



## **Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014**

**(Second Edition)**

Office of Institutional Research,  
Planning, and Assessment

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## About the Authors and Contributors

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction .....	2
Methodology.....	4
Results - Descriptive Data.....	6
Results - Telephone Survey.....	13
Vanguard Scholarships.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
References.....	19

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment completed the second iteration of a study to find out as much information as it could about the freshmen who were admitted to UNA for the fall 2014 semester but who did not enroll (n=893). This number was significantly less than the 1,112 freshmen in last year's group. Highlights of the information gathered is below:

- A total of 43% of the students are attending two-year colleges.
- A total of 25% attend Masters/Comprehensive institutions with the large majority enrolling in Jacksonville State University, Troy University, and the University of Montevallo.
- Out of those students who attended a Masters/Comprehensive institution, 36% attended a private college or university.
- Most students chose institutions that were closer to home than UNA. However, within UNA's Primary Service Area, many of these students attended institutions further away than UNA.
- The primary reason for not attending UNA was that they were not awarded a scholarship or they were offered a better scholarship.

The study also concluded the following:

- A large part of UNA's market niche is concerned about price and may look for lower cost alternative if they believe their perceived value will be the same or better.
- Many in UNA's market niche are also enrolling in private institutions where, while costs are higher, a higher value may be perceived.
- With a 37 percent acceptance rate, the Vanguard Scholarship program was not as effective as anticipated. Reasons why more did not accept were that they were given more money, or that the money given at the enrolled institution covered all of their tuition.
- UNA clearly should strengthen its branding and messaging by focusing on the unique benefits it offers to students who enroll at its institution.

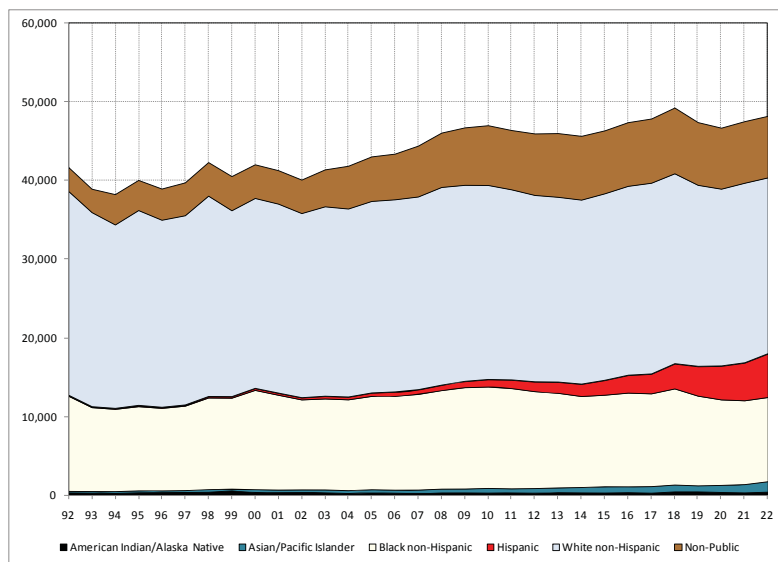
### INTRODUCTION

Following its report last fall entitled “Where Did They Go: An Analysis of Why Admitted Students Did Not Enroll in UNA,” the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment was charged by the Board of Trustees to complete a similar report each fall semester. Last year’s report was created shortly after the official census data collection for the fall 2013 semester when it was discovered that UNA’s applicant to enrollment yield had dropped from its normal rate of 38% to 33%. This five-percentage point drop in matriculation culminated in approximately 136 fewer freshmen enrolled at UNA in the fall 2013 semester. This drop also accounted for a 9.5% decrease of new freshmen enrolled from the previous fall 2012 semester.

During the current fall 2014 semester, UNA experienced a drop of 1.3% in overall enrollment as compared to last fall, and a new freshman enrollment drop of 2.16%. This fall semester’s decrease marks the fifth consecutive fall enrollment decrease for a total decline of 6% of overall enrollment (438 students) since fall 2010. Furthermore, new freshmen enrollment has declined 11.5% since 2012.

