



Maintaining Lawrence's enrollment is an annual combination of renewal and generation. Each year a reasonably predictable number of students graduate, and a less predictable number decide to leave Lawrence. The role of the admissions office is to recruit and enroll enough appropriately qualified and well-matched new students to replace those who are no longer enrolled here. To do so, our staff of 11 professional admissions officers (with the assistance of eight other staff members) visits several hundred high schools from Maine to Hawaii (as well as overseas), attends nearly 200 college fair programs, hosts over 1,500 visitors to campus, coordinates more than 300 auditions (both on-campus and regionally), and interviews nearly 2,000 students.

A Record-Setting Year

As was noted in the last issue of *Lawrence Today*, our recruitment efforts met with significant success this year. Our freshman applicant pool surpassed 2,600 for the first time in history. We enrolled 382 freshmen, with 294 pursuing the B.A. degree, 38 the B.Mus. degree and 50 pursuing both through our double-degree program. The academic profile of the freshmen again edged upward and the musical talent and the instrumental balance of the Conservatory of Music class were among the best in recent history. Geographically, the class continued to become more diverse with international students representing nine percent of the freshmen and only 29 percent of the freshmen hailing from Wisconsin — the smallest proportion in history. The next largest contingents were from Illinois, Minnesota, California, New York, Colorado, and China!

A number of years ago, **Kit Okimoto '04**, one of our graduates from Hawaii told me that his greatest apprehension about coming all the way to Appleton for college was that he wouldn't know anyone. But he said that within 24 hours of arriving, he realized that virtually everyone was a stranger, so it was really easy to make friends. This characteristic is actually one of the unique features about the Lawrence student body — most students arrive without a cadre of friends from their high school, so the entire freshman class becomes a new unit, with no pre-formed groups. That pattern repeated itself again this year — of the 382 freshmen, 289 of them were the only student from their high school. One high school sent us six freshmen, three others sent four freshmen each, and the remaining 77 freshmen were each one of only two or three students from their high school.

Recruitment and Retention

Overall, our fall enrollment of degree-seeking students was 1,452, about 30 students beyond our target. Some of these additional students were transfers, who accepted our offers of admission in larger numbers than we expected (a total of 34 new transfer students enrolled in September). But the majority of the discrepancy was the result of an increased retention of our current students — something we have been devoting attention to, but couldn't predict.

Last spring we sent alumni a copy of our new viewbook, "Lawrence — The Power of Individualized Learning," a sample of the new line of publications we rolled out this year. Many alumni wrote to us expressing their enthusiasm for the new look, and prospective students have responded with equal enthusiasm.

Though our location continues to be an enrollment challenge, we have amplified our efforts to enroll a student body that is as ethnically and culturally diverse as possible. We enrolled nine students in our second Posse from New York, four students from the Admission Possible program in Minnesota, and one Native American graduate of last year's College Horizons program.

The Changing Face of Admissions

An increasing number of our applicants are what we refer to as "stealth applicants" — students for whom our first contact is the receipt of their application. Increasingly, students are doing all of their college search online, so unless they actually come to visit campus, they have no need to ask the admissions office for any information. Gone are the days when they needed to give us their addresses so that we could send them our viewbook and application. As we continue our transition from paper to electronic communication, we are devoting increasing resources to our web presence. But we are also developing strategies to enhance and increase the word-of-mouth visibility of Lawrence. Ultimately (unless we start playing nationally televised football), Lawrence's future depends on its word-of-mouth reputation. And alumni can play an important role by making sure everyone you know knows you are a proud Lawrentian!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Syverson".

Steve Syverson
Vice President for Enrollment
and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid