

How Dalhousie University exceeded target with video messaging

Dalhousie University's Monique Thomas introduced video to their admissions process during a time when one-to-one, in-person interaction was limited due to the pandemic. Goodkind videos have now allowed their recruiters, advisors and student ambassadors to personally connect with students across the globe.





The traditional university admissions process has been disrupted. In the last two years, students couldn't tour college campuses or meet with recruiters in-person. In one of the most exciting phases of a young person's life, the human element was lost.

Monique Thomas, Assistant Registrar of Communications & Marketing at Dalhousie University, recruited students from around the world and supported them in their move to college.

During the global pandemic, she and her department adapted. By adding authenticity and personalization to their application process, Dalhousie connected with students in a new, engaging way and improved their admissions pipeline.



Admissions & recruitment challenges during COVID-19

COVID-19 threw universities around the world for a loop. Those who recruited international students were impacted even further. With global and domestic travel essentially off limits, admission departments were forced to adapt.

99 We couldn't see students. They couldn't see us. Pre-COVID, we were traveling around the world to visit students. And, all of a sudden, that changed. We had to depend on students being engaged in virtual sessions and *actually checking* their emails.

Dalhousie's situation was no different. They went from recruiting in the Caribbean, East Asia and across Canada to being forced to use virtual communications overnight. A highly personal process was whittled down to a digital one. Regardless of the reasons, the task at hand remained: Dalhousie needed to recruit their next class of 5,000 students. No exceptions.

Thomas admitted they weren't necessarily looking for video messaging at this time or considering it as a potential fix.

99 We didn't see a need for [video] to be honest. "We'll send an email or we'll see them in-person." It was fine.



Severely limiting the personal connection that admissions teams had with students, in-person communication had been impacted. Most universities were merely “getting by” with traditional mass email outreach. When Goodkind reached out, Thomas saw the value in the ability to bridge this newfound gap. It wasn’t just about video, it was about having the opportunity to show up for students even though you couldn’t see them face-to-face anymore.

Dalhousie chose to buck the status quo, stand out from their competition, and humanize their admissions process amidst this hurdle. Thomas said, “I like that we can send different communications to students with Goodkind. It allows us to stand out. It puts a face to Dalhousie. That’s my favorite part.”

Reaching students via email was hard enough before the pandemic. Thomas claims, “**What we send in emails is too lengthy. All the research shows students want short form videos.**” Dalhousie pounced on the opportunity to connect with students via personal video messaging rather than mass email and they haven’t looked back since.

99 We saw Goodkind as an opportunity to actually get in front of students. For them to see us. To put a face to our name.



Adopting video & Goodkind to enhance outreach

Dalhousie's team of 15 global recruiters, advisors and student ambassadors have used Goodkind to communicate with prospective students in the following ways:

- Inviting students to virtual and in-person recruitment events
- Reminding students of university updates, events and deadlines
- Promoting events with high school guidance counselors and faculty
- Nurturing and yielding applicants

99 There will always be that virtual, hybrid component. When we are going to an event, helping students feel safe by saying, "You're going to meet me," feels more personal. Not just a robot emailing [students] to "come to our university."

Thomas saw the impact of Goodkind right away, as videos were vastly outperforming email metrics in just the first few months. She noted while Dalhousie's international admissions team was the first to adopt Goodkind, domestic recruitment and grad programs have now asked to participate in the fun.



99 Internally, [Goodkind] gives more variety in what we can do and what we can offer to other stakeholders at the university.

The Dalhousie team initially realized Goodkind's power with the very first video they sent. "You never know with the demographic we target," Thomas explained. "How engaged they are or not engaged they'll be. It wasn't hard to see ROI with Goodkind. In the first video we sent – students *actually* responded!"

99 We see the engagement metrics of how our Goodkind campaigns are doing, and it's impressive. Before Goodkind, we weren't getting much uptake on our campus tours. We thought, let's do something more engaging. I'm hearing from advisors that **we're now seeing 10% - 20% more uptake on events** from the Goodkind videos. And we get responses from the students like, "Can't wait to join. Thanks for the video." Those responses make our day!

After adding Goodkind to Dalhousie's admissions strategy, Thomas found benefits far beyond modernizing their communications. The team connected with international prospective students at **3x the rate of email**, by featuring ambassadors from their respective countries. At roughly 30% of Dal's student population, their international community is crucial to engage with in both recruitment and campus life.

This year, Dal's first with Goodkind, they were able to exceed their international student target. A huge feat given COVID's impact on the international market.



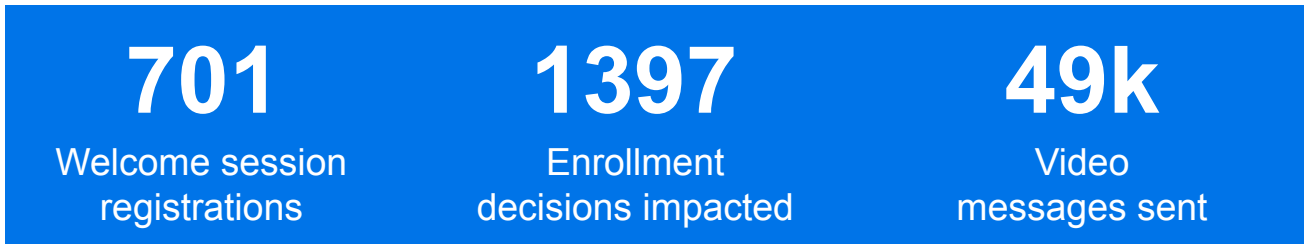
International students are historically underrepresented in university enrollment plans. They receive promotions in a foreign language when they'd prefer a familiar face or even language. Goodkind has helped Dalhousie bridge this gap.

gg We saw [Goodkind] as an opportunity to reach out to [international] students – for example, our Chinese market. We have a recruiter who is Mandarin-speaking. He sends videos in Mandarin to those students, so they see him. They hear him. That's been really impactful.

It's one thing to send an email in Mandarin that we translated. Sending a video where they can actually see somebody who looks like them, who talks like them, who understands them, who has been through the process that they're going through. And who can really relate with them.

Measuring the success of video

Monique credits Goodkind with transforming Dalhousie's student admissions process. "Video for sure has a permanent role in our students' admissions journey," Thomas says.





As an administrator, Monique's favorite part about Goodkind is her ability to welcome new students and supporting them along in their admissions journey. Video helps put a face to Dalhousie and humanizes a heavy process full of automations, bots and merge fields.

Thomas points to the success they've seen with their international student community, **exceeding their target by 8%**. In the last year, they have been able to feel more in-touch with and inclusive of all students applying to Dalhousie.

Conclusion

Dalhousie University's Monique Thomas introduced video to their admissions process during a time when one-to-one, in-person interaction was limited. Goodkind videos have now allowed their recruiters, advisors and student ambassadors to personally connect with students across the globe.

Universities need to guide, support and nurture students during one of the most important decisions of their young life. Goodkind empowers anyone in admissions to start building a long-lasting relationship with an incoming student that is more personal than ever before.