



COLLEGE *and* UNIVERSITY

Vol. 94 N° 2 ♦ Spring 2019

Educating the Modern Higher Education Administration Professional

An Admissions/Enrollment
Imperative for Predicting
Student Success

Student Retention Models
in Higher Education:
A Literature Review

An Interview with Tina Falkner

FORUM

Campus Viewpoint

The Emerging Role of the
Registrar in Enrollment
Management

Leading Internal
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Enrollment Management
throughout New Academic
Program Implementation

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A Year in Review 2018

The Next Generation of
One-Stop Student Service
Centers: Part One

Commentary

The Registrar:
A Cultivator and Curator
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Don't Let Your Calling
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Editor's Note

Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Ph.D.
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I'm writing this note a few days before our annual rite of spring, the AACRAO Annual Meeting, the association's 105th. At the meeting, AACRAO will be recognizing Associate Executive Director Janie Barnett, who is retiring after more than 20 years with the association. In those 20 years, she has had an immense positive impact on the association and its members, including me. I join many, many others in thanking Janie and wishing her a wonderful retirement!

This edition includes three feature articles. In "An Admissions/Enrollment Imperative for Predicting Student Success" (*Chapter 9 from Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body*), Michele Sandlin discusses, among other topics, holistic assessment, key takeaways from Supreme Court decisions, and essential training of reviewers. In addition, Adam Burke wrote, "Student Retention Models in Higher Education: A Literature Review."

College and University has periodically published interviews with leaders in the AACRAO professions. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing AACRAO President Tina Falkner. The article appears in this edition. Among other topics, we discussed how she first got involved with AACRAO, and how her work with AACRAO connected to her work at the University of Minnesota.

There are two Campus Viewpoint articles, "The Emerging Role of the Registrar in Enrollment Management," by Rodney Parks and Alexander Taylor, and "Leading Internal Communication from Enrollment Management throughout New Academic Program Implementation," by Jeffrey P. Levine.

There are two Research in Brief articles, "AACRAO Research Year in Review," by Wendy Kilgore, AACRAO's Director of Research, and "The Next Generation of One-Stop Student Service Centers: Part One", by Francisco Maldonado Altieri.

There also are two Commentaries, "The Registrar: A Cultivator and Curator of Academic Policy," by Joe Tate, and "Don't Let Your Calling Catch Up with You: The Importance of Self-Care," by Monique Perry. We also include one book review, by Matthew Fifolt, of *Consolidating Colleges and Merging Universities: New Strategies for Higher Education Leaders* by James Martin, James E. Samuels and Associates.

My thanks to all who contributed to this issue of *College and University*! I hope, dear reader, that you will be inspired by something you read here to submit an article or book review to a future edition! Enjoy spring!

An Admissions/Enrollment Imperative for Predicting Student Success

This feature focuses on the five areas an institution needs to know before implementing holistic measures. These include: what does a holistic review entail, how to be legally compliant, Sedlacek's noncognitive variables, applying student success measures, and the vital importance of training.

Editor's Note:

"An Admissions/Enrollment Imperative for Predicting Student Success" was originally published in *Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body*.

The Insight Resume: Oregon State University’s Approach to Holistic Assessment,” published in the AACRAO *College Admissions Officer’s Guide* in 2008, outlined what had occurred when Oregon State University had begun to add a nonacademic assessment to its admission requirements. The goal since embarking on this venture in 2000–01 had been to fulfill the mission of a land-grant university and serve the state of Oregon, but this had become increasingly challenging because “the institution did not have a reliable way for nontraditional students to demonstrate their knowledge in order to be admitted to our campuses” (Sandlin 2008). At the time, the campus had been dealing with record enrollments and was concerned about to whom it was closing its doors and how it would impact the institution’s goal “to diversify and create a richer learning environment” (Sandlin 2008). Fast forward to 2017: in less than ten years, the concept of expanding admission requirements from just academic preparation to a holistic review that includes life skills, socioeconomic status, educational background, and other factors has become much more commonplace and in fact necessary in order to achieve the goals Oregon State had established in the early 2000s.

It is important to define what is meant by *holistic assessment* or *holistic review*.

Holistic can be defined as an emphasis on the whole person, not just select pieces that make up the whole person. If a college has holistic admissions, the school’s admissions officers consider the whole applicant, not just empirical data like a grade point average (GPA) or scholastic achievement test (SAT) scores. Colleges with holistic admissions are not simply looking for students with good grades. They want to admit interesting students who will contribute to the campus community in meaningful ways (Grove 2017).

Jaschik (2007), editor of *Inside Higher Ed*, provides another useful definition:

“...the qualities being asked about reward, determination, hard work, and other qualities that do in fact relate to college success as much as test scores.”

Incorporating additional non-academic criteria into the admission requirements equation has actually been a practice for more than 20 years and has been researched for close to 40 years. Only within the past ten years, though, has there been a surge in the number of colleges and universities that have incorporated nonacademic factors into the admission process, orientation, or first-year experience programs in order to better predict and ensure student success. This is an add-on and not a take-away methodology. Incorporating additional measures, the value of which is supported by research and case law, improves the decision-making process and increases the likelihood that students will be admit-

ted who are a good fit for the institution and who will be successful. Decisions will be based not only on students' academic accomplishments but also on the life skills and support students will require to survive and thrive.

A 2017 article in *Inside Higher Ed* focused on the admission process at selective colleges and universities. The author notes that such institutions admit students who “are increasingly from families with the resources to own houses in great school districts or afford private school”; he states further that “75 percent of students at selective colleges come from the top income quartile, while only 5 percent [come] from the bottom quartile” (Craig 2017, 2). And while there are only approximately 200 selective institutions, they have a significant role in that they are the “lens through which American culture views the entire higher education system” (Craig 2017, 2). This article promotes the idea of expanding admission requirements to add a life skills factor—what Craig calls “distance traveled” (Craig 2017, 2). This factor highlights the work of William Sedlacek, the foremost researcher on nonacademic criteria or non-cognitive variables as a significant factor in predicting success, dealing with adversity and diversity, setting and achieving long-term goals, having a strong support person, identifying with a community, and having a positive self-concept and a realistic sense of self (Sedlacek 2017); and Duckworth (2016), who is well-known for her promotion of passion and perseverance (more than genius) and grit. The distance traveled factor or having an “adversity index” focuses on where a student started compared with where they finish; in other words, a student who has had to overcome a significant hurdle(s) in life is more likely to have the ability to deal with challenges in college, whether financial, lack of support or structure, discrimination, or other (Craig 2017). “[T]his concerted effort to evaluate student achievement relative to unique background and resources” is what predicts success (Craig 2017, 2). Researchers such as Sedlacek, Duckworth, and others repeatedly find that the majority of these students are likely to be successful in college, in their careers, as citizens, and in life.

Additional nonacademic measures include more than those traditionally considered by colleges and universities to diversify and predict student success—for example, leadership skills, community service, extracurricular activities, and being a first-generation student. Many campuses are adding a broader range of factors, such as life skills, persistence, deferred gratification/long-term

goals, ability to deal with adversity, socioeconomic status, and educational background—based on environmental scans of student populations and what they are missing in terms of predicting and ensuring success.

Being Legally Compliant

One outcome of the legal cases of the past twenty years—in particular, *Fisher II*, which confirmed that colleges and universities have a compelling interest in ensuring student body diversity—is increased attention and focus on adopting a holistic admission policy and process. Having a race-neutral, holistic practice complies with the Supreme Court’s decision in *Fisher II*.¹ Whether public or private, and whether they receive any federal funding (including student aid) or not, it is important for colleges and universities to stay abreast of diversity and affirmative action issues at the state and federal levels. They must understand the implications of *Fisher II*.

The outcome of this case “reflected the importance and value of truly holistic, individualized review of applicants for selective institutions that seek to attain the benefits of diversity” (Coleman 2017, 3). But this is true for all types of institutions, not just those that are selective. It is a matter of ensuring that the students an institution admits will be successful during and after their higher education career.

Resources are particularly helpful to institutions reviewing admission requirements to achieve their missions of diversity or to be race conscious while also being race neutral. The *Fisher II* decision provides insight colleges and universities can use to ensure that their admission policies are compliant.

In October 2016, Stegmeir wrote an article for the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) entitled “What Your College Should Know about *Fisher II*”; it summarizes three key points:

◆ **Race-neutral recruitment strategies are important.**

Colleges should anticipate that they may be asked how they attract a diverse applicant pool. In *Fisher II*, the U.S. Supreme Court noted with approval some of the methods used by the University of Texas at Austin to recruit diverse applicants, including outreach to minority student populations, regional recruitment centers, and race-neutral scholarships.

¹ See <supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/11-345_l5gm.pdf>.

- ◆ **Data and analytics matter.** Colleges may need to provide evidence that they explored race-neutral alternatives. The court emphasized UT-Austin’s ability to demonstrate through quantitative and qualitative data that race-neutral strategies of achieving diversity were inadequate.
- ◆ **Frequent self-evaluation is critical.** Just because a race-conscious policy is currently considered constitutionally sound, there’s no guarantee it will remain so indefinitely. Colleges should constantly assess whether they must rely on race-conscious admission practices to achieve their educational goals, or whether race-neutral strategies are sufficient.

Education Counsel has been a national leader in informing the higher education community about legal rulings regarding diversity and affirmative action, articulating the implications of those rulings for U.S. colleges and universities, and providing guidance on policy development. Two well-known joint publications by Education Counsel and the College Board regarding higher education diversity are *The Playbook: A Guide to Assist Institutions of Higher Education in Evaluating Race- and Ethnicity-Neutral Policies in Support of Their Mission-Related Diversity Goals* and *Implications from Fisher II: The U.S. Supreme Court’s Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education Regarding Race-Conscious Enrollment Practices*.

What is unique about *The Playbook* is that it is designed to help higher education meet diversity goals, evaluate policies to meet “mission-related” diversity goals, and assist with meeting federal compliance requirements. At the forefront of *The Playbook* is the legal requirement of “strict scrutiny.”²

The strict scrutiny standard of judicial review is based on the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Federal courts use strict scrutiny to determine whether certain types of government policies are constitutional. It is the most rigorous form of judicial review. The U.S. Supreme Court has applied this standard to laws or policies that impinge on a right explicitly protected by the U.S. Constitution, such as the right to vote. The Court has also identified certain rights that it deems to be fundamental rights, even though they are not enumerated in the Constitution.

² Definition retrieved February 13, 2018 from <legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Strict+Scrutiny>.

According to *The Playbook*, for an institution to meet strict scrutiny, it must establish:

- ◆ **A Compelling Interest.** This is the end that must be established for maintaining lawful race- and ethnicity-conscious programs.... Federal courts recognize a limited number of interests to justify the consideration of race or ethnicity....
- ◆ **Narrow Tailoring.** This is the requirement that addresses the means to achieve the compelling interest, with race or ethnicity only in the most limited manner possible to achieve that goal.

The federal courts examine criteria to see if a program is achieving that goal, such as:

- Necessity of using race or ethnicity,
- Flexibility of the program,
- Burden on those who do not benefit from the consideration, and
- Whether the policy has an end point and is subject to periodic review.

(College Board and Education Counsel 2014).

Figure 1 (on page 6), adapted from *The Playbook*, is helpful to colleges and universities in their review of their race-conscious/race-neutral practices.

The Playbook is unique not only in that it is laid out like a sports playbook but also in that it goes beyond race and ethnicity to strategies related to socioeconomic status, geographic diversity, first-generation students, and states such as Texas with percentage plans. Perhaps of greatest help is *The Playbook*’s posing of the following three questions relative to the use of a race-conscious policy:

- ◆ Can the institution achieve its goals without race-conscious policies? Why or why not?
- ◆ How has the institution seriously considered (and, when appropriate, tried) race-neutral alternatives?
- ◆ Could a workable alternative (or alternatives) achieve the same results as race-conscious policies about as well and at tolerable administrative expense? Why or why not?

(College Board and Education Counsel 2014)

The second collaborative document, “Implications from *Fisher II*,” was the more detailed draft regarding the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Fisher II* decision about race-conscious admission programs allowable under federal

law. The key takeaways “provided additional insight and guidance regarding the kind of action necessary to comply with federal nondiscrimination law” (College Board and Education Counsel 2016, 1). “Implications” includes an in-depth guide to implementing policy and resulting practice for U.S. colleges and universities.

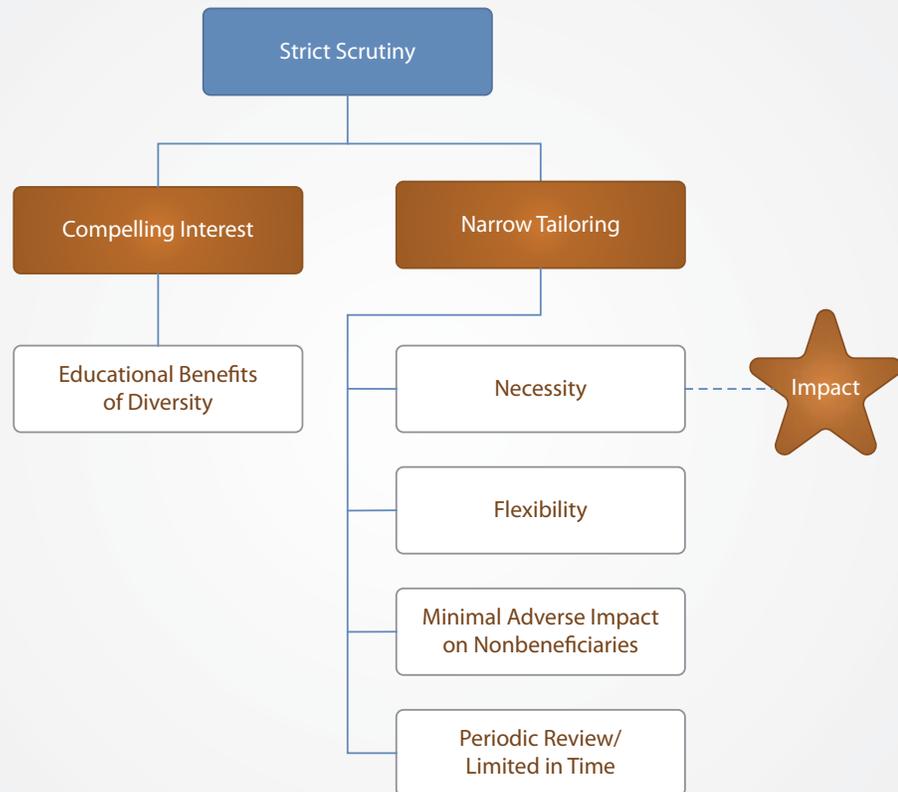
The third takeaway, as shown in the “Key Takeaways” sidebar on the next page, focuses on holistic review as a cornerstone and again highlights the increased demand in U.S. higher education for successful, research-based, and tested holistic review assessments that are easy to implement, efficient, and do not add significant time to review nor significant workload to admission or other offices. Most important, they need to consider all items listed above, in *The Playbook*, and in the “Implications” guide. Institutions that do this well are tracking all the measurements of success of any review process, review annually, are staying abreast of legal issues, updates, and research, and, most important, are tracking and documenting the success of students through the entire enrollment funnel, from prospects to successful alumni.

The Education Counsel is conducting work that will help colleges and universities implement holistic review within the admission process or once a student is enrolled and plans to release a document grounded in law, policy, research, and best practice.

The Sedlacek Method

William E. Sedlacek, Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland College Park, has made his life’s work (close to forty years) the study of nonacademic success measurements in higher education or *noncognitive variables*. Sedlacek’s noncognitive assessment method is a strong predictor of retention and student success and is designed to be used with academic measures, thus enabling holistic review of an applicant for admission to a college or university. “The term noncognitive is used here to refer to variables relating to adjustment, motivation and perception, and can be assessed efficiently in a variety of ways, and can be incorporated into any admissions process,” and are applicable for all students

Figure 1.
Strict Scrutiny
for Race-
Conscious
Enrollment
Practices



Source: College Board and Education Counsel 2014, 11.

Key Takeaways

The following lessons and clarifications can and should guide institutional planning and action:

- Goals and objectives associated with student body diversity should be sufficiently precise, without resorting to numbers only, and based on evidence-centered academic judgments.
- Institution-specific evidence should support the necessity of using race-conscious methods for achieving these goals.
 - ▶ All related enrollment policies and practices should inform an institution's conclusion that other "workable" race-neutral efforts alone will not achieve its goals.
 - ▶ Race-conscious policies should have evidence of meaningful, if limited, positive impact on the achievement of the institution's goals.
- Holistic review remains a cornerstone for race-conscious admissions because it reflects flexible consideration of race through individualized evaluation and an institution's unique mission.
- Institutions have an "ongoing obligation to engage in constant deliberation and continued reflections" regarding their admissions and related policies. The decision to consider race in enrollment decisions cannot be an isolated, one-time occurrence.
- The broader social context counsels that institutions should use *Fisher II* as an impetus for recommitting to their institutional goals.

Source: College Board and Education Counsel 2014, 11.

(Sedlacek 2004, 2017). In fact, noncognitive variables are critical when assessing nontraditional students. To assess using only traditional academic measurements can be limiting and even unfair in the assessment of these students' potential (Kalsbeek, Sandlin and Sedlacek 2013).

