THE PATH TO PATHWAYS: ONE UNIVERSITY'S MARKET RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Presented by: John MacMillan

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

TODAY'S DISCUSSION

- Some background on our university
- Market research insights
  - Qualitative
- Who are our students?
- What's the value of university (and college)?
- What's the transfer journey?

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

BACKGROUND

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- 10,000+ undergraduate and graduate students
- Situated on two Oshawa campus locations
- Seven faculties with 75+ programs
- 96% of our degree programs incorporate a form of experiential learning

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PATHWAYS – IT'S WHO WE ARE

It is the special mission of the university to provide career-oriented university programs and to design and offer programs with a view to

create opportunities for college graduates to complete a university degree.

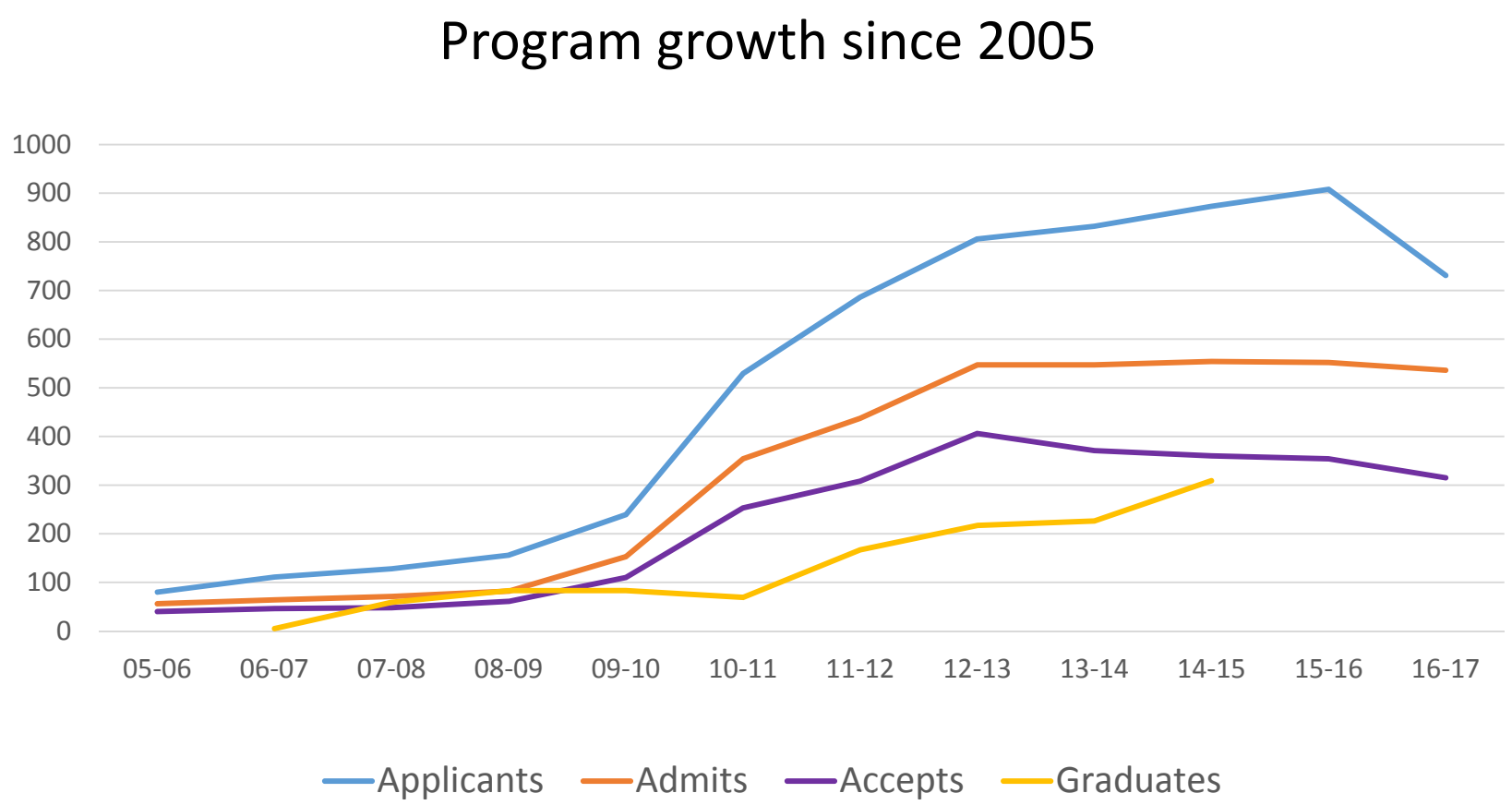
UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PATHWAYS – WE'RE GOOD AT IT

