Study of Prospective Traditional, Graduate, and Online Students

University of West Florida

Prepared by

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Objectives

• To determine awareness and perceptions of the University of West Florida (UWF) among inquiring traditional-age, graduate, and online students

• To understand the recruitment tactics that inquiring students find most helpful in the college-choice process

• To determine UWF’s primary competitors and the University’s placement within its competitor set

• To evaluate how various importance and perception attributes might influence students’ decision to consider or attend UWF

• To understand what factors influence applicants to attend elsewhere
Methods

• Stamats completed 400 telephone interviews among current UWF inquiries and applicants. Respondents consisted of the following:
  – 252 traditional-age students (first-time and transfer students)
  – 75 graduate students
  – 73 online students

• Survey development, fieldwork, data entry, and analysis was conducted by Stamats

• The sampling error was estimated at 4.9% at the 95% confidence level for the entire population

• Sampling error for individual audiences consisted of the following:
  – Traditional-age students is estimated at 6.2% at the 95% confidence level
  – Graduate and online students is estimated at 10.7% at the 95% confidence level
Demographic Overview
(Prospective Traditional Respondents Only)

- **Gender** – 56% female, 44% male
- **Age** – 67% 18 years old or younger, 26% 19 to 24, 4% 25 to 34, 2% 35 or older, 2% refused to answer
- **Educational achievement (self-reported)** – 66% high diploma or less, 12% some college—no degree, 19% associate’s degree, 2% bachelor’s degree or higher, 1% refused to answer
- **Ethnicity** – 71% white or Caucasian, 10% black or African American, 10% Hispanic or Latino, 5% mixed—no dominant race, 2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2% other
- **ACT** – 70% have taken the ACT
  - Score: 15% 1 to 20, 43% 21 to 24, 34% 25 to 28, 8% 29 to 36
- **SAT** – 78% have taken the SAT
  - Score: 16% 1 to 979, 33% 980 to 1129, 31% 1130 to 1279, 20% 1280 to 1600
- **Cumulative GPA** – 46% A- to A+, 45% B- to B+, 7% C- to C+, 1% don’t know
- **Anticipated major** – 7% nursing, 7% psychology, 6% undecided, 6% biology, 5% marine biology, 4% education, 4% Pre-med, 4% communications, 4% computer science 4% engineering
- **List source provided by UWF** – consisted of admitted freshmen and transfers for fall 2008 who still show that they may be attending UWF
Demographic Overview
(Prospective Graduate Respondents Only)

- Gender – 60% female, 40% male
- Age – 1% 18 years old or younger, 53% 19 to 24, 27% 25 to 34, 12% 35 to 44, 4% 45 or older, 3% refused to answer
- Educational achievement (self-reported) – 3% high diploma or less, 5% some college, no degree, 4% associate’s degree, 87% bachelor’s degree or higher, 1% refused to answer
- Ethnicity – 69% white or Caucasian, 19% black or African American, 7% Hispanic or Latina, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% mixed—no dominant race, 3% other
- GRE – 43% have taken the GRE
  – Score: 34% 400 to 999, 41% 1000 to 1190, 25% 1191 to 1600
- GMAT – 19% have taken the GMAT
- Cumulative GPA – 55% A- to A+, 43% B- to B+, 1% C- to C+, 1% don’t know
- Anticipated major (top 5) – 21% business, MBA, 8% education, 7% college student personnel, college administration, 7% psychology, 5% anthropology
- List source provided by UWF – consisted of graduate inquiries from selected programs
Demographic Overview
(Prospective Online Respondents Only)

- **Gender** – 78% female, 22% male
- **Age** – 3% 18 years old or younger, 20% 19 to 24, 40% 25 to 34, 20% 35 to 44, 10% 45 to 54, 4% 55 or older, 3% refused to answer
- **Educational achievement (self-reported)** – 4% high graduate or less, 26% some college, no degree, 25% associate’s degree, 44% bachelor’s degree or higher, 1% refused to answer
- **Ethnicity** – 74% white or Caucasian, 15% black or African American, 6% mixed—no dominant race, 3% Hispanic or Latina, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% other
- **GRE** – 15% have taken the GRE
- **Cumulative GPA** – 49% A- to A+, 38% B- to B+, 11% C- to C+, 1% don’t know
- **Anticipated major (top 6)** – 25% education, non-specified, 11% special education, 10% elementary education, 6% nursing, accelerated nursing, 6% accounting, 6% oceanography
- **List source provided by UWF** – consisted of inquiries interested in UWF’s online programs
Decided on a College

• The majority of the respondents have already selected an institution best suited for them.
• It appears UWF has an equal number of “phantom” inquiries across all segments—traditional-age, graduate, and online.

