New goals, new approaches
Furman aims to double size of applicant pool

New strategies designed to meet ambitious enrollment goals for the incoming freshman class are yielding promising early returns for the Admission Office, with Early Decision applications up 60 percent over last year. The size of the inquiry pool and the number of campus visits also show healthy increases.

While many institutions nationwide are reporting a surge in Early Decision applications, none so far has approached Furman’s record-setting pace, and the trend is encouraging to an Admission staff that has redoubled its efforts this year to bring in a freshman class about 100 students larger than last year’s 715.

“We’re pleased with our results so far, but by no means are we resting on these laurels,” says Bill Berg, Vice President for Enrollment. “Once we make the decisions about who to accept from these early applications, we’ll be focusing on enrolling them while also continuing our efforts to grow applications for the Regular Decision phase.”

The impetus has come from the top, with President Rodney Smolla charging the Enrollment division to increase the size of the student body and to eventually double the applicant pool from last year’s 4,800 to 10,000.

The goals have been embraced by Berg, Admission Director Brad Pochard, and the staff, Berg says.

“In reviewing our strategic indicators, Brad and I feel that the number of applications is the measure we most need to improve,” he says. “Our academic reputation is solid, and we continue to attract outstanding students, but we need to be able to expand the pool, to reach out to new markets, and to find creative ways to identify talented students.”

New positions and new strategies
Earlier this fall Berg, whose division includes Admission, Financial Aid, Student Employment and Planning and Institutional Research, shifted unfilled positions into the Admission Office from elsewhere in the division. Under direction from President Smolla, he added three new positions in Admission.

The first, a marketing manager (Lindsay Timmerman Niedringhaus ’07), will develop strategies to mine new areas for applicants.

With nearly 60 percent of Furman students coming from the Carolinas and Georgia, Berg says the university is “looking to secondary markets like Florida, Tennessee and Virginia, where Furman has some name recognition, but we feel we can improve our draw.”

This fall, outreach was immediately directed to Virginia. Staff visited about a dozen Virginia high schools and traveled to Richmond to accept an award from the Washington Center, an organization that matches college students with work opportunities in the Washington, D.C., area. The Center named Furman the Private University of the Year. Other events included a men’s rugby game in Charlottesville and a reception for Richmond-area alumni and prospective students hosted by two Furman trustees. The events give university administrators and recruiters a chance to build relationships with high school counselors, parents, alumni, and prospective students in the area.

Perhaps the most dramatic change is the adoption of a new policy that gives each applicant the option of requesting an interview. Understanding that thousands of requests may pour in from a variety of locations, the Admission, Development and Alumni offices have bolstered the Furman Admission Network (FAN), with 650 university friends, parents, and alumni who have volunteered to conduct interviews with prospective students.

Modeled after similar programs at Yale, Northwestern, Georgetown, Duke, and Washing- ton & Lee, FAN members will spread the Furman message. A new FAN coordinator (Kristen Fischer Anthony ’03) will begin work in mid-December and oversee this effort.

“The best way to recruit students is through word of mouth,” says Tom Tripplitt, director of the Alumni Association. “We have 28,000 alumni. About 13,000 are fairly active. They and parents can be a powerful force for us. They have personal stories to tell, and this will give them a place to channel their energy.”

Tripplitt says each volunteer will complete a short training session in which they will be given a set of guidelines and a list of suggested questions. After each student interview, the volunteer will submit a report to Admission to be included in the applicant’s file.

Lastly, Admission has added Allyson Brown to work on recruiting transfer students, a relatively untapped market. “On average we enroll 25 transfer students each year,” says Pochard. “We’d like to increase that number. There are a lot of high quality transfer students out there. We just need to reach out to them.”

New markets and the Southwest factor
While FAN and new staff members work to attract more students to Furman, Pochard and others are working to make sure their campus visit—the university’s in-person sales pitch—is more effective.

For starters, the typical campus visit has been expanded to three or four hours, up from two hours.

“We try to get families to spend half a day here,” says Pochard. “The old rule of thumb used to be that if we get them to campus, we’d get them to apply, but that is not necessarily the case. Last year, 51 percent of those who took the campus tour ended up applying.”

