Researching and Planning School Visits: A Happy Union

The following components may be helpful as you plan your upcoming recruitment calendar. When searching for schools to visit or subtracting schools where visits have been unproductive, it is crucial to consider data as well as your institution’s mission with your planning.

1) What is my university’s mission, and what types of students are most successful at my institution?
   - What sort of curriculum does my institution offer?
     Example: My institution is well known for its Natural Sciences curriculum, so perhaps the high school where most students take part in the Journalism magnet would not be a good place to visit.
   - Does the high school I would like to visit have a similar mission, and does it prepare students for the education offered by my institution?
     Example: My institution emphasizes social justice, so perhaps a high school where students do meaningful community service would be a good place to visit.

2) Use the data in the school profiles.
   - In today's internet-driven environment, it is easy to overlook the data in hard-copy school profiles. However, the school profiles offer a clear, concise presentation of the resources offered at different schools, which can save the potential hassle of searching for the information on the school websites. As you continue to work with different territories over the years, begin to build a personal library of profiles for easy access during the application review process.
   - Does the school offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses or an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum? Are students encouraged to take courses at a nearby community college?
   - What is my institution’s policy on credit awarded for AP and IB exams, the IB diploma, and college courses taken while in high school? Could the students at the high school be drawn to our policy, or could they be turned off by it?
     Example: My institution offers limited credit for college courses taken while in high school, and many students at the high school where I may visit work towards an Associate’s degree during high school in order to decrease the number of years in college. Our policy may discourage students from applying.

3) Does your school have access to the Enrollment Planning Service? If so, use it!
   - The “Overview” can be your most helpful tool. It shows how many students sent scores to your institution in the previous year, as well as the averages of those scores. It provides information on ethnicity, family income of test takers, and subjects students are interested in pursuing in college.
   - You can also use the data to look at recent trends.
   - The information in EPS can help you determine how competitive students from a certain school group may be in your institution’s admission process, as well as provide a clearer mental image if you are visiting the school for the first time.

4) Use previous years’ application data.
   - Much like the data provided by EPS, application data from previous years can provide a clear picture of how well your institution is drawing students from different high schools.
   - Application data will also suggest the success of your recruitment approaches at a particular school.
     Example: Applications from a high school with a successful history in your institution’s admission process have been steadily declining from year to year. In the past, you have only scheduled personal high school visits during the school day. The high school takes part in a district-wide college fair, so you could perhaps forgo the school visit one year and attend the fair instead, with the hope that you will reach more students in that manner.