Strategies for Increasing Enrollment: Understanding How the Business Officer Can Impact the Revenue Factor

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Shifting Efficiencies: Revenue

- Excellent business managers understand the importance of improving expenditure efficiencies.
- This course looks at the revenue side by focusing on how to maximize student enrollments.
- The participant will learn about leading concepts and strategies used to attract and retain students.
- This session shows how business officer can be an important decision maker in the development of successful enrollment strategies.
- Course participants will assess their college's institutional enrollment management effectiveness; and
- subsequently learn “best practices” that will generate stronger enrollment revenue.
Why is Enrollment Management Important?

“Enrollment management was a logical response for higher education when suddenly the marketplace changed from seller to buyer and admissions directors transitioned from gatekeepers to salesmen.

Simply stated, it was all in the numbers.”

“Enrollment Management Grows Up,” University Business.com, May 2006, pg. 80 – 84
Why Business Managers?

The business office has become less a “spectator” in the enrollment management process—marketing, recruiting and student retention.

Leaders who are able to quantify their assessment of institutional effectiveness understand the importance of locating and funding “high impact” functional areas.

It is through the ability to identify and effectively redirect discretionary funds that fiscal managers are becoming involved in the allocation of resources to high impact enrollment management areas.
Why the Business Office Becomes Engaged with EM

• Research – understands numbers and how to measure accountability.
• Funding/budgeting – understands the need to find high impact program areas.
• Strategic Planning – willing to make tough decisions to shift funds from institutional weaknesses to strengths.
• Evolving from “bean counter” image to educator with a fiscal specialty—i.e., maximize student outcomes.
And finally…

The 21st Century fiscal leader must make a shift by shifting the focus from expenditure controls towards…

emphasizing activities that impact revenue.
Issues Impacting Higher Ed Enrollments

• The unprecedented growth that higher education experienced after WWII has been coming to a predictable end.
• A decline in the number of children of “baby-boomers”—national decline in high school graduates beginning 2012.
• Costs—real or perceived—are reaching prohibitive levels at a time when traditional support from federal and state resources were staying flat, at best.
Issues Impacting Higher Ed Enrollments (cont.)

• The emergence of the for-profit sector (17% increase in enrollment during previous ten years)

• Enrollment statistics have become the “bellwether”—indicator of institutional effectiveness.
  – U.S. World Report
  – DOE – Accreditation = student learning outcomes
  – National measurements of effectiveness
What is Enrollment Management?

Basic components:

• Recruiting
• Funding
• Tracking
• Retaining
• Replacing students
YOUR COLLEGE’S EFFECTIVENESS TEST

Twenty Step Self Diagnostic Test of Your College’s Enrollment Management Program

1= weak  2= poor  3= good (or you don’t know) 4= great  5= you didn’t need to take this course
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Recruiting--Marketing & Outreach Checklist

Step #1 Marketing Brochures
Step #2 Message Effectiveness
Step #3 Web Site Ease and Clarity
Marketing & Outreach

The purpose of this assessment is to determine how well the college conveys its message and whether it has coordinated (efficient) the cross-campus recruitment efforts.

Misrepresenting the college to prospective students is the first potential reason a student will become disillusioned and decide to leave.
Marketing Strategies

• Students shop on the web—virtual messages capture or turn off prospective younger students.

• Print mode remains effective for the adult learner.

• Identify lead recruiting messages through market research and then develop promotional materials around identified themes.
Data and Information

• Develop a weekly admissions report:
  – Inquiries and prospects (cards; PSAT; campus visits; catalogs; etc.)
  – Pre application (FAFSA # of apps; transcripts # of apps)
  – Applications submitted
  – Admissions without completed financial aid
  – Enrolled and attended—yield

• Data by market segment—high school, transfer, adult returning, demographics, etc.
Marketing Strategies

Indicator: Decline in yield, percent of students enrolling as compared to admitted...

Focus:
• Price sensitivity (Admissions & Fin Aid)
• Lack of connecting activities after student is admitted
• Soft admissions—not serious or primary choice; false application; financial aid not completed, etc.
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Recruiting--Continued

Step #4: Recruiters Effectiveness
• Allocates resources to maximize returns

Step #5: Institutional Research
• Uses research to identify viable target populations

Step #6: Cross Campus Coordination
• Coordinates cross-campus recruitment efforts

Step #7: Campus Visits
• 64% of students select campus after first visit
• Incorporates alumni, faculty, corporate interests, students and other stake holders that understand and support the college’s message
Recruiting Strategies

Indicator: If demand, inquiries and applications, is in a decline...

