

PRIVATE // UNIVERSITY, FAITH-BASED



Nearpeer
CASE STUDY

Building Community and Connection to Improve Yield, Reduce Melt

Harding University

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, it is a priority to ensure prospective and incoming students can understand and get to know the fellow students with whom they will learn. Each student's well-being and success is profoundly influenced by the people they meet along their learning journey, so Harding wanted to make sure these connections are built early and proactively by their students.

ABOUT //

Located 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
- ↗ Improve Yield
- ↘ Reduce Melt

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“When schools often say 'you belong at this institution' or 'we want you as part of our community or family' all of those are great words, and we mean those words...

...but to actually allow them to experience it in some way, shape, or form through Nearpeer is incredibly important.”

- Scott Hannigan, Senior Director Undergraduate Admissions, Harding University

EARLY SUCCESS

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.

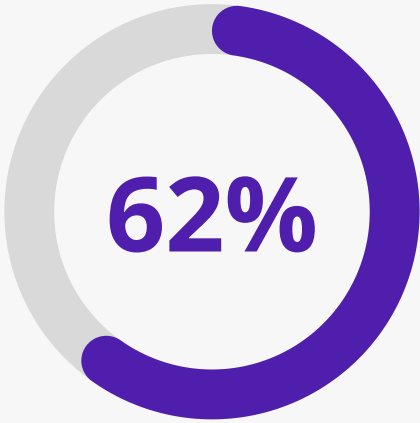
Nearly two in three of Harding's admitted students voluntarily adopted Nearpeer,

which 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.

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

2.5X

higher yield rate for Nearpeer users



of new students adopted Nearpeer
before their semester began

18,000+

new peer-to-peer connections made

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.

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*"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

EARLY SUCCESS, cont'd.

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 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

ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

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.

(See Figure 1 on following page.)

FIGURE 1: HARDING UNIVERSITY PROMOTES NEARPEER ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES, cont'd.

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

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.

↓ 70%

lower melt for Pell-eligible students
who used 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

NEXT STEPS, cont'd.

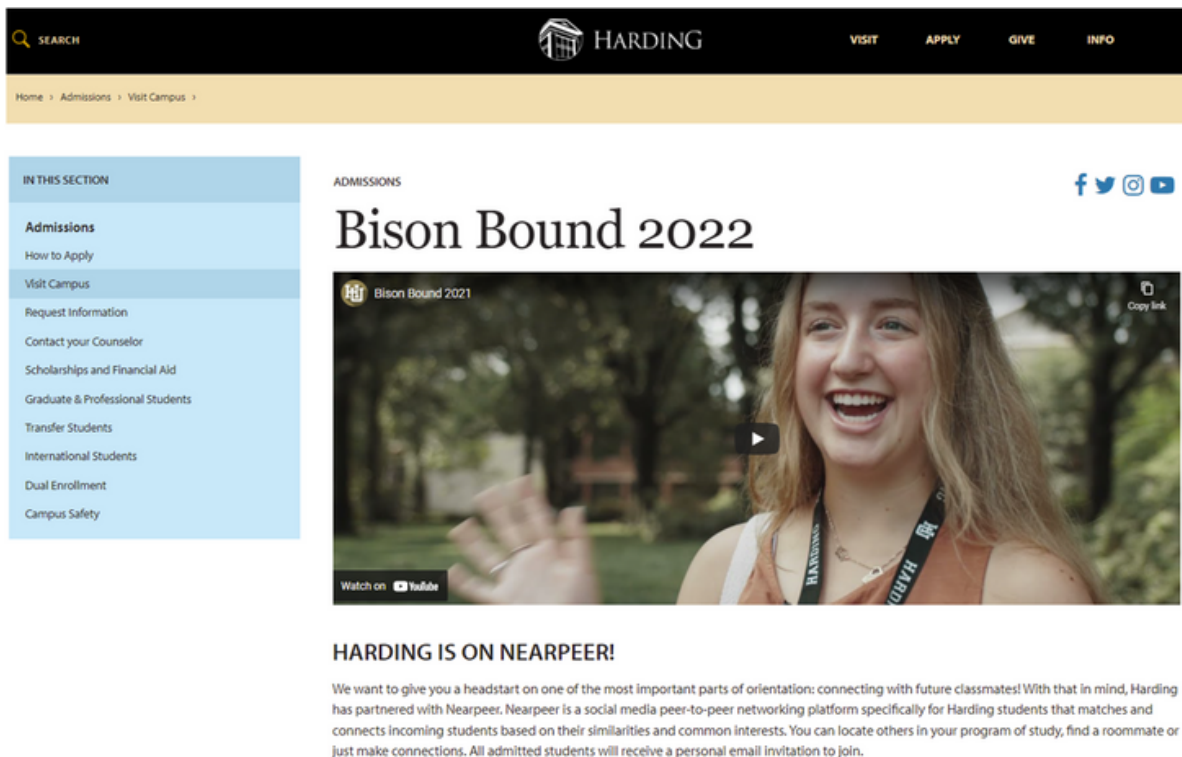
In addition, Harding will make use of Nearpeer's early warning signal for admissions counselors. This early warning information is based on each student's engagement patterns in Nearpeer.

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.

