STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT PROGRAM AT THE DEPARTMENTAL AND PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL

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PREFACE

In early December 2008, the chair of Augustana's faculty senate and the senate steering committee invited me to conduct a recruiting workshop for faculty, specifically to introduce strategies and tactics for developing a recruitment program at the departmental and programmatic level. While I welcomed the opportunity to address a group on this topic, I found I needed to do a considerable amount of preparation to adequately make the case for recruitment at the department and program level. Through research and consultation with colleagues on- and off-campus, I recognized that in addition to offering suggestions on specific tactics, it was an important challenge to make the case and "connect the dots." In the end I drew upon a number of resources to develop a case for recruitment and a number of specific recommendations that can work for Augustana College.

I developed this brief white paper as a follow-up to the session, for two reasons:
  > To share the information presented with those who were unable to attend
  > To provide a foundation for those interested in further developing recruitment tactics at the department and program level

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge on-going, willing and often enthusiastic participation of many—from faculty and current students to alumni and coaches—in serving the prospective students who visit Augustana. The college has enjoyed a tradition of constituents' involvement in staffing recruitment programs and ensuring students feel welcome on campus. Moreover, our recruitment efforts have greatly benefited from outreach by faculty in some programs to interested prospective students, via direct mail, email and phone calls.

I acknowledge that the "art" of successful recruitment is in large part someone who is present, interested, excited and willing to make a connection with a prospective student over shared academic interests. It is equally important to acknowledge that while most faculty were not hired with the specific responsibility of recruiting students, faculty are nonetheless the best representatives of the strength of their program, as well as a voice for their discipline within the context of Augustana's distinctive learning environment. In the end, not all faculty will be involved in recruitment. For such reasons this white paper should not be perceived as a change to one's job description or a "call to arms."

PROGRAM-LEVEL STUDENT RECRUITMENT AT AUGUSTANA COLLEGE

To begin, it is important for the Augustana community to understand what higher education research firms have found in terms of the impact of individual faculty members—intentional or otherwise—on program-level recruiting:

> Professors are the primary symbol of the academic program

> Professors represent the style and substance of their discipline and the quality of the major in which they teach;

> Interaction with professors is the primary example of personal attention and value-added aspects of a college like Augustana

Because we can neither escape nor underestimate these symbolic realities, we must create processes and tactics to highlight the faculty and our academic programs.

WHAT PROCESSES, TACTICS AND OTHER RESOURCES CAN ASSIST US AT THIS RECRUITMENT LEVEL?

A basic theme for Augustana's future recruitment plans is to lessen the approach of taking a broad overview of the college and to elevate the focus on program and major. For institutions of higher education, a comparison might be made to businesses: corporations communicate at the brand level to develop awareness, and also compete at the business level to differentiate their goals and processes from those of similar organizations. At this time when more attention than ever is on the major, we must compete at the level where we get down to the business of the academic focus if we are going to succeed in the higher education market.

To do so will require our work together as partners. Staff in the admissions office and communication and marketing will work with you to develop very specific communication tools:

1. A list of "things you can count on" when you study (X) at Augustana (Appendix B)

2. Serious prospect-, accept- and choose-Augustana letters

3. An in-depth questionnaire for prospects—highlighting distinctions of the major and gathering information about the student—which allows us to customize our response (Appendix A)

4. Yield letters from key alumni which attest to the strength of the major and successful outcomes

5. Variety of programming for on-campus events to correspond with developmental stages, including summer visit days highlighting particular departments, and culminating with the academic departmental open house and scholarship competition each January

By working in partnership to develop the tools above, we will likewise benefit from developing clearer messages about:

> How Augie Choice strengthens the major
> How Senior Inquiry strengthens the major
> How our location in the QCA strengthens the major

Over the longer term we may also want to consider additional tactics to respond to further areas of concern identified in recent research:

> Developing pre-college programs (the English department has one model)
> Establishing honors within the discipline
> Indentifying a faculty or staff member to be Coordinator of Graduate and Professional School Advising
> Developing more guaranteed visibility efforts (the chemistry department's periodic table and the math-department's mathematics formulas are mailed to feeder high schools annually)
> Developing "white papers" about programs we offer (Appendix D)

Such ideas are attractive goals for the future; for the present, we should aim for the five tactics and tools listed above. These tactics represent a strong response to this challenging time in the higher education market, supported by the accompanying data (see below).

WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION NOW?

Augustana College, like many colleges across the country, has enjoyed considerable success in the last decade. Full classes, expanding enrollment and increased revenues have created energy on campus and generated quite a bit of "buzz" off-campus. With such success, one might ask, "why are we having this conversation now?" The simple answer is that the good times are over.

