5-15-1972

The University of Dayton to Embark on Rigorous Recruiting Program

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Recommended Citation
"The University of Dayton to Embark on Rigorous Recruiting Program" (1972). News Releases. 4051.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/4051

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DAYTON, Ohio, May 15, 1972 -- As huge multi-campus, state-supported systems of higher education continue to spring up around this country, the private independent college is facing an enrollment crisis that seems to be threatening its existence. The University of Dayton is no exception.

In light of the current situation, UD is embarking on a rigorous recruiting program, a program which is spelling out the unique qualities of UD, the differences that this University offers the student. And, in order to accomplish this program, the entire University community has been called into action. The full-time recruiting done by the Admissions Office has been recognized as just a part of the effort rather than the whole of it. Every member of the University, faculty, administration, and students, are devising ways and means of attracting students to UD.

Some of the difficulties faced by UD in this effort encompasses problems that are affecting the entire private educational system: the depressed economy, inflation, and high unemployment; the educational process necessary to keep parents and high school counselors informed of current financial aid information; competition from junior and state colleges; lack of encouragement by some Catholic high schools for their students to attend college or to attend a Catholic college; desire of some students to work or travel rather than attend college; and cost versus educational return relatively between private and state colleges.

The current economic situation has caused UD to reform, to an extent, its recruitment efforts in two ways: strong local recruiting efforts so that prospective students can live at home, and, increased student aid and scholarship efforts so that students from all income family levels can be eligible for financial assistance.

It will only be through the ingenuity and cooperation of all members of UD that the enrollment crisis will be overcome.

ADMISSIONS OFFICE:

The traditional function of recruiting is still undertaken by the Admissions Office. But, in order to hit the 'new' student, techniques have changed.

"There is no such thing as a 'typical' student who comes to UD," states Dave Goode, Chicago area recruiter. Certain norms have appeared though. "Our students are usually from a middle-class family; they're first or second generation college; and they're usually from a private (Catholic) high school," Goode explained. And, although high school students are still interested in such things as the social life of the campus, cost seems to be the question most often heard by the recruiters. "We're trying to get across the idea that a loan is not a stigma. Actually, you can compare it to getting a loan for a car, except that the product you receive from an educational loan lasts for the rest of your life."

On the road, the recruiters have three types of presentations. There is the college night, sponsored by a high school and involving 50 to 100 colleges. Parents and students gather information and compare colleges in general. Group presentations are also held. Appointments are set up with a high school and the recruiter is able to delve into more specific information on UD with a number of students. The one-to-one presentation is the final type. Here, the recruiter sees the students one at a time, thereby allowing for more detailed information sharing.

In the Chicago area, Goode can see certain trends occurring. "Students want to go to small (2500 or less) liberal arts colleges," he explained. "The junior colleges are thriving, and there is a return to commuting to school. This would probably
cause a decrease in enrollment here at UD because the out-of-state students are staying in their state. And," he continued, "although commuting is the trend in the Chicago area, only one-seventh of UD's students are commuters."

To attract more Dayton-area students, financial aid programs that are geared toward these students are stressed. UD is also broadening Project Advancement, a program where high school students can take UD courses for credit during high school. These students are given a tuition reduction and if they attend UD, then the money is deducted from their freshman year. Other financially-backed proposals are being studied.

Goode feels that UD has an "image" problem in and around the city of Dayton. "When you get away from the city, UD has a fantastically good image. The city sees us in an identity crisis," he explained.

Another area that Admissions is trying to recruit from is the junior college graduates and transfer students.

According to Peg Rzetelny, UD attracts transfer students because of its size, because these students have friends here, and because UD has a liberal transfer policy.

Miss Rzetelny prizes the opinions of transfer students because "they have been in college and usually know more than an incoming freshman straight from high school."

I'm concentrating on the Dayton area junior college because these kids tend to be more pragmatic regarding cost, have set life styles, homes and friends, and will generally tend to stay in the area," she stated.

Some suggestions that Miss Rzetelny would like to see implemented are more relationships developed with junior colleges and colleges to attract students who have associate degrees, and scholarships for transfer students. Presently transfers are eligible for all financial aid except scholarships.

Brother Ralph Mravintz, S.M., director of Admissions, pointed out some of the qualities that UD is trying to project when recruiting.

"We're trying to sell our program, our regular and unique programs," he said. "We also stress the fact that our faculty here is tremendous and measures up to any college of comparative size. We also point out the location of the campus and of the city of Dayton. One of the things we try to get across," he continued, "is that UD is a good place to be--people can make mistakes here and learn from them."

One of the key elements that makes UD unique, Brother feels, is the Catholic nature of the university. By Catholic he means that UD "is under a religious order; it has a Judeo-Christian atmosphere; there is an attitude here that there are some moral premises; and that the courses have an orientation stating these facts."

