Beyond The Enrollment Management Division: The Enrollment Management Organization®
Dr. Peter M. Jonas & Dr. Alexander J. Popovics

I've Always Wanted To Be A..., But Now I'm Not So Sure: A Survey of Students' Career Plans
Rosalie R. Young

Performance Management: A New Approach
Louise Lonabocker

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Editor’s Note

“Service” is today’s watchword! On campuses countrywide “Service” is spelled out, emphasized, stressed, recommended, demanded, and covered in seminars for administrators and faculty. With this in mind, I just can’t resist relating an anecdote concerning service from my own career.

At an institution at which I once served—I’ll not identify it—the administration decided to call in a team of Boston efficiency experts. Our office had just begun several new projects, including microfilming, and we were eager to learn how to be more efficient. We instructed our staff to cooperate fully. What a mistake!! When the receptionist explained to these experts about her duties, they in turn reported that her position should be made part-time because she had time to “chat.” Day after day brought about similar fiascoes and we learned absolutely nothing of value. They recommended slashing our staff, but we won that argument with our administration by pointing out all the errors in the “experts’” statistics and logic.

Won we may have, but we were punished nevertheless. For the next two months we were to keep a tally of every activity: letters opened, letters posted, stamps licked, phone calls answered, transcripts processed, on and on and on. Okay, we said, we’ll comply fully, BUT there is no place to tally students, faculty, and administrators who come in for assistance! The experts collectively scratched their heads, looked non-plussed, and after a minute of silence came up with a brilliant solution: Count them as interruptions!

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References should be formatted in the author-date style and follow guidelines provided on page 526 of The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th edition. A list of references should appear at the end of the article. Text citations also follow the author-date format; examples may be found on page 641 of the Manual. For more information or for samples, please contact the C&U Editor.

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Beyond The Enrollment Management Division: The Enrollment Management Organization

The term “enrollment management organization” is used to identify a system’s approach to establishing optimum enrollment at a college or university. It integrates assessment, planning, and budgeting on an institution-wide basis to determine and achieve enrollment goals.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a step-by-step process that will enable all institutions of higher education to move from focusing on an enrollment management division for achieving goals to utilizing the entire institution, thereby transforming to an Enrollment Management Organization©.

Evolution of the Enrollment Management Organization

During the 1960s and 1970s, colleges and universities were doubly blessed with an abundance of students resulting from the baby boomers and the general admiration of the public. The ivory tower was intact as students were the ones who had to fight to get into selected schools. Students needed and wanted an education, while the public put educators on a pedestal of approbation. Many colleges and universities enjoyed the role of gatekeepers, being selective in the enrollment process while students typically marketed themselves to the institutions of higher learning. Those were the glory years that many schools long
for once more; however, it also was a time when the admissions office typically operated in isolation. Members of the admissions office were supposed to be seen and not heard. In other words, they were to do their job, bring in the students (a few more every year) and quietly go about their business without involving faculty who concentrated on academics, learning, and teaching. Life was good for both sides because the number of qualified students continued to rise. But, all of this was about to end.

In the late 1970s there was an increasing number of students of high school age entering college. By the 1980s this pool of potential students started declining while the number of “older” or “working” adult students returning to college was increasing. This shift in the student population coincided with a new emphasis on creating non-traditional educational delivery systems designed for this “new” traditional student. At the same time, there appeared a growing public interrogation of higher education. Was the public getting its money’s worth out of the educational infrastructure? Even more importantly, the national media published articles asking colleges and universities to prove that they were in fact providing the excellence in education that they professed. Accrediting agencies responded to these criticisms by requiring assessment as a major component of re-accreditation.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The admission offices were now faced with a new dilemma, a shrinking pool of traditional-aged applicants and keener competition from a more diverse group of schools starting non-traditional programs. The trend for the admission professionals was to increase marketing efforts in addition to recruitment initiatives. Massive campaign blitzes, accompanied with mailings, flyers, ads, billboards, etc. inundated high school students during the 1980s. As the decade ended, a new strategy of enrollment management gripped many colleges and universities. The process of recruiting students was becoming larger than one office could handle. Not only was competition keener, but the students were becoming more savvy consumers. Moreover, enrollment management was a cooperative group solution (as taught in the classroom) to a classic problem of sales and marketing. By combining the admissions, registration, financial aid, student advising or student development, business, and retention offices or departments, institutions could produce a unified front for marketing, recruiting, processing, enrolling, and advising students (e.g., so-called “one stop shopping”) appropriately labeled enrollment management. However, the world of academia continued changing.

Throughout the 1990s the population of high school students continued to decline, while more and more non-traditional programs sprang up. The demographics of the “typical” college student were changing drastically. Students were becoming older and more diverse. This meant that students also were becoming more selective, service-oriented, and in need of additional services or programs on, and now off campus. This put a tremendous burden on the enrollment management area. In previous years, the admission area could concentrate almost exclusively on the 18-21 year old high school or transfer student. Now, however, age was no limit, cultural and ethnic diversity became a driving force, and students demanded more services, along with a quality education.

In order to accommodate the changing demographics, systems, academic environment, student achievement profiles, and demands, the enrollment management concept needs to reinvent itself once again. It needs to move beyond the enrollment management division.

TERMS OFTEN RELATED TO ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

When dealing with enrollment in a highly competitive market, a systematic approach should be applied. All departments or offices should generate the kind of data needed to tailor departmental or divisional strategies to the various competitive environments in which they operate. Types of information generated often include the following: a benchmarking of the competition, an analysis of student satisfaction (via outcomes assessment), and an analysis of how economic and employment trends are likely to affect demand for specific program offerings.

In generic terms, benchmarking is a process that begins with the systematic identification of the characteristics of process outputs experienced by students. In an academic environment, the process would be educational experience, culminating in a degree. Tuition, course offerings, majors, convenience, student services support, to name a few, are all characteristics of the process that students experience while pursuing their degree. Once these characteristics are identified, major competitors are targeted for systematic comparisons.

The second component, student satisfaction, can be measured in a number of ways. A comprehensive outcomes assessment program may include attitudinal surveys, culture and climate analysis, or focus groups. The challenge here becomes taking the outcomes assessment data and separating them by program. However, divisions will have to perform an even more targeted survey of student needs for this component to yield the kind of data needed. For example, programs organized in a non-traditional format often provide non-traditional delivery systems, and learning how students experience such services will be critical to the development of targeted strategies.

Finally, individuals within the divisions are most likely to be able to glean the implications of global economic and employment trends for their specific programs. Here the importance of environmental scanning, and establishing a process for forecasting the future are necessary, i.e., an interface with the Environmental Scanning Committee.

It is hypothesized that by developing a more systematic market analysis mechanism for implementation at the divisional level, the divisions, programs, or departments will be able to articulate their own strategies, keeping in mind the institutional-wide priorities as identified by the planning efforts. Dialogue with the institutional-wide planning process must be on-going, since the emergence of more focused divisional priorities may cause the institution as a whole to rethink some of its priorities. The point is that this is an on-going systemic process, one requiring continuing involvement and dialogue among all participants.

The focus on service to the students and the enrollment management concept should have an immediate impact on the
institution. Recruitment and retention become synonymous while recruitment also becomes a concern for more than just the admissions office. For many smaller institutions that are tuition-driven, this is the lifeblood of the school and the process of recruiting/retaining students becomes part of everyone’s job responsibility. Faculty, housing, career services, maintenance departments, etc. all become more active in the recruitment and retention of students, but the bottom line responsibility still rests with the enrollment management area.

The Enrollment Management Organization

The Enrollment Management Organization (EMO) integrates assessment, planning, and budgeting on an institution-wide basis to achieve enrollment goals. It is similar to strategic planning where it must not be just another “add-on” responsibility of every member of the academy, but a fully integrated component of the daily activities within the organization. The Enrollment Management Organization is a more comprehensive concept than the enrollment management division because it not only addresses recruitment, marketing, retention, and advising processes of students, but also involves the entire institution in those processes specifically targeting graduation and goal achievement of the student. By combining assessment, strategic planning, and budgeting in the enrollment equation, members of the institution can work together not only recruiting students, but more importantly retaining them while facilitating the achievement of their educational and professional goals. This is not an easy task.

The Enrollment Management Organization concept model has its roots with Ewell and Lisensky (1988) in their text, Assessing Institutional Effectiveness—Redirecting the Self-Study Process. Ewell and Lisensky describe Jack Krakower’s four domains of institutional effectiveness including a) goal achievement, b) management processes, c) organizational climate, and d) environmental adaptation. The Enrollment Management Organization includes processes of the enrollment management division and the basic concepts of Krakower’s four domains. Although our descriptions of some of these areas are different from Krakower’s, his influence is evident.

