

CASE STUDY

Strengthening Enrollment, Retention, and Strategic Growth

University of Arkansas-Fort Smith (UAFS)



How We're Helping UAFS

UAFS is building its reputation as a regional destination for high-quality, affordable education. The campus and community have a lot of momentum, and a new strategic plan builds on the energy to elevate the campus. Leadership faced declining enrollment and budget concerns, an evolving political landscape, and pressure to successfully launch and scale new program offerings.

Partnership Goals

To better align with their priorities, UAFS needed deeper, data-driven insight into their audience and performance. A social intelligence strategy enabled them to make more informed decisions.

UAFS Challenges

- **Enrollment and budget concerns.** UAFS struggled to meet their enrollment targets and experienced budget constraints.
- **Evolving political landscape.** Policy shifts at the state and federal level placed tighter limits on campus practices, student activism, and institutional requirements. The changes emphasized compliance and tied outcomes more closely to funding and workforce goals.
- **Pressure to successfully launch and scale new program offerings.** UAFS wanted to mitigate enrollment challenges with new academic programs. The team was tasked with positioning the programs to meet prospective students' needs in a competitive market.



“You have to measure brand equity, ideally in multiple ways (social intelligence, surveys, etc). Knowing this helps you persist as an institution, or evolve through M&A into what you can be in the future.”

— Dr. Teresa Riley, Chancellor

UAFS's Progress

Social intelligence helped UAFS deliver meaningful, campus-wide impact and advance their strategic vision.



Strengthened executive decision-making

Providing timely, digestible analysis of evolving federal and state policy at critical moments saved UAFS leaders time and maximized impact. The concise insights enabled more confident, informed decisions during periods of industry change.



Optimized campus staff time and expertise

Outsourcing the management of UAFS's strategic social intelligence program added capacity to the on-campus teams, supporting efficiency and effectiveness across campus. It also provided data, insights, and strategic direction that the team leveraged to inform go-to market, enrollment, and advancement strategies.



Strengthened go-to-market strategy for new academic programs

Insights from aspirational and comparator institutions enabled UAFS to position new programs competitively and align with regional workforce needs (e.g., SMART manufacturing, data science, and nursing). The strategy strengthened the university's value proposition, reinforced its support of economic growth in Arkansas, and deepened its connection with prospective students and the broader community.



Supported a 25% increase in enrollment growth

Spanish-language insights uncovered new perspectives, informing recruitment and admissions events. Over three years of promoting Spanish-language orientation, UAFS saw a 25% increase in Hispanic student enrollment with rising engagement.



Positioned UAFS as a regional destination

Developed and socialized a shared understanding of the value of a UAFS education and used custom insights about admissions, athletics, brand awareness, and more to support cross-campus collaborations. Ongoing measurement of audience perceptions enabled UAFS to strategically position itself as a leader and demonstrate the positive contributions higher education brings to the state and region.



Strengthened UAFS's awareness and perception with key stakeholders

Helped the campus articulate its strategic impact and leverage opportunities that differentiate it. Monthly social intelligence insights empowered UAFS's communications team to align their work to the strategic plan and take action on emerging challenges.

Explore if your campus is ready for social intelligence at
cb.org/strategicadvisory.