

**A-B Tech Community College**  
**Welcome Back Registration Campaign**  
**February-June 2021**

**I. Objectives**

The primary objectives of the Welcome Back Registration campaign were to increase overall enrollment in more than 125 degree, diploma and certificate programs, workforce training, and continuing education classes. Unlike other years, however, a key objective was to recover enrollment lost during the COVID-19 pandemic by communicating that most instruction is now available online and that it is safe to return to in-person classes. We also announced multiple free tuition and scholarship programs made possible through COVID-19 emergency relief funds and a COVID vaccine incentive program.

**II. Strategies and Tactics**

A-B Tech's Welcome Back campaign was a comprehensive, integrated registration campaign that included advertising, promotional materials, public relations, and events to promote enrollment for 2021.

The integrated campaign included print, outdoor, TV, radio, online and social media advertising, as well as promotional materials, direct mail, PR, social media, and website elements. Elements of the campaign were targeted to targeted populations, including high school students and their parents, the 18-49 key demographic, older adults, African American and Latino populations, specific program groups (Selective and Limited Admissions programs, new programs, low-enrollment programs), as well as to adults who lost jobs or income due to COVID-19.

**II. Strategies and Tactics**

- Paid Advertising
  - Broadcast (TV, radio)
  - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Spotify)
  - Outdoor (14 billboards)
  - Print (newspapers and magazines)
  - Digital (SEM, targeted online display, online video, website)
  - Direct Mail (postcards and magazines to all households in service area and targeted groups)
- Promotional Materials
  - Campus and event banners
  - Posters
  - Flyers
  - Digital Signage

- Brochures
- Program Sheets
- Recruiting Viewbooks
- College Magazine (A-B Tech Education Journal)
- Events
  - Spring Virtual Open House
  - Summer Program Open Houses
  - New Student Welcome Day
- Public Relations
  - Media Relations
  - Social Media
  - College radio shows in Buncombe and Madison counties
- All registration traffic is directed to a dedicated landing page: **[abtech.edu/welcome-back](https://abtech.edu/welcome-back)**, which is regularly updated to reflect current campaign focus.

### III. Results and Outcomes

- Enrollment
  - Curriculum registration for Fall 2020 reflected enrollment lost due to COVID-19 and, at one point, was 16% lower than the previous fall. As of this writing, our gap has been lowered to 2% and is on track to make a full recovery for Fall 2021. We also have recovered continuing education and workforce enrollment, which is approximately 13,000 to 14,000 students per year. Our online classes in continuing education, which were added after the pandemic began, ranked in the top 10 nationally for enrollment. These achievements are considered highly successful in an area where surrounding community college enrollments have declined by as much as 30% and our service area unemployment rate is the region's lowest at 4.4%.
  - Targeted Populations
    - Parents and high school students proved the most responsive to targeted advertising. We also added direct mail and TV and radio broadcast sponsorships of high school sports to strengthen outreach for high school dual enrollment.
    - Our Selective and Limited programs filled to capacity.
    - The combination of our Trailblazer Promise free tuition program and the COVID vaccine incentive, which is \$150 gift card to the college bookstore for fully vaccinated students, proved extremely popular and helped close the enrollment gap by 6% in under two weeks.
    - Latino diversity continued to increase and now comprises 10% of our student body, compared to 6.5% Latino population in the community. Moreover, DACA students were eligible for our free tuition program, which increases the likelihood that they will remain enrolled and that enrollment will increase this fall.
  - Enrollment Events

- Our virtual and in-person open houses generated positive PR and provided additional advertising opportunities to support various registration efforts.
  - New Student Welcome Day, which ties into the Welcome Back theme, drew a crowd that particularly was interested in our free tuition and vaccine incentive programs.
- TV ads promoting COVID safety and the Trailblazer Promise free tuition program that were used paid online video ads on social media and targeted SEM and display performed extremely well.
- Fall enrollment is not yet complete, with an August 23 start date and continued late-start admissions throughout the academic year, but we are on track to meet or exceed last year's enrollment.
- Social Media
  - Facebook.com/abtech.edu:
  - Instagram.com/abtech\_cc
  - YouTube.com/abtech\_cc
  - Twitter.com/abtech\_cc
  - LinkedIn.com: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/140232>
- News Coverage
  - Abtech.edu/News