

Enrollment Professionals: The Centralization Movement and External Influences

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USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

- Founded in 2007 at the University of Southern California
- Center Goals
 - Provide forums that allow scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to share their perspectives and further generate ideas that enhance our understanding of enrollment issues
 - Conduct and sponsor research
 - Enhance the level of professionalism within the enrollment management field
 - Serve as a central hub for information relating to enrollment issues

OVERVIEW

ON THE WEB:

WWW.USC.EDU/CERPP

The screenshot shows the website for the USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice. At the top, the USC logo is in the upper right corner, and the center text reads "UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA" and "CENTER FOR ENROLLMENT RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE". A navigation menu includes "Overview", "Goals", "Staff", "Board Members", and "Contact". The date "February 8, 2010" is displayed in the top right. A main banner features a circular refresh icon and the text "USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice presents: WHAT MATTERS NOW: College Access and Success in the Age of Obama" for a conference on January 13-15, 2010 in Los Angeles, CA. A "CLICK HERE for the Conference Blog" link is provided. A sidebar on the right lists "Podcast Series", "Enroll. Citation Clearinghouse", "Research" (with sub-links for CERPP Sponsored, CERPP Other), "Presentations", "Publications", and "Conferences and Symposia". Below the banner, four columns of content are visible: "ENROLLMENT NEWS" with links to proposals for 2010 AER conferences, early college program help, Massachusetts immigrant tuition, and a symposium on uncertainty; "CENTER CALENDAR" listing events for February 2010 (research grant reports, regional forums in Chicago and San Diego) and March 2010 (summary proceedings, statewide college access conference); "PROFILE OF THE WEEK" featuring Meredith Kelley, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management at California State University, Chico; and a "WEEKLY POLL QUESTION" asking if Obama's education vision is on target, with radio button options and a "VOTE" button. At the bottom, there is a section for "USC's support for the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice", a "Messages from Scholars and Practitioners" form, "CERPP's Partners" (listing NACAC, ASHE, CollegeBoard, and ACT), and a "Follow Us On twitter" button.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- I. Explore the educational and career backgrounds of chief enrollments and chief admission officers
- II. Examine enrollment structures
- III. Study the extent to which market-oriented influences are shaping the practice of enrollment management

METHODOLOGY

- Interview participants were gathered using data from a 2007-08 salary survey of HR representatives at 3,800 institutions conducted by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)
- Institutions self-identified themselves as having a Chief Enrollment Officer (CEnO), Chief Admissions Officer (CAdO), or both

Chief Enrollment Officers defined as:

- Responsible for development of marketing plans for recruitment and retention of students. Also coordinates institutional efforts in admissions, financial aid, records and registration and advising.