Focus

• Admissions and Marketing need to determine message effectiveness
• Admission’s recruiters need to be held accountable
• Assessment of source enrollments need to be examined—e.g., high school, adult, program…
• Identification of trend by type of student
Guiding Principles for Recruiting

• Don’t waste time on nonproductive market sectors.
• Learn to identify high profile opportunities to redirect “discretionary” time and resources.
• Sell an objective, then deliver the results—for-profit sector understands this perfectly.
• Close the deal early, then focus on keeping the prospect out of the market.
• Recruit your real customers—e.g., families, spouses, employers, etc.
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Funding--Financial Aid

Step #8: Aid Formula

Effective utilization of institutional funds (not Title V) for awarding merit aid is becoming a strong determinant in the recruitment process.
Financial Aid

• Are institutional funds shifted from need based awarding methodology to merit or discounting tuition strategies?
• Are nontuition awards (e.g., dorm space) considered in the awarding process?
• Are other than merit scholars considered in the awarding process—2.5 to 3.0 GPA?
• Is financial aid used as a recruiting tool or just a reward for showing up?
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Retention--Admissions

Step #9: Identifying “At Risk” Students

Only one in two students graduate within five years—55% national trend; 42% minority students.

Only one in four students make it past the first year of college, and most of that group have decided they can’t make it by the fifth week of the first semester.

This becomes even more baffling when we note that academic success cannot be predicted by ACT/SAT scores—excluding high school GPA & class ranking.
Enrollment Management Guiding Principles for Retaining Students

1. Effective programs focus on identifying “at risk” students before they attend classes.

2. Successful retention programs utilize proactive intervention environments.

3. Students will usually succeed if they are successfully incorporated into the academic and social programs during their first-year.

4. Many successful retention programs are faculty driven.

5. Success is measurable—both processes and end result.

6. Students must believe in their ability to achieve their goal(s) in a timely manner—e.g., milestone events, achievement recognition (pins), peer support....
1. Effective programs focus on identifying “at risk” students before they attend classes.

- Understand the difference between admitted and “at risk”—i.e., educational Darwinism vs. obligation to help student succeed
- Vice President in charge of all enrollment management—institutional emphasis on student success
- Understand the “at risk” profile (as determined by previous students—e.g., expected decline in first-year GPA; high school GPA or class ranking; placement scores; number of credits enrolled; behavior profile; etc.)
2. Successful retention programs utilize proactive intervention environments.

- Special programs for “at-risk” students
- Strategies for early identification and proactive intervention—e.g., attendance; resident counselors; faculty quiz results
- Philosophical Issues:
  - Counselors are available for student drop in vs. focus on students with need; or
  - Counseling and special programs are for all students, or just high risk?
3. Students will usually succeed if they are successfully incorporated into the academic and social programs during their first-year.

- First-year experience
- One-stop Centers (facilitates problem solving)
- Family orientation
4. Many successful retention programs are faculty driven.

- Faculty mentoring programs (Community Learning Groups)
- Mandatory daily attendance (on-line) with faculty follow-up
- Alumni mentoring
- Summer internships
5. Success is measurable—both processes and end result.

- Understanding the need to profile risk factors
- Regular review of success statistics
- Division, program, course, instructor success indicators
- Exit interviews with follow-up procedures—determine the real reason, look for patterns, check the academic record, ask the hard questions
6. Students must believe they can achieve their goal(s) in a timely manner—e.g., milestone events, achievement recognition (pins), peer support....

- On-line advising and degree planning
- Career placement counseling early—first year
- Declare degree early—mixed beliefs and concerns
- Special recognition programs (honors; special guides, etc.)
- Milestone recognition events—before graduation
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Advising & Placement

Effective retention processes are usually a function of how proactive the academic advising efforts are for the incoming students—freshmen and transfer.
Retention--Advising & Placement

Step #10: Identifying “At Risk” Students
• High school GPA or ranking
• Placement testing

Step #11: Timely Remediation
• Special steps and programs to work with at-risk students before they get into difficulty – 3rd week
• Front load services and programs for students who fit the dropout profile—even before they know they need it

Step #12: Early Warning Processes
• How proactive are student advisors?