Sedlacek's (2004) eight noncognitive variables are:

- ◆ **Positive Self-Concept:** Demonstrates confidence, strength of character, determination, and independence;
- ◆ **Realistic Self-Appraisal:** Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development. Recognizes need to broaden individuality.
- ◆ **Understands and Knows How to Handle the System:** Exhibits a realistic view of the system based upon personal experiences and is committed to improving the existing system. Takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs but is not hostile to society nor is a "cop out." Involves handling any "isms" (*e.g.*, racism, sexism, ageism).
- ◆ **Prefers Long-Range to Short-Term or Immediate Needs:** Able to respond to deferred gratification; plans ahead and sets goals.
- ◆ **Availability of a Strong Support Person:** Seeks and takes advantage of a strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement.

- ◆ **Demonstrated Community Service:** Identifies with a community and is involved in community work.
- ◆ **Successful Leadership Experience:** Demonstrates strong leadership in any area: church, sports, non-educational groups, gang leader, etc.
- ◆ **Nontraditional Knowledge Acquired:** Acquires knowledge in sustained and/or culturally related ways in any area, including social, personal, or interpersonal.

Hundreds if not thousands of colleges and universities—and not only in the United States—are using the Sedlacek method. Other countries have worked with Sedlacek to address some of the same enrollment and equity issues with which U.S. institutions grapple. The Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS) program is perhaps most famous for utilizing the Sedlacek method.

The GMS program applies Sedlacek's noncognitive variables to award 1,000 annual scholarships to talented college or university applicants for the full course of study for an undergraduate degree as well as for graduate study in select disciplines. This successful program seeks to increase diversity in U.S. society, prepare "a diverse cadre of leaders," provide access and support to those who traditionally and historically have been disadvantaged, and advance the United States into the next millennium. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the program was established

in 1999 for African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students who were federal Pell Grant–eligible, citizens, legal permanent residents or nationals of the United States, have a 3.3 high school GPA or higher, have undertaken a rigorous high school curriculum, and complete the noncognitive assessment. The program’s success is unparalleled.³

- ◆ GMS selects 1,000 new scholars each year; more than 20,000 Gates Scholars have been funded since 2000.
- ◆ GMS awarded \$934,092,630 in scholarships between 2000 and 2014.
- ◆ The average award was \$12,785 between the 2001 and 2014 academic years.
- ◆ The average first-year undergraduate student retention rate is 96.2 percent (active or deferment) among Gates Scholars; the average second-year rate is 93.2 percent (active/deferment).
- ◆ The GMS five-year graduation rate is 82.2 percent; the six-year graduation rate is greater than 86.9 percent.
- ◆ Nearly half of Gates Millennium Scholars (48.5 percent; n=6,281) enroll in graduate school after earning a bachelor’s degree: 60.6 percent in a GMS funded field and 39.4 percent in GMS unfunded fields.
- ◆ Gates Millennium Scholars have enrolled at 1,751 colleges and universities.
- ◆ 12,959 Gates Millennium Scholars have completed a degree since the program’s inception; 10,654 Scholars who started the program as freshmen have earned an undergraduate degree.
- ◆ Of the active entering freshmen in the 2015 cohort, 40.9 percent (n=399) are attending highly selective colleges that admit one-third or fewer of their applicants. More than half (51.1 percent; n=499) are attending colleges that admit 40 percent or fewer of their applicants, and 58.7 percent (n=574) are attending colleges that admit fewer than half of their applicants.

Sedlacek’s work on noncognitive variables paved the way for the consideration of life skills, adversity, grit, “distance traveled,” socioeconomic status, educational background, and other factors as more significant

³ See <gmsp.org/gates-millennium-scholars-program> for current success statistics.

predictors and indicators of the success and needs of students of diverse backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, learning styles, income groups, geographic locations, customs, and availability of resources and support.⁴

Holistic Review as a Success Measure After Admission

Colleges and universities that have added noncognitive variables to their admissions requirements are finding that these variables are associated with improved outcomes and higher retention, particularly for certain populations. The application of noncognitive variables is allowing for earlier intervention methods.... The end result is stronger preparation, better orientation programs, and mentoring and coaching programs that start on day one (DeHaemers and Sandlin 2015, 392).

Even institutions that successfully implement a holistic admission process may not be prepared for what may come after they enroll a more diverse group of students. One advantage of implementing a holistic process is that the admission office will have a wealth of information about the students they are admitting—including their strengths and needs. What will the institution do with this information? Knowing students’ needs can help the campus provide assistance and support to ensure that students are successful. Institutions that manage this information and create a process for channeling services will increase student persistence, retention, and graduation rates. A holistic admission process can have an impact far beyond incorporating nonacademic factors in decisions.

Many early adopters are successfully funneling information from the admission process. In recent years, orientation and retention efforts have begun to incorporate holistic reviews to identify the noncognitive factors that can help students succeed during their enrollment and subsequent transition. Student affairs, student services, and advising have all worked with students on noncognitive issues, though typically on a case-by-case or individualized basis. Advances in technology have made tools available that can assist with holistic assessment. Academic and noncognitive factors can be used

⁴ For more information about Sedlacek’s work, noncognitive assessments, and how to use and implement them, see <williamsedlacek.info> or <consulting.aacrao.org>.



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to help identify and implement strategies and services for increasing student persistence and retention.

Educational Testing Service has released Success Navigator,⁵ a product that institutions can utilize during orientation to warn key retention staff and faculty when students are experiencing trouble, are at risk, and/or may need additional support with noncognitive factors such as discipline and social adaptation. This “early warning” online system notifies institutions when interventions such as coaching, advising, support, and resources are needed. The assessment provides insight into those factors that have the greatest influence on new students’ academic and personal success.

Uniform Standards: It’s All About Training

In the *Fisher II* Supreme Court case, Justice Kennedy stated that “if a holistic plan is adopted, reviewers must be trained to ensure uniform standards” (Yudof and Moran 2016). In addition, a 2016 study highlighted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* found that “the personal background of admissions officers appeared to play a major role in determining how much they used holistic consideration to promote socioeconomic diversity” (Schmidt 2016). Having built noncognitive training programs at many other institutions, it is clear that the training of the staff who will be reading and scoring the reviews is extremely important. Good training must focus on who is reading and scoring: is it a diverse pool of readers with various backgrounds who can read and score subjective assessments as objectively as possible? Most colleges and universities leave a large portion of the file review to admission counselors, many of whom are themselves recent graduates. While they know the institution well and believe in it, they may find holistic review challenging. “We need to look carefully at whether the practices of admissions offices are consistent with the rhetoric” (Schmidt 2016). In fact, Schmidt (2016) found that alumni counselors were more likely to have a “strong preference for high-achieving candidates from a wealthier background” (2). This is concerning given that 45 percent of the counselors who participated in the study were alumni.

Another interesting outcome of the study pertained to the gender and diversity of the reviewers. Women were more likely to award higher scores and to consider lower-income applicants whereas reviewers of color were less likely to admit high-achieving, higher-income applicants (Schmidt 2016). It is clear that all reviewers must be trained and be made aware of how their personal biases may factor into their reviews; the review process itself must have an opt-out option for reviewers. Training must address equity concerns, but “hiring is also crucial” (Schmidt 2016, 2). The review process coordinator must be cognizant of and promote diversity among those who will review applicants. In fact, in addition to admission counselors, the reviewer pool should include other professionals on campus with an interest in the process. Consider inviting staff from student affairs/services, cultural centers, LGBTQA, tutoring or academic assistance, faculty, housing and dining services, health services, other enrollment management offices, campus sports, the career center, and other offices.

A holistic training must provide instruction on how to read, score, and review applications and on how to recognize personal bias. Can a reviewer be fair even if an application expresses viewpoints opposed to a personal belief, or will the reviewer award a lower or higher score on the basis of past experiences or background? Can the reviewer recognize their own implicit biases? Can biases be suspended? If not, is there a process for opting out of reviewing an applicant’s file and assigning another reviewer? This issue suggests why a holistic process may not work: a reviewer’s background or personal bias may skew who is and who is not admitted.

Finally, all reviewers who participate in holistic admissions or holistic review once a student is admitted should be required to complete a comprehensive cultural competency training course at least once every couple of years. In fact, all enrollment management staff must be culturally competent. The lack of core cultural competency skills is directly related to poorer holistic reviews and miscommunication with diverse students, faculty, staff, and the public, and it adversely affects retention. Cultural competency⁶

⁵ See <ets.org/successnavigator>.

⁶ Definition retrieved February 13, 2018 from <medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/cultural+competence>.

is the “ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from cultures and/or belief systems other than one’s own, based on various factors” and to possess “the knowledge and skills required to manage cross-cultural relationships effectively.” Holistic training needs to ensure cultural competence in all staff; they must have the tools and the mindset for commu-

nicating with diverse people in an effective, respectful, and empathetic manner. Often, cultural competency training is available through an institution’s human resources campus training division or campus cultural center. It also may be offered through a higher education training seminar or professional association.

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About the Authors

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Student Retention Models in Higher Education: A Literature Review

This literature review examines student retention in higher education institutions. Specifically, it looks at the background and history of student retention, three student retention theories, and current literature on student retention within the social system. The three theories are Spady's (1970, 1971) Undergraduate Dropout Process Model, Tinto's (1975, 1993) Institutional Departure Model, and Bean's (1980, 1982) Student Attrition Model. These provide context for a literature review on current publications, focusing mainly on the social (as opposed to the academic) aspect of higher education. Major findings are that the topic of student retention is critical to higher education institutions, but it is highly complex and difficult to predict. The literature is clear that student engagement during the higher education experience leads to higher student retention rates and increased institutional commitment.

Student attrition rates have been one of the most critical issues in higher education for decades. As students fail to persist at higher education institutions, there are impacts on both the academic and social environments. Student persistence also plays a major impact in institutions' financial planning, as student tuition and fees are major drivers of institutional income. With these facts in mind, it becomes increasingly important to understand what literature and theories exist relative to increasing student success and retention within higher education. The literature is rich with theoretical frameworks as well as qualitative and quantitative research to support understandings of student persistence. This article provides an overview of student retention, some of the theoretical models that exist in the literature, and some of the applied retention research within student affairs.

Definition of Retention

Student retention in higher education is typically defined as the continued enrollment of a student from the first year to the second year (Bean 1980, 1982; Cotton, *et al.* 2017; Farrell 2009; Ishler and Upcraft 2005; Spady 1970; Tinto 1975, 1993). Another term that is used, sometimes interchangeably, is student persistence. However, persistence is typically used to define students' continued enrollment from years two until graduation (Belch, *et al.* 2001; Chambers and Paull 2008; Kerby 2015). Student retention is critical to the

success of higher education institutions as the highest levels of student attrition are from year one to year two (Achinewhu-Nworgu 2017; Blue 2018; Tinto 1975, 1993). The higher the retention rate an institution can achieve, the more students it will maintain who will pay tuition and fees and generate academic achievements—all of which are imperative to institutional success.

Background of Retention in Higher Education

While student attrition has been a critical issue since the establishment of higher education institutions, the theoretical frameworks in which retention is studied are relatively new (Aljohani 2016a, 2016b). The majority of theories that relate to student retention were derived during the early 1970s and have since been added to, revisited, and revised (Tinto 2007, Tudor 2018, West, *et al.* 2016).

Throughout the history of the education system, institutional goals and priorities have shifted away from building individual competencies in a few skill areas and toward the graduation of students (Aljohani 2016a; Bodin and Orange 2018). In the decades that preceded the 1950s, there was no systematic approach to student retention (Aljohani 2016b; Caruth 2018). Following World War II and the expansion of higher education, institutions had to deal with the influx of new students and the increased desire for a college education (Crosling, *et al.* 2008, Logan 2017, Manyanga, *et al.* 2017). The literature argues that during this expansion period, student retention became a global concern, with the result that student retention models were created (Aljohani 2016a, 2016b; Tinto 2007).

Prior to the 1970s the majority of student retention research and theories focused on characteristics of individual students (Aljohani 2016a; Reason 2003; Tinto 1975, 1993). Institutional research prior to the 1970s focused on traits such as gender, socioeconomic class, and race to determine whether any characteristics related directly to student attrition (Reason 2003; Tinto 1975, 1993). Interaction between individuals and institutions was rarely addressed, but beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, these relational variables began to be incorporated into student retention models (Aljohani 2016a, 2016b; Bean 1980; Spady 1970, 1971; Tinto 1975).

Methodology

This article has been constructed by reviewing literature and seminal works on student attrition and retention in higher education. The findings of this literature review are presented as two main sub-topics: the theoretical student retention models and current research that impacts and influences those models. Because the field of student attrition is rather extensive, this literature review focuses on the role of social interaction during students' higher education experience.

Theoretical Models

Although there are many student retention theoretical models, this literature focuses on three seminal works: Spady's (1970, 1971) Undergraduate Dropout Process Model, Tinto's (1975, 1993) Institutional Departure Model, and Bean's (1980, 1982) Student Attrition Model. All are grounded in sociology and refer to the relationship between the individual and the institution. The majority of the literature expands or tests these theories in their specific setting or application, as in private, distance, and non-traditional learning environments (Guglielmetti 2011; Holmegaard, *et al.* 2017; Page and Kulick 2016). This literature review is through the lens of a public, four-year institution.

Current Research

While student attrition is a major institutional concern, there is still work to be done in determining what an institution can do to improve retention. This literature review focuses on current research (from no later than 2010) on student engagement in higher education. In an

attempt to relate the current research to student engagement within the field of student affairs (or non-academic units), many of the articles were attained either from the *Recreational Sports Journal* or the *NASPA Journal*.

Current research in the field typically takes specific applications or programs within higher education and tests them to determine their impact on student retention. Many of the articles that are reviewed are specific applications of student retention work and may not be transferrable to other applications or program areas within higher education. That said, one of the consistent themes is that when student engagement increases at an institution, attrition rates decrease (Bean 1980; Belch, *et al.* 2001; Bowman and Culver 2018; Forrester, *et al.* 2018; Grier, *et al.* 2016; Ishler and Upcraft 2005; Kampf and Teske 2013; McElveen and Rossow 2014; Miller 2011; Mosholder, *et al.* 2016; Weaver, *et al.* 2017).

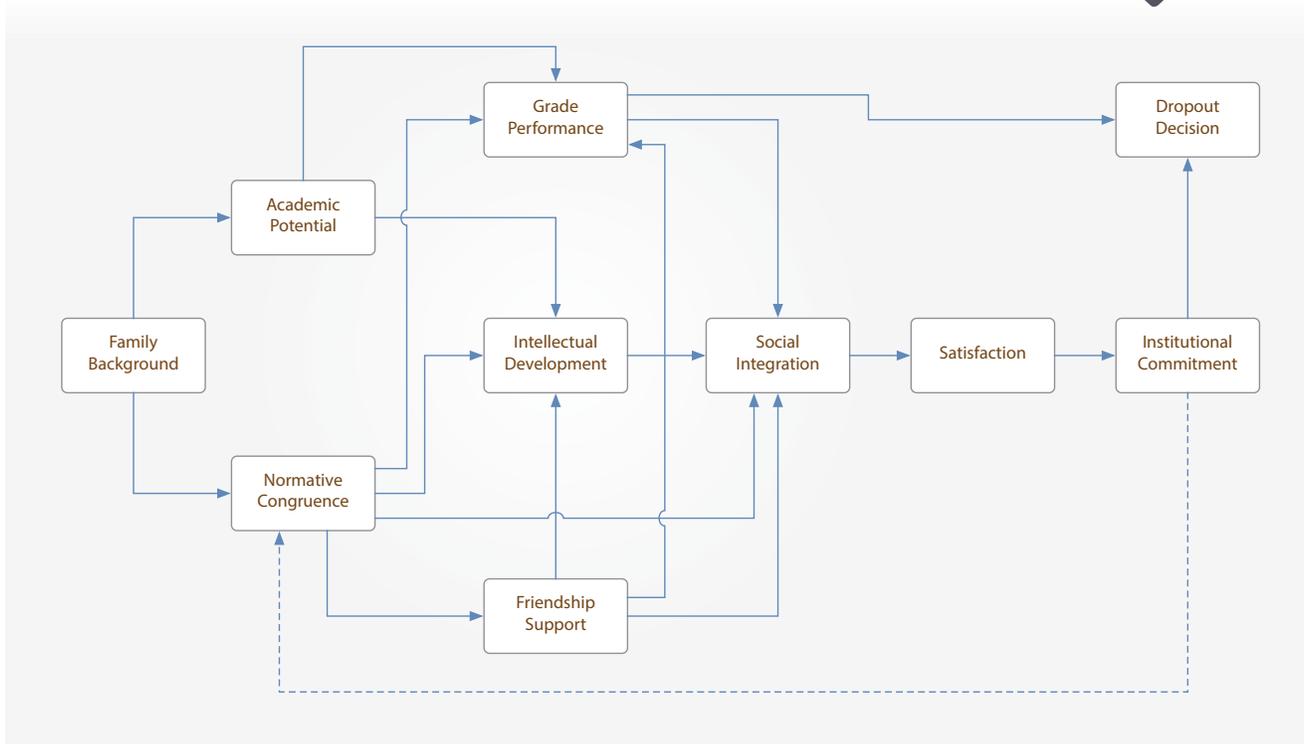
Findings

Theoretical Models

The Undergraduate Dropout Process Model (Spady 1970, 1971)

The Undergraduate Dropout Process Model is widely considered to be one of the first theoretical models of student retention in the literature (Tinto 1970, Webb, *et al.* 2017). Spady's (1970) model was one of the first to incorporate Durkheim's theory of suicide as it relates to student retention, as both suicide and attrition are forms of removing oneself from society (Spady 1970). This model was one of the first attempts to move toward an interdisciplinary approach to understanding student retention rates (as opposed to looking at the characteristics of individual students independent of the institution).

