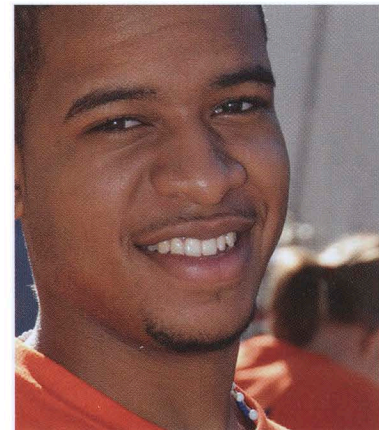


Appealing **PROSPECTS**

AS ENROLLMENT REACHES NEW
thresholds of quality and diversity,
SU confronts the challenges of
providing student support

BY AMY SPEACH



WHEN IT COMES TO APPEALING TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, Syracuse University is in an enviable position these days. Each year, more highly qualified young people from across the country and around the world are choosing SU.

They are attracted by the interactive and collaborative nature of the University's academic programs; the Scholarship in Action vision that invites students and faculty to be vital participants in the world; the wealth of hands-on learning opportunities, including study abroad, research, and internships; and the friendly residential campus, active student life, and blossoming relationship with the City of Syracuse. "If you look at what is happening with our enrollment from a broad perspective, it is a very positive picture," says Donald Saleh, vice president for enrollment management. In the past five years, SU has seen a substantial increase in the number of applications received annually from aspiring students, going from fewer than 14,000 to more than 22,000. "As more people see what SU is about—the quality of our programs and the dynamic nature of the University—our reputation strengthens," Saleh says. "And I suspect that, given the momentum this institution has and our increasing visibility, those numbers will continue to grow in the foreseeable future."

The larger applicant base has allowed SU to move into a position of being very selective, admitting approximately 50 percent of those who apply. "Within that mix of applicants, we're also seeing a greater diversity than ever before, including significant increases in the number of students of color, from abroad, and from outside our traditional geographic base—the Northeast," Saleh says. "This is all good news. We have moved away from the challenge of filling a class to the challenge of shaping the class."

According to Dean of Admissions Susan Donovan '66, G'82, a variety of factors are considered in shaping the ideal incoming class. "First and foremost, we are looking for bright and creative students," she says. "We look for students who contribute beyond the classroom, and who exhibit leadership qualities or have a history of volunteering." The University seeks out students whose academic preparation allows them to bring to campus unusual experiences—international study, for example. Selection committees are also on the lookout for students who have done extraordinarily well academically and will be the first generation of their families to attend college—an indication of strength of character and motivation to achieve. "We now have the ability to select among highly qualified students to bring together a culturally and geographically diverse group—a very interesting mix of people who are eager to share their stories and backgrounds in ways that will enhance the community," Donovan says. "That's a hallmark of Syracuse."

According to Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric F. Spina, the higher quality and increasing diversity of the student body reflect an overall positive trajectory in SU's strength as an institution. "The trend line marking the quality profile of our incoming undergraduate students would be the envy of Wall Street," Spina says. "Just as importantly, the incoming class has become more and more diverse—a clear characteristic of excellence. Further, we have sustained our commitment to remaining need-blind in admissions to

sustain the socioeconomic diversity of incoming classes. These braided trends have had a transformative effect on the student body, as well as on the intellectual climate on campus. There are convincing reasons to believe that we are a stronger institution today, overall, than we have been before—perhaps ever before."

A National Leader at Ensuring Access and Support

The unifying goal of all the University's recruitment and retention efforts is to land students who are a good match for Syracuse, regardless of their financial circumstances. SU ranks first among private institution members of the Association of American Universities and is among the national leaders of all private universities at enrolling students eligible for the federal Pell Grant program, which provides support for those from low-income backgrounds. "We have a history of enrolling students from economically diverse backgrounds, and we're proud of that," Saleh says. "We want to continue to expand our reach in terms of the diversity of the student body and to be able to recruit talented students, including those who are the first generation in their families to attend college and others who have not traditionally been part of higher education. So we must look to our financial aid programs to allow us to open doors to them."

For the 2008-09 academic year, the cost of tuition, residence life, books, and personal expenses for SU undergraduate students is estimated to be \$47,820. Approximately \$150 million is being given

Making Memorable CONNECTIONS

IN REFLECTING ON THEIR TIME HERE, students cite a variety of experiences that contributed to their development, personally and intellectually. For many, their undergraduate years were highlighted by opportunities to put their learning into practice within the community, helping uphold the University's vision of Scholarship in Action.

April Hace '08 was a sophomore in the Whitman School when she helped found the University's chapter of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), one of the world's largest student-based organizations. The group's goal is a simple one: "We help people build successful lives," says Hace, who majored in retailing, marketing, and finance.

Last year, SIFE's 70 members contributed some 3,500 hours to teaching people in the community the principles of free enterprise. For example, SIFE members established a partnership through a fair trade organization in Guatemala, helping train a group of Mayan women in jewelry making with the goal of selling their pieces in the University Bookstore. They also tutored women at Chadwick Residence, a transitional home for women at risk, preparing them for GED exams.

SU community projects span a range of activities. For example, through the University's International Young Scholars Program, students work on language and reading skills with area refugee children from Africa and Cuba. One undergraduate organized a drama club at a Syracuse high school. School of Information Studies students helped set up a network and wireless hotspot in a local library.