Step #13: Special Student Advising
• Retention isn’t just about remediation
• Honors, international students, band, athletic—keeping them engaged and meeting unique needs
Identifying “At Risk” Students

Indicator: If attrition, student persistence, is a continuing problem, then institutional research is needed to identify what barriers prevent student success…

Focus:
• Patterns of at-risk students either at entry level or while enrolled.
• Establishing effective intervention programs to help remove barriers to success becomes a critical component of the enrollment management strategy.
Nontraditional Student Programs

• Step #14: Transfer Students

• Step #15: Weekend & Evening Students
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Nontraditional Student Programs

Many colleges are experiencing growth in the nontraditional student area, and the definition of “nontraditional student” is also changing. This is an area that the for-profit sector understands well—

• fast track programs;
• on-time graduation;
• cohort support systems;
• effective employment placement and transfer;
• relevant career (e.g., internships) training;
• course offerings at time of student need vs. convenience.
Nontraditional & Transfer Students Strategies

Indicator: If statistics indicate that students are not completing degree plans, then...

Focus:

• Review curriculum to verify that students graduate on time

• Assess services to verify timely and comprehensive services are provided—e.g., time to degree, equivalency guides, articulation agreements, 2+2 programs, internships, placement success rates, accessible degree plan (automated)…
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Career Counseling

Determine if the college’s programs support early and effective career counseling to provide incentives for all students to remain in college—e.g., summer internships; career mentors (alumni); vocational field trips…

Step #16: Integrated Advising
- Early career advising is more effective than degree declaration
- Require career counseling for undeclared majors
- Typical student changes majors three times before the junior year

Step #17: Alumni Interface
- Career mentors
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Process Friendly Environment

Step #18: Process Steps

Learning to navigate
The confusing college campus environment can be a daunting experience that results in delayed requests for assistance—processes and locations (e.g., “Bursar’s Office” vs. Student “One-stop”)

Step #18: Process Steps

Process Friendly Environment

Empower staff to reduce student run-around by examining outdated policies and procedures for eliminating unnecessary steps.
Student Life
Step #19: Student Development Efforts

• An active and meaningful campus calendar is important for establishing student connections and desire to stay on campus and engaged—social and special needs of the weekend, off-hours and commuting students.

• Faculty contact
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Retention planning efforts must be data driven

This is an assessment of the college’s ability to provide timely and relevant retention information. These research standards are mentioned and assessed at various points of the diagnostic review and steps #1 through #20.
Enrollment Management Self Assessment

Step #20  Institutional Research

• Establish a college-wide research and effectiveness agenda

• Define desired overall growth that ill come from new student enrollment vs. improvements in student retention

• Develop both an annual and strategic (3-5 year) enrollment management plan
  – Measurable goals and strategies, not just a list of activities
Institutional Research

Step #20 Monitoring Institutional “Kick Points”

• Characteristics of “at risk” students
• Adequacy of placement testing
• Effectiveness of remedial courses (math and writing)
• Retention of traditional and nontraditional students
• Identification of “gate keeping” instructors
Institutional Research (cont.)

- Track persistence by subgroup, term…
- Progression (drops, alerts, major changes, advisor changes)
- Retention (fall-to-fall)
- Completion (graduation, goal attainment)
- Develop a non-persisters profile (who are they?)
Add Your Score

90 to 100 = strong growth potential
65 to 89 = will not grow, may hold but just barely
45 to 65 = average (watch your enrollment drop)
35 to 45 = times are going to be tough; time to look for a new job
Less than 35 = are you still working there?
Extra Credit

How many programs are in place at your institution?

✓ Community Learning Groups
✓ First-year experience
✓ Faculty mentoring programs
✓ Alumni mentoring
✓ Summer internships
✓ Milestone recognition events—before graduation
✓ Exit interviews with follow-up procedures
✓ Division, program, course, instructor success indicators
✓ Regular review of success statistics
✓ Vice President in charge of all enrollment management
✓ One-stop Centers
✓ On-line advising and degree planning
✓ Family orientation
✓ Special programs for “at-risk” students
✓ Mandatory daily attendance (on-line) with faculty follow-up
Change!

Enrollment management almost always means change. Status quo operations, reporting structures, definitions of success, goals and objectives typically change as the dynamics of new market and delivery demands occur.
Conclusion

The challenges and risks of strengthening organizational responses to student needs and new performance criteria cannot be underestimated.

Those institutions with leadership capable of understanding and willing to take the risk towards implementing necessary changes, will move ahead of the competition, and survive.
QUESTIONS???
Thank You