Spady's (1970, 1971) starting point was the assumption that the student attrition process is best explained by an interdisciplinary approach that involves both the interaction between the individual student and the particular college environment in which the student's characteristics are exposed to influences from a variety of sources. The theory assumes that students operate with two main institutional systems: the academic system and the social system. The theory relies on the idea that as students are challenged and exposed to various influences, the systems impact them differently; success in the academic system is measured by grades and in the social system by attitudes, interests, and personality



dispositions that are in line with the institution (Spady 1970, 1971).

Durkheim maintains that the likelihood of suicide increases when two types of integration are absent: “insufficient moral consciousness and insufficient collective affiliation” (Spady 1970). Suicide clearly is much more serious and severe than student attrition, yet Spady argues that the social situations present in Durkheim’s theory form a parallel to institutional attrition in that poor performance in the academic system coupled with a lack of consistent, intimate relationships may lead to student attrition.

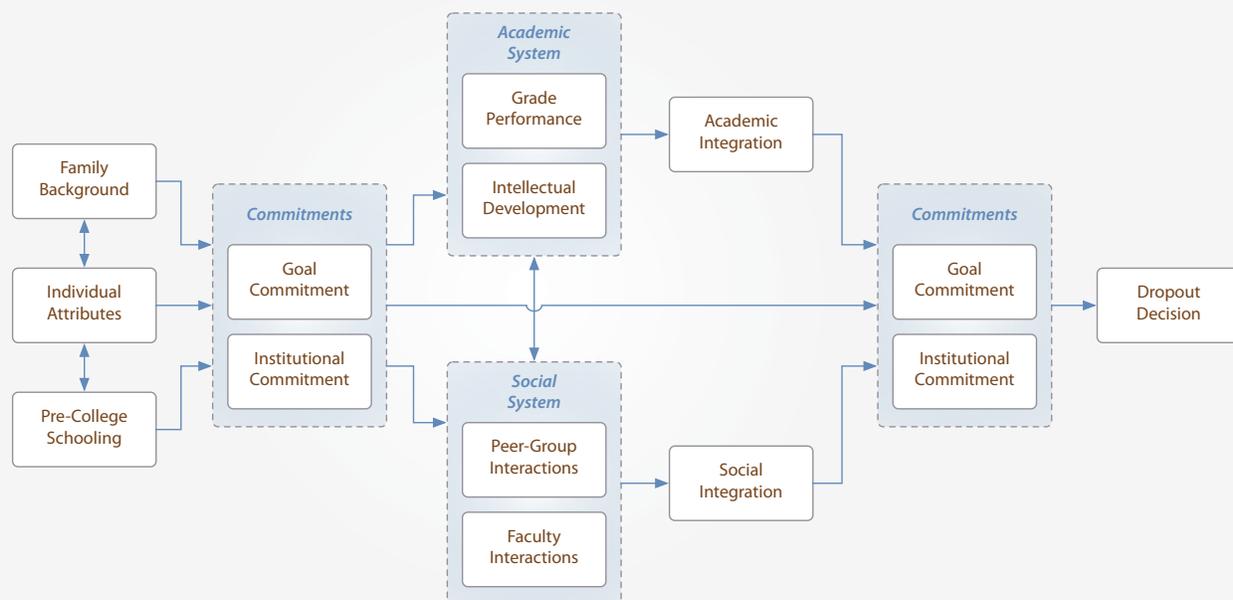
Spady’s (1970) first Undergraduate Dropout Process Model (which he revised in 1971) tied student attrition rates to four main variables: intellectual development, social integration, satisfaction, and institutional commitment. This model depends on the assumptions (1) that one’s satisfaction with the college experience will depend on the available social and academic rewards and (2) that sustaining one’s commitment to the college requires both integration into the system and a sufficient number of positive rewards (either academic or social) (Spady 1970, 1971). Figure 1 demonstrates

how the multiple variables within Spady’s (1970, 1971) model interact with each other.

Institutional Departure Model (Tinto 1975, 1993)

Tinto’s (1975, 1993) Institutional Departure Model is perhaps the most cited and influential theory of student retention. Tinto’s (1975, 1993) theory builds upon Spady’s (1970, 1971) theory utilizing Durkheim’s suicide theory. Tinto (1975) also relies heavily on the social integration writings of Van Gennep (1960), who argued that in tribal societies, there are rituals and rites of passage that apply within social communities and that they must be followed.

Expanding on Van Gennep’s rites of passage in tribal societies, Tinto (1975, 1993) argues that the social transition for incoming, first-year students is essential to their success. During the stage of separation from one life (high school, hometown, etc.) to college, students must develop new relationships and a new community in order to be successful. This can be difficult to accomplish as there are potentially new values, priorities, and behaviors within the college community that students were not exposed to previously.



Like Spady (1970, 1971), Tinto (1975, 1993) acknowledges the presence of two main environmental factors: the academic system and the social system. Tinto (1975, 1993) argues that a student's decision to leave an institution must be grounded in one of two realms: academic or social. In the academic system, a student must have a certain level of commitment to personal goals (grades, graduation, etc.) to continue to be motivated and persist. Conversely, a student must demonstrate a certain level of institutional commitment, typically evidenced through social network and school pride. The combination of personal goals and institutional commitment is what leads ultimately to a student's decision to return to school (*see* Figure 2).

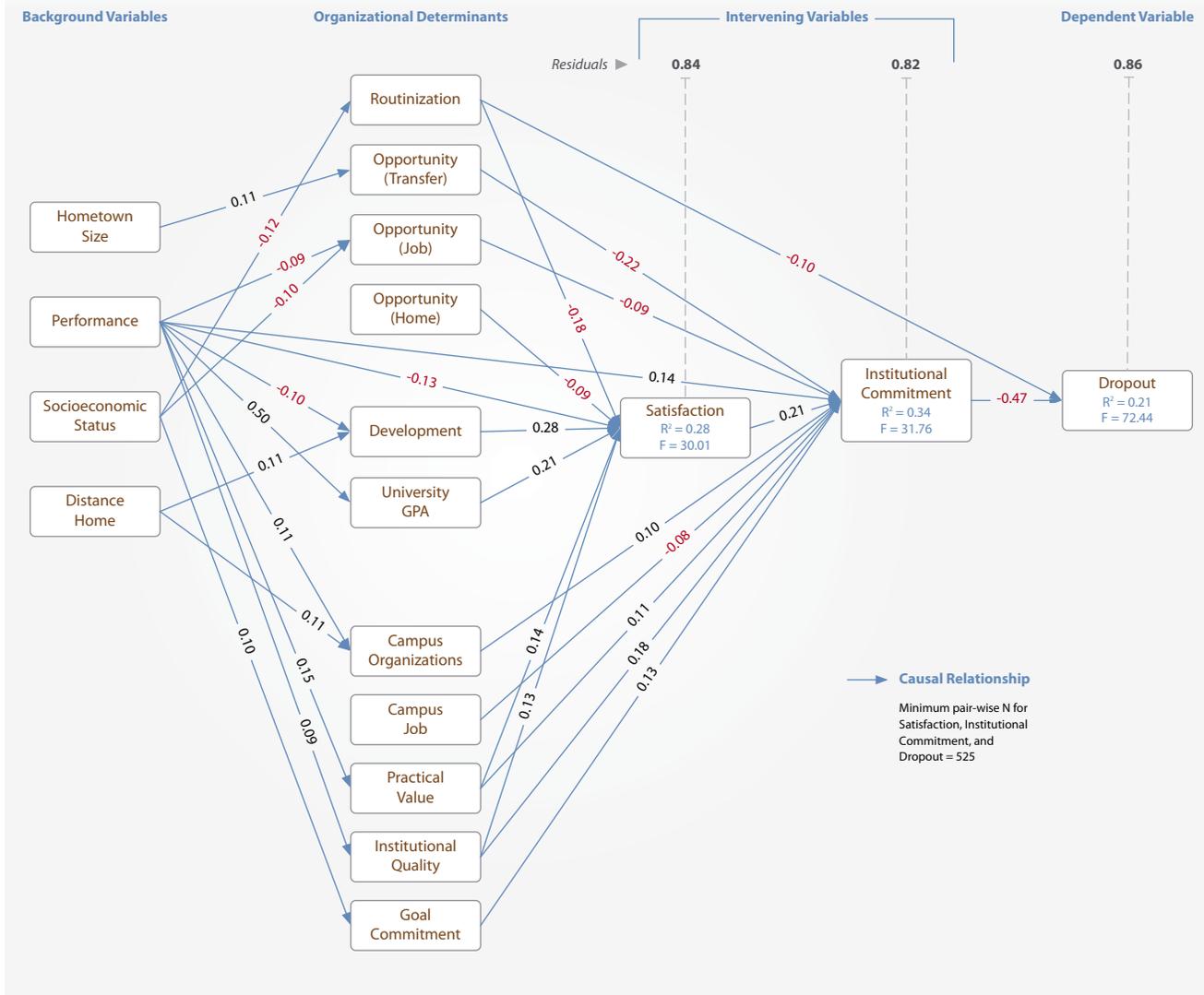
In part because this model is the most cited (Tinto 1975, 1993) and perhaps the most well accepted, it has been repeated, tested, and reviewed repeatedly since its publication. Individuals have taken Tinto's (1975, 1993) model and applied it to their own specific contexts, including for-profit, public, private, distance, and international education (Gansemer-Topf, *et al.* 2018; Grier-Reed, *et al.* 2016; Mansouri and Moumine 2017; Mosholder, *et al.* 2016; Page and Kulick 2016). These

studies have taken the basis of Tinto's (1975, 1993) model and modified it to meet their and their populations' needs, but the use of Tinto's model in multiple contexts gives more credibility and validity (Aljohani 2016a).

Student Attrition Model (Bean 1980, 1982)

Bean's Student Attrition Model (1980, 1982) postdates Spady (1970, 1971) and Tinto's (1975, 1993) models and argues that none of the previous models is testable with a direct correlation (Bean 1980). Bean also argues that there is insufficient evidence to support the link between Durkheim's theory of suicide and student attrition; this is a major difference between the models. Bean's models (1980, 1982) strive to create a direct path of causality such that administrators can point to a specific variable that indicates why students drop out.

Spady (1970, 1971) and Tinto (1975, 1993) relied on characteristics of individuals and their relationships to their organizations to create their models, but Bean (1980, 1982) took an organizational workplace view. Bean (1980, 1982) argues that the factors that influence workforce turnover correlate directly with student attri-



tion in higher education institutions (Aljohani 2016b). Bean (1980, 1982) argues that the same reasons that a staff member would leave an organization apply to a student leaving an institution.

Bean's (1980, 1982) theory is grounded in statistical analysis and quantitative data; Spady (1970, 1971) and Tinto's (1975, 1993) are grounded in sociology and philosophy. One major finding of Bean's (1980, 1982) is that male and female students leave institutions for different reasons, but institutional commitment is the most important variable in explaining student attrition for both genders. One of the major differences between male and female students is that males leave an institu-

tion even though they are satisfied whereas females who are more satisfied are more committed to their institution and are less likely to leave (Bean 1980).

As Figure 3 indicates, Bean's (1980, 1982) Student Attrition Model includes many variables that impact a student's decision to persist; most are a function of the institutional structure and organization. Some of the confounding variables that Bean (1980, 1982) considered were university GPA, institutional satisfaction, value of education, student life engagement opportunities, and organizational rules, all of which can lead to a student dropping out or deciding to transfer to a different institution.

Current Research

Throughout Spady (1970, 1971), Tinto, (1975, 1993), and Bean's (1980, 1982) models are two systems in which students operate: the academic system and the social system. (This is less true of Bean's (1980, 1982) model, though many of the variables remain.) This review of the research focuses on the social system. Further, the research is considered according to two distinct realms: co-curricular programming, such as housing communities, honors programs, and academic communities outside the classroom, and service programming, which for the purposes of this article focuses on the impacts of campus recreation and related programming.

The literature makes it clear that when students' sense of belonging increases, their likelihood of being retained from year one to year two increases (Ishler and Upcraft 2005, Logan 2017, Olbrecht 2016). In creating this sense of belonging, many institutions are moving toward cohort models, where students move through coursework together and—at some institutions—even live together. These cohorts often have a focus area, such as STEM, that serve as the common ground for connecting students. These cohort models have been shown to increase retention overall and have been particularly successful with female and minority students (Dagley, *et al.* 2016, Sithole, *et al.* 2017).

Students who participate in honors programs, intrusive advising, and living-learning communities within residence halls have higher retention rates and higher overall GPAs than their campus peers who do not (Bowman and Culver 2018, Reader 2018, Soria and Taylor 2016). Like academic cohort models, these co-curricular program areas provide students with opportunities to interact with like-minded peers and have been shown to improve students' satisfaction with the institution (Bowman and Culver 2018; Reader 2018; Soria and Taylor 2016). Similar co-curricular programming can be more impactful in terms of retention of students from historically underrepresented groups (Bowman and Culver 2018, Grier-Reed, *et al.* 2016, Mosholder, *et al.* 2016).

Campus recreation is a known resource and service that is available at the majority of four-year higher education institutions. The presence of a recreation center has been shown to increase the retention of students as it impacts their sense of belonging and institutional commitment (Forrester 2015, Forrester, *et al.* 2018, Kampf, *et al.* 2018, Miller 2011). It has also been shown that the newer the campus recreation facil-

ity, whether new build or renovation, the greater the impact of the space and its programming on student retention (Kampf, *et al.* 2018).

Campus recreation usage and programming has also been examined to determine whether participation affects student success and retention. The two areas that have been studied most are intramural sports and club sport participation. Intramural sports are defined as sports offered at an institution where students create teams to play other teams at their institution; club sports are teams that represent an institution and travel to compete against teams representing other institutions. The required level of commitment and dedication is one of the major differences between the two programs, with intramurals being more informal and club sports requiring a greater commitment.

In their investigation of the impact of intramural sports, McElveen and Rossow (2014) found no significant difference between the academic performance (GPA) of individuals who participate in intramurals “moderately to heavily” and those who do not participate at all. These results were interpreted to indicate that social interaction and participation in co-curricular activities do not impact a student's academic success. McElveen and Rossow (2014) did find, however, that individuals who participate in intramurals were retained at a higher percentage than were those who did not.

Current research indicates that club sport members are retained at higher rates than non-members but generally finds no significant difference between their academic performance and that of non-participants (Forrester 2015, Kampf and Teske 2013). The authors suggest that participants' increased retention is the function of social integration and that students who feel connected are more likely to persist. Kampf and Teske's (2013) study also found that club sport participation remained the most significant predictor of persistence over most demographic characteristics, implying that social integration was more important than pre-college characteristics as an indicator. Weaver, *et al.* (2017) noted that club sport programs can influence students' choice of institution, and when community is created, students are more likely to persist.

Discussion

The theoretical models and literature agree that student retention is critical for higher education institutions

and that student attrition is a complicated multivariate issue. While the Spady (1970, 1971), Tinto (1975, 1993), and Bean (1980, 1982) models focus on different aspects of higher education, they acknowledge that both the academic and social spheres influence students' persistence. However, the models do not agree on how the different systems interact; Spady's (1970, 1971) model is the most linear, and Bean's (1980, 1982) model contains the most singular variables.

While the models disagree as to how different variables interact with one another, they agree that student retention is difficult to fully comprehend. Some of this difficulty can be attributed to students' characteristics and lived experiences. Educational backgrounds, personality characteristics, and social norms all potentially impact a student's ability to succeed in higher education and are extremely difficult to measure and account for in theoretical models. The number of controllable variables could limit the extent to which some of the theories can be applied.

Current research agrees that student engagement in co-curricular programming increases retention. The literature (Belch, *et al.* 2001; Bowman and Culver 2018; Forrester, *et al.* 2018; Kampf and Teske 2013; McElveen and Rossow 2014; Sithole *et al.* 2017) suggests that type of engagement—whether living-learning community within a residence hall, campus recreation programming, or academic co-curriculars, such as an honors program—does not matter; students engaged in any of these areas demonstrated higher retention rates than did their “academic” peers. The literature and theoretical models also argue that creating positive social communities is vital to improving a student's institutional commitment and decreasing the likelihood of dropping out.

The current research around student engagement, within the social sphere, directly influences one of the two main emphasis areas present in all three student retention models. Spady (1970, 1971), Tinto (1975, 1993), and Bean (1980, 1982) all rely on both academic and social factors within their models and that while a significant amount of current research focuses on the social sphere, student backgrounds, demographics and lived experiences all correspond to student academic success (Reason 2013; Webb, *et al.* 2017). The three models demonstrate the complicated interplay between social and academic variables and their impacts on student attrition. These models, when combined with current

research show that students are more likely to persist when both their academic and social spheres are well developed and intentionally addressed.

Implications

The theoretical models and literature suggest that student retention rates need to be addressed within both the academic and social systems. Institutions striving to increase retention will need to invest in staff as well as programming. Providing professional development, increasing staff compensation, and creating a healthy culture to promote the services that lead to student retention efforts are all important. In addition, institutions will need to invest in new and innovative programming to engage students and increase their institutional commitment. Often, programming is limited by staff capacity or budgetary concerns, but institutions have the ability to address these issues if they choose.

The current research and theoretical models also suggest that higher education institutions must be cognizant of the demographics and backgrounds of incoming students. As institutions look to increase enrollment into the future, they will need a fundamental understanding of the demographic shift within higher education. From 1980 to 2020 the United States white, working-age population (25–64) is projected to decrease from 81.9 percent to 62.5 percent (Zumeta, *et al.* 2015). This decrease in white working-age individuals shows that the increase in ethnic minority individuals will increase, over the same time span from 18.1% to 37.5 percent (Zumeta, *et al.* 2015). This demographic shift in working-age individuals will have an impact on college enrollment demographics, and the three student attrition models from Spady (1970, 1971), Tinto (1975, 1993), and Bean (1980, 1982) argue that this should influence how higher education institutions are providing academic and social support.