Like many colleges, Augustana has been preparing for significant decline in the number of high school graduates, which has been predicted for the past decade. However, Augustana felt the impact earlier than many other colleges. When we experienced a 40-student shortfall in first-year enrollment for the fall of 2008, this prompted further study of our place in the market. Through this study, conducted by George Dehne & Associates, we learned of some challenges we face in addition to demographic decline.

In the summer of 2008, George Dehne & Associates, a leading higher education consulting and research firm, conducted a recruitment environment assessment and a research project with accepted students. Their conclusions about the market in which we compete included the following observations:

> The demographic decline in the upper-Midwest is more problematic for colleges like Augustana because of our traditional reliance on enrolling Caucasians and students from Illinois
> There is an emerging reality that private colleges and their associated qualities are no longer per-ceived as "better"
> Parents are less committed to sacrificing their lifestyle to finance higher education

In addition to the observations about the market, the Dehne research of students accepted to Augustana revealed the following:

> We are not effectively communicating the strength of our academic majors

> Rock Island is seen as a "net negative" by admitted students

> Our relationship-building with prospective students has been going more poorly than we thought

> Augie Choice and Senior Inquiry are poorly understood

> Students and their families are not sufficiently convinced of Augustana's value, or whether an Augustana education is "worth" it when compared with other schools

All of this is particularly troublesome when we consider what are the most important factors in choosing a college, as identified in the Dehne research:

> Strong majors

> Location

> The campus visit experience

> Relationships and connections

The work of George Dehne & Associates, along with what we know about demographic decline and the changes in the marketplace, reveals significant challenges for Augustana College. However, because we now know these challenges we are in a good position to face them as a community. With a focused effort, a clear understanding of the environment and achievable objectives, we can move forward in changing our culture from one that is admissions-focused to one more recruitment-focused, and face these challenges head-on.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

To shift from an admissions focus to a recruitment focus, we must begin with the premise that maintaining status quo will not be sufficient to meet the challenges we face. What has changed?

> The college search process begins earlier than ever before. Approximately 20% of colleges nationwide send solicitations to high school freshmen. We sent mail to 50,000 sophomores last year.

> Once upon a time the recruitment year was from September of the senior year through May of the senior year; now, it is a 24- to 36-month cycle.

> Reflecting national and societal trends, prospective students visit campus when it is convenient for them, rather than when it is best for us. More than 1/3 of our prospective student campus visits occur during the months of June, July and August.

In addition to following these changes, many colleges already have shifted from an admission-focused culture, in which admission functions as a sort of stand-alone gate-keeper, to a recruitment-focused culture, where we see active pursuit of desired students and an integrated collaboration among a number of functional areas, including financial assistance, academic affairs and admissions. Augustana must make the shift, as well.

Continuing to support our existing recruitment efforts and initiatives, as sponsored and arranged by the Office of Admissions, is important—but it is not enough to respond to the challenges. Simply being present, interested and excited about meeting with students who attend admissions-sponsored events is not enough. Before we can do what we need to do, we must understand our prospects and future students better than we ever have before: know what they want, and to what they will respond.

HOW CAN WE BETTER UNDERSTAND AUGUSTANA'S PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS?

In order to develop a tactical plan for outreach, it is important to know two things about our prospects: how many are out there, and what they are looking for.

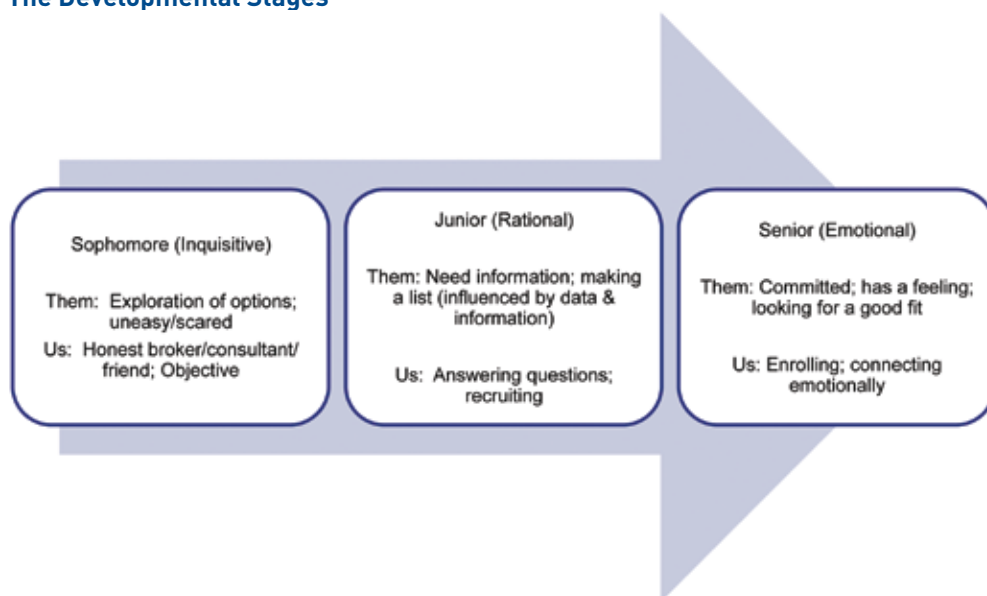Two illustrations can help to answer these questions:

