

Check Your E-mail

SC Cyber-Connects With Prospects

Todd Moore became an admission counselor in 1984, a couple of decades before he became director of admission at Southwestern College.

Back then the life of the admission counselor was predictable—a handful of college fairs every year, countless high school visits, letters to special prospects, and expensive full-color publications for kids who needed a hard sell.

But the world of student recruitment has seen a groundswell of change since Moore entered the field.

Eloy Mendoza was born in 1984. He has never known a world without the Internet. If you need to contact him, don't bother with a letter; his e-mail is set to auto-check around the clock, and the news of the day updates constantly to his laptop through an Internet feed.

This year, Mendoza became the newest wrinkle in the Southwestern College's admission efforts. As a digital communications counselor, Mendoza helps the college reach students who have never been dependent on traditional forms of communication.



Digital communication, using Internet resources, has become the latest weapon in college recruitment wars. Most of the traditional weapons are still in place—phone, mail, personal visits—but technology is taking on increasing importance as students live more of their lives on the World Wide Web. (A 2005 Pew Internet study shows teenagers are the most likely of any age group to be online.)

According to Steve Wilke, vice president for enrollment management, the addition of a digital communications counselor was a logical next step in the increasingly-competitive world of student recruitment. And for Southwestern, recruiting via the Internet is a logical extension of the life of the college. Using technology for communication reflects the life of the student after arrival at Southwestern, when they will communicate with professors and fellow students on their college-issued laptop computers.

"Thirty years ago, athletes were recruited with a lot of aggressiveness," Wilke says. "Today, every student is recruited with this same kind of attention."

This makes standing out among dozens of college choices a challenge. To try to rise above this noise of competition Moore and Mendoza use a variety of digital techniques.

Each week Eloy sends out e-mails designed to connect specific students with programs at the school. A student interested in theatre, for example, might receive a photo of the Homecoming musical with an invitation to attend. Or a prospective political science student might see a picture of the governor during her recent visit here.

Campus visits are commemorated by personalized computer "wallpapers," featuring photos of the prospective student and their parents during the visit. The wallpapers are waiting in the e-mailboxes of the students by the time they arrive home, and have been a huge hit with the prospects. (See an example above.)

"It's not just having the tools, it's the personalization," Wilke adds.

And in this, the digital communications is simply an extension of what Southwestern College has long done in its admission efforts.

"The sense of trying to find a fit, trying to match a student to the school—that personal fit has stayed the same," Wilke says.

But, Wilke and Moore admit, these tools are best used in the hands of a person who has grown up with the Net.

"Eloy brings a lot of contemporary understanding of color, humor, and layout that students have come to expect," Wilke says. "We're maximizing these tools because he understands them. He knows the design, the words, the way students expect it to be."

So what's next in the digital recruitment wars? Look for more movement on SC's admission Web page as video clips are added—a professor explaining his teaching style, for example, or a student talking about an internship SC made possible. Webcasts of athletic events, chapel services, music performances, and other events allow prospective students and alumni to listen to campus life in real time.

Moore predicts more students will find Southwestern without hearing about it any way except through a Web search.

This phenomenon already is being seen on campus—Jamie Garrard, a music education major from Benton, Mo., googled "United Methodist colleges" and found Southwestern. Only after thoroughly exploring the Web site and checking out the theatre and music programs did she contact the school for more information. Although she had been accepted at the University of Missouri-Kansas City music conservatory, she visited campus, connected with theatre and music faculty, and applied for admission. Today she is one of the college's most visible students, a M^cNeish Scholar who sings in A Cappella Choir and appears in theatre productions.

"We know students are finding us without using the traditional methods," Moore says. "They don't listen to the radio, they don't read newspapers, and that's why we are using what we had spent on those media to support Eloy's position."

Still, awareness of the college comes through in a variety of ways, and the college will continue to evaluate each new method. (Cell phone text messaging, for example, was rejected by admission leaders as being too intrusive.)

