

Seaver Office of Admission: Program Review

Methodology

In August 2010, a 10-item survey was sent via e-mail to 648 domestic admitted students that had declared their intent to enroll at Pepperdine for the Fall 2010 semester. Students were offered a free t-shirt for completing the survey. With a response rate of 24 percent, 156 (n=156) students completed the survey.

The survey included a variety of questions related to Pepperdine University and the undergraduate admission process. Specifically, questions addressed if and how students interacted with admission counselors, which aspects of the admission process were most helpful or the most difficult, etc. The survey also asked students to describe some of the unique aspects of Pepperdine, including the Christian mission. See Appendix A for the full survey.

Question #1: Are students able to describe the Christian mission of Pepperdine? (SLO 2)

Themes

To assess how admitted students would describe the Christian mission of Pepperdine, we asked students to respond to the following question: *What would you say to a friend who asked you, "How 'Christian' is Pepperdine?"* Several themes emerged through analysis of the 156 open-ended responses. See below for several quotes that support each theme.

"Pepperdine is a Christian school, but is welcoming of different faith traditions and a variety of beliefs"

I would say that it is backed by the Church of Christ but it is not mandatory that you be a member of that church to attend Pepperdine. There is a convocation requirement but it can help your GPA if you attend regularly.

I would say that I felt that Pepperdine definitely has a Christian focus, and many opportunities to get involved if pursuing your faith is important. However, a nonreligious student would not feel overwhelmed or unwelcomed in this environment.

I would say that Pepperdine is based on a Christian foundation and principles, but you don't have to be Christian to enjoy the school. Chapel on campus and ministries is amazing to me, but if you are not Christian you won't feel the pressure of participating. Christianity isn't forced upon you, but is a very large part of the school's foundation.

I would say that they definitely do not discriminate against people who are not Christian. They let you explore your faith. But I like that convocation or chapel is required. I love the Christian aspect of the school. It encourages people to think deeper about life.

It is a Christian school and you have to take Christian religion classes and attend religious activities, but the school is open-minded and accepts all religions. They just want you to be educated about Christianity and then make the choice for yourself.

"Pepperdine is committed to Service"

I imagine that Pepperdine will have a whole variety of "Christian" people and purposes. It seems like the college really incorporates the elements of Christ-like service into University foundation, which is awesome. However, I think that the students will not necessarily be as focused on Christianity and there will be a large variation of religions and spiritualities.

Religion is important to the campus, but it's not about just "being a Christian"-- it's also about doing good deeds for people and the community, and just living your life with a purpose.

I would say that Pepperdine has Christian values that it takes seriously and they are carried out by the campus community in order to provide a good college experience and to instill the importance of helping those in need around the world.

I would say that Pepperdine is a religious university that welcome all faiths, and is more driven towards providing a close knit environment of faith, community, learning and service more than "Bible study."

Pepperdine is service oriented and moderately Christian.

"Pepperdine is very Christian"

I would say that from what I have seen, Pepperdine is extremely Christian. I can really see a passionate effort to maintain the Bible as the foundation for the entire campus. With the student code of conduct, array of spiritual opportunities available, and mission to integrate Christ into every aspect of learning, it is undeniably obvious this institution stands for God.

It is Christian to a point where academics, athletics, and student life is the number one priority of the school so that the student's experience positive college life. It is an environment in which you have the choice to renew, grow in, or explore your faith without coercion.

I would not have an exact answer for my friend because I have yet to experience college life at Pepperdine. However, I would tell my friend that unlike many colleges, Pepperdine is one of the few faithful Universities. Knowing that there is spiritual support all around the campus, from the dorm R.A.s to even the Professors, I would take great pride in sharing Pepperdine's faithful environment. I do not believe that Pepperdine forces its student to become a Christian but instead patiently guides them in believing in Jesus Christ. Through worship and praise, students are given an opportunity to become a family in Christ.

Pepperdine is very much Christian.... more genuinely than any other campus I visited.

I would say the University is based on a Christian foundation, and that the religious aspects of it are expressed as early as the application process.

"Pepperdine is as Christian as you want it to be"

Pepperdine is as Christian as you make it. Students can complete the bare minimum with convocation requirements and the Religion courses and call it good, or they can choose to make it a daily part of their time at Pepperdine.

It is what you make of it. There is a definite opportunity to learn a Christian lifestyle that will affect the way a person lives, but then again a person could just do the bare minimum in order to get credit and graduate, but I would say that about almost all Christian Schools in America.

I would say it is very "Christian" but not forced on you. They exemplify Christian morals into the school but ultimately you are in control of how much you would like to be involved. In my case I really enjoy the great friendly environment that these Christian morals bring to the school.

It's a place where it is easier to be a Christian than a secular school, but not as restrictive as Masters or Biola. It's a place where it's more on your shoulders as a Christian.

There are some requirements (convocation), but it's not overwhelming or forced upon you. Plus, being a part of the Church of Christ isn't a requirement.

The religious aspect of the school can be as influential as you want it to be.

