The University of Akron – Enrollment Management
Board of Trustees Report for November 2018

2019 High School Class: Focus on Application Generation

During this time of year, the Office of Admissions is focusing on encouraging prospective students to apply and visit campus, as well as working with applicants to submit additional materials for admission consideration. Several campaigns and initiatives continue to be executed to support these calls to action.

Campaigns
The Akron Gold Application Campaign continues to target Ohio high school students. Another letter was mailed in October to the homes of prospective students to encourage them to apply. The campaign continues to include an electronic message that ties the marketing to the technology. A conference call with representatives from EAB is conducted on a bi-weekly basis to review/discuss the status of the campaign.

The Fathom digital marketing efforts for Ohio and non-Ohio high school students continue to focus on application generation. We meet regularly with Fathom and University Communications & Marketing (UC&M) to review the progress within the paid social, paid search, display ads, and search engine optimization campaigns. Modifications are made as needed.

Communication
Acceptance Packets continue to be mailed to students that are admitted. Accepted students also are receiving a personal note and phone call from current UA students working in the Office of Admissions.

After students receive their acceptance packet, they also are receiving in the mail a letter of welcome and congratulations from Dr. Green.

A new initiative this year includes mailing a letter from Dr. Ramsier. Students will receive this letter after the correspondence from Dr. Green.

Emails promoting visiting campus, the Williams Honors College, financial aid and scholarships, academics, and student support services continue to be sent to students and parents.

We also worked with UC&M to make major modifications to the Admissions web pages to guide students more seamlessly through their UA college search journey.
Outreach
The majority of the admissions counselors have concluded their high school visits and college fairs within their assigned recruitment territories for the fall semester. They are back in the office conducting personal visits with students and their families, hosting high school student bus trips, as well as attending to their individual responsibilities.

There are more than 100 high school counselors registered to join us on Friday, Nov. 16 for the High School Counselor Advisory Board meeting.

With fall arrives the new financial aid application season. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) became available on October 1 and staff have been busy presenting financial aid information to students and their families at our local high schools including Copley, Revere, St. Vincent/St. Mary, Wadsworth, Springfield, Nordonia, Ellet, Green, and McKinley, to name a few.

On October 21, the team in the Office of Student Financial Aid and Admissions hosted a FAFSA filing event and served almost 70 visitors by helping them complete their financial aid applications for the coming academic year.

Transfer and Adult Students: Focus on Outreach

Direct Connect
The Direct Connect program with Stark State was launched on October 12, 2018. This program provides the opportunity for students to have dual admission status at both Stark State College and The University of Akron as they complete an associate degree while preparing for transfer to complete a bachelor’s degree at UA.

A student may apply for dual admission and enrollment directly out of high school or as a currently enrolled SSC student as long as they begin the program by completing an associate degree at SSC, while purposefully planning to transfer to UA for bachelor degree completion.

Academic advisors from UA will work with SSC advisors and faculty members to conduct appointments on each of SSC’s campuses with students enrolled in the program. Students in the program will also have the option to receive a Stark State/UA Zip Card allowing them to use facilities and services offered to regularly admitted students at both SSC and UA (e.g., libraries, career services, recreation centers, computer labs, sporting events, parking, email and internet access, etc.).
Other Transfer Student Outreach Efforts

The transfer admissions counselors also continue to visit and engage with students at the following community colleges: Tri-C, Lakeland Community College, Lorain County Community College, North Central State Community College, Eastern Gateway Community College, Columbus State Community College, Zane State Community College, Community College of Beaver County, and Community College of Allegheny County.

The admissions counselors also conduct individual appointments with prospective transfer students to guide them through the enrollment process, as well as provide information regarding how their courses will transfer.

Letters are being mailed to students that were admitted and confirmed to enroll at UA for the 2018 fall semester but decided to enroll at a community college. The call to action of the letter is to encourage the students to transfer to UA.

Technology: Focus on Service

Target X CRM Implementation Update

During the past few months, many implementation benchmarks have been achieved.

The admissions officers now have easy access to interactive dashboards identifying all outreach admissions activities (on left). From this dashboard, the admissions officer is able to initiate communication to students who have attended an event.

Initial marketing campaigns have been implemented in the CRM. Admissions is currently implementing the ‘search to inquiry’ campaign, as well as the ‘out-of-state encourage to apply’ campaign from the CRM.

The admissions office has also been using the CRM for our fall visit day registration process—and for the check-in activity on the day of the event.
Admissions is working with Information Technology Services to import application information (Common App and EAB) from PeopleSoft into the CRM.

**Financial Aid Support Center Update**
The ongoing collaboration with Blackboard Student Services continues to grow, with more than 20,000 student interactions handled to date by the Financial Aid Support Center team. The overall resolution rate remains high at 90% and the customer satisfaction rating is 91%. The tedious process of reviewing tax documents for the purpose of verifying information reported on the FAFSA was greatly improved and review times were reduced down to just a few days. Staff continue to work with the team at the Support Center to retrain and provide new, upcoming information necessary to begin advising for the new aid year. The senior leadership team in the Office of Student Financial Aid visited the Support Center, located in Somerset, Kentucky, in November for additional training and collaboration.

**Personnel: Focus on Community Service**

**Make a Difference Day**
UA’s 14th Annual Make a Difference Day was held on Friday, Oct. 26. Employees within the Office of Admissions, as well as members of the Zip Recruiting Club (Admissions student volunteer organization) participated in the event.

**Federal Financial Aid Processing: Potential Changes on the Horizon**
The elimination of mainstay financial aid programs including the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) and subsidized student loans is possible as the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (known as the PROSPER Act) makes its way through congress. The Perkins loan program has already been eliminated and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program may be eliminated. As the rising cost of higher education continues to outpace financial aid opportunities, the number of low income, first generation students will continue to decline and the affordability gap will widen.

Efforts to simplify the FAFSA process, perhaps even changing the need to apply each year, are underway and may provide some relief to an otherwise difficult application process. The continued commitment to using income from two years prior will facilitate the timely application process, helping students and the University secure aid earlier and positively impact decision making.