- First program in 2005 – Criminology
- 29 programs across many study areas
  - Business
  - Information Technology
  - Education
  - Health Sciences
  - Humanities
  - Science
  - Social Science

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PATHWAYS – WE'RE GOOD AT IT



UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PATHWAYS – WE'RE SUPPORTIVE

- Articulation agreements

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE	BERMUDA COLLEGE	CAMBRIAN COLLEGE	canadore college	CENTENNIAL COLLEGE
Confederation COLLEGE	DURHAM COLLEGE SUCCESS MATTERS	Fleming College	Georgian	LOYALIST COLLEGE BELLEVILLE · ONTARIO
SAULT COLLEGE	Seneca	Sheridan	Saitb POLYTECHNIC	St. Lawrence College

WE CONNECT WITH COLLEGES

- Admit students from a variety of colleges

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

MARKET RESEARCH PLANNING

WHY NOW?

- Increasing priority for the university
  - Change in demographics – market availability
- Missing emotional drivers and journey mapping

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

WE'VE GONE DIGITAL

- Two very different audiences:
  - College student and college graduate
- GTA focus
- Behaviour focused digital tactics
  - Search
  - Mobile
  - Video
  - Social Media (LinkedIn, Twitter)

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

STUDENT VS GRADUATE

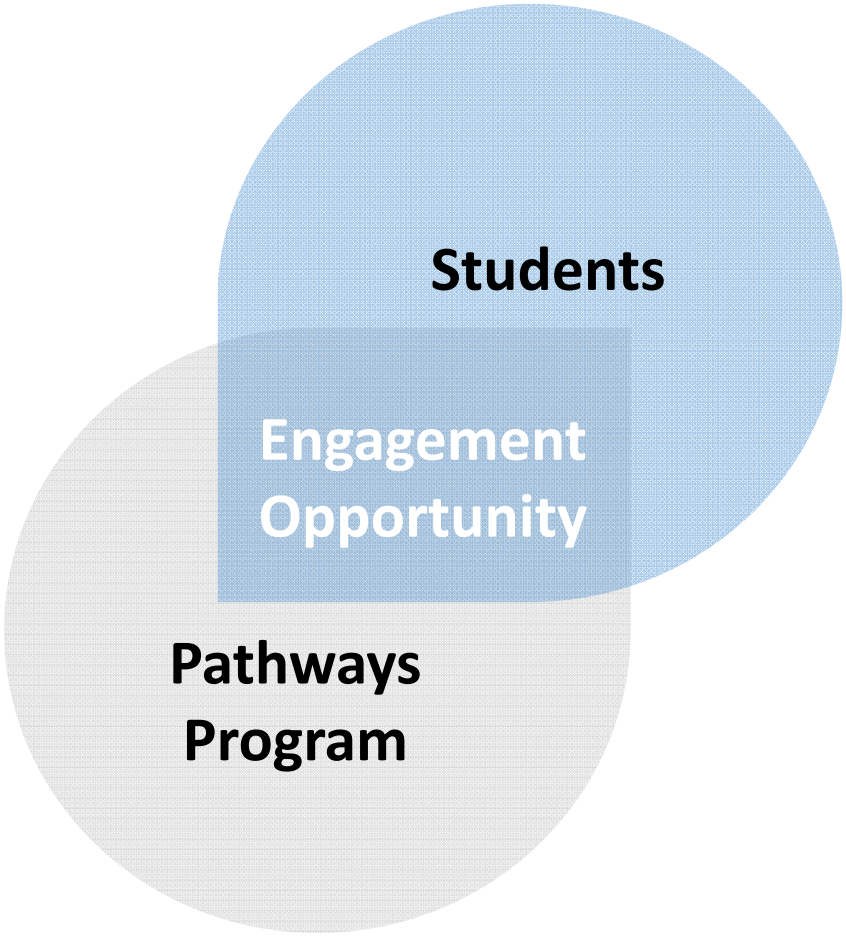
- College Students = easy to find
- College Graduates = varied industries, functions, seniority

