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A Letter from the President

Friends and colleagues,

This article was originally intended to be about change. Change in the office, at the university, etc. At 5:45 p.m., July 15, that all changed. I received a call that my college roommate was found dead as a result of a heart condition. He was 38.



Aaron Hamilton
KACRAO President
Assistant Director of
Admissions
Wichita State University

This has given me cause to examine my relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. Fortunately, my time with this person was well spent. I looked back and don't see any negativity in our relationship. I don't have any regrets. The last time I saw him was at AACRAO in Seattle. We spent two evenings with another fraternity brother of ours catching up and celebrating the old days (which seem to get better as more time goes by).

It's hard to think about and not something we want to face but my question to you is this: can you say the same thing about the people you love the most? I can't. I was lucky in this situation but there are many people in my life where the circumstances are not as positive.

My challenge to you and to myself is to take some time. Call someone you care about but haven't spoken with for awhile. Send someone an email or Facebook message. Call your parents or kids and just tell them you love them. What is there to lose? Are relationships with those we care about worth a few minutes for a phone call or email? They are to me.

I appreciate all of you being a part of KACRAO. Thank you for the time you give your colleges and universities, but don't forget what matters the most.

Sincerely,

Aaron Hamilton

KACRAO President



KACRAO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday, September 28 - Friday, September 30, 2011
Register Online at www.kacrao.org

Ambassador Training 101

People in the college admissions world would agree that the process of recruiting new students has changed drastically over the years. The introduction of the internet, the move to set visit times and more specifically the lunch visits at high schools throughout the state, and advancement in communication opportunities are just some of the factors that have went into this change. These changes have caused us all to adjust the way we go about recruiting new students to our schools. But the one factor that hasn't changed is the importance of the campus visit in the recruiting process. And while every campus needs great admissions representatives to talk with potential students and parents about what their school can offer I think that a good student ambassador is equally important.

The availability and responsibility of student ambassadors vary from campus to campus but for most colleges they are a staple that the admissions office cannot do without. A lot of times they are the key to a successful campus tour. With that said, training those ambassadors to be an integral part of the campus tour experience is very important. So I wanted to take the time to look at how a few schools are training their ambassadors to be part of the recruitment process. Hopefully this will give all of us a chance to reflect on the things we are currently doing and see if there are some ideas that we can take from our fellow admissions family to make our programs better.

Here at Hutchinson Community College we will bring our student ambassadors in the week before school starts for three full days of training that will include learning about the college, how to give campus tours, how to help do office work, and do team building exercises. Of course, we will also throw in some fun time in between all the learning as well. However, this year we are going to go beyond the normal practice of teaching our ambassadors the standard routine. We are going to incorporate diversity training into our training process this year. By this I mean we will be teaching our ambassadors how to deal with situations of touring someone who is of a different race, age, sexual preference, or a person with a disability. We all know that not only do our ambassadors come from all walks of life but so do our potential students. As part of our normal training we have always done team building exercises so that our staff can get to know each other and learn how to work together. Now we want to take that a step further by teaching our ambassadors how to relate to the students in that same way. We will be putting our student ambassadors in scenarios where they will feel comfortable talking to any student about the student community that exists within our college. We want to make sure our ambassadors can relate to all prospective students and share the True Blue experience of attending Hutchinson Community College. We will also make the diversity training part of our team building exercises.



By Lynnette Hilty
Admissions Counselor
Hutchinson Community
College



Hutchinson Community College Ambassadors
(Photo courtesy of Lynnette Hilty)

Cowley College Ambassadors are required to volunteer two hours each week in the Admissions office, performing various tasks and providing campus tours to prospective students and their families. They are also required to work all admissions events and optional endowment events in exchange for a ticket to the show.

Training these new ambassadors every year begins the Monday before classes begin with a trip to Camp Horizon in Ark City and participating in their low ropes course. The training is mandatory for all ambassadors to attend. It has proven to be an intense team building activity that helps all of the admissions staff and ambassadors get to know each other. The ambassadors are divided into three groups where the admissions staff rotates them through training stations. The rotations consist of teaching them how to give a proper campus tour, a how-to session on all the office procedures, and finally a session dedicated to setting expectations and etiquette for the admissions office. At the end of

the day, the admissions staff rewards their hard work and wrap-up with dinner at one of the restaurants in town. However, the training does not end there. The Cowley College Admissions Office will also conduct on-going training of all of

Ambassador Training 101...continued

these procedures throughout the school year.