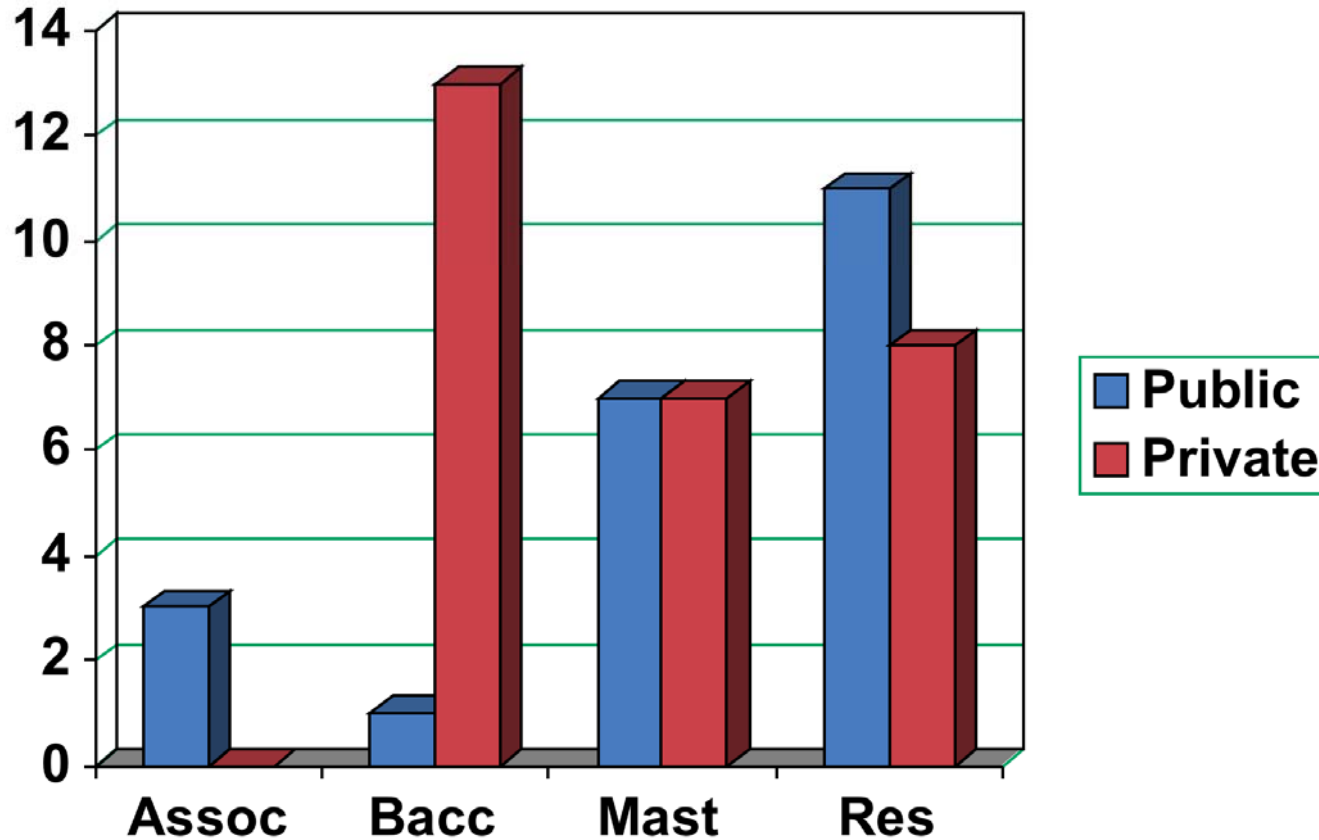
Chief Admissions Officers defined as:

- Responsible for the admission of undergraduates. May also be responsible for recruitment and selection and for the admission of graduate and professional students or for scholarship administration or similar functions.

METHODOLOGY

- Interviews of approximately one hour in length each were conducted in the spring of 2009
- Final set of interview participants (n=52) included in this analysis consisted of:
 - 19 CEnOs (out of 48 volunteers)
 - 17 CAdOs at institutions with CEnOs (out of 32 volunteers)
 - 16 CAdOs at institutions without CEnOs (out of 61 volunteers)
- Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, coded, and themes extracted for analysis

METHODOLOGY



Popular bachelor's degrees

- English, History, Psychology and Business

Popular master's degrees

- Education/HED Administration, College Student Personnel/Counseling, and MBA

Doctoral completion

- 2 CAdOs had completed doctorates
- 5 CEnOs had completed doctorates

None of the doctorates were earned at the enrollment professionals' current institutions

Why do enrollment professionals believe it may be beneficial to earn a doctorate?

- Career stability/advancement
 - Many stated possible presidential aspirations
 - A “status factor”
- Credibility/confidence with subordinates and within the institution
- Theoretical and practical knowledge that can be applied to the position
- Personal gratification

DOCTORATES

For those enrollment professionals without a doctorate, what has prevented them from earning the degree?

- Lack of access to a nearby doctoral program
- Lack of time
- Lack of desire/interest
- Degree not necessary for career advancement/success or lack of desire for career advancement beyond a point requiring a doctorate
- Lack of programs specific to needs of enrollment professionals

ENTERING THE PROFESSION

- How did enrollment professionals initially enter the profession?
 - Recruited
 - Connections made as students
 - Alumni connections
 - Career uncertainty
 - Lack of available jobs in areas of expertise

Building Careers in the Profession

- How do the careers of enrollment professionals evolve?
 - Cosmopolitan approach
 - Local approach
 - Relational approach
 - Network approach
 - Falling into the position due to institutional need

PREPARATION

Attributed to:

- Experience
- Education
- Great mentors – locally and nationally
- Involvement with professional associations
- Work ethic

PREPARATION

Areas of responsibility **CEnOs** commonly not prepared for:

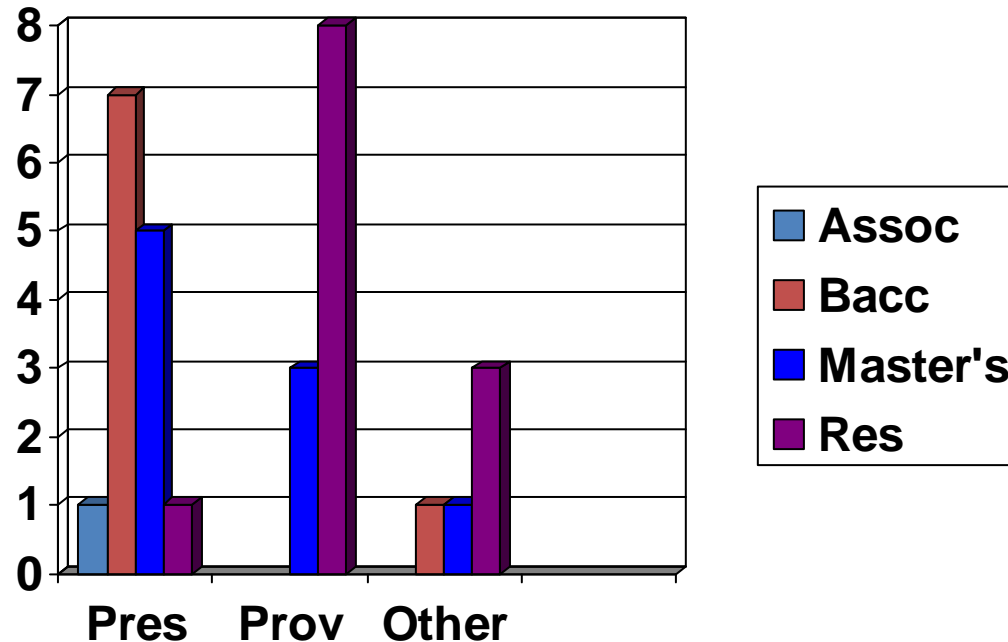
- Personnel issues
- Knowledge of various units within a comprehensive enrollment system
- Budgeting
- Statistical modeling
- Marketing

Looking to Future Professional Development Opportunities

- Knowledge in the following areas would help enrollment professionals become more effective:
 - Best practices and strategies
 - How institutional units in- and outside EM work together
 - National EM public policy trends and how they will affect institutions
 - Marketing
 - How to be politically influential within institutions
 - Government regulations