Pochard said the tour has grown to include visits to the Bell Tower, lake, PAC and the southern part of campus. Prospective students are also taken to a furnished North Village apartment, where they view

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Fifty years and counting

Charles Brewer, master teacher and advisor, is a Furman treasure

This year Charles Brewer reached three milestones. As Furman’s senior faculty member, he earned the move during the inauguration of President Rodney Smolla. Brewer also became just the second professor to receive both the university’s Mentorious Teaching and Advising Awards. (Tom Closer, Professor Emeritus of Education, was the first.) And, perhaps most importantly, he marked his 50th year in the classroom.

But Brewer, known for his witty style, classroom flair and rigid standards, isn’t much on reminiscing or slowing down.

At 76, he rises at 4:30 each morning (as he has for five decades). He arrives at his office in Johns Hall at 6 a.m. and puts in a 12-hour day. (He would stay longer but they stop serving diner in The Woodlands at Furman, where he lives, at 7 p.m.) He calls it a day at 10 p.m.

“I get more done between 6:30 and 9:00 than I do the rest of the day,” he says. “By 9:00 a.m. the phone starts to ring and students start dropping by the office. I’m not the type of person who can start writing, have that time interrupted, and then start all over. It’s good for me to have that uninterrupted time.”

The routine, he says, fuels a zeal for teaching that has enriched classrooms and created lasting memories for thousands of Furman students.

Brewer’s style is unique. An old-school, rigid disciplinarian, Brewer does not accept late papers and forbids students from wearing caps and hats in his classroom. He doesn’t use PowerPoint.

“I have sat through too many PowerPoint presentations that have no power and no point,” he says. “I don’t buy that.”

Brewer’s theatrics are not limited to the classroom.

After working in the dark basement of Plyler Hall for 30 years, Brewer and his psychology colleagues had cause for great celebration in 1998 when Johns Hall opened. They decided to celebrate the move to the airy, modern building with a New Orleans-style funeral procession.

Psychology professors John Batten (who studied under Brewer at Furman) and Gil Einstein described the event in Furman magazine: “Having persuaded a trumpeter to lead the way, students and faculty marched up from the old space, accompanied by slow, mournful music. As they exited the building, however, the mood quickly changed, and the trumpeter launched into a spirited rendition of ‘When the Saints Go Marching In.’ Most of the marchers began to dance, although somewhat self-consciously, since they were standing in the middle of campus—in broad daylight.

“For Charles L. Brewer, who had endured life in the cellar longer than anyone and who, when asked about the impending move, responded, ‘I’ll miss the basement but I wouldn’t miss chicken.’ Not about to let the opportunity pass, he proceeded to dance, jog and gyrate around campus. He even dragged the embarrassed trumpeter through the administration building and the boardroom—with a trustee meeting in session.”

“I am not the retiring type,” Brewer says. “I worked during the administrations of Blackwell, Johns, Shi and now Smolla. And I plan to outlive the last one.”

A native of Arkansas, Brewer received his undergraduate degree from Hendrix College and his master’s and Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Arkansas.

When Gordon Blackwell took over as Furman’s president in 1995, he promised to make the university “great by national standards.” At the time, most Furman faculty members were from the southwest. Blackwell asked Dean Francis Bonner to cast a wider geographic net for faculty.

Boner called Brewer, who was teaching at Elon College in uptown New York, where he had developed a psychology program and a reputation as an inspirational teacher.

“He called me because I had built the program at Elon,” says Brewer. “When I came to Furman, the Psychology Department was not really a department. It had two people. Bonner used to go to Chapel Hill and other places to recruit faculty. At the time Furman was not known much outside the southeast. Bonner didn’t have anyone to improve Furman’s academic standing.”

Brewer’s impact was immediate. In 1995, he received the first Alexander G. Furman, Jr. and Jane Furman Earle-Farmer Award for Mentorious Teaching. Earlier this year he received the Furman Award for Mentorious Advising. He has also been widely honored by the American Psychological Association for his teaching and other exemplary contributions to the profession.

His classroom and professional accomplishments aside, Brewer is perhaps best known to the students for his “Brewerisms,” a collection of off-the-cuff remarks that are sometimes funny, frequently insightful and always entertaining.

The list has grown each year. And Brewer promises, “I am not the retiring type,” he says. “I worked during the administrations of Blackwell, Johns, Shi and now Smolla. And I plan to outlive the last one.”

Increasing admission numbers

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On top of this, the university wants to nudge enrollment up to 2,700 from its current level of 2,504. Next year’s first-year student goal is 825, up from 715 this year.

