constituent relationship management (CRM) and student information systems (SIS) is becoming increasingly important in the higher education market, moving from a nice to have capability to a must have one.”<sup>8</sup> We asked our participants to indicate if their CRM data is shared with their SIS and to what level of success is it shared. We also asked if the CRM data is used for any institutional planning purposes and if so, what purpose(s).

## Data Sharing with Student Information Systems

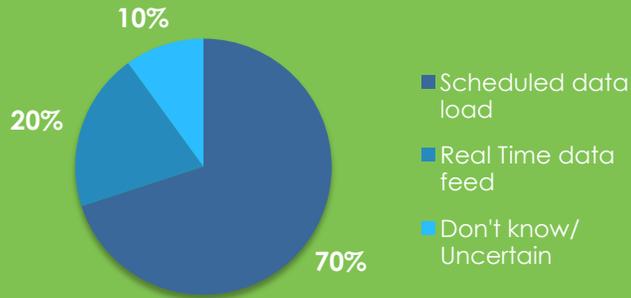
Among the 384 responses to our question about whether or not the CRM data is shared with the institution's SIS, just one-third (33%) indicated that, “Yes, all of the data we need” is being shared between the two systems.

Figure 13: Data Sharing Between CRM and SIS



Almost half (48%) indicated that, “Yes, some of the data we need” is being shared, while 14% indicated data was not being shared, and 5% were not sure (Figure 13).

Figure 14: CRM/SIS Data Sharing Method

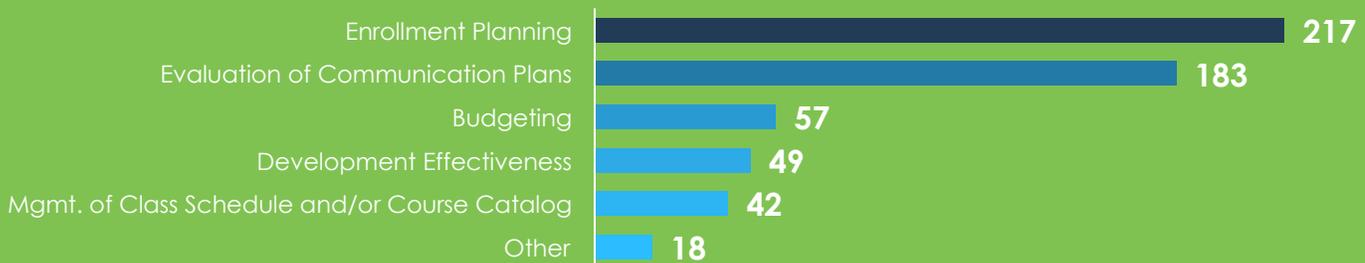


Most (70%) indicated that the data between the CRM and the SIS was shared using a scheduled data load, and a further 20% indicated that their institution used a real time data feed (Figure 14).

## Data & Institutional Planning

Two-thirds (67%) of 344 respondents indicated that the CRM data is used for institutional planning. Respondents were able to use a check list function to indicate what aspects of institutional planning the data was used for. The results are summarized in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Uses of CRM Data



In addition to answering this question with a checklist, respondents were also invited to respond to this question in an open-ended, free-text format.

### Open-ended responses included the following:

- "Search
- BI (business intelligence) is used to develop different messages
- Very limited; not sufficient
- Event Management
- FA (financial aid) planning
- Effectiveness of recruitment events and campaigns
- ROI for events, initiatives
- Strategic Planning
- To evaluate the effectiveness of Recruiting by geodemographics
- Development with parents
- We are in the implementation phase and expect impact in all above areas.
- Evaluate effectiveness of Admissions and Recruitment efforts
- Territory management
- Tele-counseling metrics
- Demographic analysis of student or alumni populations
- Lead Management and Source effectiveness (i.e. Test Score purchases by "geodemographics")"



# Closing & Recommendations for Practice

As we noted in the Executive Summary, this is our first survey of the institutional practices and use of data related to the ownership of a CRM. We received a credible set of responses to our survey and we found that:

-  Roughly two-thirds (64%) of institutions own at least one CRM.
-  Few use the CRM to support the entire student lifecycle.
-  Recruiting, admissions and alumni/development are the most common uses of a CRM.
-  Processes are easier and take less time with a CRM but more people are involved in the process.
-  A majority (62%) do not currently have all of the data needed (and available) from their CRM imported into their SIS.
-  The vast majority of institutions are not currently using texting as a means of communicating with students even though recent marketing effectiveness measures indicate that texts are read at a much higher rate than emails<sup>9</sup>.
-  Finally, institutions reported several roadblocks to maximizing the use of the CRM functionality including institution-wide buy-in, lack of project leadership support and resource constraint.