• These “phantoms” put a drain on UWF’s time and resources. Consider a process to segment the inquiry pool, to identify those who are truly interested in seeking a UWF education.

• The overall level of familiarity is lower than what we would expect among applicants. Those who have applied should be “very familiar” with UWF.

• The following UWF-specific slides focus only on inquiries with some level of familiarity of the University.
UWF’s Position in Consideration Set

Where does UWF rank among the colleges and universities you are currently considering?

- UWF’s inquiry and applicant pool is solid, as the majority of respondents consider UWF within their top two choices.
- Early in the recruitment process, it’s important to determine where UWF ranks among inquiries competitor set. This allows UWF to focus its time and resources on those likely to matriculate.
- 95% of applicants placing UWF as their first choice are likely to enroll, compared to only 48% of those placing UWF as second.
Applied to UWF

- The majority of survey respondents have applied with the intention of enrolling to UWF in the near future.
- It is important to note the data is skewed toward UWF’s applicant pool versus the inquiry pool, with almost all traditional and transfer students being applicants, and approximately 70% of the online and graduate students being applicants.
Nonapplicants Only: Likelihood of Applying

- Over one-third of inquiries are still considering UWF as a viable option for their education
- Online inquiries that have not applied are least likely to matriculate
Reasons Applicants Don’t Plan to Enroll

• **Top reasons applicants do not plan to enroll:**
  - Accepted elsewhere, chose another college (45%)
  - Proximity to home (16%)
  - Too little financial aid and scholarships (11%)
  - Cost, financial reasons (9%)
  - Doesn’t offer my major (7%)

• **Top institutions traditional applicants will be attending:**
  - University of Central Florida (4)*
  - University of Florida (4)*
  - Florida State University (3)
  - University of South Alabama (3)*

• **Top institutions graduate applicants will be attending:**
  - University of Massachusetts (2)*

• **Top institutions online applicants will be attending:**
  - Florida State University (2)*

*Represents total number of respondents
Respondents are clearly focused on pursuing an education at UWF with a significant portion naming UWF among their top picks. While encouraging, these results are, to a degree, expected (especially among traditional and transfer students), with the majority of respondents having already applied.

Among all inquiry types, Florida State University is UWF’s biggest competitor. However, it was named by less than 20% of respondents.

In a broader sense, especially among traditional-aged inquiries, UWF competes primarily against in-state public institutions.
# Importance of College-Choice Characteristics

Please tell me how important each of the following characteristics is to you using a 5-point scale. *(1=Not at all important to 5=Very important)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Characteristic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Traditional Prospects</strong></th>
<th><strong>Graduate Prospects</strong></th>
<th><strong>Online Prospects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of your program or major</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of your academic major</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates get good jobs after graduation</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of the campus</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of financial aid available, including scholarships</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal attention from faculty and staff</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to attend</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reputation</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people on campus are welcoming and friendly</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of class scheduling</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school offers a fun college experience</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of computer/technology resources available</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of the college campus</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location of the institution</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of quality on-campus housing</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity of students on campus</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location is close to home or work</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the student body</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online learning options</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The most influential features inquiries and applicants consider in their college search are highlighted in blue (those 4.5 or above)
- Aspects remaining constant, no matter the inquiry type, are quality and availability of their major, and quality of teaching faculty
- As expected, flexible scheduling and online learning options were very important to online students
# Perceptions of UWF

Please rate your perceptions of UWF for each of the following attributes using a 5-point scale. *(1=Very poor to 5=Very Good)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Traditional Prospects</th>
<th>Graduate Prospects</th>
<th>Online Prospects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The people on campus are welcoming and friendly</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of the campus</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of UWF's college campus</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWF's location in Pensacola or West Florida</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWF's ability to offer students a fun college experience</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of computer/technology resources available</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of your program or major</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of your academic major</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal attention from faculty and staff</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to attend</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of quality on-campus housing at UWF</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of class scheduling</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability of UWF graduates to get good jobs after graduation</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic reputation of UWF</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity of students on campus</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of financial aid available, including scholarships</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of UWF's student body</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online learning options</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location is close to home or work</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To better evaluate these perceptions, the attributes have been color-coded to determine their overall ranking. The following colors represent:

- **Blue** = “very good” ratings (4.5+)
- **Yellow** = “good” ratings (4.0-4.4)
- **Dark gray** = “average” to “below average” ratings (<4.0)

Among the attributes tested, UWF is generally perceived as a “good” to “average” institution.

