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A Proposed Strategic Undergraduate Enrollment Marketing Plan For St. Thomas Aquinas College

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A PROPOSED STRATEGIC UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT MARKETING PLAN
FOR ST. THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

Masters Thesis Project
Thesis Advisor: Monsignor Dennis Mahon
Summer 2007

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Master of Arts in Strategic Communication

ABSTRACT

The intense competitiveness of the higher education enrollment market increases the amount of pressure on college's enrollment teams to recruit and enroll students each year. The purpose of this masters thesis project is to propose a strategic undergraduate enrollment marketing plan for St. Thomas Aquinas College, the author's place of employment. The project will include research on current issues related to enrollment marketing, a strategic plan laying out specific marketing initiatives for St. Thomas Aquinas College, and a practical application of the strategic plan in the form of a marketing timeline for the 2007-2008 recruitment year.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I started as an Admissions Counselor at St. Thomas Aquinas College a month after I graduated from Rutgers University with a B.A. in Communication and a focus in public relations and organizational communication. I knew I wanted the job at St. Thomas from the moment I stepped foot out the door following the interview. I anxiously awaited a call back, was ecstatic when I was asked to meet with the Dean and President, and literally jumped for joy when they offered me the position.

Everything about the admissions position excited me. I was given the opportunity to travel, work with students through the admissions process and reinforce that St. Thomas was the right fit for them. I felt important, almost as if I and the other admissions staff were the only factors that played a role in these students choosing or not choosing to go to St. Thomas. A few short months into the “admissions cycle” I realized that I was far from the only factor in recruiting these students. It did not make me make me dislike my job, I still loved what I was doing. However, it was an eye-opening experience when that first student withdrew from the process because he could not afford the tuition and when that first parent showed anger towards me because the coach their child wanted to see was not available during a visit. The bigger picture came to light for me then, and I began to understand the complex nature of recruiting students (and their parents) for a higher education institution. It requires much more than just a great admissions counselor!

After my two years as a counselor a position opened up in the communications and marketing department. The Executive Director for Communications & Marketing was promoted to Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing and was looking for an assistant to help with

aspects of his former job. I jumped at the opportunity having been a communication major and being in the process of looking at graduate communication programs. The pieces fell into place and I have been in the communications and marketing position for two years now. And four years after having started at the College I feel I have a firm grasp on what it takes to market to and recruit undergraduate students for St. Thomas Aquinas College.

Before the Executive Director for Communications & Marketing took over as Dean for Enrollment & Marketing there was a large disconnect between what the enrollment and marketing departments were doing. The enrollment department was not effectively communicating the information that was needed by the marketing department to effectively set in place and carry out initiatives to target prospective students. For example, the marketing department was working with outside companies that operated websites, magazines, booklets, etc., specifically targeting prospective high school students. These outside companies collect prospective student data from those students that expressed an interest in a certain college and provide it to the institution in an electronic format as part of their service. This type of service is commonly used by institutions that then take the student data in that electronic format and upload it into their own operating system. However, the marketing department at St. Thomas did not realize that the enrollment staff was taking the electronic data, printing it out, and having the staff type in the information because they did not have the capability, at that time, to upload the information. While the marketing department thought they were using a cost-effective means to recruit additional prospective students, in actuality, the service was creating more work for enrollment staff and causing the response time to students to lag. No one expressed this to the Executive Director of Marketing, though, until he was appointed Dean for Enrollment and saw it for himself. The problem has now been corrected.

When Boston College was having trouble filling their classrooms in the 1970s they brought in Jack Maguire as Admissions Director, a physics professor who was an outsider to the field. He changed the way admissions typically did things and integrated the many parts into a new model wherein everything pitched to the customer base should be the responsibility of a single administrator, with the new title of ‘enrollment manager’” (Kirp, 2003, p. 15).

By combining the recruiting and the marketing under the single hat of the enrollment manager, St. Thomas Aquinas College transitioned into a model, like Boston College’s, that allowed them to synchronize their marketing and enrollment efforts and streamline initiatives. Now, with both areas being under one umbrella, operations run much more smoothly and we can better target our strengths and weaknesses to more effectively recruit students. There has been a much needed marriage of the areas and we continue to try and improve our methods and efforts.

As the person leading the communication and marketing efforts under the Dean, I feel there is a need to put into writing a concrete enrollment marketing plan, a roadmap of sorts to lay out our initiatives and how to bring those initiatives to fruition. We have been successful in our efforts thus far, we are figuring out what works, what doesn’t, and what we want to accomplish. In the past there has been a general communications and marketing plan for the entire College, laying out what needs to be accomplished on a quarterly basis. Yet, that plan operated independently from the enrollment goals that were in place. This proposed strategic enrollment marketing plan will bring these pieces of recruitment and marketing to those recruits together. This independent plan will lay out the initiatives specifically related to recruitment and enrollment of undergraduate students, rather than combining that segment as part of the overall communications and marketing plan for the College. The College is in the process of designing a 10 year strategic master plan and the Dean for Enrollment is in the process of designing a 5

year enrollment management plan. My thesis project will be to design a proposed strategic undergraduate enrollment marketing plan for St. Thomas Aquinas College.

The college market is becoming increasingly more competitive each year. St. Thomas Aquinas College is just one small, liberal arts institution among the masses. According to the New York State Education website, there are 335 institutions, including public, independent and proprietary schools, in New York State alone. In neighboring New Jersey, there are a total of 56 institutions (statistics from New Jersey State Education website). At St. Thomas we are not only in competition with other higher education institutions in our state and neighboring states but institutions across the country and even around the globe.

Every institution is vying for students to meet their enrollment goals, but it goes beyond simply filling incoming freshman classes. Enrollment teams have to fill those freshman classes with the “right” types of students. The “right” students are those with certain GPAs, SATs, athletic abilities, special interests, from certain geographic regions and the list goes on. In these types of markets, a strategic marketing plan is no longer a good idea, it becomes a necessary tool.

Another factor that contributes to the competitiveness of the higher education market is the rising costs of tuition. A *US News* article reported the cost of college rose by about 6 percent in 2006, outpacing ... inflation, or financial aid. According to the article rising costs each year are attributed to reductions in government subsidies, and increases needed to cover salaries, benefits, energy, and basic operating costs (Clark, 2006). Increasing tuitions are even more staggering for a private school, like St. Thomas Aquinas College, whose costs are higher to begin with than public and community colleges. This is yet another reason why it is so important to have a solid plan in place to market to prospective students whose tuition and fees are the driving force for the institutions’ operating budgets.

According to Witherspoon (2007), “A marketing plan can help you to achieve a unified and practical approach to your business goals. A marketing plan will help you to identify the key business points you need to develop in order to influence your customers. A marketing plan should be able to assist you in focusing on what your real marketing budget will look like. A marketing plan can help you apply reality based learning to achieve profit”. In the competitive world of higher education marketing, customers are high school students and their parents and profit equals the achievement of enrollment goals.

The overall goal of this enrollment marketing plan is to lay out achievable objectives that are in line with the enrollment and strategic plans of St. Thomas Aquinas College in order to successfully reach the institution’s customers and achieve undergraduate enrollment goals.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are countless strategies, gimmicks, products and services that are available for institutions to use as part of their marketing plan. Different institutions rely on different marketing methods based on their size, location, name-brand, and the type of student they want to attract and enroll. Although, in a sense, higher education marketers are selling a product, marketing to prospective students is quite different from selling products in the traditional sense. Marketing, in the traditional sense, is about getting a customer to purchase a product by using their wants and needs to attract them to that product. Higher education marketing, however, is about building a relationship with a prospective student and their family. Higher education marketing requires a different touch, it requires an understanding of people, communication and relationships.

Relationship Marketing in Higher Education

The product in higher education is complex. Higher education is more a service than an actual product. It involves the institution itself but also the education and the overall experience that institution will offer the student throughout his or her college career. Furthermore, higher education marketing involves selling a promise to the prospective student of future success in their career, graduate studies and life in general. Higher education marketers strive to build long-lasting relationships with their prospective students.

Relationship marketing is an effective way to market higher education. Stover (2005) says, "The goal for this type of marketing [relationship marketing] is to create a long-term, customized relationship with you, the consumer, that is based on knowledge of your particular set of needs" (p. 1). Higher education lends itself to relationship marketing because of its nature

in that the institution and the prospective student engage in a process over time. Transactional marketing, which is known as the traditional marketing, focuses on the current transaction and uses the idea of mass marketing. Marketing higher education is a process, not a one-time transaction. Relationship marketers argue for a different approach from the transactional model, “they would say that student recruitment is the first step in a series of marketing processes” (Strover, 2005, p. 1). Relationship marketing “is an institution’s attitude expressed by friendly and professional staff who are interested in addressing the concerns of students” (p. 2).