The Recruitment Funnel
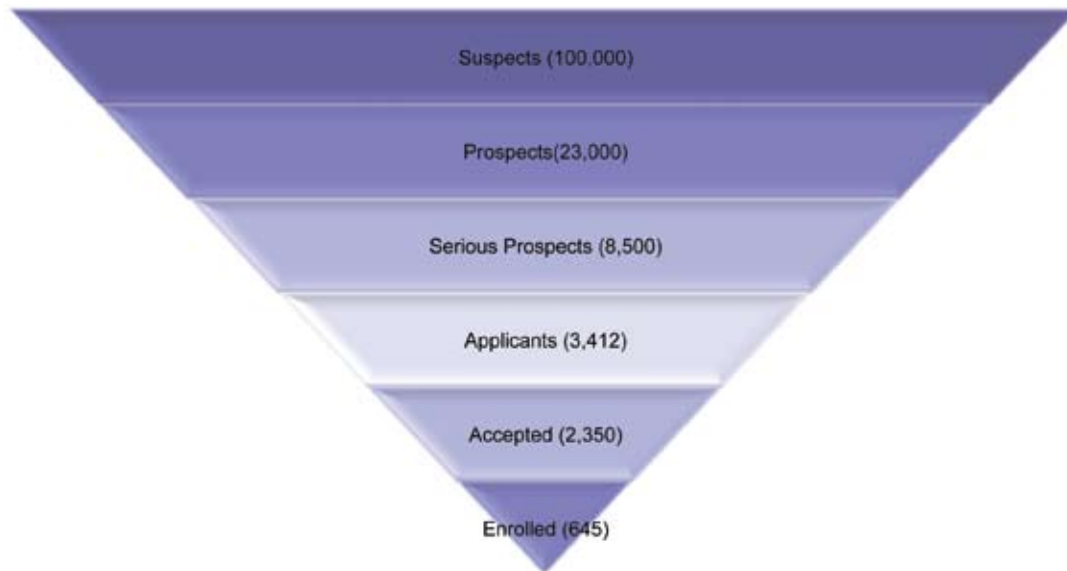
The recruitment funnel is critical because it clearly illustrates the different phases through which a prospect passes. As one imagines the funnel, one can also imagine that one size does not fit all. Even a casual observer can see that a different message is necessary depending on whether a student is a prospect (i.e. one of 30,000 who likely responded to one of our initial request-for-info mailings or email blast) or an accepted student trying to make his or her decision. During the session in December, one participant asked, "When can faculty begin—at which stage?" The plain answer is, at any level. However, if we are going to shift to a more recruitment-focused culture, the earlier stages of prospect or serious prospect are the most important.

The funnel is a great starting point to begin planning.

The Developmental Stages

Sophomore (Inquisitive)	Junior (Rational)	Senior (Emotional)
Them: Exploration of options; uneasy/scared	Them: Need information; making a list (influenced by data & information)	Them: Committed; has a feeling; looking for a good fit
Us: Honest broker/consultant/ friend; Objective	Us: Answering questions; recruiting	Us: Enrolling; connecting emotionally

In addition to the funnel, it is important to understand a prospective student's developmental stages. We have adapted a model for Augustana based on our own research and experience, similar to a process described by Bob Sevier in his 2000 article "Recruiting Funnel," which appeared in The Journal of College Admissions. Much like the funnel, the Developmental Stages model illustrates that we can't just develop one message and expect the message to fit at each stage a prospect goes through when choosing a college. Customizing the message and meeting them where they are is critical to making a meaningful connection.

If we agree that students need different messages at different times, we also need to know how to effectively communicate.

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE?

George Dehne & Associates and Simpson-Scarborough, another nationally recognized higher education consultant research firm, point out what works, as illustrated in the charts below.

Information	Very Effective
Information about major field of interest	70%
The College's website	51%
A viewbook mailed home	40%
An e-mail from admissions counselor	40%
A personal letter on college stationary	37%
A telephone call from a college admissions counselor	33%

(GDA-IS, 2008)

Helpful resources in the process

Open Houses	51%
Individual college websites	37%
College counselor visits	27%
College fairs	19%
Brochures	14%
College guides	11%
College rankings	7%

(Simpson- Scarbourgh, 2008)

These charts can help us understand what we need to do to be more effective at recruitment. The data reinforces the following:

> Students want information about the major

> The campus visit is enormously important

> The website is critical

> Paper still matters (i.e. letters, view book, etc.)