Nationwide, data indicates that both new freshman and current student enrollments are declining. The U.S. Census reported that college enrollment declined for the first time in six years during the fall 2012 semester and that trend continues (Reuters, 2013). According to Moody’s Investors Service (2013), enrollment challenges will persist for several years, and those institutions likely to suffer the biggest squeeze will have a larger dependency on tuition as their primary revenue source. However, in their report “Knocking at the College Door” (Prescott and

**Number of High School Graduates,  
1992 to 2022: Alabama**



Source: WICHE/The College Board

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

Bransberger, 2012), released by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) in collaboration with the College Board, data indicated that Alabama should see modest increases in high school graduates with an even larger percentage increase in minorities through 2022. If these data are true, what steps should an Alabama institution take in order to attract more of the state's students and well as students from outside the primary service area?

It becomes important, therefore, to understand where matriculated freshmen decided to enroll, and why they chose a particular institution over UNA. Answers to these seminal questions should be addressed campus-wide and should be included within an institution's on-going enrollment management plan. This study tries to address these questions by evaluating those freshmen who were admitted to UNA during the fall 2014 semester but who decided to attend another institution. The methodology used in this study, along with results obtained, is included within this report.

Before going any further, however, it is important to understand two specific types of yield and how they affect UNA. The first type, or gross yield, is the percentage of total freshmen applicants to the total who actually enrolled in UNA. This yield was the percentage used above, and is typically lower because it includes incomplete applications as well as applications that have been turned down due to the failure of the applicant to meet UNA's minimum academic requirements. The second type, or net yield, is the percentage of those freshmen applicants who were accepted by UNA to those who actually enrolled. A three-year trend of the two types of yield for UNA is shown below:

As shown, gross yield during fall 2013 decreased five percentage points from the previous year, but indicated a slight increase during the current fall semester. Net yield during fall 2013, however, indicated a three percentage point drop from the previous year, but took a significant increase of five points during the current fall semester.

While there is a positive relationship between increases in gross yield and increases in net yield, the purpose of this study is to better understand net yield and why freshmen who were accepted at UNA decided to enroll elsewhere.

“...net yield, is the percentage of those applicants who were accepted by UNA to those who actually enrolled.”

UNA Gross and Net Yield			
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
Net Yield	48.60%	45.36%	50.11%
Gross Yield	38.15%	33.13%	34.03%

### METHODOLOGY

After the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment completed its official collection of census data from the fall 2014 semester, it generated a list of those new freshmen who were admitted to the institution but who did not enroll (n=893). It should be noted that the number for last year's data file contained 219 more students than this year. During the middle of October, this list was forwarded to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center to determine the status of each of these students.

The National Student Clearinghouse is the nation's leading source for education verification and student outcomes research. Currently, most US higher education institutions participate in data sharing with this organization and, according to the Clearinghouse; it maintains data on almost 98% of all higher education students within the US. The Research Center provides student outcomes data to higher education institutions, states, school districts, and educational organizations.

In November, the Clearinghouse responded with a report indicating the enrollment status and other demographic data of each student on the list. The Clearinghouse was able to find data on 646 of the original 893 list of students (72.5%). Reasons why the Clearinghouse could not find data on all of the students could be attributed to one or more of the following:

1. The institution where the student enrolled does not share data with the Clearinghouse
2. The student decided not to enroll in a higher education institution
3. A Clearinghouse-participating institution had not yet submitted their data

From these 646 students, various comparative descriptive data were generated based on information provided by the Clearinghouse, as well as data collected by UNA during the application process. Included within these descriptive statistics were the type of school the student attended, distance the institution was from their home, ACT scores, and where the students resided.

In addition to the descriptive data, OIRPA also conducted telephone interviews with those students who were admitted to UNA but who did not attend. During last year's study, the telephone interviews included only those students who decided to

“The National Student Clearinghouse is the nation's leading source for education verification and student outcomes research.”

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

enroll in an institution similar in role, scope, mission, and size, to UNA. This year, OIRPA telephoned all 646 of the students no matter what type of institution they attended. Respondents were asked why they decided not to enroll in UNA, what the institution could have done differently to ensure that the student would have chosen UNA, how scholarship availability affected their choice, and why they originally applied to UNA.

