Editor's Note

Tom C. Green

This issue of *SEM Quarterly* continues our series by female SEM leaders. Across Volume 6 of *SEMQ*, we are featuring the lessons learned by some of the leading SEM executives in North America, all of whom are women. For many years, women have been underrepresented in executive roles. While this is changing, there is still much work to be done before we achieve gender equity in the C-Suite of SEM. This month, Jody Gordon, a pioneer in SEM in British Columbia, shares five insights on leadership from her stellar career across several colleges and universities in her home province. This issue also features case studies and research articles by women in the profession. While a few men made the issue, we are proud to publish the contributions of so many women to our field.

Volume 6, Issue 3 continues with a field case by another female SEM leader, Diane Walleser of Borough of Manhattan Commu-

nity College (BMCC). Dr. Walleser is a recipient of the SEM Award of Excellence and has served several large community colleges in the United States. Her case study examines change management, one of the most important and under-researched areas of SEM. As one of AACRAO's Core Competencies for SEM, this is an area that enrollment leaders must master, often through trial and error. Walleser's contribution here is significant in growing our understanding of how change management applies to our profession.

Following this theme of culture and change, Irlanda Price and Brier Albano examine techniques to encourage participation in the SEM planning process. This is perhaps the most discussed area of SEM planning, as many enrollment leaders struggle to gain the participation and buy-in of academic colleagues. We know that getting them on board is essential to the successful implementation of any SEM plan yet we seem to speak different languages when it comes to the SEM planning process.

Price and Albano provide practical advice for anyone writing or revising a SEM plan.

Because academic partnerships in SEM are so vital to its success, we offer not one but two research articles on this topic in this issue. Dr. Jason Trainer, formerly of the University of North Dakota, shares his qualitative research on a dual-level approach to establishing a "shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes." This is another and likely more elegant way of discussing "faculty buy-in" for SEM. His article is the result of a study he conducted on faculty partners in his previous institution, and the resulting insights will help enrollment managers better understand their faculty colleagues' point of view on enrollment issues.
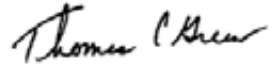
Volume 6, Issue 3 offers a fifth article. Our new format allows us greater flexibility in the number of articles we can provide, so consider this a "bonus" article in more ways than one. Four stars of our profession, Dr. Jerry Lucido, Dean of the Rossier School of Educa-

tion at USC, Dr. Don Hossler, currently teaching at USC in his "retirement" (his academic and research credits are far too long for this sentence), Dr. Katie O'Dowd, Project Director at WPS-Educational and Psychological Assessments (and former director of Rossier's Ph.D. program and enrollment research), and Dr. Robert Massa, former SEMO at Johns Hopkins, among other stops in his long and distinguished career, offer their research on a professional body of knowledge for our nascent SEM profession. Perhaps we are now advancing beyond what Stan Henderson called "the brink of a profession" to a nascent one in their eyes. Their research aligns with AACRAO's work on competencies and proficiencies, and offers deeper insights into these areas. Besides, this all-star team could write out the Los Angeles phone book, and I would probably read it. We are grateful for their ongoing research and contributions to our developing field.

Here's to your reading pleasure and continued intellectual growth,

Thomas C. Green

Leading within a SEM Environment: Five Lessons Learned

By Jody Gordon

Over the span of my career, I have read many books on leadership. At no time did it ever occur to me that someday I would be asked to offer my own reflections on leadership. Why? Well, because I agree with Sundborg (2018), who states:

> [L]eadership is one of the most personal of realities that tests and shapes us, makes us vulnerable and self-possessed, puts us in hundreds of enriching and challenging relationships and deepens our humanity. It is not easy to write about leadership because it is so personal and particular to the individual person (107).

But write I will. I will share some lessons learned over my 30-year career (I really did start as a 20-year-old). I certainly learned many more than five lessons, but these shaped my career the most.

One of the most important leadership lessons of my career happened when I was a young manager just 25 years old. The lesson came in the form of a cartoon: A young boy is handing his father his report card, and his grades amount to no more than a high of C with several Fs. The look on the father's face is one of shock and disappointment, but the son simply says, "I don't have to be smart, because someday I'll just hire lots of smart people to work for me." Effective leaders recognize very early in their careers their strengths as well as their shortcomings. When they do, they park their egos at the door and hire those who possess skills they

simply do not have. The risk is that these direct reports may outshine their leader; the reward is that they may outshine their leader. Herein lies the first of five lessons I learned about effective strategic enrollment management (SEM) leadership: Surround yourself with a strong team. The other four lessons are "count everything that moves"; "be the best salesperson ever"; "students first, always"; and "have courage with a splash of great wine."

Simply the Best, Better Than All the Rest…

As I reflect on the many years I have had the privilege of supporting students within student affairs/student services, it is hard to believe that it all began when I was a 20-year-old residence assistant and peer student advisor. I was incredibly appreciative to have received these well-paying student positions on campus. I was, after all, your typical starving student with student loans. But more important, I was humbled that someone with much more experience than I thought I could provide something valuable to first-year students. This experience shaped my career immensely. Helping other students navigate their journeys in higher education is rewarding work. In addition to teaching undergraduate criminology students, supporting students' learning outside of the classroom has been the focus of my career for almost 30 years. Clearly, I could not do it alone.

I was just 25 years old when I was promoted to a managerial role at a university. That experience taught me a lot. I knew nothing about leading and supporting others (all of whom were senior to me in age and work experience). And while I would like to tell you a wonderful story of a supervisor who mentored me in those early days, that is not at all what happened. Instead, my supervisor was an insecure leader with a temper. What I did learn in those early days was what not to do as a leader. I recognized that I could not manage this alone; I needed those around me to feel included and supported in order to provide the requisite services to students. I needed them, and what they needed from me was to feel supported and, most important, to be shielded from the wrath of an angry senior manager. Eventually I left this position, but not before I saw the power of surrounding myself with skillful people.

At the very heart of a SEM-aware institution is an understanding that student success is a community effort. A student's experience is not driven exclusively by what top leaders do. Everyone must be SEM ready if students are to be successful: Every hire is critical to positively influencing a student's learning in and out of the classroom. As Kerlin (2008) states:

> [Strategic] enrollment management is a comprehensive and coordinated process that enables a college to identify enrollment goals that are allied with its mission, its strategic plan, its environment, and its resources and to reach those goals through the effective integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum planning, and market analysis (11).

During a SEM plan "roadshow" at one university I worked at, departments including Human Resource Management, Facilities, and Institutional Technology wondered what their roles had to do with SEM and student success. A deeper understanding of what an "effective integration of administrative processes" really means for student success helps clarify why what they do matters and why who we surround ourselves with as leaders matters greatly to achieving our institutional mission. With every hire, I still ask myself, "How will this candidate further the success of our students?"

While we don't get it right every time, when we do, the impact on student success is powerful.

With whom we surround ourselves is not limited to whom we hire. We also can surround ourselves with great colleagues. As Bing (2000) says, "Don't try to do it without pals" (21). While it has always meant more work, I have tried to involve myself in projects and governance bodies within our profession at a provincial level (for those in the United States, the state level) as well as at the national level. I am fortunate to be surrounded by many skillful colleagues from whom to learn and with whom to share expertise and ideas. And if you are lucky, one of those amazing colleagues could someday become your great supervisor. Managing up is just as important as supervising your team. Don't forget to care for and feed your boss, too. With any luck, they are part of the great team with which you get to surround yourself.

Count Everything That Moves

Skillful leaders know that an evidence-rich environment is critical to sound decision making.

As Bing (2000) so aptly states, "Princes who fail to sweat even the tiniest numbers tend to pay for it later" (129). Data are the very foundation upon which all SEM plans ought to be built. According to Harrington, Hoffhehr, and Reid (1998):

> Numbers help you answer the three basic questions concerning every decision: (1) Am I getting the results I want? (2) Is there too much variation in the results I get? and (3) Are the results I get stable over time (xvi).

In a student affairs context, this means asking such questions as "How do I know what impact those programs...have on student learning, retention, and overall success?" (Bingham and Bureau 2015, 9). In a SEM-ready environment where student success is the ultimate goal, we are required to lead through assessment and data analysis in all that we do. When preparing a university SEM plan, I ask the institutional research office to literally "count everything that moves." One example is a plan that now reflects almost 20 pages of data analysis and allowed that university to put urban legends to rest;

it also confirmed some gaps in their knowledge that they could now fill.

Data analysis of institutional programs and services is a must. No new service or program should ever be offered without first asking how its impact on student success will be determined. In other words, how will we ensure that we are doing no harm but rather furthering students' success? What data needs to be collected and analyzed in order to answer this question? As leaders, it is our job to ensure that data analysis is occurring throughout the division and that a culture of evidence-based decision making is being instilled among our team. For effective decision making to occur, "analysis will have to be a broad capability of employees, rather than the province of a few 'rocket scientists' with quantitative expertise" (Davenport and Harris 2007, 16). This certainly can be taught, but if you make it a priority in hiring for certain positions within your division, then you will continue to surround yourself with skillful people (lesson number one). Yet keeping these rich data analyses to ourselves is not how we sing praises of student success.

Being the Best Salesperson Ever

An African proverb says, "As the water hole shrinks, the animals look at each other differently." As higher education began to experience fiscal challenges (as a result of decreasing enrollments, reduced government funding, and frozen student tuition), student affairs/services found itself under attack. "Under attack" may be strong language, but many student affairs/services divisions had their budgets slashed, and senior leaders were let go in favor of amalgamating the division under another vice president or in some cases under a less experienced person. In my province, for example, I was one of just a small number of vice presidents overseeing a stand-alone student affairs/services division; most report to either the provost or the vice president for administration. As Bresciani (2012) reminds us, "Student affairs makes a unique institutional contribution that requires specific educational and professional preparation" (1). Or in the words of a former university president with whom I worked, "it is imperative to have the 'voice of the student' at the senior leadership table."

This shrinking water hole did, however, force many student affairs/services division leaders to take action in a way we never had before. First, as leaders we became much more aware of the ongoing need to evaluate and disseminate the results of the impact of our programs and services on student success (lesson number two: data analysis); second, we began to seek out external funding sources through sponsors and organizations looking to support youth leadership and development in the broader community. Being reliant on external funding organizations made it critical to demonstrate an ROI and so reinforced the need to evaluate and share the results of programmatic and service impact on student success (again, lesson number two).

In order to stave off further funding cuts and/or to acquire and maintain external funding sources, leaders in student affairs/services have had to become skilled at telling the story of student learning and student success. When that story is tied to ensuring that the institution is meeting its strategic enrollment management goals, the impact on budgetary decisions can be powerful. Effective story-telling can only occur in a data-rich environment (again, lesson two). Without data, you are just another leader with an opinion—or, worse, an opinion based solely on anecdotal information.

In Keeling's (2004) pinnacle work, *Learning Reconsidered*, student affairs is viewed as "integral to the learning process because of the opportunities it provides students to learn through action, contemplation, reflection, and emotional engagement as well as information acquisition" (12). While we are humble leaders, we should be anything but that when it comes to sharing the impact of our division on student success. After all, student success is paramount to all that we do as a college/university.

We should not, however, confuse data with information. "*Data* are what we 'process'; *information* is our output" (Chrisakis and Demeter 2015, 124). Find ways to disseminate information about the impact of what you do. Don't be shy in asking to be on agendas for various meetings where other decision leaders are present; better yet, bring some of your students along to tell that story for you. The most impactful way to share the

successes of your division is through the words of your students. This brings me to my fourth lesson learned.

Students First, Always!

To use a less violent analogy, putting students first is a mountain I am always willing to climb. Several years ago, I was faced with the difficult task of needing to evolve a very expensive, boutique, single-subject-focused, student learning support service by expanding its reach to a full-fledged, comprehensive, multi-subject offering of student learning support. This meant changing the roles of current staff (but thankfully did not mean staff layoffs). We had the data necessary to support this decision, but as we began to roll out the changes, an outcry from a small group of individuals made the environment for change very tense (a petition was started, public protests occurred, and meetings were disrupted). But we knew these changes were best for students, and we never lost sight of the main reason we were making them: student success. This took courage, conviction, and an unwavering commitment to students first, always.

In rare cases, always putting students first can mean the difference between life and death. I had the pleasure of working with a strong student leader at one university. Tragically, she became a victim of a violent sexual assault. I did everything I could to support her, including checking in on her regularly and ensuring she was getting the professional support she needed. Months later, she disclosed that when one such call had been made by me, she was seriously contemplating suicide. That call of concern was just enough to prevent that fatal act. Her story grounds me in the work I continue to do to support and engage our students. But some days it can be challenging, and our commitment to our profession is tested. This brings me to the fifth leadership lesson learned.

Courage With a Splash of Wine

There were some days when I was unsure whether I was the vice president, students or the vice president of responding to litigious behavior. Human rights complaints, lawsuits, privacy requests, harassment complaints, police investigations into criminal activity, *etc*... all leave us feeling a little weary and wondering if this is what we signed up for. Student affairs/services has become very complicated, but the joys are still plentiful. We must not lose sight of the latter. When in doubt, ask yourself what courageous decisions you have made that resulted in powerful change for your students.

