



# THE PAPER CHASE NO MORE

BY STACIA MOMBURG

PAPER IS SO SIX YEARS AGO. Just ask any student who's been recruited and enrolled at Cal Poly since 2000.

According to Wikipedia.com, the notion of a "paperless" office dates to a 1975 article in *Business Week* magazine, in which a publicist predicted that paper would become an obsolete encumbrance in the office of the future.

Having received its first electronic application in 1992, Cal Poly's Admissions and Recruitment office literally made the shift to a paperless office in 2000, when James Maraviglia, assistant vice president for admissions, recruitment and financial aid, joined forces with Hobson's Management Technology, an international provider of education and recruitment information, to develop state-of-the-art recruiting software.

Using "Flash" Web video messages to capture the attention of recruits, Maraviglia and his team make initial e-mail contact with high school sophomores, and continue sending updates, messages and deadline information throughout the enrollment process. On average, a prospective Cal Poly student will receive 54 e-mail messages throughout any recruitment cycle. They are also invited to participate in chat rooms and targeted pod casts.

Each newly admitted student receives personalized e-messages from the Cal Poly president, provost, and their department chair, explains Maraviglia.

He says prospective students also can easily create their own Cal Poly "portal" to receive targeted, updated information about the colleges and campus activities that interest them, as well as messages about services such as housing, financial aid and summer advising.

In February, Maraviglia and his staff again teamed up with Hobson's to launch "Respuestas EMT," an online tool that enables prospective students to ask questions and receive answers in Spanish directly from the Web. The new program is endorsed by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

"Not only are we able to provide 24/7 access to information about the admissions and enrollment process that is specific to Hispanic prospective students, we also show our dedication to furthering the educational progress of the fast-growing Hispanic population as a whole," Maraviglia says.

How effective is this high-tech recruiting effort? Cal Poly just documented its 12th consecutive record applicant pool – more than 35,000 candidates applied for roughly 4,500 undergraduate openings. And numbering 3,800, this year's freshman class is the university's largest ever.

There is quality to complement the quantity, too. Incoming freshmen had an aggregate grade-point average of 3.83. □