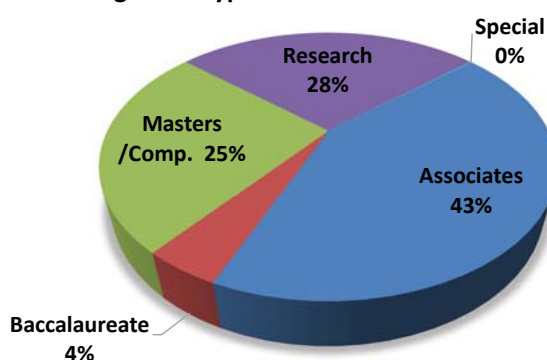


## RESULTS - DESCRIPTIVE DATA

### *Type of Institution Attended*

Based on an abridged classification of institutional types from the Carnegie Commission, students were placed into type of institution they attended. For purposes of comparison, UNA is classified as a Masters/Comprehensive institution. The data in **Figure 1** indicate that the majority of students who decided not to attend UNA enrolled in an Associates-level or two-year college (43%). Out of this percentage, a total of 71 enrolled in Northwest Shoals Community College, 69 enrolled in Calhoun Community College, and 27 enrolled in Bevill State Community College. Compared to last year's 46%, fewer students attended two-year colleges this year.

**Figure 1: Type of School Attended - 2014**



A total of 162 students enrolled in a Doctoral-granting Research institution (28%). While the number of students enrolling in Doctoral-granting Research institutions decreased from last year, the percentage actually increased. Out of this percentage, a total of 40 enrolled in The University of Alabama, 36 enrolled in The University of Alabama – Birmingham, 29 enrolled in Auburn University, and 24 enrolled in the University of South Alabama.

A total of 162 students enrolled in a Masters/Comprehensive university (25%) which was a three percentage point increase from last year. Out of this percentage, 26 enrolled in Jacksonville State University, 21 enrolled in Troy University, and 13 enrolled in the University of Montevallo.

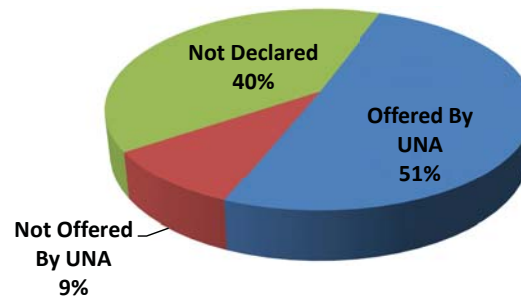
It should be noted that, based on a prior study by Luna and Vaughn (2012), the two- and four-year institutions mentioned above are also the predominant institutions where students enroll after they transfer out from UNA.

General assumptions can be made as to why students decided to attend either a two-year college or one of the state's four-year research institutions over UNA. With this in mind, a major focus of this research concerns why freshmen who were accepted at

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

UNA decided to attend another similar Masters/Comprehensive institution. One significant reason students may decide on one institution over another is academic program (major) availability. However, as shown in **Figure 2**, this may not provide an adequate explanation. Out of all students who chose another Masters/Comprehensive institution over UNA, only 9% chose an academic program not offered by UNA. The majority (40%) did not declare a major and 51% chose programs that were also offered at UNA. Based on last year's numbers, there was a significantly higher number of students this year who declared majors and a significantly higher number of students who chose majors that were also offered by UNA.

**Figure 2: Majors Sought  
Masters/Comprehensive - 2014**

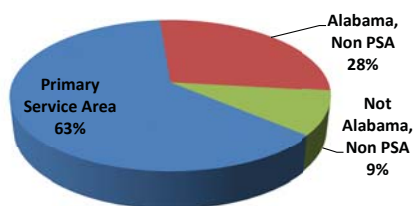


Throughout the rest of this section, descriptive data from all of the 646 students will be compared to those 162 students who chose to attend a Masters/Comprehensive institution.

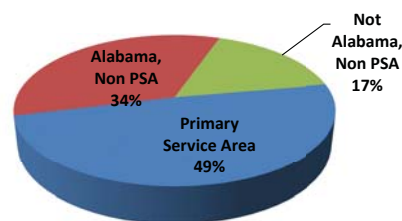
### *Primary Residence of Students*

According to **Figures 3-A and 3-B**, the majority of students who did not enroll in UNA from both groups came from UNA's primary service area. This primary area includes Colbert, Cullman, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Morgan, Walker, and Winston counties in Alabama; Alcorn,

**Figure 3-A: Primary Residence  
All Students - 2014**



**Figure 3-B: Primary Residence  
Masters/Comprehensive Students - 2014**



Itawamba, Lee, Prentiss, and Tishomingo counties in Mississippi; and Decatur, Giles, Hardin, Henderson, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Maury, McNairy, Perry, and Wayne counties in Tennessee. A relatively higher percentage of Masters/Comprehensive students came from Alabama counties outside the primary service area and from outside the state as compared to the All Students

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

group. An explanation of this difference can be attributed to the large number of Primary Service Area students within the All Students group who attended two-year colleges.

