

Executive Summary

Since 2002/2003, the Office of Undergraduate Admission has sought resources both within and without the University to evaluate, support and advise our best efforts. These resources have included nationally recognized education and admission-focused organizations. (Maguire Associates Higher Education Consultants and the College Board are two examples.), as well as colleagues at USF and from high schools, two-year and four-year colleges, and professional organizations, who serve as members of our Admission Advisory Board. Most recently, we prepared a self-study and invited admission professionals from the University of Notre Dame, the University of Illinois, Chicago and the State University of New York, Buffalo, to serve as our external review team for this program review.

The reviewers met with the Undergraduate Admission staff, colleagues throughout Academic and Enrollment Services, Academic Affairs, Athletics, and University Life.

1. **How did the reviewers rate the quality and reputation of the Office of Undergraduate Admission?** Overall the office was rated very good with individual functions rated from good to excellent. A substantial number of best practices were noted as being in place. The areas of strength identified included:

- Knowledgeable, dedicated, professional team leaders and members
- Provide very good student-centered services and programs
- Enjoy confidence and support at the University Leadership level
- Strategic Enrollment Council outstanding for collaboration and engagement
- Admission Operations “compares favorably to other high quality operations nationally”
- Team members “juggle” multiple priorities very well
- Quality and performance of the department is very good
- General office structure rated good, in terms of teams, shared leadership, and shared functions across teams
- Diversity of admission team rated “excellent.”
- Progress with application generation very good
- Results from prospect base rated very good
- Focus on multicultural recruitment and outreach is very good
- Student diversity is enviable
- Strong mission statement

2. **What are the most important issues that emerged from the external review process?** The issues identified by the external reviewers included:

- Successful ERP transition is essential, since loading applications and data directly into Banner is critical for efficiencies
- Sufficient human and fiscal resources essential in to continue applicant pool growth; resources are still lacking; reliance on temporary workers rated “weak”
- International student recruiting and operational responsibilities by both Undergraduate Admission and the Office of International Relations not clear; reviewers thought the efforts appeared “disjointed” ... resources dedicated to recruiting international students relative to resources dedicated on recruiting domestic students questioned

- Continue to improve use of “search” process ... consider use of an outside vendor in order to increase response rate and generate many more applications
- Improve relationship with Athletics to improve overall recruitment efforts

3. What specific recommendations were made by the external reviewers and the Admission Advisory Board members? The recommendations made by the external reviewers included:

- Consider possibility of offering some academic merit aid to international students
- Consider implementation of several refinements in recruitment and communication efforts (e.g., ensure prospective students are able to request information by phone 24/7, personalize group information sessions more ... make tours smaller, create longer “shadow” visits for prospective students, examine whether streamlining the application process might mean more male applicants, expand alumni assistance in tertiary markets, highlight visit programs more in marketing collateral, continue innovation with unique programs to enhance the appeal of specific programs/colleges and continue to invite faculty to participate in prospect visits/programs)
- Establish assigned liaisons between the Office of Undergraduate Admission and each school and college
- Assess admission programs more regularly (e.g., prospective students and families perceptions of visit program ... adapt program based on assessment results)

The recommendations made by the members of Admission Advisory Board included:

- Personal notification of fall high school or community college visits to prospects in database and to high school counselors via email
- Send regular update information bulletins to high school counselors (e.g., on new programs)
- Formalize and regularize parent-to-parent communication
- Formalization and share with the USF community of the annual recruiting plan
- Focus some need-based aid based on criteria related to fulfilling the University’s mission
- Improve communication with local high schools (backyard schools) regarding their alumni who are now at USF
- Enhance efforts to work with Alumni Relations
- Outreach to faculty asking them to identify key alumni
- Create an Alumni Advocate micro-website

4. In the opinion of the external reviewers does the Undergraduate Admission Office reflect an understanding of and commitment to the University’s Vision, Mission and Values? The external reviewers recognized Undergraduate Admission colleagues’ understanding of, dedication to and obvious efforts to realize the University’s Vision, Mission and Values as one of their outstanding strengths and defining characteristics. They daily provide very good service and programs for the varied audiences whom they serve.

5. In what way does the University Admission Office contribute to achieving the goals of the University?

- The Undergraduate Admission Office colleagues are dedicated to helping students and their families find the best higher education “fit” for them

Office of Undergraduate Admission Program Review

- The Undergraduate Admission Office has improved the academic quality and quantity of succeeding entering classes and consistently met the new student enrollment goals over the last 5 years
- The Undergraduate Admission Office dedication to and effectiveness in achieving diversity in all its many forms is enviable

6. What is the timetable to respond to the recommendations of the external reviewers and the Admission Advisory Board members?

- The Office of Undergraduate Admission Office contributed to the AES FY09 request for additional resources for Banner support and international admission application processing.
- The Office of Undergraduate Admission will consider all recommendations for enhanced outreach and recruitment efforts. Those that can be implemented with current resources will be developed for the 2008-09 recruitment cycle. Those requiring additional resources will be addressed through the FY09 or FY10 planning initiative process and/or re-allocation of current resources.

7. What general issues are crucial to understanding the reviewers' feedback? The reviewers all agreed that the Undergraduate Admission Office will continue to be challenged to meet the needs of the annually increasing applicant pool, technology implementation demands, and the effective use of new and evolving outreach tools and strategies ... particularly those that involve the use of technology tools.

Crucial to addressing the reviewers' recommendations will be securing the human and fiscal resources necessary to continue to grow our applicant pool and to make timely admission decisions. In the future, when demographics indicate that there will be increased competition for fewer students, the critical inquiry-to-applicant stage of the process will be even more important to building a competitive applicant pool.

Responsiveness at all stages of the admission cycle, but particularly at the applicant stage, translates to a more competitive position in winning both highly qualified students, international students, and students who will fulfill, in holistic ways, the University's mission. Continuing to build on the successful relationships with our faculty and alumni will bolster our efforts as well.