Stephanie Bergeron
President
Walsh College

As assistant treasurer for Chrysler Corporation from 1988-1998, Stephanie Bergeron helped manage the money of a troubled corporation during a turbulent era. Now, after eleven years on Walsh College's board and two years as president, she and her campuses are ready for anything this economy delivers.

Who are your students?
They are adults seeking a business education. They are aged 23 to 55, about half male, most of them with families. The vast majority live within twenty miles of one of our four locations. At the undergraduate level, we teach 1,500 juniors and seniors, so every new admission has an associates degree or better. Our 3,000 graduate students are pursuing one of eight Master's degrees or a doctorate. Their age and gender characteristics are similar to the undergrads.

How do you attract them?
Our primary source is referrals from alums and enrolled students—more than 80 percent of our admissions! I recognized that strength during my first six months on the job here. I would ask people what they've heard about Walsh College, and they would invariably answer, "You're a good school." I followed up with, "How do you know that?". They invariably had a friend, relative or workmate who went to Walsh and got a great education and a very good job. Our enrollment team wrapped campaigns around alumni recruiting.

From your viewpoint, what is the state of undergraduate education in Michigan?
A feast of opportunities. Michigan has many many fine institutions to handle those opportunities. For one reason, more state residents are attending locally rather than leaving Michigan to go to school. In the near future right-priced schools will benefit from consumers looking for more value for their dollar.

What is Walsh College doing about it?
You mentioned price. Our undergraduate tuition is $7,000 per year, $14,000 per degree, priced at $294 per credit hour. Our graduate tuition is about $7,000 per year, $20,000 per degree, priced at $509 per credit hour. As matter of fact, our tuition has risen the least among all types of higher education institutions in Michigan. Accessability, affordability and convenience are what we offer.

How are those offerings resonating with the local population?
The local population is looking for accessibility, affordability and convenience. Interestingly, after they graduate from Walsh they associate value received with their faculty interaction, their classroom experience, the quality and calibre of their student peers, and the support from our career services staff.

How does Walsh College put the student first?
At the front door, admissions and advising, we offer walk-in Wednesday. Come in without an appointment and talk with an advisor. Bring your transcript, official or unofficial, select a degree, build a schedule of next semester's classes, and enroll on the spot. With a few transcript and GPA requirements, we are truly one-stop shopping.

To be continued...
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