For example, over 63% of All Students came from the Primary Service Area as compared to only 46% of those who enrolled in Masters/Comprehensive institutions. Likewise, within the All Students group, 28% came from within the State but outside of the Primary Service Area as compared to 34% of the Master's Comprehensive group.

As compared to last year, there was not a significant difference. While slightly more in the All Student group came from the primary service area, slightly more of the Masters/Comprehensive students came from the primary service area this year than did last year.

### *ACT Composite Score*

The ACT Composite Score average for all students in the group, as well as those who attended Masters/Comprehensive institutions was 21.5. This is slightly lower than the average of the ACT Composite score of UNA's entering freshman cohort for fall 2014 at 22.2.

While the distribution of ACT Composite Score for All Students and Masters/Comprehensive students is similar (**Figures 4-A and 4-B**), there is a higher percentage of Masters/Comprehensive students who have scores that fall within the Under 20 range.

This year, more Masters/Comprehensive students scored in the Under 20 range than last year, and the 20-25 range for this

Figure 4-A: ACT Composite Score  
All Students - 2014

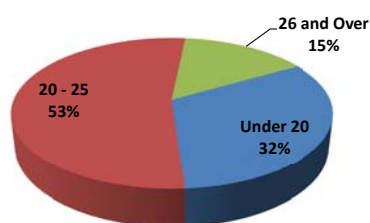
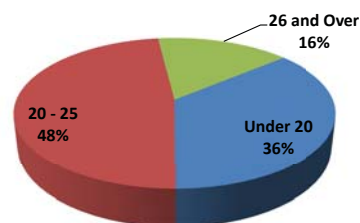


Figure 4-B: ACT Composite Score  
Masters/Comprehensive Students - 2014



group is significantly smaller this year than it was last year. This difference within the Masters/Comprehensive area may indicate that the newly created Vanguard Scholarship program may have caused more students in the group to enroll in UNA. The Van-

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

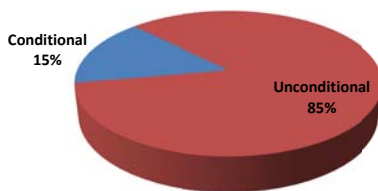
guard scholarship program allows UNA to give partial scholarships to students earning a 22-24 ACT score.

Within the All Student category, a significantly fewer number of students scored in the Under 20 category (32%) this fall semester as compared to last fall semester (43%). Furthermore, there was an increase in the number of students during this fall semester who scored in the 20-25 category (53%) than last year (49%) as well as more students who scored in the 26 and Over category from this year (15%) as compared to last year (8%).

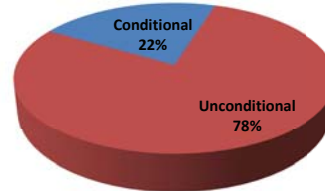
### *Enrollment Status of Students*

According to UNA policy, freshmen may be admitted to the institution as either conditional or unconditional. A conditionally admitted student does not meet the general requirement threshold for the ACT score or high school grade point average within the student's core units.

**Figure 5-A: UNA Admit Status  
All Students - 2014**



**Figure 5-B: UNA Admit Status  
Masters/Comprehensive Students - 2014**



A Temporary Admit status indicates that the institution is missing an official document (i.e. ACT scores, final high school transcript, dually enrolled college transcript, etc.). Therefore, students were either classified as Temporary or Complete and as either Conditional or Unconditional. Since the Temporary and Complete status have little bearing on a student's academic ability, this study condensed enrollment status to either only Conditional or Unconditional.

It should be noted that Conditionally admitted freshmen are not eligible for any of UNA's "Excellence" or merit-based scholarships. However, some of these students could receive band or athletic scholarships.

According to Figures 5-A and 5-B, the overwhelming majority of students within both groups were admitted unconditionally. This information could also be useful to further support UNA's initiation of the Vanguard scholarship program. Based on last year's data, there was an increase of three percentage points in the number of Conditional Admits from this year to last and the

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

commensurate percentage point decrease in the Unconditional Admits from this year to last.

### *Institutional Governance*

While state support of public higher education has significantly waned over the past five years to where most public institutions are receiving less than half of their revenue from the state, the tuition of public higher education is still attractive to many. Although tuition costs for public higher education have increased commensurate to decreases in state revenue, the costs for private-sector education have also increased and are still much higher than public higher education.

