



PRIVATE // HBCU // FAITH-BASED



# Transforming the Student Experience to Power Enrollment Growth & Student Support

## WHY XAVIER CHOSE TO PARTNER WITH NEARPEER

Under the leadership of President Reynold Verret, Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) has been on a path to not only rebuild -- but also intentionally transform -- the student experience. Facing declining enrollment, Xavier leadership began to construct a new way to recruit and enroll new Xavierites. They took a more holistic view on the student journey to ensure both academic excellence and a deeper connection to their community. For this plan to work, they knew they also needed to give students and their families an exceptional experience before they arrived on campus.

## KEY FINDINGS

Nearpeer was highly effective tool in increasing connection and yield across a wide variety of groups.  
Results include:



**78%**

of incoming students adopted **Nearpeer** before Fall term even began



**20%**

**increase in new enrollment** for the Fall term, including record male student enrollment



**44**

**new peer-to-peer connections** made per incoming student

# BUILDING GREATER BELONGING

## XAVIER UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA

*New Orleans, LA*

As Xavier (XULA) leaders worked to deliver an experience that both attracted and retained today's student, they knew they needed a different approach. National reports show that more Black students are beginning to choose an education at an HBCU, but Xavier needed to ensure their experience delivered something unique. They were already a national leader in academics, with nationally recognized science and liberal arts programs. They also knew that they had untapped potential in delivering on the value of the Xavier network and campus community.

For Xavier to build back their enrollment to levels not seen in over a decade, Xavier leaders wanted to ensure their prospective and incoming students found a sense of belonging within their community.

To do this, Xavier launched a program with Nearpeer to serve admitted students. These students were invited with an email from the Enrollment Management office, which was then followed up with a text message. Xavier leaders promoted Nearpeer on their social media channels and with virtual orientation events throughout the summer.

### **President Ronald Verret**

Xavier University of  
Louisiana



*"I wanted to make sure our students feel a sense of belonging and know that they are an essential part of the Xavier community."*

*"That's why we set up Nearpeer -- a new resource to help our students connect with each other in a meaningful way."*

- President Reynold Verret,  
Xavier University of Louisiana



# SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN A NEW WAY

## A NEW APPROACH TO FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

For many Xavier students, the decision to attend Xavier was influenced by important people in their lives. If their parents or family members felt confident in Xavier's approach to learning and the student experience, then those incoming and new students were more likely to enroll and stay at Xavier. Attending Xavier was a decision and an investment made by both the student and the parent.

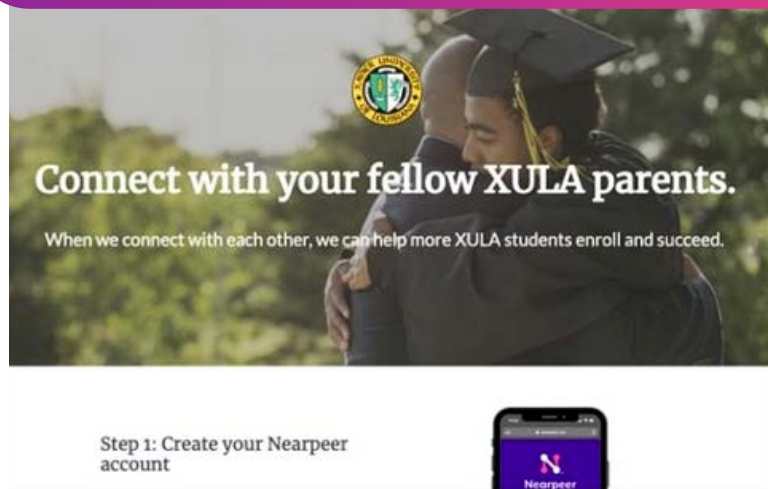
So, in parallel to their work in support of new students, Xavier leaders knew they needed to approach parental and family involvement differently. They came to realize that they needed to help parents and families know that they belong and that their student would be a vital part of the Xavier community.