Conclusion

Among the several theoretical models explored in this literature review, there is consensus that greater understanding is needed as to why students choose to drop out of college. The models suggest that students' predetermined characteristics and interactions with the academic and social systems within their institutions influence their decisions to persist. Literature focused

on the social system clearly communicates that students' engagement during their higher education experience is extremely important to retention. The literature also

shows that engagement creates a higher level of institutional commitment, which in turn increases students' likelihood of persistence.

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Adam Burke is the Assistant Director of Programs for the Department of Campus Recreation at the University of Wyoming. He is currently working on his Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Administration at the University of Wyoming. Previously, Adam attained his B.S. degrees at Colorado State University and his M.S. degree from Oregon State University. He has research interests in the areas of non-academic staff impacts on student success and the impacts and implications of non-academic staff on student attrition rates.

An Interview with Tina Falkner

Tina Falkner is the Director of the Office of Student Finance for Academic Support Resources (a large unit comprised of the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Finance, the Office of Classroom Management, One Stop Student Services, Continuity and Compliance, and an internal web development team) at the University of Minnesota. Prior to her current position, she served as the director of Continuity and Compliance in Academic Support Resources for fifteen years where one of her primary responsibilities was policy creation, revision, interpretation, and enforcement. She is the institutional and national expert on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other student records compliance-related matters. As the director of the Office of Student Finance, she oversees financial aid, student billing, collections, bursar, and other student financials. Prior to joining the academic affairs side of the house, Tina served in student activities. She was the 2018–2019 President of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). Tina holds a B.A. from Northwestern University and a M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

How did you first get involved with AACRAO?

My first AACRAO involvement was when the 2002 Annual Meeting was held in Minneapolis; I helped with volunteers. I was able to attend the 2001 meeting in Seattle to help staff the hospitality booth for Minneapolis. We spent a lot of time at the booth, talking up Minneapolis and encouraging attendees to mark their calendars for the 2002 meeting. We did have many questions about snow and cold, so it was quite amusing when that next year it was nearly 90 degrees during the meeting. Most people brought heavy winter clothes and had to buy more weather-appropriate items as the week progressed.

What volunteer roles did you have with AACRAO before becoming President?

I have been a member of a Professional Activities Committee (PAC), a PAC chair, a group coordinator for the Annual Meeting, the Annual Meeting Vice Chair and Chair, Chair-elect and chair of Nominations and Elections, a session facilitator, a session presenter, Vice President for Records and Academic services, and an author.

What do you see yourself doing with AACRAO after your term as Past President?

I would like to continue to help bring better cross-awareness to our membership and members of other

associations, especially financial aid. I have often reflected over the past four years working in financial aid how truly intertwined records and financial aid work are, and for too long we have both considered the other as an afterthought. I think if we had more opportunities to understand each other's compliance requirements, constraints, shared points of service to students, and the impact we can have on student success when we work together it would benefit our students.

We have made some good progress, but there is lots more to do. If I had the chance, I would really like to participate in AACRAO's public policy work. I've become a sort of education public policy junkie and am excited that we are sharing our positions more vocally and readily with members of Congress and the Department of Education. But I'm pretty much game for doing anything that the Association and our members need. I like volunteering because it helps me grow and gives me a chance to share what I know with others.

How has your work with AACRAO connected with your daily work at the institution(s) over the years?

My work with AACRAO has always connected well with my work on campus. I regularly "exercise my FERPA muscles" at the University and help educate others on campus about their FERPA obligations. In my current role in financial aid, I see even more connections with the AACRAO portfolio. Over the past four years, I have often found myself wishing I could go back in time and know what I know now when I was working on

policy matters, calendars, and course-set up. For example, when I oversaw the University of Minnesota’s academic policies, I never thought about whether there were financial aid implications associated with academic policy changes. The one that specifically comes to mind is our repeat policy before we started enforcing it in our student system—financial aid states it can only pay for a class twice (unless the student truly fails it multiple times, but that is a completely different story).

What were the AACRAO accomplishments while you served as President of which you are the proudest?

The easy answer is the purchase of a new staff office building, but I am also really proud of our focus on expanding the notion of leadership and who is a leader in the Association. I’m really excited to see the impact of the LEAD Initiative. I see the LEAD Initiative as a good starting point for us to address pressing issues facing our profession, specifically diversifying leadership in strategic enrollment management (SEM). We are actively working to address the problem, instead of just lamenting about it. I’m encouraged to see that we are approaching this topic with more than establishing mentor relationships but with a curriculum to assist up-and-coming SEM professionals gain valuable, tangible skills. If the model works, which I am optimistic it will, we can apply the framework to other areas within AACRAO’s portfolio.

What will the new AACRAO office space mean to the association?

Easily the biggest impact of purchasing the office space is financial stability. Establishing a solid financial footing for the coming years, has been a Board priority for years, and this helps solidify that. I think it also allowed the office a way to rethink which teams need to be near each other, how to better facilitate communication among and between teams, and to examine how work gets done. For example, the floor plans were specifically designed with huddle-spaces so teams could work on projects together if desired. Also, different team members’ offices were co-located to facilitate their work together—it may seem silly but in the old space that wasn’t always the case.

What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities for the incoming President and Board?

AACRAO is not alone in trying to figure out how to engage younger members of the profession in its offerings and in leadership. We also need to continue to be intentionally inclusive in all that we do. This is not an easy task, nor one that you ever actually complete, but always needs to be at the forefront of the work we do.

About the Author

Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Ph.D., is Editor-in-Chief of *College and University*, and a past president of AACRAO. He has more than 40 years of higher education experience in University Registrar functions, enrollment management, and as a faculty member. Dr. von Munkwitz-Smith retired from Boston University as Assistant Vice President and University Registrar. He previously served as University Registrar and Director of Summer Programs at the University of Connecticut and in a variety of positions at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. von Munkwitz-Smith has served on the Board of Directors of the College and University Machine Records Conference (CUMREC), the Program Committee for the first Educause conference, and on the Educause Professional Development Committee. He was Director of the AACRAO Technology Conference and chaired the AACRAO working group on professional competencies and proficiencies. He has been a frequent presenter on technology in student services, retention and graduation, FERPA, and space planning and management. He has been published in *Business Officer*, *College and University*, and *Educause Quarterly*.

Dr. von Munkwitz-Smith holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Religious Studies from Macalester College and a Doctor of Philosophy in South Asian Languages from the University of Minnesota.

The Emerging Role of the Registrar in Enrollment Management

By Rodney Parks and Alexander Taylor

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robotics in recent decades have caused significant disruption in the contemporary workforce. While fears about job displacement have led to negative public opinion regarding many of these developments, Bob Ubell, Vice Dean Emeritus for Online Learning at New York University's Tandon School of Engineering, believes such fears are unfounded. In a 2014 Pew Research Center article, Ubell said, "As history tells us, once initial destructive tendencies displace workers, some industries emerge with greater economic power beyond the overturned industry, creating large-scale new industries requiring an even larger labor force than the one displaced" (Smith and Anderson 2014, 36). Although technology's future impact on work remains uncertain, humans consistently adapt to find jobs that complement the capabilities of new mechanical coworkers. The same can be said of the increased automation occurring in registrar's offices today.

The role of the university registrar is unquestionably changing. As automation eliminates manual data entry and paper forms, campus constituents often fail to understand the registrar's role. The modern registrar's office functions more like an office of information technology than of service. Our work is at a crossroads: Should we remain technicians of registration and records, or is there inherent value in the data we harbor? When faced with job displacement, existing sectors adjust or rebrand to find new purpose in the workplace. While registrars are being outcompeted by technology

in processing forms and reporting, we continue to find value in our human gifts of entrepreneurship, creativity, and systems thinking. These skills provide a natural foundation for the emerging role of registrars as enrollment managers.

Recently a provost remarked that registrars lack the necessary skills to be enrollment managers. If we consider only the traditional definition of enrollment management, that may be correct—to some degree. When we think of enrollment management, we tend to think of admissions offices: recruiters strategizing how to attract and matriculate a diverse range of students. However, while those tasks are essential, they are just one part of the equation.

Registrars and other university offices are integral to students' full life cycle, from prospective students to alumni. In this more encompassing definition of enrollment management, registrars perform a number of duties that overlap with the objectives of enrollment management.

This perspective paper analyzes the changes in the historic responsibilities of the registrar and presents new insights into the emerging role of the registrar as a leader in the field of enrollment management. The registrar profession is naturally one of systems thinking: utilizing technology to create systems and communications among offices to achieve intended outcomes. Because registrars operate between the worlds of academic and student affairs, they are able to make connections among various initiatives and strategies on

campus. Effective registrars are self-aware regarding their place at the institution and are willing to test new strategies and technologies to improve operational efficiencies for students, faculty, and staff.

Advancements in technology have liberated our work beyond operational management, providing the opportunity to begin evaluating policies and systems in order to engage and connect students, academic instruction and curriculum, and campus support services.

University Withdrawals

A long-held role of the registrar with regard to enrollment management has been to uphold the policies and procedures regarding student withdrawals from the institution. A longitudinal study by Shapiro, *et al.* (2018) found that of the 2.8 million students who entered college for the first time in fall 2011, 38 percent transferred to a different institution at least once within six years. Students reported academic, social, and financial reasons for transferring, among others.

Historically, the registrar's office has been responsible for developing systems to track students at risk of transferring or dropping out of the institution. A common practice is to use midterm grades as a method of identifying and tracking students who are struggling academically. Using the same system, faculty can report at-risk students who are struggling in their classes. In cases of at-risk students, any details related to why a student may be struggling academically can help ensure that the student receives necessary support and guidance. Thus, an effective communication system allows faculty to provide notes detailing why they believe a student may be struggling in their class. This in turn can prompt the registrar's office to communicate with available resources and support channels (*e.g.*, academic advising, counseling services) for assistance.

For students who do drop out of the institution, policies implemented by the registrar's office can help streamline the process for withdrawal (as well as for re-admittance). Registrars must also consider how the institution handles the student record after a student has dropped out. What does the institution do to retain students who are thinking of dropping out? What institutional policies exist to encourage students who do leave to return?

For students who decide to return, registrars must consider how the institution readmits them. Any of

myriad circumstances—from a family emergency to an internship or employment opportunity—may cause a student to leave school for a semester (or more). A cumbersome readmission policy may dissuade students from returning to the institution. Registrars must seek ways to streamline the process to encourage persistence toward degree completion. This gives students some relief from uncontrollable life events that risk derailing their completion of a degree.

In fall 2018, Elon University instituted a new policy that allows students to take a leave of absence for any of various circumstances. Prior to the policy change, all disenrollments from the institution were classified as either regular or medical withdrawals. This policy failed to properly classify students who chose to take a hiatus from their studies for reasons such as family emergencies or internship opportunities, among others. In all such cases, the registrar's office "froze" all withdrawn students' individual academic programs and denied the students access to institutional resources. Further, all students who withdrew were required to undergo the same readmission procedure, regardless of reason for withdrawal. This created a barrier for students seeking a short-term hiatus from the institution.

Under the new leave of absence policy, administrators classify students either as having withdrawn, which indicates the student's permanent departure and results in freezing the student's record, or as taking a short-term leave of absence. When the leave of absence status is activated, a student may take up to two consecutive fall and spring semesters off. Students may receive an extension of the initial leave of absence with approval of the registrar and the dean of students.

If a student taking a short-term leave of absence subsequently chooses to leave the institution or fails to return by the designated return date, the student's status changes to withdrawn, triggering permanent withdrawal procedures that disable the student's institutional access.

Withdrawal data should be used to identify trends shared by at-risk students and to help identify potential barriers to success. Elon University uses a Qualtrics survey to collect information about why students transfer out and to determine what the institution needs to do to help retain students in the future. It is worth noting that students who withdraw seem to provide candid responses to questions about the institution and the challenges that resulted in their transfer.

Academic Planning Aids Retention

As record keepers, registrars have extensive knowledge of the academic programs and courses offered by their institutions. We can seamlessly capture the state of the institution through reports, enrollment data, and curriculum planning. These reports help us spot linchpins in programs and deficiencies in course offerings. Proper data aggregation is crucial when analyzing course efficiencies. Without proper aggregation methods, we may collect data that prove unusable or, worse, that misrepresent course offerings. We can pull from information systems a breadth of course data, including high-demand courses and low-demand meeting times.

In addition, the registrar's office must serve as a bridge for communication between students and academic programs. Registrars traditionally have produced degree audits and academic catalogs to achieve this. While these tools are vital to academic success, we can dig deeper by producing interactive tools for students. One such initiative at Elon University is the development and launch of a new degree audit system that helps students visualize their academic programs for effective four-year planning. The new platform allows students to select courses for their four-year plan and immediately see how the plan interacts with their degree audit. The application also has the capability of recording students' interests and identifying courses that match particular keywords or descriptions. This functionality opens the door for exploration across disciplines and provides advisors with insight into how an academic program may inform students' academic and co-curricular activities.

Changes to Traditional Credit Hours

Another enrollment management strategy that registrars can implement to improve retention is variable course credit. Institutions traditionally run course sections at a standard, fixed credit-hour rate. However, this can be an archaic policy for students who need only one or two credits to complete a degree requirement. This is common, for example, among transfer students whose originating institutions operated on a different credit-hour system and who often require a small number of credits to satisfy their degree requirements.

Another barrier is the "overload rule" that limits students to a maximum number of credit hours per se-

mester and that may penalize students who exceed that limit by assessing a surcharge on their tuition. Registrars should encourage faculty to modify credit options by offering course sections with variable credit hours. Like registering for courses that are split level (*e.g.*, upper/lower level), a student could register for variable credits (*e.g.*, two or four credit hours). Faculty would provide different versions of the syllabus to reflect the appropriate workload for the course. Contact minutes would remain the same, with out-of-class assignments variable according to credit load. Elon University's Office of the Registrar has used variable credit hours to increase participation in global education (study abroad) programs. Study abroad programs can be a transformational experience and a means by which students expand their worldview through intercultural learning. Such programs typically constitute an enormous investment by students, both financially and academically. The applicability of study abroad course credit to a student's degree program varies widely, and a program that doesn't fit perfectly into an individual's course of study may increase time to degree completion.

To resolve this issue and encourage global engagement, Elon University offers variable-credit, travel-embedded courses. As they do for other study abroad experiences, students apply for the travel-embedded course through the Global Education Center, which includes a credit-based course and non-credit travel abroad. Students choose to register for the course at the two- or four-credit level, with variable coursework. Such options allow students to have an experience abroad while completing a full course load that applies to their major.

Elon's registrar was the first faculty member to pilot a travel-embedded course offering variable credits. Of the 22 students in the course, twelve utilized the variable credit option without having to register beyond the credit overload. The course counted for only elective credit for all twelve students using the option.

Six of the students who took the variable-credit course had never participated in a global education program, so their engagement in this opportunity helped the institution meet its goal of increasing participation in global education. Variable-credit courses have also been tested during Elon's summer school, yielding similar results. Summer courses offered for variable credit can be marketed to students who need to satisfy a general education requirement as well as to

students who want to take an interdisciplinary course for two or four credits. Variable-credit courses such as Sociology of Suicide and Grief and Loss with Children have been popular among the student body and have generated new income.

Experiential Learning and Enrollment Management

Co-curricular activities constitute an element of the student record that continues to expand. While most co-curricular activity was the province of student affairs, it has found its way into academic affairs as institutions increasingly recognize the value of learning beyond the classroom. This shift can best be explained through the development and implementation of Kuh's high-impact practices, which foster greater engagement between students and faculty in addition to facilitating various methods of learning (Kuh and O'Donnell 2013). As curricular and co-curricular activities continue to blend, so, too, does the collaboration between academic and student affairs. The registrar's office is at the heart of both.

As for academic performance, most institutions have the metrics and systems with which to track co-curricular activity. We can now accurately assess the outcomes of students who participate in co-curricular activities and compare them to the outcomes of those who do not so as to evaluate the impact of these practices on retention and other behaviors. These data are especially valuable for new students. Often, institutions implement first-year seminars or other experiences in order to foster a stronger sense of belonging. And while we have traditionally assessed only academic performance, we now can also evaluate levels of engagement in high-impact practices.

Gallup's (2014) Student Survey consistently finds that students who participate in engaged learning activities such as semester-long projects or faculty mentorship are confident in their ability to succeed in school and, later, in the workplace. Student engagement also correlates with students' understanding of a degree's relevance and how higher education will inform their life beyond the classroom. Strada-Gallup (2018) found that students who believed their degree was highly relevant to their career and life were more likely to report that college was worth the cost and that they received a high-quality education.

In 2017, the Office of the Registrar at Elon University began to mine co-curricular data in an effort to track student engagement (Taylor, *et al.* 2018). Elon's co-curricular data include five of Kuh's high-impact practices: global education (study abroad), internships, undergraduate research, service learning, and leadership. From this data set, we can analyze the academic performance of students (by considering GPA, retention rates, etc.) who participate in co-curricular activities as compared to that of students who do not. The results inform crucial insights into the behaviors of first-year students and confirm that co-curricular experiences are vital to institutional retention.