The following slides chart both mean importance and perception ratings.
Plotting 21 Perception Versus. Importance Ratings

(Traditional Prospects Only)

1=Academic reputation
2=Quality of your academic major
3=Cost to attend
4=Availability of your program or major
5=Amount of financial aid available, including scholarships
6=Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors
7=Graduates get good jobs after graduation
8=Appearance of the college campus
9=Personal attention from faculty and staff
10=The people on campus are welcoming and friendly
11=Geographic location of the institution
12=Size of the student body
13=Location is close to home or work
14=Flexibility of class scheduling
15=The school offers a fun college experience
16=Online learning options
17=Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.
18=Cultural diversity of students on campus
19=Safety of the campus
20=Amount of computer/resources available
21=Availability of quality on-campus housing
Implications: Traditional-Age Prospects

• Attributes in the blue boxes are aligned well with respect to importance and perceptions. Attributes below the blue segments are underperforming. Attributes in a box above the blue segments are overperforming.

• Good news! There are no areas in which UWF is perceived to be underperforming, or even closely on the verge. This indicates UWF has positioned itself well among traditional-aged prospects.

• Areas in which UWF is performing well, but are not proportionately important to traditional-age prospects include:
  – Appearance of the campus
  – Geographic location
  – Availability of quality on-campus housing
  – Cultural diversity of students on campus
  – Online learning options
Plotting 21 Perception Versus. Importance Ratings
(Graduate Prospects Only)

1=Academic reputation
2=Quality of your academic major
3=Cost to attend
4=Availability of your program or major
5=Amount of financial aid available, including scholarships
6=Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors
7=Graduates get good jobs after graduation
8=Appearance of the college campus
9=Personal attention from faculty and staff
10=The people on campus are welcoming and friendly
11=Geographic location of the institution
12=Size of the student body
13=Location is close to home or work
14=Flexibility of class scheduling
15=The school offers a fun college experience
16=Online learning options
17=Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.
18=Cultural diversity of students on campus
19=Safety of the campus
20=Amount of computer/technology resources available
21=Availability of quality on-campus housing
Implications: Graduate Prospects

• Areas in which UWF is perceived to be underperforming include:
  – Academic reputation
  – Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.
  – Cost to attend
  – Amount of financial aid available

• Areas in which UWF is performing well, but are not proportionately important to graduate prospects include:
  – Appearance of the campus
  – Geographic location
  – Availability of quality on-campus housing
  – Size of the student body
Plotting 21 Perception Versus. Importance Ratings

(Online Prospects Only)

1=Academic reputation
2=Quality of your academic major
3=Cost to attend
4=Availability of your program or major
5=Amount of financial aid available, including scholarships
6=Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors
7=Graduates get good jobs after graduation
8=Appearance of the college campus
9=Personal attention from faculty and staff
10=The people on campus are welcoming and friendly
11=Geographic location of the institution
12=Size of the student body
13=Location is close to home or work
14=Flexibility of class scheduling
15=The school offers a fun college experience
16=Online learning options
17=Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.
18=Cultural diversity of students on campus
19=Safety of the campus
20=Amount of computer/technology resources available
21=Availability of quality on-campus housing
Implications: Online Prospects

• As with traditional-age prospects, there are no areas online students perceive UWF to be underperforming. However, there are a couple that are on the verge:
  – Personal attention from faculty and staff
  – Amount of financial aid available

• Areas in which UWF is performing well, but are not proportionately important to online prospects:
  – Appearance of the campus (overperformed for all 3 audiences)
  – Size of the student body
  – The school would offer a fun college experience
  – Availability of quality on-campus housing
Implications: All Segments

- UWF excels (rank high in both importance and perception) at four attributes across all prospective student segments—traditional, graduate, and online:
  - Quality of your academic major
  - Availability of your program or major
  - Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors
  - Graduates get good jobs after graduation

- In addition, UWF shines in providing personal attention to traditional and transfer students (an important college-choice attribute) and is close to excelling among graduate and online students. This attribute can be used to support the case for the attributes listed above.

