



H E A D L I N E S

Guardians of the Gate

The role of SU's Office of Admissions has taken on many new dimensions.

Hundreds of high-spirited students consume picnic-style food as beach volleyball games are played, Hackey Sack circles are formed, and the rhythms of pop music fill the air. At the perimeter of activity, a group dressed in matching navy blue golf shirts enjoys burgers, salad, and complimentary Häagen-Dazs. Between bites, however, they keep a sharp eye on the festivities, making sure that every participant from the Class of '99 is well cared for.

The occasion is Opening Weekend '95, and the event is Syracuse University's first Freshman Beach Party. The blue-shirted observers are members of SU's

In more recent decades, things changed dramatically as the pool of potential college students began to dwindle and competition among educational institutions for their attention heated up. "Suddenly, admissions work took on a greater dimension of representation and promotion," says Smith. "It became crucial that we get out into the field and do things on campus that would effectively make SU stand out against other universities."

The role of admissions, first and foremost, remains that of bringing top students to SU. But the techniques for accomplishing this have changed significantly. Year-round, person-to-person presentations to prospective students and their parents, on campus and across the country, continue to be a top recruitment strategy. So does distribution of SU literature to the homes of high school students. But it is the explosion of global communications technology that created the most exciting new avenues for reaching potential students. Already, the Office of Admissions has introduced pages on the World Wide Web, allowing anyone to gather instantaneous information about SU through the Internet. It also has an e-mail address and an internal office system that ensure all electronic inquiries are answered promptly. "We're keeping up with and, in some ways, are ahead of many other schools as far as the latest technology," says Susan Donovan, associate dean and director of admissions.

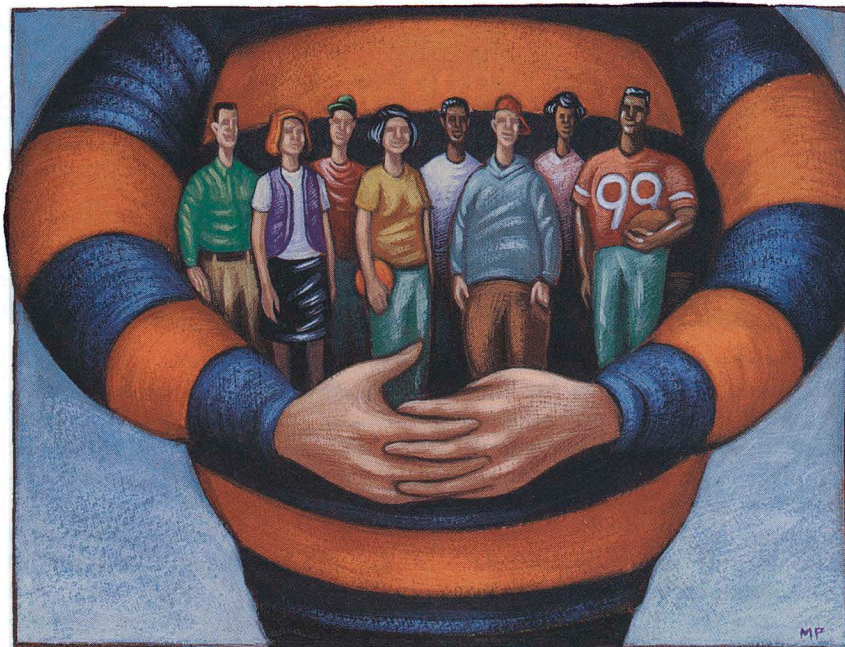
Admissions has also taken on a more proactive role by contacting prospective students at a younger age. "We've found that students express an interest in college as early as the ninth and tenth grades," says Donovan. "This provides us with an opportunity to work with students very early on, acting as counselors regarding the benefits of higher education."

This interaction, Donovan notes, keeps students and parents informed and able to manage the information needed to make appropriate decisions about students' education and career goals. A key factor in making this determination is cost. According to Smith,

Office of Admissions, who head up the welcoming committee.

Coordinating Opening Weekend is a fairly new responsibility for the admissions office, and just one of the many roles it now plays in its overall task of attracting the best and brightest students to SU. "When I first started admissions work in the 1960s, our primary function was to guard the gate," says David Smith, dean of admissions and financial aid. "There wasn't much activity involved in the form of recruitment."