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Project goal:

Understand the desires and motivations of college students.



UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

[Initiation]

Competitive Analysis

- Review past stakeholder research (UG/G)
- Market intelligence

[Fieldwork]

Focus Groups

- Engaged in seven focus groups in March 2016
- 28 participants from the GTA
- 90 min interviews

[Solutions]

Brand Purpose Design

- Make sense of insights collected
- Link behaviours/ emotions to brand values

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

WHO ARE PATHWAYS STUDENTS?

COLLEGE STUDENTS AND GRADS
- PRAGMATIC, GOAL-ORIENTED REALISTS

High school graduates:

- Seek personal development
- Finding their path in life

"Zoom-out"

College students and graduates:

- Pragmatic and practical
- University as means to an end

"Zoom-in"

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS - HAVE EDUCATIONAL MOMENTUM

- Who are they?
- What's important to them?
- What's driving them toward university?

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

COLLEGE GRADUATES
- HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND NEEDS

- Who are they?
- What's important to them?
- What's driving them toward university?

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

UNIVERSITIES ARE PREACHING TO THE CHOIR

These college students and graduates do not need to be convinced of the value of a university degree.

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

Current college students - not a change of plans, rather a return to their original educational goal.

College graduates - decided to go to university only after life in the real world.

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

My end goal was to go to university, but I couldn’t do that due to certain choices I made. So, I thought why not just start with college and move my way up to university.

- College Student

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

VALUE OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

DUAL DRIVERS FOR SUCCESS

College Practicality

University graduates need practical knowledge and experience.