We must have the courage to make bold decisions. This can be daunting, so sometimes we go home at night and indulge in a glass of wine. The point is to not just do what makes you happy at work but to also do what makes you happy outside of work. Travel, sports, fitness, watching great movies, reading a wonderful book—the key is to have some fun. You don't have to be a courageous leader *all* of the time.

Final Thoughts

As Bontrager (2004) reminds us, "Strategic enrollment management (SEM) is a concept and process that enables the fulfillment of institutional mission and students' educational goal" (12). I would add that without strong leadership, it is not possible to fulfill the institutional mission or for students to achieve their educational goals. The five lessons learned—surrounding yourself with a strong team; encouraging a data-rich environment; being the best salesperson of student success; ensuring that students come first, always; and finally, having the courage to make difficult decisions—have shaped my career and who I am as a leader today. SEM is the canvas on which I paint my personal picture of leadership every day. It has been far from perfect (I tend to stray outside of the lines), but it has been colorful and rich.

About the Authors

Jody Gordon

Jody Gordon currently serves as a Senior Consultant for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, a non-profit organization in the United States who is a leader in strategic enrollment management and admissions and registrarial services. Previously, Ms. Gordon served as the Vice President, Students and Enrollment Management, at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), Abbotsford, B.C., Canada, and prior to this she held the position of Associate Vice President, Students at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), Surrey, B.C., Canada. Ms. Gordon has worked in postsecondary education since 1992, beginning her career at Simon Fraser University before joining KPU in 1998 and UFV in 2012. She has held progressively responsible positions as an Academic Advisor, Associate Director of Advising and Enrollment Services, Registrar and Chief Student Affairs Officer. In addition to Ms. Gordon's administrator roles, she has taught first-year criminology students. Her broad experience in the classroom, in enrollment services, and in student affairs has allowed her to lead universities in developing such retention initiatives as an Early Alert Referral system, Academic Boost camps for at risk students, a behavioral intervention team, peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring and sexualized violence policy and prevention/education awareness programming.

Ms. Gordon completed a First Class Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in 1992 and a Master of Arts degree in 1996 from Simon Fraser University. She was selected as the recipient of the 2009 Strategic Enrollment Management Award of Excellence in the Canadian Institutions category, an award co-sponsored by AACRAO and Education Systems Inc. Ms. Gordon presents regularly at higher education conferences across North America and has published articles on such topics as enrollment management, student success initiatives, the mobile transfer student, and leadership in higher education.

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Managing Change in a New Enrollment Management Culture

By Diane K. Walleser

SEM leaders continually challenge their teams and institutions to implement changes to student systems and processes. Often, these efforts do not go as planned. As institutions scramble to increase enrollments, streamline workflows, and improve the student experience, their success depends on their ability to manage organizational change in the midst of complex cultures. Flanigan (2016) found that leadership and culture impact the effectiveness of SEM organizations and that leadership behavior has the ability to significantly influence SEM and organizational cultures. This article describes how culture and leadership impacted my own work in launching a new enrollment management division.
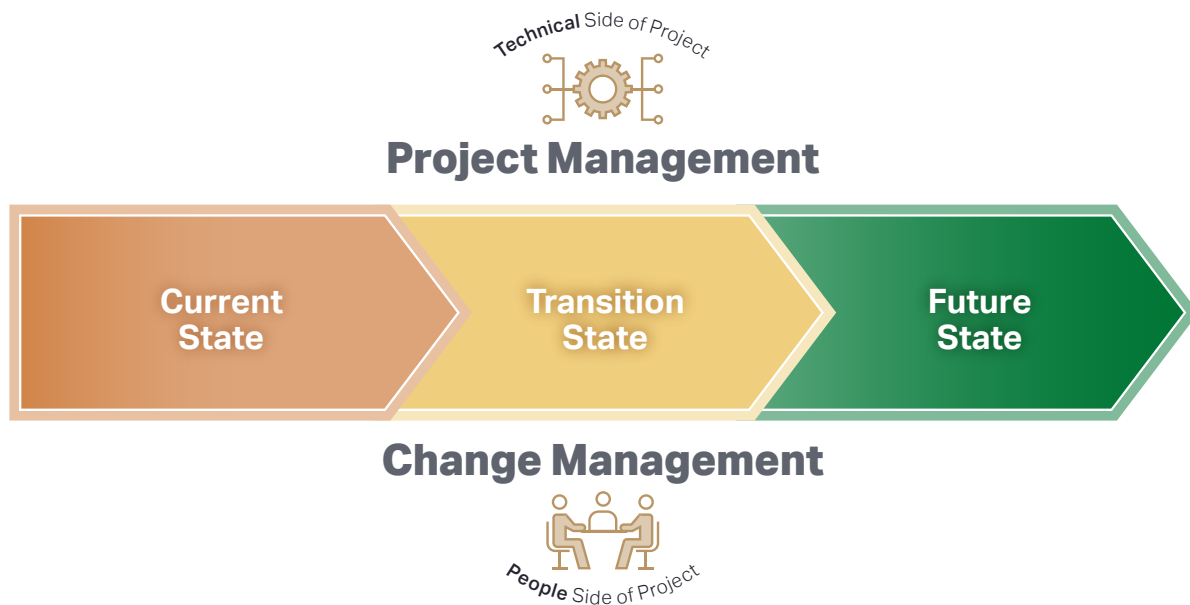
Change Management Theory

In thinking about how to influence change at my new institution, I reflected on the many projects I had already led. Two authors influenced my thinking most significantly, and I realized that they addressed change not only from a project perspective but also from a people perspective. Early in my career, I learned to use the Six Sigma project tool "DMAIC" (define, measure, analyze, improve, control). The approach is primarily about project management and does not address the people element of projects. DMAIC is an effective tool, but I still faced surprising roadblocks—caused mostly by staff resistance.

Jeanie Daniel Duck (2001) introduced me to the human element of change. She identified three essentials:

■ have a strategy that you believe in passionately;
■ have a good management plan for execution; and
■ realize that managing the emotional and behavioral issues of people is a critical component of effective change (Duck 2001).

I had learned the hard way that the best-laid plans can go awry when staff will not let go of the old way of doing things. Duck's change lifecycle helped me see how projects can get complicated as they scale up and as more people get involved. This can lead to conflicts and project failures. If the project leader fails to identify what is going wrong and to address the issues, staff morale will flag, and the project's success will be in jeopardy (2001).

While Duck helped me realize the importance of managing the emotional and behavioral issues in the change process, Jeffrey Hiatt's *ADKAR—A Model for Change in Business, Government, and Our Community* (2006) provided more detail about how to implement change. (ADKAR stands for awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement and represents Prosci's formula for the change process.) Prosci Sponsor training provided a detailed manual on managing change. In examining the ADKAR model, two things stood out: First, every project evolves from the current state through transition to the future state. This made me realize that often, too much

FIGURE 1 ➤ Project Management and Change Management (Prosci 2014)

focus is put on the current state and the future state; the transition state is often under-emphasized. Figure 1 shows that this process includes both project management and change management and that both are equally important. At a former institution, I led a technology conversion project that was phased in over two years. That was the first time I worked on a large-scale project that had change management built into the planning process. There was no doubt that building change management into the planning created additional work, but the results were more robust and predictable than they would have been otherwise.
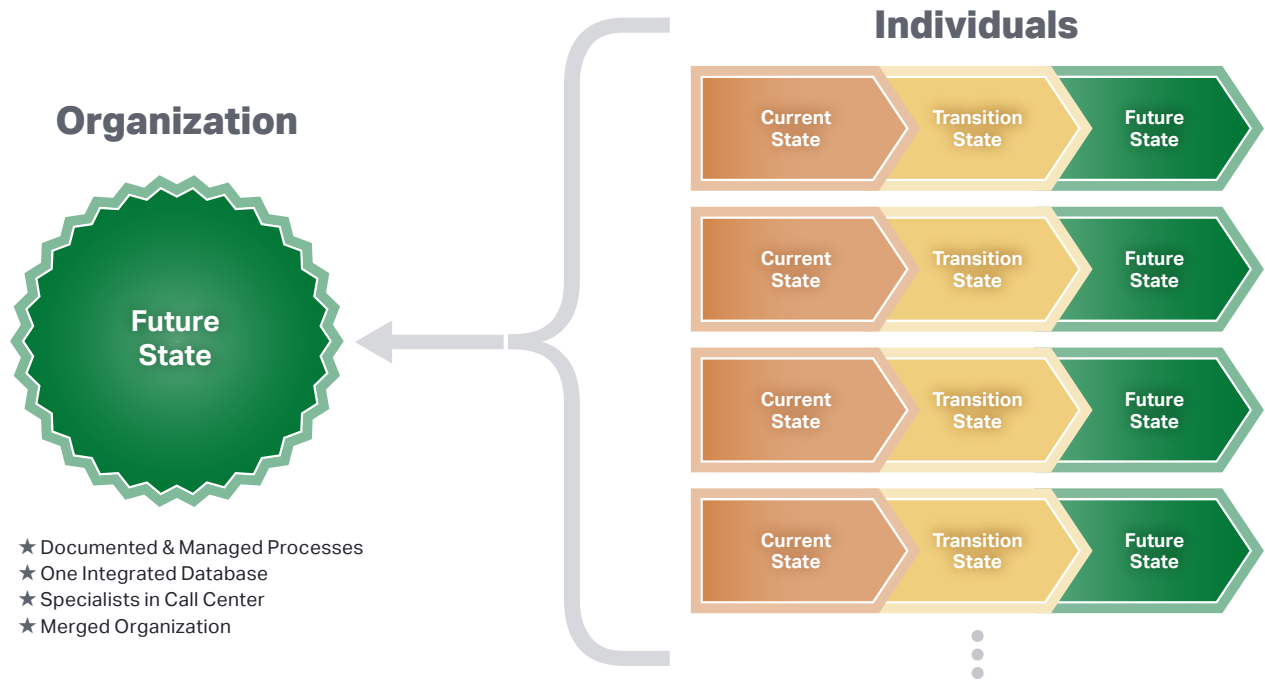
The second element of ADKAR that impacted my thinking was that every person involved in the project had to go through the three-step process as it related to their individual role (Prosci 2014). Structuring our change process in this way allowed us to maintain focus on outcomes. It increased planning and implementation time but also increased the project's chance of success. (*See* Figure 2.)

New Division, New Challenges

So how does one tackle change at a new institution? Having moved from the midwest to New York City, I had to consider the culture of the institution as well as those of the region and the community. My new college had experienced lots of successes and had enjoyed many years of healthy enrollments. The results were positive but had been gained the hard way, having relied on lots of people and paper processes. As the leader of a new division, I quickly discovered there was little institutional knowledge about enrollment management. Staff were accustomed to a top-down management approach and had not been involved in decision making. "Tell me what to do" was a common response when I asked staff to help with a project or a problem. Empowering staff to think on their own took a lot of encouragement and time.

Peasant Theory

Our admissions director was brought in last year to help make our systems current and to create a proactive recruitment strategy. In trying to understand our culture, this professional of twenty-plus years related the

Organization

Future State

★ Documented & Managed Processes
★ One Integrated Database
★ Specialists in Call Center
★ Merged Organization

Individuals

| Current State | Transition State | Future State |

FIGURE 2 ➤ Impact on Employees in a Change Process (Prosci 2014)

change process to what she had learned about peasant theory and her Italian ancestors. She shared how peasants had viewed their world in southern Italy:

⚑ They believed they were subjects of history, not makers of it.

⚑ They believed they were power-less to change their environment, so there was no reason to take action.

⚑ They were in favor of a regime that would maintain order with a strong hand.

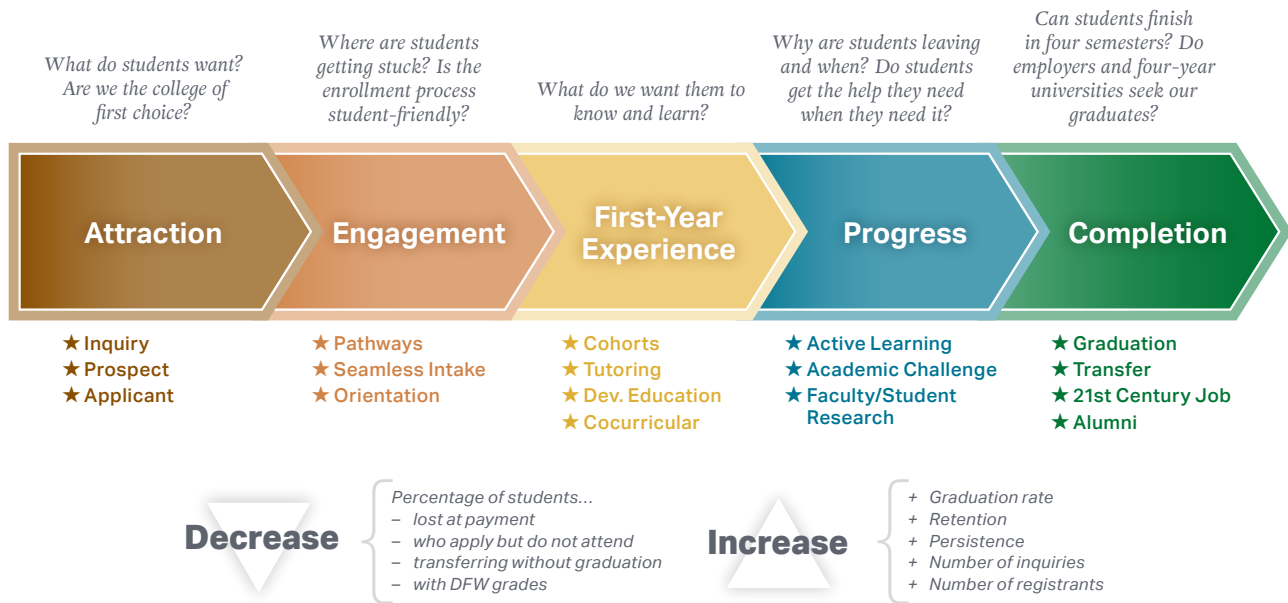⚑ They lived in denial of the hope of progress and of systems (Cancian 1961).

