



STAFF CONFERENCE

SPECIAL EDITION:

ENROLLMENT





To be respectful of time, we ask that you write down your questions instead of asking them in the moment. If you briefly put your hand up, a Staff Assembly member will come collect your question.



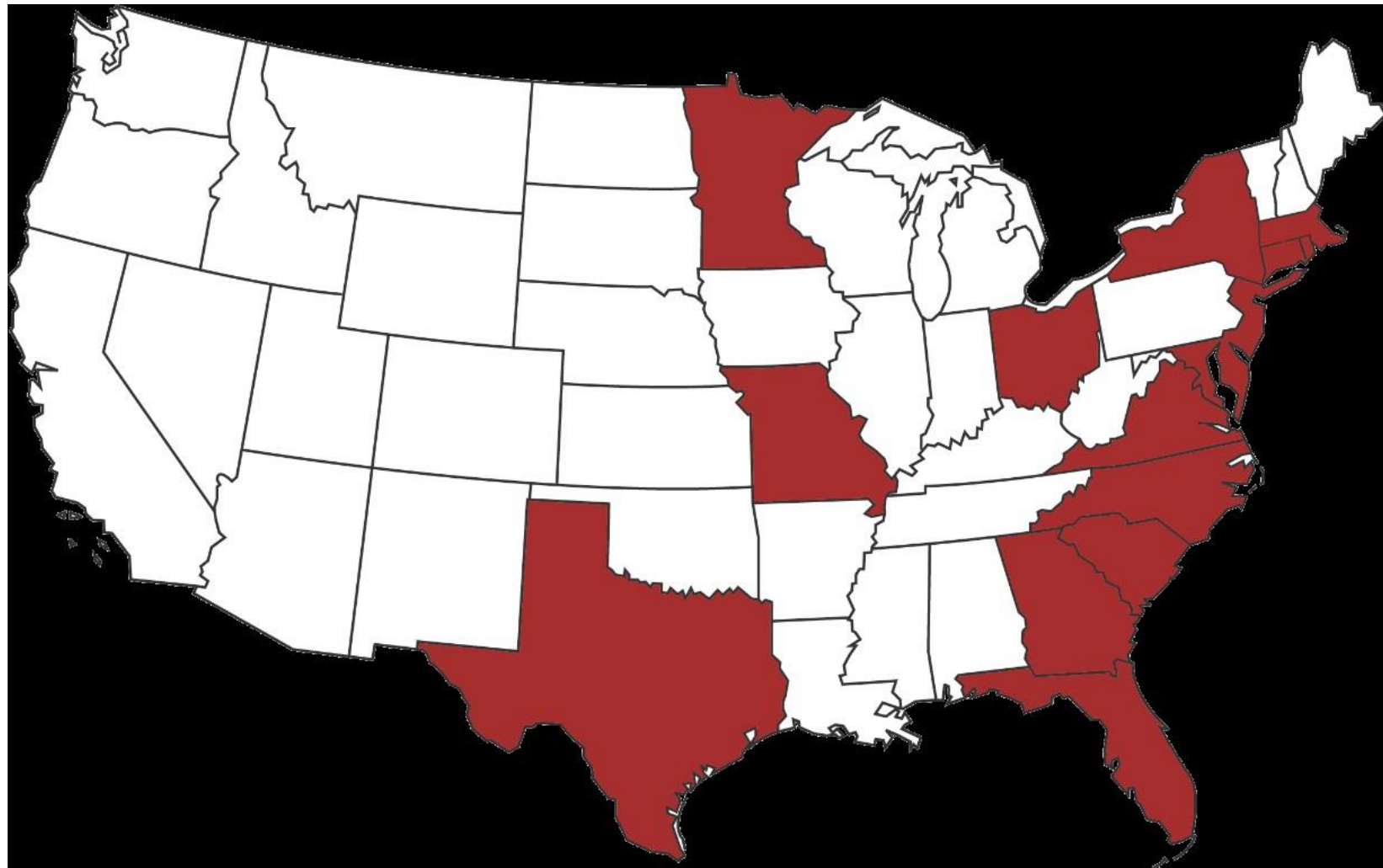
What parts of the country do we concentrate recruitment efforts on?