“We can absorb these students by increasing the number of seniors who are allowed to live in the Vining[s],” says Berg. “The bigger pinch will be felt in first-year seniors. We’ll need to ask faculty to teach additional classes in the fall.”

“Our Early Decision numbers are up, and it’s a high-quality pool, as well. We’re moving in the right direction, and we’re off to a great start.”

— Bill Berg

Doubling the applicant pool, Berg says, will allow Furman to accommodate these goals without sacrificing the quality of the student body.

According to early returns, the strategy is off to a promising start. Furman received 824 Early Decision applications, a 60 percent increase over last year. Unlike many other colleges, Furman’s Early Decision is non-binding.

Furman received 824 Early Decision applications, a 60 percent increase over last year. Unlike many other colleges, Furman’s Early Decision is non-binding. But accepted applicants notified December 15 must reserve their spot at Furman by mid-January.

Early Decision can save some anxiety with colleges and families. It allows the university the opportunity to gauge its financial ability and class quality before the spring, while going high school seniors spend peace of mind knowing that they’ve completed their college search by January.

Generally, Berg says, students accepted during this early period are more committed to Furman. Students selecting colleges during Regular Decision often do so after competing financial aid packages and negotiat-

ing for additional assistance.

About a third of this fall’s freshman class enrolled in Early Decision. Berg says the percentage could climb to 40 percent for the Class of 2015.

BREWERSISMS

■ Everything is related to everything else. (Professor Cordaro: And dammit, don’t you forget it.)

■ If you do not know where you are going, the likelihood that you will get there borders on randomness.

■ You are always more complicated than they are.

■ Things always take longer than they do, especially when there is more work to do than time to do it.

■ You can do more, so loam concepts and principles.

■ Be willing to say, “I don’t know,” but strive always to decrease the frequency with which you must do so.

BREWERS MAXIM: Leave no academic butt unknicked.
Furman has finalized a deal with retail giant Barnes & Noble to operate the University Bookstore.

The New York-based company already operates more than 600 campus bookstores, including three at Clemson, the University of South Carolina, the College of Charleston, and the College of Charleston.

Mary Lou Merkt, Vice President for Business Affairs, said Furman’s agreement with Barnes & Noble will offer a large selection of books, textbooks, and other supplies.

The fast-changing dynamics in the bookstore industry have made it difficult for university-operated bookstores to compete, she said.

The presence of online and brick-and-mortar retailers, as well as an increase in online ordering, has made it challenging for university bookstores to keep up.

For the Spring 2011 semester, the bookstore will offer a full range of textbooks and supplies, as well as a selection of non-bookstore items, such as stationery, school supplies, and snacks.

Barnes & Noble also plans to introduce a new service to students, offering same-day delivery of textbooks and supplies.

The bookstore will also feature a variety of music, movies, and books, as well as a range of other products.

The new bookstore will be located in the lower level of the College of Liberal Arts, next to the student union.

The move to a new location will allow the bookstore to expand its selection of books and other products, as well as provide a more convenient location for students.

In addition to the new bookstore, Furman will also offer a new student card, the Furman TAP card, which will be accepted at the bookstore and other campus locations.

The TAP card will allow students to make purchases with a pre-loaded balance, and will also serve as a means of identification.

The bookstore will also offer a new program, the Bookstore Loyalty Program, which will allow students to earn points for purchases, which can then be redeemed for discounts on future purchases.

Overall, the move to a new bookstore and the introduction of the TAP card and Loyalty Program will provide students with a more convenient and user-friendly experience.

For more information about the new bookstore, visit the Furman Bookstore website at bookstore.furman.edu.
The award is named in honor of the late Ralph Guthrie, professor of early childhood education at the University of South Carolina, who made significant contributions to the field of early childhood education in the state. Doeling, a past president of SCACET, is currently on the board of directors of the Early Childhood Foundation of South Carolina (ECFSC) and wrote the keynote address at the Southern Conference at Ball State University, which took place in October. In November, Tolson was appointed by the South Carolina Speaker of the House to serve a four-year term on the S.C. Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission.

History

Courtney Tolson’s exhibit, Wearing Our Survival: Uncanny Stories of World War I, won the 2010 Award of Excellence from the Southeastern Museums Conference. Tolson traveled to Baston Rouge to accept the award in October. Tolson was appointed by the South Carolina Speaker of the House to serve a four-year term on the S.C. Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission.

