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Smarter, faster, better

How Berry College is hitting enrollment goals and scaling admissions with AI

BERRY COLLEGE

About Berry College

Founded in 1902 in Mount Berry, Georgia, Berry College is a nationally recognized private liberal arts institution renowned for its academic excellence, close-knit community, and distinctive commitment to experiential learning. As home to the world's largest contiguous college campus, Berry offers a unique environment that integrates intellectual development with hands-on experience and leadership growth.

With approximately 2,300 undergraduates, Berry delivers a values-driven education through small class sizes, strong faculty mentorship, and an integrated student work program. The college's mission "to develop the head, heart, and hands of every student" makes it an ideal destination for those seeking both intellectual growth and real-world preparation.

The challenge:
Staying competitive in a noisy market

In 2024, Berry College sought to deepen its digital engagement and admissions strategy in response to a highly competitive environment and evolving student expectations. The college was focused on:

- **Scaling outreach** while maintaining personalized, values-driven conversations
- **Staying ahead of the curve** with a modern, AI-supported admissions process
- **Creating efficient follow-up systems** that didn't overburden staff
- **Driving conversions** from inquiry to application through timely, relevant messaging
- **Accelerating application review** in alignment with rolling admissions timelines
- **Increasing efficiency of financial aid and merit offers** within budget constraints

Berry needed a solution that would help them be better, faster, and more cost-effective, while maintaining the values at the "head, heart, and hands" of their community.

The CollegeVine solution

Berry partnered with CollegeVine to launch **Missy**, a fully branded AI recruiter designed to embody Berry's voice, culture, and goals.

AI-powered chat, email, phone calls to manage high volumes without sacrificing personalization

Missions launched for a more targeted outreach approach to a select group of students, such as reaching out directly to admitted-but-not-deposited students on next steps

Custom knowledge base infused with Berry's history, programs, and values

CRM integration with a bi-directional data sync to support personalized outreach

Dynamic, behavior-triggered journeys that guide students through every stage of the funnel

Actionable engagement analytics to inform recruitment strategies and optimize staff focus

The results:
Measurable impact on recruitment efficiency

Acting as a force multiplier, Missy handled thousands of conversations that would have otherwise required human intervention, delivering the right message, to the right student, at the right time.By taking on routine yet critical engagement tasks, Missy empowered the admissions team to focus their energy on high-impact, personal outreach. **The result: a more responsive, scalable, and effective recruitment engine.**

Missy helped Berry convert interest into action, delivering timely, mission-aligned engagement at scale.

38.6%
Email open rate

From 136,095 emails delivered, far surpassing the 13.5% industry average

19.7%
SMS Reply rate

From 131,035 messages sent to prospective students, more than 2.5x the industry benchmark.

13,357
Staff hours saved

Allowing the team to accelerate funnel movement and build deeper relationships without adding headcount

Taking it one step further:
Meet Sylas, Berry College's AI One Stop

Building on Missy's success, Berry is now extending AI into student services with Sylas, an AI-powered One Stop designed to support student success and enrich the on-campus experience.

Key benefits of the AI One Stop:

24/7, personalized, multilingual support: available in **50+ languages**, offering inclusive, real-time support across web, text, email, and phone for students, parents, and alumni.

Increased student engagement: students interacting with AI agents report a significant **reduction in communication anxiety**, making them more likely to seek help and leading to **higher satisfaction, retention, and academic performance**.

Automated administrative tasks: handles a wide range of inquiries so staff can focus on complex, high-value needs.

Integrated data analytics: surfaces behavioral trends and early warning signs to prioritize proactive interventions.

Cross-departmental integration: routes support requests across units, creating a **frictionless support ecosystem**.

"Working with CollegeVine has allowed us to reach more students, more effectively, without losing the personal touch that defines Berry. Missy has been an incredible addition to our team, scaling our outreach, improving conversion, and saving time so our team can focus on what they do best: building relationships.

With Sylas, we're taking that same personalized, mission-driven approach and bringing it to every part of the student journey."

Andrew Bressette
Vice President of Enrollment Management, Berry College