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

- Clay, incoming new student
Harding University



The screenshot displays the Harding University Admissions website. At the top is a dark navigation bar with a search icon, the Harding logo, and links for VISIT, APPLY, GIVE, and INFO. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Admissions > Visit Campus >. A light blue sidebar on the left, titled 'IN THIS SECTION', lists various admission-related links. The main content area features the 'ADMISSIONS' header, social media icons, and a large video player for 'Bison Bound 2022'. Below the video, a section titled 'HARDING IS ON NEARPEER!' explains the partnership with the peer-to-peer networking platform.

IN THIS SECTION

- Admissions
- How to Apply
- Visit Campus
- Request Information
- Contact your Counselor
- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Graduate & Professional Students
- Transfer Students
- International Students
- Dual Enrollment
- Campus Safety

ADMISSIONS

Bison Bound 2022

Watch on YouTube

HARDING IS ON 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.

IMPACT //

Harding University

2.5X

higher yield with students who used Nearpeer
vs. students who did not use Nearpeer

↓ 77%

lower melt rate for students who used Nearpeer
vs. students who did not use Nearpeer

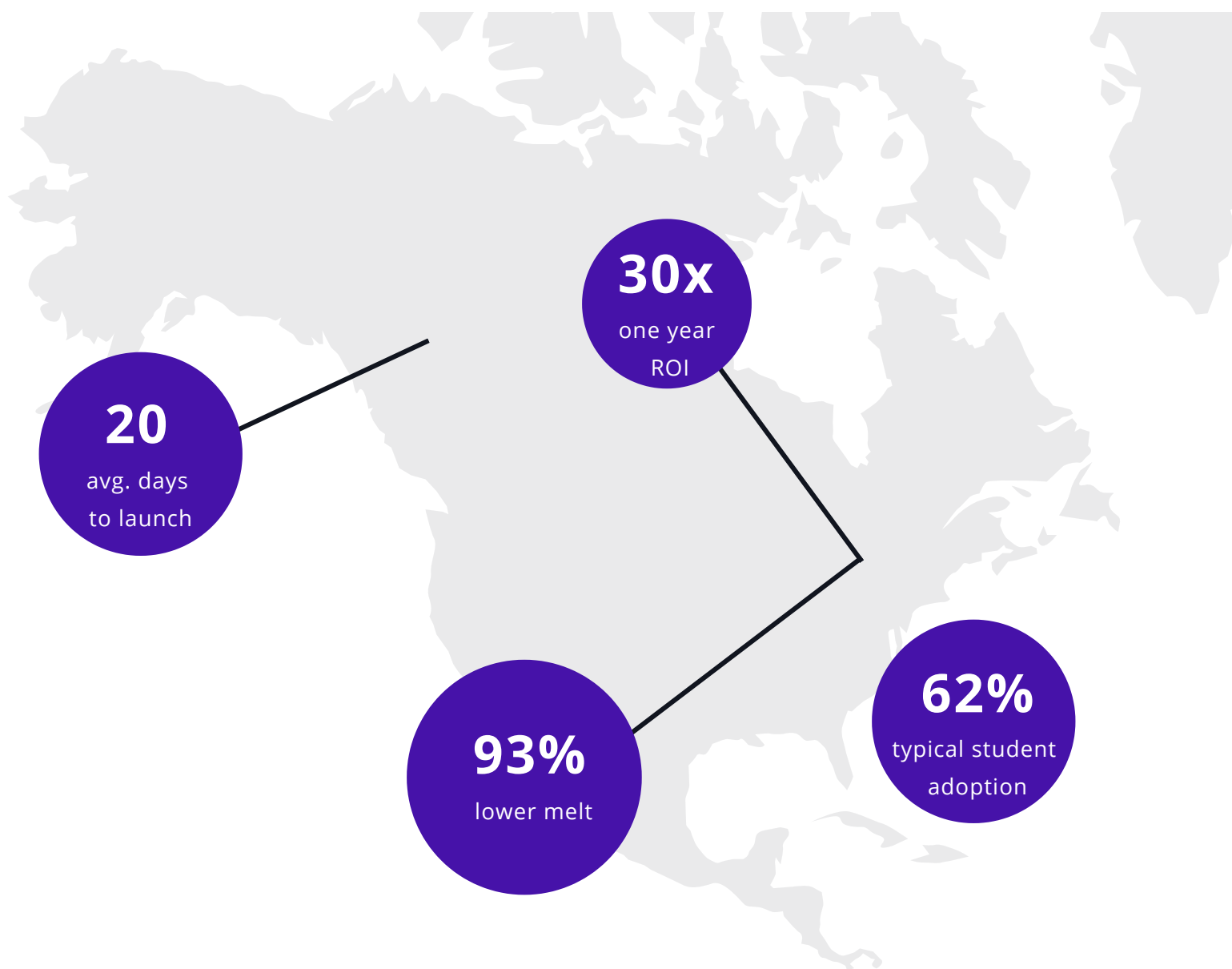
62%

voluntary student adoption of Nearpeer

34

average new peer connections

OUTCOMES ACROSS OUR PARTNER COMMUNITY



For more information, **visit nearpeer.com**.

CASE STUDY: HARDING UNIVERSITY

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