Cancian (1961) also noted that peasants were not unaware of modern processes. He shared a particular example related to their knowledge that human and animal waste could aid the growth of crops. Encouraged to use this fertilizer to improve their crops' growth, "the peasant usually argued that it would tire his mule too much to carry it to his land" (Cachian 1961, 9).

It was ironic that our work culture was similar to the world view of peasants long ago. How could we shift

employees' thinking and get our teams to do more than "just plant?" It was clear that we had to challenge them to think about how they could change their practices to "improve their crop." Most important, we wanted staff to know that their actions made a difference and that their help was vital in creating a better environment for students and staff.

Starting With a Plan

In contemplating how to reset the thinking of our work teams, I knew I had to develop a plan with which our team could connect and toward which it could work. I spent a lot of time seeking to understand the college's strategic goals and to identify students' needs. It was also important that our teams understand the broader context so they could appreciate how vital their work was to students' overall experience. To achieve this, I created a student experience model. (*See* Figure 3.) This helped our teams understand that enrollment management was more than admissions and that all of our efforts must work together from start to finish so students can reach their educational goals. This model was also

What do students want? Are we the college of first choice?

Where are students getting stuck? Is the enrollment process student-friendly?

What do we want them to know and learn?

Why are students leaving and when? Do students get the help they need when they need it?

Can students finish in four semesters? Do employers and four-year universities seek our graduates?

Attraction — **Engagement** — **First-Year Experience** — **Progress** — **Completion**

★ Inquiry
★ Prospect
★ Applicant

★ Pathways
★ Seamless Intake
★ Orientation

★ Cohorts
★ Tutoring
★ Dev. Education
★ Cocurricular

★ Active Learning
★ Academic Challenge
★ Faculty/Student Research

★ Graduation
★ Transfer
★ 21st Century Job
★ Alumni

Decrease

Percentage of students...
– *lost at payment*
– *who apply but do not attend*
– *transferring without graduation*
– *with DFW grades*

Increase

+ *Graduation rate*
+ *Retention*
+ *Persistence*
+ *Number of inquiries*
+ *Number of registrants*

FIGURE 3 ➤ Student Progression Model

used as the framework for our college-wide strategic enrollment management plan.

With a clear picture of what we wanted to accomplish, our divisional leadership team focused on three goals to help us improve the student experience:

- Enhance recruitment and outreach.
- Improve the student onboarding experience.
- Streamline enrollment operations.

Everything we do in our division is connected to these goals. We share them with our teams at monthly forums. When planning new initiatives, teams must show how they connect to these divisional goals. New staff positions must be justified in a way that enables us to help meet these goals. Employee performance is rewarded for work in these areas, and upcoming goals are established around these goals. The goals were translated into an ambitious to-do list:

- Expand the call/contact center for phone and virtual traffic.
- Build a one-stop center for walk-in traffic.
- Implement a new admissions application and processing workflow.
- Implement a new student onboarding system.
- Reformulate the college's recruitment strategy.
- Develop a comprehensive student communication plan.
- Implement document imaging and workflow for financial aid and the registrar's office.

Assessing Our Teams

Our next goal was to map out a plan to reach our goals and actively engage our teams in the process. Our leadership team was ready, but were our work teams? Did they have the skills and the mindset to support our lofty goals? Did we have the right people in the right jobs? I asked each of our divisional directors to evaluate their work teams. What skills were missing? What kind of training was needed? Who were the rock stars? After each team was evaluated, our divisional team went through the same assessment for the division. After a long series of discussions, our divisional directors came up with a plan to leverage our resources in the best way possible. Our financial aid and registrar's offices were well-managed and functioning at high levels, but other areas were struggling. We used our high-performing

teams to help coach and mentor those that were under-performing. Rather than each director focusing solely on the work of one unit, they all focused on the goals of our division. Without this sharing of resources, open discussions about our deficits, and agreement regarding how to attain our goals, the change process would have failed before it had begun.

We learned that very little formal training was in place for our teams. We put together a cross-functional work team to survey training needs and to make recommendations regarding what was needed. The committee got off to a slow start. I met often with the team chair, who was having difficulty getting the team to engage in real solutions. They weren't confident sharing ideas and were afraid to make recommendations for the whole division. We were fighting against a culture in which staff did not believe their opinions mattered. Creating a safe place for them to own and present their ideas was a real challenge. With a lot of patience and nudging, we eventually overcame the resistance. The team has since surveyed staff needs and now is mapping out a staff development plan and organizing staff appreciation events.

Following are some specific examples of how we are progressing with our divisional to-do list. While all of our initiatives are important and include work plans, we have made the most progress on our call center expansion and one-stop planning. Consider particularly how teams worked through organizational change in these specific areas.

Start Small

This year we are launching a new one-stop center. To start, we decided to close our admissions service counter and merge its functions with those of our information desk. The intent was to enable admissions staff to catch up on processing and to have the one-stop center begin phase one of implementation. What started out as a simple first step quickly turned into long lines and chaos. Staff didn't have the system access or training they needed to respond efficiently to admissions inquiries, and we had unexpected staff turnover. The enrollment services director focused on the goals and worked side by side with the team, coaching them along the

way. It was a rough couple of weeks, but in the end, staff were confident in their new skills and supervisors and had a realistic view of the challenges of bringing a one-stop center to full scale.

Another step in preparing for the one-stop shop was to expand the call center, which initially responded only to admissions calls. Staff were able to answer 96 percent of the calls. Other departments were not doing so well. For example, during peak season, financial aid was able to answer only 38 percent of incoming calls. Expanding the call center to respond to all divisional calls would constitute a significant first step in building our knowledge base in order to ultimately create the content training manual for the one-stop shop.

We put a plan in place for the division and hoped to have the expanded call center fully functional by the start of the fall semester. Midway through the project, the manager abruptly announced that the call center would not be fully up and running until the first of the year. We had no idea of any struggles that would cause such a delay. We were so focused on achieving our goal that we had missed the subtle hints from the call center manager that the project was encountering some challenges. Call center staff were struggling particularly with the complexity of financial aid information, and training was not proceeding as planned. Staff were overwhelmed, resulting in illness, absence from work, and staff turnover.

The enrollment management team spent time with the call center manager to better understand the challenges. We validated the call center issues, reengaged the call center team, and reordered our priorities. Financial aid narrowed the scope of the information agents were required to learn, and new technology was put in place to provide operators with greater access to the answers to financial aid FAQs. Ultimately, we met our goal, but certainly not as we had planned. Our team persisted through the challenges, identified better solutions, and found a way to meet goals without compromising desired outcomes.

The call center's modest start resulted in some early wins. Abandoned call rates decreased by more than half in the past year. The team answered an additional

27,000 calls during the expansion, and the call answer rate is currently 92 percent, which meets global call center standards of excellence. The center is moving to a new location and is expanding its staffing from 13 to 29 operators.

Building Momentum

Building on the success and confidence gained in the call center expansion, planning continues for our one-stop student center. We have a plan for how the center will be designed, built, and staffed. We have been communicating planning timelines with staff for the past year, and the feedback has been very positive. In the next couple of months, we will be asking members of admissions, financial aid, testing, and the registrar's office to apply for positions in the one-stop shop. As we announced the process for selecting the one-stop team, staff began to share their concerns. An important next step will be to work individually with each staff member involved in the change to pinpoint areas of concern. This will take time but is a critical step in positively engaging team members. Hiatt (2006, 90–94) offers some suggestions for how to work through employee resistance without adversely impacting the overall project:

- **Identify the barrier point to the change.** With regard to the delay in opening the call center, we needed to find out what the issues were and to address them appropriately. Our project was at risk until we reassessed the situation and adjusted our plan.
- **Listen, and understand objectives.** We are committed to holding monthly forums to talk about divisional goals. Questions do not always surface during these meetings, but often, staff will reach out to me or to their supervisors after the meeting to seek clarification. Staff are beginning to engage in conversations about the future; this is a critical part of motivating staff to change.
- **Remove obstacles.** Part of the delay in opening the call center was because staff were struggling with the steep learning curve relative to financial aid content. After hearing feedback, the director of financial aid trimmed the training content to the top ten frequently asked questions. This made it easier for the

call center team to learn the financial aid content and enabled them to answer the majority of questions callers were asking.

- **Make a personal appeal.** Through staff forums and one-on-one meetings, I share my vision and commitment to improving the student experience. I work hard to emphasize the important role that everyone on the team has in making our goals a reality.
- **Negotiate; find the win-win.** In motivating staff to move to the one-stop shop, we tried to focus on their professional goals and to offer new roles that would help them move toward attainment of those goals. While we were not able to offer promotions, we were able to offer new work opportunities that would increase the likelihood of advancement in the future.
- **Provide simple, clear choices and consequences.** Some employees are not anxious for change and are not seeking to move to the one-stop center; they need to understand that even if they stay back and work in operational roles, their jobs will still change.
- **Hold employees accountable.** New expectations are being mapped out for the one-stop and the operational teams. Staff members are beginning to understand that they are expected to be actively engaged in helping us reach our goals; there are no seats on the sideline.
- **Convert the strongest dissenters.** While our first instinct is to avoid the naysayers, they are the ones with whom we particularly need to connect. Until we understand their real concerns and fears, we can't move forward in a way that will be most beneficial for students.

The list of projects to complete is long, but by taking small steps, our teams are learning how to manage change successfully. Despite the stress, cost, and time delays of unexpected challenges, we fight the urge to retreat to our old ways of doing things. Our confidence in managing projects and change continues to grow. As Winston Churchill said, "When you are going through hell, keep on going." In the heat of change, our natural instinct is to retreat; instead, we must keep on mov-

ing. In the end, we will realize the intended benefits of change. We may even experience additional benefits, like a stronger, smarter and resilient work team whose members are ready and willing to tackle new challenges.

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Diane Walleser is Vice President for Enrollment Management at Borough of Manhattan Community College, which serves 27,000 students as part of the City University of New York system. Walleser oversees the offices of admissions, testing, financial aid, the registrar, and enrollment services.

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Working Smarter, Not Harder: SEM Participation Strategies That Work

By Irlanda Price and Brier Albano

Medicine Hat College implemented its first strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan in 2015/16. The implementation required a variety of stakeholders, and initially Medicine Hat College found it difficult to create a diverse cross-campus team. Recognition of the unique cultures within the organization advanced SEM efforts and supported college-wide participation in the process. Using work completed by the Canadian Foreign Affairs Institute (2005) as a framework, this article articulates how this college used intercultural communication strategies to increase their success.

Many changes occurred at Medicine Hat College (MHC) in 2014: installation of a new president, creation of two new senior executive portfolios, introduction of a new institutional philosophy, reorganization of various departments, and development of a new strategic plan. Prior to this major institutional shift, the culture at MHC had been focused on student success but protective of traditional methods and processes. It was in this context that a strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan was commissioned by the college's senior leadership.

As a comprehensive community institution in Alberta, Canada, MHC developed and implemented its first SEM plan in 2015–16. The departments critical to enrollment success at Medicine Hat College were not unfamiliar with the development of an enrollment plan, having previously invested extensive resources, time, and effort attempting to develop a plan. Unfortunately, due to various circumstances, the plan was never final-

ized or approved. The current plan would not have been created and approved if special attention had not been focused on the institution's *culture*. Leadership spent quite a bit of time getting to know the culture, norms, habits, and traditions of MHC and then identified three pillars to provide the basis of the plan: recruitment, retention, and relationships.

After the plan was approved by senior administration, the real work began. Three subcommittees were created to correspond with the plan pillars. Despite excitement that was beginning to build around the plan, one common thread among the three groups became evident: committees struggled to involve diverse elements of the campus in the implementation process. People supported the plan, but with the number of projects that faculty and staff do "off the side of their desk," SEM was beginning to become just "another thing" for people to do.

Recognition of a variety of cultural components within MHC provided staff, faculty, and administrators the opportunity to work smarter toward the institution's SEM goals. Creating a shared language with which to talk about the SEM plan and using intercultural strategies helped the team gain a better understanding of the environment, increase participation, and create a cross-campus SEM culture. This article describes the experiences that led to strategies transferable to any SEM implementation and how MHC did so using an intercultural lens.