Together with Nearpeer, Xavier leaders identified a path to build on the community already built for Xavier students by creating a new, separate community for parents and families.



Less than two weeks before the fall semester began, Xavier rolled out Nearpeer for XULA Families. Immediately parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and more began to connect with each other and join small group discussions on how to best support their Xavierites.

Xavier leaders partnered with Nearpeer to create Nearpeer for XULA Families



*"It's really awesome to be able to connect [with other parents in Nearpeer]. I've had three other kids attend HBCUs, and I never had this experience."*

- Parent of Incoming Xavier Student

# CONNECT FAMILIES, REDUCE COMPLAINTS

## INCREASING FAMILY CONNECTION AND SUPPORT

To date, more than 40% of eligible students have at least one parent or family member using the Nearpeer for Families virtual community. In other words, more than one in three families are in Nearpeer already -- not including students -- who are also on XULA's Nearpeer for Students platform.

What's more, each parent has utilized Nearpeer to find and connect with, on average, 36 fellow parents and college staff. In less than three months from launch, these family members logged into Nearpeer an average of 64 times and spent an average of 6.75 hours connecting with each other.

*"Since implementing Nearpeer, the calls that we get, the complaints that we get, have been significantly reduced. It has created a line of communication that is not contentious. It has built community with our families."*

- VP of Student Affairs Curtis Wright  
Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier leaders intend to continue using Nearpeer for XULA Families as a way to extend the network of student support and care throughout the year.

**40%+**

of students have at least one parent or family member using Nearpeer for Families



**36**

connections made on average by each parent with fellow parents + college staff



# INCREASED STUDENT ENROLLMENT

## MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

By the time new Xavierites moved to campus in August, almost 80% of students were actively using Nearpeer, and 91% of these students used Nearpeer to connect with peers and make meaningful friendships.

That year's class set a new record for incoming class size with more than 850 students enrolled. Additionally, male student enrollment increased by 56% and had some of the highest engagement rates in Nearpeer—a tremendous achievement. This was the largest class in 15 years, and it marks a chapter of renewal and growth for the Xavier community. With nearly 700 incoming students using Nearpeer, it was important for Xavier leaders to also know how students were actually using Nearpeer. Group discussions proved to be active and engaging, but perhaps more importantly, their incoming students were connecting directly with each other to build new peer relationships.



**78%** freshman adoption of Nearpeer



**850** students in a record-breaking new incoming class size



**56%** male student enrollment in new incoming class



**44** 1-to-1 peer connections made on average

On average, these students each made 44 peer connections and spent 3.9 hours with each other in the app.

With Nearpeer, Xavier's incoming students made meaningful connections with other new students before they arrived on campus or attended classes. In Xavier's words, these students "found their squad" and made new friendships, which in turn ensured they were more confident in their decision to commit to and enroll at Xavier.

Inviting XULA recruits to Nearpeer



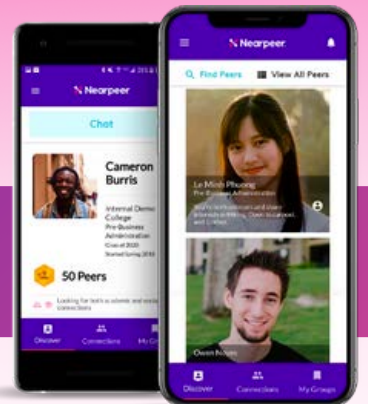
it's time to find your squad.

Join Nearpeer @ XULA to connect with your fellow Xavierites and meet your future study buddy, 1990's music lover, activist, Netflix-watching foodie, or partner-in-good. Use your smartphone's camera to access nearpeer.net with your XULA email address.

GET NEARPEER FOR XULA STUDENTS



 **Nearpeer**





# THE Nearpeer<sup>®</sup> 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](https://nearpeer.com).