Marketing to Different Prospective Student Audiences

I officially began my college search late in my junior year in high school. I had an idea of what kind of school I wanted to go to. I talked to my guidance counselor and visited a couple of campuses with my mom. I did not spend time thumbing through countless viewbooks and I do not recall talking to any admissions counselors. Although I felt pressure to score well on the SATs, keep my grades and activities in top shape and fill out application on time, I did not feel pressure about choosing a school. I applied to only three schools, was accepted to all of them, and chose one from those three. I was happy with my choice and with the outcome. Having had the opportunity to work directly in admissions, I know that times have changed since my college search began in 1998.

“Marketing to prospective students has changed dramatically. Students are starting their college search earlier, and many students have their “final choice” list drawn up the fall of their senior year, if not sooner. Information gathered on PLAN and PSAT test-takers suggests that more than 40 percent of college-bound high school students are in the market for their college before their junior years” (“Marketing to Sophomores”, 2005, p. 3). Even though high school students are beginning their college searches earlier it is important to remember that marketing to

prospective high school seniors is different than marketing to high school sophomores. This article discusses the difference between “cultivation” and “recruitment”. During the cultivation phase “the institution’s goal is to be recognized in the student’s top five list” (p. 3). During the recruitment phase, “which occurs from late junior year to receiving a student’s deposit and beyond, the institution’s goal is to be that student’s first-choice college” (p. 3). According to the article, the difference between cultivation and recruitment lies in communicating versus actively wooing.

Regardless of the method or the audience, “students now expect personalization in any marketing messages” (p. 3). The key is in knowing how to personalize the different messages for the different audiences. The “Marketing to Sophomores” article suggests ways to target the cultivation audience (high school sophomores and juniors) and the recruitment audience (high school seniors) using the web and print materials. In the cultivation phase, e-newsletters can be used to offer students information on summer visits. In the recruitment phase, those same e-newsletters, with different topics, can be used to link students to pages that offer specific information about degree programs. Even though electronic communication is becoming more popular, print publications are still useful and serve as a great way to show off campus photos. Institutions should create print publications that target each group. If a viewbook is used to send to prospective high school seniors, create smaller version of that same piece to send to earlier inquiries.

Key points to remember when marketing to both groups are: one, promptness matters, people expect a response in a timely fashion, this shows effective follow-through; two, the institution’s print and web pieces should have a similar look and feel, creating recognition for the school (“Marketing to Sophomores”).

Building Internal Support for Your Marketing Initiatives in a Unique Marketplace

As I mentioned in my introduction, it was eye-opening for me when I realized that, as an admissions counselor, I did not have complete control over whether or not a student ended up enrolling in our institution. The admissions team was a piece in a very large puzzle. My experience since then, specifically with marketing, has made me realize that the higher education marketers, along with the admissions team are the driving force in enrolling students. It falls on our shoulders to create the plan and, more importantly, get the rest of the parts, the various members of the college community, to be on board in executing the plan.

Sevier (2006) says, “The first step in building support for a marketing plan is to begin with a clear definition of what marketing is all about” (p. 7). Sevier stresses that higher education marketers must convey that marketing “is about creating, communicating, and delivering value” (p. 7). Furthermore, the internal constituents of the institution must realize that marketing is focused on managing customer relationships. Sevier goes on to offer 12 steps in building internal support for an institution’s marketing plan:

1. Help the campus and campus leaders understand the marketing model being used.
2. Clarify the role of the campus leaders in the planning process.
3. Help the campus leaders understand their level of involvement by clarifying their time commitment.
4. Work with the faculty and others who want to work with you.
5. Show that your conclusions and plans are data-driven, this adds credibility to your plan.
6. Identify evangelists who will help you spread the word and overcome internal obstacles.

7. Project reasonable outcomes on how marketing efforts will impact enrollment.
8. Keep things moving, do not get caught up in undue debate and deliberation.
9. Remember the goal is not output, but outcomes. Clarify how your market position has improved as a result of your output.
10. Don't overlook internal communication. Aggressively communicate with internal audiences about marketing efforts and successes.
11. Launch your efforts, don't leak. Create an energy around what you are doing.
12. Give the plan and efforts time to work and do not be too quick to change strategies.

Sevier concludes by saying, "Building internal support for your marketing effort is not difficult, but like laying the foundation for a new building, it does require the investment of time and effort" (p. 8). Marketers who make an investment in communicating their marketing plan to their internal audiences have better results in the long-run.

Although it may seem that direct comparisons can be made between marketing a product and marketing a higher education institution, it is not so clear cut. According to Sickler, (2006) campus-based marketers need to realize themselves and educate their internal constituencies on the realities of the higher education marketplace. They [campus-based marketers] must "align the issues, initiatives, and stakeholders at a school to focus on the needs and expectations of key constituent groups. This makes the primary role of today's campus-based marketer to sell the school internally as much as externally" (Sickler, 2006, p. 23).

Building a Strong Admissions Website

Although the internet's growing popularity has changed and added to the ways in which prospective students search for colleges, a 2006 article in *Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education* suggests that many websites make the same common mistakes. "They include

focusing on style rather than substance, focusing egotistically on what the organization does and is rather than what visitors need, not having a distinct personality, and offering no clear goals for visitor action” (p. 1). The article offers 14 steps to take in order to build a great admissions website.

One of the highlighted steps is articulating website goals and looking at how the website fits into the greater goals and needs of the institution. Another suggested step is to create content for all phases of the consideration process. An earlier article discussed the difference between cultivation and recruitment in marketing to different levels of high school students (“Marketing to Sophomores” 2005). This article builds on that idea and suggests creating website pages that directly target these different levels of students. The article also suggests offering multiple ways for visitors to express interest. “For instance, your website might make offers that align with the visitor’s stage in the college-choice process. Early on, the site might invite visitors to sign up for a ‘college success’ newsletter or access information about how financial aid works. Later in the process, the website should make it easy for families to schedule a campus tour” (p. 2).

The overall theme of the article is to use the admission website as any other marketing method would be used. Using analysis, having a plan and measuring effects are all crucial. It is important to avoid generic pages on the website and focus on honing in on key target audiences.

Foster (2003) states that “too many college websites are crowded with junk because web designers are fearful that if they don’t link to every department they might offend someone” (p. 2). It is crucial to not generalize the website to the point where the prospective student feels overwhelmed and does not know where to go, personalization is important. Foster also suggests that marketers need to define goals for their admissions websites. “Some colleges want to use the web to increase enrollment, while others want to use the web to attract students who excel in

certain academic or extracurricular activities or come from certain regions of the county” (p. 3). It is crucial for marketers to know what their admissions teams are trying to achieve and hone their website in accordance with those goals.

In her article, Foster discusses how the University of Dayton’s uses their admissions’ website to collect data on their prospective students and then stay in touch with those students by giving them the specific information they need. For example, Dayton’s website monitors when a student starts to fill out an online application but does not finish so that admissions officers can then follow up. This is a typical process in admissions for incomplete files but Dayton’s online system speeds up the process, offering admissions quick and easy data.

Another way Dayton uses their website to help hone in on what is most desired by prospective students is through tracking. Dayton found that many prospective students were clicking on the faculty and staff link, so the university spruced up those pages with photos and credentials of their faculty and staff. Dayton also has an “financial-need estimator” form on their website “which helps students determine roughly how much of their tuition is likely to be covered by grants and loans” (p. 3). Dayton did research and found out that students who fill out that online form are more likely to enroll so admissions began sending student reminder with instructions on how to access the form.

Admissions websites are becoming more than simply a means for prospective students to access information about an institution. Websites have grown into interactive marketing tools that can be used by enrollment teams to target and communicate with prospective students. Websites, when used as a integrated part of a comprehensive marketing plan, can assist higher education marketers in reaching and surpassing selected enrollment goals.

Parental Involvement

“Helicopter parents” is the coined term for parents who are overly involved and hover over their children’s lives unwilling to let their children make independent decisions (Bartini and Hesel, 2007). This term is commonly and often used to describe parents who are overly involved in their children’s college admissions processes and decisions. Although the connotation of the term is negative, it is clear the parents are a large part of the process when it comes to admissions decisions and therefore they need to be marketed to as well.

A recent College Board study (2007) found that college plans were at the top of the list for reported levels of parental involvement in students’ activities and plans. More than 50 percent of students surveyed indicated that their parents were very involved in their college plans and only five percent indicated that their parents were not involved at all. The College Board study also found that a sizeable segment of students want their parents more—not less—involved in the college search process. The results state that 3 out of 5 students are satisfied with the level of parental involvement but the vast majority of the remainder, 28 percent of total respondents, actually want their parents to be more involved. Only 6 percent of all students surveyed indicated that they wanted less parental involvement in their college search.

