Getting Everyone on Board for Enrollment Success

Tennessee Board of Regents

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A few words about AACRAO

1. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
   – Also the professional home to enrollment managers

2. We’re old!
   – Started by faculty who were charged with new administrative duties as registrars in 1910
   – As admissions work grew out of the registrar’s office, we went from AACR to AACRAO after World War II
   – Enrollment management was looking for a home as more people were charged with more than just admissions work in the 1980’s and 1990’s
A few words about AACRAO

3. We’re large
   - Over 11,000 members
   - Many work in our areas of service but they are also
     • Student affairs professionals
     • Financial aid directors
     • Business and finance, IT professionals
     • Presidents and provosts (senior academic officers)

4. We’re international
   - Members in over 40 countries
   - Most institutions in the United States and Canada are members

5. We see lots of practices
Frequently heard in higher education today

“We’re enrollment is down and we haven’t been able to get the numbers back to where they were in 2011”

”We’ve tried advertising, more marketing and still we’re getting about the same number of students we did last year”

“I can’t get faculty to be involved in our recruitment/retention efforts”

“The upper administration isn’t supportive of what we need to boost enrollment”
Lots of things are working against enrollment today

1. Shifting demographics
   - Most colleges and universities in America are located in places where the population, especially of high school graduates, is shrinking

2. Booming economy and record low unemployment
   - Fewer people want to enter or return to higher education when jobs are plentiful and wages are rising

3. Declining value of higher education
   - While still largely positive, there is significant erosion in the belief that a college education is worth the investment
How can we improve enrollment and get everyone on board?

1. There are no silver bullets or magic marketing plans
   - Stop looking for the one thing that will make enrollment turn around

2. Nothing works everywhere or all the time
   - What will work for your institution must fit with your mission, vision, resource base and unique character
   - You can’t take someone else’s plan and paste your name over it

3. There are things that have shown better results, over time:
   - Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)
   - SEM planning
What is Strategic enrollment Management (SEM)?

Strategic enrollment management is a concept and process that enables the fulfillment of institutional mission and students’ educational goals.

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The Purposes of SEM are Achieved by...

1. Establishing **clear goals** for the number and types of students needed to fulfill the institutional mission

2. Promoting **students’ academic success** by improving access, transition, persistence, and graduation

3. Promoting institutional success by enabling effective **strategic and financial planning**

4. Creating a **data-rich environment** to inform decisions and evaluate strategies

*Bontrager*
The Purposes of SEM are Achieved by...

5. Improving process, organizational and financial efficiency and outcomes

6. Strengthening communications and marketing with internal and external stakeholders

7. Increasing collaboration among departments across the campus to support the enrollment program

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SEM Planning Framework

Sustainable Enrollment Outcomes

Tactics

Strategies

Enrollment Infrastructure

Strategic Enrollment Goals

Data Collection and Analysis

Key Enrollment Indicators

Institutional Strategic Plan

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SEM as a linked strategic plan

- Facilities Master Plan
- Institutional Strategic Plan
- SEM Plan
- Academic Affairs Plan
- Long Range Budget
- Student Affairs Plan

Institutional Strategic Plan
Start with the backing of the upper administration

1. How does the strategic plan become manifest in its enrollment?

2. What would the ideal size of the institution be in about five years?
   – Larger, smaller, the same?

3. Is growth proposed largely to satisfy budget needs?
   – Are there other needs that growth meets and if so, what are they?

4. Are there certain segments that need special attention to meet the vision of the institution?
   – Online education, special populations, age groups, other??
The upper administration may need help

1. Don’t assume that upper administrators understand the nuances of enrollment management

2. Keep the conversation at a very high-level, strategic place
   - Help your board, president or provost avoid getting into tactics or “the weeds” of enrollment solutions

3. Provide some background reading
SEM Organizational Framework

Executive Team
Institutional strategic plan, approval and champions of strategic enrollment goals and initiatives

SEM Steering Committee
Long-term enrollment goals, securing the approval of strategies through appropriate institutional channels, communication with Executive Team

Recruitment Council
Develop 3-4 strategic goals for new student recruitment; review and approve sub-committee action plans; recommend to SEM Steering Committee

Retention Council
Develop 3-4 strategic goals for retention and graduation; review and approve sub-committee action plans; recommend to SEM Steering Committee

Data Team
Environment scanning, student enrollment behavior research, enrollment models, provide data to councils as needed

3-4 Sub-Committees
Action plans, time lines and metrics for each strategic goal

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Everyone has a role to play

1. Executive team
   - Broadest view of the mission, vision and budget

2. Steering team
   - Co-chaired by executive-level academic, student affairs and enrollment leaders
   - Involve deans

3. Data team
   - Fuels the planning with research on current market position, opportunities and challenges on the horizon
   - Informs decision-making about enrollment with trend analyses of your enrollment for the past 5-10 years
Recruitment and Retention teams

1. Why not just one enrollment committee?
2. Co-chaired by a faculty member and staff expert in that area
3. Both teams need faculty representation and staff expertise
4. Goals and strategies must be highly focused:
   – This goes against our culture where everyone’s ideas become part of the plan
   – Requires discussion, often debate, and strong facilitation and leadership skills
Involving faculty

1. If you want faculty to implement the plan, they have to have a hand in building the plan

2. Make sure the process is viewed as “legitimate” in the eyes of the faculty:
   – Transparency
   – Dissent and dissenters may need to be part of the process

3. Communicate the work:
   – As you launch
   – During the planning process (and ask faculty to talk about their work at the departmental or other meetings)
   – Once the plan is done, make sure faculty are involved in presenting it
Some enrollment tips

1. SEM planning is about the long term
   - Make sure to have a mechanism to address short-term enrollment needs

2. SEM plans can’t fix poor operational performance
   - Those have to be addressed in order for the plan to reach its potential

3. When something doesn’t work:
   - Stop doing it
   - Talk about it
Questions and Discussion
Thank you!

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