



OptEd

Strategic Enrollment Partner

OAKS COLLEGE & OPTED

Partnership Update

Q1 Progress Brief

PREPARED FOR

Oaks College Leadership

MAY 2026

A NOTE

A Note to Oaks College Leadership

Oaks College leadership team,

It has been a privilege to walk alongside your team since our on-site visit earlier this year. From day one, we have been impressed by the depth of leadership at Oaks, the strength of the mentorship culture, and the heart your team carries for raising up the next generation of ministry and business leaders. Our role at OptEd is to take what you are already doing well and pair it with proven enrollment strategy, modern marketing systems, and operational best practices, so that the program you have built can reach the students it was designed to serve.

This brief recaps the key takeaways from our on-site executive session, outlines the progress your team has made over the first quarter of our partnership, and points to the priorities ahead. The momentum is real.

The OptEd Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The challenge is the system around the program

Oaks College is a dynamic leadership program with a rich history, strong executive leadership, and a thriving Christ-centered culture. The challenge ahead is not the program, it is the system around the program. Marketing, recruitment, and follow-through have not historically been resourced or systematized in a way that matches the quality of what happens once a student arrives on campus.

Our partnership exists to close that gap. The first quarter has focused on three things: (1) helping leadership see the enrollment funnel clearly, (2) standing up the systems that have been missing, including call-team prioritization, email/text automation, post-visit surveys, and communication-team alignment, and (3) building cross-functional connections between Oaks College, Oaks Church communications, and OptEd's marketing leadership. Those foundations are now in place. The next quarter will be about activating them.

GOALS

Where We Are Headed

These goals were established together during our on-site session. They continue to anchor every decision and every workstream of our partnership.

100

STUDENTS BY FALL 2027 (LONG-TERM)

15%

YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH (SHORT-TERM)

OPTED'S STRATEGIC FRAME

Optimize current systems and communication. Improve communication of college distinctives through every available channel. Identify internal and external opportunities to integrate Oaks College awareness and cultivate relationships.

BASELINE

Where We Started: Key Takeaways from the On-Site Visit

Our on-site visit produced a SWOT analysis that has guided every conversation since. The summary below is the lens we are using to prioritize work over the next twelve months.

STRENGTHS TO BUILD FROM

- Executive leadership and program health are strong; the foundation is solid.
- High-level access to church leaders gives Oaks College a distinct advantage.
- Integrated internships with hands-on opportunities are leading to high job placement.
- Incredible 2:1 mentorship program for every student.
- Well-curated student spaces and dedicated facilities at Nelson.
- Easy access to Bishop Arts and Dallas, a real lifestyle and recruiting asset.

GAPS WE IDENTIFIED

- Marketing strategy and communication of distinctives across available channels.
- Enrollment strategy, recruitment plan, and follow-up cadence.
- Pricing and cost model relative to Nelson.
- Automation and outreach infrastructure (phone, email, text, CRM).
- Staff turnover in admissions and marketing roles.

OPPORTUNITIES & EXTERNAL REALITIES

Oaks Church carries strong brand awareness, a passion for raising up next-generation leaders, AG district connections, a thriving youth ministry, and a steady stream of camps and "Called Events," all of which can be channeled into the enrollment funnel. At the same time, traditional college demographics are shrinking nationally, the competitive set is broader than ever, and the Nelson University partnership comes with both benefits and challenges. The takeaway: the right marketing, recruitment, and conversion systems are no longer optional, they are how Oaks wins in this environment.

Q1 PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

Five workstreams, activated

Each workstream targets a specific gap identified during the on-site visit.

RECRUITMENT

New church-event recruiting approach. Call-team workflow restructured around top-prospect prioritization. Calendly recommended for warm-lead scheduling.

SCHOLARSHIPS

AG district matching scholarship concept (tied to pastoral credentials) elevated to the N. Texas Secretary.

EVENTS

Visit-day experience refined. Sample post-Preview Day survey delivered. Same-day no-show follow-up established as a non-negotiable.

COMMUNICATION

Mailchimp standing up for email and text. Oaks Church Communications brought into a joint working session. Quarterly cadence recommended.

SOCIAL & MARKETING

OptEd's marketing expert introduced to the Oaks College communications team to begin shaping a paid digital strategy.

Q1 PROGRESS IN DETAIL

What was identified, what got done, what's next

The following sections expand on each workstream, including what was identified, what has been done, and what is queued up for next quarter.

01 Recruitment

The recruitment goal for Q1 was to move Oaks from a passive posture (waiting for inquiries) to an active posture (engineering inquiries from existing church traffic) and to make the call-team more effective with the bandwidth it has.

- **Church-event recruiting model:** Worked with the team to map existing Oaks Church events (camps, Called events, youth gatherings) and identify which ones are natural recruiting moments. This is a new approach for Oaks College and one of the highest-leverage shifts of the quarter.
- **Call-team strategy with Canon:** Coached Canon on prioritizing "top prospects" rather than attempting to call every lead, which was creating a real bandwidth issue. Recommended higher pay or performance incentives for top-tier student callers.
- **Calendly recommendation:** Suggested Calendly as the tool for the call team to book hot leads directly onto Canon's calendar, closing the gap between "interested" and "on a call."

02 Scholarships

Scholarships are one of the most underutilized levers Oaks College has, and one of the easiest to activate when tied to existing AG district relationships.

- **AG district matching concept:** OptEd surfaced the idea of pursuing matching scholarships from the AG district tied to students working toward pastoral credentials. Kolby has carried that concept forward to the N. Texas Secretary, a meaningful step that opens a door OptEd has seen produce real conversion lift at peer institutions.

03

Events & Visit-Day Experience

Events are where the program sells itself, but only if the experience is intentional and the follow-up is fast. Q1 focused on tightening both.

