We R Anything but Common:
Implementing the Common App Across the University

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Abstract:

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, currently utilizes two pathways for prospective undergraduate students for application submission. Our most heavily used pathway is through an internal, stand-alone application managed by the Salesforce CRM. While Rutgers has partnered with the Coalition organization over the past several years, the Common Application (Common App) is the most widely used college application platform across the globe with over 900 member institutions. The Common App is committed to the pursuit of access, equity, and integrity in the college admissions process. These same values closely align with our university's mission statement and core values. The university's participation on the Common App would increase the visibility of a Rutgers education for several key student populations by accessing and increasing a diverse applicant pool. The primary goal of this project is to work on the planning, design, integration, and maintenance of a software interface to accept Common Application applicants.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Prospective Rutgers applicants
- High School Guidance Offices
- Enrollment Managers across each campus unit
- University Enrollment Services (UES)
- Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- Office of Institutional Research & Academic Planning

Key Steps/Activities:

The successful implementation of the Common Application at Rutgers will include:

- Creation of a steering committee and task committee(s) with stakeholder representation among each campus unit/department
- Outline scope, set goals with deadlines, and
- Schedule kick-off meetings and subsequent meeting schedule
- Develop Rutgers Common application questions
- Build and test data mapping to Salesforce and other downstream databases: Identity Management, SRDB (SIS)
- Develop marketing and outreach communication plan for launch.

Effectiveness Measures:

The number and percentage of applications, admits, and enrolling students each year by application source (e.g. Salesforce, Coalition, Common App).

The plan also includes the review of these measures for:
- Underrepresented minorities
- First Generation students
- Low socioeconomic status
- Non-NJ resident (e.g. Out-of-State/International)

Communication/Engagement:

This implementation will move quickly and will require coordinated and consistent communication among committee members and stakeholders. To best keep all parties informed, the task force will use multiple communication channels:

- Emails – Announcements and project updates
- Microsoft Teams – Share files and communicate via chat with committee
- Common App "Road Show" - presentation slide deck to interested internal and external parties, establish and meet with multiple committees: sponsor/steering committee, implementation committee (OIT/CU representatives)
- Office Hours – to be scheduled leading up and post-implementation
- Marketing Campaign – communicate to prospective students

Proposed Timeline:

Summer 2022 – Establish committee, needs assessement
Fall 2022 – Kick-off and develop application
Spring 2023 – Build data mapping and system integration
Summer 2023 – Testing and Launch

Current Status/Future Directions:

This project has been agreed upon by multiple levels across the university. The steps outlined in this proposal will begin later this year with the formation of a task force, solidification of necessary institutional funds, and identification of project sponsors. We have a target "launch" date of August 1, 2023 to start accepting prospective Rutgers undergraduate students for the fall 2024 semester!