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BECOME PART OF THE FURMAN ADMISSION NETWORK

LAST FALL President Rod Smolla presented the Office of Admission with a compelling challenge: create an international army of volunteers to help recruit the university's future students.

Meeting this challenge was no small undertaking. But when we put out the call, more than 700 eager volunteers answered, and the Furman Admission Network — or FAN — was running full tilt.

FAN consists of Furman alumni and parents who donate their time and talents to connect with prospective students through interviews, college fairs, special events and telephone campaigns. In short, FAN members serve as ambassadors for Furman in their communities — and as extra eyes and ears for the Admission Office.

With the help of these volunteers, Furman was able — for the first time — to offer each applicant for the Class of 2015 the opportunity to have a personal interview with a Furman representative. Thanks to FAN members' flexibility and support, nearly 1,000 applicants benefited from an interview. For a program in its inaugural stages, this was a fantastic outcome.

The development of the FAN initiative supports Admission's growing efforts to personalize the recruiting process, develop a more holistic review of applicants, and boost the diversity of the applicant pool. In exchange, prospective students — many of whom live far from Greenville and are unable to visit the campus — can still enjoy a conversation with a card-carrying member of the Furman family.



FAN interviews are usually conducted in person, in an informal setting. They can also be done over the phone or via Skype. Following each interview, FAN members complete an online evaluation that becomes part of the student's application file.

For the Admission Committee, FAN evaluations provide the kind of insight into a student's character and personality that is not always apparent from a paper application. For the students, the one-on-one visits breathe life into the stories, pictures and facts on Furman brochures and foster a personal connection with the university. The interviews also offer the students the chance to speak from the heart about their interests, dreams and aspirations.

It's a powerful recruiting tool. Indeed, a number of students in the Class of 2015 said that their FAN interviewer made the difference in their decision to enroll at Furman.

Among the shining first-year stars of the FAN program were parent Chris Henson of Columbus, Ga., who interviewed seven students; Richard Bowers '64, who traveled more than two hours from his home in Corpus Christi, Texas, to conduct an interview with an international applicant; and Jessie Phillips '05, who conducted four interviews in China, where she was attending graduate school.

The FAN program is already one of the most exciting developments at Furman in recent years, and the Admission staff is grateful for the interest and support demonstrated by Furman's alumni and parents. In return, FAN members get an inside look into the university's recruiting process, connect with alumni and parents and, most importantly, play a key role in molding Furman's future.

But FAN can use more help.

Whether you're young or old, city-dweller or suburban homeowner, CEO or stay-at-home-mom, FAN needs you. In the coming years interview requests are expected to skyrocket, so enthusiastic interviewers are needed around the globe. The Office of Admission can also use additional help with college fairs, special events and telephone campaigns.

To apply, visit <http://community.furman.edu> and sign up for the Furman Engage Community. On the right side of the Engage Community home page, a box that says "Want to be a FAN Member?" will appear. Click "Yes!" and follow the prompts.

Even if you can't commit to joining FAN at this time, we hope that all alumni and parents consider themselves ambassadors for Furman. In that vein we encourage you to take advantage of any and every opportunity to talk with prospective students about the university.

As Alumni Association president Chris Brown '89 wrote in the summer *Furman* magazine, "All of us can support Furman's recruitment efforts because we are some of the best recruiters Furman could have. By sharing our stories with prospective students and their parents, we can personalize the Furman experience and provide insight and understanding they can't get from anyone else."

— KRISTEN FISCHER ANTHONY

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