The College Board study also surveyed the levels of parental involvement in college-related plans and tasks. At the top of this list was filling out financial aid forms, deciding what colleges are affordable, encouraging application to certain schools, and going on campus tours with prospective students. Given these figures, it is clear that higher education enrollment marketers must pay particular attention to parents of prospective students. Bartini and Hesel (2007), of College Board, say, “College and secondary school officials might consider seeing increased parental involvement as an opportunity rather than a threat. Engaged and interested

parents can be much more easily mobilized to support academic achievement of their children, meet volunteer needs, provide philanthropic support, and become advocates for the institutions their children attend”. Parents must be considered when planning marketing for prospective students and as an independent target market in the enrollment marketing process.

Budgeting for the Marketing Plan

When I first transitioned into my communications and marketing position after being an admissions counselor at the College, the word “budget” buzzed in my ears much more frequently. I was unaware of what the “spending allowance” was in admissions, but in marketing it is very clear cut what is available to spend and what is not available to spend, I am on a strict allowance. Yet, when it comes to getting price quotes for certain marketing pieces we do not always pick the vendor offering the lowest cost. My supervisor quickly taught me to weigh in different factors including print quality, the turnaround time and the ease of working with that vendor. It is not about getting the lowest price, it is about getting the most cost-effective method for the best possible quality.

“One of the simplest (and most misleading) evaluations we can perform involves comparing the relative cost of one strategy with another. Those of us with a strong finance bent and no real understanding of marketing often use this approach as we struggle to find meaningful common denominators. However, rather than asking, ‘How much?’ we need to ask, ‘What’s the return?’” (Sevier, 2004, p. 22).

In another article, Sevier (2006) offers the following advice for marketing budgeting. “First, nothing will cause a budget to grow faster than the word ‘more’”. Try to focus in on limited target audiences and geographic markets because when you try to expand your targets you are likely to spend more dollars but not enough to reach them all effectively. “Second, if

dollars are tight, stay away from extensive investment in advertising (paid media). There is little evidence that advertising, especially by itself, is an effective brand-building tool.” Sevier suggests that unpaid media including public and media relations, special events and co-branding, augmented by a smaller component of paid media is more effective. He suggests the way to go is piecing together a comprehensive, and balanced array of unpaid and paid media for the maximum impact in the market.

Finally, Sevier states “never, never start something you cannot sustain”. Partaking in a one-time blitz makes you look foolish and “will cause your competitors to react and they will be rolling out their own messages when you can no longer fund your own”. Laying out an all-inclusive marketing strategy with consideration and focus budgeting will help institutions create the maximum impact in their targeted markets. Sevier (2003) suggests, “If you are spending the resources to write the [marketing] plan, then commit the resources to support the plan. And if you’re a truly savvy marketer, you’ll make sure your planners have a sense of how much money they will have to spend *before* they begin writing the plan. As a corollary, if the plan calls for dollars to be spent in a specific way, make sure people have the authority to spend those dollars” (pp. 27-28).

Evaluation and Assessment of Marketing Plans

According to Sevier (2003), “perhaps the greatest difference between business and education is the historic reluctance of college and universities to systematically evaluate whether or not programs, strategies, activities, and plans are working, are still current, and are still contributing value” (p. 29). In order to move past this reluctance and avoid continuing a strategy that is not working, Sevier suggests establishing clear criteria for evaluating how well you are executing your plan. Ideally, these evaluation criteria should be established before the plan’s

execution commences rather than after the fact. Sevier closes his article by offering this advice, “Don’t just plan—do! The best time to think about how your plan will be executed is before the plan is completed” (p. 29).

In a later article, Sevier (2004) differentiates the difference between evaluating and assessing brand marketing efforts versus direct marketing efforts. He says, “Brand marketing has a single goal: to create awareness. Direct marketing also has a single goal: to generate response” (p.21). It is important for enrollment marketers to remember this when they are assessing their overall marketing plan. Concurrently, enrollment marketers have the job of building the institution’s brand with target markets and building direct response from prospective students. It is key to measure the effectiveness of brand marketing differently than that of direct marketing initiatives because each type has different goals.

CHAPTER 3

The strategic undergraduate enrollment marketing plan for St. Thomas Aquinas College will serve as a tool to support the overall enrollment team of the College. The strategic plan will provide an overview that will guide the enrollment marketing efforts of the College. This marketing plan will separate out the marketing efforts aimed at the populations related specifically to undergraduate enrollment. The plan will include internal and external communication as support must be built internally before we can successfully reach our external target markets. The external target markets include prospective high school students, their parents and/or guardians and the high school guidance population.

The plan will cover several key areas directly and indirectly related to marketing the institution to the designated target populations. These areas will include, but are not limited to: the importance of building relationships; paid and unpaid media efforts; direct marketing materials; the use of the web; budgeting; and assessment and evaluation. The plan will address the need for marketing to the different target population simultaneously through these various initiatives.

The plan will lay out detailed initiatives for each area and an applicable timeline for the 2007-2008 recruitment year. Certain initiatives will have individual, smaller objectives, but all of the initiatives will serve the purpose of reaching undergraduate enrollment goals. Built into the plan will be assessment and evaluation procedures wherein the enrollment team can judge if the initiatives are meeting the target goals as the plan is being executed and overall at the close of a recruitment year.

The strategic marketing plan will discuss the current initiatives and how they lay out over the next recruitment year. The strategic plan will provide a core set of marketing guidelines

and directives to build upon for future recruitment based on determined enrollment goals. It will be subject to periodic change as enrollment goals change. The higher education markets, as all markets, are constantly in flux. The enrollment marketing plan must have flexibility and changeability built into it to adjust as the institution adjusts their overall goals.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIC UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT MARKETING PLAN FOR
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

The enrollment team strives to build productive and lasting relationships with prospective students, their families, the high school guidance community, and internal constituencies at the institution. Relationship building is necessary in order to effectively recruit and enroll students and gain and maintain support of the guidance and internal communities. The enrollment marketing team uses various initiatives to shape and share the institution's image with the target audiences in such a way that promotes strong relationships with those target audiences.

The strategy for the following areas of marketing is discussed in detail to explain how they are used to support the recruitment and enrollment efforts of the institution. The marketing areas, although independent, all mesh to create a strategic marketing plan to reach and build relationships with the target audiences.

Areas of Marketing:

1. Recruitment Publications
2. Promotional Giveaways
3. Admissions Events
4. Advertising
 - Newspapers
 - Education Publications/Services
 - Niche Advertising
 - Radio
 - Television
5. Building Internal Support
6. College Website
7. Media Relations
8. Budgets
9. Assessment of the Marketing Plan

RECRUITMENT PUBLICATIONS & ACCOMPANYING PACKAGING MATERIALS

Publications are an integral part of marketing to prospective high school students. The Admissions staff uses publications on the road at college fairs and as a tool in mailing campaigns to provide prospective students with information. Vibrant photos, listings of the College's programs, and student and faculty testimonials are included in various publications to offer prospective students a glimpse of campus life.

Each year several publications are produced to use in the College's marketing process. Specific planning is needed to appropriately meet the needs of the enrollment team. External agencies, focus groups, photography, internal groups and research are all aspects of the publication processes. Below is a listing of the major recruitment publications and the required planning for each. It is the role of the lead enrollment marketer to work with external design agencies and printing vendors on each piece and ensure that each publication: is reviewed by appropriate internal individuals and/or departments; is accurate in content; is in line with the thematic strategy of the family of publications; is printed in a timely manner based on the usage needs of the enrollment team; and that each publication is completed in a cost-effective manner with the allotted budget in mind.

Viewbook

The viewbook is the central piece in the recruitment publication family. It offers a complete overview of the College and its offerings and various photos of students and the campus. The viewbook is printed each summer in advance of the recruitment year. The planning process begins in January when the enrollment marketing team determines what is needed to successfully

produce the new viewbook. The marketing team has two options at this juncture. One, the team can work on copy updates, new photography and profiles to “refresh” the current viewbook without changing the design and strategy or, two, the team can decide to go with a new design of the viewbook, changing the strategy.

The factors that play into this decision include: research, is the current viewbook still an effective tool in the recruitment of high school students; current state at the institution, are there major changes occurring at the institution that require a complete redesign; budget, is there enough money allotted in the budget for a complete redesign; and outside factors, such as change in postal rates affecting the packaging of the viewbook.

It is important for the marketing team to not be lured into changing the publication for the sake of change. The team may be bored or tired of seeing the same viewbook but the team is not the target audience. A complete redesign is costly and time consuming compared to refreshing the viewbook. The decision to redesign or refresh the viewbook for the next recruitment year is made in December. If the team chooses to redesign the viewbook appropriate planning and a timeline must be set in place immediately because once the viewbook is redesigned most of the subsequent publications that are used in the recruitment process must also be redesigned to keep in line with the new viewbook’s theme. If the team chooses to refresh the viewbook then the planning process begins in February and continues through until June. Whichever decision is made, the viewbook process is wrapped up in July with delivery in August.