Michael Porter (1980) reduced any competition into three unique strategies:

- Cost Leadership
- Product Differentiation
- Market Segmentation

Speaking academically, Luna (2012a) stated that these strategies represent the ways in which an institution could provide students with what they want at a perceived better price, or more effectively than others. Essentially, Porter maintained that all companies (higher education included) compete on cost, perceived value (differentiation), or by focusing on a very specific customer (market segmentation). Therefore, students who

“If the higher numbers of students within the Masters/Comprehensive group who attend private institutions perceive a higher quality of educational experience than at a public institution, UNA could exploit this perception by changing its image”

Figure 6-A: Institutional Governance  
All Students - 2014

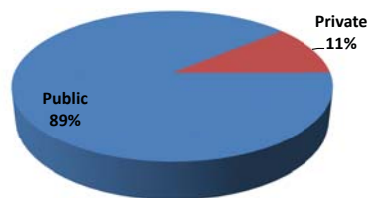
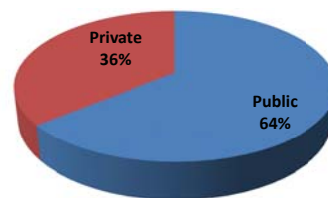


Figure 6-B: Institutional Governance  
Masters/Comprehensive Students - 2014



attend a significantly more expensive private institution clearly perceive a better or more effective education than the public counterpart.

Looking at Figures **6-A** and **6-B**, it is evident that most students who attended an institution other than UNA enrolled in a public college or university. There is, however, a significantly higher percentage of students within the Masters/Comprehensive group who attended private institutions (36%) over the All Students group (11%). These percentages within both categories

did not change from last year to this year. If the higher numbers of students within the Masters/Comprehensive group who attend private institutions perceive a higher quality of educational experience than at a public institution, UNA could exploit this perception by changing its image to reflect its small class sizes, quality of teaching, and the fact that 80% of its total credit hour production is taught by full-time faculty (Luna, 2012b) – all for a significantly lower price than a private institution.

### *Distance from Home*

How far a student will live from home is often a deciding factor when attending an institution. While some students desire to live far away from home, others want to be much closer. An important question for this research, therefore, focused on the average distance from the student's home to the institution they are attending as compared to the distance from their home to UNA. The original file received by OIRPA contained the zip code of the permanent address. Zip codes for the attending institution were then later added to the file.

In order to calculate distance using zip codes, the longitude and latitude (in degrees) had to be added to the file for each zip code. Next, each longitude and latitude value had to be converted from degrees to radians using the following formula:

$$\text{long} = \text{atan}(1)/45 * \text{longdeg}$$

*NOTE: The formula for latitude is the same as the formula for longitude*

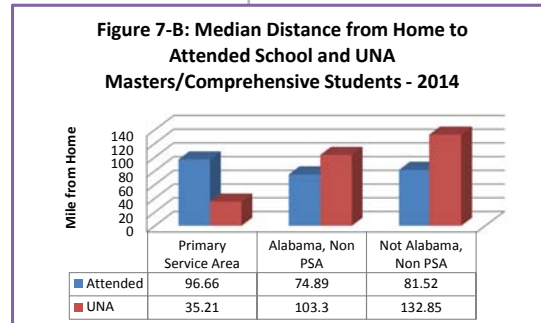
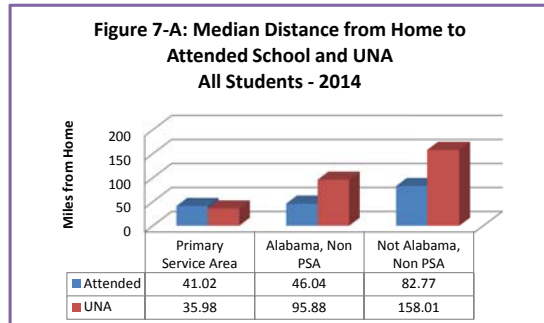
Next, the Great Circle Distance Formula was used to calculate the distance in miles between the two pairs of values. Assume that the longitude and latitude for the first zip code are LONG1 and LAT1, respectively, and the longitude and latitude for the second zip code are LONG2 and LAT2, respectively. The Great Circle Distance formula is as follows:

$$\text{Dist} = 3949.99 * \arccos(\sin(\text{LAT1}) * \sin(\text{LAT2}) + \cos(\text{LAT1}) * \cos(\text{LAT2}) * \cos(\text{LONG1} - \text{LONG2}))$$