While student behavior beyond the classroom is important, it is equally important for students to understand the value of these experiences. Even engaged students struggle to understand the relationship of co-curricular experiences to meaningful skills related to the workforce. With large percentages of their time dedicated to academics, many students fail to consider how their co-curricular experiences may be equally important in the scheme of a four-year degree. This is where registrars have an opportunity to connect with students and positively influence retention. Registrars have a role to play in further connecting systems to improve the student experience; artificial intelligence has begun to help them blend technologies for this purpose. Already, systems can alert students when they are missing prerequisites or co-requisites, inform them when courses are offered, and allow them to chat with an advisor at any point in their development of a four-year curriculum. New functions—like adding co-curricular elements to a four-year planner, previewing four-year plans as they relate to specific jobs, and linking course descriptions with outcomes/competencies, syllabuses, and faculty videos about a course—are all resources that will enhance the student experience.

Academic Calendars

Creative enrollment practices allow many institutions to offset some of the revenue lost each semester due to students withdrawing or studying abroad. Admissions offices now have processes that allow students to start in any academic term. And with the growth of learning communities, linked courses, and faculty-in-residence programming, institutions are intentionally creating

environments of engagement and belonging for incoming students—including transfer students.

Because registrars help create the academic calendar, our office can help implement programs that support student engagement as well as an institution’s enrollment management initiatives. For example, institutions could consider admitting cohort-based transfer students at the half term (*i.e.* midway through a semester) and linking these cohorts to core courses. Institutions usually have residential capacity during the spring term because of students studying abroad, medical withdrawals, and academic dismissals. While it can be difficult to create a living-learning community on the half term, linked courses and a cohort structure may help institutions overcome these challenges.

Transfer Articulation on Steroids

Transfer classes have always been a challenge to registrars everywhere, and concerns about transfer credit often impede enrollment by students hoping to transfer. While some schools give the registrar’s office author-

ity to make the initial determination of transferability, others rely on faculty to process transfer equivalencies. Technology has helped by providing national databases of courses and institutional equivalency tables, but more attention to this challenge is needed.

Most institutions don’t invest resources in prospective students until they apply and are admitted. Even the standard systems many of us use don’t allow a degree audit to be viewed until a student is admitted and ready to be advised. New systems being developed will allow prospective students to use articulation tables, save catalog pages under a log-in, and build four-year plans without even applying. Imagine the power of providing students with the ability to make an informed decision and then having student-initiated plans migrate to the student system upon application. Such systems not only will aid in recruitment but also will reduce the surprises and frustrations that transfer students often experience when they matriculate.

Registrars are also being asked to do more at the national level to showcase institutional credentials. New initiatives like Credential Engine hold promise for

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students seeking more information about credentials, competencies, and programs using standard search engines. As data are aggregated, students will be able to compare what institutions have to offer long before they apply to any programs. These systems also have the potential to create value in other credential types, such as certificates, by aligning outcomes with skills employers seek in specific jobs.

Summary

In 1995, David Lanier, then university registrar of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, wrote, “As a result of technology, the registration and records functions are becoming more automated and the registrar is becoming a data manager.... However, there is danger lurking in the lure of technology. Technology can turn the registrar into an invisible entity on campus.” For the past two decades, registrar’s offices have grappled with the advancement of automation as they seek to define their ongoing meaning and purpose on college cam-

pus. Should registrars become merely an extension of information technology offices, specializing in the transactional operations of records and registration? Or can the registrar’s office grow to influence policy, drive change, and build systems across the institution?

The role of the registrar is increasingly analytical rather than transactional. Our objectives align closely with those of enrollment management as we support our institutions’ goals of matriculating and retaining students. If the artificial intelligence revolution is any indication, higher education will need to adapt its business model and instructional approaches in order to educate a diverse student population. Technologies regulated by the registrar’s office foster communication and interactions among students, staff, and faculty. Policies developed by registrar’s offices will promote flexibility in students’ academic programs, encouraging increased exploration and promoting experiential learning. Finally, registrars will be the catalysts for institutional change as higher education continues to support the demands of an uncertain future.

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Leading Internal Communication from Enrollment Management throughout New Academic Program Implementation

By Jeffrey P. Levine

More than a dozen years ago, after my first year as director at a 30,000-student college, I presented at our annual fall faculty orientation. Confidently reading a short list from the podium to an auditorium at capacity, I highlighted key strategic enrollment initiatives completed during the previous academic year. A friendly, visibly upset, award-winning female professor stood up and shared, “Your small team accomplishments are fantastic, but you failed to regularly update us—because faculty may choose to help!” At that moment, as a naïve young manager, I vowed that if I ever participated on university cross-departmental teams building on a strong foundation from both student affairs and enrollment management, I would never miss an opportunity to engage key faculty, senior leadership, and academic affairs leadership. Collective successes and momentum should not fly stealthily under the radar. But how would I become an amateur, in-house, championship-caliber public relations department?

Enhancing Internal Communication Using SEM Framework

Fast-forward to a few years ago: Our hero is in another role, helping a top ten-ranked engineering college cross-departmental team implement a new program across multiple system campuses. To aid the team and accomplish goals across departments and throughout

the university, I kept asking myself, “How do we get people on the same page?” Utilizing AACRAO-based strategic enrollment management (SEM) planning initiatives as a guide, subject matter experts on our team began implementing an existing academic program at a new campus to address recruitment needs. Remembering faculty feedback in that jam-packed auditorium where I’d learned a valuable lesson, I wanted to let myriads of constituencies know that we were listening, were influential without being the dean, and desired to leave a legacy for the university community.

Among the keys to assisting and motivating your internal audience are:

- ◆ Being transparent,
- ◆ Building momentum,
- ◆ Documenting progress,
- ◆ Celebrating collective milestones, and
- ◆ Saying what is next.

Transparency

In any university community, there are times you must tell everyone how the sausages are made—even though they really may not wish to know. During new academic program implementation, you can provide key concepts learned from the enrollment management profession, including “establishing clear goals for the number and types of students needed to fulfill the institutional mission” (Bontrager 2004, 12). Setting ambitious yet realistic program implementation goals and

clearly telling the story are key ways to reach stakeholders, build trust within your community, and bridge the faculty versus staff divide.

Build Momentum

Energy is key. You can be a great tactician and implement data-driven or -assisted decision making into the team's work, but the way you motivate others across campus during new academic program implementation can make a trustworthy difference. Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*, discusses starting with “who” not “what” when trying to accomplish goals (Collins 2001). Short, weekly communications about key program implementation wins, minor setbacks, and upcoming events gain attention, provide insight, and share snapshot point-in-time data to keep everyone informed. One of the easy ways we were able to show progress to the community was by posting a picture in a university-wide electronic newsletter of the academic program implementation committee wearing hard hats while touring a new academic facility. Another was celebrating with team lunches at which we also provided ice cream and project-related apparel.

Document Progress

Having a record of when teams of people accomplished small, medium, and large projects is good for several reasons, including showing continuous improvement for accreditation purposes, helping the chief financial officer allocate the budget, demonstrating cross-departmental team project implementation, and aiding future projects if the team members change or if there is turnover across the college or university. This may be as simple as letting the group know you received an updated draft of a communication going out to several stakeholders across campus. Showing revisions with collective input provides a record of being better off than the community was at the beginning of the project.

Celebrate Collective New Program-Specific Milestones

Within enrollment management, we celebrate kick-off events such as the launch of a fall application for admission for the next academic cycle, targeted scholarship and marketing programs to reach goals, and even a strategic enrollment management plan. This meets the SEM planning goal of increasing collaboration among departments across campus to support the enrollment

program (Bontrager 2004, 14). Like small celebrations along the way, the enrollment management executive summary provides a forum for sharing new academic program cross-departmental team progress throughout the duration of team goals. At the end of the semester and at the end of an academic year, it can show each piece of the puzzle the team put together. Share things that did not work to show how the team grew throughout its time together.

Say What's Next

Recently, a former colleague and I were discussing why he had moved in order to continue to serve on my team. He said, “You are good about telling us the next thing we are working on.” Effective leaders plan the next weeks leading up to key events and assess progress along the way. This is translated from the SEM planning goal of “increasing process and organizational efficiency” (Bontrager 2004, 12).

Applying Business Resources

To continually connect through regular communication, I sought external resources. Utilizing *HBR Guide to Managing Up and Across* (2013) and Jim Collins' *Good to Great* (2001), I was able to continually energize multiple stakeholders by building momentum based on the *flywheel effect*: creating strong project timelines and creation of shared goals. In addition to Zoom and in-person meetings and multiple presentations to counselors, students, and parents throughout the nation, I developed the new academic program implementation enrollment management executive summary (EMES).

The EMES was emailed and shared weekly up and across multiple campuses from senior leadership to entry-level staff, succinctly recapping collaboration, praising contributors by name, presenting current data expressing progress, providing a two-bullet-point data analysis, listing multi-channel student CRM communications to aid unified goals, clearly sharing metrics, sharing future important dates and yield events, and soliciting feedback. A forum was created for team and senior leaders with distinct skill sets to make additional contributions.

Weekly enrollment management executive summary (EMES) implementation recommendations for new academic programs include:

- ◆ Recaping and reinforce cross-departmental collaboration progress,
- ◆ Praising people advancing new program goals,
- ◆ Presenting new academic program-specific enrollment funnel data,
- ◆ Providing a two-bullet-point analysis of the new program data,
- ◆ Listing new program-specific external communications,
- ◆ Providing program-specific metrics and results,
- ◆ Listing upcoming dates and events, and
- ◆ Asking for feedback.

Recap and Reinforce Cross-Departmental Collaboration Progress

What is taking place in the university community—among multiple departments—that others should know about? Did the academic side of the house work with student affairs and enrollment management on new, program-specific information sessions at new student orientation? Did the Office of Residence Life

share the list of students who applied for on-campus housing but did not pay their admissions deposit with the Office of Admissions so team members could follow up with phone calls? Did a faculty member go above and beyond by meeting with a program advisory board with staff counterparts? Each of these is a bullet point to be highlighted on the summary to the campus community. Showcasing team success can motivate others to elevate their performance in order to have their efforts shared.

Praise People Advancing New Program Goals

An example of effective praise might be:

“Courtney from admissions did a great job planning Tuesday’s on-campus yield event for the College of Engineering

Her contributions connected our community with 524 prospective students and family members from thirteen states

Please join me in congratulating Courtney.”

IT’S LIKE GPS FOR THE

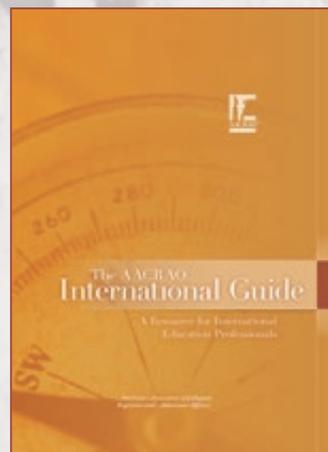
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This section highlights the good work individuals and offices do during new academic program implementation to strengthen cross-departmental team progress. The goal is to enable senior leadership to associate the names of the people in the report with positivity and success. Highlight the servants involved in servant leadership (Greenleaf 1997). Documenting praise of employees in your and other departments can aid supervisors during evaluations and demonstrate to the human resource office that you recognize the efforts of key contributors.

Present New Academic Program-Specific Enrollment Funnel Data

Present new academic program data in clear, readily understandable amounts. The easiest way for people in the community to make sense of information is via simple charts or data visualization. Absent training in creating Tableau dashboards, the easiest way to present data is to compare the new-academic-program-specific enrollment funnel for new fall first-year students with data from the previous year. Be sure to add columns for change in headcount and percentage change. Present more detail according to audience segments.

Provide a Two-Bullet-Point Analysis of the New Program Data

An example of a two-bullet data analysis follows:

- * *Fall 2019 first-year applications are up 11.69 percent year over year.*
- * *We have received 169 fewer first-year applications overall, but 486 more have been completed and 132 more have been admitted year over year (+7.8%).*

This weekly new-program-specific implementation analysis can be cited by the president in a report to the board, by a vice president of enrollment management at a cabinet meeting, a provost when explaining the state of admissions to academic leadership, housing, financial aid, and others during the week, and more. In a concise analysis featuring clearly denoted positive and/or negative trends, community perceptions of the outcomes of the program implementation work can be shaped. This will demonstrate proactive, dynamic collaborative efforts in a format that people who do not work in your area can understand.

List New Program-Specific External Communications

Marketing and enrollment communication departments do not always have the opportunity to showcase key program-specific campaigns and their results. This is an opportunity to provide weekly updates on specific CRM campaigns, referencing communication types and goals.

Sample list of new program-specific external communications:

- ◆ Thank you letters and e-mails are going out Wednesday to all last Friday's new engineering program open house attendees.
- ◆ Postcards and an e-mail are being sent this week to all new engineering program admitted students who are not yet registered for new student orientation.
- ◆ Personalized missing items letters and e-mails highlighting our February 1 deadline are being sent to all new engineering program freshmen with incomplete files as of January 1.

Provide Program-Specific Metrics and Results

In addition to presenting new program-specific campaigns, provide some action items measuring progress for current or recently completed campaigns for the new majors being implemented. This showcases efforts and lets collaborative stakeholders know how challenging it is to convert students from each part of the funnel. It may also prompt interest in boosting results—and thus lead to more resources being allocated to digital marketing and/or scholarship dollars. Be sure to mention new program-specific social media campaigns and results.

List Upcoming Dates and Events

Share who will be on campus; large group tours and where they are from; external admissions counselor recruitment in their assigned territories; important new yield event information; program-specific milestones; and key dates on the university calendar. Add cross-departmental team member birthdays for more personalization. This section can be longer because it showcases new program-specific external recruitment activity

leading up to a yield event or the entire listing of associated events for the rest of the semester.

Ask for Feedback

A key component when implementing a new academic program and sending out a related EMES is—at the bottom of the report, before the email signature—to ask for feedback. This communicates receptivity to constructive criticism and provides an opportunity for others to engage, synthesize, consider, and reflect on the summary information. Once the report is sent, few colleagues throughout the community may respond via e-mail, but they will read the report. One of the best pieces of feedback I received was from a College of Engineering department chair who copied all of the faculty in his department on his e-mail, which said, “Way to go!” I have also been asked to clarify points with which some colleagues may be unfamiliar. The larger the audience to whom the information is sent, the greater the transparency of program-implementation initiatives and the flow of accurate weekly information—and the more effective the communication. Multiple presidents, provosts, and vice presidents have been thankful for this information because it was more “human” than a data dashboard. Provide the continual inside story of how the sausage is made.

Successful Connection Results

When utilizing the EMES up to the program launch, you may be wondering about your team’s results. What lessons were learned? Buy-in was created because contributors participated electronically and in person to actively inform stakeholders. Information flowed up,

down, and across, creating momentum. Yield events were held, scholarships were awarded, adaptations to new student orientation were made, social media were utilized to generate interest, and students enrolled. Results indicated that after year one, we exceeded new program-specific enrollment goals by 22.0 percent. In the second year, new program-specific goals were exceeded by 29.4 percent, contributing to a two-year overall enrollment increase of 8 percent. As a result, utilization of the new program-specific EMES as one tool in a toolkit for success allowed us to frame team actions to distinctly address positive progress, areas for improvement, and needs for additional cross-departmental team resources.

Table 1. Sample Fall 2019 New Engineering Program First-Year Funnel

Population	Fall 2019 (12/2/2019)	Fall 2018 (12/2/2018)	Change	
			n	%
Prospects	65,328	57,687	+7,641	+11.69
Applicants	9,432	9,601	-169	-1.79
Completed Applications	5,881	5,395	+486	+8.26
Admitted	1,684	1,552	+132	+7.80
Deposited	886	747	+139	+15.69
Registered	221	184	+37	+16.74

Table 2. Sample Campaigns and Metrics

Campaign	Number Contacted	Open Rate (%)	Click-Through Rate (%)
Apply Now	308	11	26
Admitted Student Engagement	384	56	28
Register Now	7,947	22	13

Table 3. Upcoming Dates and Events Listing

Date	Event	Event Type	Staff Responsible
11/1	East St. Louis HS STEM Juniors	Group Tour	Jessica, College of Engineering
11/2	HS Seniors	Engineering Yield Event	Fred, Admissions; Dr. Simpson, Department Chair

Alternative EM Internal Communication Toolkit Strategies

Alternative tools when implementing new academic programs include hiring consultants to monitor progress; assigning extraordinarily happy, extroverted staff to be the implementation leads; sending teams to conferences; and actively showing appreciation. Providing food, recognition, and team and individual awards shows that you care. Our president bought a gourmet lunch for our team and dined with us. One thing we did *not* do was get a framed hand-signed letter from the provost for each member of the cross-departmental new academic program implementation team. It would have been a nice touch and would have provided kudos

for a job well done and signaled progress toward addressing strategic planning goals.

One EM goal was to leave a legacy for future new academic program implementation teams. We wanted to create a template to aid future cross-departmental teams. Thinking back to early in my career, presenting in front of all those faculty members, our team progress was shared incrementally throughout the community as the new program crawled, took its first steps, attended its first day of school, and then started running. By creating the EMES and implementing a new tool in a toolkit of solutions, our team enrolled students, exceeded expectations in completing a component of a college dean's strategic plan implementation, and boosted university net tuition revenue so other institutions can, as well.

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AACRAO Research: A Year in Review 2018

By Wendy Kilgore

Similar to years past, we examined eight areas of research interest to our members in 2018. We have enough longitudinal data to make comparisons of 2018 data to years past. For example, we repeated the registrar's career profile report and learned there will be a large number of retirements in the next few years. We also updated information on admissions practices in a 60-Second Survey, and partnered again with AICE on international education practices.