About Medicine Hat College

Located in the cities of Medicine Hat and Brooks in the province of Alberta, Canada, Medicine Hat College supports more than 8,000 learners in credit and community programming each year. More than 3,700 students engaged in full- and part-time credit programming including a variety of one-, two-, three-, and four-year programs in addition to pre-employment training and apprenticeships.

As a member of Campus Alberta, Medicine Hat College has a variety of transfer pathways and collaborative programs that allow students to take one or two years of university studies and, in some cases, a four-year bachelor's degree on site from other Alberta universities. More than 50 percent of Medicine Hat College students come from the city of Medicine Hat, with just under 10 percent coming from cities outside Canada. The college's students report higher than average satisfaction rates, with 95 percent indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with their educational experience (Medicine Hat College 2017).

Medicine Hat College embraces the use of an appreciative inquiry philosophy to guide changes when they occur. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a powerful resource for the postsecondary environment. AI has been well received because it creates energy and generates positive change as people discover and build on their positive core and "life-giving forces" to co-create their futures (Cockell and McArthur-Blair 2012, 2). Using the work of Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012), the college focuses attention on strengths through story-telling and inquiry which can support the discovery of innovative

opportunities to be more successful. AI was an important driver in discovering how we could "work smarter" across the college in order to increase SEM participation.
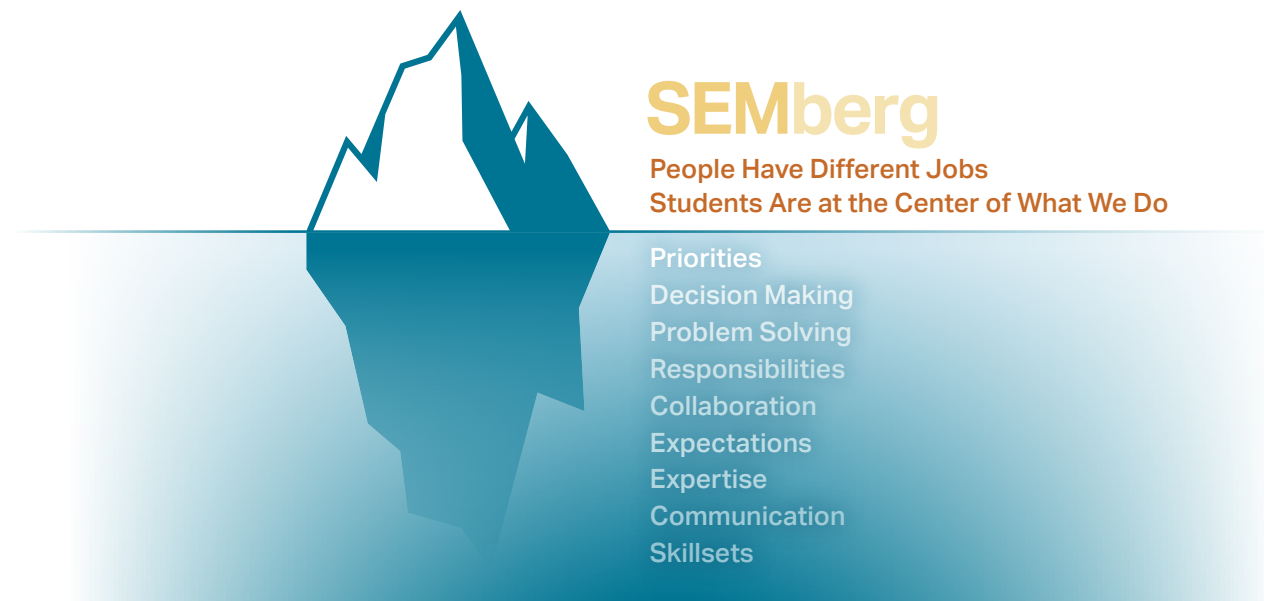
Our SEM Story

The college's SEM planning process was led by the associate vice president, student development and was designed over approximately one year with consultation across MHC's campuses and departments. Using the institution's strategic plan as its foundation, the SEM plan's main priorities were set by academic leadership after reviewing available data and engaging in discussions about goals. Strategies and tactics were then developed by a larger SEM team primarily comprising administrative staff. It was acknowledged in the development of the plan that "increased faculty engagement would be critical in order to effectively execute the plan successfully" (Price 2016).

One of MHC's greatest strengths is the abundance of data and reports that are available from its strategic research and analysis department. These data facilitated the process of identifying the overarching institutional SEM goals. The plan identifies an 8 percent increase in full-time equivalent enrollments by 2020 in addition to a retention increase of 1 percentage point per year for a total increase in overall retention of 4 percentage points by 2020. Aiding these enrollment and retention targets, sub-committee goals were developed for recruitment, retention, and relationships. The most significant goal from the relationships sub-committee was directly connected with the internal culture of the institution: focusing on investments to internally develop awareness and understanding of SEM.

Once the plan was approved, implementation started immediately at the committee level. On the recruitment committee, the single faculty member who had been part of the team through the initial planning stages left, and the committee struggled to find representation from the instructional side of the institution. At broader SEM meetings, it was noticed that this was a trend across committees.

Initial strategies to increase participation included mass communications using all means available and

SEMberg

**People Have Different Jobs
Students Are at the Center of What We Do**

Priorities
Decision Making
Problem Solving
Responsibilities
Collaboration
Expectations
Expertise
Communication
Skillsets

FIGURE 1 ➤ The Cultural SEMberg

asking institutional leaders to recommend faculty participants for the committees. Many faculty considered SEM to be an administrative effort and did not want to participate in additional work that would need to be done "off the side of their desk." Overall, faculty did not understand either how the SEM plan had an impact on them or the importance of SEM. More important, administrative staff did not understand why faculty were not participating.

MHC's plan is continuously under review; it is important to recognize the impact of external factors beyond the control of any enrollment planning process—factors such as the economy, government mandates, funding structures, and world politics. By late fall 2016, enrollment in apprenticeship and trade training (which, in Alberta, is allocated by the government) began to decrease precipitously. The sub-committees had to refocus their efforts and energy on identifying strategies to directly impact programs that were undersubscribed. The academic leaders selected the program areas that were experiencing decreasing enrollment and high rates of attrition to participate in a full SEM review.

Defining Culture and Using Intercultural Strategies in SEM

Renowned cultural expert Geert Hofstede (n.d.) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (para 1). Understanding the effects of culture was critically important in building participation strategies that worked at Medicine Hat College. Building credibility for the administrative lead of the plan (who, incidentally, was a newcomer and thus had to learn how to find a place within the prevailing culture and build trust within it) was essential.

Understanding culture, in its more traditional sense, was deemed a priority. In early 2017. many administrative departments received intercultural assessments and training to aid in building a more advanced skill set for MHC's growing international student population. Through the lens of intercultural development, a greater understanding emerged of the communication and participation challenges we were facing with SEM. Using intercultural strategies for communication, we had the ability to enhance our understanding of the

people with whom we work and an opportunity to reflect on the way in which we engage.

Using the well-known symbol of the cultural iceberg, we looked at the issues that were affecting our SEM strategies and created the "cultural SEMberg" (*see* Figure 1). On the surface of the SEMberg were the general understandings that MHC employees had different jobs and that students were at the center of what we do. Under the surface were a variety of priorities, understandings of authority, skill sets, expectations, and different methods of problem solving. As with culture, not taking time to understand all that lives below the surface was causing setbacks in our progress because we had a false understanding of the point from which we were starting. Mai Moua (2011) tells us that "culturally intelligent leaders are those that take the time to know about culture. They look for opportunities to learn about the cultural facts, the music, the history, the language, and the behaviors of people." Not speaking the same language as the rest of the institution—particularly the faculty—and not asking for interpretations of the language being used led to many miscommunicated ideas and expectations.

SEM and culture being intertwined is not a new concept. In 2016, *SEM Quarterly* published "Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture in Strategic Enrollment Management," which acknowledged the deep ties between the cultures of an organization in meeting its goals. Using the competing values framework, the article explores organizational culture and considers the differences between culture assessment at the division and department levels (Flanigan 2016, 123).

The realization that different work units on campus might be creating micro-cultures within the organization became the premise for how we could define where we were having success. Using a backwards discovery process, we recognized that the new successes with cross-campus participation were tied to strategies already used internationally to better connect and communicate across language, ritual, and other cultural barriers. Therefore, the use of intercultural collaboration strategies facilitated the ability to communicate SEM in a way that would support even greater participation.

Using seven issues the Canadian Foreign Affairs Institute (CFAI) identified in 2005 for effective intercultural collaborations, we started to dissect the strategies being utilized in our work. CFAI identified:

- Intercultural dialogue
- Shared tools, jargon, and work methods
- Knowing the stakeholders and the management context
- Shared understanding of expected results
- Clear process, transparency, and trust
- Knowledge and acceptance of cultural differences
- Learning while doing and iterative approach

Within the context of the seven issues for effective intercultural collaborations, we recognized that these strategies were linked to areas where we were achieving success. Following are the observations and examples that fit well in terms of using an intercultural framework for SEM participation.

Intercultural Dialogue

It was fitting that intercultural dialogue was the first issue identified by Canadian Foreign Affairs as it was part of a key event that transformed the way we looked at SEM participation and how we could modify our strategies in seeking faculty participation. Early in the implementation process, we had approached a faculty member from an under-enrolled program. The faculty member listened to the request to join the SEM committee then politely declined, saying, "I have no time to work on SEM; I have to focus on recruitment and retention." This was our 'a-ha' moment.

This interaction started a conversation about how we, as administrators, create our own micro-culture and language that have the power to alienate other areas of the institution. As leaders of the plan development, we assumed the entire institution understood the language of SEM in the same way we did. Had we been engaged in intercultural dialogue, we would have understood earlier in the process that we needed to change how we were speaking about SEM and that this change in language could then encourage the campus commu-

nity to engage in SEM. Not recognizing this earlier hindered some departments' understanding of what SEM is, what it is for, and how it is used. It also demonstrated that while we had been vocal and excited about SEM, the particular words with which we were familiar did not resonate among the larger campus community. We needed to better understand the needs of the faculty in lieu of demanding that they enter what they considered "administrative space."

The SEM recruitment subcommittee recognized that micro-cultures existed and refocused the plan tactics on only a few low enrollment programs to support the overall SEM goals. This allowed for better dialogue with stakeholders as we could focus on a limited number of needs in our communications. Partnering with three programs allowed for more focused sharing of administrative and faculty tactics and supported the faculty need to see the relevance to their day-to-day work. Using the phrase "recruitment and retention of students" rather than "SEM" while focusing on specific activities to support the plan goals helped to increase faculty participation to one-third of the overall committee at any given meeting.

Shared Tools, Jargon, and Work Methods

Once we began to understand the language that other cultures within our organization were using, it became easy to expand to shared tools, jargon, and work methods. Each time we interacted with faculty members, we worked to develop a shared institutional understanding of the meaning of SEM. We were continuously ensuring that time was saved for the sharing of different understandings of best practices relative to students' in-class learning. Once they realized the value of their contribution, faculty were prepared to help us understand how we could gain their participation. Faculty also reminded us, as administrators, where we needed to listen.

One work method that changed almost immediately after recognizing our differences was meeting times. Non-teaching units almost always were the schedulers of meetings, many of which were between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.—the peak time for teaching classes at our

institution. Shifting subcommittee meeting times to accommodate instructors immediately yielded better participation.

Shared tools were also identified quickly. Our institution produces a weekly newsletter called *OnCampus* that is sent to all faculty and staff e-mail addresses. Through this process, we learned that faculty do not perceive *OnCampus* as having relevant information and instead prefer their faculty association newsletter. In order to reach a wider audience, we started publishing information in both newsletters.

Jargon was also identified quickly and was not always what we expected. For example, words like "admitted," "enrolled," "confirmed," "registered," and "applied" not only were misunderstood by faculty but also held different meanings for those who had worked at other institutions. To promote mutual understanding, the terms were explained at meetings with every program and the admissions office. In addition to creating a common language, the meetings also helped some program faculty access data they had wanted but to which they had limited access.

We also started promoting "shared jargon"—for example, the term "SEMhug." Initially used to describe the way in which SEM envelops all of the important areas in a program, SEM committee members began using the term to refer to programs that would receive focused attention as part of the SEM process. The concept of the "hug" seemed to appeal across the institution, with faculty proudly announcing that they were part of a "SEMhug" program. Later that year, the vice president, academic used the term at a senior leadership meeting. Creating our own word, even ironically, helped facilitate SEM conversations.

Knowing the Stakeholders and the Management Context

Every culture has its leaders, whether with formal titles or simply having earned the community's trust and respect. The importance of knowing the team with which you are working should never be underestimated, particularly when you are new. As a newcomer to the culture of MHC, I had to get to know key individuals

within the college; doing so proved important and personally rewarding.

