



Is A&T a party school? As a student "telecounselor" in A&T's admissions office, junior Starla Lyles says she gets this question more than any other from prospective Aggies who depend on her to tell them the truth.

"My answer is that A&T has the best of both worlds," the pre-med chemistry major says. "Getting a good education is about finding a balance."

The telecounseling program is a tool that has proven instrumental in the growth of A&T's student population, says Mozell N. Weston, senior associate admissions director.

"We're probably the only HBCU with a real telecounseling component," she says. "We know it works."

Manning phones from 5-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 4-8 p.m. Sunday, telecounselors call high school students nationwide who have expressed an interest in A&T, answering their questions and inviting them to special events such as University Day and "Aggie Nights" in their areas.

"We try to build relationships with prospective students," says Lyles, a third-generation Aggie from Nashville, Tenn. "I tell people what I would have wanted to know."

Once they've read all the recruitment manuals and Web pages and gotten the official view of the university, prospective students can get their questions answered "on the real" through the telecounseling program, by students who are just a few years ahead of them.

On the real: Students share the A&T experience

Parents can get straight answers, too.

"I enjoy talking to the parents," Lyles says. "They usually ask about financial aid. I tell them where there's a will there's a way. If you want to go to A&T, there's always a way. Anything's possible."

It's a plum job, for which students must maintain a certain GPA and perform well during telephone and face-to-face interviews.

"It's the best thing," says Reggie Gilmore Jr., a computer science major from Augusta, Ga. "You get to be a part of bringing new students and new talent into the university. It's kind of like giving back to your university before you leave."

Gilmore, who also conducts campus tours during the day as a volunteer Aggie Ambassador, says both experiences have taught him much about the university and the world.

"A&T has a lot of history as far as progress not just for this university but for this nation," he says, his enthusiasm and "Aggie Pride" evident as he talks.

At the same time that he's had to learn about and keep up with the fast-growing campus, he's learned from interacting with the families he meets on the phone and during campus visits.

"I've had a chance to meet so many different kinds of people - people from all walks of life," says Gilmore, who considered Howard and Georgia Tech before settling on what he's convinced was the best choice: "No other college could ever come close to what I've gained from A&T."

Lyles, who plans to study medicine back home in Nashville at Meharry, is equally enthusiastic.

"I love A&T because not only is it an academic environment, it's an opportunity to lift yourself up," she says, citing numerous scholarship, internship and extracurricular opportunities, as well as the involvement of alumni.

"You can start on your future right now," she says. "You're mingling, you're meeting people, you're going different places - I don't think I could have gotten these experiences anywhere else."

Just as she followed her father and grandfather to A&T, she can see recommending the same path to her own children: "I would definitely give A&T my stamp of approval."

In a sense, A&T is a family thing for Gilmore, too. He shares a story about one student from Brooklyn, N.Y., he met as a high schooler on a college tour.

When such tours come through, he explains, some students are interested, some are not.

"This one young lady was really interested and I worked with her until seven or eight that evening, making sure she got her application filled out," Gilmore said.

They kept in touch by phone until she enrolled as a freshman, at which point he became sort of a big brother to her on campus. Now, she's starting the process to become a telecounselor and Aggie Ambassador herself.

"She's going to do the same thing for somebody else," Gilmore says, "and it's going to build a trend moving forward."

For more information, call the admissions office at 334-7946.

All the way to the Ph.D. at A&T



Dr. Kenneth Murray

The School of Graduate Studies is the contact point for more than 30 graduate programs in six different schools and colleges at A&T, offering the Master of Science, Master of Arts, Master of Social Work and Doctor of Philosophy.

"We're the only graduate school in town that has technology, engineering and agriculture," says Dr. Kenneth

Murray, interim dean of the graduate school. "If anybody's looking for graduate education in those areas then we're the only game in town."

"It's important to note that A&T happens to be nationally known for its excellence in those areas of study," Murray adds.

A&T also is attracting an increasing number of graduate students who are responding positively to the flexibility provided by its evening and online programs.

"We have a part-time evening education program that is very attractive to the teachers in our local systems who need to get new certification or to get re-certification," he says. "Our master's level program in technology also can be an evening program so students don't have to quit work to go."

All of A&T's graduate programs give students the opportunity to study with faculty doing research in various fields. The classroom and laboratory experiences create a learning environment that encourages everyone to excel. Also, an integrated and intercultural faculty and student body attracts graduate students from all over the world.

While A&T's graduate school still boasts small classes, they're not quite as small as they once were, Murray says, citing a positive response to classes that used to have only two students and now have eight or so.

"Our enrollment has grown so our classes are a little bit fuller," he says, "so that makes the setting a little bit more comfortable for students."

For more information about graduate study at A&T, call 334-7920 or visit www.ncat.edu/~gradsch/.