The viewbook is mostly used as a mailer to prospective students in the database in both their junior and senior years of high school. The major viewbook mailing to juniors is in the spring of the junior year and subsequent monthly mailings go out to new recruits as they request information and are entered into the database. The major viewbook mailing to seniors is in the fall of the senior year and subsequent bi-weekly mailings go out to new recruits as they request information and are entered into the database. Each viewbook is accompanied by a specific, personalized letter targeting the particular group it is being mailed to (i.e., the letter that is mailed to juniors is different than the letter mailed to seniors). Each viewbook and personalized letter is mailed in an envelope chosen to best fit the design of the publication.

The viewbook is also given to high school guidance offices to which the admissions staff visits and it is given out at certain recruitment events on campus.

The quantity ordered for the viewbook is generally 20,000 or 25,000 but that is subject to change based on the planned mailings, travel and expected usages by the Admissions Office for each recruitment year.

Travel Piece

The travel piece is used by the Admissions staff when they “travel” to numerous high schools, college fairs and visits with prospective students outside of the office. It is an abbreviated version of the viewbook, providing the institution’s basics, and allows for easy transport because of its condensed size. The piece includes a postage-paid business reply card (BRC) allowing a

prospective students to fill out the card and mail it into the Admissions office at a later time at no cost to the student. This publication is rarely used as a mailer.

The travel piece is updated yearly usually in June and July with an August delivery in advance of the start of the fall recruitment season. Typically, 15,000 travel pieces are ordered for an entire recruitment year. However, quantity may change from year to year based on the amount of visits the Admissions staff has scheduled.

Open House Invitation Piece

The open house invitation pieces are printed two times per year in advance of the two fall open houses (October and November) and the spring open house (April). The open house invites are used during travel engagements, as mailers to the prospective students whose information is in the database, and the potential prospective students whose names are purchased from the College Board based on standardized test scores and geographic regions. The mailed open house pieces are accompanied by a personalized letter from the Admissions recruitment staff and are packaged in a special envelope with “Don’t miss out on this great event!” printed on the outside.

The fall open house piece is updated yearly in June and July with an August delivery in preparation for the fall recruitment season and the September mailing. The spring open house piece is updated yearly in January with a February delivery in preparation for the spring recruitment season and the March mailing. The quantity order of the fall and spring open house invites varies based on the amount of pieces being mailed and those being used for travel. Generally, 25,000 open house invites are ordered in the fall and 15,000 in the spring.

Financial Aid Brochure

The financial aid brochure was created as part of a campaign encouraging accepted students to fill out their FAFSA forms. The publication offers a general overview of the financial aid process as well as forms of aid and scholarships offered by the College. It is a richly information piece that is a useful guide for students and their parents. The publication is updated yearly, usually in September and October with a November delivery.

The publication is used in mailings to accepted students, beginning in December and continuing throughout the winter. It is accompanied by a personalized letter from the Dean of Enrollment, a save the date list of accepted students events and is packaged in an envelope. The publication is given to accepted students and families who attend the financial aid workshops the College hosts.

The quantity ordered is based on the predicted amount of accepted students for the given recruitment year and the predicted attendance at the financial aid workshops but is generally 3,000 pieces.

Majors Brochure

The majors brochure was created as a publication to mail to accepted students as a more specific academic follow-up to the general pieces used in the recruitment phase . It includes information about the different majors, minors and specializations across the five academic divisions of the College. Since the College offers over 60 different programs it would be nearly impossible and

very costly to design an individual brochure for each program. The majors brochure offers accepted students a glimpse of the programs within each division and the contact information for each division chair, encouraging them to call or set up a visit to discuss the specific programs in more detail. The publication is updated yearly, in November and December with a January delivery.

The majors brochure is mailed to accepted students beginning in February and continuing throughout March and April. It is accompanied by a personalized letter from the Vice President of Academic Affairs, save the date sheet for accepted students' events and is packaged in an envelope. The piece is primarily used as a mailer but may be given out at certain on campus events as needed. The majors brochure quantity can vary from year to year based on the enrollment team's needs but is generally 2,500 or 3,000 pieces.

*It is important to note that as the accepted student mailings begin to overlap to accepted students, more than one publication may be mailed together (i.e., the financial aid brochure and the majors brochure) with a different personalized letter from an administrator incorporating reference to both publications.

Visitor's Guide

The visitor's guide is a brochure including a campus map highlighting the College's main departments and directions to campus. The publication is used in confirmation mailings to prospective students for campus events, as a guide for campus visitors, and other usages as the need arises.

The updating and printing of the visitor's guide varies. The piece has a longer shelf-life than most other publications given that it only needs updating if major changes to the physical structure of the campus (i.e., a new building) take place. Appropriate updates are made and the visitor's guide inventory is periodically monitored and re-ordered as necessary.

Special Programs Brochures

Special programs brochures are designed and printed for programs including the honors program, the higher education opportunity program and the pathways program (a mentoring program for students with certain learning disabilities).

The design, updating and printing of these brochures vary depending upon changes in programs, the need for updated photos and/or profiles, and planned campaigns to recruit for different programs throughout a recruitment cycle. The special programs brochures' inventories are periodically monitored to ensure that there is always a working stock of each brochure for the enrollment team to use for recruitment. Specific quantities are ordered of a particular brochure if they are to be used in mailings to high school students, guidance offices or different target populations.

Recruit Cards

Recruit cards are business reply, index-type cards that are used during travel engagements for prospective students to provide their contact information to the institution and be added to the mailing list. Recruit cards can be given to admissions staff in-person or they can be mailed back to the institution at a later time, given their business reply design.

The marketing team designs the recruit card with the appropriate information (name, address, telephone, e-mail, high school, graduation year, interest, and internal codes for the staff's purposes) and then sends it to an external printing vendor to be produced. The recruit cards are updated as needed and the inventory is monitored by the lead enrollment marketer prior to travel seasons to ensure the admissions staff has enough for their travel engagements.

Miscellaneous

The lead enrollment marketer is also responsible for designing and ordering business cards and nametags as needed for the enrollment team.

PROMOTIONAL GIVEAWAYS & PACKAGING MATERIAL

The promotional giveaways for admissions events and the packaging material used to hand out information are determined by the lead enrollment marketer and the Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing. The giveaways are chosen based on cost, storability, the ability to neatly package the item with the other materials given out at events, and attractiveness for the prospective student audience. Similarly, the packaging material, such as folders, envelopes and/or bags for guidance, open house and acceptance packets, are chosen based on size appropriateness, cost, storability and the attractiveness for the audience.

Promotional giveaways and packaging material are ordered in the summer for the entire recruitment year. Based on analysis of past years' events, the lead enrollment marketer and Dean determine the needs for the upcoming year. It is the responsibility of the lead enrollment

marketer to work with the Admissions Records Supervisor to check inventories of all giveaways and packaging materials prior to placing any new orders. Most giveaways and packaging materials can be repeated from year to year since the prospective student audience is new each year. However, new possibilities and changes are reviewed each summer to ensure that the giveaways and materials are continuing to meet the needs of the enrollment team, are effective part in marketing to the prospective students, and their families and reaching the guidance community.

Currently, gold and maroon portfolio envelopes are ordered for guidance packets and event packets. Guidance packets hold the publications and material given to the guidance offices during recruitment visits. Event packets include the materials and giveaway for each student that attends an open house, accepted students day, etc. The promotional giveaway for each event is discussed in the admissions events section.

ADMISSIONS EVENTS

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for supporting admissions events in the planning stage. In the past the admissions point person responsible for each individual admissions event handled the invites, programs, giveaways, and packets. Since different admissions staff planned each event there was a lack of uniformity among the materials for each event. Now with the lead enrollment marketer responsible for this material for all admissions events, there is a uniform look and theme throughout, enabling more effective, consistent marketing efforts for prospective students and their parents who attend the events.

Open House Events

For each of the open houses the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for the open house invitation piece (covered in the publications section), the creation and printing of the program for the day of the event, the promotional item (i.e., water bottle, lanyard, etc.) that is given to each prospective student in attendance, and any other supporting materials that are needed for the open house packets.

- o Open House Program

The open house program is an in-house print job created by the marketing team and sent to an outside vendor for printing. One program is printed in the fall for both the October and November open houses and one program is printed in the spring for the April open house. The open house program is an 8.5" x 11", 4-page booklet printed on cream cardstock with maroon ink. It includes a letter from the dean thanking the prospective students and their families for visiting the open house event, an event schedule listing the day's speakers, sessions and special programs, and a contact list of the admissions staff, with each of the recruiters travel territories, and the financial aid staff, including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses on the back cover.