Get to know the natural leaders within the institution—those who are passionate and driven regardless of the titles on their business cards. Identifying key stakeholders within the institution—those who already had established trust and rapport within the college culture—helped with the development and implementation of the SEM plan at MHC. They were able to share insight, history, and lessons learned from past attempts at creating a plan. They offered lived experiences and shared cultural norms, some of which prevented the senior lead from committing cultural faux pas that could have potentially undermined any progress in the development of the plan.

Getting to know these leaders, who became known as SEM champions, included learning about their passions, motivations, and interests. Supporting their personal and professional goals came naturally. They were so invested, committed, and enthused about student success at Medicine Hat College that it was impossible not to share their excitement. Investing time and professional development opportunities in these champions only resulted in their greater dedication.

Think strategically about how the passions and drive of cultural champions can impact the development and implementation of your plan, especially if you are a newcomer to the culture.

Shared Understanding of Expected Results

Language and communication are perhaps the most critical elements of culture. Communication—verbal and non-verbal—is meaningful and can be misinterpreted if one is unfamiliar with cultural norms and expectations. During the development of the plan under the leadership of a new senior lead, special attention was paid to not assuming everyone understood the direction in which the plan was going. Assumptions that everyone shared a common understanding created some setbacks as well as opportunities for reevaluation.

It was important to clarify the expectations of the committee, the sub-committees, and their respective chairs throughout the process. This helped maintain understanding throughout the processes of plan creation and implementation. Time not spent reevaluating the approach or listening to champions can set institutions up for failure such that shared understanding of expected results will never truly be achieved.

Clear Process, Transparency, Trust

In conjunction with establishing a common language, the simultaneous establishment of trust was beginning to occur. As an outsider, building trust within any culture can be a very slow process, but its significance cannot and should not be underestimated. Without trust, nothing can really be established.

Being clear about intentions, process, and decision making is mandatory. Do not leave any questions unanswered, and be available to respond to potentially difficult questions. Clearly articulate the intended outcomes of the plan. For example, MHC's plan was not intended to identify low-enrollment programs so they could be cut and so faculty and staff would lose their jobs; rather, it was to refocus and redesign the way in which MHC focused on those program areas.

Medicine Hat College is recognized for having one of the highest student satisfaction rates in the province of Alberta. It has had this recognition for many years, since long before the arrival of the college's current leaders. Naturally, after the significant changes and shifts that occurred as part of the reorganization, a lot of questions arose as to why they were necessary, especially since MHC already had highly satisfied students.

When working with existing cultures, newcomers must pay attention and acknowledge and respect their history. This is particularly true for administrators who are new to their institution and who are charged with implementing SEM. In order to establish relationships, build trust, and develop credibility, it is critical to recognize past efforts. For our team, it was important to the culture of the institution to celebrate all the work and effort that had already been accomplished and to acknowledge that processes that were already successful should be maintained. Prioritizing integration and acceptance into the introduction of SEM efforts and

incorporating past experiences at former institutions helped guide the approaches taken at MHC. When communicating in a culture that is new, be it a different department or a new institution, it is critical to maintain a personal mindset that acknowledges, supports, and celebrates history and past practices.

It may seem basic to establish a transparent process as part of the effort to build trust, but it is necessary. Establish a process that will facilitate the attainment of SEM goals, but remain open to the possibility that the process may need to be changed to best meet the needs of the institution. Be honest and open about expectations and direction, and always make yourself, as a leader of this initiative, available for questions and to hear comments.

As you build trust, community members' trust in the plan you are leading will grow. This takes time; SEM planning is not a process that happens overnight. Positioning yourself within a culture requires time, energy, and connection. The requirements for building a SEM plan are exactly the same.

Knowledge and Acceptance of Cultural Differences

In "A Separate Peace: Strengthening Shared Justice," Borrows (2004) writes, "If each group in an intercultural relationship did not have the space to define, interpret, and apply its own culturally appropriate dispute resolution principles, the intercultural aspects of its association would eventually disappear" (343). This is an important aspect of intercultural communication and understanding that is often forgotten.

In creating SEM culture, institutions do not want to lose the unique, important elements of our organizations that help us grow. It is important to ensure that our divisional and departmental micro-cultures remain intact in order to support the teams and needs in those areas, but SEM has the opportunity to be the "place" where ideas are shared and our uniqueness is considered in order to think strategically about student enrollment.

One way to translate this is to use differences to encourage participation. By recognizing the unique perspectives of certain faculty members and, more impor-

tant, acknowledging certain weaknesses in that area, the overall perceived value of participating in the process can be increased. At MHC, this increased participation in other activities outside of SEM, as well, including faculty attendance at key events throughout the year and invitations from faculty for administration to participate in key learning activities in which they had not had a part in the past (for example, the recruitment sub-committee was put on the art program's events mailing list).

Learning While Doing and Iterative Approach

Using intercultural approaches and techniques and focusing on intercultural issues continues to challenge our literacy relative to cultural norms across our institution. Even within micro-cultures, further divisions exist that can grossly impact how communication and collaboration are perceived. We continually focus on learning and building shared understandings while continuing to make space for new ideas, work methods, and strategies to grow our SEM implementation. Focusing on institutional growth as well as the changes that occur because of intercultural efforts being made can assist in bringing institutions closer to their goals and is recommended in order to ensure that learning and growth continue to propel SEM forward.

Just as intercultural strategies are always developing, so we continue to develop our own strategies working within our institution as the culture changes. Making note of where we are having success and growing that success is a key part of our strategy. As with any communication strategy, there is no "stop date" by which all communication will be complete, so constant review and learning from mistakes will continue to support SEM growth.

Conclusions

Any time we move or visit a foreign country or even begin a new job, "learning culture" is an inevitable part of our transition. Implementing a well-researched strategic enrollment management plan for the first time can be supported by the inclusion of a shared cultural space

in which all the unique micro-cultures at your institution can come together. Develop your shared language; ensure understanding; communicate clearly; and invite people to participate in the exploration. Celebrate and continue to encourage leaders, and always be aware of the culture you are trying to influence. The development of a new SEM plan tends to create a new culture all its own.

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Top Down or Bottom Up: Consider a Dual-Level Approach to Enrollment Managements

By Jason Trainer

Increasing institutional dependency on tuition revenue paired with rising political pressures toward student success outcomes has many institutions turning to enrollment management (EM) to improve their institution's enrollment outcomes. EM is a comprehensive and inclusive process focused on achieving the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation institutional outcomes. The academic community remains at the epicenter of this EM process. Chief enrollment officers failing to create an institutional partnership with the academic community will unlikely attain desired enrollment outcomes.

This study seeks to assist institutions by assessing how a "shared sense of responsibility" for enrollment outcomes is developed through the eyes of both chief enrollment officers (CEnO) and key academic partners (KAP). Once high-performing institutions are identified, the researcher interviewed 20 participants from twelve institutions including twelve CEnOs and eight KAPs. This study is designed with a constructivist grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis.

The findings of this study suggest institutions that are successfully drawing the academic community into their EM process do so by engaging EM at two levels of the institution, the central and local. This dual-level approach to EM creates the optimum environment for developing a "shared sense of responsibility" for enrollment outcomes with the academic units. In order for each level to effectively work together, two institutional conditions must be established: credibility and transparency. Each condition is met by addressing three distinct elements. Although each element should be addressed, the degree of importance of each element is tied to internal and external environmental influencers.

In the United States, disinvestment in higher education coupled with public outcry for institutional accountability relative to student success has many colleges and universities turning to enrollment management to improve their enrollment outcomes (SHEEO 2014). Enrollment management is being employed to stretch beyond individual marketing strategies, recruitment and retention tactics, and organizational structure. It is aiming to achieve and maintain optimal recruitment, retention, and graduation rates with the academic community remaining at the epicenter (Dolence 1993).

An institution's chief enrollment officer (CEnO) is often charged with developing and overseeing this meaningful connection with the academic community. In order to meet this challenge, chief enrollment officers must establish a consultative relationship with the academic units (Wallace-Hulecki 2007). Those who fail to partner with the academic community will be unlikely to attain desired enrollment outcomes (Hossler and Kalsbeek 2013). This study seeks to assist institutions and chief enrollment officers by assessing how a shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes is developed with the academic community.

Literature Review

Strategic Planning

A common outcome in enrollment management is the development of a strategic plan that identifies goals, strategies, performance indicators, and responsible individuals. This process is often referred to as *strategic enrollment planning* (SEP). It is important to note that the function of enrollment management encompasses the SEP process and that SEP is often an initial and visible step taken by institutions seeking to influence enrollment outcomes. The SEP process is a complex, organized effort to connect institutional mission with academic, enrollment, student affairs, research, facilities, fiscal, technology, and fundraising plans (Hundrieser 2012). Although the SEP process is unique to each individual institution, several consistent themes are identified in the enrollment planning literature. These include: senior administrator support, broad committee formation, data-informed

processes, established goals, targeted strategies, devoted institutional resources, and aligned departmental plans.

Organizational Structures

Organizational structures related to enrollment management are growing increasingly complex, and chief enrollment officers are finding themselves in a greater position to influence change (Penn 1999). Enrollment management structures are of four types: the enrollment management committee, the enrollment management coordinator, the enrollment management matrix, and the enrollment management division (Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green 1982; Penn 1999). Each organizational model increases the level of complexity, sophistication, and institutional investment. Regardless of the model, success often rests with the chief enrollment officer's "ability to influence, communicate, persuade, lobby, and bargain with others" (Penn 1999, 7).

No single enrollment management model works for every institution (Hossler and Bean 1990; Kalsbeek 2006; Lee 2010). Rather, enrollment management models typically evolve, becoming more sophisticated in response to need, culture, and administrative skill (DeBiaso 2012; Hossler and Bean 1990). However, enrollment management models with increased structure are more likely to force the desired institutional change or outcome (Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green 1982).

Components and Best Practices

Enrollment management best practices comprise five essential components:

- the utilization of data to identify unique student characteristics and potential new markets;
- the strategic use of resources to create need-based financial aid programs;
- the implementation of retention programs such as early alert, orientation, and other timely professional services;
- engaging in long-term enrollment planning focused on mission, academic offerings, and enrollment projections;
- and the establishment of an organizational structure that supports coordi-

nated enrollment management efforts (Huddleston and Rumbough 1997; Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green 1982).

A common practice is to analyze and segment data typically collected in the application process, strategically identifying and targeting prospective students more efficiently (Hayes 2007). Examples of these data include GPA, standardized test scores, intended area(s) of study, location, financial need, level of interest, and/or admit status. Another common practice is to analyze data to identify and understand students' price sensitivity to tuition. This allows an institution to offer the amount of financial aid necessary to influence students' decisions to enroll (Singell 2002). Other common practices are to target increased retention and graduation rates. For example, early alert programs that provide systematic intervention have been found to improve students' progress toward degree completion (Zajacova, Lynch, and Epenshade 2005).

Faculty Involvement

Enrollment management policies and procedures related to student success, program development and review, and curriculum are inherently linked to academic matters (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges 1999). Institutions that fail to engage the academic community risk isolating the enrollment management process from the innermost and essential component driving institutional mission and culture. Wallace-Huecki (2007) identifies several underlying conditions for successful participation with the academic community in the EM process:

- collaborative leadership between the chief academic officer and the chief enrollment officer;
- financial incentives linked to accountability and outcomes;
- the SEM committee comprising senior academic leadership;
- the CEnO communicates data transparently both horizontally and vertically;
- the CEnO holds a position of influence within the institution;

- communication with the faculty at large via governance bodies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine how public institutions develop a shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes with the academic community.

Research Questions

The primary research question in this study was "what role does the academic community play in institutional enrollment efforts?" Secondary research questions were:

- How do chief enrollment officers engage the academic community to establish a "collaborative partnership" and "shared sense of responsibility" with faculty?
- How does the institution provide a unified approach toward how students move to, through, and away from the institution?

Methods

This study was conducted in accordance with Charmaz's (2006) constructivist perspective of grounded theory. Grounded theory is a systematic methodology that constructs new theory through analysis of the data (Charmaz 2006). In addition, a grounded theory design uses data to systematically generate a theory "that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic" (Creswell 2012, 422). In this case, the grounded theory design examined the development of a "shared sense of responsibility" for enrollment outcomes at the institution.

Step One: Identification of High-Performing Institutions

In order to determine the highest-performing enrollment management institutions, the SEM Health Assessment Survey was administered to four-year public member institutions of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC). The SEM Health Assessment Survey was created to probe five areas: comprehensiveness of enrollment efforts, recruit-

ment, marketing, financial aid, student retention, and student services (Black 2003). Each of the instrument's 33 questions was answered using a five-point Likert scale, with five being the highest and one being the lowest. Subscale scores were calculated by averaging the responses from the Likert scale in each of the five core areas. A cumulative score was calculated by averaging the five subscale scores together.

The SEM Health Assessment Survey was e-mailed to the 385 four-year public institutions that had a permanent chief enrollment officer. The study netted a 24 percent response rate, with 91 institutions completing the electronic survey within fourteen days. The institutions were sorted from highest to lowest using the cumulative score and then were separated by the NACAC regional affiliate association. Fifteen high-performing institutions were identified for further study.

