

Admissions & Recruitment Annual Report 2021-2022

Mission

The Admissions Office is dedicated to recruiting, admitting, and enrolling a diverse and academically talented student body. By providing information and support throughout the application and enrollment process, the Admissions Office strives to promote student success.

Vision & Values

The Admissions Team creates energetic and engaging experiences that exceed expectations to recruit, admit, and enroll students. Additionally, the Admissions Team takes good care of people – prospective students, families, colleagues, and each other – to be successful and reach enrollment targets.

2021-2022 Goals

A major focus for 2021-2022 was resuming domestic and international recruitment travel. In addition, the return of highly successful on-campus recruitment events were eagerly anticipated, especially Campus Close-Up, Scholar Day, and Senior Visit Day. Finally, meeting new student enrollment targets set by the university remains a critical yearly goal.

Domestic recruitment travel increased dramatically in 2021-2022 compared to the previous year. Admissions counselors were able to visit high schools and attend college fairs in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. International travel restrictions remained in some areas of the world. However, international recruitment trips were completed in Mexico, Central America, Caribbean, Canada, and Sweden.

The return of five Campus Close-Up programs, a Scholar Day event, and two Senior Visit Days in 2021-2022 were welcomed with fanfare following the cancellation of large visit events during the 2020-2021 year. Thanks to the partnership with and involvement by many faculty, staff, and students across campus, these visit programs were well attended and contributed toward the strong new student enrollment predicted for fall 2022.

The summer/fall 2021 new freshman target was set at 2,150 students. On the tenth day of the fall semester, the official freshman cohort was reported at 2,207. This is the largest freshman cohort in the history of UWL. The transfer target for summer/fall 2021 was set at 350 students. The official transfer class was reported at 394 students, surpassing the target. The numerous partners across campus combined with the steadfast dedication and work of the Admissions staff resulted in both freshman and transfer enrollment targets being exceeded.

Summer/Fall 2021 Freshman Funnel

Applications	7118
Admits	5259 (682 cancelled)
Deposits	2593 (333 cancelled)
Enrolled	2207 (57 over goal of 2150)

Summer/Fall 2021 Transfer Funnel

Applications	760
Admits	573 (86 cancelled)
Enrolled	394 (44 over goal of 350)

As of June 15, 2022, the applications, admits, and deposits for the summer/fall 2022 freshman cohort are strong and running ahead of last year. It is predicted that the summer/fall 2022 freshman cohort will exceed the enrollment target of 2,150 students and will likely set a new university record for freshman class size.

Summer/Fall 2022 Freshman Funnel (as of 06/15/2022)

Applications	7250
Admits	5407 (548 cancelled)
Deposits	2645 (246 cancelled)

As of June 15, 2022, the transfer applications and admits for the summer/fall 2022 cohort are comparable to this point in time last year. It is predicted that the transfer enrollment target for summer/fall 2022 of 350 students will be met.

Summer Fall 2022 Transfer Funnel (as of 6/15/2022)

Applications	696
Admits	438 (40 cancelled)

2021-2022 Points of Pride & Accomplishments

Campus Visits

Large campus visit options resumed in the fall 2021 semester. Interest in these visit options was strong and several partners across campus assisted to provide energetic and engaging experiences that exceed expectations.

Campus Close-Up (five):	780 students + families
Senior Visit Day (two):	168 students + families
Scholar Day:	46 students + families

Admissions Information Sessions, Walking Tours of Campus, Senior Snapshots, and Individual Appointments were also offered. During the 2021-2022 year, Vanguardians provided 1,365 campus tours. Total campus visitors exceeded 15,000 for the year!

Multicultural Student Visits

Thanks to the financial support from the Academic Initiatives Differential Allocation Committee, the Admissions Office coordinated 24 special group visits this past year that involved 734 students. This included the return of the LatinX Visit Day on April 30 – a visit program offered in Spanish as an introduction to UWL for LatinX students and their families.

UChat

Prospective students and families may interact with the Admissions Office in many ways, including phone, email, text, and UChat – a live chat widget on the web site. Admissions staff responded to 5,636 questions and comments via UChat during the 2021-2022 year.