Analysis of Evidence

After review of the themes that emerged from the student responses, it is clear that the vast majority of admitted students have a good grasp of the mission of Pepperdine University. In many ways, students broadly described the mission of Pepperdine quite well—Pepperdine is a Christian university that is committed to service, and seeks to welcome students of a variety of backgrounds. Further, students seem to understand that they will have the opportunity to take advantage of the faith-related elements that Pepperdine offers (Bible studies, small groups, spiritual life advisor programs, etc.), if they so choose.

However, although the open-ended responses suggest that students have a good idea of how 'Christian' Pepperdine is, only 14 students noted that students are required to complete religion classes, and 17 students noted that students are required to attend chapel/convocation. It seems that while students are aware of how Pepperdine's mission impacts the overall university experience, they are less aware of the actual requirements (chapel/convocation and religion courses) associated with the mission.

Question #2: Can students distinguish the unique characteristics of Pepperdine? (SLO 3)

To assess if admitted students could distinguish the unique characteristics of Pepperdine, we asked students to respond to the following question: *Why did you decide to come to Pepperdine (top three reasons)?* Through analysis of the 156 open-ended responses, the following areas were identified as the most common reasons why students selected Pepperdine:

Pepperdine Characteristics	Number of Mentions
Location	76
Christian/faith environment/Religion	56
Specific Academic Program (i.e., sports medicine)	36
Academics	36
Financial Aid/Scholarships	30
Size	23
Overall environment/atmosphere	20
Faculty	17
Reputation/Prestige	17
Study Abroad/International Programs	16
Community	12
People	11
Athletics	15
Quality	5
Values	4
"Not being a number"	3
Mission	3

See below for examples of student responses, in their own words:

1. I love the prestige of the school and therefore, the opportunities that it will bring in my future career.
2. The size is not too big so I feel like a number, but bigger than my high school; it is perfect for me.
3. And lastly, I'm serious about my faith so I'm excited to further that as well as my education.

1. Private college with worldly education and opportunities but a slightly more conservative approach.
2. Small college with stellar students and amazing faculty.
3. RIDICULOUSLY BEAUTIFUL location and so close to Los Angeles, providing numerous opportunities for internships, jobs, careers, etc.
4. I was accepted to the Music Program!

1. The small size
2. The Christian values that are apparent on campus
3. The recommendations from multiple people about the high quality of everything at Pepperdine.

1. The academics and Pepperdine reputation.
2. Knowing that the faculty truly cares and wants to see all of their alumni succeed.
3. The study abroad and mission trip opportunities

1. The small student population makes Pepperdine students more than just a number.
2. The Christian background is a supportive environment for college students.
3. It doesn't hurt that Pepperdine is located in Malibu, California.

1. It is a Christian institution
2. Financial Aid
3. Prestige of the school (academics and ranking)
4. Study abroad programs
5. It is a dry campus

1. The stellar programs offered
2. The small close-knit community feel
3. The whole experience-small classes, getting to know your professors
4. International business programs and music programs

Analysis of Evidence

After review of the reasons why students selected Pepperdine, it is clear that the vast majority of admitted students have a good grasp of the unique characteristics of Pepperdine University. Through the Seaver College Office of Admission Web site, viewbooks, e-newsletters, campus visits, etc. (see Curriculum Map), we highlight almost every area that students mentioned, including the Christian environment, small class sizes, opportunities to study abroad, excellent faculty and academics, athletics, etc. We also highlight a few areas that were noticeably absent from student's lists: opportunities for undergraduate research and service. Several students did mention service in response to the "How Christian is Pepperdine" question, but it did not seem to be a compelling reason for students to select Pepperdine.

Question #3: Are students understanding and successfully navigating the various components of the application and matriculation process? (SLO 1) How do students interact with the Office of Admission? Which interactions did students find most helpful? Did students experience any difficulty in the admission process?

To assess how students navigated the admission process, we asked them to tell us how they interacted with the Office of Admission. See below for student responses, both qualitative and quantitative:

Student Interactions with the Office of Admission

Q: During the admission process to Pepperdine, I experienced the following: (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Percent of Respondents	Level of Engagement*
Read the E-Newsletters	63.1	Low
Read the e-mails	98.3	Low
Looked up the application process on the Pepperdine Web site	91.6	Low
Used the WaveNet Portal to view my application file To Do List	92.2	Low
Read the brochures sent to me	86.6	Low
Attended a high school visit with a Pepperdine admission counselor	10.1	Mid
Visited campus	78.2	Mid
Attended a college fair and visited the Pepperdine booth	10.6	Mid
Called the Admission Office to ask a question	63.7	High
E-mailed the Admission Office to ask a question	62	High
Watched a video about Pepperdine	70.4	Low
Attended a Pepperdine off-campus admission event	31.8	High
Talked with a Pepperdine alumnus (phone, e-mail, or in-person)	55.9	High
Talked with a Pepperdine professor (phone, e-mail, or in-person)	40.2	High
Visited the Admitted Student Web site	86	Low
Looked Pepperdine up in a college guidebook or Web site	83.8	Low

