

# Creating Campaigns Students Want to Engage With: How Knox College Uses Mongoose to Text Smarter

## Overview

Knox College, a private liberal arts college in Galesburg, Illinois, is known for its vibrant campus culture, student-centered learning, and creative spirit. With a focus on personalized experiences from inquiry to enrollment, Knox sought a more dynamic way to connect with prospective students. At Knox, digital communications aren't just about pushing information—they're about building relationships. Since implementing Mongoose in 2020, the college has transformed its admissions marketing strategy into a cohesive, creative, and student-centered experience. Under the leadership of **Digital Communications Specialist Natasha Caudill**, texting has become a powerful tool, not just to inform students, but to delight and engage them in ways that make a real impact. From coordinating multi-channel campaigns to spotlighting social content and bringing Blaze the Knox Fox to life, Mongoose helps Knox make student engagement personal, playful, and powerful.

## Challenge

Before Mongoose, Knox admissions counselors were texting students manually using personal or work phones, then copying those conversations into Slate. It was inefficient, inconsistent, and nearly impossible to track. Even after implementing Mongoose, early usage was minimal; counselors used the platform primarily for basic one-on-one conversations and a generic weekly welcome message. Enter Natasha. Hired in late 2023 into a newly created digital communications role, she saw Mongoose as an opportunity to bring more creativity, personality, and planning to student engagement. Natasha noted,

“The first few messages I sent, I was terrified. But I quickly realized we could do so much more, and students were actually paying attention.”

NATASHA CAUDILL

## Solution

Natasha developed an integrated campaign strategy, syncing emails, texts, and social media into cohesive content plans. Each campaign—whether focused on application season or yield—was mapped out in advance. Then, Mongoose was used to bring those campaigns to life with texts that felt fun, personal, and timely. Key improvements included:

- Coordinating campaigns across email, text, and social
- Using Mongoose texts to highlight TikTok videos and Instagram links
- Rebranding welcome messages to come from Blaze the Knox Fox (the college mascot)
- Supporting counselors by handling bulk outreach and event promotion

“Students aren't just opening these texts—they're clicking, replying, and then following us on social. We've seen it happen in real time.”

## Creative Campaign Highlights

### Blaze the Knox Fox

New admits now receive a cheerful “Congrats!” message from Blaze the Knox Fox—Knox's mascot. The message is followed by a second text with social links, timed to capitalize on their excitement. The result? A noticeable spike in Instagram and TikTok follows within minutes.

### Knox in Your Inbox

To fill a messaging gap identified in the fall, Natasha and her team created a full campaign called *Knox in Your Inbox*, with scheduled emails and complementary biweekly texts. Topics ranged from athletics to study abroad, each paired with a video, meme, or quiz to keep things fun and interactive.

### Live-Texting Flunk Day

Knox's most beloved (and secretive) campus tradition, Flunk Day, got the live-text treatment. Natasha sent playful real-time updates and photos through Mongoose, giving prospective students a sneak peek into campus life. “It made something exclusive feel inclusive,” she said.

### Social Link Boosting via Text

By texting students directly with TikTok or Instagram content, Knox saw a clear jump in social media engagement. Natasha explained,

“I could see students clicking the link, then commenting on the post within 10 minutes. It showed us just how powerful texting could be.”

## Results & Impact

### Authentic, Empathetic Conversations

While the team doesn't rely heavily on quantitative data, the qualitative results speak volumes:

- Hundreds (230+) of quiz completions and clicks on interactive text links
- Increased social media engagement within minutes of the text sends
- Counselors are freed up to focus on 1:1 conversations while Natasha manages bulk sends
- High student satisfaction, with many replying positively to fun content



Our counselors love it, and students don't hate it, which honestly means it's working.

NATASHA CAUDILL

## The Mongoose Difference

### Text + Social Integration

Mongoose makes it easy to distribute multimedia content and track engagement.

### Support for Creative Campaigns

From mascots to memes, Knox uses texting as a creative channel, not just a utility.

### Shared Inboxes

Keep counselor texts separate from mascot-driven sends, ensuring clarity and consistency.

### Ease of Use

Natasha picked it up quickly—even as a first-time user—and now supports the entire office's messaging efforts.

## Future Plans

As Natasha continues to evolve Knox's digital engagement, the team plans to build on what's working, leaning further into creative, real-time texting that aligns with student behavior. With high engagement from campaigns like *Knox in Your Inbox*, holiday quizzes, and mascot-driven messages, the focus remains on experimentation, student feedback, and integrating Mongoose even more deeply with other digital content.

Natasha also sees room to expand the use of real-time texting during campus traditions and events, like Flunk Day, to give prospective students more insider glimpses into life at Knox. As demand grows, the goal is to keep communications personal, fun, and unmistakably Knox.

## Conclusion

For Knox College, Mongoose isn't just a texting tool—it's a bridge between the brand and the student. By using Mongoose to coordinate campaigns, highlight social content, and bring their mascot to life, Knox has made student engagement personal, playful, and powerful.

When asked if she had advice for other institutions using Mongoose, Natasha urged,



Trust your marketing and social media people. Students respond to personality, creativity, and fun. If your team has a good idea, let them run with it. Texting doesn't have to be boring, and when it's not, students notice.

Mongoose Conversation Intelligence Platform

Learn more

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