<sup>9</sup> <http://blog.oxygen8.com/sms-marketing-statistics/#.VAiaxhZuVqw>

Based on the insights into institutional CRM use, practices and roadblocks gleaned from this brief survey, we believe that there are two distinct groups that are in need of CRM-practice guidance: 1) those considering a CRM; and 2) those who own one but are not fully utilizing the CRM. Accordingly, we offer the following commentary.

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## CRM Selection and Implementation Guidance

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In the 2007 article *Strategies for successful CRM implementation*<sup>10</sup> the authors summarized previous research on CRM implementation and presented the following paraphrased recommendations:

- *Strategic Context*: Clarify how the CRM fits into the overall business strategy.
- *Capabilities Assessment*: Conduct a current CRM needs and capabilities assessment.
- *Business Case Development*: Establish a reason for implementing a CRM.
- *Implementation Plan*: Create a plan with manageable goals, actionable steps, and execute as planned.

There are many CRM vendor-produced selection and implementation resources available through a web search on the topic. EDUCAUSE<sup>11</sup> has several discussion threads available for public review about selecting a CRM for higher education. Gartner has also produced a CRM application selection criteria guide<sup>12</sup> (available through membership with Gartner). JISC has produced a publicly available, comprehensive CRM handbook for higher education<sup>13</sup>. In addition to other useful resources, the JISC handbook includes “Top Tips,”<sup>14</sup> compiled from institutions of higher education, for supporting a successful CRM implementation. Some of those tips are included here and on the following page:

- “The system you use is less of an issue as long as it’s fully functional and does what you need it to do. It’s about that cultural understanding that you’re working as part of a larger organisation that’s trying to achieve corporate aims and making a breakthrough on that is the main issue or challenge. An organisation that can achieve this can increase its chance of success.

<sup>10</sup> Nguyen, T.U., Sherif, J.S., & Newby, M. (2007). Strategies for successful CRM implementation. *Information Management & Computer Security*, 15(2), 102-115.

<sup>11</sup> [www.educause.edu](http://www.educause.edu)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gartner.com/doc/2664819/gartners-crm-application-selection-criteria>

<sup>13</sup> <https://vwcrmhandbook.pbworks.com/w/page/52081662/Good%20Practice%20in%20Customer%20Relationship%20Management>

<sup>14</sup> <https://vwcrmhandbook.pbworks.com/w/page/55432300/Top%20Tips>

- Getting buy in from appropriate stakeholders.
- Get procedures set out as to how you want data inputted. Think about the information you would like to get out of it, and work backwards. Initial set up might take longer, but easier than carrying out remedial work.
- From the outset create a vision, what is the key purpose of CRM?
- Define the purpose and scope from the outset of CRM implementation.
- Make sure you have a senior champion.
- Make sure you choose a CRM system that is fit for purpose, not only for the next couple of years but will grow with your institution.”

We recommend that those considering a CRM investigate the resources we’ve provided above as a starting point and then establish a project team to provide procurement recommendations.

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## Recommendations for Maximizing CRM Use

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Based on the findings within this report, most institutions who own a CRM are not fully utilizing it. As we gathered from the results of the survey, institutions face several roadblocks to maximizing the use of their CRM. In addition to those gleaned from the survey results, other potential roadblocks are noted in *Strategies for successful CRM implementation*<sup>15</sup> and are summarized below:



**Lack of definition** – Often organizations implement CRMs on top of old business strategies, and do not recognize that the CRM needs to be structured on new business practices to be the most efficient.



**Poor leadership** - Organizational leaders may not keep business-needs in mind when implementing CRMs and instead focus on technical requirements.