*See Curriculum Map

Student Interactions with the Office of Admission Admission Counselors

Q: Did you interact with an admission counselor in any of the following ways? (select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	# of Students Listed Interaction as Most Helpful	% of Students Listed Interaction as Most Helpful*	Level of Engagement**
I never interacted with an admission counselor	29.6%	53			
Phone	29.6%	53	18	34.0%	Mid
E-mail	38.0%	68	14	20.6%	High
High School Visit	3.4%	6	0	0.0%	Mid
College Fair	6.1%	11	1	9.1%	Mid
Pepperdine Campus Visit	41.3%	74	41	55.4%	Mid
Fall Regional Information Session	6.7%	12	5	41.7%	High
Preview Day	5.6%	10	2	20.0%	High
Spring Admitted Student Reception	22.9%	41	20	48.8%	High
Malibu Reception	15.1%	27	10	37.0%	High

*Percentage of the students that participated in interaction and listed it as most helpful

**See Curriculum Map

When asked if they experienced any difficulties in the admission process, 44% of students (69 of 156) noted that they had no difficulties. In an analysis of the responses from students who did experience some difficulty, several themes emerged:

I had technical difficulties with WaveNet.

{I had trouble] navigating WaveNet; it really is not very user friendly.

Overall, great process. I did, however, experience minor difficulty accessing my WaveNet account at first but was assisted immediately.

During the application process, I had some technical difficulties with WaveNet and setting up an account there because for some reason it locked me out when I tried to make a password.

I experienced complications with Financial Aid.

I missed several financial aid deadlines that I was unaware of. Also it was confusing to navigate what I needed to get done and when early on. It got easier though.

I REALLY struggled with the financial aid process. Pepperdine is obviously a very expensive school and I don't feel I received enough information or help concerning financial aid. I had to continuously contact financial aid asking numerous questions because of my confusion.

The college essays were tough.

The college essay was my most difficult task during the application process. It was difficult for me to write from a personal and completely honest point of view, knowing that my essay would be compared to many other students. I had to make myself come from a personal place, rather than writing an essay that sounded good and would appeal to the admission committee.

The personal statement was tough to answer because it was one of the most personal questions to tackle.

I had a slight amount of trouble writing the essay about the integration of faith and learning, it was unlike the essays that any other colleges had called on me to write, but after some careful thought, I think I did a good job on it.

Deadlines and materials were a bit complicated.

Finding the deadline calendar. I got so annoyed trying to find it, I printed it out and now use it as my mouse-pad.

It was very long. There was so many materials to gather. As a transfer it was difficult knowing exactly what I needed and didn't need.

There is a lot to do and I always had to remain alert so as not to miss any part of it. But the application in itself is not very hard.

Everything went smoothly!

No problems-- I did accidentally send in a print version of my app, but a member of the admissions team was nice enough to call me and tell me that I needed to just do it online! That was unbelievably nice!

I didn't feel that it was very difficult. It was nice that it could all be done on the CommonApp. It was simpler and shorter than many of my other apps.

I did not face any difficulties in the application process because of the detailed list given on the web site.

The application process went as smoothly as any. The difficulty lies in the investing of one's time.

There were no difficulties for me in the application process because of Pepperdine's involvement with Common App.

It was pretty hard to balance APs, the application process, sports, clubs, extra curriculars and the house responsibilities. Through it all, I found the application process to be very fun. It's very rare that people want to get to know you and I found the process to be enjoyable. I think it's also because I only applied to schools that I truly wanted to go to.

Analysis of Evidence

Through analysis of the data, it is clear that students interact with the Office of Admission in a variety of ways. The vast majority of students visited the Pepperdine Web site for information on the applications process (92%), use the WaveNet Portal to view their application To-Do list (92%), read e-mails from the Office of Admission (98%), and read the brochures that were sent in the mail (87%). Interestingly, each of these activities was categorized as a low level of engagement with the Office of Admission—but had exceptional importance to the more transactional components of the admission process.

The transformational components of the admission process are more closely aligned with the mid and high engagement interactions. For example, 78% of students visited campus, 64% of students called the Office of Admission, and 32% of students attended an off-campus Pepperdine event. Each of these personal experiences emerged as the most helpful interactions for students in the admission process. High school visits and college fairs were the interactions least identified as the “most helpful.”

Although students generally seemed pleased with the overall application process, students did note having difficulties with WaveNet, clarity of application deadlines, and the financial aid process. Overall, it appears that the low engagement interactions are important for the admission and matriculation process (SLO1), and the mid and high engagement interactions are more helpful in demonstrating the unique characteristics of Pepperdine (SLO2 & 3).

Question #4: Are students able to describe the Christian mission of Pepperdine? (SLO 2)

Methodology

According to the fourth student learning outcome, students will be able to demonstrate that they are a good fit for Seaver College (SLO4). To assess if students are a good fit for admission, the Admission Committee reviews student files, which includes the following:

- Common Application (with essay questions)
- Pepperdine Supplement (with essay question related to Pepperdine's mission)
- High School and/or college transcripts
- Standardized test scores (ACT or SAT)
- Academic and Personal letter of recommendation

For more information on the requirements for application, please visit the following Web site: www.seaver.pepperdine.edu/admission. Admission Committee utilizes a rubric to assign each applicant a "supplemental rating." See Appendix B for the rubric. Supplemental ratings are given after review of a student's applications (The Common Application and Pepperdine Supplement) and letters of recommendation. In order to make an admission decision, the supplemental rating is considered in conjunction with a student's academic record.