Table 1 outlines the components, related purposes, and priorities of an EMO. Although more detailed in its entirety, for the purposes of this paper, only several key components essential to a properly functioning EMO are discussed.

GENERAL OUTCOMES

Assessment of a school’s major areas of study is a necessary foundation block of an EMO. Outcome, value-added, or talent development assessments not only provide valuable program improvement measures but provide valuable marketing information for institutions. The credibility provided by assessment greatly supports universal claims such as “we have a great program.”

Similarly, assessment of the liberal arts core or general education curriculum will provide valuable marketing information, especially if linked to an underlying philosophy of a program. Measures of attitudinal changes also are especially helpful. It is meaningful to be able to say at an institution whose mission includes a strong service orientation that “75 percent of our incoming students are expected to volunteer during their college career” and upon graduation, “95 percent of our graduates performed over 100 hours of community service during their career at this college.” (For more information on assessment see references to Astin 1985; Banta 1988; and Ewell 1996.)

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<td>Assure attention to quality and provide marketing information</td>
<td>Answer question: “How big do we want to be?” and promotes longer term departmental budgeting and commitment to enrollment efforts</td>
<td>Enhance retention by helping to assure a healthy environment and higher morale</td>
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Projecting

When departments make projections of future enrollments, they should be done in consultation with the enrollment manager. At least three resources should be included in making projections: census data, employment statistics, and professional knowledge or intuition. Census data regarding primary and tertiary territories are readily available, as are projections of employment needs either from agencies, local libraries, or Web sites. These measures are a legitimate source of enrollment and projections in major fields of study when combined with professional knowledge of heads of departments or faculty members and an enrollment manager.

If an institution is on a five-year cyclical self-assessment cycle, every program should have projections for any particular year in the near future. Projections for the nearer upcoming years will probably be more accurate than for those more distant. All projections should be updated on a regular basis.

If someone asks, “How many students do we want to have in three years?” the answer is easily found. Tally the projections from the cyclical self-assessments for all departments for a particular year and the sum is a total number based on hard data and sound planning. This number will be founded on departmental commitments to recruitment and, hopefully, an institutional commitment in terms of resources. Let us examine the importance of both.

Departmental commitments to recruitment. In order to assist an enrollment management division, a department during goal setting in a cyclical self-assessment process should list commitments or plans to enhance the recruiting process. These initiatives supplement or complement efforts of the admissions department and may be included in operational costs of the academic department. Such initiatives are endless and depend upon the needs and creativity of the academic units.

A department may offer a particular on-campus program such as a math or psychology day and invite high school teachers and students from selected schools. Faculty members may form partnerships with faculty members in similar areas of study at community colleges and present guest lectures during the year. Professors may form similar relationships with selected high schools. These are best done in coordination with the admissions department. With the financial aid and admissions departments, special on-campus scholarship days may be planned, such as music and art performances or competitions. Retention efforts also may be identified.

Institutional resource commitments. At the conclusion of a cyclical self-assessment, administration should verify its commitment to the master or strategic plans and goals of a department. In the best scenarios it is possible to determine or project resource or budgeting needs of a department over the coming years of the cyclical self-assessment cycle. Using these projections, an institution may begin a longer term or cyclical self-assessment college-wide or university-wide budgeting process. At this time departments should be able to zero-base a budget for the upcoming year and project outward budgets for each year of the upcoming cycle.

As institutions may use cyclical self-assessments to answer the question, “How big do we want to be?” so too may institutions use the reports to answer the question, “How much are we going to need to operate the institution in two or three years?” By totaling costs related to items, personnel, and activities related to operations, recruitment, and retention, an institution also may gauge the support rendered to monetary and human resources fostering these initiatives as well as overall enrollment management efforts. (For more information see references to Capoor 1984; Jonas and Popovics 1994.)

Organizational climate

Various measures of organizational climate are available for purchase or may be developed by the institution. They are used to assure that all constituents are satisfied to the point of being able to focus on the needs of students rather than on personal or institutional needs that are not being met. Such distracting concerns may be related to salary, benefits, working environment, communication, morale, opportunities for professional development, or any other disturbing situations.

Addressing these types of concerns will help ensure that an institution is composed of a vast majority of happy and content employees. Visitors and current students can sense a healthy and supportive environment and it will translate into a happier student body and, most likely, into higher retention.

Climate indicators also should include measures of student satisfaction. Often a seemingly isolated concern may be affecting...
more students than administration is aware. Sometimes a perceived larger concern may not be as wide spread as originally thought. Department chairs, office directors, faculty, etc. may identify climate indicators. Data may be collected at the point of contact and included in yearly reports or through the establishment of focus groups, climate and attitudinal surveys, or Web-based feedback sites, e.g., electronic communication.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING.
It is more important than ever for institutions to prepare for the future so that the future works for them and does not happen to them. Every department and office should be involved in environmental scanning as related to recruitment and retention and sharing what they are doing for the future of the institution. It is critical that faculty conduct futures research and relate the information to the planning process.

In order to stay abreast of environmental changes that may affect the future of a college or university, it is necessary to establish a systematic method of collecting information regarding both internal and external influences. However, it is quite difficult for any individual to be knowledgeable of all occurrences that may affect a college or university and it often requires special expertise to realize how an isolated incident or an emerging trend might impact an organization in the future. Because each postsecondary institution has a distinct mission and specific goals, a single occurrence may affect different educational institutions in different ways and to various degrees. An institution must tailor for itself specific sources of internal and external information, devise a method to collect the information, and effectively use the information in a planning process (Popovics 1990).

An institutional Environmental Scanning Committee (ESC) is one method employed to systematically scan the external environment and generate findings for the strategic planning process. This committee often is comprised of faculty and professional staff members appointed by the president based on their expertise of social, economic, legislative, technological issues. The chief planning and enrollment manager may chair the committee. The committee forwards planning concerns related to external influences to the president and administrative board in an advisory capacity. By collecting and interrelating information the ESC’s focus is primarily on issues that may affect the institution as a whole. (Additional information regarding environmental scanning and futures research may be gleaned from the works of George Keller; James Morrison, William Renfro, and William Boucher; and David Snyder.)

Putting it All Together
Beyond the coordination of the delivery of services and planning promoted by an enrollment management division is the need to coordinate efforts of an entire institution in meaningful enrollment management. Outcomes, cyclical program, organizational climate, and environmental assessments, when incorporated in an EMO model, help to achieve this goal.

Outcomes assessment gives credibility to marketing efforts. It provides an institution opportunities to prove excellence by determining strengths and the ability to market them. Weaknesses can be addressed and, one hopes, improved by the strategic planning process.

Cyclical self-assessment with the EMO model helps to answer many questions, including: “How many students do we as an institution want to enroll?” This systemic approach also distributes responsibility for enrollment to the departmental level, as opposed to having it reside solely in the admissions office. Each department in completing the cyclical self-assessment projects department enrollment in consultation with staff or faculty and the enrollment manager. Projections are based upon professional intuition and knowledge of the major field, statistical demographic information in the recruiting area, and employment needs in the degree fields. The availability of each department’s projections enables the institution to determine totals from various departmental goals.

Departmental activities in support of recruitment and retention goals also are noted at this time, including, but not limited to, the following: faculty telemarketing, high school presentations, departmental days on campus, networking with faculty at high schools or community colleges, expanding office hours, and tutoring opportunities, etc. These commitments complement the enrollment management division’s efforts at the departmental level throughout the institution.

Administrative areas also may incorporate projections into their planning process. For example, if the sum of departmental projections reveals a substantial increase in enrollment, additional resources will be needed to support student needs.

Too many institutions have a tendency to overlook organizational health from a system’s perspective. Maslow’s theory of hierarchy should be considered within this entire process. A self-actualizing or socializing focus will assist in creating a welcoming and caring environment for students and others within the organization. An unhealthy environment that has constituents concerned about problems of communication, poor benefits, low salary, staff turnover, unsatisfactory working conditions, etc. will not be beneficial to enrollment efforts.

Environmental scanning can provide a solid foundation of information that can enable the future to work for institutions. Awareness of data through environmental scanning is needed at both the departmental and institutional levels.

Moreover, it is not healthy for an organization to simply state that it wants to grow in size. However, this is not uncommon for institutions that are tuition-driven. Responsible growth must be accompanied with planning, services, and resources. All too often institutions fail to systematically analyze the market, environment, and cost-benefit analysis when planning for growth. If every department completes a comprehensive annual report and subsequent cyclical self-assessment, then the growth (health) of the institution could be more accurately planned for and tracked by combining all of the projections; hence the concept of Enrollment Management Organization.

