

Bridging Academic Mission with Market Demands



 The Council of Independent Colleges

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2024 Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Their Teams // November 1-4, 2024
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Presenters

Megan Zwart, Interim Provost and Vice President
Saint Mary's College (Indiana)

David Strauss, Principal
Art & Science Group

Jamie Ealy, Senior Associate
Art & Science Group

Chair

Nanci Tessier, Principal
Art & Science Group

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Typically...

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STRATEGY

MISSION

ASPIRATIONS

What can be more effective...



STRATEGY

MISSION

ASPIRATIONS

MARKET



INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY & POSITIONING: CASE STUDY EXERCISE

This situation at Edgar Allan Poe College



**Strong
liberal arts
college**



**Challenging
geographic
location**



**Powerful &
opinionated
faculty**



**Diffuse
competitive
set**



**Deciding among
possible strategic
directions**

What should the College do?

Redacted Slides

Edgar Allan Poe College

- Broad directions and specific strategic initiatives under consideration



Detailed slides have been removed to protect the confidentiality of the client and the proprietary nature of the underlying methodologies.

Instructions



1. Your table represents Edgar Allen Poe College, a real institution.
2. You'll be handed a description of an array of potential initiatives Edgar Allen Poe College is considering implementing as well as a menu card.
3. Work with your team to think through the context of the institution & what choices you think it should make.
4. You have 20 minutes to make your selections.
5. Fill out two cards with your choices, one to submit to A&S staff and one to keep at your table.

An Interview With...

MEGAN ZWART
Interim Provost and
Vice President
Saint Mary's College

&

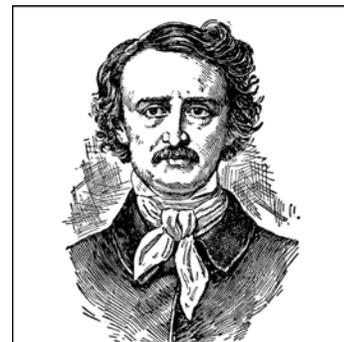
NANCI TESSIER
Principal
Art & Science Group



EDGAR ALLAN POE COLLEGE

Redacted Slides

- Broad directions and specific strategic initiatives under consideration at Edgar Allan Poe College, arising in the campus planning process
- Potential market response:
 - Pointing up dramatic differences in application and yield rates that would result from pursuing options preferred by some campus groups vs. other authentic options that resonated in Poe's market
 - Impact on populations of particular interest to the College (students of color, higher scorers, and higher income)



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Redacted Slides

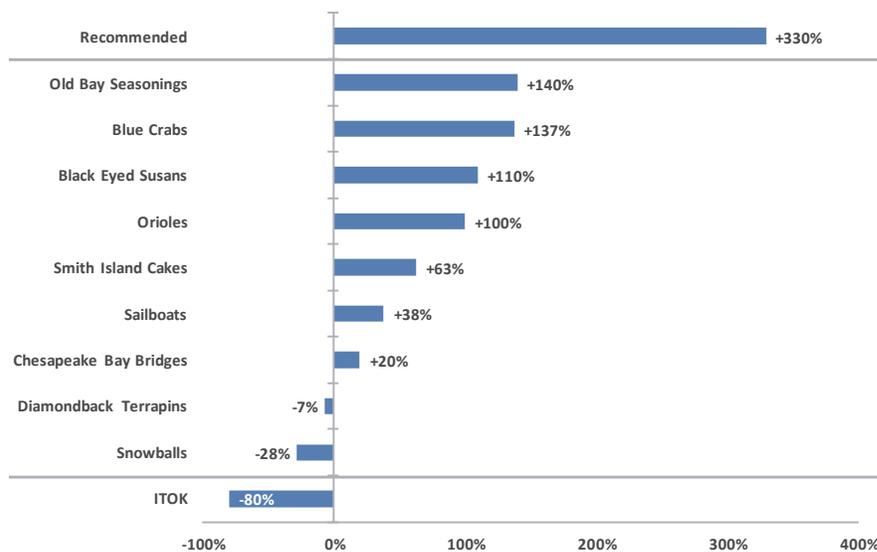
- Breakdown of each team’s selected positioning initiatives, the underlying reasoning, and simulation of their impact on application and enrollment rates



HOW'D YOU DO?

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HOW'D YOU STACK UP VS. THE RECOMMENDED AND "IF THEY ONLY KNEW" CASES?



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What does an institution need to achieve?

1 Substantiate & articulate a proposition that is both **distinctive & compelling**

3 Build an underlying **authentic** value proposition **from the inside out** based on substance

2 Develop an institutional strategy with a **focus on the student experience**—academic & student life

4 Satisfy **threshold** requirements & **differentiate** it from competing options in ways that matter to its markets



What have we learned?

Institutional strategy & positioning

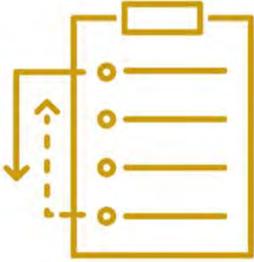
To stake out a substantive, differentiated positioning that is compelling in your markets, relative to your competitors, keep three key lessons in mind:

- 1** Not all differentiators are created equal
- 2** What works for one institution is idiosyncratically different from what will work for others
- 3** How you play out a theme can be more powerful than the theme itself.

What does this require?



PRIORITIZE



SCALE



INTEGRATE



Q&A