> Personalization is key

Asked to highlight what this means to our recruitment effort, I would posit the following:

> We need more specific information about the major, so we can then more intentionally highlight the major and its distinctions earlier in the process

> We should include an explicit invitation to visit campus in all recruitment correspondence, and make the success of the campus visit the test of our recruitment efforts

> We should continue to improve the website and related efforts

> We can't abandon print

> We need to do a more effective job of personalizing and customizing our responses

> More people need to be involved in reaching out via phone calls (Appendix C)

ARE SYMBOLS REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

Several years ago, after surveying more than 40,000 students, George Dehne authored a guide for campus-wide recruitment efforts, in which he developed the following chart demonstrating the symbolism associated with certain actions, facilities and characteristics of a college. This resource likewise helps us better understand students' perceptions of our actions as we represent Augustana.

Symbol/Action	Meaning to Prospect
Meeting with professor	Quality of major, personal connection
Original student research	Quality of major, personal connection
Major brochure/fact sheet	Quality of major
Faculty research	Quality of major
Variety of job placements	Quality of major, flexibility
Graduate school placements	Quality of major, flexibility
Multiple majors in one department	Quality of major, flexibility

Symbol	Meaning to prospect
Well-kept facilities	Quality of institution
Library	Quality of institution
Distribution requirements/core	Quality of institution, maybe the liberal arts

Symbol/Action	Meaning to Prospect
Letter from non-admissions personnel	Provides credibility, signals interest beyond admissions
Hand signed, personalized, typed letter	Real person responded
Hand written note on P.S.	High level of personal attention
Meeting current students	Assures "customer satisfaction"
Phone call with prospect	Proves serious interest
Connecting with alums	Confirms success and quality
Admissions publications	Propaganda, info must be confirmed

Although some may perceive this as nothing more than "symbolism over substance," we would make a mistake to think symbolism is not an important part of the calculus of making a college decision.

In short, we must examine our actions, facilities, programs and processes to ensure we are sending the "right" message.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT IS THE RIGHT MESSAGE?

We don't know what the right message is for everyone. But we know enough.

Through George Dehne & Associates, we know the most important factors in choosing a college, as well as what we are currently not doing well. We also know how to communicate with prospective students and what symbols matter to them. This general knowledge is important, but what about the information specifically related to better understanding Augustana students?

In the fall of 2008, Simpson-Scarborough conducted a large study of our alumni and prospects. Their body of research is significant, but can be summarized in the following way:

> Augie prospects respond to messages about…"Me today and me later in life."

Prospects considering Augustana want to know what they can do while at Augustana. They are not as interested in what we will do for them. Although somewhat narcissistic, this is characteristic of the Millennials. Simpson-Scarborough's work found that Augustana's prospects respond most favorably to these ideas of "me now":

> Topics that interest me

> Personalized

> Hands-on

> Career jump-start

As our prospects think about "me later in life," Simpson-Scarborough discovered that students define a high-quality college education through their impressions:

> The college academic reputation

> Whether the college has what they consider to be successful graduates

> Whether the college has a high percentage of alumni who have jobs after graduation

These are important considerations for a student's future.

Drawing upon Simpson-Scarborough's research and their understanding of Augustana's prospects, we might ask how effectively we are developing messages for students that respond to the desire they have to know more about "me now and me later in life."

WHAT CAN AUGUSTANA'S FACULTY DO WITH ALL OF THIS KNOWLEDGE?

First, much like recruitment, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. An outcome of the recruitment environment assessment, conducted this summer by George Dehne & Associates, was the following list of "reasonable expectations" for faculty recruitment efforts:

> One faculty member from every department participates in each visit day program

> At least one designated faculty member in each department is willing to meet with and speak to prospects

> Each faculty member is willing to make five to ten phone calls to prospective students each year

At the meeting in December there was support for these ideas—some of which we are currently doing and which already fit within a recruitment-centered model.

But as we consider all of the information presented above, we must also recognize the need to go further than the recommendations presented by Dehne. Equally important, we must respond to the data and the need to shift to a recruitment-focused culture. At the same time, we cannot and should not over-burden faculty. What we do, tactically and strategically, must be as reasonable as the expectations discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

There is much here that seems overwhelming, but there is much to reassure, as well. Unlike many other colleges, we have the data and we can see the path ahead. Whether we can agree how to proceed remains to be seen; but after spending a great deal of time thinking about what might be reasonable, I think we can agree and tackle the job together. There also is much here to capture the imagination—a stronger and more interesting story for us to discover and tell about all that is happening at Augustana College.

It is my sincere hope you will join me in making the case for:

> Why study (X)

> Why study (X) at Augustana College: what makes our program different and better

> Why you, John Smith or Emily Molina, should study (X) at Augustana College

As we move forward as partners, we will interpret and apply the "science" of recruitment by developing and executing the five tactics listed on page 2 of this white paper. Working toward adopting these specific five tactics will help position Augustana for what we face. And as we move forward, we also must continue our commitment to the "art" of successful recruitment, which all begins with the campus representative who can be present, interested, excited and willing to make a connection with a prospective student.