Primarily South Carolina, North Carolina, and the Eastern seaboard. Winthrop's visibility is greatest in South Carolina. Admissions has moved toward more recruitment in North Carolina over the years. Due to funding, we cannot travel to some locations, and can't afford some of the "misses" that other, larger schools can. We look at the per capita income of areas before traveling there. We also travel to markets that are growing economically. We have not had many students from the Mecklenburg County area in the past, but we have developed a niche in South Charlotte schools, such as the faith-based schools.



WINTHROP
UNIVERSITY

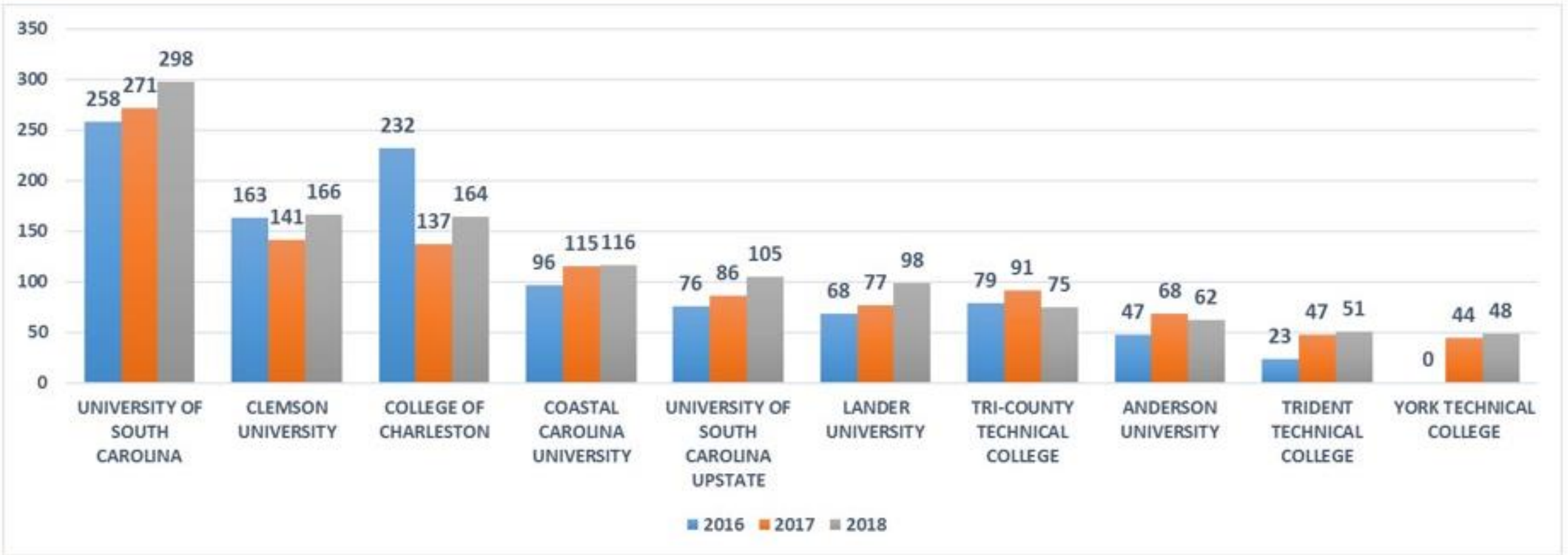




What other institutions are realistically considered our competition – i.e., USC and/or Clemson, yet shouldn't we also be looking at Lander and Francis Marion?



It appears that University of South Carolina, Clemson, and College of Charleston are the biggest competition. USC and Clemson alternate the No. 1 spot. We typically don't lose a lot of students to Francis Marion, and not as many to Lander as the others.





Do visiting students go into the dorms? Are there any plans to improve the dorms? To outsource the facilities work for the dorms? Do we actually use all the available dorm space? Could we consolidate as to provide higher-quality living areas?



Yes, currently the tour features show rooms in Margaret Nance and Lee Wicker. We invite you to come take a campus tour. They're 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday-Friday, and we'd like to do more Saturday tours.

