



CASE STUDY

UF Hamilton Uses Market Research to Attune to Student Program Demand

University of Florida’s Hamilton School applied Hanover’s survey and interview insights to improve enrollment messaging and academic program decisions.

THE INSTITUTION

University of Florida Hamilton School of Classical and Civic Education

INSTITUTION TYPE

Public University

LOCATION

Gainesville, Florida

THE CHALLENGE

Leverage student data to refine enrollment and engagement strategies

HANOVER SOLUTION

Surveys, Qualitative Research, Enrollment Management

In 2022, the University of Florida launched the ambitious **Hamilton School of Classical and Civic Education** (UF Hamilton), a multi-disciplinary American and Western civilization studies center for aspiring leaders.

UF Hamilton partnered with Hanover to create a sequence of research initiatives aimed at gathering actionable data to inform its academic program development and student recruitment activities, including crafting effective messaging for students, families, and high school counselors.

THE CHALLENGE: UNDERSTAND THE EVOLVING NEEDS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS

As a new academic school at the university, UF Hamilton’s leaders were interested in launching academic paths rooted in a liberal arts tradition while meeting the student demand for career-connected learning.

To determine how to align offerings and messaging with relevant student interests and preferences, UF Hamilton worked with a dedicated research team at Hanover to conduct a custom series of market-based surveys and in-depth interviews.

“This partnership helped us figure out how we could actually address the people who would be signing up for our majors. Hanover’s insights helped us understand how prospective students and families think.”

—Robert G. Ingram, PhD,
Professor of Humanities and Associate Director



2,000

The number of students enrolled between 2022 and 2024

THE SOLUTION: LEVERAGE SURVEYS AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS TO INFORM PROGRAM AND RECRUITMENT DECISIONS

In 2024, Hanover Research conducted a comprehensive sequence of surveys and in-depth interviews to understand current and prospective student preferences as well as those of their parents and high school counselors.

This approach allowed the school leaders to gain a nuanced understanding of the expectations and priorities of each of these key audiences, which informed their strategic program decisions as well as their approaches to communication and recruitment.

For example, the research uncovered that high school guidance counselors highly valued receiving information by direct postal mail, which UF Hamilton leaders would not have otherwise considered.



80+

The number of courses offered to date



2

The number of degree programs launched

“Hanover allowed us to be more nimble and intentional with our future strategies. I think all units at the University of Florida should get curious about what their prospective students actually want.”

— Jason Mastrogiovanni, PhD,
Director of Academic and Student Success

THE OUTCOME: ENROLLMENT, ENGAGEMENT, AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM STRATEGIES TAILORED TO STUDENT INTERESTS

The research partnership led to a clearer understanding of what students and families are looking for in educational offerings. Hanover’s analysis of the findings included key recommendations related to:

- A strong demand for interdisciplinary program development
- Targeted messages and themes tailored to specific audiences
- Messaging keywords to avoid

The multi-modal data collected helped the Hamilton School to not only tailor its programs and marketing strategies more effectively but also set a precedent for continuous improvement through data-driven decision-making.

In the fall of 2024, the Hamilton School launched two new undergraduate majors: Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law, and Great Books and Ideas.

Going forward, the leadership plans to launch more undergraduate degrees and is partnering with Hanover to explore graduate and professional education offerings. They also plan to continue conducting surveys on a regular cycle to keep pace with evolving student expectations.