Step Two: Institutional Interviews

Step two of the research study was to interview two participants from each identified institution—the chief enrollment officer (CEnO) and a key academic partner (KAP)—about their enrollment management success. Each interview was conducted via telephone and lasted approximately 30 minutes. All interview questions were open-ended, allowing the CEnO to identify practices, strategies, and individuals of highest importance to their success. At the end of the interview, the CEnO identified a key academic partner who had played a critical role in the institution's enrollment management success. The key academic partner (KAP) interview was important to the study because it offered an alternative viewpoint and further insight into the institution's enrollment management efforts.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and member checked in batches of five. The batches allowed the data to be collected and analyzed in a zigzag pattern. Transcripts underwent four rounds of coding: (1) initial codes, (2) focused codes, (3) focused codes to initial theoretical framework, and, finally, (4) theoretical codes. The joint data collection and analysis helped the study to evolve, and interview questions were adjusted to probe the emerging theoretical constructs (*see* Appendix).

Findings

Emergent Theoretical Constructs

As data were collected and analyzed, four theoretical constructs emerged. The core phenomenon and construct emerging from those institutions successfully developing "a shared sense of responsibility" for enrollment outcomes was "engaging EM at two levels of the institution." This dual-level approach to enrollment management engaged the academic community at the institution's central and local levels. The researcher identified the dual-level construct as the core phenomenon in the initial theoretical framework. As this construct moved to the center, existing themes of data were viewed through the lens of the central construct. The result of two rounds of data collection and ongoing data analysis was a refined framework that identified three additional theoretical constructs: credibility, transparency, and environmental influencers.

Central and local levels are the "dual levels" of EM. The constructs or conditions of credibility and transparency ensure collaboration between the two levels of enrollment management. The condition of credibility is achieved through three elements: executive supported, data informed, and academically positioned. The condition of transparency is also achieved through three elements: defining purposes and goals, maintaining open communication, and providing adequate opportunities for input and feedback. Last, external and internal influencers are components of the construct of environmental influencers.

Dual-Level Enrollment Management Model

Institutions and CEnOs that are able to successfully develop a shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes with the academic community do so by engaging enrollment management (EM) at two levels. This dual-level approach to EM draws individual attention to both the central and local levels of the institution. In order for the central and local levels to properly inform and influence each other, the conditions of credibility and transparency must be established. Each of these two conditions comprises three elements (defined further
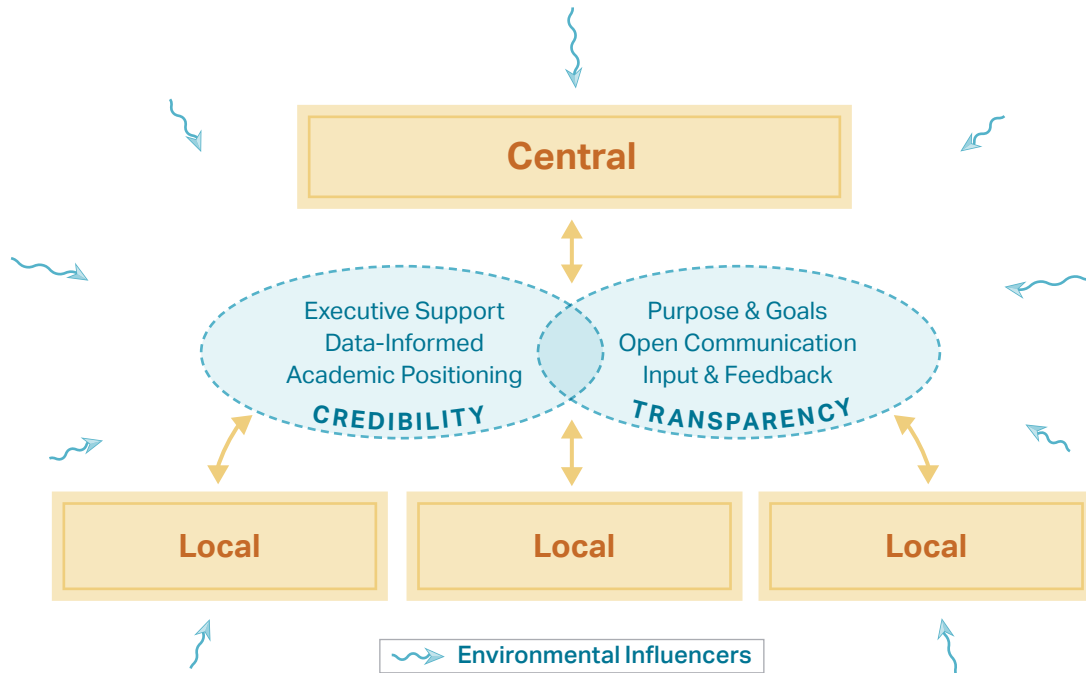
FIGURE 1 ➤ Dual-Level Enrollment Management Model

below). In addition, internal and external environmental influencers impact priorities at each level of the institution, as do the individual elements impacting the conditions of credibility and transparency. The dual-level enrollment management model identifies institutional levels, necessary conditions, and environmental influencers (*see* Figure 1).

Establishing Central-Level EM

Establishing enrollment management (EM) at the central level focuses on the creation of broad institutional initiatives. These initiatives are often aligned with institutional strategic plans and typically address areas of sought improvement, such as enrollment, retention, diversity, and overall academic quality across the institution.

The advantage of establishing central-level EM is the ability to approach institutional initiatives as a single entity; a challenge, however, is garnering meaningful involvement of the academic community. Faculty participation at the central level should include committees, shared governance, and other methods for faculty

to provide feedback and input regarding institutional priorities. Faculty who develop a deeper understanding of enrollment management at one level are likely to serve as stronger partners and collaborators at the other level.

Establishing Local-Level EM

Establishing enrollment management (EM) at the local level transitions initiatives into the academic units that together make up the institution as a whole. Academic units include colleges, departments, and academic programs. Local-level EM focuses on the same initiatives as those at the central level: enrollment, retention, diversity, and academic quality. The advantage of establishing local-level EM is the increased ability to garner stronger understanding, involvement, and commitment by the academic community. Local-level EM is advantageous because activities derive from the passions and expertise of the faculty; a major challenge is the complexity and timeliness of orchestrating multiple priorities and initiatives across various academic units within the institution.

Interaction Between the Dual Levels of EM

In order for the central and local levels to successfully inform and influence each other, conditions of credibility and transparency should be established. Each condition is comprised of three elements; the degree of importance of each element is tied to internal and external environmental influencers. Credibility is earned by rooting enrollment management efforts, ensuring they are supported by the executive team, data informed, and academically positioned within the institution. The latter is established through organizational structure, academic relationships, and credentials.

Transparency focuses on creating an environment where enrollment management is clearly visible and understood throughout the organization. Transparency is achieved by implementing an enrollment management process that defines purpose and goals, maintains open communication, and provides adequate opportunities for input and feedback

Accounting for Environmental Influencers

It is important to identify the environmental influencers impacting both the central and local levels and to account for them within the enrollment management process. Environmental influencers may be internal or external and affect central and local levels as well as credibility and transparency. For an institution to develop an effective enrollment management process, it must account for the unique blend of influencers exerting pressure on it.

For example, the central level may be subject to external pressure from state entities to increase enrollment or as a result of decreasing financial support. At the same time, local levels of the institution might be subject to external pressure from accrediting bodies to be more selective or to improve student outcomes. Accounting for these unique pressures fosters collaboration across the institution as it strives to attain desired enrollment outcomes. In addition, accounting for internal influencers helps determine the importance of each element comprising credibility and transparency. For example, if the institution has a culture characterized by faculty mistrust of administration, then strategies

targeting the elements of transparency will be of utmost importance to the enrollment management process.

Making Decisions

The dual-level enrollment management model can be used to review and direct institutional enrollment management efforts. For example, the model could be used to conduct an audit of past and/or present enrollment management efforts or to influence the EM process created by the strategic enrollment management (SEM) committee.

Conducting an EM Audit

The dual-level enrollment management model is ideal for auditing an institution's past and current EM efforts. The model is especially useful for institutions struggling to develop a shared sense of responsibility with the academic community for enrollment outcomes. The model helps the institution identify areas for further improvement by facilitating auditing of the enrollment management process. The model provides a means by which institutions can examine their past actions and/or current enrollment management processes. The conclusions of an EM audit can be used in the SEP process, which is a visible and essential component of EM.

Auditing the Dual Levels. When conducting an EM audit using the dual-level model, questions should probe both levels of the institution. For example, is the institution taking into account both the central and local levels? Are the institution's enrollment management efforts pushed strictly downward from the central level? What are the enrollment management initiatives that can be identified at both levels of the institution? Do the two levels successfully inform and influence each other? Describe faculty participation and buy-in at each level of the institution.

When conducting this enrollment management audit, it is also important to recognize that conditions, credibility, and transparency are in no particular priority order. The audit is not intended to identify a proper sequence; rather, it should highlight areas that need to be addressed. In addition, the degree of importance of each of the elements is determined by accurately identifying key environ-
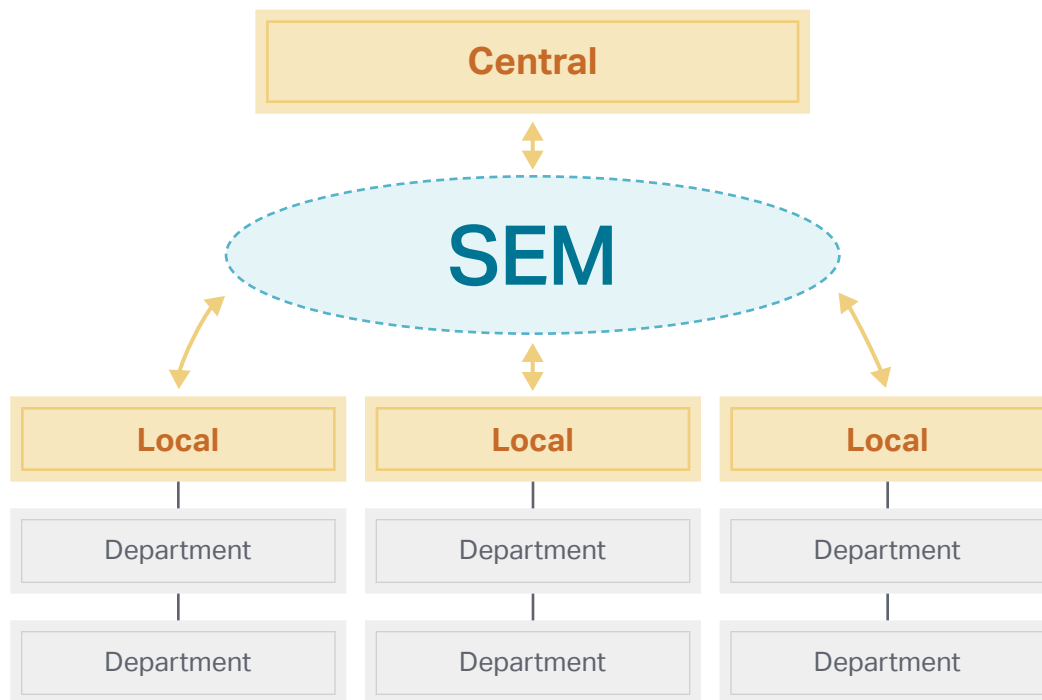
FIGURE 2 ➤ Dual-Level Approach to SEM Committee

mental influencers. If an institution has an internal culture in which faculty members do not participate in enrollment management activities, then it may be difficult to get buy-in (at least initially). In such a case, the elements of executive support, clear purpose and goals, and open communication are critical to developing a culture that supports faculty acceptance of and participation in enrollment management.

Auditing Credibility. When reviewing the condition of credibility, the institution should evaluate the areas of executive support, data-informed decisions, and academic positioning. For example, do the president and senior-level administration serve as champions for enrollment management? Is every aspect of the enrollment management process informed by data? How is enrollment management positioned in relation to academics at the institution? Does the EM division link directly to the institution's president or provost? Does the chief enrollment officer have a terminal degree or strong ties to the faculty?

Auditing Transparency. When reviewing the condition of transparency, be sure to evaluate purpose and goals, open communication, and opportunities for input and feedback. For example, do the institution's enrollment management efforts clearly define purposes and goals? How are these purposes and goals being communicated openly and consistently across the institution? Are there adequate opportunities for the academic community to provide input and feedback regarding EM processes and initiatives?

Influencing the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Committee

The dual-level enrollment management model is also ideal for influencing the institution's strategic enrollment management (SEM) committee. The dual-level model can be used to create and guide the EM process (*see* Figure 2), which is often overseen by a SEM committee. The committee selection process should ensure participation by key areas, thereby encouraging alignment and integration of central- and local-level goals

and initiatives. The model can also be used to guide specific enrollment management processes. For example, task groups can be created at each EM level with recommendations brought back to the SEM committee for prioritization, selection, and oversight. (See below for additional examples of the dual-level EM model being used to influence the SEM process at both the central and local levels of the institution.)

🔖 **Institutional/Central Level.** SEM at the institutional or central level focuses on broad institutional initiatives, such as data mining and market analysis. This information will likely lead to the formation of task groups charged with researching, developing, and presenting recommendations to the SEM committee. Institutional SEM task groups may focus on scholarships, marketing and communication plans, academic advising, transfer friendliness, or early alert, among others.

