

PRIVATE // FAITH-BASED



Building Community and Connection to Improve Yield, Reduce Melt

WHY HARDING CHOSE TO PARTNER WITH NEARPEER

Located in central Arkansas, Harding University has a global reputation that attracts students from every corner of the world. However, it is an increasingly competitive market for students, especially for private, faith-based institutions.

For Harding leadership, a key priority is ensuring prospective and incoming students build connections early. Each student's well-being and success is profoundly influenced by the the people they meet along their learning journey, so Harding wanted to ensure these connections were built early and proactively by their students.

KEY FINDINGS

Nearpeer is a highly effective tool in increasing connection and yield across a wide variety of students at Harding. Results include:

**62%**

of incoming students **adopted Nearpeer** before their semester began

**2.5x**

higher yield rate for Nearpeer users

**18,000+**

new peer-to-peer connections made

IMMEDIATE IMPACT



Searcy, AK

Nestled in Searcy, Arkansas, this private, faith-based institution serves a diverse, coeducational student body of over 4,600 from across the United States and around the world.

Almost two thirds of admitted students enroll at Harding. Student retention is 87%, and their six-year graduation rate is 72%.

Priorities

- ↗ Improve Recruitment
- ↗ Increase Yield
- ↘ Reduce Melt

Once admitted to Harding, every student was invited to join Nearpeer and connect with other future classmates. Harding leadership wanted to improve student commitment (admit-to-enroll conversion), and they knew that the sooner these students were matched with their peers, the more likely they would commit and ultimately enroll at Harding.

In fact, within the first enrollment season using Nearpeer, these students developed a connection to Harding that resulted in higher yield, even in today's increasingly competitive market for students. Students using Nearpeer had a 2.5X higher admit-to-enroll yield rate versus students who did not use Nearpeer. Nearly two in three of Harding's admitted students voluntarily adopted Nearpeer,

2.5x higher admit-to-enroll yield rate versus students who did not use Nearpeer

62% of incoming Harding students voluntarily signed up for and used Nearpeer.

THE POWER FOR PEER CONNECTION

AN UNMET NEED

This high adoption speaks to their interest in authentic connection and the unmet need left by social media platforms. These students continued to use Nearpeer's peer engagement platform over 35 times each to build new peer relationships and friendships within Harding's student community.

"Nearpeer is incredibly user friendly... the barriers to adoption are very small with Nearpeer, and that's not always the case with other platforms."

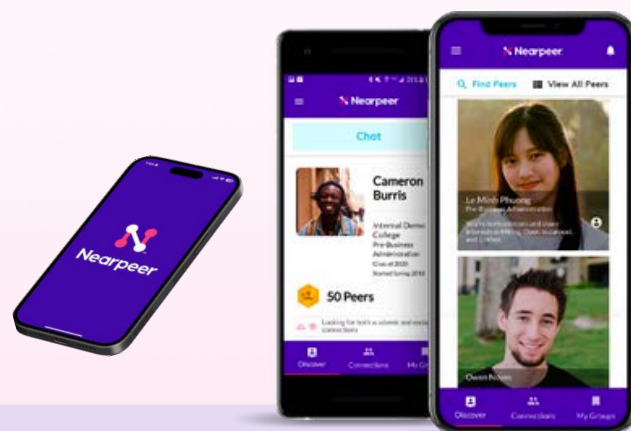
- Scott Hannigan, Senior Director Undergraduate Admissions Harding University

For many students, visiting campus as a prospective or incoming student was difficult, especially for Harding's significant international student population. On average all students connected with 34 peers before the first day of class, which would not have been possible for these students otherwise. In a similar vein, campus visits have a different weight and impact on various types of students, such as extroverts or introverts.

"Nearpeer helps Harding students achieve a shared experience and sense of belonging, and results in higher enrollment conversion rates."