Revenue vs. expense standpoint. The current dorms are paid for, so they are far more profitable than would be a new residence hall. Also, new residence halls will cost the students more, which impacts a lot of our students who do not have as much money to pay for housing. State money cannot be used for residence halls, so anything we do would either involve borrowing money to build new residence halls or working with a private developer. The latter option generally means giving up most of the revenue coming from the residence halls. We will likely replace Wofford in the next five years after we pay off more of the debt on past building projects.



This year we were a little lower on occupancy, but traditionally we are at about 95%, which means consolidation would not be practical. While it would be nice to have new residence halls, it is important to remember that ours are not as unusual as we might think and ours tend to be cheaper.

(NOTE: The president's son is staying in a residence hall built in the 1960s and very similar to our older ones, but pays \$5,000 more per year).



What are we doing to work with the technical schools to recruit their students?



We have the bridge program agreement with York Tech. We are looking to expand our agreements. Touchpoints have increased by 100 percent; for example, Admissions reached out to Central Piedmont Community College (CPC), with CPC personnel saying it's the first time Winthrop had approached them. One-third of our new transfer students (115) are coming from York Tech, so we have a lot coming who don't go through that bridge program. The Bachelor of Professional Studies will also be very helpful in recruiting students from technical schools. We are also examining our general education program in order to make sure our requirements are transfer-friendly.



Students who W/D from Winthrop fill out a W/D form. Who analyzes this information and how does it get used? Do we follow-up with students who *don't* come to see why they left or did not return? What about students who enroll, but then don't ever show up?



This form needs to be revised and updated. It's not certain who all sees it. It appears that most students leave for financial, personal or medical reasons. It's unsure what relevance we can take from it in its current state, and we may not always find the *real* reason. We need to figure out better ways to capture students *before* they leave campus. This is not an unusual problem since students across the country are not generally forthcoming related to their reasons for leaving.



Can we increase enrollment by dropping Admissions requirements and/or tuition?



No. Dropping admissions requirements will not happen. There's been discussion about making us a test-optional university or modifying our use of standardized tests in some other ways. For example, we are missing approximately 30 students a year who qualify for S.C. Lottery money (LIFE scholarship) but do not meet our requirements for admittance. Data shows that high school GPA is far and away the best predictor of college success; if they do well in high school, they will do well in college.

We have also looked at new tuition models (e.g., no tuition increase, capping the tuition for all four years), but research does not suggest most of these work very well beyond the initial year or so. Moreover, if they do not increase enrollment by a significant amount, they can have a detrimental financial impact on the university.

Ultimately, tuition is a board decision, and they will continue to explore options.



**Would bringing back LEAP help
Admissions?**



It is unclear whether bringing back LEAP will help with student performance (because there are other supports available) or with admissions. While some parents/students may like the support provided by LEAP, others do not like being labeled “LEAP students.” Schools, such as USC, admit these students without the LEAP label.



Why are we losing admitted students?



There have been some general changes in the admissions process nationally. Students are applying to 3-5 schools on average, but some apply to far more, which has resulted in a decline in yield rates. Around a 30% yield is not unusual, while in the past it was more likely to be around 40%. Students are also now attending Orientation sessions at multiple universities before making a final decision later than in the past, which makes the final incoming class far less predictable. What we are seeing here is what most universities are experiencing.



Once students apply, there are a wide variety of factors that impact their final decision. The financial aid package is certainly one of the most critical. One of the least important numbers is the published tuition and fees rate because only a small number of students actually pay this. Students and their families focus primarily on what they have to pay. This year we had to reduce the scholarship pool for incoming students to comply with state limitations. This creates some problems when we compete with private institutions who can discount tuition as much as they want.

Beyond financial aid, there are probably hundreds of reasons why students pick one university over another. The fact that they decide later means we can all contribute to attracting students by making all of their interactions on campus as positive as possible.



What acceptance criteria does Admissions follow when accepting an applicant?



3.0 GPA for an in-state student (based on 5.0+ scale), mid-to-high SATs (800 and up), and mid-to-high ACT (19 and up). Our average ACT score is 23-24, within the top four in the state. We review class rank and the amount of credit hours as defined by the state. Letters of recommendation are requested for students that are on the edge of our requirements.



