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A111: Enrollment Management in the 21st Century

The Real Deal or a Fancy Façade?

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Enrollment Management in the 21st Century

The Real Deal or a Fancy Façade?

- How is Enrollment Management (EM) defined?

Enrollment management is an organizational concept and a set of activities designed to enable colleges and universities to exert more influence over their enrollments. Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities concern student college choice, student retention and student outcomes. These processes are studied to guide campus practices in the areas of new student recruitment and financial aid, student support services, curriculum development and other academic areas that effect enrollments, persistence and outcomes.

- Hossler & Bean (The Strategic Management of College Enrollments, 1990)



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“Over the past twenty years.....enrollment management has transformed admissions and financial aid, and in some cases the entire mission of a college or university. At its most advanced, it has a hand in every interaction between a student and a school, from the crafting of a school’s image all the way through to the student's successful graduation.”

- Matthew Quirk, (*Atlantic Monthly*, November, 2005)



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When asked to describe his job as Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services at Indiana University, Bloomington:

“It is my job to manage at the nexus of revenue, prestige, diversity, and access for the campus.”

Don Hossler, Indiana University, Bloomington

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- “[Enrollment Management is] a brilliantly analytical process of screwing the poor kids.....Enrollment managers are ruining American higher education”

George Winston, Professor of Economics, Williams College (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2004)

- “I am deeply troubled by the short-sighted, self-interest focus on revenues and prestige reflected in the enrollment management decisions of many selective admissions 4-year colleges and universities, both private and public.”

Tom Mortenson, *Postsecondary Education Opportunity*, December 2005



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- Since first envisioned by Frank Campanella and Jack Maguire at Boston College in 1976, Enrollment Management has had as many believers as detractors.
- Slavish devotion to the EM creed without understanding context is dangerous; dismissing EM as a cold-hearted corporate model is short-sighted.



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EM in the 21st Century: Small Liberal Arts Colleges

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EM in the 21st Century: Small Liberal Arts Colleges

Semantics or successful?

- Narrow – admissions, recruitment, marketing, net revenue
- Traditional – above, plus enrollment patterns in specific majors, retention programming
- Broad – above plus student life programming, career support, alumni tie-in
- Unfocused – a fancy name for the dean of admissions



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EM in the 21st Century: Small Liberal Arts Colleges

Factors working against EM at small colleges

- A “bureaucratic” organization (EM) is the antithesis of the personal approach.
- “Management” is a term that causes concern among some faculty
- For highly selective colleges: no enrollment crisis
- A liberal arts education IS traditional; EM IS NOT.
- A lack of appreciation for other than short-term admissions benchmarks



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EM in the 21st Century: Small Liberal Arts Colleges

What defines EM “success” at small colleges?

- Number, quality, diversity (racial, socio-economic, geographic) of student body
- Increased selectivity and decreased reliance on discounting
- Achieving or exceeding net revenue goals
- Improvement in retention and graduation rates
- Increase in student satisfaction with academic and student life
- Increased “placement” at top graduate schools and/or employers
- Increased alumni satisfaction, buy-in, and volunteering
- Increased media interest
- Strategic plan benchmarks achieved



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Leadership Requirements at Small Colleges

- Presidents more likely to be involved in institution-wide EM
- CeO and senior officers can mobilize faculty/staff toward recruitment and retention activities
- Develop passion in staff for the centrality of their jobs to the college's mission.
- CeO uses culture of "ownership" among employees as a motivation factor



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Systems Management

- Smaller colleges less likely to have IR offices; also to under-fund them
- Critical to analyze how different recruitment “funnels” are tracking
- IR can build projection models to guide decisions
- IR can answer market questions that will help guide admission/ net revenue, and retention questions which will inform efficient resource allocation



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Process Management

- Easier to manage “touch points” in admissions, financial aid, registration, withdrawals at a small college.
- Small colleges are less complex and less likely to use enrollment/revenue projection models to manage admissions, aid and retention



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The Future of EM at small colleges

Challenges

- Price
- Value
- Visibility
- Outcomes
- Declining endowments and regional demographics



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The Future of EM at small colleges

Strengths

- Product
- Outcomes
- Faculty
- Staff
- Networks



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EM in the 21st Century: Small Liberal Arts Colleges

The Future of EM at small colleges

Focus, focus, focus

- Do not ignore retention, admission and aid application trends, course-taking patterns, alumni support
- Focus on the biggest bang for the buck – recruiting, and aiding the right students
- The “right” students help foster a vibrant learning/living environment which impacts retention
- The “right” students bring outstanding credentials, diversity, and necessary net revenue.
- The “right” students develop an affinity to the college and will give back to make it stronger in the future.
- The “right students” create demand which in turn increases prestige which increases bond ratings which helps the college to better deliver on its mission.