An inter-rater reliability test was conducted to ensure consistency among members of the Admission Committee. Inter-rater reliability describes the amount of agreement or consensus between multiple raters. Too little consensus often indicates that the criteria or rubric on which the judges base their ratings should be adjusted. The Committee individually read and assigned supplemental ratings to ten applications. The inter-rater reliability test was conducted individually for each component on the rubric (Christian mission, character, leadership, and extracurricular involvement), and then on the collective scores. See the following Web site for the reliability test: <http://www.med-ed-online.org/rsoftware.htm>.

Inter-rater Reliability Scores among Admission Committee

Admission Component	Reliability Score
Christian Mission	0.92
Character/Service	0.83
Extracurricular	0.78
Leadership Development	0.89
Total	0.96

Note. Reliability scores are based on a scale of zero to 1, 1 representing the highest level of reliability.

Analysis of Evidence

According to the test, the Admission Committee is very consistent and reliable with their supplemental ratings. Although reliability of the extracurricular rating was the weakest (.78), it was still very high. With an overall reliability rating of .96, the supplemental rating rubric seems to be a solid tool for Admission Committee to identify students that are a good fit for Seaver College.

Summary

In this program review, several questions were explored. First, we assessed how students describe the Christian mission of Pepperdine. Through qualitative analysis of student responses, we identified several themes:

"Pepperdine is a Christian school, but is welcoming of different faith traditions and a variety of beliefs."

"Pepperdine is committed to service."

"Pepperdine is very Christian."

"Pepperdine is as Christian as you want it to be."

After review of the themes that emerged from the student responses, it is clear that the vast majority of admitted students have a good grasp of the mission of Pepperdine University. However, although the open-ended responses suggest that students have a good idea of how 'Christian' Pepperdine is, only 14 students noted that students are required to complete religion classes, and 17 students noted that students are required to attend chapel/convocation. It seems that while students are aware of how Pepperdine's Christian impacts the overall university experience, they are less aware of the actual requirements (chapel/convocation and religion courses) associated with the mission.

Second, we asked students to identify the top three reasons why they selected Pepperdine in order to see if they could identify the unique characteristics of the school. Through analysis of 156 open-ended responses, it is clear that the vast majority of admitted students have a good grasp of the unique characteristics of Pepperdine University. Most notably, students identified location, Christian/faith environment, specific academic programs, strong academics, financial aid, size, and the overall atmosphere of the college, and many others as the top reasons for matriculation. Service opportunities and undergraduate research were noticeably absent from student's lists.

Thirdly, we assessed how students interacted with the Office of Admission. The majority of students engaged in the more transactional components of the admission process: visited the Pepperdine Web site for information on the applications process (92%), used the WaveNet Portal to view their application To-Do list (92%), read e-mails from the Office of Admission (98%), and read the brochures that were sent in the mail (87%). Students identified the more personal interactions (visiting campus, personal phone calls and emails, and off-campus events) as the most helpful forms of interaction for students during the admission process. High school visits and college fairs were the interactions least identified as the "most helpful." Although students generally seemed pleased with the overall application process, students did note having difficulties with WaveNet, clarity of application deadlines, and the financial aid process.

Finally, we assessed the reliability of the Admission Committee's rubric for supplemental ratings. Through inter-reliability analysis, we identified that Admission Committee is very consistent and reliable with their supplemental ratings.

These findings will be shared with Office of Admission and with Enrollment Management. Additionally, specific program review discussion groups will be held in areas most related to specific components of the review. For example, everyone who has or organizes direct contact with the prospective students (admission counselors, associate director of admission marketing, student tour guides, etc.) will meet to discuss the findings related to the Christian mission and the application process.

Overview of Admission Statistics

In the past few years, Seaver College has seen a dramatic increase in applications and the overall quality of the applicant pool. For the Fall 2010 semester, during our inaugural year as a Common Application member school, we saw a 22% increase in applications (first-year Common App members typically see a 10% increase in applications). The admitted class had the strongest academic profile in history. Although our yield has been trending downward since 2005, we were pleased to enroll our strongest academic and most diverse class (48% of the admitted class was non-white) in the history of Seaver College. For the Fall 2011 semester, 9876 applications were submitted to Seaver College for a 16.5% increase over the Fall 2010 semester. The Fall 2011 admission process is currently underway. Please see Appendix C for a detailed description of admission statistics, both past and present.