The lead enrollment marketer works with the admissions point person(s) responsible for the open house events to ensure the information in the program is accurate. The fall open house program is designed, proofed and ready to print by September 15 (before the admissions staff is out of the office recruiting). This process is subject to change in time based on the dates of the fall open houses which usually fall the third Sunday in October

and the second Sunday in November. The quantity is determined prior to each event based on the expected attendance of prospective students and their families.

The spring open house program is designed and proofed approximately one month prior to the spring open house. The spring open house is generally towards the end of April. The quantity is determined prior to each event based on the expected attendance of prospective students and their families.

- o Promotional Giveaway

For the 2007-2008 open houses the promotional giveaway is a lanyard with the St. Thomas Aquinas College logo. The lanyards are a popular item with prospective students, store easily given their size, package nicely in the portfolio envelopes used for open house events, and are cost-effective. Typically, prospective students only attend one St. Thomas Aquinas College open house either in the spring of their junior year or the fall of the senior year. This allows the marketing team to use the same promotional giveaway for open houses from year to year with little chance that a student will receive the same item twice.

- o Other Supporting Material

The marketing team provides the admissions staff with additional material as needed for the open house events each year. This material varies at time and includes, but is not limited to: the up-to-date College community listing, room signs, inserts for the program, etc.

Accepted Students Day

For the accepted students day event, usually held in April, the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for the accepted students day invitations, the creation and printing of the program for the day of the event, the promotional item that is given to each prospective student in attendance, and any other supporting materials that are needed for the accepted students day packets.

- Accepted Students Day Invitation

The accepted students day invitation is a card with the College's seal and the details for the luncheon and event. The card is designed in-house by the marketing team, reviewed by the admissions staff member(s) responsible for the event, and printed by an outside vendor chosen by the lead enrollment marketer. The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for the timely delivery of the invitations and accompanying response card and envelope to the admissions staff for their mailing to accepted students.

Typically, the invitations are created and reviewed in January, printed in early February and delivered, along with the envelopes and response card, by February 15 in advance of admissions late February/early March mailing. Quantity for the invitations is determined based on the expected number of accepted students prior to the event.

- Accepted Students Day Program

The accepted students day program is an in-house print job created by the marketing team and sent to an outside vendor for printing. The program is formatted the same as the open house program to keep a continuous look throughout the recruitment cycle. It is an

8.5” x 11”, 4-page booklet printed on cream cardstock with maroon ink. It includes a letter from the Dean thanking the accepted students and their families for coming to the accepted students and what to expect in the coming months, an event schedule listing the day’s speakers, sessions and special programs, and a contact list of the admissions staff, with each of the recruiters travel territories, and the financial aid staff, including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses on the back cover.

The lead enrollment marketer works with the admissions point person(s) responsible for the accepted students day event to ensure the information in the program is accurate and any changes to the event schedule or layout are incorporated. The accepted students day program is designed, proofed and ready to print by late February. The programs are delivered to the admissions office by March 15. The quantity is determined prior to each accepted students day event based on the expected attendance of accepted students and their families.

- o Promotional Giveaway

The 2008 accepted students day promotional giveaway is a maroon junior padfolio with the St. Thomas Aquinas College logo embossed on the cover. The junior padfolio is an attractive, high-quality yet cost-effective item that packages nicely in the portfolio envelopes used for the event. Typically, accepted students attend more than one event throughout the spring. As a result, the promotional items for each accepted students event must be different. The junior padfolio accompanies the other giveaways given to accepted students. Although the marketing team can not repeat the junior padfolio for

numerous events within one year, they can use the junior padfolio from year to year as the accepted students group is new each year.

- Other Supporting Material

The marketing team provides the admissions staff with additional material as needed for the accepted students day event each year. This material varies at times and includes, but is not limited to: the up-to-date College community listing, room signs, inserts for the program, etc.

Scholarship Reception

For the scholarship reception, usually held in March, the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for the creation and printing of the program for the event, the promotional item that is given to each accepted student in attendance, and the certificate paper and folder awarded to each accepted scholarship student.

- Scholarship Reception Program

The scholarship reception program is an in-house print job created by the marketing team and sent to an outside vendor for printing. The program is formatted similar to the open house and accepted students day programs to keep a continuous look throughout the recruitment cycle. It is an 5.5" x 8.5", 4-page booklet printed on cream cardstock with maroon ink. It includes a letter from the Dean congratulating the accepted scholarship student on their hard work and thanking them for attending the event, an event schedule listing the evening's speakers activities and a contact list of the admissions and the financial aid staffs on the back cover.

The lead enrollment marketer works with the admissions point person(s) responsible for the scholarship reception event to ensure the information in the program is accurate and any changes to the event schedule or layout are incorporated. The scholarship program is designed, proofed and ready to print by early February. The programs are delivered to the admissions office by February 15. The quantity is determined prior to each scholarship reception based on the expected attendance of accepted scholarship students and their families.

- Promotional Giveaway

The 2008 scholarship reception promotional giveaway is a maroon executive padfolio with the St. Thomas Aquinas College logo embossed on the cover (this padfolio is a larger version of the junior padfolio given at accepted students day so if a student attends both events, they have a paired set). The executive padfolio serves as an attractive item for this group and is still cost-effective because the pool of accepted scholarship students attending the reception is less than those attending the general accepted students day.

- Certificate Paper & Folders

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for designing the certificate paper, overseeing its printing, and ordering the folders to accompany each students' certificate. The certificate paper and folders are typically designed and ordered in early January and delivered by early February allowing time for the individualized certificates to be personalized and packaged in-house by the admissions staff.

Other Admissions Events

There are other admissions events throughout the recruitment year such as open campus days, the basketball event, and financial aid workshops. These events are smaller in size and are mostly handled by the admissions and/or financial aid point person responsible for each.

However, the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for the promotional giveaways, if any are used, for each of these other events. The promotional giveaways for these events are ordered in the summer at the same time as the giveaways for the year's recruitment events and quantities are determined accordingly. Occasionally, an event comes up throughout the year that was not previously planned for. In that situation, the lead enrollment marketer works with the appropriate member(s) of the enrollment team to order any necessary promotional items in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for providing any additional supporting materials (i.e., publications, flyers, reference sheets) that may be needed for other admissions events.

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING IN EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

There are numerous companies that offer advertising and services specifically for higher education institutions that directly target high school students and the high school guidance communities. Some companies offer packages including print advertisements in their magazine or guidebook, an online component on their website and a response card, either mail based or web based, allowing the students to request information from the specific institutions. The

purpose of these companies' services is to generate responses which become recruits for the institutions. Institutions purchasing these services can target high school students in particular geographic areas. The service costs widely range depending upon the type of package the institution chooses and the extent of geographic regions they wish to reach.

The marketing team, under the direction of the Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing, carefully analyzes the purchasing of education publications and services because some of the responses received back are unqualified. Although many high school students are reached by these various publications and websites, the College does not have any control over the quality of the students that request information in turn. For example, a student requesting information may not have real interest in St. Thomas Aquinas College, they are simply requesting information from random institutions because the services make it easy to do so. The enrollment team then must spend time and money uploading these students into the database and including them in the mailing campaigns. Based on data analysis of past years, the marketing team has found that a majority of responses from these services do not turn into enrolled students. Therefore, the marketing team now purchases the services of a select few education publication companies that have proven to meet enrollment needs in the most effective ways. The lead enrollment marketer explores different and new opportunities for advertising each year and makes decisions based on analysis from the Dean of Enrollment Management and the upcoming needs of the enrollment team.

Below is a list of education publications that the College currently advertises in:

School Guide and College Conference Manuals

School Guide is published once a year in the summer and is distributed to guidance offices primarily in the northeast region. Institutions choose the regions in which they want to advertise. School Guide also has a website wherein institutions participating in print advertising also have an online profile.

The lead enrollment marketer meets with a representative from School Guide each February to plan advertising for the following recruitment year. For the 2007-2008 year, St. Thomas Aquinas College purchased a full page color ad in the New York City Metro and New Jersey region School Guides.

The College Conference Manuals are a series of newspapers published in conjunction with several regional college fairs in the fall and spring. Institutions choose which College Conference Manuals they wish to advertise in. The College generally advertises in the College Conference Manuals that are run in conjunction with the college fairs that admissions representatives are scheduled to attend.

For the fall 2007 recruitment season St. Thomas Aquinas College is scheduled to advertise in the Rockland, Westchester and Long Island editions in New York and the Bergen edition in New Jersey. The lead enrollment marketer schedules the advertising for the spring and fall College Conference Manuals when they meet with the representative in February of each year based on the Admissions anticipated recruitment schedules. The editions advertised in vary from year to year based on the recruitment schedules.