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EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

William T, Conley
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EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

Setting Context

- Complex, multi-divisional institutions
- Enrollment Manager can be buried deep in the organizational chart
- Undergraduate experience not the only show in town
- Meeting multiple enrollment goals within the overall undergraduate target presents challenges to balancing quality, quantity and diversity
- Undergraduate revenue flows into many pots
- Not just competing in the marketplace against other institutions, but on your own campus against other divisions
- Crafting a positioning statement for marketing the undergraduate experience may not always sync with “central” vision



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EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

Foundation Attributes for EM Effectiveness

- Leadership
- Systems Management
- Process Management
- Communication & Measurement



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EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

Leadership

- Lead the leaders through mastery of institutional & national enrollment data & factors/trends influencing college choice & retention
- Lead the followers through moral suasion and authority (when needed)
- Motivate and collaborate
- Recognize your blind spots
- Hire the best

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Systems Management

- Know your Student Information System (SIS)
- Enjoy data analysis; hone interpretation skills
- Be educated on research design and statistics
- Grasp how SIS captures and moves data along the recruitment to graduation continuum
- Be aware of institutional data limitations and how to supplement with external resources

EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

Process Management

- Be able to design, achieve buy-in, and lead an institution-wide strategic enrollment management plan
- Build and/or use enrollment projection models at each stage of the enrollment process (from suspect to prospect and enroll to graduation)
- Identify critical intervention strategies when original plan assumptions go awry



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EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

Communication & Measurement

- Be the Pied Piper of your Plan
- Don't become isolated from the marketplace
- Obsess on the details: student service across all dimensions
- Grasp the power of social media and traditional media
- You can't improve what you don't measure

EM in the 21st Century: Private Research Universities

An Effective Enrollment Plan Is:

- Linked with the institution's overall strategic plan
- Data driven, analytical, and artistic
- Comprehensive, engaging: enrollment, positioning & budgeting strategies
- Being "at the table" across the institution
- Not dependent on a single organizational model



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EM in the 21st Century: Public Flagship Universities

Pam Horne

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EM in the 21st Century: Public Flagship Universities

It All Starts with Mission

- Institutional history and present day place in higher education
- Current strategic plan, goals, objectives – and yes, ambitions
- Revenue, size and mix of student body to match mission and institution's resources
- Typical functions include at minimum admissions, financial aid and registrar – often also include bursar/student accounts, retention and student success programs, pre-college outreach, learning communities and freshman year experience, student information systems, institutional research and reporting



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EM in the 21st Century: Public Flagship Universities

Both an Art and a Science

- Data, data and more data – to analyze, synthesize, communicate and to inform decision-making and strategy
- Technology critical for both operations and communications
- Integrated marketing
- Deep passion for education – even if at higher levels student contact is limited
- On-campus relationships critical and challenging due to size, complexity and specialization
- Collaborative gathering of information and, where possible, for decision-making
- High tolerance for ambiguity and calculated risk imperative

EM in the 21st Century: Public Flagship Universities

Givens

- Highly visible scoreboard and some degree of vulnerability
- Lots will say “wow, I wouldn’t want your job” – but many will not hesitate to tell you how to do it
- Have to know your place in the hierarchy, but also have positive relationships with Board, President, Provost and Deans – the latter particularly important at Research 1 institutions
- Will likely deal with constant turnover in all of the above positions – so relationship-building and educating others about EM is on-going
- As a public institution, also have to be aware of and sometimes manage politics and public policy within your state
- Technology and processes that “take work out of the system” are critical due to volume of transactions and increasingly high service expectations



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Strategic Enrollment Goals

- Not dissimilar from many private institutions – but on a larger scale
- Enrollment numbers, academic profile, diversity, etc.
- Balancing the financial aid budget
- Residency also has to be managed politically, financially and with differential yield rates in admission modeling
- In many cases, admission is to program or college within the university – adding further complexity to modeling and to achieving overall goals
- Total enrollment important – including mix of undergraduate, professional, masters-level and doctoral-level



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EM in the 21st Century: Public Flagship Universities

Flagship EM Challenges in the 21st Century

- Need for additional tuition revenue in context of shrinking state support
- Hence trend toward more nonresidents, but very little need-based aid for same and challenging demographic trends for mobility across state lines
- State laws against use of race and gender in admissions and scholarship decisions
- Other state and political intrusions in academic policy and practice
- Incessant demands for data and research to inform policy and practice (or just to satisfy someone's curiosity!)
- Rising international enrollments
- Doing more with less – shrinking departmental budgets but increased demands
- Balance within financial aid budget – need vs. merit



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Flagship EM Joys in 21st Century

- Technology is catching up to our needs for streamlining processes and personalizing recruitment
- Public flagships are affordable and accessible to in-state low-income students; can actively recruit and enroll these students in large numbers
- With the constant pressure comes great recognition within the university of the importance of EM
- Opportunity to become involved with fund-raising for financial aid
- As freshman admission becomes more selective, transfer becomes more important – meaningful relationships with community colleges
- Meaningful involvement in state educational policy and programs
- High visibility and contact with the media Consortia and cooperation among similar institutions, even though we compete



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