60-Second Survey topics:

- ◆ Accreditation and Recognition of International Education, January 2018
- ◆ Pre-college Programs, March 2018
- ◆ Official Transcript Types, Cost, and Volume, May 2018
- ◆ Alternative Credentials: Beyond the Diploma and Transcript, July 2018
- ◆ Program Completion Time Limits, September 2018
- ◆ Admissions Practice Snapshot, November 2018

Other topics:

- ◆ Registrar career profile
- ◆ Excess credits at graduation

As with our 2017 efforts, these initiatives were designed to help meet our research goals:

- ◆ Contribute to a better understanding of the factors and conditions that impact

higher education academic/enrollment services and ultimately student success;

- ◆ Use the Research Advisory Board to engage the membership in determining the focus of the research;
- ◆ Develop new insights and information for our members to help them successfully lead their institutions in a continually evolving environment;
- ◆ Maintain current partnerships and develop new partnerships with other organizations and associations who share common interests with AACRAO; and
- ◆ Disseminate relevant, up-to-date research on student success to practitioners and institutional decision makers.

Included in this article is a brief introduction of the research topics and summary of the key findings, which have been modified slightly from the original reports. The purpose of this article is to provide a single source of research finding takeaways from 2018. With the exception of the full report on excess credits at graduation, the related reports can be found within the Research section of AACRAO's website.¹ The report on excess credits at graduation was published as an article in *SEMQ*. This article includes only the highlights.

¹ See <aacrao.org/research-publications/research>.

60-Second Surveys

With the continued support of our membership, this is the fourth year that AACRAO has conducted 60-Second Surveys. The purpose of these snapshot surveys is to gather a broad-brushstroke perspective on practice. With that in mind, it is understood that the way the questions are written will likely not be inclusive of all variations in practice. However, the results of these surveys provide insight into comparative practice on a high level. AACRAO regularly completes more comprehensive surveys on topics of interest to our members.

Accreditation and Recognition of International Education

The January 60-Second Survey was a partnership between the Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE) and AACRAO.

Institutional accreditation is an important factor for U.S. institutions in determining if credit or degrees from another institution will be accepted. However, accreditation as we understand it does not often exist outside the United States. This month's 60-Second Survey, in partnership with AICE, examines institutional policies pertaining to accreditation status and the acceptance of credit and degrees from foreign institutions.

The survey included participation from 588 institutions. Several of the policy-related questions proffered "yes," "no," and "not sure" as the response choices. The percentage of respondents who selected "not sure" was higher than expected. As such, the "not sure" responses were removed from the descriptive data in the key findings below and are reported separately in the figures.

Key Findings

- ◆ Nine out of ten institutions have a prescribed policy on regional accreditation requirements for admission and transfer-of-credit purposes.
- ◆ Comprehensive institutions are more likely than other types of institutions to have a prescribed policy.
- ◆ More than 70 percent accept a foreign institution's recognition by a national ministry of education to be equivalent to regional academic accreditation in the United States.
- ◆ Comprehensive and/or very large (20,000+ students) institutions are more likely than other types and sizes of institutions to follow this practice.

- ◆ Less than half accept recognition by a national government board or body overseeing training or employment to be equivalent to regional academic accreditation.
- ◆ Only 30 percent recognize a national government board or body overseeing specific professional sectors (Health/Agriculture/Defense/etc.) as equivalent to regional academic accreditation.
- ◆ Less than 15 percent recognize a non-governmental organization, and less than 20 percent recognize a governmental board of a foreign government outside of the institution's geographic area as equivalent to regional academic accreditation.
- ◆ The admissions office (54 percent) is most likely to be responsible for determining whether students' foreign education comes from an accredited school, followed closely by the registrar's office (50 percent).
- ◆ The registrar's office (68 percent) is most often responsible for determining if transfer credits from a students' foreign education come from an accredited school.
- ◆ More than half of responding institutions have exceptions to regional accreditation requirements for admission or transfer of credit.

Pre-College Programs

AACRAO members were asked about the existence and purpose of pre-college programs in the March 60-Second survey, and 451 participated. The following definitions framed this survey.

- ◆ *Pre-college Programming* defined in this context: University sponsored/organized programs and activities for K-12 school participants typically not yet enrolled in college as degree-seeking students.
- ◆ *Pre-college Programming Unit* defined in this context: The university department and/or umbrella entity with responsibility for oversight of all pre-college programs at one college or university.

A few of the questions included "I do not know" or "I'm not sure" as response options. These responses have been removed from the descriptive data presented here and from the sample size above.

Key Findings

- ◆ Most institutions (82 percent) report having pre-college programs.

- ◆ Nearly four in 10 have two to three programs and 14 percent have ten or more.
- ◆ Almost half of the institutions have increased the number of pre-college programs in the last three years.
- ◆ Pre-college programs are most likely to be administered by academic affairs.
- ◆ It is not unusual for pre-college programs to exist in more than one institutional division.
- ◆ Just 30 percent of pre-college programs are housed in their own unit.
- ◆ A director is most likely in charge of the day-to-day operations of pre-college programs.
- ◆ Less than one third of pre-college units report through admissions and recruitment.
- ◆ More than half report that recruitment materials are provided to participants of pre-college programs and/or a list of pre-college program participants is provided to admissions/recruitment.
- ◆ Just under half include an admissions presentation at each pre-college program.
- ◆ Seventy percent either strongly agree or somewhat agree that pre-college programs are an important part of the enrollment pipeline at their institution.
- ◆ Three-quarters note that less than 24 percent of 2017 applicants were part of a pre-college program.
- ◆ Community outreach, academic program exposure, and access to college top the list of the primary purpose of pre-college programs.
- ◆ More than half indicate that one to four staff work in pre-college programs and a further 11 percent have fifteen or more.
- ◆ Nearly one third serve 500 or more students annually in pre-college programs, and 22 percent serve less than 100.

Official Transcript Types, Cost and Volume

May's survey addressed the type, volume, and cost of official transcripts. A big take-away from this survey is that there is quite a variety of ways in which institutions charge for transcripts. For example, in building the survey it was assumed that institutions selecting "no charge" for the question about official transcript charges would mean no charges at all and, thus, terminate the survey. I heard back from one member that although they selected "no charge," they were expecting to be asked the questions about delivery fees. Additional comments provided by respondents in their survey responses also

point to a high degree of variance in official transcript cost and pricing practices that could not be captured by the survey design. Some practices mentioned are as follows:

- ◆ There is no charge for paper transcripts for walk-ins.
- ◆ A different amount is charged depending on the language of the transcript (*e.g.*, Spanish vs. English).
- ◆ Mailed and walk-in transcripts are free, but there is a charge for electronic transcripts.
- ◆ The transcript fee is waived for current students. Alumni pay \$20 + a special handling fee if it is greater than standard postage.
- ◆ There is a difference between what degree and non-degree students are charged.
- ◆ The rush processing fee is per order, not per transcript.
- ◆ There are additional charges for notary or apostille services.

The survey received responses from 688 institutions including several combinations of control, size, type, and countries.

Key Findings

- ◆ In addition to credit-based transcripts, 21 percent of responding institutions issue undergraduate non-credit or continuing education transcripts, and 14 percent do the same for graduate and/or professional programs. Just 4 percent issue co-curricular transcripts.
- ◆ Sixty-two percent have seen an increase in the number of official transcripts issued by their institution in the last five years.
- ◆ One-in-five issue 20,000 or more per calendar year.
- ◆ Half do not partner with a transcript vendor; 2 percent outsource the process entirely; and the remaining 48 percent partner with a vendor, and both produce transcripts.
- ◆ Almost three quarters (72%) produce both paper and electronic official transcripts.
- ◆ Almost three quarters (73%) charge a per transcript fee with no free copies.
- ◆ Three percent have a one-time service fee
- ◆ Another 2 percent have either a flat-fee per term or a flat fee per calendar year.
- ◆ Fifteen percent do not charge for official transcripts

- ◆ Among those who offer both paper and electronic transcripts, 62 percent charge the same for both, while 14 percent charge more for electronic, and 24 percent charge more for paper.
- ◆ The average cost for a transcript, regardless of format, is between \$5.00 and \$9.99.
- ◆ Most offer a walk-in service for official transcripts, and most charge a premium for that service.
- ◆ More than half offer a rush service that reduces processing time and charge for this service.
- ◆ Half offer an expedited delivery for transcripts bound for international destinations, and more than half offer the same service for domestic addresses.

Alternative Credentials: Beyond the Diploma and Transcript

In July, 639 AACRAO members responded to the survey about the existence of, or institutional interest in, alternative credentials. For the purpose of this survey, examples of alternative credentials include co-curricular transcripts, badges, e-certificates, comprehensive learner records, diploma supplements, e-diplomas, or any other micro-credential (a credential that is less than a certificate). In retrospect, we should have included two other branching points in the survey. The first would have been asking those who already have some alternative credentials if they were considering others. The second would have been asking if any alternative credentials were in use at any time in the past but eliminated for one reason or another.

Key Findings

- ◆ Just under a quarter offer at least one type of alternative credential.
- ◆ Of those that do, the co-curricular transcript is the most common.
- ◆ The co-curricular transcript is most often issued by student affairs whereas most of the others are issued most often by the registrar's office.
- ◆ Among the institutions without alternative credentials, 38 percent are considering offering at least one, and the co-curricular transcript is being considered by the majority.

Program Completion Time Limits

The topic of the September 60-Second Survey Program was completion time limits. Questions included whether time limits existed, institutional control over

SIS program time limits, how time limits are applied, and what the time limits are. This topic is one that highlights the variety in practice between and among institutions of different sizes, types, and control. The survey received responses from 612 institutions.

Key Findings

- ◆ Most (68%) institutions set program completion time limits.
- ◆ Fewer than half (46%) have an automated method in the student information system to keep track of program time limits.
 - Among those that do have this ability, about half (49%) centrally manage the responsibility.
- ◆ Nearly three quarters (74%) set the program completion time limit the same for all programs, degrees, majors, and student levels.
- ◆ Seventy-three percent set program completion time limits by credential level exclusively (*e.g.*, certificate, associate's, bachelors).
- ◆ Almost half (44%) somewhat agree with the following statement: "Students have easy access to their program completion time limit and are well-aware of the limit."
- ◆ Just under half (46%) report that when a student changes their program he gets a new program completion time limit for the new program.
- ◆ About one third (35%) require a student who returns after stopping out to complete the program within the original timeframe.
 - 30 percent set a new catalog and time limit.
 - 11 percent extend the time limit to exclude when the student was not enrolled at the institution.
- ◆ Eighty-seven percent allow students to apply for a program time limit extension.

Admissions Practice Snapshot

The final 60-Second survey of the year focused on updating the research about admissions practices; the first was in July 2015. The survey received responses from 500 members who answered one or more of the questions in the survey. The survey logic enabled respondents to select that they were reporting on practices for undergraduate, graduate, or both populations. This branching logic resulted in 433 undergraduate and 207 graduate responses. Due to changes in the way data was collected by student level in this year's survey, the results of the 2015 survey cannot be directly com-

pared to this year's results. However, the current data differentiates undergraduate from graduate practices whereas the 2015 survey did not. This year's survey also breaks out questions about the use of technology from inquiries about practice and includes a question for institutions in the United States about the request for criminal justice information on the application for admission.

Key Findings

UNDERGRADUATE PRACTICES

- ◆ Slightly more than half use holistic admissions methods.
- ◆ Less than one quarter use a self-reported high school GPA for an initial admit decision.
- ◆ Nearly one third use an admissions waitlist for high demand programs.
- ◆ 60 percent require an enrollment deposit, and, of those, more than half require one that is \$250 or less.
- ◆ One in ten is using a chatbot.
- ◆ More than three quarters are using a CRM.
- ◆ More than half make an admissions decision within a week once the application is considered actionable.
- ◆ 78 percent use enrollment projections to determine admissions targets.
- ◆ Less than half have a practice for the admission of undergraduate applicants who do not meet traditional admissions criteria because of displacement.

GRADUATE PRACTICES

- ◆ Less than one quarter allow a student to enroll with an undeclared/undecided program of study.
- ◆ Slightly more than one third use a waitlist for high demand programs.
- ◆ Sixteen percent use a self-reported undergraduate GPA for an initial admit decision.
- ◆ One in ten is using a chatbot.
- ◆ Less than half require an enrollment deposit, and of those, 46 percent require one that is \$250 or less.
- ◆ More than half take two weeks or less to make an admit decision once the application is considered actionable.
- ◆ Fifty-six percent use enrollment projections to determine admissions targets.

- ◆ Less than one third have a practice for the admission of graduate applicants who do not meet traditional admissions criteria because of displacement.

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- ◆ Half ask criminal justice questions in the admissions process.
- ◆ It is more prevalent for private, not-for-profit institutions to do so than public or private, proprietary.
- ◆ Lower division institutions are the least likely to ask this information.

Registrar's Career Profile

This is the second AACRAO registrar career profile report. The first was completed in 2015 and was limited to U.S. institutions; this iteration was not. Although the respondents are predominantly from the United States, there are also respondents from Canada, Armenia, Ivory Coast, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates. The AACRAO career profile series consists of reports on chief enrollment management officers (CEMO), chief admissions officers, and registrars. As states in the 2017 CEMO report, the two primary purposes of this series of reports are: 1) to build a longitudinal understanding of the career profile and position responsibilities for these three positions; and 2) to provide those seeking an equivalent position an understanding of the typical career path for doing so.

In 2015, we were fortunate to have 703 respondents. This year, 886 participated, and from them we have concluded that a registrar likely:

- ◆ identifies as a woman
- ◆ identifies as non-Hispanic, white
- ◆ is between the ages of 45 and 49
- ◆ holds a master's degree
- ◆ has been in higher education his/her entire career to-date
- ◆ has been in their current registrar position less than five years
- ◆ reports to a vice president or equivalent position
- ◆ came to their current registrar position from another registrar-related position or registrar position
- ◆ serves on a wide variety of committees

More than 260 provided “words of wisdom” (first-hand comments, observations, opinions, and advice) based on their experience in the position, and 27 volunteered to provide their own story with the following themes in mind:

- ◆ A Day in the Life
- ◆ My Story So Far
- ◆ If I Could Do it Over Again
- ◆ Wow, I Wish I Knew That Before
Becoming a Registrar
- ◆ My Path to the Registrar Position
- ◆ And other personal themes

From the words of wisdom, personal stories, and data, it is clear that the registrar position is complex, data-centric, and involves building and maintaining positive relationships throughout the institution. Registrars need to be both detail oriented and big picture thinkers as well as technologically savvy and flexible. Several recommended needing and keeping a sense of humor. Not one shared a story that they had planned on being a registrar someday, yet almost all find the position and work rewarding. Many advocate seeking a mentor and also being a mentor. Select words of wisdom and personal stories are shared throughout the report.

A look at the next career move data over time-to-next-move provides an insight into the possible percentage of U.S. registrar vacancies that can be expected over time. Based on ballpark calculations, there will be more than 2,100 registrar vacancies in the United States within the next three years. This calculation is based on the number of degree granting Title IV eligible U.S. institutions (n=6,760). However, it *does not* exclude respondents from outside the United States, nor differentiate between college-level registrars and institution-wide registrars. It *does*, however, exclude existing registrars seeking another registrar position. In 2015, the anticipated number was 1,672.

AACRAO intentionally does not gather salary information for administrative positions because CUPA completes annual comprehensive salary studies. Their 2017 *Administrators in Higher Education Salary* report contains salary data for registrars. Table 1 illustrates some of the salary data points for this position by select institutional or demographic characteristics.

Table 1. 2017 Salary Data

Institutional or Demographic Characteristic	Unweighted Median Salary
Public	\$91,841
Private	\$79,274
Doctoral	\$113,072
Master's	\$80,777
Baccalaureate	\$75,790
Associate's	\$77,188
Male	\$90,647
Female	\$80,353

Source: 2018 CUPA HR Survey

Excess Credit Accumulation: An Examination of Contributing Factors for First-Time Bachelor's Degree Earners

Abstract

AACRAO partnered with a large public university in the southwestern United States to examine a multi-year data set and to complete a student survey in order to gain insights into variables that contribute to excess credit accumulation at graduation. Until state legislatures began to decrease funding for public colleges and universities, excess credit was not thought to be an issue worthy of discussion or consideration. One of the tactics to reduce full-time-equivalent-based budget funding was to cap the number of credits an institution was eligible to receive for budget allocation. Some states even decided to penalize students who earned credit above a maximum by charging them a higher tuition rate; some legislatures voted not to fund what they deemed excess credit. Institutional responses varied from reducing the number of credits required for a bachelor's degree to what is now a fairly standard 120 semester hour credits. Engineering, business, and some hard science program credit hour requirements were also reduced but often remained in the upper 120s or lower 130s.



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Key Findings

- ◆ Most graduates have excess credit accumulation at graduation with a first-time bachelor's degree regardless of whether they are direct-entry or transfer students.
- ◆ Complex statistical modeling is able to explain only a modest amount of the variance in excess credit accumulation between and within groups. Much of the variance is unexplained by these models.
- ◆ Pursuing a STEM major, participating in an honors program, spending more time at the university, and attending multiple institutions are correlated with having excess credit at graduation.
- ◆ Students with a history of academic probation are less likely to accumulate excess credits.
- ◆ Most students are aware of the reasons they lost credit at transfer and/or have earned more than the standard 120 credit semester hours by the time they graduate.
- ◆ Most students are neither pleased nor displeased with the excess credits and/or credit loss at transfer and know why one or both of these situations occurred.
- ◆ Among students who are displeased, better academic advising was listed as the service that could have helped prevent credit loss and/or excess credits at graduation.

Closing

We would like to once again thank our members who regularly participate in our research projects. The information collected and reported back to you would not be possible without your participation. If you have any research ideas or any questions about the reports highlighted here and on the AACRAO research website, please contact wendyk@aacrao.org.