The lead enrollment marketer makes the ad placement decisions based upon the Admissions staff's anticipated recruitment schedules. If recruitment areas are changing or expanding, the lead enrollment marketer evaluates the value of adding or adjusting ad placement in the College Conference Manuals depending on availability.

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for working with the external design agency to create appropriate ads for the School Guide publication and each of the College Conference Manuals and for submitting those ads according to deadlines.

Next Step Magazine

Next Step Magazine is a 4-color publication targeted towards high school students looking at higher education institutions. The magazine is published about every two months and distributed to high school students who are on Next Step's mailing lists as well as high school guidance offices. Next Step also has a website in conjunction with their print magazine and a web lead generator component wherein high school students can electronically request more information from specific institutions. Next Step publishes different versions of their magazine for different geographic regions. Institutions can choose to advertise in specific geographic regions based on their recruitment needs.

Each year in June the lead enrollment marketer meets (via telephone or in person) with the representative from Next Step to plan the advertising for the upcoming recruitment year. For the 2007-2008 year, St. Thomas Aquinas College is scheduled to place a full page ad for the New

York region in the September/October issues (promoting the fall open houses), in the January/February issue (promoting personal visits and applications), and in the March/April issue (promoting the spring open house). The College is also signed up for the featured online package on Next Step's website which includes a full page profile with a photo and link to the College's home website, categorical listings for all of the College's programs, and the online lead generator program. The College receives monthly reports tracking the activity on their page of Next Step's website as well as the information for prospective student leads. The lead enrollment marketer works with the Admissions Data Entry Supervisor to ensure the prospective student leads from Next Step's online generator are being uploaded in a timely manner.

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for working with the external design agency to create appropriate ads for each of the Next Step Magazine issues and for submitting those ads according to deadlines. The lead enrollment marketer also handles the updating of the featured online profile on Next Step's website.

Peterson's

Peterson's offers a print publication with informational listings and a website with online profiles and informational listings for higher education institutions. Through their website, Peterson's also has an online lead generator that provides prospective students the opportunity to request information and subsequently Peterson's sends those students' contact information to the participating institution.

Each year the lead enrollment marketer reviews the new Peterson's contract and updates the College's information for the print and online listings. For the 2007-2008 year St. Thomas Aquinas College has both a print listing and an online profile. The leads generated by the online profile are e-mailed to the Admissions Data Entry Supervisor for uploading to the College's database system. It is the responsibility of the lead enrollment marketer to stay in contact with the Data Entry Supervisor to ensure leads are being received appropriately.

Peterson's sends a survey to all participating institutions each summer. This survey includes questions and requests for statistical information about the institutions and their enrollment. It is the responsibility of the lead enrollment marketer to work with the necessary College departments and the Director for Institutional Research to ensure the survey is completed accurately and returned on time as Peterson's uses the survey information in the print and online listings.

ADVERTISING IN NEWSPAPERS

The marketing team uses newspaper advertising to promote the three undergraduate open houses each recruitment year. The newspapers are selected based on the geographic regions that are being targeted for each open house event. The College also advertises in special sections of newspapers focused on education and/or other related areas that target the market they are trying to reach.

The lead enrollment marketer meets (either via telephone or in-person) with the ad rep from each of the main newspapers every summer. During each of those meetings the general advertising

plans for the recruitment year are sketched out, special section opportunities are discussed, and contract levels are determined. The lead enrollment marketer is then in continual contact with each ad rep to ensure specific dates, zones and proper placement of ad materials for each run. It is the responsibility of the lead enrollment marketer to work with the ad reps and the external design agencies to create and direct placement of all undergraduate recruitment advertising.

Generally, the following newspapers are advertised in:

1. *The Journal News*

The Journal News is a daily newspaper that covers Rockland, Westchester and Putnam Counties in New York. Advertisers have the option of running ads in the Rockland zone (covering all of Rockland County), the Southern zone (covering lower Westchester County), the Central zone (covering central Westchester County), the Northern zone (covering northern Westchester County and all of Putnam County), the Westchester and Putnam zone (including the southern, central and northern zones), or full run of press which includes all zones. The College runs ads for the undergraduate open houses in different zones based on the target market for the particular events. For most open houses ads are run at least two times in each zone. The College also places ads in *The Journal News*' special sections including, but not limited to, *Education Outlook*, *How to Guide*, *Living Here*, and occasionally *Rockland Magazine*.

2. *The Record* (and *Herald News*)

The Record is a daily newspaper that covers Bergen County, New Jersey. The *Herald News* is published by the same parent company and covers Passaic County, New Jersey. The College mostly advertises in *The Record* to promote undergraduate open houses but advertises in both for

certain special sections such as the fall sports previews. Typically between six and eight ads are run in *The Record* prior to each of the open houses.

3. *The Times Herald Record*

The *Times Herald Record* is a daily newspaper that covers the Hudson Valley Region and Catskills in New York (including Orange, Ulster and Sullivan Counties). The College runs ads promoting the undergraduate open houses in the *Times Herald Record* and participates in special sections including the *Back to School Issue* and *How to Guide*. Typically between six and eight ads are run in the Times Herald Record prior to each of the open houses.

4. *Catholic New York*

Catholic New York is a bi-weekly newspaper serving the Catholic communities in Manhattan, Staten Island, the Bronx, Rockland, Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties in New York. The College runs ads prior to the fall and spring undergraduate open houses (typically six ads prior to the October and November open houses and four ads prior to the spring open house).

5. *Long Island Catholic*

The *Long Island Catholic* is a bi-weekly newspaper serving the Catholic communities on Long Island (Nassau & Suffolk Counties and some distribution in Kings County). The College runs ads prior to the fall and spring undergraduate open houses (typically two ads prior to the October and November open houses and two ads prior to the spring open house).

In addition to having advertising contracts with these newspapers, the lead enrollment marketer will explore different advertising opportunities with other newspaper outlets based on the needs of the enrollment team and the enrollment goals for any particular time.

NICHE ADVERTISING

Niche advertising in the enrollment field is a term used for advertisements that are placed in counselor association publications, publications produced for specific local, regional, and national fairs, college-related publications produced by school districts and/or counties, etc. Generally, this genre of advertising is cheaper than print advertising in newspapers and it directly targets the higher education markets of guidance counselors, prospective students and their families. The marketing team runs advertisements in these various publications based on their availability and the extent to which each publication meets the needs of the enrollment team and recruitment goals at the particular time in the recruitment cycle.

The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for keeping up-to-date with the various opportunities for niche advertising in the admissions team's recruitment regions. The decision to place advertisements is made by the lead enrollment marketer and the Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing. Once the decision is made to place advertisements, the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for working with the external design agency to create appropriate advertisements, direct placement with the publishing organizations and meet all related deadlines.

Currently, the enrollment marketing team runs recruitment advertisements with county, state, and regional counselor organizations in New York and New Jersey, with Laurel Publications based in Long Island, NY, with Guidance Expo and Steps to a School Choice based in Westchester, NY, with the National Association of College Admissions Counselors which produces publications for national fairs throughout the country, and with other organizations as opportunities arise.

RADIO ADVERTISING

Currently, the marketing team schedules little radio advertising due to limited budgeting for radio. The lead enrollment marketer explores radio advertising opportunities periodically and maintains contact with radio advertising representatives should the decision be made to run radio commercials. It is also the responsibility of the lead enrollment marketer to write, organize recording (in the case of student testimonials) and schedule radio ads as needed.

Typically, the marketing team runs radio commercials on WRCR 1300am, a local Rockland County station, two weeks prior to each undergraduate open house, in January for a personal visit program, and in July for the summer visit program.

TELEVISION ADVERTISING

The College periodically runs television ads promoting open house events. The decision to run television advertising is made by the Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing and the lead enrollment marketer based on the specific enrollment needs and goals and allotted budget at a particular time in the recruitment cycle. When the decision is made to run a television ad campaign, the lead enrollment marketer is responsible for writing the scripts, working with the

external production agency and overseeing placement of television ads. The television ad campaigns are generally run on local cable stations, including, but not limited to, Cablevision, MTV, and other affiliates.

BUILDING INTERNAL SUPPORT

Enrollment Management Committee

The College has an Enrollment Management Committee which the Dean for Enrollment Management and Marketing chairs with representatives from the following departments: admissions, financial aid, marketing, the registrar's office, athletics, student life and housing, technology and retention, and the College's Treasurer, Vice President for Academic Affairs and President. The committee meets monthly and each meeting serves as a forum to discuss matters related to enrollment at the College.

The lead enrollment marketer prepares and presents the marketing report for each meeting to keep the committee members, and the staff and faculty they represent, informed of the enrollment marketing initiatives at the College. Dates for enrollment events are discussed and confirmed at the Enrollment Management meetings. All relevant enrollment marketing information is shared with the President of the College prior to the Enrollment Management meetings allowing the President to make adjustments and changes before the information is shared with the committee.