🔖 **College/Local Level.** SEM at the college or local level will focus on auditing, prioritizing, and recommending action items within each college. A team will be created to assist colleges and departments in auditing as well as in developing recommendations regarding their students' progress. Collaboration at the departmental level will result in the articulation of goals and strategies and the dedication of resources to the program's recruitment and retention ideas. The results of departmental audits will be collected for the dean to review and prioritize. Initiatives selected by the deans move "upward" for consideration by the SEM committee.

The SEM Committee Dual-Level Process

🔖 Select broad SEM committee membership.

🔖 Develop institutional EM activities—*e.g.*, data mining and market analysis.

   ★ Form task groups based on findings.

   ★ Develop and propose recommendations to the SEM committee.

🔖 Develop college/departmental audit activities.

   ★ Design audit worksheets for distribution.

   ★ Create an EM audit team to assist colleges and departments.

   ★ Identify college priorities and push recommendations to the SEM committee.

🔖 Select SEM priorities from institutional and college-level recommendations.

   ★ Establish performance and outcome goals.

   ★ Develop strategies to meet established goals.

   ★ Implement developed strategies for follow-up, measurements, and adjustment.

Recommendations

Make EM Both Central and Local

The primary finding of this study relates to the importance and value of engaging the academic community at both the central and local levels of the institution. This dual-level approach to EM creates an optimal environment for achieving a shared sense of responsibility with the academic units for enrollment outcomes. Special attention and considerations at both levels should exist within EM efforts. Each level adds a distinct value and should inform and influence the overarching strategic direction of the institution's EM process. For example, the central level focuses on broad institutional initiatives such as data mining and market analysis while the local level focuses on college or departmental initiatives such as identifying recruitment and retention priorities. (Environmental influencers that may impact each level differently are discussed below.)

A top-down approach to EM risks isolating the process from the academic units. In addition, a strictly downward approach discourages a shared sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes across the institution.

Recognize Environmental Influencers

Environmental influencers should be considered when developing and implementing EM initiatives. Environmental influencers provide internal and external pressure at the central and local levels. By accounting for various environmental influencers, the institution's EM efforts will be better positioned to achieve desired outcomes.

Consider, for example, an institution facing external pressure at the central level to increase enrollment in

order to establish financial stability. At the same time, an academic department at the local level may be experiencing external pressure from accrediting agencies to tighten admissions criteria in order to increase student success outcomes. This same institution may also be characterized by an internal culture of mistrust between administration and faculty. All of these influencers should be taken into account in order to develop the institution's ideal enrollment management process.

Establish Credibility with the Academic Community

It is important to establish a sense of credibility regarding enrollment management with the academic community. Credibility is established by being executively supported, data informed, and academically positioned. The institution can academically position the EM process through organizational structure or via CEnO relationships and credentials.

Credibility is all about positioning the EM process as an institutional priority. Executive support should include EM champions as well as adequate financial resources. (In fact, it is recommended that financial resources be connected to enrollment initiatives and desired outcomes.) The use of data throughout the EM process also adds credibility and is key when developing support among the academic community. Last, the EM process needs to be positioned to collaborate effectively with the academic units. Organizational structure is a common approach, where the EM function is positioned directly "under" the president or provost. The EM process can also be positioned academically by having a chief enrollment officer (CEnO) who either has strong faculty relationships or has earned advanced academic credentials. (A CEnO who served previously as a faculty member or who has completed a doctoral degree is more likely to be supported by faculty members.)

Facilitate Collaboration Through EM Transparency

Transparency is vital for successful collaboration with the academic community. Faculty members want to easily understand and have a voice in the institution's enrollment management efforts. A transparent enrollment management process clearly identifies purpose and goals, maintains open communication, and provides adequate opportunities for input and feedback. Transparency also encourages the free flow of information between central and local levels.

Everyone at the institution should understand what is driving the enrollment management process. For example, the reasons the institution wants to increase its retention and graduation rates should be clear. All aspects of the EM process need to be communicated at every stage and level of the institution: Be sure to create opportunities for faculty to provide input and feedback; such opportunities may include open forums, participation on institutional committees, and/or presentations to faculty governing bodies. By engaging directly with governing bodies—for example, through shared governance—enrollment outcomes are reinforced as an institutional priority and shared responsibility of the academic community.

Conclusion

In summary, institutions that are successfully involving the academic community in their enrollment management efforts do so by engaging EM at two levels: the central and the local. This dual-level approach to EM creates the optimum environment for developing a shared sense of responsibility with the academic units for enrollment outcomes. In order for each level to work with the other effectively, two institutional conditions must be established: credibility and transparency. Credibility is typically gained as a result of executive support, data-informed decisions, and academic positioning. Transparency is satisfied by having a clear purpose and goals, open communication, and opportunities for input and feedback. While each element should be addressed, the degree of importance of each is likely to be determined by internal and external environmental influencers.

The dual-level enrollment management model is an effective means by which to audit and review institutions' current EM efforts. By identifying areas for further development and improvement, the model is especially useful for institutions struggling to develop a shared

sense of responsibility for enrollment outcomes with the academic community. The findings of the current research inform the following four recommendations:

- Purposefully engage both central and local levels.
- Take into account environmental influencers.
- Establish credibility with the academic community.
- Develop transparency with the academic community.

The assumptions and limitations of the study were affirmed. The dual-level enrollment management model is supported by the literature with an interpreted contradiction regarding the role of local-level EM within SEP. Opportunities for further research are numerous and include the following: studying EM at private and two-year institutions; exploring EM conditions, credibility, and transparency; using the dual-level EM model to audit institutions; examining SEP in relation to the dual-level EM model; and further investigating the impact of local-level EM on faculty perceptions.

Appendix

Initial Interview Questions

- Describe why enrollment management was implemented at your institution.
  - ★ What were the goals or reasons for EM implementation?
  - ★ Where does EM report in the organizational structure?
- Has implementation of enrollment management been a collaborative process? If so, who have been key partners in your institution's success?
  - ★ Describe the involvement of academic affairs in the EM process.
  - ★ Describe any steps or actions you or your department have taken to encourage collaboration throughout the EM process.
- What have been the greatest successes of enrollment management at your institution?
- What have been the greatest challenges or criticisms of enrollment management at your institution?

Revised Interview Questions

- Describe the function of enrollment management at your institution.
  - ★ What does enrollment management look like at the institutional level?
  - ★ What does enrollment management look like at the divisional or departmental level?
  - ★ Could you provide examples of enrollment management activities at each level?
- How would you describe the transparency of enrollment management at your institution?
  - ★ To what extent were input and feedback collected in your enrollment management process?
- How would you describe the credibility of enrollment management at your institution?

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A Professional Body of Knowledge for a Nascent Profession

By Jerry Lucido, Don Hossler, Katie O'Dowd, and Bob Massa

Little attention has been given to identifying the professional bodies of knowledge or expertise that should be possessed by entering, early career, or senior SEM staff members. Using a multi-method research approach that included both a national survey and a modified Delphi Technique involving senior enrollment and admissions professionals, we examine the domains of knowledge/expertise in which enrollment management personnel need more education and training. In addition, this study reports on the preferred levels of education for the preparation of enrollment management personnel. The results reveal that a master's degree in enrollment management, followed by a doctorate in enrollment management, are the preferred levels of educational preparation for gaining SEM expertise. The domains of knowledge garnered from these studies include: strategic planning, the analysis and use of SEM relevant research, marketing, admissions models and practice, financial aid, budgeting, campus leadership, diversity, student retention, and campus leadership. This study closes with a discussion of the implications for the formal educational preparation of future enrollment managers.

There is little doubt that the number of colleges and universities that have senior administrative positions charged with managing college enrollments has increased dramatically (Schultz and Lucido 2011). Enrollment management has evolved from a senior administrative position primarily at less selective private institutions that had to work harder to achieve their enrollment goals to a normative position found at most private and public institutions. As the presence

of enrollment management organizations has become commonplace, increasing attention has been given to the training and development of enrollment managers (Hossler 2014). These trends have also raised questions about the extent to which enrollment management is a profession (Henderson 2001; Ward and Hossler 2016). Indeed, having an identifiable body of knowledge that by implication becomes part of the formal education and training of individuals in a field of work is one of

the criteria that sociologists apply when determining what is considered a profession (Carpenter 1991, Henderson 2001, Lester 2010). Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) note that formal higher education graduate programs also play an important role in socializing novice employees into the profession. Thus, research of what experienced professionals think novices in the field need to know and how they view the formal education of enrollment managers is relevant to the nascent field of enrollment management.

To shed light on these important issues, the results of two studies that examined how senior enrollment management professionals view the educational needs of early- to mid-career enrollment professionals were combined:

- A national survey of experienced enrollment managers explored two research questions. First, what do respondents identify as the areas of knowledge and expertise required of enrollment managers? Second, what kind of formal education do experienced enrollment managers recommend for early- and mid-career professionals? More specifically, do early- and mid-career professionals need workshops, non-credit certificate/non-degree programs, master's degree programs, or doctoral degree programs?

- A session that took place at a national professional conference on enrollment management added detail. A modified Delphi Technique (Powell 2003) was utilized to identify the most pressing concerns of enrollment managers. These findings provide insight into the thematic content that should be part of educational programs for emerging enrollment managers.

Methods

This study was a multi-method study involving two research methods. First, a survey (*see* Appendix) was sent to 2,400 senior enrollment professionals; almost 15 percent (352) of those completed some but not all of the survey items, and 273 completed all of the items. All usable responses to individual items were included in the analysis. The response rate fell at the high end of normal response rates for online surveys according to a leading survey research company (Fryrear 2015) and at the low end according to Nulty (2008); the response rate was lower than the authors preferred. The response rate, though credible, might give pause in the analysis if a second study (described in the methods section) had not also been conducted. The two studies enabled the data to be triangulated and substantive conclusions to be reached.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Tableau was used to display the results). Using a forced choice set of questions, respondents were asked to select from among a set of options to identify the topic areas they believed to be the most important knowledge domains for enrollment managers. The survey also asked questions about the delivery methods for courses in enrollment management and the appropriate degree level for students in an enrollment management program. Survey respondents were almost evenly split by gender; with regard to race, 73 percent identified as white, 6 percent as black, 6 percent as Latino, and 3 percent as Asian. (The remainder did not answer this question.) Only 12 percent held a bachelor's degree as the highest degree attained, 61 percent held master's degrees, and 26 percent had an earned doctorate. On average, respondents had sixteen-plus years of experience. Fifty-two percent worked at private, non-profit four-year institutions, and 27 percent worked at public institutions (the majority at four-year institutions).

The second study was conducted at the ACT Enrollment Planner's Conference in July 2016. Approximately 60 enrollment managers represented an array of two- and four-year, public and private institutions. The study was based on a two-step process: Before the data-gathering process began, they were organized into groups numbering between eight and ten. Using a modified Delphi Technique, members of each group were asked to identify the five most pressing issues with which they were dealing. Group members shared their lists and used a consensus process to determine top priorities. The facilitators then grouped the priorities according to similar themes; participants were asked to vote for their top five concerns.

Considered in their entirety, these two studies provide a robust understanding of the professional education needs of early- to mid-career enrollment managers. They
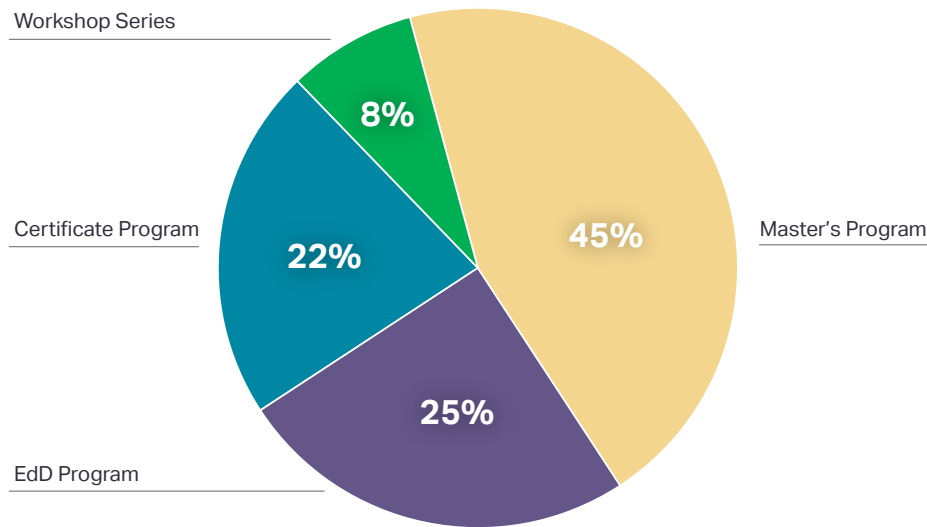
also enable us to present the results of these data with confidence and to make summative statements about the educational and professional needs of individuals aspiring to careers in the field of enrollment management.

## Results

What Level of Education is Needed?