- Scott Hannigan, Senior Director Undergraduate Admissions Harding University

Even highly introverted students felt comfortable engaging and connecting one-to-one thanks to Nearpeer's advanced peer-matching engine and personalization. More than 18,000 new peer connections were made as a result of Harding's approach.



34

peer connections made on average before the first day of classes

18,000+

connections made by incoming Harding students in the months before enrolling

ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

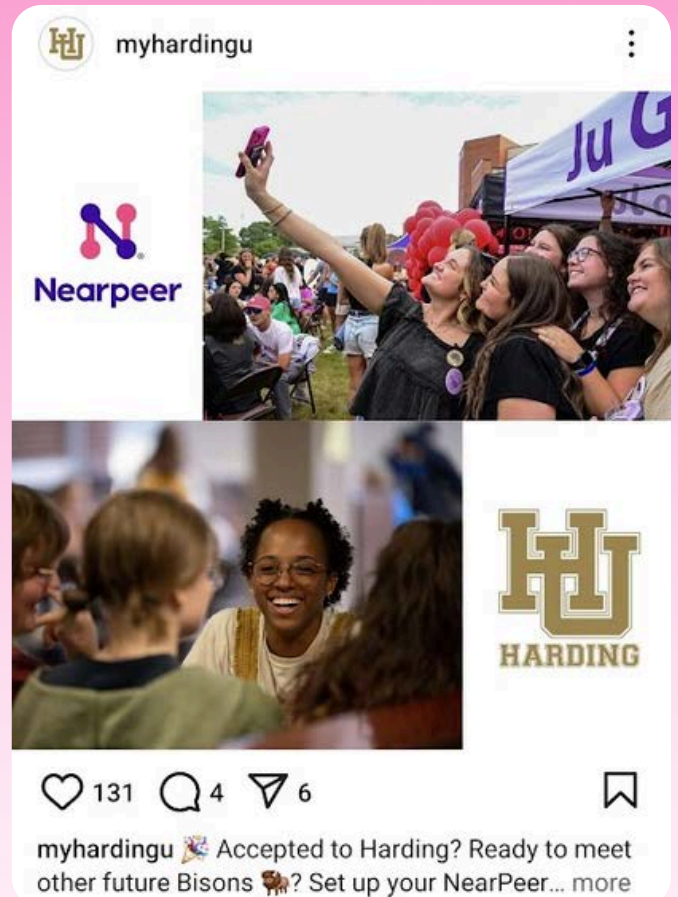
REDUCING MELT WITH NEARPEER

To reduce their summer melt, Harding wanted to ensure incoming students remained engaged and committed throughout the summer. Orientation offered some of that, but continual engagement with not only the people who they attended orientation with, but also other students who attended separate sessions.

When incoming students used Nearpeer and connected with their peers, there was a 77% lower melt versus students who did not use Nearpeer. In addition, Harding wanted to ensure extra focus was given to its first-generation, Pell-eligible, and underrepresented populations.

↓ **77%** decrease in melt for students who used Nearpeer

↓ **70%** decrease in melt for Pell-eligible students who used Nearpeer



Harding University promotes Nearpeer across social media channels

Pell-eligible students, for example, were averaging over 2X the melt rate of the overall incoming class. However, when Pell-eligible students connected with all incoming students on Nearpeer, these higher-risk students had 70% lower melt when using Nearpeer.

NEXT STEPS

Building on their success, Harding's admissions and marketing teams will personalize outreach based on the interests and life experiences students voluntarily share in their Nearpeer profile. For example, 73% of Harding students shared a specific career aspiration, and 100% shared personal interests, such as hobbies, passions, sports, and more.

73%

of students shared a specific career aspiration in their Nearpeer profile

100%

of students shared personal interests, such as hobbies, passions, sports, and more.