APPENDICES

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY College of Science Opportunities Survey

Thank you for your interest in engineering at the Florida Institute of Technology's College of Science. We want to tailor information about our programs to your interests. To learn more about your interest in engineering, please take a few minutes to complete and return this postage-paid card.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____ Email _____

Please indicate which area or areas of science you are or might be considering:

___ Biological Sciences
   ___ Aquaculture
   ___ Ecology
   ___ General Biology
   ___ Marine Biology
   ___ Molecular Biology
   ___ Preprofessional Biology
   ___ Interdisciplinary Biochemistry Program
   ___ Undecided

___ Chemistry
   ___ Research Chemistry
   ___ General Chemistry
   ___ Chemical Management
   ___ Premedical Chemistry

___ Mathematical Science

___ Physics and Space Science
   ___ Astronomy
   ___ Astrophysics
   ___ Interdisciplinary Science
   ___ Military Science
   ___ Physics
   ___ Preprofessional Physics
   ___ Space Sciences
   ___ Undecided

Check below what best describes your intentions immediately following earning your Florida Institute of Technology degree?

___ Attend graduate school immediately
___ Start a career
___ Work a few years, then attend graduate or professional school
___ Don't know
___ Other: _____

What is the most important to you in your college selection process? Give a 1 to most important and a 2 to second-most important:

___ Preparation for a career
___ Preparation for graduate school
___ Preparation for professional school
___ Cost/financial aid
___ Quality of major field
___ Participation in intercollegiate athletics

What are the most important characteristics of a major field? Check only those that are most important to you:

___ State-of-the-art equipment
___ Faculty are accessible to undergraduates
___ Known for excellent teachers
___ Major combines theory with hands-on learning
___ Offers many courses in the field
___ High percentage of professors have Ph.D.s
___ Has both undergraduate & graduate program
___ Professors publish scholarly articles
___ Faculty are nationally known in their field
___ National reputation of the department

What career would you like to pursue?

___ Science research; please specify:
    _____
___ Physician (MD)
___ Research; please specify:
    _____
___ Dentist
___ Health administration
___ Veterinarian
___ Pharmaceuticals
___ Allied health; please specify:
    _____
___ High school teacher
___ Ph.D. for college teaching
___ Law
___ Business
___ Don't know
___ Other; please specify:
    _____

What experiences would you like to enhance your engineering major?

___ Internship
___ Independent research (topic, if any, special?
    _____)
___ Overseas experience (country, if any, special?
    _____)
___ Research with a faculty member
___ Help in identifying a career
___ Major in two fields
___ Join a club or organization related to my field
    of interest

Undergraduate students at FIT often become involved with one of our centers or institutes. Please indicate which of these centers or institutes might be of interest to you?

___ Aquaculture Laboratory
___ Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)
___ Institute for Biological and Biomedical
    Sciences (IBBS)
___ Institute for Marine Research (IMR)
___ Center for Corrosion and Biofouling Control
    (CCBC)
___ Center for High Resolution Microscopy and
    Imaging (CHRMI)
___ Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution
    (HBOI)
___ International Society for Reef Studies (ISRS)
___ Joint Center for Advanced Therapy and
    Biomedical Research (JCATBR)
___ Laser, Optics and Instrumentation Laboratory
    (LOIL)
___ Microelectronics Laboratory
___ NASA's Kennedy Space Center (KSC)
___ National Center for Hydrogen Research
    (NCHR)
___ Neotropical Paleoecology Research Group
    (NPRG)
___ Southeastern Association for Research in
    Astronomy (SARA)
___ Sportfish Research Institute (SRI)
___ Vero Beach Marine Laboratory (VBML)
___ Wind and Hurricane Impacts Research
    Laboratory (WHIRL)

Roughly, what is the maximum distance from your home you would consider when attending college:

___ Under 100 miles
___ Between 100 and 200 miles
___ Between 200 and 500 miles
___ More than 500 miles

COMPOSING A LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF A DEPARTMENT ABOUT A MAJOR

The letter from a professor or the department chair has a different role than that of the departmental brochure or POD (print on demand).

As students become more suspicious of direct-marketing publications from the admissions office, letters from others on campus take on increasing importance. A "personal" letter from the department head or a professor can be very effective. Students are also more likely to open a regular business-sized letter envelope, especially if it is hand-addressed.