About the Author

Wendy Kilgore, Ph.D., is Director of Research and Managing Consultant for AACRAO with more than 20 years of experience as a higher education administrator and consultant in the United States and Canada. Prior to her full-time work with AACRAO, Kilgore served as State Dean of Enrollment Services for the Colorado Community College System and Director of Admissions and Registrar for the Pima County Community College District.

The Next Generation of One-Stop Student Service Centers: Part One

By Francisco Maldonado Altieri

Almost without our realizing it, the 21st century has already reached adulthood—and, along with it, ideas and concepts—such as the one-stop shop—that once seemed innovative. But is the one-stop shop concept still valid when Millennials and Generation Z are our students? This two-part article presents the origins of the one-stop shop at the first university in Mexico to implement one, its evolution, what we learned along the way, and what we must do to meet the needs of these newest generations of students.

A one-stop shop, one-stop store, or one-stop source is a business or office where multiple services are offered—*i.e.*, customers can get all they need in just “one stop.” The term originated in the United States in the late 1920s or early 1930s to describe a business model offering customers the convenience of having multiple needs met in one location instead of having to drive “all over town” to attain related services at different stores. The phrase, now slang, describes any circumstance where people can find most of what they need in one place.

But how, when, and why did the “one-stop shop” model come to apply to colleges and universities? Just ask college students what frustrates them most about their college experience; they’ll likely respond “the run-around!”

“The run-around” refers to the often inefficient processes by which students transact their business. Students’ frustration is often centered around critical administrative tasks such as bill payment, financial aid

reconciliation, course registration, mandatory advising check-ins, and transcript or credential requests. While portions of some of those tasks have shifted to digital services, plenty of tasks still require students—at some of the busiest times of the year—to find offices they never knew existed (and that can’t seem to communicate with each other), to submit the right paperwork with the right signatures, and to wait in line only to have to repeat the process in order to complete yet another task in yet another building across campus.

Since at least the 1990s, institutions have adopted more student-focused efforts to make some of these processes not only more efficient for students but also more effective for administration. One way to combat “the run-around” is to implement a central location—physical, Web-based, or both—where students can accomplish administrative tasks more efficiently and effectively. This centralized office is known as a “one-stop” student service center; it has evolved into a hive of innovation that can improve student service and institutional processes, saving time and resources, minimizing student frustration, and enabling new institutional opportunities relative to technology, service, staff development, and more.

A further benefit of the “one-stop” student service approach is that while dramatically improving students’ experience, it can also enable schools to integrate more data, more processes, and more decision makers. This can ultimately unleash more informative analytics and

the realization of technological efficiencies and capabilities. A few institutional silos may even fall.

“One-stop” centers are evidence of institutions’ recognition of students’ changing needs and habits. The centers enable students to manage all of their business in one location (mirroring somewhat the process of managing tasks in industries outside of higher education). A one-stop center¹ moves services from a process-centered approach to a student-centered approach and reduces the run-around students often experience as they navigate the business (and busyness) of college life.

How to Design and Maintain an Efficient, Satisfactory Service in a One-Stop Student Service Center

We speak here of our experience. What you now read is not taken from any book or manual; it is what we have learned along the way.

We designed our one-stop shop from 1999 to 2000 and went live in 2001. During the one-stop shop’s first decade, we made several adjustments relating to matters we had not considered or foreseen. In 2010 we were finally able to offer a comprehensive service, IT driven and student satisfaction oriented.

In Part I of this article, we focus on fifteen “musts” that should be considered when planning to implement and maintain an efficient and satisfactory one-stop student service center.

◆ **Are you already sure of it?** We had to be sure that this was what we wanted and what our students needed. Once we raised expectations among students and staff, there would be no going back. Implementing almost any service—especially a one-stop shop for students—is a point of no return.

Remember that these kinds of offices are known as “hygiene” in that while they work, no one notices, but as soon as they fail or cease to exist, everyone notices.

◆ **Sell the idea; involve, commit, and get buy-in.** Persuade various stakeholders to support the idea—especially those whose work, processes, and “power” will be affected.

Integrating various services in one place somehow removes a good portion of what some colleagues understand by “power” from those who previously of-

fered a specialized service in their own offices (hence the well-known resistance to change and its consequent obstruction by some people who feel affected).

We encountered this, and not only was it not easy to overcome, but it also proved the most difficult obstacle to overcome. Even after operations in our one-stop shop started, we still encountered resistance to change. Today—eighteen years later—some people who were working during the implementation still make negative comments about the one-stop model.

◆ **Analyze, simplify, and connect processes.** The next thing we did—the most laborious and time consuming, if not the hardest—was to analyze, simplify, and connect our service processes. Prior to the one-stop shop, each office had its own processes, requirements, documents, and even information systems. While some were linked to those of other offices or departments, they were not linked in a systematic way, which resulted in students having to make pilgrimages from one office to another to get the form or the signature that the next office required.

To resolve this, we first had to analyze our processes separately, simplify them, and then connect them, all with a systemic vision. All who participated ultimately had to acknowledge that by virtue of being part of a whole (systemic vision), certain requirements and business rules were no longer necessary.

◆ **Design and build a strong, comprehensive database.** The analysis, simplification, and connection of processes would have served little or no purpose if they had not led us to build a solid, comprehensive database that contained the information of all our students relative to the different offices that make up the one-stop shop. That is, it was necessary to include the information from the different systems and databases managed by each office in a single central database; this was also necessary for the next stage.

◆ **Merge or integrate student-service-related IT systems.** All the requirements and validations that had to be done manually from one office to another were made directly by the system, without the need for students to go to each office to collect the required signature, seal, or authorization.

The core of the design of a one-stop model is among stages three, four, and five. Although it would not be impossible, it would be much more difficult to implement this service model without analysis, simplification, and connection of processes, a solid

¹ See <ellucian.com/Blog/Modern-one-stop-student-service-centers-transform-the-student-experience>.

and comprehensive database, and a single system (or several, but integrated).

- ◆ **Recruit and train the right staff.** At the same time, we worked on recruiting, selecting, and training the team with the right profile to give our students the service we wanted. The soul of any service is the people who provide it; a person who is not service oriented can do more harm than not offering the service at all.

These positions tend to have high turnover. Even people with a service-oriented profile tend to burn out much sooner than those in almost any other position. As a result, the team requires close follow-up, motivation, constant training (primarily because of emerging technology and institutional change), dynamism in their positions that helps its members not get bored or burn out, and even a high degree of tolerance for frustration.

- ◆ **Design and develop a brand.** We found it useful to create and position a brand within the institution, among students as well as academic and administrative staff. This supported the general strategy of our university as an innovative institution focused on ac-

ademic quality as well as service; it also generated a sense of belonging to something greater—something more important—for the team that participated in this process (that is, those to whom we had to sell the idea).

- ◆ **Spread the news.** At the same time our first self-service consultation system for students was released, we utilized the institution’s internal media to spread the word about the simplification of processes, the elimination of queues and endless visits, and systematization. In this way we were able to address people’s doubts regarding their academic and administrative information.

- ◆ **Open the door.** This is the moment of truth—the moment to open the doors and start to serve students face to face. This led us to the next and crucial stage.

- ◆ **Fulfill what you promised.** Since day one we have had to fulfill the expectations and promises we had generated. This is not a “single day” thing but every day, student to student, service to service, case by case. As noted above, this is a “hygiene” service: even one promise or expectation not fulfilled, whether

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eighteen years ago or today, is enough to undo the work of many people and a lot of time. The work is difficult, but it is necessary.

- ◆ **Measure everything that matters.** From the day we started, we learned to measure everything. What is not measured cannot be managed and improved. As time passed, we learned to measure what really matters rather than absolutely everything.

If even one person does not experience good service and complains about it to university authorities or on social media, it will be useless to have accurate measurements that reveal that, on average, it takes very little time to solve a problem or that we treat students well. Of course we will not reply to that person with our statistics; instead, we focus on measuring what really matters—which in our opinion is the particular experience of each customer and the resources these experiences cost us. It is also necessary to maintain balance.

- ◆ **Share the results of your measurements with whom they matter.** These measurements must be shared—to celebrate what is good, to congratulate and reward, and also to correct what is necessary to. Much of this is not entirely in the hands of our team, but we can seek the solution nevertheless. For example, when it comes to something related to the systems, or when resources of all kinds are required in order

to continue fulfilling our promises, we have to negotiate with whoever is needed in order to solve the problem for our students.

- ◆ **Make decisions.** Even more important than measuring and sharing information is making decisions on the basis of it. Measuring is useless if it does not lead us to make decisions.
- ◆ **Improve.** The decisions mentioned in the previous stage enable us to improve continuously. Services quickly become obsolete and have to be renewed in order to meet customers' expectations. Students' expectations are higher every day: as soon as they get what they expected, they raise their expectations, in such a way that the one-stop shop must improve continuously.
- ◆ **Stay student-centered.** Keep the student at the center of everything, and encourage others to do so as well. This is perhaps one of the most important things we have learned. For other stakeholders as for ourselves, the temptation to put processes or systems ahead of or above the interests of students is constant. In everyday life, it is common to lose focus and look for the simplest or most efficient process. Yet the simplest or most efficient process is not necessarily either for our students. For this reason we have to be alert all the time and fight against each threat so that we—and others—keep students at the center of everything.

In Part Two of this article (College and University 94[3]), we will review topics such as the use of IT for high-quality service, who are today's students (Millennials and Generation Zs), and what constitutes satisfactory service for them.

About the Authors

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The Registrar: A Cultivator and Curator of Academic Policy

By Joe Tate

The efficacy of academic policies intended to promote student and institutional success is a function of the effort invested to evaluate their merit and feasibility. An academic probation policy designed to improve student retention may not have the desired impact if policy owners fail to consider its need for “teeth” in the form of real consequences for neglecting participation in intervention activities (Amundsen, Atwood, Hutson and Kamphoff 2007). Likewise, a proposed admissions requirement calculated to reinforce student preparedness for the rigors of an academic program may have the unintended consequence of creating complications in the admissions process if it is implemented without confirming the necessary logistical support of systems and staff.

Policy owners are not ignorant of such implications when proposing changes, but being so closely connected with a policy tends to diminish objectivity. More significantly, however, is the reality that most individuals in a position to own or propose an academic policy are subject matter experts who are not expected to possess an intimate awareness of the full breadth of all affected institutional operations. Thankfully, the typically flexible and broadly defined nature of the registrar’s role is tailor-made to address these deficiencies.

Since the turn of the new century, university registrars seem to be opining with increased frequency on that subject, echoing recommendations made as early

as 1926 by former University of Minnesota President Lotus D. Coffman (2016). Gerald Pugh (2001) observed that the “role of a contributing academic officer may be the one role that is most uniquely that of the registrar” (34). David Lanier (2006) identified an emerging awareness among higher education professionals that the registrar’s function was changing to include a “greater role in recognizing patterns and possible policy changes” and a “greater responsibility to evaluate policy as good or bad” (16). More recently, Barbara Blaney (2009) cited Lanier in reaching the conclusion that “policy review with an eye toward student success is a positive and potentially significant way for a registrar to contribute to institutional retention efforts” (56). These sentiments convey an evolving recognition in higher education of the benefits of a registrar who not only operationally executes policy decisions but also is a partner in policy development and analysis.

By contrast, a structure in which the registrar’s office is sidelined in the policy development and implementation process invites unnecessary impediments to institutional success in the form of academic policies that are poorly conceived, implemented, and maintained. Students, faculty, and staff are better served by an institution that empowers the registrar to engage with academic policy in the dual roles of cultivator and curator. The policy cultivator assiduously vets and prepares newly proposed policies, and the policy curator duti-

fully examines the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of existing policies. The registrar can establish these policy caretaking roles as an integral part of academic policy governance through a collaborative review both before and after implementation.

The Policy Cultivator

The ubiquitous impact of academic policy changes warrants their consideration by multiple institutional perspectives, suggesting the value of review by a cross-functional committee of stakeholders. The role of the registrar's office in policy enforcement and as a link among many different departments within an institution renders the policy-cultivating registrar ideally suited to convene and facilitate a policy review committee. The policy cultivator can use sound process engineering principles (*e.g.*, those promoted in Lean and Baldrige practices) in the design and execution of a systematic approach to conducting such reviews. Considering the voice of the customer (*i.e.*, students, advisors, faculty, support staff, etc.) and recognized standards of institutional effectiveness—within the context of an institution's mission—will clarify the appropriate criteria to include in a policy review checklist.

Identifying the voice of the academic policy “customer” may be as simple as looking to the various grievances finding their way to the registrar's inbox—which is a particularly rich source for such feedback given the registrar's role at the “center of the university's administrative life” (Coffman 2016, 33). Are students complaining about inconsistent or unfair policies that are inhibiting their academic progress? Are academic advisors echoing those complaints or voicing concerns of their own about policies that are gratuitously tying their hands when it comes to providing students with a rational and attainable path to degree completion? Has the institution implemented policies that operations staff do not have the human or technology resources necessary to properly support? Is the academic governing council repeatedly remanding proposed policy changes to be revised or reconsidered for the same reasons?

Feedback from academic policy customer groups can be refined when evaluated in comparison with recognized standards of institutional effectiveness—some of which are universally relevant by virtue of their association with the shared goal of student success. The

published standards of regional accrediting bodies such as the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (2018), the WASC Senior College and University Commission (2018), the Higher Learning Commission (2018), and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2018) are reputable sources for identifying broadly applicable student success factors. The accreditation criteria these bodies have in common suggest that a policy review checklist ought to at least address such priorities as student impact, academic quality, technology resources, support staff resources, policy clarity, and regulatory compliance.

Student Impact

Inquiry into a policy's benefits to students will focus implementation stakeholders on how the proposed policy will contribute to each impacted student's accomplishment of individual course and overall program objectives. A student-centric perspective on the merit of proposed policies ought also to include an analysis of student impact generally, including business intelligence reporting leveraged to identify how each impacted segment of the student population will be affected (Blaney 2009). Developing strategies for deriving optimal student benefit from a policy's implementation is more likely to succeed when undergirded by data-driven analysis.

Student impact should also be considered from the perspectives of faculty and staff who are most familiar with student behavior. These individuals often have an eye for the unintended consequences of a policy change—thus providing preventive control against the “cobra effect” of an academic policy that has the best of intentions. For those unfamiliar with the term coined by economist Horst Siebert (2001), it derives from an anecdotal story of the British colonial government in Delhi attempting to solve a cobra infestation by announcing a bounty for every dead cobra turned in to the authorities—which incentivized locals to start breeding cobras. When the government became aware of the breeding, the bounty was canceled and the suddenly worthless cobras were released into the village. Sometimes a change in policy may be proposed to solve a problem like the cobra infestation, and faculty and support staff will frequently have the insight to identify whether the proffered solution will lead to an unanticipated (and undesirable) impact on students.

Academic Quality

The existence of a logical academic rationale behind proposed policy changes may be taken for granted, but requiring policy owners to expound on the “why” of the proposed change will yield instructive insights into the proposal’s academic quality implications. The driving rationale behind some requested policy changes may subsequently be determined to be non-academic at its core (*e.g.*, revising policies to address operational challenges). The existence of something other than a strictly academic motive does not necessarily warrant an automatic rejection of the proposed change, but responsible academic governance requires a clear explanation of how the policy change enhances—or at least does not diminish—the institution’s academic quality. Systematically identifying and conspicuously documenting the academic rationale may therefore be a sensible prerequisite for moving a policy forward in the review process.

Technology Resources

Evaluating policies for their potential impact on the institution’s technology infrastructure will establish appropriate expectations for technology integration. A clear understanding of those expectations as early as possible in the process enables decision makers to properly consider the technology investment required to support the policy; allows for better planning on the part of those sponsoring the policy; and ultimately contributes to a more harmonious relationship between the institution’s academic and technology divisions.

Support Staff Resources

Changes in policy may mean significant changes to support processes, and these may lead to operational inefficiency and diminished capacity—especially when technology resources are unavailable to support automated solutions. Operational concerns should not be the only determining factors in whether a policy change is implemented, but decision makers should be fully aware of those institutional costs. In addition, support staff will benefit from the advance notice for planning and training purposes.

Policy Clarity

If a proposed policy is worded in a way that makes it confusing or unclear, the implementation effort ultimately may be for naught. Poorly worded policies lead to inaccurate advisement, inconsistent application and enforce-

ment, frustrated students, and the rework necessary to clarify the policy. Wording deficiencies can be addressed by soliciting feedback from stakeholders with a talent for written communication and a thorough understanding of the rhetorical situation of policy publications.

Regulatory Compliance

Academic experts proposing new and updated policies may not be well-versed in regulatory compliance, but proposed policies should harmonize with both the letter and the spirit of all relevant state, federal, and accrediting body standards. The registrar also may not be the ultimate authority in all regulatory matters but can provide a forum for those who have the requisite expertise to provide early input on regulatory implications in such important areas as accessibility, non-discrimination, FERPA, financial aid, and the alignment of pre-licensure programs with state licensure requirements (to name a few).

The Policy Curator

The pre-implementation effort to support well-executed academic policies still runs the risk of allowing outdated or ineffective policies to linger on the proverbial books if a post-implementation evaluative process does not also exist. The prudent registrar is an objective cultivator of effective academic policy and an active policy curator, providing “analyses, alternatives, options, conclusions, and recommendations as a result of regular or special reviews of academic policies...” (Pugh 2001, 30). The curator role of a registrar does not call for an entirely new set of processes and review criteria distinct from those of the cultivator role; rather, the criteria and subject matter experts that are most important in evaluating proposed policies will likewise be of importance in evaluating existing policies.