HARDING Request Information Schedule a Visit Apply Make a Gift Information for Search

ACADEMICS ADMISSIONS AND AID LIFE AT HARDING ABOUT

BISON BOUND

Admissions > Visit Campus

Overview Apply Scholarships and Financial Aid Dual Enrollment - Bison Prep Visit Campus Request Information Meet Your Admissions Counselor

BEFORE YOU COME TO BISON BOUND

- Activate Pipeline (pipeline.harding.edu)
- Download the Harding App
- Review Admissions requirements (if applicable)
- Join NearPeer! We want to give you a headstart on one of the most important parts of orientation — connecting with future classmates! With that in mind, Harding has partnered with Nearpeer. Nearpeer is a social media peer-to-peer networking platform specifically for Harding students that matches and connects incoming students based on their similarities and common interests. You can locate others in your program of study, find a roommate or just make connections. All admitted students will receive a personal email invitation to join.

"I've really enjoyed it, and made some friendships that will probably last a lifetime."

- Clay, incoming new student at Harding University

In addition, Harding will make use of Nearpeer's early warning signal for admissions counselors. This early warning information is based on each student's engagement patterns in Nearpeer. It will allow Harding to use its admissions resources to best serve those admitted students who need higher-touch engagement to cement their commitment to Harding.



THE Nearpeer[®] EXPERIENCE



LAUNCH QUICKLY

Nearpeer is a turnkey solution that can be implemented with minimal lift from university partners. With no system integration or university staffing required, the platform has launched in as little as 24 hours for clients seeking immediate help growing enrollment, improving retention, and supporting greater sense of belonging among students.

SEE SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

Institutions using Nearpeer can achieve 3X higher yield rates, up to 93% melt reduction, 17% year-over-year retention increases, and 16% higher four-year graduation rates. Students also report reduced anxiety and isolation, along with greater inclusion and belonging, making Nearpeer the top choice for improving student success and mental health.

TRUSTED PARTNER AND REAL IMPACT

Nearpeer partners with institutions of all sizes to support diverse learners, from undergraduates to adults and early-college students. Nearpeer conducted the largest clinical trial on belonging's impact on student success in higher education, establishing itself as a leader the field. This transformational work is backed by philanthropic leaders like The Lumina Foundation and The Lilly Endowment.

ENHANCE EXISTING INVESTMENTS

Nearpeer is a powerful standalone tool that seamlessly enhances universities' existing systems, including student information systems, res-life platforms, marketing tools, student success platforms, and resources for tutoring, mentorship, and mental health.

CONSIDERABLE ROI

Nearpeer is a proven, high-ROI investment for universities, driving increased yield, reduced melt, and improved persistence. Partner schools see a 10x (or higher) return through higher enrollment that increases tuition revenue, with some achieving up to 97x ROI. No wonder *Forbes* calls Nearpeer "A very big deal."

HIGH ADOPTION

"Will I fit in?" is today's top concern for college students, and without an early sense of belonging, enrollment and persistence decline sharply. Nearpeer addresses this need by helping students form meaningful friendships before orientation, leading to an average 50% voluntary adoption—rising to 95% at some schools.

Forbes

“ For those in the know, or who follow the razor’s edge world of college recruitment, boosting enrollment is gold. But also boosting retention, as was shown in this study [of Nearpeer], is platinum...

This is a very big deal. ”

ABOUT NEARPEER

Our peer-to-peer engagement platform acts as a transformative catalyst, fostering meaningful connections and enhancing students' sense of belonging at every stage of their journey. Leveraging advanced matching algorithms, Nearpeer facilitates personalized, meaningful, and healthy 1:1 connections tailored to each individual student. Nearpeer's clients benefit from a custom-built, safe, and inclusive virtual peer-networking platform that has proven to strengthen engagement, commitment, and community throughout the student lifecycle. This unique approach drives measurable improvements in enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates while also proving to reduce student loneliness, anxiety, and isolation. This is why so many schools partner with Nearpeer – and why Forbes calls Nearpeer “a very big deal.”



For more information, visit nearpeer.com.