Appendix A. Admitted Student Survey

Admitted Student Survey: Fall 2010

1. Did you interact with an admission counselor in any of the following ways? (select all that apply)

I never interacted with an admission counselor

Phone

E-mail

High School Visit

College Fair

Pepperdine Campus Visit

Fall Regional Information Session

Preview Day

Spring Admitted Student Reception

Malibu Reception

2. Of the above interactions, which were the most helpful?

3. What topics were most important or interesting to you when considering Pepperdine? (Please list anything that you were interested in, even something as seemingly insignificant as the cafeteria food.)

4. During the admission process to Pepperdine, I experienced all of the following: (select all that apply)

Read the E-Newsletters

Read the e-mails

Looked up the application process on the Pepperdine Web site

Used the WaveNet Portal to view my application file To Do List

Read the brochures sent to me

Attended a high school visit with a Pepperdine admission counselor

Visited campus

Attended a college fair and visited the Pepperdine booth

Called the Admission Office to ask a question

E-mailed the Admission Office to ask a question

Watched a video about Pepperdine

Attended a Pepperdine off-campus admission event

Talked with a Pepperdine alumnus (phone, e-mail, or in-person)

Talked with a Pepperdine professor (phone, e-mail, or in-person)

Visited the Admitted Student Web site

Looked Pepperdine up in a college guidebook or Web site

5. What additional activities would you have appreciated or participated in during the admission process? (example: a Skype interview, a phone call from a current student, etc.)

6. What would you say to a friend who asked you, "How 'Christian' is Pepperdine?"

7. What difficulties did you face during the Pepperdine application process?

8. What tips or advice would you give someone starting the application process now? What advice do you have to improve the application process?

9. Why did you decide to come to Pepperdine? (top three reasons, or more if you would like)

10. The following questions are optional: What other schools did you apply to? What other schools were you admitted to?

Note. With the exception of question 1 and 4, all questions asked for open-ended responses.

Appendix B. Rubric Utilized for Supplemental Ratings

Seaver Office of Admission: Supplemental Rating Rubric

	Below Expectations		Satisfactory		Exemplary
Christian Mission	No mention of faith/spiritual development	Mention of faith or desire to pursue a spiritual commitment	Mention of Christian faith, involved in church/mission trips	Mention of Christian faith, involved, leader in church, recommendation letter from pastor	Expressed a commitment to God, motivated to live an authentic Christian lifestyle, involved in Christian fellowship, recommendation from pastor, etc/ Clearly shows a unique and dynamic relationship with the Lord, highly involved in Christian fellowship, and desires to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and power of Holy Spirit.
Character/Service	Lacks any clear motivation, little evidence of concern for others, only engaged in mandatory community service	Motivated by external pressures, shows some evidence of servant hood		Motivated by internal convictions, articulate and honest in sharing about self	Well defined and strong personal convictions and a willingness to act on them. Articulates strengths and weaknesses, motivated by a concern for the future and for others.
Extracurricular	No involvement	Limited involvement		Substantial amount of school and community involvement	Involvement with school, community, extracurricular involvement goes above and beyond
Leadership Development	No mention of being a leader or having leadership experience		Some leadership experience (officer in a club, etc)	Substantial amount of leadership experience in several areas, or a phenomenal involvement/leadership story (i.e. Eagle Scout, organizing blood drives, etc)	Peerless involvement and leadership (started own club, internal initiative, as well as all of the above)
Academic Rigor			GPA, test scores, essays, etc. reflective of Academic Preparation		Extraordinary and distinguishing evidence of Academic Preparation beyond HS GPA/test score: Majority AP/IB classes for at least 2 years, extremely rigorous College Prep Program, top 10% of HS class, AP scholar, provocative and academic/critical essays, NHS or cum laude society, other nationally recognized academic clubs and honors, etc.

Note: In order to make admission decisions, this rubric is utilized in conjunction with high school and/or college GPA, standardized test scores (ACT and/or SAT), and personal and academic letters of recommendation.

Appendix C. Seaver College Admission Statistics

(to be added upon submission to external reviewer)

**Enrollment Audit
Pepperdine University
June 2011**

It was indeed a pleasure to visit Pepperdine University on June 22 and 23, 2011. Michael Truschke invited me to undertake an undergraduate enrollment audit, based upon my 30+ years of experience as a Dean of Admissions / Financial Aid / Enrollment at four private California colleges and as Director of College Counseling at Bellarmine College Preparatory, my current position.

What I found in meeting with students, staff and faculty was uniquely impressive in that each person I met with could articulate the mission of Pepperdine very clearly while sharing his/her passion for that mission. It is rare in higher education today to see such clarity and consistency on a campus, and the entire Pepperdine community is to be justly celebrated for directly following the path set for them by the founders and leaders of the institution.

Pepperdine's enrollment efforts are in a great position to utilize the cornerstone of a good reputation within higher education to focus on strengthening that position. This strengthening will take place through disciplined planning and strategic activities within the admissions and financial aid staffs, coordinated with similar efforts within academics, student life, athletics and development.

The Undergraduate Enrollment Staff is ready to move forward. There is a depth of talent and commitment within the individual admissions, financial aid and international student services staffs that are again unique. Bright people are working very hard on behalf of the institution and your students. It is my hope that this report serves to reinforce the strengths they possess and give some direction for their future development as professionals in the field. This report will also provide Pepperdine's decision makers some insights and suggestions that will support the overall enrollment process and outcomes.

