



## Presenters

**Megan Zwart**, Interim Provost and Vice President  
Saint Mary's College (Indiana)

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Art & Science Group

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## Chair

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Art & Science Group

Academic Leadership  
**NOW&NEXT**

2024 Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Their Teams //



The Council of  
Independent Colleges

## Typically...

ART &  
SCIENCE  
GROUP LLC



STRATEGY

MISSION

ASPIRATIONS

What can be more effective...



STRATEGY

MISSION

ASPIRATIONS

MARKET



## INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY & POSITIONING: CASE STUDY EXERCISE

## This situation at Edgar Allan Poe College



**Strong  
liberal arts  
college**



**Challenging  
geographic  
location**



**Powerful &  
opinionated  
faculty**



**Diffuse  
competitive  
set**



**Deciding among  
possible strategic  
directions**

### What should the College do?

## Redacted Slides



Edgar Allan Poe College

- Broad directions and specific strategic initiatives under consideration



Detailed slides have been removed to protect the confidentiality of the client and the proprietary nature of the underlying methodologies.

## Instructions



1. Your table represents Edgar Allen Poe College, a real institution.
2. You'll be handed a description of an array of potential initiatives Edgar Allen Poe College is considering implementing as well as a menu card.
3. Work with your team to think through the context of the institution & what choices you think it should make.
4. You have 20 minutes to make your selections.
5. Fill out two cards with your choices, one to submit to A&S staff and one to keep at your table.

## An Interview With...



**MEGAN ZWART**  
Interim Provost and  
Vice President  
Saint Mary's College

**&**

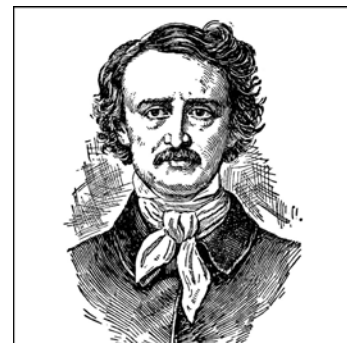
**NANCI TESSIER**  
Principal  
Art & Science Group



# EDGAR ALLAN POE COLLEGE

## Redacted Slides

- Broad directions and specific strategic initiatives under consideration at Edgar Allan Poe College, arising in the campus planning process
- Potential market response:
  - Pointing up dramatic differences in application and yield rates that would result from pursuing options preferred by some campus groups vs. other authentic options that resonated in Poe's market
  - Impact on populations of particular interest to the College (students of color, higher scorers, and higher income)



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## Redacted Slides

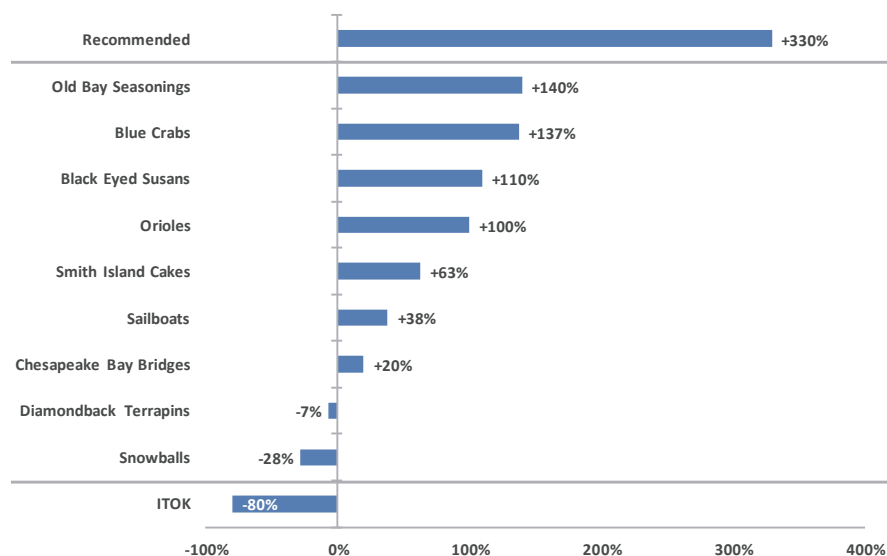
- Breakdown of each team's selected positioning initiatives, the underlying reasoning, and simulation of their impact on application and enrollment rates



**HOW'D YOU  
DO?**

Detailed slides have been removed to protect the confidentiality of the client and the proprietary nature of the underlying methodologies.

### HOW'D YOU STACK UP VS. THE RECOMMENDED AND "IF THEY ONLY KNEW" CASES?



## What does an institution need to achieve?



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> Substantiate &amp; articulate a proposition that is both <b>distinctive &amp; compelling</b></p>                | <p><b>3</b> Build an underlying <b>authentic</b> value proposition <b>from the inside out</b> based on substance</p>                          |
| <p><b>2</b> Develop an institutional strategy with a <b>focus on the student experience</b>—academic &amp; student life</p> | <p><b>4</b> Satisfy <b>threshold</b> requirements &amp; <b>differentiate</b> it from competing options in ways that matter to its markets</p> |



## What have we learned?



### Institutional strategy & positioning

To stake out a substantive, differentiated positioning that is compelling in your markets, relative to your competitors, keep three key lessons in mind:

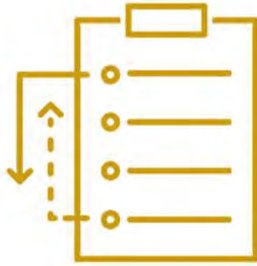
- 1** Not all differentiators are created equal
- 2** What works for one institution is idiosyncratically different from what will work for others
- 3** How you play out a theme can be more powerful than the theme itself.



## What does this require?



### PRIORITIZE



### SCALE



### INTEGRATE



Q&A



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