



Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Admissions shifts to enrollment management

The distinction may not be important to many, but it is to Robert Johnson, vice provost of enrollment management, and his team. Where admissions is focused primarily on recruiting students, enrollment management addresses the entire process of effectively recruiting, enrolling and graduating students in a systematic and customer-friendly way. The enrollment management team currently consists of the Financial Aid, Admissions and Registrar offices.

OU's transition from an admissions model to enrollment management has happened over the last five years. Through a new enrollment management process:

- Enrollment has increased to more than 15,800 students as of fall 2001.
- Maintained average entering freshmen GPA and ACT score of 3.2 and 22, respectively, during a rapid growth period.
- OU is becoming a first-choice university for more incoming students.
- The number of freshmen who are full-time students has increased.
- The university's market share in southeastern Michigan has increased.

All this supports OU's **2010 Vision** of increasing enrollment to 20,000 students and increasing the quality of incoming students.

"Our accomplishments over the years are important to Oakland," says Johnson. "And, the changes we're making as a result are good for students and for the university."

Changes on the way include making the Web the main tool for service delivery at OU.

"In a very short time, all services related to registration, records, bill payment, admissions, financial aid, orientation and all other enrollment services will be available to students over the Web," Johnson says.

Online academic advising, transcript transmission, application for financial aid, access to financial aid status, virtual campus tours and degree auditing will join the many services already available. Today, OU students can **register** and **pay for courses** online, take all or parts of classes online, apply for admission, and refer to the **schedule of classes** and **course catalog**.

"This shift to a more student-centered model allows students to access services 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Johnson said. "Today's students think it's nice to be able to access services at their convenience, but we'll lose students tomorrow if we don't make the shift – because today's college-bound high school students expect a higher level of service delivery."

"In order for colleges and universities to remain competitive in this complex and evolving market, they must fully incorporate the Internet into their everyday operations and overall recruiting efforts," says Phillip Dunkelberger, president and CEO of Embark.

Embark, an online admissions service provider, reported a 175 percent increase in the number of online applications it processed from July 1, 2000, through January 1, 2001, compared to the same period in 1999/2000.

It's a nationwide trend that also plays out at OU.

Oakland University's incoming students used the Internet to inquire about or apply to OU at an increasing rate. The number of online inquiries jumped from 165 in 1998 to more than 2,000 in 2001, while online applications increased from 80 to nearly 800 in the same time.

About 87 percent of college-bound high school students report using e-mail regularly, according to a studentPOLL report published by Art & Science Group. Forty-four respondents reported logging onto the Internet one or more times per day and another 38 percent use it three or more times a week.

Oakland's enrollment management team is taking advantage of how college-bound students rely on e-mail by establishing communication with prospective students through e-mail.

"Students in the 10th grade today expect a more service-oriented approach," says Johnson. "They're used to having every piece of information they need available in an instant, and at OU we need to be able to compete."

Oakland's new one-stop Office of Student Financial Services is another way OU is improving service to students. Here, students can receive multiple services in one office. (Read more about the new office in the next issue of "Inside Oakland" due in faculty and staff mailboxes at the end of January.)

"And, gradually, we'll move to a non-stop service model, where technology becomes the primary service delivery system," Johnson says.

In January, Johnson will begin meeting with various faculty and student groups on campus to gather input on how best to continue moving OU toward a service-oriented model, so Oakland will remain competitive and become a top-choice university for even more high-quality, college-bound students.

SUMMARY

The distinction may not be important to many, but it is to Robert Johnson, vice provost of enrollment management, and his team. Where admissions is focused on recruiting, enrollment management addresses recruiting, enrolling and graduating students.

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