THE IDEAL PEPPERDINE STUDENT

In an overall enrollment picture, it is important to focus on what the outcome might be . . . in this case the ideal Pepperdine student who will enroll, be challenged and supported while contributing to the University in a variety of ways, and will graduate and go on to success in his/her chosen field and community. I had the pleasure of asking a variety of groups and individuals about the ideal student during my visit and was interested in their responses.

The student group identified a service orientation as the most important characteristic, and then went on to list commitment to quality and excellence, thinkers and problem solvers, and globally minded as further descriptors. Undergraduate Admissions found ideal students to be curious, dreamers and altruistic, but the commitment to service within the world was also an important component. International Services focused on support of the mission, strength in academics, and leadership and volunteerism as their choices. The faculty members I met with believe the ideal Pepperdine students are those who will push faculty in the ways faculty push them, as well as those who are good writers and who are serious about exploring applications of their faith.

The common themes of excellence in the classroom and service within the global community were echoed by others as well, and again mirror Pepperdine's mission very clearly. Throughout this report I will be referring to the document Boundless Horizons: Opportunities for the Future of Pepperdine University, presented by President Benton last September. The President stated a commitment to “. . . keep our promises; that our market positioning be accurate and honest . . .” I believe the consistency of descriptions of the ideal Pepperdine student which I found in my discussions to be directly related to the experience of the students, and that Pepperdine is keeping those promises.

PRIORITIES IN ENROLLMENT PLANNING

There are a variety of constructs / frameworks for enrollment planning available within higher education. At some point a consultant may be brought in to further examine the entire University's strengths and opportunities as enrollment is planned for the next ten years. I have found the following construct, developed originally by my colleague Jim Whitaker, to be extremely helpful as a tool in seeking consensus on enrollment priorities and moving forward strategically. (*Jim Whitaker worked with me at Mount. St. Mary's College and is currently the Associate VP of Enrollment at Chapman University.*)

Choices . . . are best made within the entire community. The results can then be implemented in recruitment, student financial aid, academic and student life planning, career planning and alumni relations. The choices are important because every institution cannot be everything to all people. Priorities, strengths and resources differ and allow students choosing college in the United States to have a variety of options. As the Pepperdine community knows better than most, you stick to what you do well.

However, it might be helpful for those discussing President Benton's stated intention that “A serious conversation must take place . . . as it pertains to the matter of where Pepperdine should

seek to place itself in the pantheon on America's colleges and universities." (Boundless Horizons) to use this construct at some point to flesh out the component's of Pepperdine's goals, and therefore give the Enrollment Staff an even clearer set of marching orders.

Whitaker's construct, with additions, requires a community to prioritize and put human and financial resources into two out of the five areas. As the tactics for recruitment and retention in each of the areas are very different, at maximum effectiveness only two can be prioritized.

Notes:

1. This does not mean that the other areas are ignored, but few resources can be effectively committed throughout all five.
2. An effective recruitment program must have a focus at least 18 – 24 months prior to a class enrolling.
3. Focus during a recruitment cycle should not change unless there are changes within the political and economic environment call for that change, i.e. the economy's fall in Fall 2009.

The choices for Pepperdine are, in no particular order:

- Academic Quality . . . usually defined by incoming grades and test scores
- Headcount . . . relates directly into how many classrooms, faculty led sections, and residence hall spaces are available for use in addition to retention rates
- Discount . . . defining the ability / willingness of the institution to put operational dollars into financial aid and the ability of the institution to raise endowed and non restricted scholarship funds
- Diversity . . . can be defined in terms of male/female balance, critical masses of ethnicities and/or socio-economic or international populations on campus
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In talking with the various groups on campus, most chose mission, academic quality and socio-economic diversity came up a strong second or third. This was not surprising given again the clear message I heard around the campus, and the priorities outlined within the Boundless Horizons document. That being said there is a need for more clear definitions of goals and a consensus within the community on the priorities.

