Southern Maryland College Fair draws huge crowd

Posted by Dick Myers On 09/21/2016

Dr. Charles Ridgell talks about the college fair with St. Mary's County Board of Education Vice Chair Mary Washington.

Hollywood, MD -- It's kind of like speed dating, but for education. More than 100 colleges and universities were trying to entice potential enrollees. More than 1,600 students and their parents and guardians wanted to know what those schools had to offer.

The 25th Annual Southern Maryland College Fair packed them in as usual at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department. The 105 colleges and universities were from up and down the East Coast from Maine to Florida along with the service academies, according to St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) Director of Student Services Dr. Charles Ridgell, the maestro to the annual event.

Ridgell told the BayNet that students and their parents or guardians come to the college fair to find out about admissions and application policies and financial aid. They often gravitate to the schools that offer the majors or specialties of interest to them. For instance, the son of an old friend of this reporter was looking for schools with TV and Film Production majors. Another was seeking a school with a marching band.

The local schools seemed to attract the most interest. St. Mary's College of Maryland, College of Southern Maryland and the University of Maryland had the largest displays and the longest lines. But other smaller, lesser known schools also attracted their fair share of interest.

Coming all the way from the deep south, a University of Alabama representative said she gets a lot of questions about the school's Number One and undefeated football team. Other smaller schools don't even have athletic programs.

St. Mary's College Director of DeSousa-Brent Scholars Program Dr. F.J. Talley was with other colleagues at their booth. He said the most often asked quested dealt with majors and tuition costs. He said they also wanted to know what the campus looked like. Talley said they encouraged everyone to visit the campus since it was so close by. The Princeton Review recently ranked the St. Mary's College campus the fourth most beautiful in the country.

The college fair is sponsored by SMCPS in collaboration with Calvert County Public Schools, St. Mary's Ryken High School, the College of Southern Maryland and St. Mary's County libraries.

Please take a look at the attached Photo Gallery of the 25th Southern Maryland College Fair.

Contact Dick Myers at dick.myers@thebaynet.com