<sup>15</sup>Nguyen, T.U., Sherif, J.S., & Newby, M. (2007). Strategies for successful CRM implementation. *Information Management & Computer Security*, 15(2), 102-115.

Those who already have a CRM but face roadblocks to optimization could gain further insight into their current CRM use by identifying their “CRM Maturity” using the JISC handbook<sup>16</sup>. Using this rubric as a guide, institutions should ideally be “strategic” in their use of their CRM. According to JISC, this means the CRM is used across all business units, informs strategic management of relationships, and is fully integrated with other institutional systems. Few of our respondents indicated that their institutions’ use of a CRM meet all these key points.

Shifting an institution’s use of their CRM to “strategic” is an undertaking similar to any other institutional change effecting both practice and culture. To do so effectively and efficiently takes strong institutional leadership, comprehensive and in-depth change management skills, a willingness to let go of old business practices, perseverance over time, and, of course, the necessary resources. Fortunately, a plethora of readily available guidance exists for change management and leading such changes. For example, in the 2008 article *Employees’ affective commitment to change: The key to successful CRM implementation*<sup>17</sup> the authors note that it is important to continue to do “soft-selling” of the CRM to employees after the CRM implementation through team building exercises, training, and cultivation of a CRM culture.

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In closing, this report begins to paint a picture of CRM use in higher education in the United States. Further in-depth research is needed to shed light on the nuances of use and to provide good practice examples of CRM-supported full student lifecycle management. We intend to replicate the survey periodically and we welcome comments and questions on this one. Please send feedback to Wendy Kilgore at [research@aacrao.org](mailto:research@aacrao.org).

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<sup>16</sup> <https://vwcrmhandbook.pbworks.com/w/page/52117394/CRM%20Maturity>

<sup>17</sup> Shum, P., Bove, L., & Auh, S. (2008). Employees’ affective commitment to change: The key to successful CRM implementation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(11/12), 1346-1371.

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## Appendix A: Survey Cover Email & Instrument

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### Survey Cover Email

Dear [First Name],

We would like to invite you to complete the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) brief survey on Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) software use and impacts on professional practice and staffing. You have been selected as a recipient of this survey because of your enrollment management or admissions position at your institution.

The aim of the study is to measure the adoption rate of CRM solutions as well to measure impacts on practice and staffing.

We are pleased to announce that this survey is being sponsored by Hobsons who is providing the survey incentive as well as survey design and report design expertise. **All who complete the survey will be eligible for a drawing of two (one each) free AACRAO conference registration of their choice for the 2015 conference year.**

This study survey link [survey link] will be active until July 31. This link is tied to your email and basic institutional characteristics. Please do not forward.

**ALL results will be reported in the aggregate.**

If you should have any questions about this survey please email me (research@aacrao).

Thank you,

Wendy Kilgore, Ph.D.  
Director of Research and Managing Consultant

# Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) Software Use and Impacts on Professional Practice and Staffing Survey

## Introduction

This survey is designed to help the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) gain an understanding about the use of CRM solutions at U.S. higher education institutions. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and interest in helping us complete this survey.

Does your institution use a CRM for any purpose?

- Yes
- No

Is your institution currently considering the purchase of a CRM?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate which units or departments are considering a CRM. Check all that apply.

- Recruiting
- Admissions
- Advising
- Student Life
- Housing
- Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)
- Registration
- Alumni/Development
- Career Services/Employment

Does your institution have more than one CRM (e.g., the CRM used by Alumni is different from that used by Admissions)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/uncertain

Is/are the CRM(s) integrated with the student information system (i.e., are data shared between the systems)?

- Yes, all of the data we need
- Yes, some of the data we need
- No
- Don't know/uncertain

How is the data shared with the SIS?

- Real time data feed
- Scheduled data load (e.g., every hour, once a day, etc.)
- Don't know/uncertain

Please indicate which units or departments currently use a CRM. Check all that apply.

- Recruiting
- Admissions
- Advising
- Student Life
- Housing
- Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)
- Registration
- Alumni/Development
- Career Services/Employment

Please indicate approximately how long the CRM has been in use for each unit or department.

	<2 years	2 to 5 years	More than 5 years	Don't Know/ Uncertain
Recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alumni/Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career Services/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Depth and Success of CRM Use

Please indicate the level of CRM use for each department.