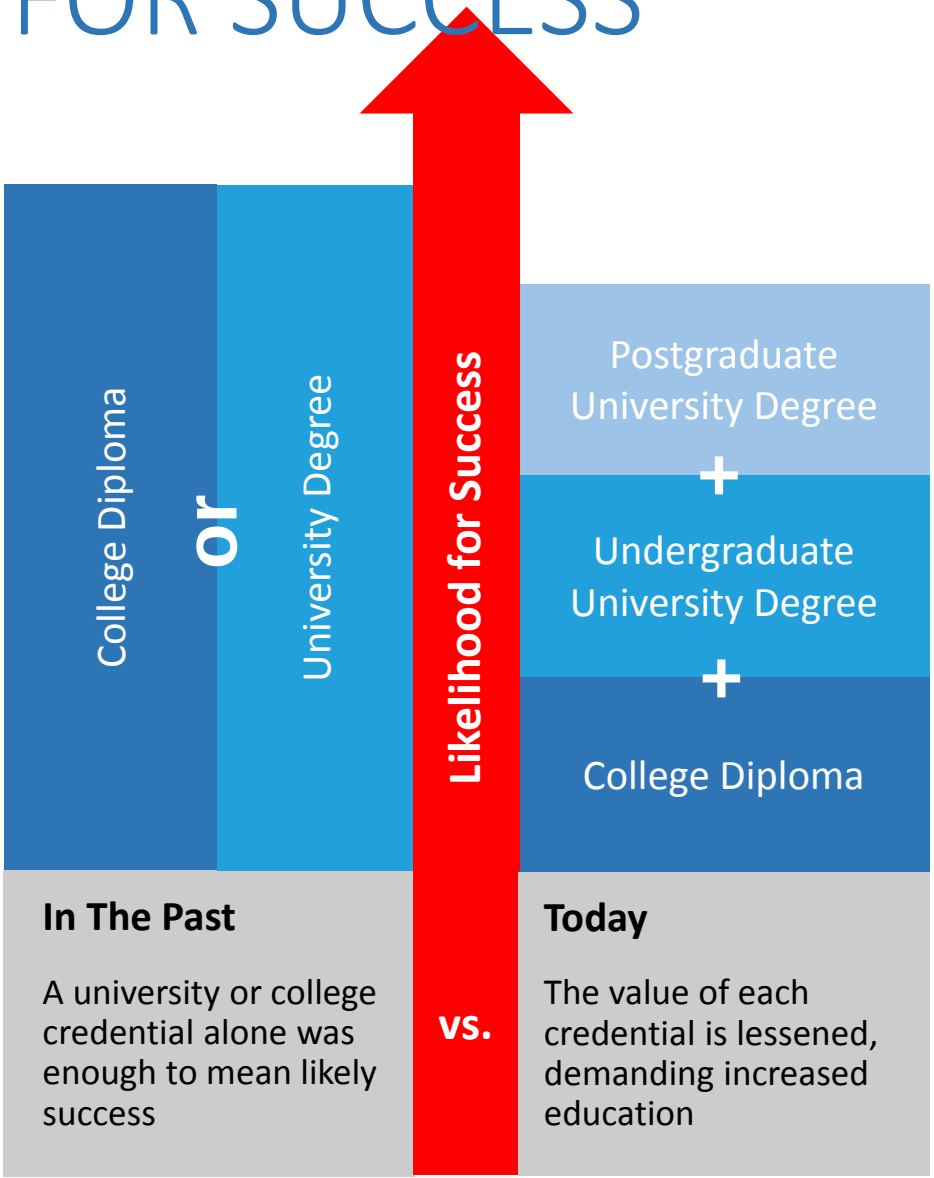
+

University Credentials

College graduates need credentials to attain specific jobs.

THE RISING BAR FOR SUCCESS

In today's context, the value and guarantee of success that post-secondary education once promised no longer holds true.



TENSION SURROUNDING THE VALUE OF A DEGREE

University degree seen as

- Bare minimum
- Subject to educational "inflation"