Transfer Admissions

More than 1,000 university transcripts were reviewed and credit evaluations completed for transfer students admitted for the winter, spring, summer, and fall 2022 terms. During those credit evaluations, more than 1,100 courses were evaluated for the first time. New course equivalencies were determined and then added to PeopleSoft (WINGS) transfer credit rules and in Transferology.

Recruitment Travel

Domestic student recruitment included the return of high school visits and in-person college fairs. During the 2021-2022 year, the Admissions Team visited over 300 high schools and represented UWL at more than 120 college fairs. It was good to be on the road again.

Taste of La Crosse in Chicago

The annual Taste of La Crosse in Chicago event for admitted students from Northern Illinois and Chicagoland returned. This event allows students to connect with one another, learn about next steps for enrollment, and hear about the experiences of current UWL students. Of the 14 students in attendance, 13 attended START and are fully matriculated for fall – a 93% yield rate.

Family Weekend

With significant coordination from the Student Life Office, Family Weekend was October 8-10, 2021. The return of this important weekend was a highlight of the year and included a dessert reception, bingo, bluff hikes, and athletic events. Participation rates were very high and a clear indication that families were seeking opportunities to visit their student and be involved in the various activities.

2021-2022 Challenges

COVID-19 forced several changes to the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of students. While many recruitment initiatives have slowly returned, there are some lingering challenges due to COVID-19. Some high schools, especially in larger cities, did not allow visitors this year and impeded recruitment efforts. Although the number of in-person college fairs increased throughout the year, some college fairs were still offered in a virtual format. Unfortunately, the virtual college fairs do not afford the same opportunities to connect with prospective students and families. International recruitment travel remained restricted in some areas, particularly in countries in Asia and Africa. Finally, signature on-campus recruitment programs were cancelled or significantly modified. The Milwaukee Summer Academic Field Trip was cancelled in July 2021 for the second straight year. The Scholar Day program returned in February 2022 but without the highly impactful lunch with faculty members.

International student enrollment for fall 2022 will see an increase following two very difficult years. The acquisition of student visas continues to be a challenge to enrollment efforts. While there is growing international student interest in UWL, generating applications and then admission, the final step of obtaining a visa has prevented students from enrolling. It is hoped that a re-opening of embassies around the world and working through backlogs will improve the visa acquisition process for future international students.

Recruitment involves a significant volume of UWL print publications distributed at college fairs, high school visits, and on-campus visits. Paper supply has been a challenge this year. Additionally, the price of paper and cost to print publications has risen dramatically – in some instances more than 50%.

Cost for recruitment travel will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future. The increase in cost for gas and hotels will impact each recruitment trip. These are very necessary travels to build the applicant pool and meet enrollment targets.

The Admissions Office ran several searches in 2021-2022 to fill vacant positions. While the positions have been filled with strong candidates, the applicant pools for positions are not as deep or robust as in the past. If the candidate pools continue to shrink, it may become a challenge to fill future positions. This must be monitored closely, and steps implemented to keep UWL in a position to attract and hire high-quality candidates.

Staff Update

As in past years, the Admissions Team said goodbye to some staff and welcomed new members in 2021-2022. Amanda Lettner, Transfer Admissions Counselor, left in September to pursue a career outside of higher education in the Minneapolis area. Kassea Krueger filled the Transfer Admissions Counselor position in November. She left in March after accepting an academic

advising position at Viterbo University. Her position was filled by Alex Wagner-Romero in May.

In December, Ana Mendoza resigned from her Multicultural Freshman Admissions Counselor position to join the UWL Upward Bound program. Tanisha Petherbridge filled the Multicultural Admissions Counselor position in February. Maddie Wozney, Freshman Admissions Counselor, left the Admissions Office in May for a health care position in the Twin Cities. Her Freshman Admissions Counselor position was filled by Marcus Mahlum in June.

Kelsey Jones, International Admissions Counselor, took an international recruitment position with the University of New Haven in Connecticut in January. Upon his departure, it was determined that position would not be filled until international student enrollment increases.