	Just Beginning	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced (leading edge)	Don't Know/ Uncertain
Recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Student Life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Alumni/Development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Career Services/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please indicate how successful your CRM use is overall.

- Very successful
- Moderately successful
- Not successful
- Not sure/don't have data

### Implementation and Use Challenges

Overall, do you believe your institution is maximizing its use of its CRM(s)?

- Yes
- No

What are the roadblocks to doing so? (Check all that apply)

- Time to learn and implement
- Product expertise
- Lack of financial resources
- Buy-in from other parts of your institution
- People to do the work
- Product limitations
- Vendor/Provider support
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

### Practice Implications

Have there been any changes to practice or practice efficiency (e.g., business processes or time on task) as a direct result of adopting and using your CRM(s)?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate how practice efficiency has changed as a direct result of adopting and using the CRM. Check all that apply.

	Easier	More Complicated	Less Time	More Time	Don't Know/ Uncertain
Recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Student Life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Alumni/Development	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Career Services/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please indicate how you use your CRM(s) to communicate with constituents. Check all that apply.

	Paper	E-mail	Text	Chat	Instant Messaging	Telephone Campaigns	Don't Know/ Uncertain
Recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Student Life	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Alumni/Development	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Career Services/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>						

### Staffing Implications

Have there been any changes in staffing as a direct result of implementing your CRM(s)?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate how staffing has changed. Please check all that apply

	Fewer staff involved in process	More staff involved in process	Change in position responsibilities	Change in position classification	Change in compensation	Don't Know/ Uncertain
Recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Support Services (e.g., tutoring, TRIO, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alumni/Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career Services/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does your institution have a communications officer or senior communications position for the whole institution?

- Yes
- No

What is of the title position?

What is the annual starting salary of the position?

To whom (title) does the position report?

Does your institution have a communication committee?

- Yes
- No

### Policy and Use of Data

Have there been any policy changes as a direct result of the implementation and use of a CRM?

- Yes
- No

Please briefly describe what those changes have been.

Are the data from the CRM used for any institutional planning purposes?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate how data are used (check all that apply)

- Enrollment planning
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the communication plan
- To help determine area budgets
- To manage the class schedule and course offerings
- To evaluate the effectiveness of development efforts
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Overall CRM Use Success by Institution Size, Region and Type

### Overall Level of CRM Use Success by Institution Size

	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Not Successful	Not Sure/ don't have data	Count
Under 1,000	18%	64%	2%	16%	45
1,000 – 2,000	21%	69%	3%	8%	77
2,5000 – 4,999	37%	52%	3%	8%	60
5,000 – 9,999	27%	58%	4%	11%	71
10,000 – 19,999	24%	56%	2%	18%	50
20,000+	35%	56%	2%	7%	55

### Overall Level of CRM Use Success by Region

	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Not Successful	Not Sure/ don't have data	Count
Midwest	28%	58%	3%	10%	117
Northwest	28%	53%	3%	17%	72
South	26%	63%	2%	9%	117
West	24%	66%	4%	6%	50
Other	50%	0%	0%	50%	2

### Overall Level of CRM Use Success by Institution Type

	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Not Successful	Not Sure/ don't have data	Count
Associate's	18%	63%	2%	16%	49
Bachelor's	20%	68%	3%	9%	75
Master's	32%	53%	3%	13%	118
Research University	33%	56%	2%	9%	82
Special	21%	67%	6%	6%	33
Not Classified	0%	100%	0%	0%	1

