The University of Akron – Enrollment Management
Board of Trustees Report for April, 2019

2019 High School Class: Focus on Yield
Our focus continues to be on yield—moving our admitted students to confirm and keeping our confirmed students engaged. Please see details below regarding specific yield initiatives for the months of March and April.

Events (On-campus)
The second Senior Day: A to Zip program was held on Friday, March 8. The audience for this event is seniors in high school who are considering UA. The majority of students who attended were admitted or confirmed. Representatives from our academic and student services areas were available to interact with the students and their family members.

Students also had the opportunity to confirm their enrolment and complete the housing application during the program. Each student in attendance received a UA T-shirt and complimentary Zip Card to use for lunch.

UA Legacy Reception will be held on Saturday, March 16. Students that are admitted and confirmed and are dependents of UA graduates are invited to attend this program.

This is the second year that we are hosting this event. Students and their parents are treated to brunch on the fifth floor of InfoCision Stadium.

The program includes presentations from UA alumni and current students. Special tours are offered of unique places on campus, as well as downtown Akron.

Students will have the opportunity to confirm their enrolment and complete the housing application during the program. Students in attendance will receive a UA blanket, and parents will receive a UA mug with Zips for Haiti Coffee.

UA Decision Day will be held on Friday, April 5. This is a new program. This event is geared towards seniors in high school that are admitted, have not visited campus and have not confirmed their enrollment. This program is similar to a Senior Day event. Students will have an opportunity to engage with academic and student services areas, as well as Admissions, New Student Orientation, Student Financial Aid, and Residence Life and Housing.
Students can confirm their enrollment and complete the housing application at the program. Students in attendance will receive a UA T-shirt and a complimentary Zip Card to use for lunch.

We also are continuing to host our daily information sessions and campus tours; we have added two evening information sessions and campus tours for local students; and we are hosting an information session and campus tour on Saturday, March 30. The program on March 30 will include a mix of seniors and juniors in high school.

Events (Off-campus)
The admissions counselors are hosting Meet-and-Greet events outside of the local area including Central, Northwest and Southwest Ohio, as well as Pennsylvania, Michigan and New York. These programs provide students and their family members with the opportunity to meet one-on-one with an admissions counselor at a location in their community. Most of the conversations at the Meet-and-Greets will center around living on campus, financing their education, academics, and orientation.

The admissions counselors who are responsible for the local area are visiting high schools to meet with admitted and confirmed students. These visits provide the student with the opportunity to talk in-person with an admissions counselor at their high school. Most of the questions are related to finances, orientation, academics and campus life. We are bringing Zippy cookies to these visits.

Communication
The Confirm Enrollment postcard was mailed to students that are admitted but have not confirmed. The call to action is to confirm enrollment.
Current students continue to write postcards and make congratulatory phone calls to admitted and confirmed students.

The digital marketing campaign developed by Fathom and UC&M to encourage admitted students/parents to confirm has launched. Early results are exceeding industry benchmarks. For example, the confirmation view rate for the video advertising is 15.5%. Industry benchmark view rate is 12%.

Fathom and UC&M also developed a family hub. This was created to provide helpful information to parents and families. We continue to add content to this site: https://discover.uakron.edu/family-parent-info-hub-organic

Meetings with academic areas
During the first week in March, Bill Kraus and Kim Gentile met with the Dean of each undergraduate college and his/her leadership teams to provide an update on the status new student recruitment for the 2019 fall semester overall, as well as within each college. Other topics of discussion included yield initiatives and efforts to keep in contact with the students that attend orientation to reduce melt.

2020 High School Class: Focus on Awareness/Inquiry
While the majority of our focus is on the 2019 high school class, we also are working to engage the 2020 class. The Admissions Officers are representing UA at college fairs within Ohio, as well as national college fairs in Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, and North Carolina to talk with juniors in high school and their parents.
Fathom launched the digital marketing awareness program at the National College Fair in Pittsburgh last month and will continue these efforts at the additional seven National College Fairs that we will attend in the states listed above.

Parents play a critical and valuable role in the college decision making process. We are working to enhance our connection with parents. We are collaborating with UC&M to develop additional print and electronic collateral directed to parents of juniors and sophomores.