College Day

College Day is an annual event the President hosts every September for all employees. It serves as a forum for all departments to share their news, new employees, upcoming events, and information for the academic year. The Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing presents the enrollment and marketing reports and shares all of the enrollment event dates with the community. In addition to the report the Dean expresses to employees that they are welcome to speak with him, the director of admissions and/or the lead enrollment marketer to discuss enrollment initiatives throughout the year. It serves as a way of opening the door to the College community, keeping them informed and helps maintain support for the enrollment team.

Working with Faculty Division Chairs

The lead enrollment marketer has to work with faculty division chairs on projects throughout the year to ensure that the academic listings are accurate. The majors brochure is one publication that requires work with the faculty division chairs because the publication includes a letter from each division chair to prospective students. In order to keep the process running smoothly, it is the responsibility of the lead enrollment marketer to have the publication designed and filled with as much content as possible before meeting with the division chairs. The proof is then given to each division chair to review and make appropriate changes. For the majors brochure, the division chairs have the option of writing the letter included in the publication themselves or having the marketing team write the letter for their review to make updates.

This method of providing a proof rather than allowing the faculty division chairs to be involved in the early creative processes works well for both marketing and faculty and is the process used

for most publications or projects that require faculty input. The division chairs are already bogged down with various responsibilities and it is easier for them to review a proof rather than create something from scratch. Similarly, it allows the marketing team to maintain quality control over each piece and ensure that it is in line with the complete publication family.

COLLEGE WEBSITE

Currently, the technical aspect of the College's website is handled by the in-house Information Technology (IT) team. The content of the website pages is monitored by individuals in various College departments dependent upon their areas of responsibility. The communications team works with the IT team and the various College departments, sometimes as a liaison, to oversee and update general content and photo images.

The lead enrollment marketer works with the Director of Admissions and the Dean for Enrollment Management & Marketing to monitor and update the content specifically related to the recruitment of undergraduate students, including all pages directly linked to the prospective students page. Open house dates, personal visit and tour dates and times, other admissions event dates, and all other date-sensitive information related to recruitment are continually monitored and updated as necessary for the website. The lead enrollment marketer, Admissions Director and Dean periodically meet to strategize about ways to improve the use of the College's website for recruitment purposes. When the need arises and when appropriate, these three are responsible for submitting proposals for website changes and updates to the head of the IT team, Vice President of Administration, and President of the College. Furthermore, the lead enrollment marketer takes an active role in monitoring the entire website as many prospective

students and their families search different pages during a college search, not only those related to prospective students' webpages.

The design of the College website is not outsourced to an external design agency as with most all of the College's recruitment publications. As a result, the design of the College website does not perfectly match the overall theme of the information prospective students receive from the Admissions' staff during their recruitment visits or the information received by mail. Using the tools available, the lead enrollment marketer provides the IT team with content and photos drawn from the publications and information being used in the recruitment cycle. However, until the College approves the outsourcing of the website to an external design agency that handles the other recruitment materials, the enrollment team continues to handle the website working with the IT team as described. If and when outsourcing of the website is approved, the lead enrollment marketer is the key person responsible for handling that process under the direction of the Dean.

MEDIA RELATIONS

The enrollment marketing team uses media relations methods, or non-paid advertising, in their recruitment efforts. The lead enrollment marketer is responsible for drafting, reviewing and distributing press releases regarding admissions events, scholarship opportunities, decision days, and any other newsworthy happenings related to recruitment. Event press releases are generally distributed one month prior to each scheduled event. Other press releases regarding admissions are distributed in a timely manner as determined by the lead enrollment marketer.

The lead enrollment marketer serves as the point person for media contacts and works with the media on stories related to higher education and make arrangements for interviews and photos as necessary.

BUDGETS

The advertising and printing budgets for the enrollment team are monitored by the lead enrollment marketer, under the direction of the Dean for Enrollment Management and Marketing. The College's fiscal year begins in July and ends and June. It is important for the lead enrollment marketer to carefully plan ahead for the entire recruitment year because a substantial amount of both the advertising and printing allotted budgets are used in the first half of the fiscal year, given the nature of the recruitment cycle.

The advertising budget is divided into categories: advertising agencies; education publications; newspapers; radio; and other. The overall enrollment-related advertising budget is about \$220,000. Advertising agencies is allotted approximately \$35,000; education publications is \$20,000; newspapers is \$110,000; radio advertising is \$20,000; and other advertising is \$35,000. Although each category has a different amount allotment, the Dean and lead enrollment marketer have discretion throughout the year to move funds among categories with the approval of the Vice President for Financial Affairs as long as the overall advertising budget is balanced at the end of the fiscal year. Advertising funds may be moved around given the particular, and sometimes unpredictable, needs of the enrollment team throughout the recruitment cycle.

The recruitment printing budget is an overall category is recruitment printing which covers most design work and actual printing production costs for recruitment publications. The approximate budget is \$170,000. The Dean and Admissions Director oversee the general enrollment printing budget and the mailing/postage budget and work with the lead enrollment marketer to ensure that the packaging materials needed for publications and their subsequent mailings to prospective students remain on target. Likewise, the Dean and Admissions Director oversee other related enrollment budgets, such as the promotional material and event budgets, and work with the lead enrollment marketer to monitor and maintain those target budgetary figures.

The Dean for Enrollment Management and Marketing is ultimately responsible for overseeing all budgets related to enrollment and enrollment marketing. The Dean requests the appropriate increases and changes each fiscal year based on his analysis and the analysis and input of his leadership team. Generally, paid media vendors increase their rates yearly. The Dean and lead enrollment marketer must monitor these increases in order to request appropriate budget increases to maintain the same levels of various advertising year to year and accommodate for changes in advertising plans. The Dean and lead enrollment marketer must anticipate the amount and costs of printing for recruitment publications prior to each fiscal year to request appropriate budget changes and/or increases to the recruitment printing budget to support and carry the enrollment team throughout the year.

ASSESSMENT OF THE MARKETING PLAN

There are various interdependent components to the strategic enrollment marketing plan. Therefore the components must be evaluated on an individual basis and as a whole because,

ultimately, the final assessment of the plan is based on achievement, or lack thereof, of the undergraduate recruitment goals. Given the nature of assessment, the individual components are monitored and assessed throughout each fiscal year, allowing for needed adjustments. While the overall assessment is completed toward the close of the recruitment year as the undergraduate class is finalized. The Dean for Enrollment Management provides the enrollment team with various reports tracking recruits, applicants and accepts over various categories (demographic and personal information) and comparing the numbers with past years, tracking attendance at events, and other related informational reports about every two weeks. These reports are used as benchmarks for assessing marketing efforts individually and overall.

Individual component assessment is based on different factors for different components. Factors used in component assessment include: effectiveness at its purpose, ease of usability, cost analysis, how the individual component fits into the complete marketing plan. While cost and ease of usability are straightforward determinations, effectiveness and how one component fits into the overall plan are more difficult to assess. For example, how can the lead enrollment marketer accurately tell whether a high percentage of Long Island high school students attend an open house because of the advertising in the local papers in that region or because an admissions counselor visited numerous high schools. Although related questions are asked on open house surveys, the results are not all-telling, and many times multiple factors play a role. Therefore, the lead enrollment marketer must assess with a “grain of salt” and keep in mind the complex nature of marketing to and recruiting prospective students when assessing individual components.

Monitoring of individual components allows the marketing team to tweak the plan as it is being carried out. For example, if the attendance at the October open house is lower than expected even though all parts of the plan for open house were carried out the marketing team can tweak and build upon pre-planned initiatives for the November open house in efforts to boost attendance and reach the overall desired results for both fall open houses. This type of individual monitoring, assessment and changeability built into the plan is necessary in order to effectively reach overall goals.

When the marketing plan is wholly assessed at the close of a recruitment year complete strategy is analyzed by the lead enrollment marketing, the Dean and other members of the enrollment team. The overall picture is evaluated through the analysis of the enrollment results. Questions asked include: did we reach the different target audiences we planned to; did we miss any targets; did we spend money in the right places; should we add, detract, or change what we are doing in any areas of marketing; what worked and what did not work; etc. The individual component assessments are used with the analysis of the enrollment results to guide the enrollment team for the next recruitment year.

2007-2008 STRATEGIC MARKETING TIMELINE

Attached is a practical application of the strategic undergraduate enrollment marketing plan in the form of a timeline for the 2007-2008 recruitment year.