Learning Organizations
The Enrollment Management Organization emphasizes a total community commitment. EMO helps to coordinate assessment, planning, budgeting, and enrollment management...
efforts. Almost every institution of higher education has systematized, and sometimes embraced, all of these concepts. Unfortunately, they typically operate in isolation. Thus institutions often duplicate tasks and sometimes have processes working against one another. An EMO uses data and processes to link these efforts in order to build a learning organization (as described by Senge 1994). In reality, this is a simple concept that can yield tremendous results through the sharing of data, resources, and information throughout the organization. As Plato stated, “Knowledge is virtue.” In other words, if the faculty, staff and administration have enough information, training, and knowledge, they will have the opportunity to make the appropriate (virtuous) decisions.

References
Ewell, P.T. 1996. The Current Pattern of State-Level Assessment: Results of a National Inventory. Assessment Update. 8(3).
In an effort to provide guidance and appropriate coursework for students majoring in public justice at the State University of New York at Oswego, the author undertook a retrospective survey of the career goals and plans of graduating seniors during the four semesters from the fall of 1997 through the spring of 1999. Students entering college with specific occupational plans frequently request career-oriented courses and resent general education requirements and major core courses that appear to be irrelevant to their targeted career goals. At Oswego, however, faculty, advisors, and institutional research across majors all suggest that even students enrolling with firm professional plans commonly modify their goals while in college, and thus benefit from a broad-based liberal arts education. This survey was conducted to document or refute the career goal fluctuations that appear to be so prevalent among college students today.

Public justice is a liberal arts program that provides students with an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective on the fields of criminal and civil law and human services. Courses promote the examination of concepts, policies, systems, processes, and problems involved in the provision of services by professionals in law, corrections, human services, and law enforcement. Students complete five required core courses, seven public justice electives chosen from a variety of academic disciplines, and the campus general education requirements. After the mandatory internship during the junior or senior year, students often are devastated by the discovery that what they had “always wanted to be” no longer seems so inviting. In addition, most students will not follow the “unitary career paths” of their parents, changing careers three to five times (Vinton and Hovet 1993, p. 26) due to economic alterations, globalization, rapid technological change, and the evolution of organizational formats, goals, and values (Miles and Snow 1996). The challenge for faculty is to provide the coursework that students request without leaving upper division students and graduates unprepared to alter their career plans.

Conflicts Inherent in Choosing a Career

In 1909, Frank Parsons provided the first conceptual framework for career decision making, suggesting that to make a satisfactory career choice an individual needed a clear understanding of himself or herself; knowledge of the requirements, conditions, and opportunities in the world of work; and the ability to adequately consider and evaluate the relationship between the first two issues (Brown and Brooks 1996). This “trait and factor” theory remains relevant today, although research suggests that additional issues must be considered (Brown and Brooks 1996). Career choice reflects a person’s motivation, knowledge, personality, and environment (Spokane 1996), although these attributes and their relative importance may change during developmental cycles across the life span (Super et al. 1996). Traditional age students, who continue to dominate our higher education programs, have relatively limited knowledge of themselves, their abilities, and the world of work. Despite their prior work experience, many adult students also remain undecided about their career goals (Duffy 1998).

In addition to school programs and personal interests, a student’s family, economic, and social environments may influence the prospective employee’s awareness of career opportunities, the routes to these opportunities, and his or her perceptions of the labor market (Powlette and Young 1996). Further, since

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Acknowledgement: The author is grateful for the cooperation of Public Justice Department faculty and students who shared their impressions and expectations, making this survey possible, and also for the research assistance of Dr. Richard Izzett of the Psychology Department.
career choice can be perceived as a process involving cognitive development and the narrowing of options beginning in childhood, early career choice may result in inadequate consideration of alternatives (Gottfredson 1996). Other recognized influences include part-time employment, work habits, scholastic success, leisure activities, and life style goals (Powlette and Young 1996), as well as decision making styles (Niles et al. 1997) and perceptions of gender roles (Tittle 1981). Most college and university applicants feel pressured to indicate career and/or major plans despite their lack of exposure to the world of work and the chaotic emotional state of the teenage years. As a result, one of the largest majors on most campuses is “undeclared” or “undeclared.” Recent research suggests that even those students who enter with firm career plans frequently change majors during their college years or graduate without a clear idea of their post-college goals (Kramer et al. 1994).

Survey Method
Beginning in the fall semester of 1997, students in the senior seminar, the final departmental core requirement, were asked to respond to a retrospective survey of their career goals beginning in middle school and ending with their current career plans. (See Appendix A: Career Path Survey.) Approximately thirty-five participants a semester, primarily students in their last semester of college, were surveyed about changes in goals; the impact of family, friends, and other environmental factors on career choice; the influence of classes, including the internship fieldwork; and current plans for employment. Additionally, although the department offers a single undifferentiated major, students were asked which of three more specific majors—criminal justice, human services, or legal studies—they might have chosen if the three options had been available when they declared their major. They were then asked if that choice would still be relevant today. The intense silence or subtle joking observed while students were filling out the surveys appeared to be indicative of the hopes, fears, and indecision that the survey revealed.

Survey Results
During the first two years of the study, 145 surveys were returned (fall 1997 through spring 1999). The respondents were almost equally divided between men and women. Most were traditional aged students, under 25 years old. Twenty-two students or 15.2 percent were non-traditional aged students ranging in age from 25 to 50 years.³

Career Plans
Just weeks prior to graduation, most students articulated only tentative post-college employment plans. In contrast to the expectations of outsiders, based on the name of our department (Public Justice Department), just 46 students or about 32 percent of graduating seniors anticipated careers in law enforcement. Although most of these 32 percent indicated plans to take local, state, or federal civil/service exams in the future, or had recently taken these exams, few had been offered a specific position so it was impossible to determine what their first jobs would actually be. Though not reflected in the survey, every semester there were several students who continued to indicate publicly to their peers that they were planning careers in law enforcement, while admitting privately that they had determined that a career in law enforcement no longer seemed appropriate.

Thirty-two students or 22 percent expected to secure positions in human service agencies. Few had specific agencies in mind, though four students hoped that human service work strategies that they were only able to indicate that their future employment, while ten students were so unsure of their plans had not yet been formulated. Four of the students who were undecided expected to be in law enforcement five years in the future. Whether their current indecision reflected questions about their own career goals or the job market was not apparent.

Gender Roles
Although the survey respondents were almost evenly divided between men (75) and women (70), student career choices reflected national gender biases (U.S. Census 1999). (See Table 1.) Thirty-six of the students anticipating careers in law enforcement were men. Only 10 of the 70 women planned to work in law enforcement. In contrast, 25 of the women planned careers in human services, including such fields as counseling and probation. Only 7 of the 75 men indicated human services

1 At least one-quarter of recent first year classes at Oswego have enrolled as “undeclared” students.
2 The Kramer, Higley and Olsen study at Brigham Young University found that the majority of students changed majors at least once during college, while 10 percent changed their majors four or more times (1994). At Oswego, the high percentage of undeclared students, combined with those students whose career goals change during their college years, is reflected in a large number of major changes, about 10 percent of enrolled undergraduates during the fall 1998 semester alone.
3 This age differentiation is a superficial demarcation, since I did not have knowledge of the activities of those non-traditional younger students who are parents or married, are working full time, or have unusual personal responsibilities. The age of 25 was selected since it indicates that a student probably did not enter college immediately after high school, graduating four to five years after enrollment, which is the traditional pattern.
as their career choice. These gender biases may also mirror the relatively conservative geographic areas from which most Oswego students are drawn. Ten of the seventeen law school applicants were women, paralleling the increasing numbers of women enrolling in the nation’s law schools.

**ANTICIPATED LONGEVITY OF FIRST POST-COLLEGE JOB**

Students were asked to indicate whether their plans for employment were of a long-term or temporary nature, leaving the students to define these terms for themselves. Only 31 students or just over 21 percent indicated that they expected their first jobs to be “long-term” positions. The remainder reported that they expected their first jobs to be temporary. Some of these students anticipated lengthy periods on civil service lists or years in graduate school, but others obviously saw their initial jobs as interim positions. The preponderance of temporary employment among both traditional and non-traditional students indicates the tentative nature of the career plans of graduating seniors. Their anticipated occupational mobility reflects the career predictions in the literature outlined previously.