Mean distances for distance between home and attending school, and distance between home and UNA were calculated by residency status and type of institution attended. It was determined that using mean values would result in significantly skewed results because a few students from each group decided to attend institutions considerably further away than the majority of the students within the group. These outliers tend to

## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

inflate the mean. To adjust for this skewness, the median was used instead. The median is the actual midpoint of a frequency distribution of observed values and is not affected as much by outliers as the mean. Results shown in **Figures 7-A and 7-B** indicate that students living outside of Alabama and outside of UNA's Primary Service Area are attending institutions that are closer to home than UNA. This is true for both the All Students and Masters/Comprehensive groups.



Concerning students within the state but who reside outside of the Primary Service area, both The All Students and Masters/Comprehensive groups indicate that the distance between the students' home and the attending institution is closer than the distance between their home and UNA.

Students within the Primary Service Area, however, are attending institutions that are further away from their home than UNA. Within the All Students group the distance from home to the attending institution is slightly higher than between their home and UNA. For the Masters/Comprehensive group, the distance is three times greater.



### RESULTS - TELEPHONE SURVEY

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment conducted telephone interviews in order to survey those students who applied to UNA, but decided not to enroll. While last year's survey focused only on those students who chose to go to another Masters/Comprehensive institution, this year all institution types were included in order to better evaluate student needs.

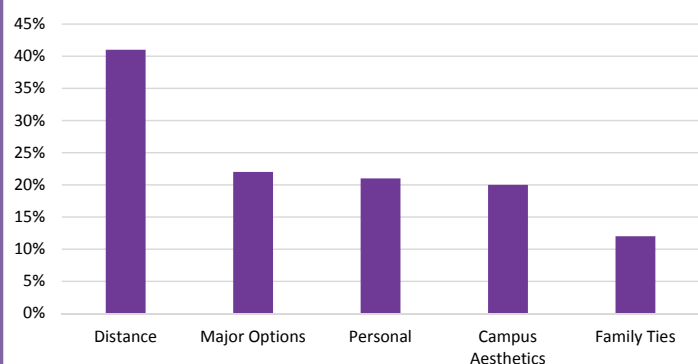
Out of the total number of students who chose another institution after being accepted to UNA (n=646), the office successfully interviewed 219 (34%) while 3 (<1%) refused to participate. In all, 367 (57%) did not answer the phone, and 57 (9%) of the phone numbers were invalid.

The 2013 survey asked only two questions: why the student chose not to enroll at UNA, and what UNA could have done differently to have them enroll. Additional questions were included this year, which asked why students applied to UNA, why the scholarship awarded was not an incentive for the student to enroll, whether those who chose to attend a community college intended to transfer to UNA in the future, and whether Northwest Shoals Community College students received Shoals Scholar Dollars.

#### *Why students applied to UNA*

Respondents were asked what first attracted them to UNA and made them want to apply. The results are contained in **Figure 8**. The most common response was distance from home (41%), with the majority saying that they wanted to stay close to home (although a few said they wanted to come to UNA because it was farther from home). Others cited major/program offerings (22%), personal reasons – such as a local job (21%), campus aesthetics (20%), and family ties (12%). Some of the respondents provided more than one reason, so the total percentage will be greater than 100%.

**Figure 8: Why Students Applied to UNA**

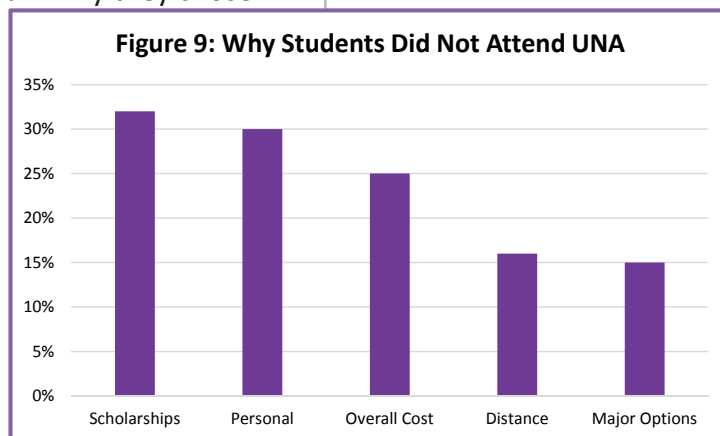




## Where Did They Go? An Analysis of Why Admitted Freshmen Did Not Enroll in UNA - 2014

### *Why students did not attend UNA*

The respondents were then asked to explain why they chose not to enroll at UNA. The results are shown in **Figure 9**. A total of 32% cited that they did not receive a scholarship, or the scholarship was insufficient. This number, however, is significantly lower than last year's 52%. Personal reasons fell just below scholarships at 30%, overall cost at 25% (85% of those students enrolled at a community college), 16% said they wanted to stay closer to home, and 15% said UNA did not have the major they wanted.