Fort Hays State University takes a more one on one approach to training their Ambassadors and student workers. The personalized one on one attention allows for them to make sure that each person working with prospective students is knowledgeable of the campus and comfortable with people. While some of their workers fill both a tour guide and office worker role for them they also have workers that just fill one role or the other as well. Before a tour guide (Ambassador) is allowed to take out a group tour they must first memorize a tour script and go out and observe on a couple of tours with returning ambassadors. Once the new person feels confident enough in their ability to lead a tour they have to give a one-on-one tour with a staff person from the Admission Office. If the staff member does not feel confident in the tour then they sit down with them and discuss corrections that need to be made. Once another tour is given and the staff member feels good that the guide is comfortable with the knowledge then they are put on the tour schedule.

All student employees of Fort Hays State University are also required to go through a mandatory series of workshops put on by the college. The topics range from being adaptive to changes, choosing your attitude, customer service, telephone etiquette, and listening skills. There is also in-office training in every department and more specifically in the Admissions Office a lot of peer training. They really rely on their Seniors to show the newbies the way.

As the new school year approaches, the Student Ambassador Society at Wichita State University is preparing to train, not as athletes, but rather as recruiters, influencers, servants and seasoned Shockers. With about 30 new members each year, training will begin shortly before school starts and will continue throughout the school year. This year, training will begin the weekend before school starts with an evening of new ambassador training. The executive board and adviser team facilitate activities. Basics include WSU knowledge, relationship building and SAS etiquette including how to mingle with students, participate on a panel, expectations of a university representative and others that vary each year based on the needs of the group.

The following Friday, the executive board and new members are joined by the existing membership for fall retreat, which focuses on team building, strategic planning, and campus tour training. The two evenings lay a solid foundation to build upon in the upcoming year. Throughout the year, the executive board and advisers continue training members on the latest WSU information, professional and personal development, but also strongly believe in a learning-by-doing model. Members are encouraged to expand their default behaviors to grow as students and serve others through their shared Shocker spirit.

Student Ambassadors at Kansas Wesleyan University train extensively the week prior to classes, followed by heavy involvement in New Student Orientation the following weekend. Training focuses on helping the students gain a knowledge and comfort with campus. Training focuses specifically on sharing experiences, team building, situation scenarios, and making training interactive and fun. The Office of Admissions will continue to utilize other campus community members to assist in training through the COYOTE Scavenger Hunt, which sends students across campus in an effort to learn different offices and also allow the campus community to get to know them. Small group tours are arranged for the new ambassadors to go with returning ambassadors as examples. An Admissions Staff member will also be giving a sample tour to the group.

After the week of training, students are required to give an Office of Admissions Staff member a full campus tour for certification. If the staff member finds the student not prepared to begin giving tours, the student is required to attempt certification again. KWU Ambassadors have built a very strong reputation on campus. They not only participate and assist in Admissions events and numerous other on and off campus events.

As the recruiting process continually evolves it's important for each of us to take a look at what other schools are doing and see how we might be able to take bits and pieces and work them into our practices as well. Hopefully, the ideas provided here will help all of us learn and grow a little to make all of our schools a better institution for our new students to attend.

Joplin, Missouri: We CAN Make A Difference

At 5:41pm on Sunday, May 22, Joplin, Missouri was hit with by the most deadly tornado of modern times. The EF5 tornado desecrated homes and business, displaced 944 pets, injured more than 1,000 people and left 159 dead in its wake. Joplin was immediately declared to be in a state of emergency and volunteers and supplies poured into the city.

Scattered throughout the city and comprised of 19 individual schools, the Joplin School District sustained heavy damage during the storm. In the weeks following the disaster 3 schools were declared total losses, with several others requiring repairs in excess of \$151 million dollars. Shortly following the storm the District estimated nearly 60% of their student population had been displaced due to the tornado. The district, which plans to start school on August 17th, is working to find space to accommodate enough classrooms for their student body. They have also implemented programs to adopt classrooms and school supplies. The district estimates a cost of \$40 per student to equip them for the year.

Pittsburg State University has adopted two Joplin classrooms and the Admission Office is working toward adopting several students and donating supplies. If your office is interested in assisting the Joplin School District's recovery effort information can be found at the following:

For more information on adopting a Joplin classroom, please visit:
<http://brightfuturesjoplin.org/adopt-a-classroom/>

For more information on adopting a Joplin student, please visit:
<http://brightfuturesjoplin.org/adopt-an-eagle/>



Joplin High School- Photo by AP photographer Charlie Riedel



Joplin High School- Photo by AP photographer Charlie Riedel



Irving Elementary School- Photo by AP photographer



By Terra Higgins

Admission Counselor
Pittsburg State University