## Appendix C: “Other” Roadblocks to Maximizing the Use of the CRM

### Response

- People's willingness to learn & use existing systems
- Amount of data that must be shared between CRM and SIS
- We go live next week so time will tell
- Lack of IT support/changes in priority that push our upgrade back and prohibit getting regionally-based staff access to the system.
- Serious technophobia on the part of the staff that would be using it.
- Just implemented it
- Our IT support has other assignments and can't provide level of support & training needed.
- IT selling their ERP solutions that are extremely expensive and impossible to implement
- An appropriate tool
- Everyone wants their own system and seems to be allowed without cross departmental collaboration
- Person leading the CRM initiative is not knowledgeable enough about Customer Relationship Management as a discipline. There are many concepts and strategies taught in college-level CRM courses, but this person has not taken any of those courses.
- We use it to communicate A LOT but could use it more
- Variance in level of complexity from product to product and inconsistency relative to end-user friendliness vs. needing a power user related to certain products
- Integration with our SIS
- Silos
- Integration with main systems
- Lack of communication/partnership between student recruitment and other areas
- Home grown system, no budget to purchase CRM
- It's home grown and has many limitations
- Poor product
- Lack of technical staff
- Housing has own system (Adirondack)
- Integration with institution database



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## Appendix D: Title of Senior Communication Officer Position

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Admission Communication manager  
Assistance Vice Chancellor  
Assistant Dean Office of Communications  
Assistant Director Strategic Communication  
Assistant Vice President  
Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications  
Assistant Vice President for University Communication  
Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations  
Associate Chancellor of Strategic Communications  
Associate Director for Creative Services  
Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Communications Officer  
Associate Vice President  
Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing  
Associate Vice President for Marketing  
Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communication  
Associate Vice President for Public Affairs  
Associate Vice President for Public Relations  
Associate Vice President for University Relations and Chief Communications Officer  
Associate Vice President of Public Affairs  
Associate Vice President University Communication and Marketing  
Associate VP for University Relations  
AVP Communications  
AVP for University Communications  
Chief Communications Officer  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Communications Coordinator  
Communications Director  
Communications Manager  
Coordinator of Communications Marketing  
Coordinator of Recruitment Communications  
Dean of Marketing and Student Recruitment  
Director and Chief Information Officer  
Director College Advancement Services

Director de Mercadeo Institucional  
Director for Marketing  
Director of Communication and Marketing  
Director of Communication  
Director of Communications and Media Relations  
Director of Design and Communication for Enrollment Services  
Director of Information Management  
Director of Institutional Advancement  
Director of Marketing  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
Director of Marketing and Creative Services  
Director of Marketing and Public Relations  
Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment  
Director of Media Relations  
Director of Multi Media Communications  
Director of Public Affairs  
Director of Public Information and Governmental Affairs  
Director of Public Relations  
Director of Public Relations and Marketing  
Director of Recruitment Marketing and Enrollment Development  
Director of Strategic Marketing  
Director of University Communications  
Director of University Communications  
Director of University Marketing and Communication  
Director of University Relations  
Director University Communications  
Executive Director College Communications  
Executive Director of Communication and Marketing  
Executive Director of Enrollment Services and Communications  
Executive Director of Marketing  
Executive Director of Marketing and Communications  
Executive Director of the Foundation  
Executive Director of University Communications  
Executive Director of University Communications and Marketing  
Executive Director of University Relations

Executive Director Public Relations  
Marketing Coordinator  
Marketing Director  
Public Relations Director  
Senior Associate Vice President of Public Relations  
Senior Director for Communications and Marketing  
Senior Director of Communications  
Senior Director of Communications and Marketing  
Senior Recruitment Communications Manager  
Special Assistant to the Chancellor  
Vice Chancellor  
Vice Chancellor of Business Intelligence  
Vice Chancellor University Marketing and Communications  
Vice President  
Vice President (for) Communications  
Vice President Communications and Marketing  
Vice President for External Relations  
Vice President for Marketing  
Vice President for Marketing and Communications  
Vice President for Public Affairs  
Vice President for Strategic Communications  
Vice President for University Marketing and Communications  
Vice President of Advancement and Communication  
Vice President of Communications  
Vice President of Effectiveness and Planning  
Vice President of Enrollment and Communications  
Vice President of External Relations  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
Vice President of Institutional Marketing and Enrollment Management  
Vice President of Marketing  
Vice President of Public Affairs and Marketing  
Vice President of University Communications  
Vice President University Communication  
Vice President University Marketing Communications