Kellie Flottmeier, Front Desk Administrative Assistant, announced her departure in April for a position at Organic Valley. Henry Bauer was hired and started in that role in June. Megan Bain, Admissions Information Systems & Operations Manager, accepted a position at Trane and ended her time on the Admissions Team in June. Plans to fill that position are currently being discussed.

It was very exciting to welcome three new positions and staff members to the Admissions Team in 2021-2022. A 50/50 split position of Multicultural Freshman Admissions Counselor/Assistant Women's Basketball Coach was created last summer. Angel Allen was hired for this role and started in August. This past winter, UWL created a new regional admissions counselor position. Taiyani Davis started in February as the Milwaukee Regional Multicultural Freshman Admissions Counselor with attention focused on Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, and Waukesha counties.

Finally, the New Student and Family Programs unit moved from the Student Life Office to the Admissions Office last fall. The Coordinator of New Student and Family Programs position had been vacant since the departure of Sarah Joslyn in Spring 2021. UWL graduate student, Courtney Warax, covered many of the duties on an interim basis. A successful search process resulted in the hiring of Aislinn Hernandez as UWL's next New Student and Family Programs Coordinator. Aislinn started in November.

2022-2023 Initiatives & Goals

The annual goal of the Admissions Office to meet the new student enrollment targets established by the university will continue.

Meanwhile, the Admissions Office will focus on three primary areas in 2022-2023

- Implementation and Leverage of the Scholarship Optimization Plan
 - UWL has contracted with Ruffalo Noel Levitz for an Advanced Financial Aid Solution, known locally as Scholarship Optimization. The Admissions Office will work closely with the Ruffalo Noel Levitz consultant to build the scholarship

awarding model and then leverage the tool to strategically award scholarships and maximize the effectiveness of those scholarships on enrollment.

- Review and Update the Admissions Office Equity Plan
 - The Admissions Office currently has an Equity Plan that was created with the Equity Liaison initiative. It is important to review that plan, update it accordingly, and identify ways to implement that plan in all aspects of recruiting, admitting, and enrolling new students.
- Implement a January 2023 New Student Orientation & Welcome Week
 - Majority of new students begin their UWL career in the fall semester. New Student Orientation and Welcome Week activities have traditionally been focused on those new students and held in September. New students starting in the spring semester have very limited orientation programming. Increasing new student orientation programming in January will support those new students. Additionally, a Welcome Week at the start of the spring semester will engage new and continuing students.

Additionally, the Admissions Office will give secondary attention to two areas in 2022-2023

- Recruitment Program and Activity Review
 - The number of recruitment programs and activities grows each year. If the number of programs is not sustainable, the quality of recruitment initiatives will suffer. A review of these programs and activities is necessary. Those programs deemed less effective will be reformatted or eliminated.
- Eagles of Greater Milwaukee
 - The first Eagles of Greater Milwaukee recruitment event was in April 2019 and was a great success. COVID-19 cancelled the event in 2020 and prevented it in 2021 and 2022. This valuable event will return in Spring 2023 and positively impact recruitment efforts in the Greater Milwaukee area.

Student Highlight

The Vanguard Organization and Admissions Office enhanced my college career more than any other club or office at UWL. Giving tours allowed me to build my self-confidence, work ethic, and public speaking skills. I will miss UWL! - Holly Korfmacher, Madison, WI

Honors & Presentations

Heather Pearson, International Admissions Counselor, along with Kris Anderson, UWL Student Affairs Administration Graduate Program Faculty, and Heather Kretz, Former UW-Eau Claire Director of Admissions, presented at the 2021 Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (WACRAO) conference. Their session was titled “Building Resilient Teams-Moving from Surviving to Thriving.” At the WACRAO conference, their session was selected as “Best of the Best” and then nominated to be considered for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (AACRAO) national conference in Portland in

April 2022. Their session was selected. Heather and her colleagues presented to a filled room at the national conference. Heather Pearson represented UWL extremely well and certainly earned this well-deserved recognition.

In conclusion, the UWL Admissions Office remains a leader within the UW System and across the state of Wisconsin. Our success is because of the dedicated Admissions Team along with the strong partnerships and relationships at UWL, in the high schools, and at other colleges and universities. We take good care of people. We create energetic and engaging experiences that exceed expectations. We plan to continue all those things in 2022-2023!