In a departmental letter, you might provide the following:

What is the emphasis of the program?
___ Strong foundation
___ Career preparation
___ Intellectual stimulation
___ Graduate school placement
___ Professional school placement
___ Broad-based for many tracks

What makes your program distinctive?
___ Research opportunities
___ Internships
___ Outcomes
___ Job placements
___ Grad school slacements
___ Futures course
___ Equipment/facilities
___ Off-campus facility
___ Off-campus study options
___ Background of faculty (applied experience, many published works, quoted by media)
___ Class size
___ Hands-on opportunities
___ Field trip opportunities

Comparison with other programs
The letter should state how the Augustana department differs from a typical department at a **large** institution:

___ More "hands-on" opportunities
___ More personal attention
___ More research opportunities
___ Value of liberal arts in specific field

When comparing with a **similar** institution Augustana can discuss these kinds of things:

___ Larger number of courses
___ Better graduate school placement

___ Quality of Augustana generally
___ Quality of faculty teaching in department

What Is expected?
Students have difficulty knowing if they can do what is expected of them. The letter should indicate these kind of things:

___ Requirements of the major generally
___ Number of hours expected to work
___ Emphasis on writing, class participation
___ Description of successful candidates (real enthusiasm, research interests, personal interests, motivation levels and so forth, etc.)

The letter opening
If you know anything about the student, the letter should open with some personal touch. Examples include:

___ Name of current student from same town
___ Reference to academic preparation (impressive ACT scores, grade-point, high school attended)
___ Alumni who live in the area
___ Reference to other mutual interests (basketball, track, debate, etc.)

The letter closing
If possible, sign the letter with a pen color that differs from body copy to show that the letter is personally signed.

If possible, include a P.S. in your own hand, such as:

___ Hope to see you on campus
___ Hope you can get to [special day on campus]
___ I will tell [name of student] that I wrote to you
___ Visit one of my classes when you come to campus

A GUIDE FOR MAKING DEPARTMENTAL PHONE CALLS

Calling inquirers who don't remember asking about Augustana College is awkward—however, there are many stages of inquiry, and a student who has gone out of his/her way two or more times is an interested prospect. By going out of the way, we mean the student has actually initiated an action. For example, the student who writes for information about Augustana, then meets an admissions counselor in the high school and then sends ACT scores is someone who is serious about Augustana. This candidate will know Augustana and appreciate the call from a professor.

If admissions asks you to call a specific student, he or she will be a "screened" and active inquirer or an applicant. Theoretically, applicants are eager to talk about the college and the college search.

A COMMON ERROR. Too often, calls are made simply to make the contact. The real goal should be to provide information and learn more about the interests of the candidate.

A call that begins as follows is not going to work very well:

I'm Dr. (X), professor of (X) at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. The admissions office asked me to call you to see if you have any questions about the (X) major. (Long deadly pause as the student tries to think of a question.)

Therefore, **always have some information to provide when you call.**

Kinds of information might include:

1. Department received a grant
2. Department developed a new internship
3. A colleague's article was published
4. A colleague was quoted on a certain topic in newspaper
5. We added a new course
6. We added a new minor
7. The department has new equipment
8. Current student from same high school says hello
9. Current student from same area presents a paper, gets into graduate school, begins an internship
10. Augustana receives some new recognition
11. Augustana receives grant that impacts your area

NOTABLE OPENERS

The most difficult part of a telephone call is getting it started. Below are some suggestions that may work after you have introduced yourself.

- The admissions office told me you were interested in (X) as a major. Is that the case? How did you become interested in (X)? Here's one more reason you might find Augustana is good place for you. [Provide new information.]

- I understand you expressed an interest in (X) as a major. Since there are so many things going on in our department I thought I would tell you about some recent developments. Do you have a couple of minutes?

- Jeff Jones [current ctudent] and the admissions office tell me you are considering Augustana and you have an interest in (X), which also is Jeff's major field. Have you spoken with Jeff about Augustana?

- The admissions staff tells me you expressed an interest in (X). Since that's my field, I always enjoy talking about it. How did you become interested in (X)?

- I enjoy talking about our program in (X) at Augustana College, so I get to call students admissions thinks will do well here. Let me tell you about our program.

- I understand you have visited Augustana College and are interested in (X) as a major field. Is that true? Since I was not available during your visit I was hoping I could answer any questions you may have about (X) at Augustana. First, let me tell you some things you might not know.

- Obviously, I feel that Augustana is a terrific place to go to college, but since I know about other colleges as well, perhaps I can tell you some of the differences between Augustana's (X) major and your other choices. What other colleges are you considering?

- You have been recommended very highly by [admissions counselor, coach, alumnus/a, current student]. I thought it might be helpful to give you a faculty perspective on Augustana College. What are you looking for in your college experience?

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

White Paper

August 26, 2008

Increase New Hire Success Rate

JMU Graduates with the Madison Quotient Offer High ROI

The purpose of this paper is to relay the findings of several studies related to business school graduates' performance within companies and to report on how James Madison University's College of Business is responding to the market's hiring needs.