## Appendix E: Reporting Line for the Senior Communications Officer Position

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Advancement  
Assistant to the President  
Assistant Vice Chancellor  
Assistant Vice President for Admission  
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Associate Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications  
Associate Vice President of Advancement and Marketing  
Associate Vice Provost of Enrollment Development  
Both Report to the Vice President for External Relations  
Chancellor  
Chief of Staff  
Chief Operating Officer  
Dean of Enrollment Management  
Dean of Institutional Advancement  
Development vice president  
Director of Admissions  
Director of Advancement  
Director of Enrollment Management  
Director of Marketing  
Dual line to President and Vice President for Advancement  
Executive Vice President  
President  
Provost  
Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs  
Senior Executive Vice President  
Senior Vice President  
Senior Vice President for Administration  
Senior Vice President for Institutional advancement  
Vice Chancellor for Development  
Vice President  
Vice President Administration

Vice President for (of) Advancement  
Vice President for Advancement and Communications  
Vice President for Enrollment  
Vice President for Enrollment Management  
Vice President for Enrollment Management and Communications  
Vice President for Enrollment Services  
Vice President for Institutional Advancement  
Vice President for (of) Marketing  
Vice President for Operations  
Vice President for Seminary Relations  
Vice President for University Advancement  
Vice President for University and Public Affairs  
Vice President for University Relations  
Vice President for University Relations and Advancement  
Vice President Institutional Effectiveness  
Vice President Marketing  
Vice President Marketing and Government Relations  
Vice President of Communications  
Vice President of Enrollment and Admission Services  
Vice President of Institutional Advancement  
Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Management  
Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Enrollment  
Vice President of Marketing and Communications  
Vice President of Operations  
Vice President of Strategic Operations  
Vice President of Student Services  
Vice President of University Advancement  
Vice President of University Communications  
Vice President Strategic Enrollment and Communications  
Vice Provost for (of) Enrollment Management

## Appendix F: Policy Changes as a Direct Result of Implementing a CRM

### Response

- Additional processes have been implemented
- Need to rethink who should be given access
- We are just beginning implementation
- Strict review of social media usage.
- Changes to any part of SIS now have to be approved before changes made; changes can affect data flow to CRM.
- Admissions applications can only be completed online. We no longer have a hardcopy of an application.
- Mostly related to storage of data since we now scan and retain far more documents electronically.
- Development of a policy covering issues related to engagement
- We eliminated the admission application fee
- Campus-wide communications and consistent branding
- Data integrity
- Online applications, inquiries...our whole business process has seen changes.
- Scan and save all enrollment and registration documentation now a policy.
- Marketing spending, programs for recruiting
- All communication plans for students centrally developed and managed
- Much more restricted
- Combining of applications, integration of communication between colleges and university admissions
- Shredding and proper disposal of paper
- Credentialing students
- We've augmented the application process; added policy around Life Experience application; and revised our anti-decimation policy.
- Communications department does not oversee admissions and recruiting communications, the DoA does
- Ability to QC communication coming from the entire office, required tracking of interactions with prospects (to convert to inquiries) and on
- Data storage policies and decision process policies

- Application processing
- Timeline
- No disclosure
- On line admission application review, electronic receipt of credentials; great for admission staff, some challenges for registrar's office as a result
- Policies related to use of CRM vs regular e-mail, etc.; policies related data changes to SIS and integration of CRM
- All communications are tracked in CRM for recruitment
- Required tracking of student interactions and increased demographic data collection upfront.
- More follow up with inquirers.
- Establishment of a Social Media Policy
- Process changes
- Policies have changed on how we process student records and using the system to work for us. We have changed how we process admissions apps and inquiries.
- Cashiering, security, enrollment, catalog, schedule
- Policy for communicating to students
- Public Affairs requests that no electronic publications be created without their review of design etc.
- Memo
- We have had to determine at what stage in the enrollment cycle prospective students can be communicated with by various departments.
- There is stricter expectations for access regarding access to levels of the CRM
- What data is required for inquiry creation
- New changes to assist recruiting and student success
- Mandatory usage starting this year by faculty Program Directors
- The Admissions office is no longer required to enter transfer GPA, hours completed, and hours attempted
- CRM was recently rolled out on our Main Campus and policies regarding use of texting are being defined before we enable the capability in the system.
- Communication flow charts for each target audience must be completed and updated each summer.
- Use is mandated
- Training to make sure staff doesn't save lists of student information to their computers, especially laptops.



*Advancing Global Higher Education*

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