Respondents were asked to project their career goals for five years into the future. Despite the anticipated temporary nature of their first jobs, most students (94, or almost 65 percent) anticipated employment in fields similar to the ones they hoped to start in currently. The 17 students planning to attend law school, most law enforcement oriented students (over 91 percent), and 29 human service oriented students (almost 83 percent) expected to continue in their previously chosen fields through the five year mark. Eight students, who had not indicated immediate plans for graduate school, anticipated that they would have started or completed graduate programs in a field similar to their currently chosen field within the next five years, most in the human services. Twenty-six students expected to be in career fields different from their immediate plans in five years. Ten of these 26 students who anticipated changing careers hoped to return for graduate study, primarily in law school. Many of the remaining 16 who anticipated career changes within five years listed career goals in law or law enforcement, although they were unwilling to specify those aspirations as current career plans. Fourteen students, most uncertain of their immediate plans, were equally unable to project five years into the future.

**MODIFICATIONS IN CAREER GOALS BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATION**

Students’ career goals while in high school were compared to career goals at the time of this survey, a few weeks before their college graduations. (See Table 2.) Career goals were considered to be similar if students altered their choices from counseling to probation or from law enforcement to criminal investigation. Although the careers differ, the undergraduate education required is similar. Career goals were considered to differ significantly if the alterations were from field to field, such as from human services to law enforcement or if their goals required different forms of education. For example, a career change from engineering to law enforcement indicates a major alteration in plans. Less dramatically, a student who initially expressed interest in teaching might still consider working with children, possibly as a family preservation counselor or in a youth center. These students would have changed majors and course requirements to reflect the modification of their goals.

Eighty-three students, or 57 percent of the total sample, revealed that they had made major alterations in their career

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**Table 1: Career Choices Divided by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Human Services</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Law Enforcement</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Temp Job</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28% (40.0%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10% (14.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8% (11.4%)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>70** (48.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7% (9.3%)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36% (48.0%)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>75** (51.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>35** (24.1%)</td>
<td>17**</td>
<td>46% (31.7%)</td>
<td>22**</td>
<td>15**</td>
<td>10**</td>
<td>145** (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in parentheses indicate percentages of men or women in the total survey sample in that particular field.

**Table 2: Students’ Career Consistency Between High School And College Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>28 (19.3%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>35 (24.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>8 (5.5%)</td>
<td>11 (5.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>17 (13.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>25 (17.2%)</td>
<td>20 (13.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>46 (31.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>13 (9.0%)</td>
<td>6 (4.1%)</td>
<td>22 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>10 (6.9%)</td>
<td>14 (9.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>25 (17.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Consistency</td>
<td>50 (34.5%)</td>
<td>83 (57.2%)</td>
<td>12 (8.3%)</td>
<td>145 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in parentheses indicate percentages of the total 1997-99 survey sample, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

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* Almost 60 percent of non-traditional students and just over 80 percent of traditional students described their first jobs after graduation as temporary positions.
plans since high school. In contrast, 50 students or more than 34 percent, reported that they held the same career goals now and in the past. Twelve students, or 8 percent of those responding, indicated careers that were similar to those they had chosen prior to college.

Eighty percent of the students currently planning to enter human service careers made major deviations from their career plans in high school. The human service professions are generally less visible and less widely discussed among middle and high school students than law (47 percent major career change) and law enforcement (43 percent major career change). Popular television programs featuring law and law enforcement professionals provide familiarity with the more tantalizing, if less realistic aspects of these professions. Some of those students selecting human service professions may have been responding to new exposure to these fields during their college years.

MODIFICATION OF CAREER GOALS DURING THE COLLEGE YEARS

About 55 percent of the student sample indicated that their career goals had changed during their four years in college. (See Table 3.) Surprisingly, 50 percent of non-traditional students also reported that their career goals had changed during college. While in college, students began to consider career options that they had not taken seriously prior to college or had not been exposed to at all. Of the three public justice career fields, it can be hypothesized that pre-college students would have had the most exposure to law enforcement officers while in high school, and less personal experience with careers in law and human services. Almost 72 percent of those graduating seniors who planned to enter law enforcement have had stable career plans since entering college. In contrast, less than 53 percent of those students planning to enter law school decided on this career choice before entering college and only 40 percent of those planning on human service careers established those interests prior to college.

Students who altered their career choices while in college were asked which of a list of possible career influences had the most impact on their decision making. Students indicated that their professional contacts, college courses, and required internship had the most impact on their career changes. Other students and families were held to be less important influences. Although it is difficult to determine the impact on career choice of years of family interactions, students themselves obviously felt that their exposure to professionals, classes, and internships during their college years had the most dramatic influence.

As expected, when Tables 2 and 3 are compared, more students altered their career plans between high school and college graduation than during the college years. Almost 48 percent of students, however, made major changes in their career plans during their college years and 12 percent of students were uncertain of their career goals just weeks prior to graduation. Though not reflected in this survey, an observer discussing post-college plans with those graduating seniors willing to express their ambivalence, might find the amount of uncertainty even higher.

SATISFACTION WITH CHOICE OF MAJOR

Students frequently complain that no one outside the department knows just what the public justice major encompasses. Before personal involvement with the department, advisement from a community college advisor, or contact with a friend who was already a public justice major, many of the students themselves were convinced that the department’s primary focus is criminal justice. Students find it necessary to continually explain to peers and prospective employers that their major is much more than criminal justice.

With this frustrating experience in mind, students were asked to indicate which of three more familiar majors they might have designated upon admission to Oswego if they had been given a choice between three concentrations: criminal justice, human services, or legal studies. Seventy-one students, almost half the respondents, would have chosen to major in criminal justice at the time of enrollment at Oswego because they found criminal justice most interesting or most relevant to their career interests. Of these, fifteen students admitted that this choice would no longer be appropriate. The current interests of these fifteen focused around either law or human services. The majority of the remaining 74 students were almost evenly divided between legal studies and human services. Twenty-eight students (19 percent) would have chosen to major in human services, only one student would no longer find this relevant. And 26 students (18 percent) would have chosen legal studies, and only one student’s altered focus would have made that choice inappropriate. Twenty students refused to choose one concentration and indicated two or all three of the possible majors. Many of those who did pick a single focus, however, indicated that they preferred the variety of course options within the current undifferentiated major.

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1 Students who dropped the public justice major prior to graduation were unavailable to survey. Their inclusion would have raised the percentage of students changing career goals. Less than 1 percent of current public justice students, however, drop the public justice major each semester.

2 A question can be raised as to whether the proportion of public justice majors who exhibit a change in career choice during their four years in college is greater than what one might ordinarily expect of a college student. Since 25 percent of students enroll without a major, requiring declaration of a major by their junior year (Admissions Office) and 10 percent of all undergraduate students altered their major during the fall semester of 1998 (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment), a test of the hypothesis that public justice majors are more likely to change career focus than the typical student would be created by establishing as a change baseline some proportion greater than .25. Thus a more conservative Chi-square goodness of fit test to determine whether the proportion of public justice majors exhibiting a career change was significantly greater than that expected of the typical student was conducted by using an expected change proportion of .33. Results of that analysis indicated that a shift in career decisions occurred significantly greater than an expected proportion of .33, $\chi^2(1) = 13.255$, $p < .001$. A similar analysis to determine whether the career focus change rate from high school to the end of the college career was greater than .33 was also conducted. Results of that analysis indicated that the change proportion was significantly greater than .33, $\chi^2(1) = 37.29$, $p < .001$. 

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Even when their current career choices differed from the concentration choice they might have made as entering students, most respondents remained interested in the concentration and the coursework which they thought would accompany that choice. Students based their decisions on their individual understanding of what a major in each of these three areas might mean. Whether they would have been equally happy once course requirements were in place is unknown. It is obvious, however, that students do not share the fear of some advisors that more specific majors might force students to focus their coursework too narrowly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>10 (6.9%)</td>
<td>21 (13.8%)</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>35 (24.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>8 (5.5%)</td>
<td>8 (5.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>17 (11.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>31 (21.4%)</td>
<td>13 (9.0%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>46 (31.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>6 (4.1%)</td>
<td>5 (3.4%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>13 (9.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7 (4.8%)</td>
<td>13 (9.0%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>22 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>9 (6.1%)</td>
<td>13 (9.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>46 (31.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Consistency Total</td>
<td>65 (44.8%)</td>
<td>69 (47.6%)</td>
<td>11 (7.6%)</td>
<td>145 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in parentheses indicate percentages of the total 1997-99 survey sample, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

**Implications for Career Guidance**

Students commonly argue that they see little reason for taking many of the departmental core courses and general education courses required for graduation. One prospective student, in fact, told the author that he would not attend Oswego because, “I just want to be a beat cop and you want your students to learn so much more.”