Executive Summary

A survey of companies that hire business school graduates conducted by Brain Surgery Worldwide, Inc., revealed that in addition to needing strong technical skills graduates also need highly developed interpersonal skills to fully assimilate and be productive in an organization. In addition to the traditional written and oral communication skills, Brain Surgery Worldwide, Inc., found that companies are looking for graduates with critical listening skills, who work well in teamed environments and can identify problems and work with their colleagues to offer solutions. On an even deeper level, they identified characteristics such as values, ethics, self-awareness, and situational assessment as key qualities in successful hires.

A report by Leadership IQ confirms these findings. According to a three-year study, the primary reason new hires fail is due to poor interpersonal skills.

At **James Madison University's College of Business** we understand the need for employees who will successfully assimilate into the company. In recent years we have made curricular changes to make it possible to graduate business students who meet new standards of achievement and we

have fostered cultural learning to produce graduates who exhibit skills that allow them to work efficiently and productively in team-centered environments.

We conducted our own study in spring 2008 to determine how our graduates perform in the workplace. A survey of our top recruiters showed that our graduates perform above average in areas of team skills, interpersonal skills and overall job performance. Recruiters also reported that turnover rates for JMU College of Business graduates are lower.

We've branded this new achievement as the **Madison Quotient (MQ)**, which means that a combination of technical and interpersonal skills offers a higher probability for success. Our survey of recruiters indicates that graduates of JMU's College of Business display interpersonal and team skills that allow them to fit well into organizations, become highly productive faster, and offer a high return on investment.

The bottom line is that graduates of JMU's College of Business have a higher probability of success in your company.

The remainder of this paper relays in more detail various research regarding employee success in the workplace, perceptions of JMU College of Business hires, and the implications for employers who hire JMU business school graduates.

*MQ = Higher Probability
for Success*

The Problem: New Hire Washout

One of the greatest challenges in the recruiting process is finding business graduates who will succeed in your organization. Recruiters and employers feel pride when new hires

- assimilate quickly into an organization.
- become productive employees.
- guarantee a high return on investment.

46 percent of newly hired employees will fail within 18 months

Hiring graduates with these qualities ensures a higher probability for success in the workplace, which reduces spending on resources for recruiting, hiring and training.

Forty-six percent of newly hired employees will fail within 18 months, while only 19 percent will achieve unequivocal success. (Leadership IQ Study: Why New Hires Fail)

Why New Hires Fail

Technical skills are not the primary reason new hires fail; instead, poor interpersonal skills dominate the list.

Poor interpersonal skills is a primary reason why new hires fail

Leadership IQ, a global leadership training and research company, conducted a three-year study on why newly hired employees fail within 18 months. The study tracked the success and failure of new hires by interviewing 5,247 hiring managers from public, private, business and healthcare organizations.

Based on its research findings, Leadership IQ determined the top five reasons why new hires failed was because they lacked these qualities:

- **Coachability.** The ability to accept and implement feedback from bosses, colleagues, customers and others.

- **Emotional Intelligence.** The ability to perceive, assess and manage one's own emotions and accurately assess others' emotions.

- **Motivation.** Sufficient drive to achieve one's full potential and excel in the job.

- **Temperament**. Attitude and personality suited to the particular job and work environment.

- **Technical Competence.** Functional or technical skills required for the job.

How Does New Hire Washout Affect Organizations?

Reducing new hire washout saves money on recruiting, hiring and training

New hire washout is costly. When new hires fail, employers spend additional resources on recruiting, hiring and training. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that it costs about 33 percent of a new recruit's salary to replace a lost employee (Johnson). Ultimately, new hire failure produces negative effects on an organization's

- Productivity
- Quality
- Profitability
- Customer service and satisfaction

Successful New Hires Emerge from Well-Rounded Business Programs

Graduates from a well-rounded business program develop strong interpersonal success skills

Employers can increase their confidence and prevent new hire failure by hiring graduates from a well-rounded business program. A well-rounded business program provides students with a challenging and integrated curriculum, high-quality professors with real-world experiences, recruiting opportunities, and the necessary technical skills to succeed.

According to a study by Brain Surgery Worldwide, Inc., graduates need to develop technical skills and the following interpersonal skills to fit in and be productive in an organization:

- Communication skills
- Presentation skills
- Situational team participation skills
- Facilitation skills
- Listening skills
- Negotiation skills
- Self awareness
- Situational awareness
- Self monitoring
- Personal chemistry skills
- Problem solving skills
- Time management skills
- Written communication skills
- Learning agility
- Decision making skills
- Judgment skills
- Ethics and values

Madison Quotient (MQ)

Graduates from JMU's College of Business have something we call the Madison Quotient. We've branded our graduates in this way because they possess specific Individual Success Skills, in addition to the required technical skills, that mean a higher probability for success in the workplace.

- Emotional Intelligence Skills
- Interpersonal Communications Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Decision Making and Judgment Skills
- Team Skills
- Learning Agility (application of learned principles to various situations)

These skills set our graduates apart and contribute to their success in the workplace, according to companies who hire JMU College of Business graduates.