For students like Hace, Scholarship in Action provides invaluable experience and the chance to make a difference. "Students are given the opportunity to take their knowledge from the classroom into the community to teach others," she says. "That reinforces academic understanding and helps other people at the same time."

to undergraduates this year in the form of institutional gift aid—scholarships or need-based grants. By providing both need-based financial assistance and scholarships that reward academic excellence, Syracuse attracts the best students while ensuring diversity and opportunity. "Our focus is always on maximizing opportunities to recruit those students who would benefit greatly from the educational experiences we offer," says Youlonda Copeland-Morgan, associate vice president for enrollment management and director of scholarships and student aid. "Right now, there are a lot of challenges to that, including the rising cost of higher education, changes in federal aid policies and decreased resources, which weaken the partnership between universities and state and federal governments, and falling real incomes that make it harder for families to pay for college."

The University has signified "Student Access and Support" as one of five key goals in The Campaign for Syracuse University, seeking to raise \$200 million for scholarships to provide access and opportunity for students from all walks of life. "Most families in today's world need help to afford higher education," says Brian Sischo, associate vice president of development and the campaign's director. "With nearly 80 percent of the SU student body receiving some form of financial support, it is imperative that we raise significant new financial aid resources in this campaign. By doing so, we will indeed provide an opportunity for a Syracuse University education to deserving students who lack the funds to attend our institution."

Uncompromising Commitment

A number of factors indicate that additional challenges lie ahead for the University's financial aid budget. For example, Saleh says, more of SU's peer institutions are increasing the funds they devote to financial aid. A projected downturn in the population of 18-year-olds in the years to come is also likely to result in increased competition as the pool of high school graduates shrinks. Additionally,

demographics indicate that during the next decade a higher percentage of students will come from lower- and middle-income families, requiring more financial assistance to attend a university of SU's caliber.

Yet while many of the nation's institutions may view these trends as problematic, Copeland-Morgan says Syracuse has good reason to remain optimistic. "Academic preparation in schools across the country is increasing," she says. "For example, more students are taking Advanced Placement classes, which gives them insight into college-level work. And there is a greater focus in grades K through 12 on preparing students for college." She points to several University partnerships within the community that provide comprehensive support for students' academic achievement and college preparation, including the Partnership for Better Education, Say Yes to Education, and the Syracuse Challenge. "The combination of these efforts allows a rich diversity in high school graduating classes, and provides a wonderful opportunity for us to embrace our mission and create a richer learning environment for all students," she says.

In preparing to meet the financial needs of its future students, the University must continue to carefully and strategically consider how to use and enhance its funds, Copeland-Morgan says. "We must look at the balance between merit- and need-based aid and make some changes in that area," she says. "The situation also calls upon us to be extremely successful in conveying our story to those individuals, foundations, and corporations helping us in The Campaign for Syracuse University to raise the necessary monies to strengthen our financial aid programs."

SU is determined to maintain its commitment to removing financial barriers for students in the face of these challenges. "We don't want to compromise," Saleh says. "We want to continue to do all we can to bring into the Syracuse University community the kind of students we want to have here—academically capable students who are enterprising and engaged with each other and their community."



Class of 2012

The profile for the entering Class of 2012 illustrates the increasing quality and diversity of SU's student body.

Number of first-year students: **3,187**

Gender: **58.4% female, 41.6% male**

Average GPA: **3.65**

Mid-50% SAT combined scores: **1080-1260**

Students of color: **28.2%**

From outside New York State: **60.6%**

International students: **6.4%**

First generation to attend college: **15.8%**

English as a second language: **14.8%**

Receiving financial support: **80%**

Passion for **ACCESS AND SUCCESS**



YOULONDA COPELAND-MORGAN believes education is among the nation's most important concerns, and that Syracuse University's leaders play a crucial role in preparing both the institution and the country to meet the needs of future students. "There is a rich discussion happening in our nation right now," says Copeland-Morgan, associate vice president for enrollment management and director of scholarships and student aid. "We are beginning to focus more on the importance of educating students for the competitive global world we live in. And that will require the University to step forward and provide leadership on issues related to making education accessible and affordable for all."

A national leader in the areas of enrollment management and financial aid, Copeland-Morgan most recently served as vice president and dean of admission and financial aid at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. "She

has a passion for assuring that higher education is accessible for students from all economic backgrounds, and that the infrastructure is in place to assure success for those students whom we enroll," says Donald Saleh, vice president for enrollment management. "As SU faces challenges in the areas of admissions, financial aid, retention, and enrollment, we will benefit from Youlonda's experience, vision, zeal, and leadership."

While at Harvey Mudd, Copeland-Morgan worked to secure the funding necessary to reposition the college's financial aid programs. Coupled with her introduction of new strategic marketing initiatives, these changes positioned Harvey Mudd to attract the most diverse and selective freshman classes in its history. Copeland-Morgan also developed financial aid policies to address retention issues and support outreach efforts to women, the economically disadvantaged, and minority students.

Currently chair-elect of the board of trustees of the College Board, an association that connects students to services and programs that support college success, she has been recognized many times by regional and national organizations for her accomplishments and leadership. She holds a bachelor's degree from Loyola Marymount University and an M.B.A. degree from the University of La Verne in California.

"I was attracted to Syracuse because of the leadership here—the goals the Chancellor has set and the values the University espouses," Copeland-Morgan says. "I believe my experience in working collaboratively with university and community constituents can enhance the quality of the student experience, encourage greater participation among campus stakeholders, and position the University to better meet enrollment management goals. Syracuse University is a very exciting and dynamic place to be at this time."