Faculty, Staff and Alumni and Roles in Recruitment

The University of Idaho

The responsibility for recruitment of students has been assigned to recruitment teams on university campuses for several years. However, while there are a team of individuals who are responsible for hitting the pavement to conduct high school visits and college fairs, others on campus and in the community are quite influential. The most effective recruitment programs are those which have collaborative and coordinated recruitment roles on campuses. The following is a discussion of roles that our campus community can undertake to help with recruitment at the University of Idaho (UI).

At the UI we generally use the enrollment funnel nomenclature indicated in the below diagram for both new first-time freshmen as well as transfer students. A student normally will progress through the stages starting as a Prospective Student and ending at the Enrolled Student stage. However, students can enter the funnel at different stages:

- **Prospective** students are those possible students who might attend college but have not expressed an interest in the UI. We may purchase student names through a clearinghouse and initiate marketing messages to those students introducing the UI.
- **Inquiries** are those students who have expressed an interest in the UI. They may have asked ACT/College Board to send their test scores to the UI as an example.
- **Applicants** have submitted an application to the UI but have not been admitted. Students may stay at applicant stage due to missing documentation that prevents an admission decision from being made. Some students, often referred to as stealth applicants, may enter the funnel at this stage with no prior contact with UI.
- **Admitted** students have completed the entire application and admission process and an official decision has been made on their admission to UI.
- **Registered** students (Registrations) are those new students who have attended a UIdahoBound (UIB) program or have otherwise registered for classes for a future term.
- **Enrolled** students include those students who have actually come to campus and will be counted in the semester census date as a new first-time freshmen or transfer student.

Conversion strategies to advance the student through the enrollment funnel stages are implemented to ultimately realize a final enrollment goal each semester. The stronger the conversion strategies the more effective the recruitment program. Without strong conversion strategies universities pour more prospective students in the top of the funnel hoping for more enrolled students to be realized.

*(An example of a strategy to convert a student from the inquiry to the applicant stage should include inviting the student and their parents for a campus visit. Students who have a good campus visit experience tend to apply for admission at higher rates than those who do not visit the campus. Parents who see first-hand a supportive campus environment tend to support their child’s decision to apply to that school.)*

Investing in prospective student names in lieu of enhancing conversion strategies can be resource intensive and should be balanced in the overall recruitment strategy.

**Professional Recruitment Staff**

The professional recruitment staff are the recruitment teams located within the Admission Office at the UI. The recruiters are responsible for recruitment within territories that include all 50 states in the U.S. as well as the international markets. They have defined enrollment funnel goals for their respective markets. The recruiters are based in Boise, Moscow, Southern and Northern California, Spokane/Coeur d’Alene, Portland, Seattle, Eastern Idaho, and Central Idaho to more efficiently reach their respective markets. One international recruiter is currently located in New Delhi, India and the other international recruiter is based in Moscow. Recruiters do travel to larger and more distant venues as the recruitment resources allow and based upon strategic priority.

The recruitment staff are responsible for outreach to high schools, community colleges, local and regional fairs, and national NACAC college fairs as well as many other venues. Their primary role is to generate student interest in all majors offered at the UI. Recruitment staff travel extensively throughout the year to generate inquiries. Those inquiries are collected by the
recruitment staff and entered into the CRM (Constituent Relations Management) software so that structured and coordinated communication campaigns can be delivered to the students in a personalized and targeted manner. The UI currently utilizes Radius as the CRM.

The recruitment staff are primarily responsible for initiating and nurturing recruitment relationships with their students within their territory. Outreach can occur anytime during the student’s educational career with most student interest being expressed in their sophomore year or later in high school or during their career at a community college. Recruitment staff are generalists who are able to speak about most every program at UI. The objective is to have a student express interest (inquire) in UI and then bring the student contact to the university. The recruiter maintains a relationship with the student to facilitate progression through the enrollment funnel that results in enrollment.

Faculty

The faculty role in recruitment is key to adding depth and substance to the already established inquiries that are generated by the recruitment staff. As Elrick (2017) states, “The expertise of faculty members and the relationships they build matter. The influence they can have on students—both prospective and current—can truly impact recruitment.” The faculty should be given the opportunity to showcase their own areas of expertise and to develop the interest level of the student in that discipline. Students generally meet with faculty to discover what the outcomes and benefits could be should they enroll in that academic program at the UI. This is the opportunity to differentiate the UI from the competitors with whom the student has also expressed an interest. The importance of the faculty role in the ultimate enrollment of the student who has expressed an interest in the UI should not be underestimated.