- **Visit-event experience review:** Walked the team through best-practice flow for Preview Days, weekly visits, and church-event integration.
- **Sample post-Preview Day survey delivered:** OptEd provided a ready-to-deploy survey template covering experience rating, mission/vision clarity, intent to apply, alignment with what students are looking for, and a personal-follow-up opt-in. This is now ready to launch after the next Preview Day.
- **No-show follow-up protocol:** Recommended that the Oaks team treat no-shows as priority leads and follow up with intentional, very-timely outreach rather than letting them go cold.

04

Communication & Cross-Team Alignment

This was identified during our on-site as one of the largest gaps. Real progress was made here in Q1.

- **Mailchimp implementation underway:** Kolby has been working hard to stand up Mailchimp as the engine for email and text communication. This was flagged as a critical infrastructure gap during the on-site and is now actively being closed.
- **Joint working session with Oaks Church Communications:** OptEd initiated, and Kolby and Canon helped bring the Oaks Communications Team into our late-April call. Email templates were identified that the church team can share directly with Oaks College.
- **Recurring quarterly cadence recommended:** OptEd recommended that Oaks College and the Oaks Church Communications Team set up a regular quarterly connect to align on key events and overlapping communication moments, making the church's existing reach work harder for the college.
- **Content production gap acknowledged:** The Communications Team confirmed that there has not been intentional Oaks College content creation in some time, but they have the capability and talent to do it with proper planning. They have committed to dedicated content-capture days at least once per semester for use across social, web, and email.

05

Social Media & Paid Digital

Building the top of the enrollment funnel requires a paid digital footprint. Q1 was about laying the relational and strategic groundwork.

- **Digital Marketing Strategy:** OptEd brought our marketing expert into a call to learn more about what Oaks College is currently doing across social media and digital marketing. We shared best practices in this area and are exploring ways Oaks College could expand on paid ads, including the opportunity that exists with geo-targeting and retargeting ads if Oaks is willing to allocate a monthly paid-ads spend.
- **Website Feedback & Recommendations:** OptEd provided high-level feedback and update recommendations for the Oaks College website, identifying opportunities to strengthen messaging, improve navigation, and tighten conversion paths so that the site better supports the recruitment funnel being built.

OPTIONAL ADD-ON — DIGITAL MARKETING

As an optional additional service, OptEd provides full digital marketing execution and would be glad to share a proposal if Oaks is interested, including strategic and branded digital marketing content, ad management, and landing-page/microsite creation for nurturing digital leads. This is something we can explore further in Q2.

OPTIONAL ADD-ON — WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

OptEd can also build custom landing pages or microsities tied to specific digital ad campaigns, as well as conduct a full website audit or a complete site redesign and build if Oaks is interested. [Milestone College \(milestonecollege.org\)](https://milestonecollege.org) is a recent OptEd-built site similar in context to what we would design for Oaks College and is a helpful reference if this is a direction Oaks would like to explore.

Q1 WINS

What's now true that wasn't 90 days ago

- ✓ A clear short-term and long-term enrollment goal is shared and operational across the team.
- ✓ A new recruitment posture, using existing church events as recruiting moments, is being implemented.
- ✓ The call team has a prioritization framework and a path to a Calendly-driven scheduling workflow.
- ✓ An AG district matching scholarship concept has been formally raised at the district level.
- ✓ A post-Preview Day survey is built and ready to deploy.
- ✓ A no-show follow-up standard is in place.
- ✓ Mailchimp is being stood up for email and text.
- ✓ Oaks Church Communications and Oaks College are now in the same working conversation.
- ✓ OptEd's marketing leadership is engaged directly with the Oaks team.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Each item above corresponds to a specific weakness identified during the on-site SWOT. Quarter one was about removing infrastructure friction so that the program's strengths, including leadership, mentorship, internships, and location, finally have a system worthy of carrying them to the right students.

Q2 PRIORITIES

Looking Ahead

The next quarter shifts from setting foundations to activating them. Below are the priorities OptEd is recommending and supporting.

ACTIVATE MAILCHIMP

Move from setup to live email and text journeys for prospects, applicants, and post-visit follow-up. Plug in templates from the Oaks Church Communications Team.

LAUNCH THE SURVEY

Deploy the post-Preview Day survey, capture the data, and use the responses to refine the next event and identify warm leads.

CONTENT CAPTURE DAYS

Schedule and execute the first dedicated Oaks College content-capture day with the Communications Team for use across web, social, and email.

PAID DIGITAL PLAN

Move from introductions to a defined Meta + Google paid strategy with the OptEd marketing team, including scope, budget, and KPIs.

CHURCH-EVENT INTEGRATION

Identify the next two Oaks Church events on the calendar and design Oaks College recruiting touchpoints into them.

COMM TEAM CADENCE

Lock in the recurring quarterly working session between Oaks College and Oaks Church Communications.

CLOSING

| Closing

The Oaks College program is the rare combination of healthy leadership, genuine mentorship, and real career outcomes, wrapped inside a community most institutions cannot replicate. Our job at OptEd is to make sure the right students hear about it, the right systems carry them through the funnel, and the right relationships get built along the way.

Quarter one closed the most urgent infrastructure gaps. Quarter two will turn that infrastructure into measurable enrollment momentum. We are confident in the team, the program, and the trajectory.

OUR COMMITMENT

Building toward Fall 2027, together.

OptEd is committed to working alongside Oaks College leadership in biweekly strategy sessions, identifying quick wins, evaluating obstacles, and helping execute the strategic enrollment plan that will carry the college to its Fall 2027 goal of 100+ students.



OptEd • Strategic Enrollment Partner to Oaks College