

Prospective Undergrads Appreciate Drake Advantage

(Cedar Rapids, Iowa) Stamats, one of the premier higher education marketing companies in the country, is eager to spread the word about the Drake Advantage undergraduate student recruitment publications campaign it created in partnership with Drake University. The program has attracted national attention in media outlets ranging from AdWeek and the Chronicle of Higher Education to the Washington Post. The innovative effort generated a steady stream of talk in the blogosphere as well...and for good reason.

The unique stylized "D+" mark that serves as the leading edge of the admissions portion of the campaign is garnering the most talk. It's an edgy and tongue-in-cheek approach designed to capture the attention of college-bound high school students. This group is notoriously difficult to reach thanks to an oversaturated media marketplace and endless stream of look-alike promotional messages from nearly 4,000 colleges and universities across the country.

"The Drake Advantage concept is designed to cut through the noise," says Fritz McDonald, Stamats Vice President of Creative Strategy. "As thought leaders in higher education marketing, it's our responsibility to help clients make confident strategic and creative decisions that will help them stand out from the crowd. The clearly intentional irony of associating a D+ grade with a highly respected, first-rate university is at the core of this concept."

This fall, Drake's entering class of first-year students boasts an average high school grade-point average of 3.7 on a 4-point scale, and an average ACT score of 27. The class average SAT score is 1194, excluding the writing component score.

Drake's innovative student recruitment messaging is rooted in research with the target audience. In a survey of nearly 1,000 high school students across the nation, more than three-quarters of the respondents indicated the sample cover designs featuring the D+ mark grabbed their attention, and nearly 90 percent felt the concept was unique from other college and university materials they have seen.

"Whenever we partner with a client, our goal is to produce creative work that is built on strategy and research, is audience-specific, and carefully targeted," McDonald continues. "At the same time, we push boundaries. Clearly, the Drake Advantage campaign took a creative approach that not only gained national attention, but is already producing the intended results."

According to Drake officials, since the launch of Drake's new undergraduate student recruitment campaign, inquiries from prospective students and campus visits have increased significantly. During July and August, campus visits are up 23 percent from the same period last year. Inquiries, via phone, mail, e-mail and website, climbed 66 percent. A one-month comparison of website traffic to the undergraduate admission landing page shows that page views more than doubled, even before the Drake Advantage campaign attracted widespread media attention.

“The success of the Drake Advantage initiative is clearly a reflection of Drake as well,” McDonald says. “It accurately captures the bold and dynamic spirit of Drake University, an institution that is more than willing to embrace creative, effective ways to connect with their most important audiences.”

The Drake Advantage recruitment campaign for prospective undergraduates is strong evidence of Drake’s sensitivity to audience-specific communication.

“As a whole, Drake has exactly the kind of resolve and courage it takes to make a major impact in the highly competitive student recruitment marketplace. That takes a lot of courage, and we’re proud to be associated with this extraordinary University” McDonald said.

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