- These are the attributes UWF can build a brand around. If not already doing so, all communication mediums should highlight these attributes.
Top-of-Mind UWF Advantages

- Especially for traditional-age and graduate students, UWF’s location is a top selling point—it’s close to home, family, friends, it’s in-state, in Florida, and near the beach. However, it is important to note that this was not found to be a highly important feature in selecting a college.
- For online inquiries, UWF’s biggest asset is the quality of its online offerings/programs providing them the flexibility needed to continue their education.
- Beyond that, all inquiries cite UWF’s quality programs and reasonable cost to be top advantages of attending the University—both important in selecting an institution.
### Top-of-Mind UWF Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the biggest disadvantage of attending UWF?</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t offer my major</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well known</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid, scholarships</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the biggest disadvantage of attending UWF?</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t offer my major</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling, class availability</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid, scholarships</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited variety of online courses</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement, career opportunities</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation, heard bad things</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the biggest disadvantage of attending UWF?</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of academics/programs</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling, class availability</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute, long drive</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not able to attend campus, having to take courses online</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- As is typically the case, UWF’s proximity to home is also seen as a deterrent—it’s either too far away or too close to home.
- Cost also appears to be perceived as a common disadvantage.
Overall Perception of UWF

What is your overall impression of UWF?

- Respondents will typically rate a school “good.” Therefore, a much better indication of how the school rates is by looking at the number of “average” responses compared to “very good” responses.

- Perceptions among traditional-age and online inquiries and applicants are high, as the greatest percentage of respondents perceive UWF as a “very good”.

- However, UWF must work to improve perceptions among graduate inquiries and applicants as perceptions are currently teetering between “average” and “very good.”

- The overall mean rating by audiences on a 5-point scale:
  - Traditional-age = 4.4
  - Online = 4.3
  - Graduate = 4.0

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### Best Source of Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Sources of Information</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Web sites</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet, online searches</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College recruitment pubs, mail</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. guidance counselor</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College admissions representative</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College fair/informational meeting</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-mouth/reputation</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mails from the college/institution</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members other than parents</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All inquiry types utilize the Internet, either through specific college Web sites or more generic online searches, to educate themselves about their various college options.
- Graduate and online prospects are more likely to embrace word-of-mouth from friends, faculty members, employers, colleagues, etc., than traditional-age respondents.
UWF’s Communication

For the most part, UWF has done an excellent job with quantity of information provided to inquiries and applicants.

However, UWF should consider increasing current communications with online students—nearly 30% wish they would have received more information.

Remember, the top sources of information for online students included:

- College Web sites
- Internet and online searches
- Speaking with faculty and staff at the institution.
Have you ever visited UWF’s Web site—uwf.edu?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did UWF’s Web site compare to other college and university Web sites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much worse</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat worse</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither better or worse</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat better</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much better</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Nearly all inquiries and applicants have utilized UWF’s Web site as part of the college search process. This is encouraging as college Web sites are the best source of information.
- Overall, UWF’s Web site is equal to or better than competitors’ Web sites.
- However, an evaluation of UWF’s graduate site, along with the University’s top competitors would be advantageous, as it is least likely to stand out in the mind of inquiries and applicants.
UWF’s Web Site
(Total Sample)

• Top reasons UWF’s Web site is “much better” than other college and university Web sites:
  – Easy to navigate, find info, user-friendly (77%)
  – Good layout, well-organized (19%)
  – Provides good information, information of interest to me (17%)

• Top reasons UWF’s Web site is “neither better nor worse” than other college and university Web sites:
  – Typical and average college Web site (69%)
  – Hard to find information (12%)
  – Nothing special, didn’t stand out from others (10%)
Impact of UWF’s Web site

What effect did uwf.edu Web site have on your impression of UWF?

- Unfortunately, UWF’s Web site has not had a tremendous impact on students’ perception of the University—especially among traditional-age and graduate students.

- Make sure UWF’s Web site focuses on issues most important to prospects—quality and availability of programs, quality of faculty, and jobs after graduation.

- Make sure the site tells the UWF brand story.

- Also, UWF’s Web site must stand out from the competitors—currently UWF’s site is perceived as just another college Web site.
UWF’s Publications

Have you received any publications from UWF?

