



Contact: Bill Jenkins
(602) 315-5566

High School Counselors Offer Guidance in Life **University conducts research to understand guidance counselors' needs**

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Sept. 24, 2007) – In an environment of increasing pressures at school and at home, guidance counselors find themselves helping high school students with more than just what to do after getting their diploma, according to feedback solicited by Grand Canyon University (GCU) in an outreach effort conducted with high school guidance counselors.

“As a university, we’re interested in how to best reach out to prospective students and we realize that many of them turn to one of the most trusted resources at their school – the guidance counselor. What we didn’t realize was how much students rely on these individuals for guidance in other areas of their lives,” said Christel Mosby, vice president of marketing at Grand Canyon University.

GCU held a series of forums to gain a better understanding of how to work with local guidance counselors, and researched what methods the school could implement to reach out to prospective local students. A follow-up electronic survey was conducted to learn how GCU might help guidance counselors better prepare for their jobs, resulting in interesting insights in areas far beyond advising students on academics.

The 28-question survey generated an impressive 40 percent response rate and covered topics ranging from parental involvement and other areas of counseling to scholarships and the college application process. Among the findings:

- While most of the respondents said that students seek their counsel on post-secondary pursuits, 76 percent of counselors said that students seek their advice on grief and bereavement and 68 percent said they seek counsel on suicide issues
- 65 percent indicated that students seek advice regarding drugs and alcohol
- 61 percent of counselors said that less than half of their students had made a decision on a college major or direction of study
- 56 percent said the one area guidance counselors needed to be better prepared for is the college application process and how to find information about and apply for scholarships

The survey comes at a time when a record number of students need support in the college application process and in deciding what to do beyond high school. In addition to deciding on a school, students are pressured to choose a direction of study at an early stage. While many universities and colleges are investing heavily in online marketing to recruit students, the role of the guidance counselor in a student's decision-making is critical.

“This is a competitive industry, and we're doing what we can to reach out to those who have some influence on the decision of where students will choose to attend college,” Mosby said. “And it's definitely helping us in determining what we can do to enhance our post-baccalaureate education for those in this industry.”

Almost all of the respondents worked at public high schools, with 70 percent at high schools of 1,000 to 3,000 students. The respondents were equally represented geographically, with 28 percent from East Valley communities, 25 percent from Central Phoenix, 22 percent from North or Northeast Phoenix, 22 percent from Scottsdale and 14 percent from the West Valley.

About Grand Canyon University

Founded in 1949, Grand Canyon University is a one of Arizona's leading higher learning institutions and is one of the nation's fastest-growing. Based in Phoenix, the regionally accredited, private, non-denominational Christian university offers online and campus-based bachelor's and master's degree programs through the Ken Blanchard College of Business, College of Education, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The school was recently ranked as having the top online education program by OEDb (Online Education Database). With a total enrollment of approximately 13,000 students, GCU emphasizes individual attention for both traditional undergraduate students as well as the working professional. For more information, please visit www.gcu.edu.

###