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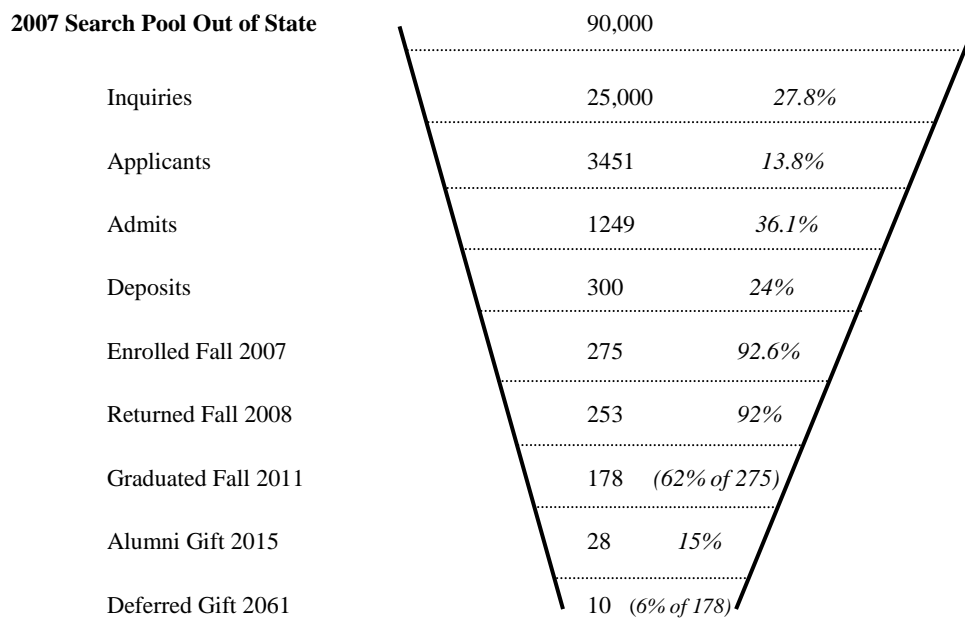
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- Gather information and analyze data on specific populations coming through the financial aid process, including among others: \$0 EFC, under \$5,000 EFC, Church of Christ students, athletes (both recruited and walk ons), high GPA / SAT scores, Cal Grant Winners, Pell Grant Winners.
- Prepare a presentation to Pepperdine decision makers on sample packages of targeted populations . . . present information on overall loan indebtedness (as affects future alumni giving), attrition of high and middle “need” students, etc.

- Work with leaders to select consultants to review packaging policies and available funds to determine the efficiency of the packages vis-a-vis enrollment, and to make adjustments for specific populations.

Retention

Many campuses are focusing more on retention in order to build enrollment and graduate successful alumni. At Pepperdine there are some vehicles in place (i.e. the Early Alert System.)

- The institution may want to consider placing the retention function within a specific area and giving that area responsibility for a retention plan and setting and meeting retention goals. There is a great deal of research being done in this area with good results . . . and while the Pepperdine retention rate is a relative success, each additional actual graduate represents both income and visibility. Here are two examples: at the University of Miami the Bookstore notifies the Financial Aid Office when students do not buy their books, and a Financial Aid staff member contacts each of those students to make sure they have books or provides the necessary resources to get them. At Otis College of Art and Design, the graduation rate has doubled partly because staff contacted those who “walked” but did not actually graduate to get them to come back to finish their degrees.
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Professional Development

At Pepperdine the staff is supported in their professional development and the number of staff taking advantage of degree programs is impressive.

- The Undergraduate Admissions Staff is very talented and committed and certainly works hard. There is a little isolation on the staff in terms of experience (Pepperdine alumni) and when possible it would be good to hire experienced staff from like-institutions (in terms of selectivity) and/or to bring professionals to campus to undertake staff training. This would be beneficial as staff would learn about effective strategies and tactics from other institutions and then make decisions about their applicability to Pepperdine.
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I hope this report has been helpful. Again, it was my pleasure to get to know Pepperdine even better and to offer my ideas on how to make you even more successful.

Katy M. Murphy
July 25, 2011

**Enrollment Audit
Pepperdine University
June 2011**

It was indeed a pleasure to visit Pepperdine University on June 22 and 23, 2011. Michael Truschke invited me to undertake an undergraduate enrollment audit, based upon my 30+ years of experience as a Dean of Admissions / Financial Aid / Enrollment at four private California colleges and as Director of College Counseling at Bellarmine College Preparatory, my current position.

What I found in meeting with students, staff and faculty was uniquely impressive in that each person I met with could articulate the mission of Pepperdine very clearly while sharing his/her passion for that mission. It is rare in higher education today to see such clarity and consistency on a campus, and the entire Pepperdine community is to be justly celebrated for directly following the path set for them by the founders and leaders of the institution.

Pepperdine's enrollment efforts are in a great position to utilize the cornerstone of a good reputation within higher education to focus on strengthening that position. This strengthening will take place through disciplined planning and strategic activities within the admissions and financial aid staffs, coordinated with similar efforts within academics, student life, athletics and development.

The Undergraduate Enrollment Staff is ready to move forward. There is a depth of talent and commitment within the individual admissions, financial aid and international student services staffs that are again unique. Bright people are working very hard on behalf of the institution and your students. It is my hope that this report serves to reinforce the strengths they possess and give some direction for their future development as professionals in the field. This report will also provide Pepperdine's decision makers some insights and suggestions that will support the overall enrollment process and outcomes.

THE IDEAL PEPPERDINE STUDENT

In an overall enrollment picture, it is important to focus on what the outcome might be . . . in this case the ideal Pepperdine student who will enroll, be challenged and supported while contributing to the University in a variety of ways, and will graduate and go on to success in his/her chosen field and community. I had the pleasure of asking a variety of groups and individuals about the ideal student during my visit and was interested in their responses.