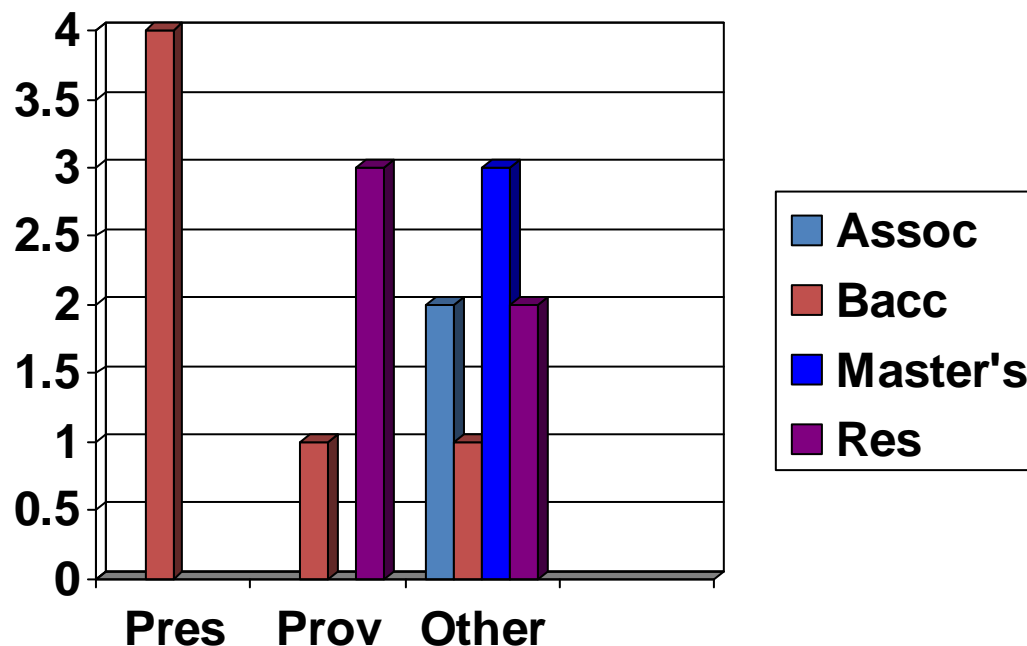
STRUCTURE

Reporting Structure – Institutions with CEnOs



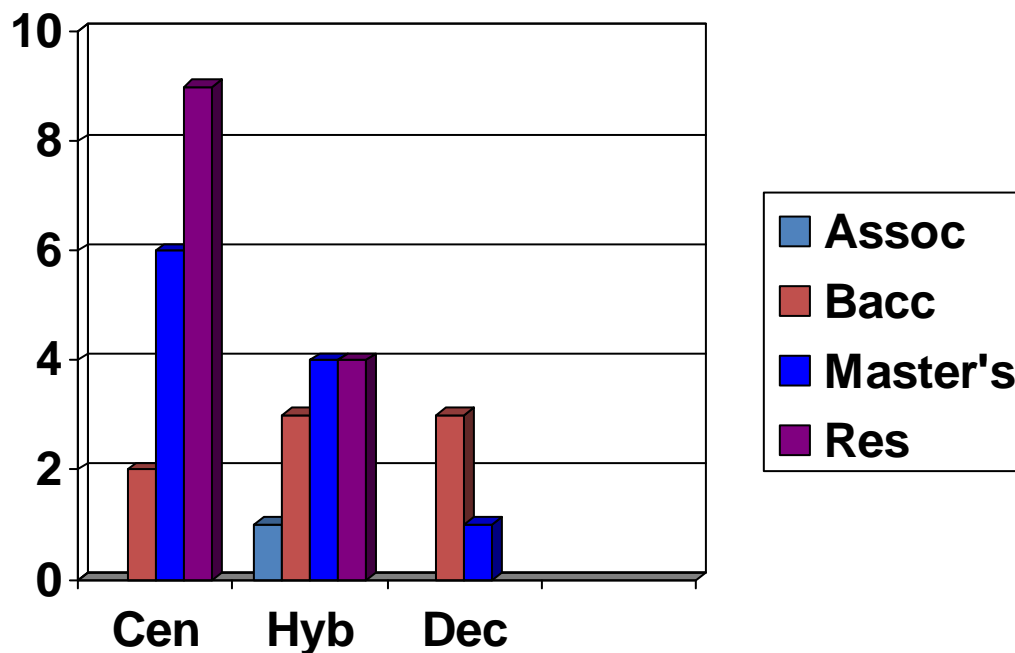
STRUCTURE

Reporting Structure – Institutions with CAdOs only



STRUCTURE

Enrollment Structures at Institutions with CEnOs



ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Centralized Enrollment Systems

- “Core” enrollment units under the oversight of the CEnO
 - All of these CEnOs oversee UG admissions and financial aid
- Many other enrollment related units also under the CEnO
 - About half of these CEnOs oversee graduate admissions and aid
 - 14 of 17 oversee the registrar
 - 7 of 17 oversee marketing and communications
 - 6 of 17 oversee institutional research
 - 6 of 17 are directly responsible for student retention

Centralized Enrollment Systems

- What motivated these institutions to centralize?
 - The need for greater coordination of EM units
 - Because other institutions were centralizing
 - To put enrollment experts in charge of enrollment functions
 - Consultant recommendations
 - New presidents/provosts with an agenda to centralize

ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Centralized Enrollment Systems

- Advantages to centralization
 - A greater capacity to respond to budgetary challenges through enrollment; improved fiscal position for the institution
 - Greater access to internal resources for EM
 - Ease of communication/sharing of data among EM units
 - Effective use of personnel

ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Challenges associated with centralized enrollment models

- Diminished capacity for success if CEnO not at a cabinet level
- Constant need for collaboration/clarity of focus/collective identity to lead a diverse set of units
- Faculty may defer all enrollment responsibilities to the central admin

ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Hybrid Enrollment Systems (moving toward centralization) are characterized as such because:

- Some programs remain historically autonomous with their own admissions processes
- Narrow front-end focus
- Graduate admissions processes often remain uncoordinated
- EM committees have substantial ownership of institutional enrollment priorities
- Functional silos remain
- Physical barriers to centralization

ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Hybrid Enrollment Systems (moving toward centralization)

- Challenges faced by institutions with partial or decentralized enrollment systems headed by CEnOs:
 - Students sometimes not made aware of all of their options/opportunities during the admissions process
 - A lack of oversight over graduate admissions
 - Individual interpretation of each unit's EM role
 - Transfer students can fall through cracks due to credit review and registration delays

ENROLLMENT STRUCTURE

Hybrid Enrollment Systems (moving toward centralization)

- What is preventing greater centralization?
 - Historical belief in departmental autonomy
 - A sense that a less centralized approach is already working
 - Lack of physical space on campus to visibly bring EM units together

Why is a movement toward centralization expected to continue?

- Presidents/Provosts and senior leadership teams committed to centralizing EM units
- New senior personnel from centralized shops bring expectations for centralization to their new positions
- Consultants recommending centralization

“CAdO Only” Systems

- Why do they exist?
 - Historical
 - In response to failed attempts to centralize EM units
- Advantages of this model
 - More buy-in across the institution
 - Checks and balances
 - More collective enrollment management responsibilities

Disadvantages of the “CAdO only” model

- Slow processes and/or progress
- Communication and timing issues
- Conflicting interests lead to collective complications
- Reactionary approach
- Lack of access to resources

“CAAdO Only” Systems

- What makes the model work?
 - A well-articulated and executed enrollment plan
 - A lack of competition
 - Local personnel
- What prevents centralization behind a CEnO?
 - Lack of funds for the position
 - Perception that the current model works
 - Personnel who maintain status quo
 - Concern about “unit crowding”

Themes to Explore: Professional Strategies and Development

- Groups and associations met with/followed regularly:
 - NACAC
 - AACRAO
 - AIR
 - American Marketing Association
 - College Board
 - State consortiums
 - NASFAA
 - USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice
 - ACT

Regular Use of Consultants and/or Vendors

- Virtually every participating institution reported regular use of consultants and/or vendors
- The most common reasons for not using consultants/vendors regularly:
 - Have already sustained growth
 - Have internal capacity for research and policy analysis
 - Limited funds available for consultants and vendors

Themes to Explore: Professional Strategies and Development

In what areas do enrollment professionals utilize consultants/vendors?

- Visibility and marketing
- Financial aid modeling
- Financial aid leveraging – including the matrix awarding process
- Tuition discounting matrices
- Search
- Electronic items
- Publications (includes viewbooks)
- Strategy/Idea generation
- Outreach – including e-mail campaigning
- Registrar functions – including student information systems
- Predictive modeling
- Campus visit experience
- Imaging
- Survey research
- Data analysis
- Branding
- Online applications

Themes to Explore: Professional Strategies and Development

Why turn to consultants/vendors?

- Build internal support by having a third party validate ideas
- Financially advantageous compared to hiring personnel
- Expertise
- Politically easier than trying to expand EM operations
- Lack of staff (already overworked)
- CEnO's lack of familiarity with a unit's responsibilities
- Institutional anonymity while gaining information from students

A Culture of Sharing (or Borrowing)

Where do enrollment professionals look for strategy ideas?

- Consultant firms
- Business resources
- Professional association publications/communique
- Professional association conferences/events
- State coordinating board events
- Research journals
- Online/Published Literature
- Colleagues

A Culture of Sharing (or Borrowing)

- Online advising tool
- One stop model
- Straight cell analysis and model
- YouTube
- Contacting HS counselors directly
- Modifying campus tours
- Recruiting program for seniors who left in good standing
- Grant programs
- Front-loading financial aid awards
- Creating no-loan and loan cap programs
- Parent handbook for parents of first-time freshmen

Additional Observations and Questions

- Enrollment professionals and advanced degree attainment
- Role differences among CAdOs in various enrollment systems
- Less than half of CEnOs mentioned student retention and/or graduation rates as a performance pressure
- What do various reporting structures reveal about institutional priorities?
- How are business values influencing higher education?
- Terminology issues – “enrollment” and “admissions” were often used interchangeably
- How can we improve efforts to prepare future enrollment professionals and meet the anticipated needs of institutions?

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS

Presentation will be available at:
<http://www.usc.edu/cerpp>

Click on: CERPP Presentations

