2019 High School Class: Focus on Inquiry and Application Generation

During this time of year, the Office of Admissions is focusing on encouraging prospective students to inquiry, apply and visit campus. Several campaigns and initiatives have been launched to support these calls to action.

As of Aug. 1, prospective students have been able to apply to UA via:
- uakron.edu/apply
- commonapp.org
- EAB application

Campaigns
The Akron Gold Application Campaign that launched in August targets Ohio high school students. The components of this campaign include the Akron Gold marketed application, inquiry pool paper mailing, senior search paper mailing, application deadline mailing, as well as a series of emails. There is an email campaign for students and another for parents.

The Fathom digital marketing efforts for Ohio and non-Ohio high school students that focus on inquiry and application generation launched as well. These campaigns that include paid social, paid search, display ads, and search engine optimization provide engagement and awareness of a quality UA education in an exciting environment. Through these campaigns, we are able to target the right audience and capitalize on the engagement.

Communication
Prospective students have received several mailings from the Office of Admissions:

- The new Viewbook was mailed to inquiries in August
- The Akron Advantage Award postcard was mailed to prospective out-of-state students in September (see left)
- Acceptance Packets are being mailed to students as they are being admitted.
The Acceptance Packet includes the acceptance letter and UA scholarship award, if applicable, as well as a Next Steps brochure and Zippy cling-on in the Acceptance Packet folder.

Emails promoting visiting campus, the Williams Honors College, financial aid and scholarships, academics, etc. are being sent to students and parents. Text messages also are being sent to students.

**Outreach**
The Admissions Officers are currently representing UA and engaging with students and their families at 140 college fairs and nearly 500 high school visits throughout Ohio, as well as Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana. They also are hosting seven high school counselor programs throughout Ohio, including the High School Counselor Advisory Board meeting at UA on Friday, November 16.

Our Financial Aid Office staff continues to participate in local events such as the Akron Public Schools Dream Day and have the opportunity to connect with over 1,000 APS seniors.

There will be continued collaboration with Zip Assist to offer FAFSA Fridays to students who need help completing the application and our annual FAFSA Completion Sunday for the community where attendees can get one-on-one help from our financial team and leave with their 2018-19 FAFSA completed.

**On-Campus Events**
We are hosting three major events for prospective students and their family members:

- **Engineering Visit Day** on Friday, September 28
- **Fall Visit Day** on Saturday, October 13
- **Fall Visit Day** on Saturday, November 3

We also host information sessions and campus tours twice a day.

**Transfer and Adult Students: Focus on Outreach**
On Friday, Oct. 12, Tri-C will bring students to UA for an admissions presentation, campus tour and lunch in Rob’s Cafe. This visit will provide prospective transfer students with the opportunity to learn more about UA and the transfer process.
The Admissions Counselors will be visiting the following community colleges this fall: Stark State College, 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 transfer student team also actively uses social media as part of their outreach efforts:

- **Facebook Live:** A Facebook Live Q&A was conducted to highlight common questions about transferring to UA and to raise awareness about opportunities to visit campus. The video received 1,500 views.
- **Life as a Zip:** Colleen Brennan is our feature Life as a Zip team member who recently transferred to UA and also is a member of Tau Sigma, a national honor society for transfer students. She has been posting information about her UA experiences on Instagram.

As part of our new partnership with College Now’s (Re)Connect program, the university was invited to participate in the “kick-off” event for an innovative new program that will help adult learners resolve student debt and increase their earning potential through higher education.

Through the (Re)Connect to College Education Loan Program, Summit County residents (with some college, but no degree) will be eligible for low cost short term “bridge loans” from New Horizon Federal Credit Union to address outstanding debt that may be preventing them from returning to college.

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**Technology: Focus on Service**

**TargetX CRM Implementation Update**

Progress continues to be made with the implementation of the TargetX/Salesforce CRM. The focus over the past two months has been to implement functionality that supports recruitment activities:
• Admissions Officers have been entering all travel, including high school visits and college fairs, in the CRM.
• Emails are automatically being sent (on behalf of Admissions Officers) to notify students 3 days prior to a high school visit or college fair, that an event is taking place at their school.
• The Sept 15th Saturday Information Session was our first pilot of the Events featured in the CRM. Attendees registered using TargetX and confirmation emails were automatically sent—as well as a reminder message three days prior to the event. At the event, Admissions piloted the use of scanning the attendee’s QR code for check-in.
• The request for information form on the Admissions web site has been replaced with a TargetX form – once the prospect completes the form, the data is automatically entered into TargetX. This replaced the previous Qualtrics form which required manual data-entry into PeopleSoft.
• We continue to work toward having all of the applicant information from EAB and CommonApp into the CRM. Admissions is working with their colleagues in Information Technology to build the queries and data load tasks. We will begin testing soon and anticipate full implementation later this fall.

Financial Aid Support Center Update

The ongoing collaboration with Blackboard Student Services continues to grow, with more than 18,000 student interactions handled to date by the Support Center team. The overall resolution rate remains high at 90% and the customer satisfaction rating is 91%.
More difficult cases continue to be escalated to our senior leaders for resolution. The partnership has helped to create many efficiencies in the Office of Student Financial Aid which resulted in faster, more accurate financial aid processing and in-person wait times of less than ten minutes during the first two weeks of the semester!

**Personnel: Focus on Professional Development**

Courtney Johnson-Benson has been recognized as a National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Rising Star.

This honor recognizes Affiliate College Admission Counseling Associations’ (ACAC) emerging members and innovative programs that exemplify excellence and dedication to serving students in the transition from high school to college.

At the 2018 OACAC Annual Conference, Courtney Johnson-Benson, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions was awarded one of the OACAC New Member awards. As a result, she was nominated for the NACAC Rising Star Award by OACAC Past President, Jeff Stahlman. Jeff said in his nomination, ‘Her character, kindness, and her breathtaking positivity make OACAC better...she is a difference maker for our organization.’

As a 2018 Rising Star Award winner, Courtney will be recognized on Saturday, September 29 during the Annual Membership Meeting at the NACAC National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.