Why do students seem to hear back from other schools about admittance and financial aid so much sooner than they hear from us?



It is normally a 2-3 week process after the application is complete. The key word there: complete. This is faster than most, since many universities do not do rolling admissions and wait to let students know. The feedback we got from recruiters was that some schools (e.g., Francis Marion) are making admittance decisions on the spot. We don't think this is a good strategy for us.

We are a little slower this year on the financial aid packages due to the EAB Research study that we are using to determine scholarships for next fall. While we are a little slower, it was better to wait to get it right than to rush ahead with the same approach as last year.



Can we contact you if we have identified qualified prospective students?



Yes! The new CRM (which saves Winthrop about \$50,000 a year) allows them to tag students as VIPs, which means they would receive more correspondence/phone calls/contact from us.



Can we consider lowering the TOEFL score from 68 to 61?



Academic Affairs would need to look into this. Our retention rate drops when we lower standards. If a student is denied acceptance, they can appeal that decision. Admissions has more than one page of standards that must be followed.



Can there be a simple formula or graph available for academic scholarships in the beginning of the school year?



This was delayed because of the EAB financial analysis. It is available online now.



Are there plans underway to accept an AA or AS degree as the equivalent of general college requirements? If not, why not?



Accepting associates degrees can be misleading because they can allow a person to believe he or she is two years into a degree, which may not be the case. Many of our programs are accredited and have discipline-specific requirements that cannot be met in two years if students did not take the necessary classes in the associates degree program. There is a group that is examining the general education requirements in order to ensure that we make this transition as easy as possible.



Do we know anything about our return on investment as far as money spent on recruiting vs. enrollment?



The average cost to recruit a student is \$2,700 for a private school and \$1,150 for a public school. We typically spend approximately \$600 per student to recruit them and feel that's a good return on investment. The budget for recruiting is now less than in the past. This \$600 includes gas, travel costs, mailings, etc. Admissions is being as efficient as possible. They are looking into making some additional investments. The new CFO has some fresh ideas and new perspective on spending money in these areas.



Why can't we lock in tuition for incoming students for the ideally four years they'll be enrolled?



This was addressed earlier. Most of the research in this area seems to indicate this might provide a slight bump initially, it seems unlikely that it is a sustainable strategy.



**What are the academic departments
doing to recruit students?**



The tours now include the academic colleges if requested by the students. They can spend time in their respective academic college while here for the tour. We have calendared out quarterly meetings with the academic colleges to discuss strategic plans. We are now working better with these departments, such as working together on mailings. Overall, there are a number of opportunities for students to interact with faculty in their program areas throughout the recruitment process.



What strategies are we using to turn high application yield into increased enrollment?



- (1) Focusing on engagement and high-touch practices, i.e. holding admitted student receptions around the area
- (2) involving high schools in the process
- (3) better coordination with emails and mailings – they're being staggered so items from different areas of campus arrive on different days



(4) segmented messaging - Rock Hill students may receive one type of mailing while outside area students receive a different one

(5) having the outcomes/values discussion – we are affordable

(6) refining what makes us special

15 percent of area students who go elsewhere to college will transfer to Winthrop sometime during their college years.



What messaging does the rest of the university need to be telling prospective students?



We're trying to refine what makes us special. We talk about small class sizes, campus beauty, etc., but we need to go past that. Admissions has come up with one to two pages of "selling/brag points," and hope to get a printed piece together that people can use to promote Winthrop, i.e., if you're out and about and need conversational points. This also ties into the segmented messaging – i.e., for Northern students we're recruiting, we talk about the more agreeable weather.



What makes us worth the extra price compared to other state universities?



We are not more expensive than other state universities. When College Scorecard reports on what students actually pay, we are somewhere in the middle and are cheaper than our top 3 competitors. There's a difference between net price and scholarship price, and people rarely ever pay the net price. The actual cost of college is different for each person. While students on average ultimately pay less here, they get smaller class sizes, more individual attention, more opportunities for campus involvement, etc. Ultimately, we have to believe we're worth what we charge. We provide students with a lot of direction and truly excel in the customer service aspect.



Questions?
Comments?
Announcements?



Next Staff Conference

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Dina's Place, DiGiorgio Campus Center