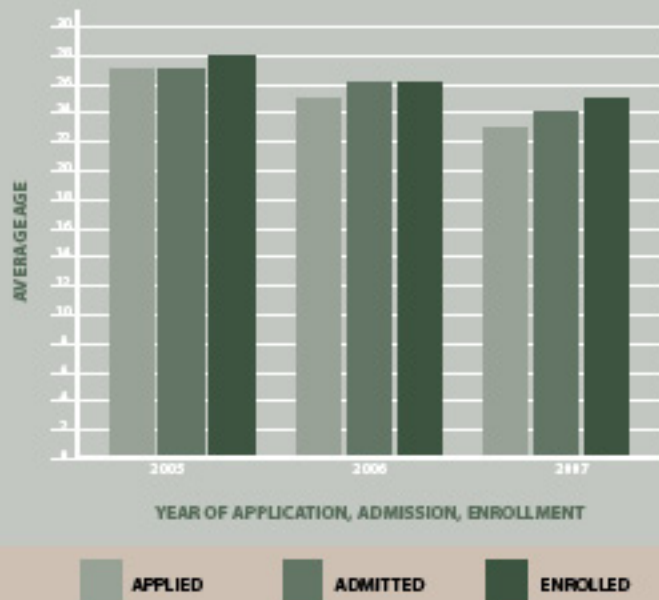


Campus gets younger with time

USF St. Petersburg applicant profile

average age of students in recent years



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The University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus bookstore may not need to start stocking crayons and paste, but the population of young students on campus has grown significantly over the last two years.

The number of new students under the age of 21 who enrolled at USF St. Petersburg nearly doubled from 165 to 338 between 2005 and 2008, according to university enrollment records. The number of applications received from prospective students under 21 also doubled from 514 to 1,072 over the same period.

The youth movement at USF St. Petersburg follows a national trend for urban campuses, said Dr. Karen White, the campus regional chancellor. Traditionally, city campuses primarily drew "place-bound" students who were not able to attend school away from home. A large number of these

students were older, non-traditional students with work and family obligations.

Urban campuses have intentionally diversified their mix of students over the last five years, White said.

"We want to draw students not because they are place-bound but because we are the institution of choice."

Residence halls drive this diversification. White said most major urban universities added residential housing over the last several years.

Dr. Frank Hohengarten, dean of enrollment services, said the addition of the residence hall drove the increase in the population of younger students at USF St. Petersburg.

"The number of young students on campus is more than a perception," he said. "With the opening of the residence hall, that has really accelerated."

The existence of on-campus housing allows USF St. Petersburg to recruit students from beyond Tampa Bay, Hohengarten said. The school expanded its recruiting of

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high school students by obtaining names from those requesting information through the SAT. Approximately 1-3 percent of prospects came from these solicitations, he said.

As the number of young students on campus increase, the climate on campus will change, Hobengarten said.

"It's kind of a chicken and egg situation. As younger students begin to live on campus, more activities will be directed towards them and as we recruit more traditional students, things will have to be in place to attract them," he said.

Dr. Kent Kelso, regional vice chancellor of student affairs, said campus life activities expand as the school's demographics evolve.

Additional housing, student organizations, meal plans, fitness, recreation and on-campus activities all help draw and retain more traditional students, Kelso said.

"Students are choosing universities with a full range of amenities," he said. "That's a big part of why they choose what they choose."

The number of older students enrolling at USF St. Petersburg dropped slightly over the last three years. There were

185 new students over 30 enrolled in 2005 and 164 in 2007.

Regional Chancellor White said the school does not want to shift its demographic makeup but rather broaden it while continuing to provide degree opportunities for older, nontraditional students.

"Our heart is to never leave one student group behind."

de santo

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doing," Tom Thompson, director of Cinelight Studios, the local award-winning motion-picture company, said of Illman. "I've seen his work before. He knows what it takes to get it going."

"It is a no-brainer; the new place is gonna skyrocket in profits," said R. Kevin Rehmeyer, general manager of Life-Style Realty Group, a company specializing in commercial real estate. "It is perfectly located, catching both downtown crowd and the students of USF who live on campus."

That fits with Illman's vision for De Santo.

"I just want to add to the magical beauty of this town."