"If we don't stress our Catholicity, we should not be in the business we're in. We have to have a value system. If you can get the same thing at other places, why should we be here? This might make us biased or prejudiced," he continued, "but if we lose these values, this attitude, why should you pay $1000 more to come here?" he asked.

DEPARTMENTS:

The Master of Business Administration in the School of Business Administration is doing a tremendous job attracting older students to the University. A large number of these graduate students are part-time from the Dayton area. Typically, they are around 26 years old and are returning after some work experience. Many are in middle management. There are some 400 in the program including a group studying at the Ashland Company in Columbus.

Dr. Norman George, head of the program, says that the program relies on advertising in local and outlaying media for its recruiting. This advertising is geared for the particular age group.

Much of the MBA's recruiting is done on the departmental level with staff assistance
from the University Relations Department. Much of their help comes from relaying information. "Any information on programs, accomplishments, is an effective method of recruiting," Dr. George stated.

Dr. George contemplates some advertising in the New York and Chicago papers for the purpose of recruiting full-time students to the program, either those students straight out of college or those returning.

On the undergraduate level, Business Administration is attracting students through its internship program, where department majors can work in community industries and agencies for academic credit.

In the School of Education, Dr. John O'Donnell feels that "it's a waste of a lot of time talking about programs to high school students—they really don't understand. They're interested in such things as the social life. Only a very few ask about the educational programs and the innovative programs. You've got to realize that many of these students come from reasonably traditional high schools," he explained. "And some, not many, are concerned about UD being Catholic," he added.

What Dr. O'Donnell thinks would really sell UD is "service and a touch of friendliness."

Special cooperative programs are into gear in many of the departments, attracting students who want more than classroom theory. The Technology Division of the School of Engineering is developing such a program and an educational/work experience program is being planned in the School of Engineering in which strong academically-oriented high school seniors study within the School and work on cooperative research within the Research Institute. This will pay as much as 85% of the student's four-year cost of education.

The faculty members of Engineering and its Technology division are in constant touch with high school seniors and junior college students in an effort for them to either matriculate to UD or to complete their total education here. This is done through personal contact, telephone calls, promotional booths at conventions and special shows, and through the mail.

Besides attracting students to the campus, two programs are taking UD to the people. MBA and Education, on the graduate level, are running educational centers in Columbus, Lima, and Springfield, allowing students to take courses for their master's degree without traveling all the way to the campus. These programs have grown with each semester. Other school systems and companies are showing an interest in participating.

ADMISSIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

"Think admissions! Promote recruitment!" This is the message of the Admissions Advisory Committee, which acts as a "clearinghouse for all members of the UD community," according to Dr. Joseph Kepes, chairman. It helps individuals who have any questions regarding admissions and recruiting and gives suggestions on possible areas to work on. Although the Committee has no formal authority of its own, it is composed of a cross-section of UD personnel, giving it much weight, and coordinates various activities by the power of persuasion. It is another method to encourage all at UD to participate in the recruiting process.

Because of its suggestions, a number of departments are beginning to recruit on their own.

The Committee has initiated the recruiting endeavor at an interesting starting point: UD's present students. In recent minutes of a meeting, it is stated: "To start with, we should consider our relationships with our current students.... Everybody has to be aware that it is part of the University's job to serve as well as to help educate our student body."

Some of the things that the Committee has recommended are: Appealing to black students; defining the unique qualities of UD vis-a-vis local universities; and helping all phases of the University to be student-oriented. It has discussed methods of reducing costs to students as a means of recruitment. All department chairmen, undergraduates, and local alumni and athletic groups have been contacted.
in an effort to get across the Committee's philosophy: "Admissions is something everybody should be involved with."

Some of the other areas the Committee is working on are foreign student enrollment, merit scholar students, and an evaluation of the reasons why UD's present students chose this University.

CONCLUSION:

What will be the future of the private independent college? The Newman Report on Higher Education asks:

What's happened to American higher education in the last twenty years? We have developed not only a tremendous number of state institutions, but we have developed these into very large multi-campus systems, which have changed the face of American higher education more than we had any idea. ... This becomes a force against diversity. Huge systems don't work well without a bureaucracy. There is very little leavening and competition in huge systems--no one allows units to compete with each other if they are in the same system. And in the future, the independent college will be playing a smaller and smaller role and these massive systems will be playing a larger and larger one.

If this is the case, then something must be done to insure that change, that this leavening, will occur in American higher education. And if the massive systems cannot do it, the responsibility of improving the higher educational system must logically be undertaken by the private independent colleges.

But if the institutions fail, what is left except huge, government-supported systems? What will happen to the dual system of education when there are no longer Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, or even non-denominational private colleges? The choice will no longer be there.

It will be a struggle, but the private universities are accepting this challenge. But it will only be through the imagination, daring, and cooperation of the private university's members that it will survive. The members of the UD community have realized this and have started working together so that in the future, college students will still have this choice.