

Tommy Newton (00:04):

My name is Tommy Newton. I'm the Vice President of Enrollment and Dean of Admission at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas. I bring 28 years of experience to the table. I've worked at six institutions in the Ark-La-Tex, that's Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. But I got to Lyon College as soon as I could. The feedback we've received from families concerned about debt and LRAPs is that it was the differentiator. It was the difference maker and their selection choice. Our admission reps, who we want them to talk through a financial aid package with their families. So a more informed deposit is a better and firmer deposit. So it can be difficult for admission reps, rookies, sophomores, to have that conversation go line by line. And then there may be a gap, there may be loans, and when that happens, to be able to say, Hey, but we have a safety net.

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We want to partner with you. And so this program is hopefully you're going to graduate and make beyond the threshold minimum, and you're not even going to need this program. You'll graduate from Lyon College and the pledge at the same time. But if life happens on the way, I mean, what if you're going to pharmacy school and you got deferred or you didn't get in this year, now you're going to be a pharmacy tech. Boom. Lyon Pledge. I also think it helps us not only in a recruitment pitch to families, but in the retention aspect, right? So Lyon's seen a couple good years of recruitment back to back. We've seen a couple good years of improvement in retention as well. I think our Lyon Pledge or Ardeo partnership's, a huge part of that. Working with the Ardeo team has been phenomenal. They are easily reachable.

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I can call, I can text, I can email. They come to campus virtually and in person, right? So we do recruitment series meetings where you bring all the recruiters on campus together, athletics, arts, the enrollment services team, and y'all have come and joined us in person. There've been times that you've had to patch in, which is great too, but enabled us to share the story. What we don't want to do is to have a great program, something that we think is a difference maker, and then not ensure that all of our people are fully engaged in buying in.