Law enforcement oriented students, in particular, are unwilling to accept faculty explanations that agencies and graduate programs are most interested in a recruit’s ability to think critically, communicate orally and in writing, and interact with the diverse populations with whom law enforcement officers will be working. The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences recommends that students be exposed to the “broad scope” of criminal justice (Minimum Standards for Criminal Justice Education 1998). And law enforcement agencies, of course, want to train their own officers in the specifics of law enforcement.

Prospective lawyers and human service employees are in a similar position. Reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication skills remain the greatest assets that they can bring to their fields. Thus a broad array of liberal arts courses, along with a mixture of required and elective social science and law-related coursework, appear to be most practical.

**The Value of More Narrowly Focused Courses**

Courses that are aimed at specific career interests have their place within the college curriculum for both students who are interested in those careers and for those who are not. A smattering of more career-oriented courses, such as “homicide investigation” or “human service skills,” stimulates the student who is interested in these fields as a career choice to test out his or her interests. Similarly, these courses allow other students to explore new areas and create a greater understanding of the types of experiences with which professionals in these fields must cope. These more focused courses draw in unresponsive students, offering them a chance to get involved in a subject area they find interesting and often inspiring levels of academic success which they had not previously experienced.

**Implications for Course Offerings and Student Recruitment**

With the exception of upper tier colleges and universities that are turning away large high quality pools of applicants, many colleges and universities find themselves competing for students. Advertising campaigns and the stuffed mailboxes of high school seniors attest to this competition. To foster enrollment, major and course offerings must stimulate student interest and provide the background needed by those with volatile career goals.

After completing their internships, students often return to campus sadly proclaiming, “I have always wanted to be a…, and now I know that it is not for me. Have I wasted all these years?” As we examine their transcripts, students are able to see for themselves that the liberal arts program against which they objected so vigorously has actually prepared them for a broad variety of career options. The former human service student who studied abnormal psychology will better understand the diverse personalities with whom he or she interacts while walking a beat. The criminal justice oriented student, who is no longer interested in law enforcement, can use his or her knowledge of the sociology of gangs or adolescent psychology to move into human services. All of these students, whether entering business, law, human services, or law enforcement, will benefit from the study of civil law, organizational theory, and the criminal justice system that other required courses provide.

**Conclusions**

The career volatility conspicuous in current career-oriented research is also visible within this sample of undergraduate students in the fields of law, law enforcement, and human services, even when students “have always known what they wanted to be.” These fluctuations demonstrate the need to continue the broadly-based liberal arts tradition. Narrowing their focus too early may prevent students from considering careers that might later seem to be desirable. A liberal arts education prepares students for multiple career changes and continuing rounds of education in response to changing interests, new technological
developments, and fluctuations in the economy. Even when students do remain in their previously selected career fields, they must be flexible enough to adapt to the demand for alterations in skills, philosophies, and attitudes so prevalent in many fields today. As one alumnus reported, “Employers require that prospective employees be flexible, not well trained.”

This study demonstrates the impact of the new ideas and experiences to which an undergraduate student is exposed. Coursework and internships allow students to explore new career interests. Students can utilize their college years to better understand their own interests and needs while exploring the world of work.

Today's students and parents are not satisfied with education for education’s sake. College is expected to provide a path to successful employment. Most students, however, will not have the luxury of a one-job career. Current students must be flexible enough to retrain, retool, or reeducate as the market demands. Colleges must offer both a broad educational experience and the more focused courses that make this retooling possible.

References


3 In the field of law enforcement, for example, officers have been pressed to respond to the introduction of community policing, new attitudes towards domestic violence, the increase in female and minority officers, and the need to work with a variety of other professionals.
Appendix A: Relevant Questions from the CAREER PATH SURVEY

In order to better understand and meet the needs and interests of Public Justice majors, we are conducting this survey about the career plans and goals of our seniors. While your answers will have no impact upon your own education, grades, or references, your responses will help guide our planning for future students.

Age: ______ Gender: ______

Currently, what are your professional plans following graduation?

Please indicate whether you see your first job as a long-term position or as a temporary employment while you are waiting for your desired position to open up, waiting for civil service exams, or prior to attending graduate school. If this is a temporary position, what are your other plans?

In what professional position do you hope to be in five years?

Did your career plans change during the course of your college education? If the answer to this is “no,” skip to question 8.

If your career plans changed during college, what were your original plans?

What influenced the change in your career plans? Indicate how these factors caused you to alter your original career plans. Mark as many as apply and add your own comments.

family ______ other students ______ professional contacts ______ practicum ______
other internships ______ college courses ______ other—please specify _____

What were you career goals while you were in high school?

If you had been given a choice between the following three majors within public justice, which would you have chosen? Please elaborate briefly on the reasons for your choice.

Criminal Justice ______
Human Services ______
Legal Studies ______

If you had chosen one of these three areas when you first became a public justice major, would your choice still be appropriate today? Why or why not?
Appendix B: CAREER PATH SURVEY

In order to better understand and meet the needs and interests of Public Justice majors, we are conducting this survey about the career plans and goals of our seniors. While your answers will have no impact upon your own education, grades, or references, your responses will help guide our planning for future students.

Age: ________ Gender: ________

1. How many more semesters after this semester do you have at Oswego before you graduate?

2. Currently, what are your professional plans following graduation?

3. Please indicate whether you see your first job as a long-term position or as a temporary employment while you are waiting for your desired position to open up, waiting for civil service exams, or prior to attending graduate school. If this is a temporary position, what are your other plans?

4. In what professional position do you hope to be in five years?

5. Did your career plans change during the course of your college education? If the answer to this is "no," skip to question 8.

6. If your career plans changed during college, what were your original plans?

7. What influenced the change in your career plans? Indicate how these factors caused you to alter your original career plans. Mark as many as apply and add your own comments.

- family
- other students
- professional contacts
- practicum
- other internships
- college courses
- other —please specify

8. What were your career goals while you were in middle school or junior high school?

9. What were your career goals while you were in high school?

10. Did your career goals change during your years of high school? If your goals changed during high school, how did they change?

11. Did your career goals influence your choice of a college? Please explain.

12. What other factors influenced your choice of a college?

13. Are you a transfer student?

14. If you are a transfer student, please indicate why you chose your first college.

15. If you are a transfer student, please indicate why you chose to attend SUNY Oswego.

16. What influenced your decision to be a Public Justice major? Please explain each of your selections. Mark as many as apply and add any additional influences.

- Career considerations
  - I didn't know what else to choose.
  - My friends liked public justice.
  - I was impressed by the faculty.
  - I took a public justice course and liked it.
  - I was told it was easy.
  - Other

17. How did you first hear about the Public Justice major?

18. When did you first hear about the Public Justice major? The year is not important, but please indicate where you were in school or professionally when you first learned about the Public Justice major.

19. What year in college were you, when you became a Public Justice major?

20. Indicate the ways in which the Public Justice major has met your career and academic needs.

21. Indicate the ways in which the Public Justice major might be altered to better meet your academic and professional needs.

22. If you had been given a choice between the following three majors within public justice, which would you have chosen? Please elaborate briefly on the reasons for your choice.

- Criminal Justice
- Human Services
- Legal Studies

23. If you had chosen one of these three areas when you first became a public justice major, would your choice still be appropriate today? Why or why not?

24. Please indicate your name, permanent address and phone number so we can contact you in the future to hear about your post-college adventures. If you are unsure where you might be, list the address of a family member who will know how to reach you. PLEASE PRINT.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD ANY OTHER INFORMATION WHICH YOU THINK MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO US.
In today’s hot labor market those of us in higher education face an ongoing challenge. Our colleagues in the business world are equipped to offer signing bonuses, retention bonuses, variable pay, sabbaticals, team-based awards, and quick getaway weekends to Disney World or a Caribbean Island. In order to provide outstanding customer service and stay abreast of Web and system development, we too must hire and retain exceptional employees. Education has always capitalized on the environmental qualities of working in an educational setting, but the advantages of tuition remission, cultural and athletic events, and student contact along with a pace that is now comparable to the corporate world are blurring the advantages. What’s a manager to do?

In fall 1997, a Performance Management team was appointed at Boston College to evaluate the compensation, classification, and performance appraisal systems. A team of twelve University administrators worked with Hewitt Associates, a management consulting firm specializing in human resource solutions, over the course of a year to design a new system. The Office of Student Services served as one of the pilot organizations for the implementation. The following article will describe the features of the new system.

