



## An Authentic Approach to Driving Admissions Yield

Even before COVID-19 created this upheaval, our partners at the University of San Diego recognized the need to provide virtual support to their incoming class of 2024. Their aim was to extend their reach and bring the feeling of a Visit Day to students. In partnership with PeopleGrove, USD Admissions was able to create a unique experience for their admitted students and continue to drive yield in spite of COVID-19 challenges.

**“It’s all the little things that only a student could say. And even if I said them as an admissions representative, it would mean half as much because it’s not coming from the mouth of a student.”**

### The Challenge:

**Develop a method that allows student ambassadors to evangelize and promote the USD campus experience.**

USD as a whole had undergone a brand enhancement focused on their identity as a private, Catholic institution in southern California focused on social justice and “change making.”

To help prospective students understand those brand pillars Austin McKinley, Admissions Communications Supervisor, created an informal ambassador program called Regional Connections. He understood how peer to peer interaction can build a sense of trust and rapport since prospects see a student or an alumni as a more

authentic source of information, having lived the USD experience.

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However, Austin was acting as middleman, connecting students and ambassadors via email. This was manual, inefficient, distracting, and difficult to measure.. The ability to match student ambassadors and prospects based on their academic or social interests was inconsistent at best.

## The Solution:

In two weeks, USD launched the Torero Ambassador Network, powered by PeopleGrove. Within the first week, over 70 student ambassadors volunteered to help bring the spirit of the campus visit to 5000+ prospective students.

Prospective students are able to instantly communicate with ambassadors recommended for them based on their academic and career interests along with their hometowns. This allows prospects to create meaningful

connections and get their questions answered from a source that feels authentic.

This solution extended the work that PeopleGrove was already doing with USD's Career Development Center in powering their Torero Employers and Alumni Mentors (T.E.A.M.) network. With the ability to have the Ambassador Program sit within the T.E.A.M. network, PeopleGrove is able to ensure a seamless introduction of enrolled students to the larger USD community.



**„ Now more than ever, our students need enrollment assistance. Without PeopleGrove's Enrollment Success platform we would not be able to provide assistance to students at the necessary scale and level of personalization.”**

**Austin McKinley**  
University of San Diego  
Admission Communication Supervisor

## Outcomes:

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| <b>1.</b>  <b>88% Student to Ambassador Response Rate</b> | <b>2.</b>  <b>65% Out-of-State Students</b>        |
| <b>3.</b>  <b>65% Ambassador Opt-In Acceptance Rate</b>   | <b>4.</b>  <b>700 message exchanged in 14 days</b> |

Aside from exciting engagement numbers, Austin is excited by the quality of the connections being made. "It's great to see our ambassadors helping these future Toreros understand life at USD. They are answering questions about everything from student government to majors to clubs and organizations." Given the campus closure in the spring of 2020, PeopleGrove has helped USD bring the visit day to their prospects and continue to drive towards their goals