Category 2	Category 3	Description
Viewbook		Finalize all viewbook edits and make final approval for printing.
Education Publications	Next Step Magazine	Meet with Next Step Ad representative to plan advertising, in print and online, for the 07-08 recruitment year. Choose ad placement dates and sign contract for upcoming year.
Promotional Items		Review inventories of promotional items, price and make decisions on which items will be used for 2007-0808 events, and place orders.
Events	Open House	Work with designer on Fall Open House Invite piece, finalize edits, and place order with chosen printing vendor for August delivery.
Special Programs Brochures		Periodic review of special programs brochures inventory. Decisions to update and re-order made as necessary.
Education Publications	Next Step Magazine	Work with designer to set up ad for September/October Issue of Next Step Magazine and send finalized ad to representative.
Viewbook	Mailing	Viewbooks completed and delivered to Admissions Office. Coordinate with admissions, mailhouse and printer to have all mailing materials printed and delivered as needed for September Viewbook mailing.
Travel Piece		Finalize travel piece for mid-August delivery.
Open House		Design fall open house program and circulate proof to appropriate admissions staff members.
Open House	Mailing	Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse to have all mailing materials printed and delivered for September Fall Open House Invite mailing.
College Day		Prepare enrollment marketing report for September College Day event.
Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for September Enrollment Management meeting.

September-07	Media Relations	Open House		Write and distribute press release to standard media distribution list for October Open House event.
September-07	Media Relations	Open House		Write and distribute October Open House news flyer and open house invitation piece to Catholic parishes in the NJ and NY regions.
September-07	Advertising	Newspapers		Plan ad schedules for fall open houses with major newspaper outlets and work with designer to set up appropriate ads for each outlet.
September-07	Advertising	Radio		Write October open house radio commercial and schedule slate with WRRCR 1300 AM for two weeks prior to October Open House.
September-07	Events	Open House		Finalize fall open house program and place order with printing vendor.
September-07	Publications	Financial Aid Brochure		Begin editorial process with appropriate individuals. Begin work with graphic designer on financial aid brochure.
September-07	Events	Open House		Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse to have all mailing materials printed and delivered for October Fall Open House Invite mailing.
September-07	Budgets			Conduct quarterly review (July through September) of advertising and printing budgets to ensure the numbers are on target.
October-07	Internal Communications	Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for October Enrollment Management meeting.
October-07	Media Relations	Open House		Write and distribute press release to standard media distribution list for November Open House event.
October-07	Media Relations	Open House		Write and distribute November open house news flyer and open house invitation piece to Catholic parishes in the NJ and NY regions.
October-07	Assessment	Events	Open House	Review October Open House outcomes and make applicable changes or adjustments for the November Open House. Record results for future reference.

Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for November Enrollment Management meeting.
Majors Brochure		Begin editorial process of majors brochure with the academic division chairs and VP for Academic Affairs. Being work with graphic designer.
Financial Aid Brochure		Finalize financial aid brochure with designer, price out printing vendors, and place order with chosen vendor.
Open House		Review November Open House outcomes and record results and any applicable notes for future reference.
Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for December Enrollment Management meeting.
Communication Publications	Next Step Magazine	Work with designer to set up ad for January/February Issue of Next Step Magazine and send finalized ad to representative.
Majors Brochure		Finalize majors brochure with designer, price out printing vendors, and place order with chosen printing vendor.
Viewbook		Meet with marketing team to make decision to redesign or refresh for next year's viewbook. Contact external creative agency and plan appropriate production timeline.
Financial Aid Brochure	Mailing	Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse as necessary to have all materials needed for initial financial aid brochure mailing delivered to appropriate locations.
Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Conduct quarterly review (October through December) of advertising and printing budgets to ensure the numbers are on target.
Open House		Prepare enrollment marketing report for January Enrollment Management meeting. Begin work with graphic designer on spring 2008 open house invitation.

January-08	Events	Accepted Students Day		Design and circulate proof of Accepted Students Day 2008 invitation.
January-08	Events	Scholarship Reception		Design and circulate proof of Scholarship Reception 2008 program.
January-08	Publications	Majors Brochure	Mailing	Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse as necessary to have all materials needed for initial majors brochure mailing delivered to appropriate locations.
January-08	Publications	Viewbook		Begin necessary creative work for next year's viewbook.
February-08	Internal Communications	Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for February Enrollment Management meeting.
February-08	Advertising	Education Publications	School Guide & College Conference Manuals	Meet with representative from School Guide & College Conference Manuals to plan advertising for 2008 School Guide and Spring 2008 College Conference Manuals. Set deadlines and sign contracts.
February-08	Advertising	Education Publications	Next Step Magazine	Work with designer to set up ad for March/April Issue of Next Step Magazine and send finalized ad to representative.
February-08	Events	Scholarship Reception		Design and place order for certificate paper and order certificate holders for Scholarship Reception 2008.
February-08	Events	Open House	Mailing	Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse to have all mailing materials printed and delivered for March Spring Open House invite mailing.
February-08	Events	Scholarship Reception		Finalize proof of Scholarship Reception 2008 program and place order with printing vendor.
February-08	Events	Accepted Students Day		Finalize proof of Accepted Students Day 2008 invitation and place order with printing vendor.
February-08	Events	Accepted Students Day		Design Accepted Students Day 2008 program and circulate proof.
February-08	Publications	Viewbook		Continue work with external design agency for next year's viewbook.

Open House		Design spring open house program and circulate proof to appropriate admissions staff members.
Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for March Enrollment Management meeting.
Open House		Coordinate with admissions, printer and mailhouse to have all mailing materials printed and delivered for March Spring Open House Invite mailing.
Open House		Write and distribute press release to standard media distribution list for Spring Open House event.
Open House		Write and distribute Spring Open House news flyer and spring open house invitation piece to Catholic parishes in the NJ and NY regions.
Accepted Students Day		Finalize Accepted Students Day 2008 program and place order with printing vendor.
Open House		Finalize spring open house program and place order with printing vendor.
viewbook		Plan and schedule photography as needed for next year's viewbook.
newspapers		Plan ad schedules for fall open houses with major newspaper outlets and work with designer to set up appropriate ads for each outlet.
		Conduct quarterly review (January through March) of advertising and printing budgets to ensure the numbers are on target.
Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for April Enrollment Management meeting.
Education Publications	School Guide	Work with external design agency to create ad for 2008 School Guide booklet.
viewbook		Oversee photography for next year's viewbook and continue work with external design agency.
radio		Write spring open house radio commercial and schedule slate with WRGR 1300 AM for two weeks prior to Spring Open House.

May-08	Assessment Internal Communications	Events Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting	Open House	Review Spring Open House outcomes and record results for future reference.
May-08				Prepare enrollment marketing report for May Enrollment Management meeting.
May-08	Publications	Viewbook		Review initial proof of next year's viewbook and share proof with necessary internal parties. Continue editing as necessary.
May-08	Budgets			Analyze the advertising and printing budgets for the 07-08 year so far and make recommendations for the next year to ultimately be submitted to upper administration.
June-08	Internal Communications	Monthly Enrollment Management Meeting		Prepare enrollment marketing report for June Enrollment Management meeting.
June-08	Publications	Viewbook		Continue to review proofs of the viewbook, make necessary edits, and move towards final proofing stage.
June-08	Assessment			Look at all components of enrollment marketing plan to prepare for the upcoming recruitment year.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my proposed strategic undergraduate enrollment marketing plan is to serve as a guide for the marketing team in their efforts to support the over recruitment and enrollment efforts of the College. The plan offers general marketing strategy that can be adjusted to accommodate what the team needs to meet their enrollment goals for each recruitment year. Although the plan is not a direct action plan, it is the preface for one. This strategic marketing plan can be used to direct the actions of the marketing team.

Although I can discuss enrollment marketing strategy and ways for the marketing team to evaluate the effectiveness of that strategy, the overall success of the enrollment team is ultimately judged according to the attainment of enrollment goals across the board by individuals outside the enrollment team. Attainment of enrollment goals tends to be a subjective process. The upper administration and board of the College determine the definition of success for the enrollment team. Some years' success is enrolling in the largest class, while other years' success is enrolling in the most academically qualified class. Success is based upon the number and types of students enrolled in special programs, athletics, living in the dorms, and those receiving scholarships. The definition of success is complex and most times out of the hands of those trying to achieve that success.

Having worked in the trenches of enrollment for the past four years, in both the direct admissions and marketing sides, I have come to accept and work toward this external definition of success that we, as an enrollment team, are held responsible. However, I have also been taught, by those in the trenches with me, that our own internal success is largely determined by the way we operate and how we do our jobs, day-to-day, month-to-month, and year-to-year.

Internal success, and personal achievement for a team, is about having a plan of strategy and being able to execute that plan to the fullest. Internal success is the stepping stone for external success.

This was my motivation in writing the strategic enrollment marketing plan. I felt that writing out our marketing strategy and using it to layout an action plan for one recruitment year would be beneficial for the entire enrollment team in helping us achieve both internal and external success.

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