Why Change?
For years the University had an employee classification system that included ten grades for exempt staff and ten grades for non-exempt staff. Each time an employee either changed jobs or changed roles within a job, a reclassification request was submitted. As jobs were changing continuously and becoming more technical and less routine, the demands on the Compensation unit of the Office of Human Resources were increasing steadily and as a result requests for reclassification often took several months. A more flexible system was required that would result in faster turnaround, a more flexible compensation program, and more managerial control over salary administration. The planning team began by designing a new approach to job classification.

Classification
To streamline the process of classifying employees and to provide greater flexibility for movement within roles, broadbanding was introduced. The Performance Management Team quickly (and somewhat surprisingly) agreed on the establishment of five broad bands, which are defined as follows:

- Chief University and academic officers
- Management and expert individual contributors who influence policy, vision, and strategy
- Management and individual contributors involved in team direction and/or knowledge leadership
- Group leaders and individual contributors who apply functional expertise, innovation, and judgment on a regular basis
- Individual contributors or team members who are guided by standard practices and procedures to accomplish work assignments.

Each career band has an accompanying broad salary band to accommodate both entry-level staff, experienced staff, and staff who have broadened their level of responsibility within the job role. The bands include both managers and individual contributors, which helps ensure that experts are not forced to accept managerial roles in order to advance. For example, the person who designs system architecture is probably more valuable in that role than he/she would be as an operational manager.

This career band system shifts the focus from the evaluation of job content to the evaluation of the individual’s performance.
and contribution. It encourages learning. In addition, the new classification system emphasizes the use of external market competitiveness.

**Competencies**

The foundation of the performance management system is the job description, which includes the role summary, the scope of the position, the essential functions, minimum qualifications, functional competencies, educational requirements, and experience. The job description is used for postings, recruitment, training, and employee development (see Figure 1).

To guide staff in their performance and development, the first exercise the Performance Management Team undertook was the definition of University-wide competencies (Figure 2). Competencies are skills, knowledge, and abilities described in behavioral terms that are coachable, observable, measurable, and critical to successful individual or organizational performance. They provide a common language for describing effective performance.

Employees are expected to possess all of the University competencies, though to varying degrees. Applying technology will be the major focus for a system manager and productivity will be essential for a support specialist. At a Jesuit university, the centerpiece of the competencies reflect the Ignatian Tradition of service to others, care and concern for the individual, and an interest in the common good. One could argue that the achievement of these alone would take care of all the rest.

Managers also identified functional/technical competencies for their individual units. Staff took part in the process by describing the performance characteristics of colleagues who were among the best in their roles. These images served to form the basis of the behaviors described in the competencies.

Table 1 shows examples of the competencies for roles within the student services organization. It includes the division-wide competencies expected of all student services employees, the technical competencies that are required for selected employees, and the leadership competencies that managers must strive to achieve. Table 2 provides definitions for some of

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**Table 1: Job Description–Administrative Specialist** (Boston College Role Description)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Specialist</th>
<th>Minimum Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Summary</td>
<td>Under each of the following sub-headings, indicate the minimum qualifications required to perform the essential functions of the role:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List those competencies that relate to the specific functional or technical expertise relevant to a particular discipline and are required to perform the essential functions of the role:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and Certification, Licensure, Registration Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the minimum formal education or training required to perform the essential functions of the role. List specific certification, licensure, and/or registration requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the type of experience required to perform the essential functions of the role. This may include specific types of roles and/or an understanding of a particular functional, organizational, or industry sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reporting Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Briefly summarize the main purposes of the role within its functional and organizational context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List those competencies that relate to the specific functional or technical expertise relevant to a particular discipline and are required to perform the essential functions of the role:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and Certification, Licensure, Registration Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the minimum formal education or training required to perform the essential functions of the role. List specific certification, licensure, and/or registration requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the type of experience required to perform the essential functions of the role. This may include specific types of roles and/or an understanding of a particular functional, organizational, or industry sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reporting Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Briefly summarize the main purposes of the role within its functional and organizational context.</td>
</tr>
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**Figure 1: Job Description–Administrative Specialist** (Boston College Role Description)

Administrative Specialist

**Role Summary**

Briefly summarize the main purposes of the role within its functional and organizational context.

- Manage office operations including budget, travel, events, purchasing, payroll, and hiring.

**Reporting Relationship**

Indicate the title of the position and/or name of the team to which this position reports.

- Director of Student Services

**Scope**

Identify the organizational and operational dimensions of the role (e.g., principal sphere of influence and accountability as measured by organizational and constituency dimensions; size of resources managed (budget, staff, facilities, capital equipment); volume of activity or revenue assumed or generated; technological environment impacted).

- Manage operating budget of approximately $750,000.
- Hire and place approximately 50 student employees.
- Maintain employee files for 65 staff members.
- Plan approximately 25 luncheons and events.
- Maintain and purchase office supplies and equipment.

**Essential Functions**

List the essential functions of the role in their order of importance taking into consideration the full work cycle (i.e., daily, weekly, annually, or irregular intervals). Note: An “essential function” is defined as being critical to the role and is one of the key purposes for the establishment of the role.

- Analyze and monitor the operating budget.
- Process hiring, termination and payroll transactions.
- Process purchase orders, travel vouchers and check requisitions.
- Purchase supplies and services using U-Buy.
- Maintain inventory of supplies, anticipate needs, replenish as needed, meet and negotiate with vendors.
- Maintain forms racks.
- Oversee building maintenance for student services areas.
- Maintain forms inventory, replenish as needed.
- Plan and manage events. Arrange for food, beverage, and/or catering.
- Receive and process subpoenas.
- Hire, place, and provide training materials for student employees.
- Maintain employee attendance records.
- Maintain employee position descriptions.
- Maintain equipment and maintenance contracts.
- Maintain office key inventory.
- Follow-up with callers on service issues to ensure resolution.
- Arrange travel for staff.

---

**Minimum Qualifications**

Under each of the following sub-headings, indicate the minimum qualifications required to perform the essential functions of the role:

**Functional Competencies**

List those competencies that relate to the specific functional or technical expertise relevant to a particular discipline and are required to perform the essential functions of the role:

- Maintain employee records and process changes.
- Plan and schedule events and arrange for food and beverage.
- Anticipate needs for supplies and forms, maintain inventory, and be responsive to requests for good and services.
- Prepare position descriptions and training materials for student employees.
- Process transactions to request goods and services.
- Provide outstanding administrative support to colleagues. Meet deadlines, process requests within the day, and follow through on issues to resolution.
- Basic understanding of accounting system and how it relates to budgets and purchasing.
- Create spreadsheets in Excel with complete calculations.
- Use Word to create and lay out documents.
- Functional use of voice mail, e-mail system, calendaring, and scheduling systems.
- Functional use of PowerPoint including ability to create and deliver a presentation.
- Use the web to search for and retrieve information including articles, news, and directory information.
- Maintain strict privacy and confidentiality.
- Share responsibility with team members.

**Education and Certification, Licensure, Registration Requirements**

Describe the minimum formal education or training required to perform the essential functions of the role. List specific certification, licensure, and/or registration requirements.

- Bachelor’s degree preferred.

**Experience**

Describe the type of experience required to perform the essential functions of the role. This may include specific types of roles and/or an understanding of a particular functional, organizational, or industry sector.

- Two to three years as an administrative coordinator preferably in a university setting.
Boston College University-Wide Competencies

The university-wide competencies describe what effective performance looks like at Boston College. These competencies are used throughout the performance management process and apply to all employees. Along with these competencies, employee performance must support the unique mission of Boston College as reflected in our Ignation Tradition listed below. By upholding this tradition, the values of the university are strengthened.