This creates a tension surrounding the true value of University degrees

Result is anxiety and uncertainty about their futures

Postgraduate University Degree

+

Undergraduate University Degree

+

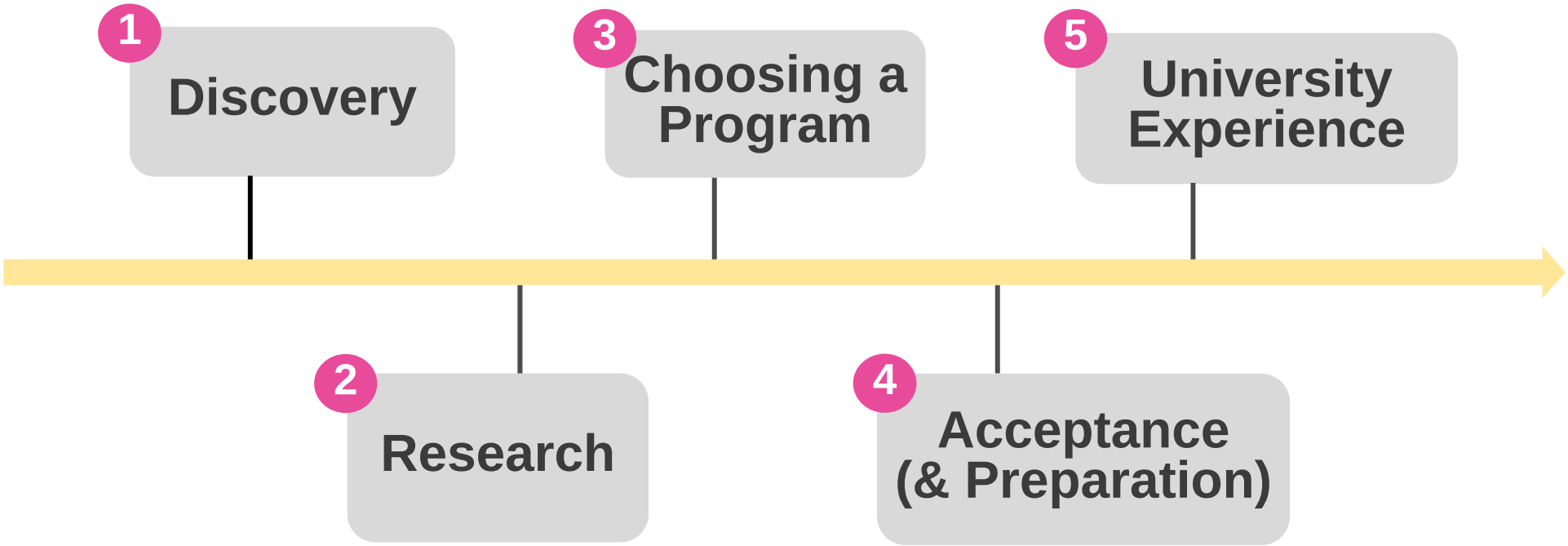
College Diploma

Today

The value of each credential is lessened, demanding increased education

THE TRANSFER JOURNEY

THE TRANSFER JOURNEY



UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PHASE 1: DISCOVERY

High school counselors set up the possibility

Colleges educate students about university degrees

Employers recommend that graduates consider university

ontransfer.com advertising works!

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

My professor let me know about not staying where I was. She gave me the website of my college. When you look at the program you are currently in it has something at the bottom… there's a link to what universities were accepting this particular college transfer… From there, the university I decided on, UOIT, I went to their website to find out more.

- UOIT Pathways Student

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PHASE 2: RESEARCH

Prospective students visit websites

Currently students speak to college counselors

Comparing different programs and schools can be confusing

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PHASE 3: CHOOSING A PROGRAM

Prospective students weigh their options

College students apply in their final year of college

College graduates want efficiency – get it fast

Logistics matter – close, flexible and minimal sacrifice

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

I first need to gather info. It is going to come down to what is suitable for me. I have no interest in quitting my job. The education will have to fit into my lifestyle, not the other way around.

- College Graduate

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PHASE 4: ACCEPTING (AND PREPARING?)

Acceptance is the easy part

They have set their priorities in the earlier stage

BUT students don't really prepare for university.

Feel that college has prepared them for what lies ahead.

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PHASE 5: UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Social: Often a huge shock

Academic: Not always prepared

Generational: Older and wiser – but not always treated that way

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

You need to set up your calendar and organize yourself. You just have to know there are certain days where I am going to study this amount of hours… after each course. When you organize yourself everything is easier. If you don't, that's where it gets really difficult.

- University Student

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

I struggled a little bit the first semester. It hit me like a brick wall. You can't be distracted. You can't wait for the last minute. As soon as the doors open and school is in session, the semester started, that's it. It is much more intense and serious than it was in college. Every assignment, I was in my own zone. Here you can't do that. You have to keep up with the material on a daily basis.

- University Student

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SUMMARY

FINDINGS?

- Big difference in feelings of college students and college grads
- The journey is worthwhile but filled with anxiety
- Good insight for us–especially with respect to the experience at university

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

- Review and discuss with cross-functional teams
  - Provost
  - Registrar's office
  - Student Life
  - Advancement
- Ultimately, aid in emotional decision-making
  - "Help me get what I need to succeed."

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

THANK YOU!

John MacMillan, Director, Communications and Marketing

QUESTIONS?