MQ = Higher Probability for Success

The CoB Program

JMU's College of Business, accredited by AACSB International, takes an integrated approach to education. COB 300, a course students take in their junior year, has been noted by *BusinessWeek* magazine as one of the elements that places JMU's College of Business in its top 5 percent rankings. The course brings together professors and students in four major disciplines—management, finance, marketing and operations. Students learn to work collaboratively, solving real-world problems. Teams develop business plans that incorporate all aspects of business development.

All programs within the College of Business engage in continuous improvement, resulting in curriculum enhancement. Faculty spend many hours scrutinizing assurance of learning results and subsequently change curriculum to better meet the needs of the marketplace.

New standards for admission to the College of Business ensure that only students who meet the highest standards will enter and graduate from the program.

Recruiter Survey Results

In spring 2008, we asked our top recruiters and employers to rank our graduates they have hired in relation to other new hires. The survey was designed to determine the washout rates and performance of JMU College of Business graduates compared to hires from other universities. Here is what they told us.
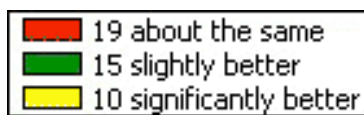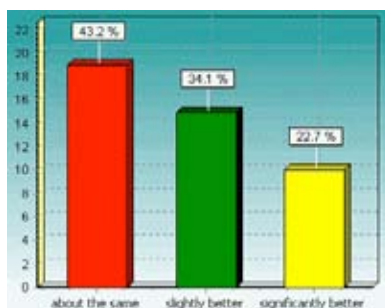
Turnover Rates for JMU College of Business Hires
43% said turnover rates for JMU grads are slightly or significantly lower than graduates of other schools.
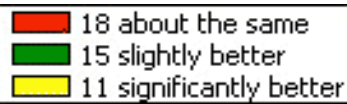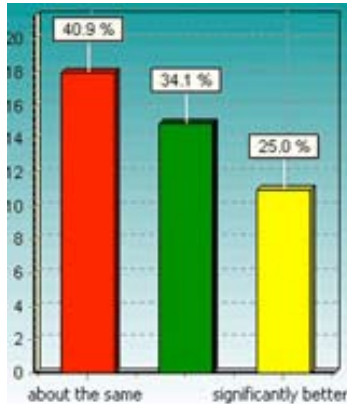
Overall Job Performance
56% said JMU graduates perform slightly or significantly better than graduates of other schools.

Team Skills
61% said JMU graduates have slightly or significantly better team skills than graduates of other schools.

AACSB accredited and top 5 percent in BusinessWeek magazine rankings

Team Skills

🟥	19 about the same
🟩	15 slightly better
🟨	10 significantly better

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal Skills
59% said JMU graduates have slightly or significantly better interpersonal skills than other graduates of other schools.

Leadership Skills
47% said JMU graduates have slightly or significantly better leadership skills than other graduates of other schools.
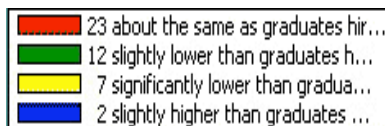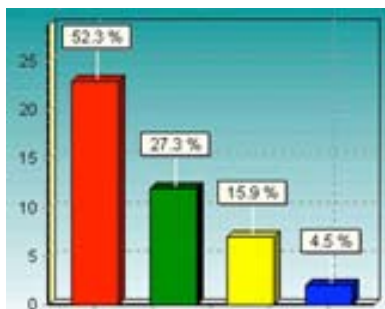
Technical Skills
36% said JMU graduates have slightly or significantly better technical skills than other graduates of other schools.

Best Talent
75% listed JMU as one of the top three universities from which they hire their best talent.

Washout Rates

JMU CoB Graduates Provide a High ROI. Why?

- Turnover rates are lower.
- Overall job performance is better.
- Team skills are better.
- Interpersonal skills are better.
- Leadership skills are stronger.
- Technical skills are as good or better.

What Does This Mean for Employers?

Less new hire training. With lower turnover rates from JMU CoB hires, employers spend fewer resources on recruiting, hiring and training.

Organizational fit. Strong interpersonal and team skills mean JMU hires assimilate quickly into the organization. Recruiters tell us they are ready and willing to roll up their sleeves and get down to details.

Faster productivity. Excellent job performance coupled with strong technical skills means JMU hires become more productive employees faster.

Return on investment. Recruiters and employers can be confident that when they hire a JMU College of Business graduate, their investment is solid.

JMU Graduates=Higher Probability for Success

JMU CoB graduates offer the confidence of organization fit, fast productivity and return on investment

With higher entrance standards and an integrated core curriculum that engages students in real-world experiences and collaborative business planning, JMU's College of Business graduates are able to assimilate quickly, be productive faster and offer a high return on investment.

JMU College of Business graduates are endowed with the Madison Quotient—a higher probability for success.