Big Picture Perspective
- Responds to major issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the university
- Demonstrates understanding of university mission, structure, culture, and constituencies
- Demonstrates knowledge of own department’s work activities and mission; understands how own job impacts work of department
- Considers financial impact to the university of own work activities and decisions

Openness to Change
- Responds positively to changes in the university and the workplace
- Initiates and/or incorporates new work methods, processes, and technology
- Demonstrates flexibility in responding to work demands

People Development
- Helps to create work environment that promotes development of people
- Participates fully in performance management process
- Acts as teacher, mentor, and/or coach to others in workplace

Valuing Diversity
- Promotes work environment that values diversity and supports appropriate behaviors in others
- Demonstrates respect for the opinions and beliefs of others
- Demonstrates commitment to university’s Affirmative Support Action goals

Communication
- Uses communication tools effectively (e.g., presentation, verbal, writing, relationship building, negotiating, listening) to meet needs of audience and/or situation
- Recognizes appropriate times to communicate and tailors communication to meet the needs and preferences of others
- Shares information and accepts feedback easily and in timely manner
- Demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to others’ needs in communicating and/or making decisions

Continuous Learning
- Keeps current with new work methods, skills, and technologies to complete work activities
- Takes ownership for own self-development and continuous learning
- Applies learnings from past experiences to current and future work activities

Customer Focus
- Understands role of “customers” in university environment
- Understands and responds quickly to needs of department and university customers
- Understands how own work activities impact customers’ view of university
- Addresses customers’ concerns with courtesy and respect; works to build “win-win” relationship

Teamwork
- Works effectively with others in a variety of university settings
- Balances own responsibilities with interests of team and/or department; respects group goals
- Shares knowledge, responsibilities, and expertise with others easily and frequently
- Demonstrates positive influences within groups/teams in which she/he participates

Productivity
- Focuses on work activities that add value to university and department, works to eliminate work activities that do not add value
- Uses resources (people, time, materials) in cost-effective manner to achieve work objectives
- Plans and organizes work effectively
- Accepts accountability for job performance and results

Decision Making/Problem Solving
- Makes and/or facilitates decisions considering impact on others and/or the university
- Reaches sound decisions and exercises good judgment based on balanced consideration of facts, priorities, and alternatives
- Makes decisions in agreed upon time frame; takes initiatives to identify and resolve problems
- Demonstrates ability to examine existing problems/issues in new ways

Applying Technology
- Learns and uses technology applications that improve productivity
- Acts as coach (as appropriate) to help others learn new technology applications
- Rethinks work activities to incorporate new technologies

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these competencies. Managers have always been expected to demonstrate leadership, but this defines for employees exactly what leadership looks like in behavioral terms. It sets the standard for performance, planning, and development.

Performance Management

Once the competencies and the job description are in place, the performance management process can begin. The process is viewed as a year-round cycle that includes performance and development planning, feedback throughout the year about performance, and an annual performance review.

At the beginning of the year the employee and the supervisor set goals for the coming year using University competencies, functional/technical competencies, department goals, and employee career development objectives as guidelines to employee development. This process aligns employee activities with University and department priorities, documents performance expectations, and supports ongoing communication. Performance and learning goals are often linked. For example, a performance goal might be to use Visual Basic to automate online transaction processing. The learning goal would be to take a Visual Basic class.

Team members can also set goals for the team. For example, the processing support staff might set a group goal of redesigning all forms.

Identifying performance goals is often a challenge for staff. They are accustomed to doing what they are told and may not have had the opportunity to set and accomplish goals of their own. To assist them in the formation of performance and learning goals, they have been introduced to the concept of SMART goals, which are goals that are:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time Specific**

An example of a SMART goal would be the following:

*To prepare a spreadsheet by August 30, 2000, tracking enrollment in majors for the past 25 years.*

To support their performance goals, employees also set learning-and-development goals. Learning-and-development is often interpreted as attendance at a conference or training session, but there are many ways to engage in ongoing learning. Once the examples listed below were introduced to staff, they were better able to prepare their own development goals:

- shadowing other employees
- reading books or periodicals
- computer-based training
- a special project
- visiting another institution
- joining a professional organization
- cross-training or swapping jobs
- identifying a mentor.

Employees can learn a great deal by taking a day to read the University catalog and the Student Guide, reading the campus newspaper, surfing the Web for information, or making a later move to a different position.

To keep employees on track and to refine goals as needed, feedback is given throughout the year to provide immediate and constructive information about performance, to monitor progress toward goals and expected results, and to revise expectations if necessary. For example, if Information Technology finds itself in a position to automate a labor-intensive process, every effort will be made to revise goals, assign resources, and hop on board.

Multi-Source Feedback

The Office of Student Services has begun to make use of multi-source feedback to enhance employee development. Feedback is solicited from five colleagues who are mutually agreed upon by the employee and supervisor. The feedback provider is asked to comment on specific competencies that may be unique to the position, e.g., customer service, project management, communication, or team cooperation. Multi-source feedback is conducted at mid-year and is used for employee development only. It does not become part of the annual performance appraisal. The supervisor compiles the feedback, which is confidential, and presents it to the employee.

This process provides a broader view of performance, usually reinforces the observations of the supervisor, and brings to light issues that may not always be apparent to the supervisor. Once it becomes more established, it may become part of the formal performance appraisal.

### Table 1: Student Services Functional Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers (Within Student Services)</th>
<th>Student Services Wide Competencies (All Student Services Positions)</th>
<th>Technical Competencies (Selected Student Services Positions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>University Knowledge</td>
<td>Word Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation</td>
<td>University Perspective</td>
<td>Spreadsheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Personal Integrity</td>
<td>Desktop Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Planning</td>
<td>Team Cooperation</td>
<td>Web Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>System Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Development</td>
<td>Privacy and Confidentiality</td>
<td>Third Party Software Expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>Meeting Maker</td>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Web Navigation</td>
<td>Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>University Information System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>U-View, Agora Access Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Voice Mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skill</td>
<td>E-Mail</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Practices Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation Skills</td>
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<td>Human Resource Systems</td>
<td></td>
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**Examples of learning activities:**

- reading books or periodicals
- computer-based training
- a special project
- visiting another institution
- joining a professional organization
- cross-training or swapping jobs
- identifying a mentor.
The review is used as the basis for annual merit raises. Ideally, sufficient feedback has occurred in the interim at least once a year to engage in performance and developmental planning. When a salary is determined, adjustments may range from 0 to 10 percent depending on employee performance. If the merit pool is 3.5 percent, salary increments may range from 0 to 10 percent depending on performance, though most tend to cluster within plus or minus 1 percent of the pool.

Variable pay options were recommended by the Performance Management Team, but have not been implemented to date. Recognition awards for extraordinary efforts or consistently outstanding performance, and achievement awards for breakthrough contributions have met with widespread approval and interest but are currently on hold. Variable pay would fill a void. It would provide an opportunity to say “thank you” when an employee steps in to do something extraordinary or to recognize a solution that results in significant improvements in customer service or productivity.

### Discussion

The new system has been in place for over a year and several outcomes have been noted:

**Classification**—Salary adjustments can be made for developmental progression without the need for reclassification. Staff have also been encouraged to take advantage of lateral moves to broaden their knowledge. Such moves may have been resisted in the past if the job was in a lower classification. The number of requests for reclassification have decreased within the student services organization. Staff must adjust to the fact that promotions may be less frequent and there are other ways to enhance skills and receive developmental salary adjustments.

**Competencies**—Competencies provide staff with clear expectations for performance. They are, nevertheless, words on paper and certainly are no replacement for the ongoing modeling and reinforcement of the desired competencies by senior staff. Staff members do not recite a competency to depict performance but often compliment and recognize extraordinary efforts on the part of staff.

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<td><strong>PowerPoint</strong>—Able to create and edit PowerPoint presentations using the text outline features and insert boilerplate Boston College master slides for backgrounds. Able to create outstanding graphic master slides within PowerPoint and import objects into presentations.</td>
<td><strong>Process Planning</strong>—Plans well, develops schedules, maintains deadlines, and shifts business cycles where appropriate to distribute the workload. Able to juggle several things at once and prioritize.</td>
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| **Motivation**—Has a passion for the work, is motivated to achieve for the sake of achievement rather than external rewards, seeks creative challenges, loves to learn, and takes pride in a job well done. | **Recognition**—Has a passion for the work, is motivated to achieve for the sake of achievement rather than external rewards, seeks creative challenges, loves to learn, and takes pride in a job well done. |

### Performance Review

At the end of the annual performance cycle, the employee and his/her supervisor review the employee's progress in meeting performance and development goals, review University and departmental competencies, and set goals for the upcoming year. Yearly performance appraisal provides supervisors and employees with an opportunity for the following:

- A look back over the previous year's performance
- A look ahead to the upcoming year
- Documentation of accomplishments both planned and unplanned
- Recognition of strengths
- Identification of areas in need of improvement
- Discussion of department priorities
- Strategizing about unmet goals that were not in the employee's control.

The process ensures that supervisors and employees sit down at least once a year to engage in performance and developmental planning. Ideally, sufficient feedback has occurred in the interim so that there are no surprises. The employee writes a self-evaluation and the supervisor prepares an overall performance review. The review is used as the basis for annual merit raises.

### Compensation

When an employee is hired, his/her salary is based on a market reference point (MRP). MRPs are established by looking at survey data for similar positions at comparable institutions in major metropolitan areas. Data from the corporate and banking sector may also be used to determine salaries for staff who are engaged in financial services or technical roles.