Faculty should generally not be called upon to interact with prospects but rather be called upon to interact with inquiries and students further along in the enrollment funnel (ex. Inquiries, Applicants, Admits, Registrations, etc.). This might typically be accomplished by faculty having a role in the following:

- visiting with parents and students who visit the campus,
- interacting with parents and students who attend Meet The Vandals (MTV), Sneak peeks, or Envision expo formats,
- offering expertise and mentoring at UIdahoBound programs within their respective academic area,
- reaching out to inquiries or other students further in the funnel to encourage them to convert to the next stage in the funnel (this can occur through follow up with students through letters, emails, personally written cards or through a telephone call),
- visiting with counterparts at community colleges or at other venues within their respective disciplines to promote and recruit for the UI (Examples might include:
  - College of Agriculture and Life Sciences might have an opportunity to recruit at the annual National FFA Washington Leadership Conference, or
  - College of Art and Architecture might recruit at the Annual Architectural Design Competition for High School Students held by the Architectural Foundation of San Francisco or the National Student Leadership Conference on Architecture, or

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College of Business and Economics might coordinate a visit to promote UI with the NIC Department of Business, or
College of Education, Health and Human Sciences might send faculty from the Movement Sciences to Mesa Community College to recruit students from the Exercise Science program to UI, or
College of Engineering may choose to become a judge or set up a recruitment table at the Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) annual conference to recruit high caliber students interested in high tech fields, or
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences might participate in the JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention to recruit potential students to the UI Journalism program, or
College of Natural Resources may send faculty to participate as judges in the Society for Range Management High School Youth Forum paper competition which results in recruitment opportunities for the college, or
College of Science may send ambassadors to help recruit at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF)
  • leveraging relationships with faculty in high schools where they may have the opportunity to present in a classroom, or
  • providing expertise in other events (ex. FFA, FBLA, BPA, and FEA Events, Rangeland Conferences, Pitch Contests, etc.) which may lead to an opportunity to recruit on the behalf of the University and College.

Where the faculty are initiating contact with a prospect, the faculty should attempt to share the student’s contact information with the admission office. This assures that the student is inserted into the university communication plan and will continue to receive communications from Financial Aid, Housing, Meal Services, Greek Organizations, Student Affairs, Admission Office and so on.

In general, faculty would not have an expectation that they would travel to recruit and generate inquiries from prospective students. In some instances, having faculty representation at a recruitment event has been identified as important to reach a target market (ex. a speech or communications faculty may be helpful in a high school forensics contest). In those instances, it is key that faculty share with the admission office where they are recruiting, collect prospective student leads and share those contacts with the admission office to ensure that the students do not miss university communications campaigns. It is important that the admission office be aware of these recruitment events in advance so that recruitment efforts are coordinated and there is no unneeded duplication.

Administration and Professional Staff

The administrative and professional staff (staff) are key in several areas in the recruitment of a student. Generally, the staff provide support in specific areas such as advising, housing, recreation and intramurals, meal services, honors program, financial aid, etc. In most instances the staff are also not interacting with prospective students but rather at the inquiry stage and later. Staff are generally helpful in the recruitment of new students by:
• visiting with parents and students who visit the campus,
• interacting with parents and students who attend Meet The Vandals (MTV), Sneak peeks, or Envision expo formats,
• offering information and answering questions at UIdahoBound programs within their respective area,
• reaching out to inquiries or other students to encourage them to convert to the next stage in the funnel (this can occur through follow up with students through letters, emails, personally written cards or through a telephone call),
• leverage relationships in their own networks (ex. presenting at a financial aid night within a community, promoting dual credit, or attending alumni chapter events), or,
• providing expertise in other events (ex. intramural competitions, drone competitions, and scholarship and award nights) which may lead to an opportunity to recruit on the behalf of the University.

As with faculty, where the staff are initiating contact with a prospect, the staff should share student’s contact information with the admission office. This assures that the student is inserted into the University communication plan and will continue to receive communication from Financial Aid, Housing, Meal Services, Greek Organizations, Student Affairs, Admission Office and so on.