- Traditional inquiries and applicants are more likely to remember receiving mailings, postcards, viewbooks, etc., than all other respondent.
- Remember, graduate and online inquiries are less likely to utilize publications and mailings to assist in their college-search.
- UWF publications have had a greater impact on inquiries and applicants than the University’s Web site. However, there is still room for improvement, with approximately 50% or more indicating the mailings had no impact on their impression.
UWF’s Publications
(Total Sample)

• Top reasons respondents like UWF more after reading the University’s publications include:
  – Lots of information, I’m more informed (46%)
  – Well-done, professional, and well-organized (11%)
  – Publications were personal (10%)
  – Made a good impression, welcoming information (9%)
  – Made me feel wanted, they showed interest in me (9%)

• Top reasons UWF’s publications did not have an impact on respondents include:
  – I’d already made my decision (33%)
  – Don’t know (14%)
  – Nothing special, didn’t stand out (13%)
  – It was information I already knew; I was already familiar (12%)
  – I didn’t read it or pay close attention to it (7%)
Visiting UWF

• Stamats experience tells us that a campus visit is the number one driver in getting students to apply and ultimately attend—without it, it’s difficult to know if UWF is a good fit. It’s encouraging to see such a large percentage of inquiries and applicants visiting campus.

• Most that visited had a “good, to “very good” experience. However, UWF may want to retool the campus visit program for graduate and online students to enhance the experience.
Visiting UWF

• Most impressive aspects of the campus visit:
  – Campus appearance and layout, easy to get around (31%)
  – Friendly and welcoming people (12%)
  – Size (9%)
  – Location, near the beach (8%)
  – Athletic field, recreation facilities (8%)
  – Faculty and staff (8%)
  – Don’t know (6%)
  – Facilities, classrooms, labs (6%)

• Least impressive aspects of the campus visit:
  – Don’t know, can’t think of any (40%)
  – Spread out, appearance, hilly campus (14%)
  – Parking (9%)
  – Hard to find my way around (6%)
  – Size (4%)
  – Facilities, classrooms, labs (4%)
UWF’s Application Process

How would you rate the application process at UWF?

- There are no current issues with the application process at UWF, as nearly all found it to be easy—more than half indicated it’s “very easy”
• As one might expect, those most interested in a traditional classroom setting are UWF’s traditional-aged inquiries.

• However, all respondents have some interest in a combination of online and in-person learning.
Paying for Education

How concerned are you about financing your education?

- In today’s economy, it is not at all surprising to find that about 75% of prospective students are concerned with the out-of-pocket cost of their education.
- As is typical, online and graduate students are slightly more concerned than traditional students. Remember these students are older, more likely to have a family, have higher household expenses, etc.
- Make sure to address cost and financing in UWF’s communication mediums—financial aid, scholarships options, value of degree, etc.
Summary Conclusions

• Overall, UWF’s current inquiries and applicants have a positive perception of the University.

• Four attributes appear be important to all three groups, and UWF receives high perception rankings. These attributes should be considered core to UWF’s brand and should be highlighted in all promotional material:
  – Quality of your academic major
  – Availability of your program or major
  – Quality of faculty as teachers and mentors
  – Graduates get good jobs after graduation

• Prospective grad students appear to have the lowest impressions of UWF. There were four underperforming attributes that are likely contributing to this lower perception. UWF should evaluate if corrective action is required or if it is a communication problem:
  – Academic reputation
  – Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms, labs, etc.
  – Cost to attend
  – Amount of financial aid available
Summary Conclusions

• The UWF Web site is the most important recruiting tool. Students rate the site relatively well. However, the current site is not effectively improving perceptions. There are several things UWF should consider:
  – Stress the appropriate attributes listed on the previous slide.
  – The most important pages on your site are your academic pages. Tell a complete UWF brand story within each of your academic department pages, again focusing on the core attributes.
  – Use your publications as a drive-to-the-Web tool.
  – Consider an aggressive search engine marketing effort (optimization and pay-per-click) to drive prospective students to your Web site.
• Add a qualification process to recruiting efforts to focus on the right students.
• Consider increasing the frequency and intensity of communications to graduate and online students, and get current students and faculty involved in the communication flow (emails, phone calls, etc.).
• Online offerings appear to be in demand by all three audiences. Consider expanding online opportunities, and use additional research to identify academic programs that will have strong online demand.
• Consider evaluating the campus visit programs for online and graduate students.
Appendix A
Survey Instrument
Appendix B
Data Tabulations