"We still rely on the tried-and-true methods, that a student visits, likes the professors, likes the campus, and decides to enroll," Wilke admits. "We just have a lot more ways to communicate now."

Check out these links:

- **SC admission page:** www.sckans.edu/admissions
- **Webcasts of campus activities:** www.moundbuilder.com
- **Computer wallpaper for you to download:** www.sckans.edu/wallpaper



It was business as usual for the cross country teams at the KCAC championships Oct. 28. The men claimed a 27th consecutive conference title, and women tied for first to mark their second consecutive title and 10th in the past 13 years. Coach Jim Helmer's men's teams have held the title since 1980, his third year at SC.

SC Partners With Wichita Middle School

Students at Wichita's Stucky Middle School gasped when the number was announced: Southwestern College would offer any qualified Stucky student who attends Southwestern a scholarship worth \$25,000 over four years.

The scholarship is part of a new partnership between the college and the middle school announced during late October. The program combines a number of efforts designed to encourage students from this urban school to continue through college, as well as giving opportunities for Southwestern students and personnel to hone their professional skills:

- Southwestern math and science students will tutor from 30 to 45 Stucky students.
- SC education and nursing students will do internships at Stucky, and Stucky teachers will serve as mentors for the education students. The program will give Southwestern students experience in working in a diverse setting. According to the Kansas Department of Education, Stucky's enrollment is 46.5 percent white, 39.2 percent black, 3.8 percent Hispanic, 1.8 percent Native American, and 5.6 percent Asian.
- Stucky principal Terrell Davis and Victor Scott, president of Raytheon Black Employees Network, will mentor black male students at the college.
- President Dick Merriman and Dawn Pleas-Bailey, dean of students, will offer seminars to Stucky teachers as part of their professional development.

The program began when Davis contacted President Merriman about the possibility of a partnership. As principal of a new school (started in the fall of 2003), Davis had the unique opportunity to create programs that would shape the attitudes of these sixth- through eighth-graders. Because he had been involved with SC's summer leadership seminar for students while principal at Mayberry Middle School, Davis thought of Southwestern.

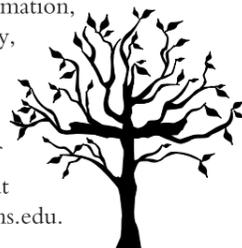
"We want to get out of the mentality of 'college isn't for everyone,'" Davis was quoted in a newspaper article. "It is for everyone, and we need to start those conversations in the sixth grade."

Builders in Ministry to Host Conference

A three-day conference for Moundbuilders who are Christian leaders will be hosted on the Southwestern College campus Feb. 27 to March 1, 2007. This is the first of what is anticipated will be an annual event.

Builders in Ministry (BIM) Week is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that nurture and enrich Christian leaders—lay and clergy—for effective living and ministry. The event is intended for Moundbuilder alumni, current students, and friends of Southwestern who are involved in ministry or are anticipating going into the ministry and will include elements of spiritual renewal/refreshment, community/fellowship, and continuing education.

For more information, contact Ashlee Alley, the Director of Discipleship Southwestern and Coordinator of Campus Ministry, at Ashlee.Alley@sckans.edu.



E-mail Address Change

The e-mail naming convention at Southwestern College recently changed.

The new system will facilitate the "E-Mail for Life" program being instituted by the alumni office, as well as standardizing addresses throughout the college.

All Southwestern College addresses (faculty, staff, and students) now have the format of `Firstname.Lastname@sckans.edu` or `firstname.lastname@sckans.edu`. The old SC e-mail addresses will continue to work indefinitely, but persons in contact with the college are encouraged to change their address books now.

Elijah Once More

The fourth *Elijah Sing-Through* is scheduled for Saturday, March 3, 2007, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Mendelssohn oratorio was performed more than 50 years in Winfield, beginning at Southwestern College and continuing with sponsorship by the Winfield Oratorio Society.

All interested singers and musicians are invited to participate. For more information contact Lou Tharp in SC's performing arts office, (620) 229-6272, Lou.Tharp@sckans.edu.