### *Why scholarships were not an incentive*

Of the 219 respondents, 67 (31%) were offered some type of scholarship by UNA. When asked why the scholarship offered was not sufficient incentive to have them enroll, most said they were offered the same amount or more at another institution. For example, some indicated that while the partial \$1,500 Vanguard Scholarship was helpful, the same scholarship offering at a community college would cover the full amount.

### *Community College students*

Participants who decided to attend a community college (46% of respondents) were asked if they intended to transfer to UNA in the future, and over half indicated they would. Many of them said they believed there was no reason to come to UNA for the first two years when they could get their basic courses at a community college at less expense. Among participants who chose to enroll at a community college, 34 enrolled at Northwest Shoals, of which 15 (44%) received Shoals Scholar Dollars.

### *Is there anything UNA could have done differently to have you enroll?*

When asked if UNA could have done anything differently to have them enroll, 63% said UNA could not have done anything differently, while 16% said more scholarship money would have made a difference, 3% indicated customer service issues, and the remaining 18% mentioned miscellaneous issues such as housing, major options, and social concerns.

“When asked why the scholarship offered was not sufficient incentive to have them enroll, most said they were offered the same amount or more at another institution”

### VANGUARD SCHOLARSHIPS

As part of its enrollment management effort last year to increase enrollment and attract a higher number of students who excelled academically, UNA initiated the Vanguard Scholarship program during the summer of 2014. Those students who earned an ACT score of between 22 and 24 and had a core GPA of 2.75 or higher would be eligible to receive partial scholarships of \$1,500 to \$2,500. It was believed that these scholarships would address applicants' concerns that UNA did not have as many scholarship offerings as did the other institutions to which they applied.

During the fall 2014 semester, there were 394 Vanguard Scholarships offered and 148 of these applicants accepted. Furthermore, two of the accepted students fell below the 12-hour load minimum required of the scholarship within the first week of class, so their scholarships had to be revoked.

As shown below, a total of 37% of students eligible for Vanguard actually accepted. While there were more who accepted the \$2,000 partial scholarship, the acceptance rate was still less than half.

Vanguard Scholarships at UNA - 2014			
Vanguard Level	Accepted	Declined	Total
\$1,500	37	72	109
\$2,000	60	83	143
\$2,500	51	91	142
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>394</b>

As indicated in the telephone survey, some of the respondents questioned indicated that, while the Vanguard Scholarship was helpful, they were offered either the same at a lower cost institution, or they were offered more. For example, a few of the respondents cited that the \$1,500 scholarship offered by UNA would only cover some of the costs of attending while the same amount offered at a two-year college would cover all of their costs.

There were approximately 13 more students within the ACT range of 22-24 who enrolled in UNA as compared to last year even though the the number of new freshmen declined almost 3 percent. While the Office of Student Financial Services continues to research the program's effectiveness, preliminary data indicated that the program was somewhat successful.

### CONCLUSION

As noted in Luna (2012a), higher education nationwide is in a state of change and instability. Potential students have more higher education options than ever and education marketers must develop and refine the messages necessary to attract and retain students, while generating sufficient revenue to keep institutions active.

In many instances, college choices are geographically motivated so there is instant local demand. Clearly the research from this study supports this claim to some extent. For example, UNA's primary recruitment has fallen mainly within a 100-mile radius, although recent studies indicate an increase in UNA market share for select areas outside this radius (Luna, 2012a). Similarly, tried and true brand messaging has been employed for a long time, and largely successful. However, over time, and as trends change, brand messaging needs to be updated and channels adapted to reach the right consumers, despite where they reside. In today's market, most students are looking for value in their education dollar. In this case:

$$\text{VALUE} = (\text{perceived}) \text{ BENEFITS} - \text{COSTS}$$

Therefore, while some students may focus more on the costs of enrolling at a particular institution, others focus more on the benefits. In developing branding strategies in a highly competitive and volatile environment, colleges and universities should concentrate resources and efforts more on promoting the benefits of attending their particular institution, rather than emphasize the costs associated with it. For example, refer to the Competitive Positioning chart (**Figure 10**).