A letter is scheduled to be mailed at the end of March to parents of current juniors. We will mail a letter to parents of sophomores at the beginning of April. A publication is scheduled to be mailed in June. A series of emails focusing on quality academics, real-world opportunities/outcomes, campus life, and affordability are being developed.

The goal is to engage parents early in the college planning process and to offer UA as a content expert in college planning, as well as share the UA advantages.

**Transfer and Adult Students: Focus on Outreach**

The transfer team continues to connect (emails and phone calls) with adult and transfer students on a continuous basis to move applicants and admits through the enrollment process. Prospective transfer students will be invited to attend an on-campus event on Saturday, April 27 to learn more about UA’s academics and student services areas.

A Transfer Student Articulation Forum is scheduled for Monday, April 15 with our community college partners. This is an opportunity for Ohio transfer counselors to learn more about specific academic programs, as well as strengthen their engagement with UA faculty and staff.

The transfer team is visiting the following community colleges to talk with prospective students and counselors: Tri-C, Stark State College, Lorain County Community College, Lakeland Community College, Belmont College, North Central State, and Eastern Gateway Community College.

The transfer team continues to work to develop Direct Connect pathways, website development, and welcome event initiatives.

A collaborative partnership with College Now and Adult Focus completed their first recruitment cycle working with UA stop-out students. The focus of this initiative is to remove hurdles that prevent a student from returning to the university.
**Technology: Focus on Service**

**Target X CRM Implementation Update**

The Confirm Enrollment electronic campaign has been launched within the CRM. The audience for this campaign is seniors in high school that are admitted to UA but have not confirmed. Parents are included as well.

There are a series of emails that are sent on a weekly basis to admitted students to encourage them to confirm. In each email, we ask the students to complete a survey to let us know where they are in the decision-making process. The responses to the survey are captured to use for analysis. Dashboards were developed within the CRM so that the Admissions Officers can respond to and analyze real-time data.

The electronic campaign to move prospects to inquiries has been launched. The audience for this campaign is students that will graduate from high school in 2020 and 2021. This campaign includes a series of emails that are segmented by Ohio and non-Ohio residents to highlight the features and benefits of UA. The call to action is to complete a survey indicating their interest in learning more about UA.

We continue to enhance our utilization of the CRM for all on-and off-campus events. Electronic invitations are sent via the CRM, and students are registering to attend the program, as well as receiving all of the confirmation information regarding the event via the CRM. Each of these transactions is stored in the CRM so the information is provided to us in real-time.

**The Financial Aid Support Center**

The Financial Aid Office’s partnership with Blackboard Student Services continues to provide our students and their families with access to financial aid information and advising 24/7/365.
Since going live in May, 2018, the support center has handled more than 28,000 telephone calls, live chats, and submitted web cases.

The users contacting the team for support are 72% students, 23% parents, and the other 5% are guests, alumni, and other university staff and faculty. The average answer speed of calls is 24 seconds with the longest wait time being one minute during the peak call season at the beginning of spring 2019 semester. On-campus financial aid advisors are available throughout the day for walk-in visitors and the average wait time to be counseled is under five minutes.

**Financial Aid: Focus on Affordability**

The Director of Student Financial Aid is overseeing an affordability campaign for students who have been identified as having a shortage of funding and lack parental support to meet their cost of attending UA. An individualized summary of estimated costs and available financial aid has been sent to the students who are also invited to meet with the director to evaluate their costs and discuss additional opportunities for financial assistance.

More than 360 new, incoming freshmen have received early scholarship awards totaling $433,000 from private/endowed scholarships awarded by the Office of Student Financial Aid and the colleges. This is a departure from when they have normally been awarded (early summer) in an attempt to use funded scholarships strategically to recruit new students.

**Personnel: Focus on Professional Development**

Financial Aid Staff have participated in a variety of outreach events this past month including FAFSA Filing Fridays with Zip Assist, senior visit days, and Discovering Diversity Day.

Courtney Johnson Benson, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions is one of three newly elected Ohio delegates to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Assembly. The Assembly responsibilities include electing board officers and directors, amending the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices, and making recommendations to the NACAC Board of Directors on association-related matters. Courtney also was featured in the recent Digest profile for Women’s History Month.

Greg Landis, Associate Director of Admissions presented, ‘How to Balance Change in Responsibilities with Leadership’ at the Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC) Annual Conference in March.