The policy curator’s reviews can be accomplished by itemizing existing policies within a comprehensive inventory and scheduling reviews at regular intervals. The review process can be conducted in much the same way as a policy proposal review, evaluating the policy in collaboration with its owners and other relevant stakeholders against the same criteria that were evaluated under the policy cultivator role. The policy curator can thereby contribute to policies that adapt and evolve with the institution in response to ongoing changes in student needs and higher education trends.

The policy curator can also provide a steadying influence in the process of institutional adaptation to external changes by analyzing how a relatively new policy compares to industry standards, best practices, and peer-reviewed research. For example, a first-year experience (FYE) policy may warrant some reconsideration and refinement when institutional student performance data are analyzed in conjunction with research like that conducted by Cavote and Kopera-Frye (2007) on the actual impact of FYE on the persistence of different types of postsecondary students. The policy curator can provide a forum in which to engage academic leaders and other policy stakeholders in such discussions and ensure that exploration into unfamiliar policy territory remains tethered to broadly accepted academic quality criteria and the assimilation of sound approaches to implementation.

Conclusion

The quality of academic policies may not be the first consideration that comes to mind when institutional leaders are strategizing for improved student persistence, retention, and graduation rates. Ongoing changes in how, when, and where twenty-first century postsecondary students are choosing to engage with higher education nevertheless suggest the benefits of a pragmatic approach to academic policy development buttressed by the deliberate and methodical consideration of policy implications. The registrar who is empowered and motivated to both cultivate and curate what can otherwise become an unwieldy thicket of policy confusion and frustration will be one of an institution's most valuable resources in rising to the challenge.

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Don't Let Your Calling Catch Up with You: The Importance of Self-Care

By Monique Perry

I've had my Apple Watch for a couple years now, and one day at work it was a signal to me about the importance of self-care. While having a performance review meeting with one of my direct reports (a very positive one!), I started to feel a bit weak. My watch started to ping me that my heart rate was increasing rapidly. While I had never experienced any heart issues or blood pressure challenges, something wasn't right. So, after a quick vitals check in our Public Safety area, I went to the ER. In 20 minutes, I had blood work completed, a series of x-rays, and two EKGs; all tests were negative! The ER doctor asked "Has anything stressful happened to you in the past 48 hours?" Little did he know that I had planned and executed a family reunion out of town that weekend for 100 plus people and returned to work the very next day (the day in question). So he said, "Oh yeah, that is it. I am writing you out for rest. There isn't anything wrong with you other than needing that. And ma'am, while you were very pleasant, make sure you are getting your rest so I don't see you again!"

While I have always managed a large workload and multiple priorities—including being a single mom and always having a demanding leadership role—I had never experienced the impact of managing multiple priorities on my physical health. This "episode" highlighted the importance of self-care. One could arguably say that other than those in top positions at a college or university, those who work in enrollment management have some of the most high-pressure roles at an institution. This is often due to the student-facing as-

pect of enrollment management coupled with the direct and visible focus on enrollment performance. With that in mind, it's critical to be mindful of self-care. It's certainly not a nebulous concept to start considering. Here are some practical tips:

- ◆ **Self-care doesn't have to be magnanimous.** To get refreshed and relaxed does not require a super-expensive luxurious vacation all of the time. There are little things on a daily, weekly, or periodic basis that one can do to practice self-care. Things like massage therapy, "no activity" weekends, after-work travel, and reading/devotional time help re-center and keep me going during the week.
- ◆ **You don't have to go on vacation to use your vacation days!** I used to think you had to have something planned to use a vacation day. Sometimes you need a day just to fit in the local errands or doctors' appointments that are difficult to schedule after hours. You can even use vacation time in order to spend a day at home with your family or to be home when your kids get there. One day's mental break from work in order to focus on the mundane is sometimes the mental self-care and reset one needs.
- ◆ **Charge your batteries before and after peak periods!** We always tell staff within the enrollment division to make sure they take time off before peak periods. I ask my leadership team to monitor time off and whether anyone has worked for an extended period without taking at least one day off; I encourage them to have a conversation about self-care. This applies after peak

periods as well. While I so appreciate a dedicated team, I want the team to be well holistically. Having these conversations has also helped other team members remain conscious of this priority.

- ◆ **Don't let work get in the way of your routine health appointments!** The importance of eating well and exercising as means of self-care is always reinforced. While I struggle with these (and certainly am not the poster child for either), I have colleagues who are super fit but still struggle with other issues. Sometimes our days are so long and full that we put off our routine self-care. One strategy that I learned from someone recently is to schedule all of your routine appointments—dental, physical, and other—during your birthday month in order to “keep the batteries charged.” It is easy to let these things slip, and it's critical to check these things off one's to-do list.
- ◆ **Convenience is care!** Depending on the demands on your personal and professional life, self-care may mean freeing yourself from the routine work you have to do and redirecting that time toward your personal life—family and friends and/or yourself. I detest going grocery shopping, so having a delivery service is a small budget item I am willing to sacrifice for. Others may choose meal prep services, housekeeping, a sitter for a regular date night, etc. Remember that sometimes investing in convenience helps manage stress and gives back time for more productive or enjoyable things.
- ◆ **Sometimes a “no” is a “yes.”** It is hard to say “no” to things you want to do—and if you are like me,

you want to do everything! But I have learned as my professional life has grown (and as my community involvement has) that I sometimes have to say no to things. While this is not something I have to do all of the time, it does happen (or I may have to offer an alternative to someone who asks me to do something personal).

- ◆ **Keep the energy and people around you positive.** Spending time with family and friends is key to self-care as relationships help make us whole. Maintaining a circle that is positive and uplifting assists with self-care too. While our loved ones may have challenges that we of course want to support them through, be careful of individuals who are constantly negative or who sap your energy when you are around them. There is a difference. At work, for the most part you really can't choose the people you are around (but outside of work you can).

The good news about self-care is that it's all about you. What I have learned and continue to learn is that as I do more, I must be more vigilant about the self-care I provide. Being attentive to self-care has made me more productive (which is surprising to those who didn't think I could do anything more!). I'm able to continue to do the variety of things in support of student success and higher education that I enjoy, and this makes me happiest. Take time today to do your inventory. Don't let an ER visit force you to.

About the Author

Monique Perry, Ed.D., is an award-winning administrator, author, leadership coach, and speaker who utilizes a hybrid of leadership experiences from over a decade in the private sector and higher education arenas to support student success. Dr. Perry is Associate VP, Enrollment & Campus Operating Officer – Chester and Lancaster Campus Sites, leading the enrollment management division off-campus sites at York Technical College in Rock Hill, South Carolina. In this capacity she is the Chief Campus Officer for off-campus sites in Chester and Lancaster Counties, and also serves as the college's Chief Enrollment Management Officer leading five departments including admissions, outreach and orientation; financial aid; academic records/registrar; one-stop center and call center operations, and enrollment data and communications. While in this role, Dr. Perry was selected by the South Carolina Technical College System as the statewide recipient of the A. Wade Martin Innovator of the Year Award in 2017. In 2018, she was selected as one of 40 national leaders as an Aspen Institute Presidential Fellow for Community College Excellence.

Prior to leading the enrollment division, Dr. Perry served as the college's public information officer and director of strategic marketing and communications. Preceding that role, she served as a full-time faculty member and advisor in the English department at York Tech. Before transitioning to higher education, Dr. Perry spent several years in the private sector in various marketing and communications leadership roles including executive speechwriter and project manager.

Dr. Perry earned her doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Florida; and completed a graduate degree in strategic communications and leadership from Seton Hall University. Her undergraduate degree in English is from North Carolina Central University. She has a coaching certificate from the Association for Talent Development (ATD), and is an alumni of the Center for Creative Leadership.

Consolidating Colleges and Merging Universities: New Strategies for Higher Education Leaders

MARTIN, J., J. E. SAMELS, AND ASSOCIATES. 2017. BALTIMORE, MD: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS. 255 PP.

Reviewed by Matthew Fifolt

Based on decades of research on trends in U.S. higher education, Martin, Samels, and colleagues articulate the conditions for and consequences of new organizational structures and configurations in *Consolidating Colleges and Merging Universities*. The authors acknowledge that institutions increasingly have been forced to close their doors due to financial exigency; however, they identify “a growing number of institutions, many entrepreneurial, now planning intentional forms of alliance and partnership” (3). Specifically, Martin and Samels consider consolidations, alliances, affiliations, partnerships, co-ventures, and consortia as viable alternatives to full institutional mergers or closures.

Martin, Samels, and 20 colleagues present *Collaborating Colleges and Merging Universities* as a collection of essays in five sections. Essays on partnerships, strategic alliances, and consortia comprise the middle sections of the book while essays on consolidations, mergers, and closures bookend the text. Collectively, the authors identify the drivers of institutional restructuring efforts as challenges that all colleges and universities now face regardless of institutional size and type: increased competition for students, reputation, and funding; declining revenues; escalating budgets; and growing governmental scrutiny (14).

Martin and Samels argue that *bigger* institutions that result from restructuring efforts are not necessarily *better*. “Academic quality,” they note, “should be the primary driver of change” (6), especially when academic leaders are able to identify mission complementarity rather than mission sameness between institutions (McGee 2015). The authors pose a thought-provoking question to frame their discussion: “Can we (higher education) change fast enough to survive but slow enough to do so wisely?” (13).

Chapter authors Samels and Martin define institutional mergers as the assimilation of two or more institutions in which the assets of one institution are assumed by the surviving institution ($A + B = A+$). Consolidation, on the other hand, occurs when two or more institutions are collapsed into one new college or university ($A + B = C$) (20). The authors differentiate these two processes from each other and observe that both have significant legal and financial ramifications. Despite providing operational definitions at the beginning of the book, the active forms of these terms are used throughout the text—including the book’s title—to describe multiple types of interactions among institutions; this frequently obfuscates their meaning.

Partnerships and Strategic Alliances

Authors of several of the book's chapters describe various benefits of institutional partnerships and strategic alliances, including increased assets, expanded geographic footprint, and economies of scale. For example, Eibeck notes that partnerships can "bring together complementary assets, business models, and synergies that ultimately will allow institutional growth and, most important, well-educated, workforce-ready graduates" (65). Chapter author Tanner, however, suggests that the costs of coordinating joint operations or consolidated services may outweigh the value of the actual partnership.

He notes that while consolidation may provide an opportunity to rebalance and restructure programs and services, thus achieving greater economies of scale, poorly integrated systems may lead to stakeholder dissatisfaction. The "alluring efficiency gains of scale," states Tanner, "may be thwarted by myriad micro-losses from awkward design, information overload, complexity, and ambiguity" (48). A successful partnership, he argues, "depends heavily on how the merged institution will reengineer itself...the structuring of interactions, communications, and logistics...(and) where it will find its inspiration and new identity" (48, 50).

Internal partnerships. Consistent with proposals advocated by Crow and Dabars (2015) to develop stronger internal partnerships among institutional divisions, departments, and programs, Zimpher describes collaborative efforts at The State University of New York (SUNY) to bring campus-driven projects to a system-level scale. She offers multiple examples to illustrate her notion of "system-ness," including support for system-wide retention and completion initiatives and seamless transfer mechanisms across all 64 institutions in the SUNY system.

Zimpher concludes, "Perhaps more than other sectors, education is highly siloed, and college and university systems too often operate as islands when they could be sharing best practices and policies, resources, and services" (62). In another chapter, Rabinowitz and Stellar note that successful institutional partnerships, as described in the research literature, are characterized by collaborative histories, supportive infrastructures, committed leaders, and a deep appreciation for differences in institutional cultures.

Co-Ventures

In a unique example of cross-cutting educational co-ventures, Ender and Middleton describe an arrangement between Harper College, a large, well-established community college, and Roosevelt University, a full-service private institution, to streamline administrative processes and develop integrated disciplinary tracks. The authors state, "Designing our respective strategic plans, it was easy to see that we could accomplish more as partners than as competitors and especially in several disciplines that could boost the local economy" (105–106).

Furthermore, working with local school districts to increase the number of college-ready graduates, Harper College has made it possible for high school students to earn up to fifteen credit hours prior to graduation. Clear articulation agreements and curricular pathways at the postsecondary level ensure that coursework at all levels (school district, community college, university) is "sequential, collaborative, and increasingly challenging" (110).

Reiger and Freitag identify comparable co-ventures that connect higher education and industry through technology. In one example, they describe a co-venture between Arizona State University (ASU) and the Mayo Clinic in which ASU Online converted many of the Mayo Clinic's didactic learning modules into a blended learning application through "interactive videos, quizzes, and exercises utilizing animation and simulation" (116). According to Reiger and Freitag, one of the reasons this co-venture was so successful was because each partner stayed within its own area of expertise to build something that neither could have on its own.

Competency-Based Education

Extending the conversation of institutional/corporate partnerships, LeBlanc and Clerkin describe a movement toward competency-based education (CBE) that allows students to progress toward degrees and credentials by demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills at a high level. Framed within the context of College for America at Southern New Hampshire University, the authors suggest that partnerships and strategic alliances with industry can address both the supply and demand sides of the educational equation.

Through the model of CBE, LeBlanc and Clerkin describe multiple partnership opportunities that sup-

port affordable academic programming, workforce development, student outreach, and customized technology platforms. They also suggest that scalability and personalized learning through online delivery systems and data analytics support the competencies that society expects of educated citizens and well-prepared employees (127). The authors argue that higher education needs “partnerships and alliances that support...a plan for scale to attract new students and a broader concept of how our institutions can operate more effectively within local, national, and global networks” (135).

International Partnerships

Jackson and Larimore observe that U.S. higher education institutions continue to forge alliances and co-ventures with international partners to broaden academic markets and respond to the increasingly great needs of global markets. The authors state, “International experiences have significant positive benefits for students and their institutions as globalization continues to change the way the world connects and works” (137). Jackson and Larimore cite specific ways in which U.S. colleges and universities have viewed international partnerships as ways to develop talent by providing educational experiences (*i.e.*, curricular practical training), recruiting international students from Pacific Rim nations, and opening branch campuses in countries in the Middle East and China.

Despite these advances, Jackson and Larimore and others note that expansion into some foreign countries may be difficult or impossible to replicate because many do not support key characteristics of the U.S. higher education system, such as academic freedom, democratic governance, and transparent financial systems (Ferrara 2015; Rhoads, Wang, Shi and Chang 2014). However, international expansion may be hampered by Trump administration policies and a renewed interest in nationalism, despite Jackson and Larimore’s predictions of increased international partnerships and co-ventures (Brune 2017).

Consortia

While the vast majority of consortia in higher education focus on academic collaboration, DiChiara describes The Boston Consortium for Higher Education (TBC) as a collaborative effort among multiple institutions to

reduce non-academic operating costs. TBC started by targeting such areas as purchasing, human resources, and issues related to environmental health and safety.

In addition to providing examples of past projects, the author articulates specific characteristics of successful consortia, including evenly distributed overhead dues, staged project costs, and pay-to-play opportunities that allow members to opt out of specific projects before assuming the full cost of implementation. In describing the development of the consortia, DiChiara states, “Dialogue leads to relationships, relationships lead to trust, and out of trust comes opportunity” (163).

Williams describes consortia of liberal arts institutions along a collaboration continuum that ranges from networking to coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and integration (175). He states, “For the liberal arts business model to be sustainable...collaborations will need to move more aggressively toward cost-reduction initiatives” (175). More broadly, Eibeck observes that new organizational structures “will be an important part of the spectrum of change and innovation that American higher education will adopt as it responds to changing student needs and expectations” (76).

Mergers and Closures

Describing institutional mergers, Pierce describes a quasi-consortium of five previously independent colleges and universities through the Community Solution Education System. This niche collaborative combines administrative functions like international services, legal affairs, admissions, and human resources in an effort to target adult students seeking to earn a professional degree or complete a bachelor’s degree. Hoyle highlights the development of “super nonprofits” as one of the many ways in which “American higher education will...reinvent itself to maintain its value in our business, civic, and cultural life” (208).

In addition to providing information about the challenges of closing an institution of higher education and doing so with respect and dignity, Hoyle encourages presidents, provosts, and trustees to take advantage of alternative arrangements while the window of opportunity is open. He states, “There is still time, even during an institution’s downward slide, to negotiate from a position of strength. If the board waits too long, however, the window will close” (206).

Summary

Consolidating Colleges and Merging Universities is an interesting and engaging exploration of the state of higher education in the United States. One of the strengths of the book is its cross-referencing of material across chapters. While chapter authors may introduce a new concept, they consistently reference the chapter in which the idea is further developed by another author. This approach toward a unified voice reinforces the value of each concept while avoiding duplication. Chapter authors also use sidebars to illustrate points with real-world examples and recommendations and provide clear and compelling action steps for senior-level administrators to weigh various options for long-term institutional sustainability.

The authors also include a number of figures and visual representations in the chapters without referencing them in the text. While several of these figures are self-explanatory and/or complement the narrative, others

seem arbitrary—or, worse, important but unexplained. Readers may be interested in reviewing the three appendices that Martin and Samels include; they highlight selected mergers and closures in higher education as well as partnerships, strategic alliances, consortia, and affiliations that were established between the years 2000 and 2016.

Given the current economic climate, public and private colleges are predicted to close at a rate of fifteen per year for the foreseeable future. Small institutions seem especially vulnerable to financial challenges as their fixed costs increase and are allocated across fewer students. In fact, Moody's Investor Services recently downgraded a number of colleges' financial standing, and in 2012 Bain and Company reported that one-third of colleges in the United States had "unworkable and unsustainable business models" (199). *Consolidating Colleges and Merging Universities* thus may prove an important and timely resource for academic leaders considering new options for collaboration.

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