As Figure 1 demonstrates, almost 70 percent of respondents indicated that aspiring enrollment managers should earn a graduate degree; 45 percent said that a master's degree was the appropriate level of education, and 25 percent thought a doctorate was the right degree for an enrollment manager to have earned. Twenty-two percent indicated that a certificate program was desirable while only 8 percent thought workshop training was sufficient. This demonstrates a clear preference for formal education as the appropriate training for aspiring senior enrollment managers.

In rank order, the five most important areas that respondents thought should be addressed in an educational program for enrollment managers were:

- ◼ Strategic planning
- ◼ Enrollment research
- ◼ Higher education finance
- ◼ Marketing in higher education
- ◼ Admissions models

To gain deeper insights into the educational needs of enrollment managers, two related questions were asked: in what areas of responsibility did senior enrollment professionals spend most of their time, and in which areas did they feel they needed more training. (*See* Figure 2.) Those areas in which respondents spend most of their time (in order of greatest time spent) include recruitment and admissions, personnel management, budgeting, campus leadership, and data collection and analysis. The areas in which senior respondents needed the most training (in rank order) include data collection and analysis, student retention, campus leadership, marketing, and financial aid.

Respondents were asked in which areas their more junior colleagues spend most of their time and in which those colleagues need more training. (*See* Figure 3.) The
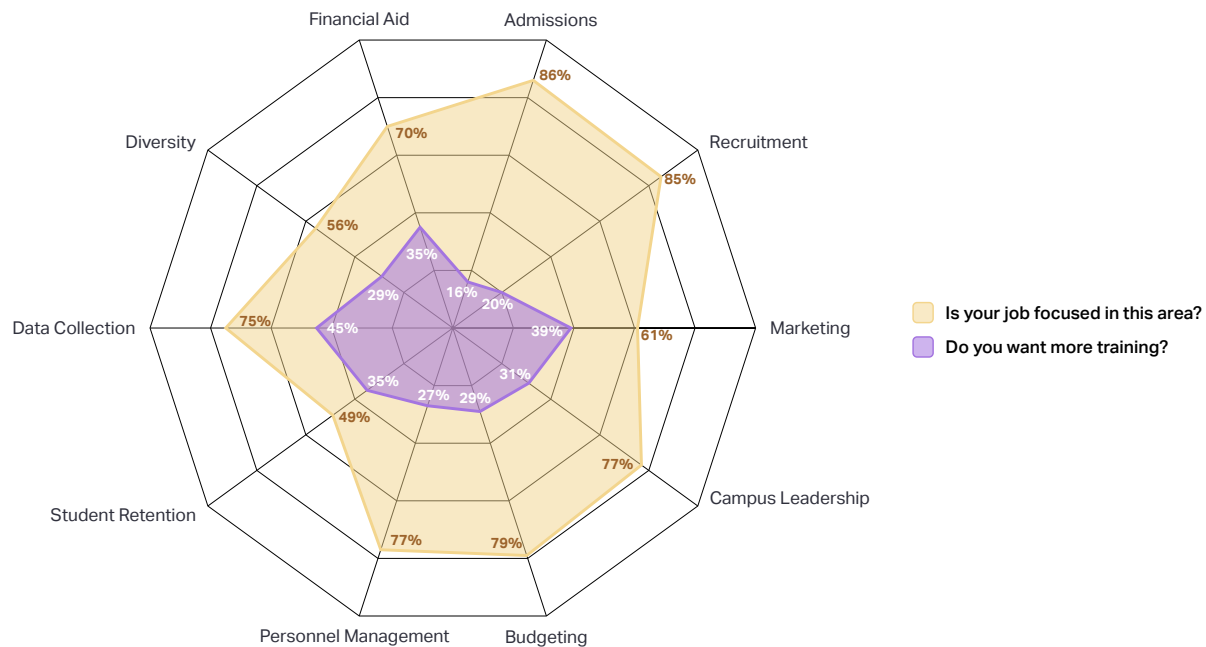
FIGURE 2 ➤ Areas of Focus and Areas Where Enrollment Managers Need More Training

areas where they spent the most time included recruitment, admissions, marketing, financial aid, and marketing; the areas where they needed the most training were data collection and analysis, student retention, marketing, and personnel management.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 present some clear patterns in what senior enrollment officers believe to be important domains of knowledge for early career professionals. Triangulating the responses, the researchers asked where domains of knowledge were most frequently mentioned. (Domains include the ability to use and understand enrollment research, higher education marketing, higher education finance, and—closely linked with finance—financial aid.) In addition, the researchers posited that strategic planning could be combined with improved exercise of senior leadership roles at the campus level. Other areas of responsibility (mentioned less frequently but still of importance) include student retention and, because respondents reported spending a great deal of time on staff supervision, personnel management.

Thus far, the results suggest that student recruitment and admissions models are important; however,

senior enrollment managers must believe that they gain expertise through practical experience. Respondents indicated that both they and their staff members spend large amounts of time focused on these areas, but for the most part, they do not rate them as important areas regarding which their staff (or they themselves need to gain more knowledge.

Results from this survey were triangulated with the five themes that enrollment managers identified through the modified Delphi Technique. The themes added more detail in the areas of leadership and as catalysts for change at institutions' senior levels. Because of concern that a survey that was too lengthy would reduce response rates, some items of interest could not be included. As noted in the methods section, approximately 60 enrollment professionals were asked to identify the five most pressing issues they faced. The five that emerged from the Delphi Technique included price and perceived value; how enrollment managers can be catalysts for change; regional decreases in the number of high school graduates; the role of enrollment management in outcomes; and getting buy-in from senior campus administrators and trustees.
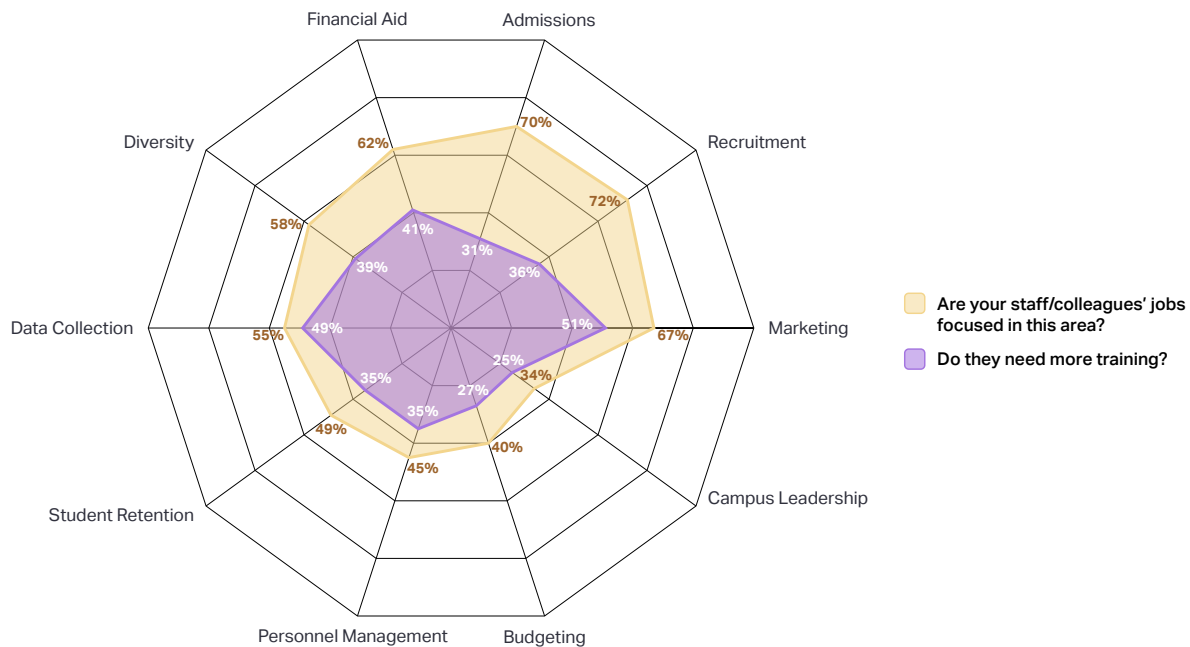
FIGURE 3 ➤ Experienced Enrollment Managers' Perceptions of Where Early Career Enrollment Professionals Spend Most of Their Time and Where They Need More Training

- Price and perceived value: States are simultaneously constraining tuition increases at public institutions and reducing levels of student debt for public and private colleges and universities. Institutions are also under pressure to demonstrate the value of the college experience and student outcomes—including lifetime incomes.

- Catalysts for change and getting buy-in: After reviewing these two themes, the researchers suggest that participants were raising many of the same issues—for example, too often enrollment managers are not included when key decisions are made; that they need to build coalitions with faculty and administrators; that they need to be represented at meetings of the board of trustees; and that they need to develop working relationships with chief financial officers.

- Demographic trends: Concerns related to this theme include the projected decreases in the numbers of high school graduates in most regions of the United States, increasing proportions of Latino and Asian high school graduates, the need to undertake more

market segmentation, and the need to increase the number of non-traditional and international students.

- The role of enrollment management in outcomes: In order to demonstrate the value of attending a specific institution, participants offer suggestions such as having career services report to enrollment management; reminding faculty of the importance of career-relevant degrees; and the career office taking special care to serve students in fields that do not lead directly to specific careers—to include ensuring that such students participate in internships.

Most of these themes are consistent with and reinforce results from the survey. For example, "catalysts for change" and "getting buy-in" are companion themes to the desire for enrollment managers to have more education in the areas of strategic planning and campus leadership. By its very nature, the strategic planning process involves working with other senior campus administrators. Serving as catalysts for change also implies working with a range of campus administrators, faculty members, and trustees.

The first theme, price and perceived value, connects with two findings from the survey: First, it speaks to the need for research to better understand an institution's position in the marketplace. It also raises another type of research not addressed in the survey: It suggests that enrollment managers need to systematically study shifts in state—and federal—policy as it relates to the funding of public colleges and universities as well as efforts to control tuition at public institutions. In addition, enrollment organizations need to monitor federal and state financial aid, which affect public and private institutions. This theme reinforces another finding from the survey: that enrollment managers need education and training in the domain of student financial aid. The third theme from the conference—declining numbers of high school graduates and downward economic trends—also speaks to the importance of research, though not to directly gathering institutional enrollment data but rather to be constantly tracking publicly available demographic and economic trend data. It is worth reiterating the importance of monitoring state and federal policy trends that could have an impact on the number and destinations of students enrolled in postsecondary education.

The only theme from the Delphi process that was not related to the survey results was the role of enrollment management in student outcomes, including career placement, internships, and the value added of earning a degree from a particular college or university. Overall, however, the results from these two different methodological approaches to understanding the educational needs of aspiring enrollment managers are both consistent and revealing.

Making Meaning for a Nascent Profession

The results from these two studies are informative regarding preferred educational pathways and curricula for aspiring and professional enrollment managers. Senior enrollment professionals demonstrate a clear preference for formal graduate education over certificates or workshops: Nearly 70 percent indicate that they believe that a graduate degree in enrollment management is the appropriate level of training for early- and mid-career

enrollment professionals. These findings suggest that graduate programs in enrollment management should become more common. In addition, the research demonstrates that the high degree of consensus about the knowledge domains in this field of work will result in a more consistent pattern of socialization for new and mid-career enrollment professionals (Lester 2010; Weidman, Twale and Stein 2001).

According to triangulation of the range of survey responses and the modified Delphi technique, senior enrollment officers recommend five knowledge domains for graduate programs:

- working with campus leaders, faculty, and trustees to develop and implement strategic plans;
- higher education finance: Build strong relationships with the campus CFO and the office of financial aid;
- enrollment research techniques and the ability to interpret data, identify institutional markets, and track demographic trends and federal and state policies that could affect postsecondary enrollments;
- higher education marketing; and
- student retention.

Student retention was the only one of the five domains that did not also emerge from the Delphi process. However, it was a strong emphasis in the survey findings and is consistent with the work of Coomes (2000), Hossler and Bontrager (2015), and Huddleston (2000). An additional area that emerged from the Delphi process was the role and/or responsibilities of enrollment managers in helping to enhance institutional outcomes. While this is important in the present age of accountability and concern about the employment outcomes and income earned by college graduates, this is not an area over which enrollment managers should have primary responsibility. (Student outcomes are tightly connected to the campus curriculum and student life experiences; for enrollment management to oversee these would create too expansive a role for the senior enrollment officer.) Rather, it is an area with regard to which enrollment managers should be concerned,

should help provide data to inform discussions, and should have a voice in discussions at senior policy levels.

Overall, there was consistency between the responses to the survey and the insights gleaned from the Delphi process. The findings indicate high degrees of agreement regarding both the formal training of enrollment managers through graduate programs and the knowledge that should constitute the curriculum of those programs. Indeed, graduate programs have begun

to emerge: The University of Miami offers a residential master's program, and Drew University offers online master's and doctoral degrees in enrollment management. These findings suggest that more graduate programs with an emphasis on enrollment management are likely to emerge in the near future. The next step will be for senior professionals in the field to recommend these programs to early- and mid-career professionals.

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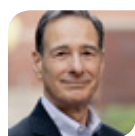
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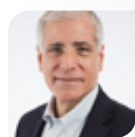
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