In general, staff would not have an expectation that they would travel to recruit and generate inquiries from prospective students. In some instances, having staff representation at a recruitment event has been identified as important because the event specifically reaches into a target market (ex. a Phi Theta Kappa honors program for prospective transfer students enrolled in community colleges). In those instances, it is key that staff collect prospective student leads and share those contacts with the admission office to ensure that the students are inserted into the overall university communications campaigns. As noted above, it is important that the admission office be aware of these recruitment events in advance so that recruitment efforts are coordinated and there is no unneeded duplication.

**Alumni and Friends of the University of Idaho**

The alumni and friends (alumni) of the UI are also important in recruiting students to the university and they can be an effective brand ambassador. Frequently alumni can authentically share about their positive experience with the UI. Campaigns highlighting the success of alumni resonate with prospective students and their parents.

Because some alumni will volunteer to help their alma mater, universities will utilize alumni to attend recruitment events both on and off campus. In particular, colleges and universities unable to attend recruitment events due to travel distance or lack of resources will call upon their alumni network. Many alumni are key in providing prospective student leads to the UI. In those instances, the admission office or other staff will follow up with the prospect to invite the student to express interest (advance to inquiry), come to the campus or attend a recruitment event.
When alumni are called upon to attend recruitment events the alumnus is usually provided speaking points about the university, guidelines to recruiting, and recruitment materials such as brochures and a university branded table cloth. Unlike recruitment staff, the alumni do not have the benefit of training that professional staff have and therefore colleges and universities use alumni at varying levels. It is important that the alumni represent the UI at an acceptable standard. Prospective students or their parents, as well as other professionals, will be unable to distinguish a professional recruiter from a volunteer. Additionally, there may be legal requirements that the volunteers have appropriate background checks if they are interacting with minors and some college fairs do not allow use of alumni to recruit.

There are many other ways that alumni can be utilized in the recruitment of prospective students such as:

- referral of prospective students to the admission office,
- visiting with parents and students who visit the campus,
- interacting with parents and students who attend Meet The Vandals (MTV), SneakPeeks or Envision expo formats,
- alumni chapters hosting events in their businesses and communities for prospective students such as College Send Offs, Chapter Nights to engage prospective students in the area, Meet a Vandal events, etc.,
- creation of, and hosting, a parents’ association,
- hosting a parents’ night or parents’ table,
- offering insight as an alumnus and sharing how the UI prepared them to be successful,
- mid-level and senior manager alumni actively participating in employer relations development with career services or hosting a student to professional event,
- reaching out to inquiries or other students to encourage them to convert to the next stage in the funnel (this can occur through follow up with students through letters, emails, personally written cards or through a telephone call),
- sharing about the UI in their own networks (ex. at their own workplace, with parents of college bound children, and returning to their own high school), and
- proudly promoting the UI brand.

The alumni can be incredibly supportive to their alma mater. However, it is important that we also support and encourage them. In many instances, recognition in the alumni magazine, on the alumni website, and through social media channels can encourage greater alumni willingness to serve. “Chapter of the Year” or “Most Notable Alumni” pages on the website cost little to nothing and can be very influential in the alumni networks. Freebies mailed to those alumni or chapters that are particularly notable tend to generate even more interest in serving. An invitation to come to a reception on campus or a tailgate party prior to an athletic event serve as great recognition and will keep the alumni engaged and interested in helping their alma mater.

As competition for new students intensifies the UI recruitment program also needs to be effective. Our success in attracting new students should maximize on the expertise and willingness of our Vandal family to help in a very coordinated and deliberate manner. Using the expertise of each individual in a way that is most beneficial will lead to a strong recruitment
Having a clear understanding of the roles in recruitment is important to ensure all involved feel valued and that they enjoy helping grow the Vandal family.

If you have a question, suggestion, need recruitment materials or would like to coordinate a recruitment event with the recruitment office please contact either the Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment, Dean Kahler at dkahler@uidaho.edu or the Assistant Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment, Bobbi Gerry, at bgerry@uidaho.edu or call 208-885-6326. We would be happy to have you help and look forward to partnering with you.

Thank you for your interest in helping attract new students to the University of Idaho. Go Vandals!

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