The student group identified a service orientation as the most important characteristic, and then went on to list commitment to quality and excellence, thinkers and problem solvers, and globally minded as further descriptors. Undergraduate Admissions found ideal students to be curious, dreamers and altruistic, but the commitment to service within the world was also an important component. International Services focused on support of the mission, strength in academics, and leadership and volunteerism as their choices. The faculty members I met with believe the ideal Pepperdine students are those who will push faculty in the ways faculty push them, as well as those who are good writers and who are serious about exploring applications of their faith.

The common themes of excellence in the classroom and service within the global community were echoed by others as well, and again mirror Pepperdine's mission very clearly. Throughout this report I will be referring to the document Boundless Horizons: Opportunities for the Future of Pepperdine University, presented by President Benton last September. The President stated a commitment to “. . . keep our promises; that our market positioning be accurate and honest . . .” I believe the consistency of descriptions of the ideal Pepperdine student which I found in my discussions to be directly related to the experience of the students, and that Pepperdine is keeping those promises.

PRIORITIES IN ENROLLMENT PLANNING

There are a variety of constructs / frameworks for enrollment planning available within higher education. At some point a consultant may be brought in to further examine the entire University's strengths and opportunities as enrollment is planned for the next ten years. I have found the following construct, developed originally by my colleague Jim Whitaker, to be extremely helpful as a tool in seeking consensus on enrollment priorities and moving forward strategically. (*Jim Whitaker worked with me at Mount. St. Mary's College and is currently the Associate VP of Enrollment at Chapman University.*)

Choices . . . are best made within the entire community. The results can then be implemented in recruitment, student financial aid, academic and student life planning, career planning and alumni relations. The choices are important because every institution cannot be everything to all people. Priorities, strengths and resources differ and allow students choosing college in the United States to have a variety of options. As the Pepperdine community knows better than most, you stick to what you do well.

However, it might be helpful for those discussing President Benton's stated intention that “A serious conversation must take place . . . as it pertains to the matter of where Pepperdine should

seek to place itself in the pantheon on America's colleges and universities." (Boundless Horizons) to use this construct at some point to flesh out the component's of Pepperdine's goals, and therefore give the Enrollment Staff an even clearer set of marching orders.

Whitaker's construct, with additions, requires a community to prioritize and put human and financial resources into two out of the five areas. As the tactics for recruitment and retention in each of the areas are very different, at maximum effectiveness only two can be prioritized.

Notes:

1. This does not mean that the other areas are ignored, but few resources can be effectively committed throughout all five.
2. An effective recruitment program must have a focus at least 18 – 24 months prior to a class enrolling.
3. Focus during a recruitment cycle should not change unless there are changes within the political and economic environment call for that change, i.e. the economy's fall in Fall 2009.

The choices for Pepperdine are, in no particular order:

- Academic Quality . . . usually defined by incoming grades and test scores
- Headcount . . . relates directly into how many classrooms, faculty led sections, and residence hall spaces are available for use in addition to retention rates
- Discount . . . defining the ability / willingness of the institution to put operational dollars into financial aid and the ability of the institution to raise endowed and non restricted scholarship funds
- Diversity . . . can be defined in terms of male/female balance, critical masses of ethnicities and/or socio-economic or international populations on campus
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Some realities regarding these choices came to light during my two days with your community:

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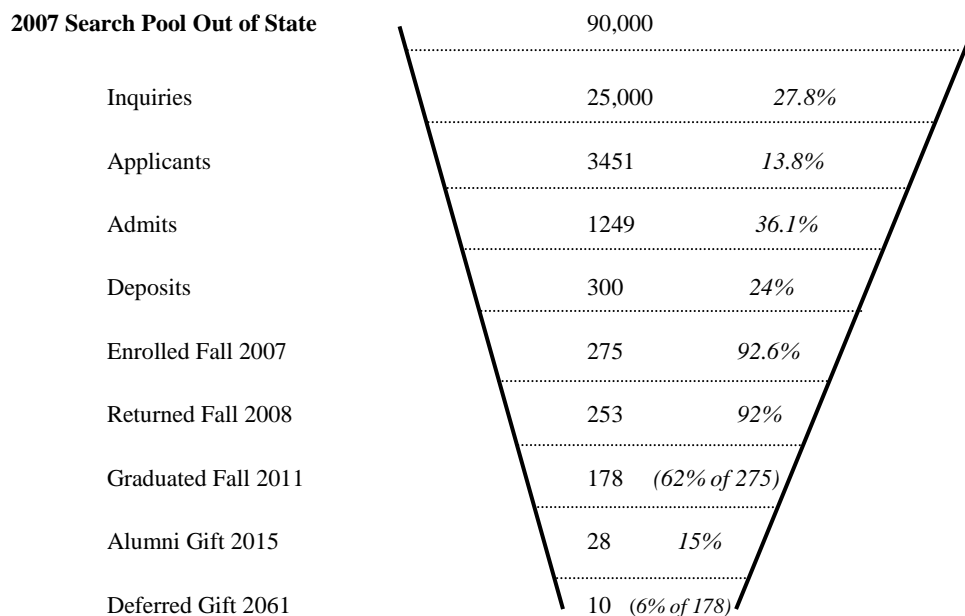
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