MICHAEL PRINZO



families need to be assured of the overall quality of the education the students will receive before agreeing to make the monetary investment. "We find ourselves much more involved as financial planners," he says. "Our job is to show families how they can afford to be here and why they should want to afford to be here. I think colleges are being put appropriately on the spot to prove the experiences they offer are worthy of both the time and financial expenditure."

Once students are recruited, the role of admissions at many universities comes to an end. But at SU, student support has become another step in the overall admissions process. A decade ago, the admissions office established the University 100 (U100), a group of 100 SU students who serve as campus ambassadors. They are easily spotted by the blue and orange rugby shirts they wear when hosting receptions, speaking at recruitment presentations, and giving campus tours. "Current students are our eyes and ears on campus," says Donovan. "They help us present the University to prospective students and parents and help familiarize them with aspects of campus life that underclassmen might be reluctant to ask staff about."

Julie Kaputa, a senior policy studies major in the College of Arts and Sciences, has been a member of U100 since the second semester of her freshman year. "I really like helping new students adjust to college life," Kaputa says. "They are anxious to hear from other students about what it will be like to spend the next four years at SU. I try to be honest and supportive and really let them know what a good school this is."

At the moment, a large portion of SU's 2,800 new students is beginning to wind down from its beach party revelry, and the admissions crew is sweeping up behind them. Admissions will continue to keep an eye on this class, even as the office continues its search for the Class of 2000. "We like to think of ourselves as equally involved in two futures—ours and our students'," Smith says.

—NATALIE A. VALENTINE

CAMPUS NEWS

➤ *Syracuse University* has developed a comprehensive five-year financial plan in response to two key institutional needs: to continually improve the quality of education at SU, and to keep in step with the complex economic demands of higher education in the 1990s.

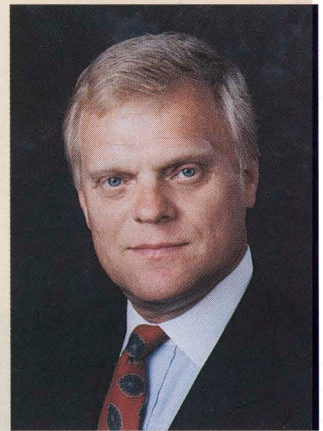
The plan includes a 5 percent annual increase in undergraduate tuition plus a 4 percent annual increase in room and board for the 1996/97 through 2000/01 academic years. At the same time, the SU operational budget will be reduced by approximately 3 percent over the next three years. According to Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw, the cuts will

not be made across the board. The core of the institution—the academic enterprise and direct student service areas—will receive a smaller cut than will administrative areas.

These changes follow a period of major University restructuring, made necessary by the impact of a smaller demographic pool of students beginning in 1989 and continuing through 1995. During that period, undergraduate enrollment dropped from 12,500 to approximately 10,000; faculty decreased from 1,050 to 890; and campus staff was reduced by 360. Even with the decline in numbers of faculty and enrollment, the ratio of students to professors has not changed. "SU consciously allowed enrollment to drop in order to improve the standards for admission and to avoid a bidding war with our competitor institutions," says Chancellor Shaw.

Along with the restructuring, 33 separate initiatives have been implemented, each designed to continue moving SU toward its vision of becoming the nation's leading student-centered research university. The initiatives include numerous programs and projects to encourage student-centered ideas and motivate faculty to bring their scholarly work into the classroom. They also include the University's first campus-wide quality improvement effort, known as SUIQ, to train and involve the entire administrative and support staff. "We know that [Syracuse University's] primary business is preparing the human resources of the future," Chancellor Shaw says. "It is an awesome responsibility, but, as a respected and improving private university, we know we are uniquely positioned to carry it out."

➤ *The Big East Conference* for the 1995-96 season increased its membership to 13 schools with the addition of Rutgers University, West Virginia University, and the University of Notre Dame. Rutgers and West Virginia were already members of the Big East Football Conference, but in March 1994 the decision was made to include them in all Big East Conference sports. Notre Dame became a member of the Big East in July 1994, and will participate in all sports except football. What does all this mean for SU? "Our schedule is enhanced because we get to see more teams, which boosts our position as an institution," says Jake Crouthamel, director of Syracuse University athletics.



Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw