

# Noel-Levitz Marketing and Recruitment Opportunities Analysis Results “Our Path Forward”

## **Initial Goals of the Marketing and Recruitment Opportunities Analysis**

- To provide an external analysis of USC Aiken’s marketing and recruitment practices for the enrollment of new students
  - Review recruitment plan
  - Review marketing plan
  - Review operation in admissions and marketing, including office structure/staffing, policies and procedures, and use of technology compared to best practices in our industry
- Identify areas in need of improvement in efficiency
- Analyze the actions of the offices in regards to complementing the University’s enrollment plan
- Goal six of the University’s Strategic Plan is to *develop and implement a strategic enrollment plan to attract and retain an increasingly diverse and qualified student body*. This evaluation is essential for us to meet this goal, which will essentially change the student body and our recruitment methods of identifying and reaching these students.

## **Results and Recommendations of the Marketing and Recruitment Opportunities Analysis by Noel-Levitz**

**Summary:** University needs to be more intentional in recruitment efforts including the types of students USC Aiken recruits. USC Aiken should develop long-term enrollment plans based on measurable outcomes (numbers). Next, the University should develop a plan that intertwines primary marketing strategies into communications for recruitment.

### **Recommendations:**

- Director of Admissions should write an abbreviated new student recruitment plan for Fall 2007 within 30-45 days (completed by mid-October)
- For the Fall 2007 cycle, immediate steps should be taken to expand SADI to capture and manage inquiry data along with applicant data within 30-45 days (completed by mid-October)
- Marketing and Admissions should map a communication contact plan for the 2007 cycle within 30-45 days (completed by mid-October)
- Comprehensive written recruitment plan should be developed for Fall 2008 by early to mid-Spring 2007
- USC Aiken must develop a written long-term strategic enrollment plan
  - Plan must have clear priorities and it is essential that numerical goals be established

- Plan must have clear and specific measurable goals for the number and mix of students the University seeks to enroll. Example of this could be:
  - Enroll a freshman class of 650
  - Enroll \_\_\_ # of students with SAT above \_\_, \_\_\_# with SAT between \_\_ and \_\_, and \_\_\_# of students with SAT below \_\_\_\_.
  - Enroll no more than \_\_\_ students with intended nursing major.
  - Enroll \_\_\_ # of minority students.
- Stemming from the strategic enrollment plan, an annual written recruitment plan must be developed
  - Plan should include targets for each stage of the recruitment funnel (prospect, inquiry, application, admit, confirmed, and enrolled).
  - Key recruitment strategies must be developed for each of the goals.
- University should purchase a third-party recruitment system (CRM – constituent relationship management) for the 2008-2010 recruitment cycles
- Establish a formal confirmation mechanism
- Consider eliminating the PGPA or at least eliminate this data entry until the confirmed stage of the funnel
- Admissions office should review its procedure, its need for detailed data entry at the applicant stage, and ensure that tasks are appropriate to the level of responsibility of the staff member.
- University should fully implement a territory management model of recruitment
- Marketing and Admissions should organize recruitment activities to generate inquiries. Next, the inquiries should be qualified, graded, and coded in the system
- Recruitment information system must be used to record all prospective student visitors
- All prospective student visitors should have the opportunity to meet with a USCA student and to have a guided-tour of campus
- All recruitment materials, which include all collateral from initial contact through the first day of class, should market as opposed to simply provide information
- Recruitment materials should focus on features and benefits as well as outcomes
- Website should be a recruitment marketing vehicle as opposed to being so information-heavy
- University should conduct an analysis of the historical success of its financial awards packages
- University should create a package that includes benefits such as membership in leadership group, automatic admissions to honors program, direct admit to professional majors, honors housing, etc.
- University should target highest ability populations in local market early in educational careers through name purchases, documentation of attendees of RPSEC programs, summer camps, etc.
- Involve alumni in recruiting
- Enrich campus life program to support additional on-campus residents and special efforts to involve those off-campus
- Consider a direct admit, provisional admit, and denials of admission into nursing program
- Request academic information on all inquiry forms, including phone request cards – additionally, all requests for social security numbers must be listed as optional

- University should develop a transfer enrollment funnel including strategies to meet transfer goals
- Athletic coaches should be able to let a recruit know whether he or she is admissible
- University should develop a short-term retention plan for the 2007 recruitment cycle establishing a percentage goal for first-time, full-time freshmen enrolled for Fall 2006 to return in Fall 2007 and a percentage goal for all other full-time students who returned in Fall 2006 to be retained for Fall 2007 within 30-45 days (completed by mid-October)
- University should write a retention plan for students enrolled in 2007-2008 year to influence retention and graduation rates, including numeric and percentage goals for first to second-year retention rates, five-year graduation rates, and retention of targeted populations such as honors students, commuters, minority students, undecided majors, students with poor academic preparation, etc.
- University should invest in ongoing professional photography
- University should increase sophistication in the design of our recruitment publications
- University should develop 2 additional recruitment publications: an educational outcomes piece focused on alumni and a piece for parents of prospective students
- Using market research, the University should develop the key marketing messages for prospective students
- University website should offer more online services to prospective students such as tuition cost calculators, financial aid estimators, and virtual tour
- University should consider the purchase of a web content management system

## **USC Aiken's Path Forward**

### **Our goals are to:**

- Become intentional about recruiting efforts and the types of students we recruit
- Make publications and website more recruitment-focused (3-year implementation goal)
  - Focus on features and benefits as well as outcomes
  - Less information-heavy, more marketing focused
  - Consistent brand and key messages through all recruitment pubs (this includes every piece from inquiry to the student's first day on campus)

### **Our immediate priorities:**

- Purchase of a CRM
- Develop and implement a communication cycle for Fall 2007
- Develop a communication plan for 2008-2010
- Develop a strategic enrollment plan for the upcoming 3-5 years
- Develop a strategic retention plan