The Y axis of the chart indicates price while the X axis indicates benefits. When price increases, value diminishes. Likewise, when benefits increase, value grows. Clearly, UNA has some applicants who are so price sensitive that they care little about the benefits. They are looking for the cheapest degree they can find. Others, on the other hand, do not mind paying a lot more than the tuition at UNA because the value of this type of education is perceived as significantly higher than at UNA.

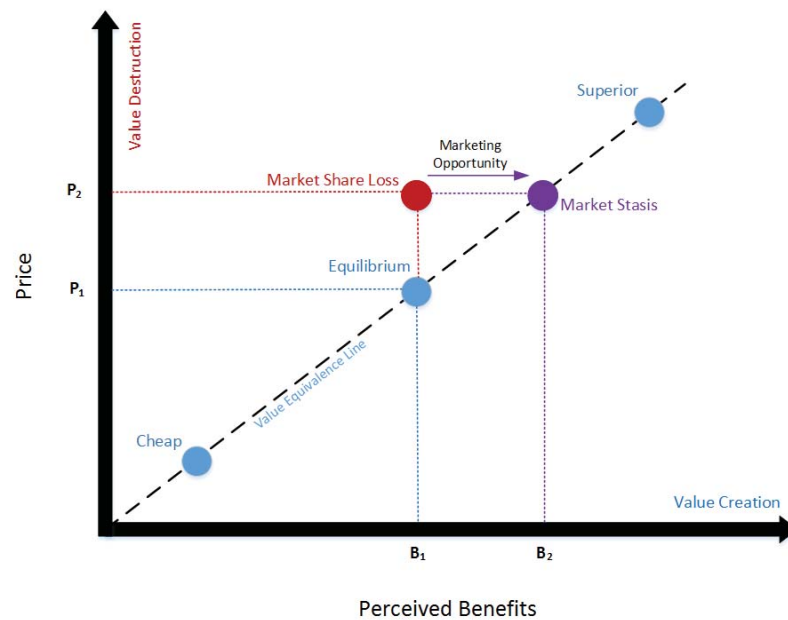
Where the price and benefit are perceived as equal, value balance or equilibrium is achieved. In the past, UNA was able to keep its tuition moderately low due to the amount of state

revenue used to supplement the institution. Therefore, the price that UNA charged ( $P_1$ ) equaled the perceived benefits that students received ( $B_1$ ). Now, with state revenue significantly declining, tuition has had to commensurately increase to the point where perceived value has diminished ( $P_2$ ). To reach market stasis due to this forced increase in tuition, the institution has offset some of the costs of the higher tuition through scholarships. This off-set, while making the price manageable to more students, does little to in-

crease the perceived benefits of a UNA education. The best way to achieve market stasis would be to increase the perception of benefits that the student receives by attending UNA. This can be accomplished through a change of branding strategy induced by exploiting key value-added benefits the institution currently possesses. For example, UNA can positively impact its image and increase its value by highlighting its small class sizes, quality of teaching, and the fact that 80% of its total credit hour production is taught by full-time faculty (Luna, 2012b).

Higher education, therefore, is becoming more competitive from a variety of perspectives. Internally, institutions must manage costs, while at the same time meet a growing need to specialize and communicate a unique message to an expanding marketplace. From the applicant's vantage, student prospects are faced with more education options than ever before. Therefore, a solid marketing and enrollment management strategy can directly affect the bottom line of a higher education institution through the measurement and understanding of its position in the marketplace, the elimination of weaknesses, and building upon its strengths.

Figure 10 - Competitive Positioning



From this research the following assumptions may be formed:

1. The market niche of UNA is highly concerned about price and may look for lower cost alternatives, even when those alternatives are further away from home than UNA, if they believe their value will be equal to or greater than UNA.
2. UNA should continue to keep student costs down to a minimum, while creating unique programs designed to minimize the effect of costs increases. Such programs could include specifically targeted scholarship opportunities, as well as academic procedures to help students earn their degree in four years.
3. UNA clearly should strengthen its branding and messaging by focusing on the unique benefits to students enrolling at its institution. Such benefits could include the fact that 80 percent of all credit hour production is taught by full-time faculty, significantly smaller class sizes, exemplar academic programs and achievements of students therein, and the overall climate of the UNA campus.

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