Library

Mary Fairbam was part of a panel presentation on “Pioneers in Information Literacy: South Carolina Librarians Share Their Best Ideas” at the South Carolina Library Association Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach in October. Delores Landi will serve as chair for Mortar Arts, Libraries, and Museums Council on Preservation (PALMCoP), a statewide organization devoted to preservation and conservation.

Religion

Echol Nokia was elected Vice President of the North American Paul Tillich Society in Atlanta, Georgia on October 30, 2010 at the meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Nokia also continues to serve as president of the South Carolina Tillich Society.

Psychology

James Guth and Beth Neilson are co-authors, with Brian McIndoo and Susan Miller, of “Religion and Public Attitudes toward the Economy,” which was published in Religion, Ethics and Democracy in the Public Sphere. Guth also authored two papers: “Guidance Teacher Candidates-Love about Their Students and Their Students’ Concerns” and “Student Asset Prognostications: Northern California and Washington State.”

The new brochure will be added as the project’s completion and the last month of project funding available.

The Admissions Office is assisting those who already have the original systems (HVAC, kitchen, and bathroom) to update to a new era of computing and building software in the new residence halls.

The Admissions Office’s role in the inauguration of President Smolla will continue to assist with fundraising, community relations, and website development.

The Admission Office has received funds from supporters of the President Rod Smolla. An invitation was mailed to 350 prospects of alumni, parents and friends of Furman. The theme for this event was “Why Furman Matters: From Public School to Private.”

In addition, a push to ensure the best possible experience for those who haveTouch the image with their families when they visit campus is under way. Un- dergraduate Admissions is coordinating a round of appointments with the Admission Office itself that feat had many students, faculty, and parents ready. The most recent survey of technology service quality indicated that only Colgate and Notre Dame Percent rate, which trailed most Division I schools with a 97...
Fowler, long-time Paladin assistant, returns to lead football program

Bruce Fowler, a former Furman walk on and a long-time member of the vaunted Paladin coaching tree, was named head football coach December 13.

A native of Cincinnati, Fowler had served on the Paladin football staff for 16 years before moving to Nashville in 2001 with then Furman football coach Bobby Johnson to take over the Vanderbilt program.

At Vanderbilt, the duo – Johnson the head coach and Fowler the defensive coordinator – helped transform a perennial cellar dweller into a respectable competitor in the powerful Southeastern Conference. In 2008, Vanderbilt, aided by a Commodore defense that ranked 15th nationally in pass defense, posted its first bowl victory by a Commodore squad since the 1955 Gator Bowl.

In 2008, he was promoted to full-time receivers coach under new head coach Jimmy Satterfield. In that role he oversaw the development of six All-Southern Conference, who played a pivotal role in the Paladins going 13-2 and winning the 1988 NCAA I-AA championship, as well as three straight conference titles (1988-89-90).

In 1993, he made the switch to defense, taking over the Paladin secondary. Johnson promoted Fowler to defensive coordinator and put him in charge of the Paladin linebackers in 1999 — a move that helped pave the way for a brilliant three-year run that netted a 30-9 record, including Southern Conference Championships in 1999 and 2001, three playoff appearances, and a 12-3, national runner-up finish in 2001.

The importance of repetition, perfect practice and positive communication were gleaned from the Sheridan era. Fowler said Satterfield, a great offensive mind of the day, helped him learn a lot about the playing on the other side of the football.

He reserved high words for Johnson, a good friend. Fowler praised his colleague’s steadiness, attention to detail, toughness and intensity.

Fowler began his collegiate coaching career in 1984 as a graduate assistant under Sheridan and was on staff in the same capacity the following year when Furman went 12-2, defeated N.C. State (42-20) for a second consecutive season, won the Southern Conference championship, and finished as national runner-up.

In 2008, Furman put on a real nice party for me, cancelled classes and I was delighted to have Rod share the day with me."

—Mickey Fray

“It was my birthday and I remember it fondly because Furman put on a real nice party for me, cancelled classes and I was delighted to have Rod share the day with me."

—Mickey Fray

“The hawk flying through and landing. It was just a real peaceful setting.”

—Suresh Muthukrishnan

“I just really appreciated everyone’s attention and response. The entire event was very well received and I was quite impressed.”

—Jack Garinhan

“Had I really enjoyed the entire ceremony. The speaker (Clare Morris, President of the Alumni Association) who called President Smolla the rock star really stood out. It was funny.”

—Nina Anthony

What was your most memorable moment of the inauguration?

A Furman homecoming

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