MRPs are adjusted yearly to keep up with inflation and to adjust for any changes within the market. For example, salaries in technical positions may move faster than salaries in other fields. When an employee is hired, his/her experience is considered as well as the MRP. An employee who possesses the competencies required for the position would most likely be hired at or above the MRP. Most pay rates fall within plus or minus 25 percent of the position's MRP. Internal equity is also considered when a salary is determined.

### Table 2: Description of Selected Functional/Technical Competencies

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Changes in salary may take place when an employee is promoted to a higher band, develops within the position by taking on new or increased levels of responsibility, or moves from being a user of technology to a developer of technology. Salaries may also increase to maintain equity within the unit and within the University and to adjust for market fluctuations. The pool for such changes is not unlimited and is generally based on a University-wide allocation.

Employees look forward to annual merit raises. Despite what goes on throughout the performance management cycle, this in general is their primary interest and primary motivation for doing well. Annual merit pools are distributed based on employee performance. If the merit pool is 3.5 percent, salary increments may range from 0 to 10 percent depending on performance, though most tend to cluster within plus or minus 1 percent of the pool.
Salary Administration—Market adjustments can be made when evidence of salary movement within the market is presented. This was recently the case with salaries for financial aid staff and Web developers. Again, the emphasis is placed on the top performers. Salary increments have also been awarded for merit, promotions and development within the role. It is important to define how progress is judged once intricate classification systems are removed.

Goal Setting—A number of staff members who do routine cyclical work have demonstrated very little interest in promotional opportunities and have been less than enthusiastic about completing performance and development goals. Some flexibility has been exercised in these cases.

Multi-Source Feedback—Multi-source feedback provides a broader view of employee performance and is taken seriously by the employee because it is not the view of just one individual. Staff within student services have been cooperative and candid about providing multi-source feedback for their colleagues. Because the concept has not been introduced to the broader campus community, staff from other offices have not been as forthcoming with their comments despite the fact that they can be submitted verbally or in writing and are presented in the aggregate without attribution to the individual who submitted the feedback.

Variable Pay—Staff were enthusiastic about variable pay and it would give managers an additional way of rewarding outstanding performance. It is on hold currently and we hope to see it introduced soon. In the meantime we have used small rewards such as gift certificates to recognize extraordinary contributions.

Compensation—The number of employees drawn to educational settings is diminishing in light of corporate tuition remission benefits, higher salaries, stock options, and other pay practices. We make use of nonfinancial rewards including flexible time, food events, gift certificates, shirts, laptops for evening and weekend use, telecommuting (based on job role), and training. We try to find as many ways as possible to say thank you.

Conclusion

The performance management system has been in place for one year and we are about to move into the second cycle. Employees and supervisors will have an opportunity to comment on the goals set last year, to evaluate overall performance, and to set goals for the next year. It may take several years before the new system becomes firmly established, before staff become more engaged in their performance and developmental planning, and before all staff are prepared to give multi-source feedback on an ongoing basis. In the meantime, learning and development activities to support continuous and just-in-time training have been scheduled to train staff in customer service skills, technical skills, functional knowledge specific to student services and other University divisions, and functional training led by managers within and across teams. Staff are also encouraged to take part in University training series including the Ignatian tradition, diversity, and wellness.

We are part of a culture that strives for excellence and efficiency and the new performance management system will guide us as we endeavor to do our work accurately, productively, creatively, and with unfailing good cheer.

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State Economic Conditions and Finances: Risk and Reward for Colleges and Universities

Context
The condition of states’ economies and thus their budgets is a topic not often likely to be among the foremost concerns of admissions, registration, and enrollment management professionals at colleges and universities. State economic and fiscal issues, however, deserve at least some measure and understanding by these professionals. They are significant for public colleges and universities because appropriations for institutions constitute the largest single discretionary items in state budgets. For private colleges and universities, needed revenue via state grant and scholarship programs is also generated from the public purse. Nearly all of this funding depends on the vitality of the states’ economies and revenue/budget structures.

As the higher education market becomes increasingly competitive, the ability of institutions to read the fiscal environment and take appropriate action will only grow in importance. Accordingly, the better equipped admissions and enrollment management professionals are to do this environmental scanning, the better prepared they will be to help their presidents and chancellors to respond quickly to changes in that environment.

Overview
The federal government and state governments are clearly enjoying the strongest economic conditions in history. The federal budget, awash in red ink less than a decade ago, is expected to have a surplus of more than $1 trillion during the coming decade. Nearly all of this funding depends on the vitality of the states’ economies and revenue/budget structures.

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The Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—the output of goods and services produced by labor and property located in the United States—grew at an annual rate of 5.6 percent in the second quarter of 2000. This represents an increase from the 4.8 percent growth rate posted in the fall of 2000.
first quarter of the year, but also represents a slowing from the rates posted in the final two quarters of 1999.

- Rising inflation may also help to put the brakes on the record expansion. The Consumer Price Index rose 3.5 percent from September 1999 to September 2000, which represents a significant increase over previous 12-month periods. Increased energy prices are being blamed in large part for the rise.

- At the state level, the September 2000 update of the Index of Economic Momentum (a composite index of population growth, personal income growth, and employment growth) reveals that the strongest overall growth is still concentrated in the Southwest and West, with Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, Washington, and Idaho leading the list. The bottom of the list is heavily represented by states in the Midwest and the industrial Northeast (Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Dakota).

- Overall, states’ economic projections for 2000 and 2001 envision slowing economic growth. The median forecasted GDP growth for all states is 3.4 percent for 2000 and 3.1 percent for 2001. Growth in employment and personal income are also expected to decline marginally over the same period. It is important to note, however, that the range of projections varies significantly across the states.

**Consequences for States**

State policymakers, largely mindful of the hard fiscal lessons learned in the 1990–92 recession (when fiscal over-extension led to deep budget cuts), appear to be approaching the current expansion with more caution. A healthy dose of conservatism is creeping into many fiscal outlooks, as a National Governors’ Association spokesperson recently summarized: “State budgets still look strong, but things are starting to tighten.”

- States increased general fund spending by an estimated 6.9 percent in Fiscal Year 2000 (FY2000), compared with 7.7 percent in FY99 and 5.7 percent in FY98. The number of states posting general fund spending growth of more than 10 percent fell from 11 to 4 from FY99 to FY2000, while the number that increased spending less than 5 percent rose from 13 to 21 during the same period. (See Figure 1.)

- State budget balances remain healthy, but are shrinking at the hands of increased spending and tax cuts. Year-end budget balances as a percentage of expenditures stood at 9.2 percent in FY98, 8.4 percent in FY99, and 6.4 percent in FY2000. Balances are expected to fall again in FY2001, as the growth rate in spending is expected to exceed that of revenue collections.

- For several states, the tightening has already begun. A handful of states narrowly averted fiscal crisis in their 2000 legislative sessions, which arose in most cases due to a combination of slower than expected revenue growth, increased spending demands, structural issues related to taxes and spending, or a combination of all of the above. These states include:

- Tennessee, where the governor and the legislature are at odds over the institution of a state income tax. Sluggish sales tax revenues and growing entitlement spending have created a likely budget gap of more than $100 million, and a major bond rating agency recently lowered the state’s bond rating because of continuing concern about the state’s fiscal health.

- Louisiana, where rising service demands and underperformance by a narrow revenue base left the FY2001 budget with a $200 million deficit.

- Kansas, where slower than expected revenue growth, a smaller than expected tobacco settlement payment, and mandated spending may leave the state short by $100 million or more by FY2002.

- Mississippi, where the state treasurer recently warned that revenues for FY01 are not likely to meet initial projections, and that a budget shortfall of approximately $40 million is likely to result.

- Rhode Island, where the combination of aggressive tax-cutting and increased entitlement spending in health care-related areas is now squeezing state coffers.

For virtually every state, though, developing trends in the economy and in society at large pose very real fiscal challenges:

- The advent of electronic commerce raises one of the most immediate threats, particularly for states that rely heavily on the sales tax as a source of revenue. Current estimates hold that remote sales could bring a loss of revenue equal to 5 percent of state and local sales tax revenues in 2000.

- The shift in the economic base from goods to services also poses potential problems for states reliant on the sales tax, since most state and local sales taxes are applied far more extensively to goods than to services.

- The aging of the population also stands to affect the primary forms of state and local taxation. Older citizens tend to consume more of the items that are beyond the reach of many state and local sales taxes, especially food and medications. Moreover, the elderly also tend to be the focus of tax breaks such as circuit-breakers and homestead exemptions. Because older Americans have moved from being the poorest age group to one of the wealthiest over the past generation, state and local policymakers may be forced to revisit tax policy related to the elderly in the not-too-distant future.

**Conclusion: What Does It All Mean for Colleges and Universities?**

As more responsibility for governing shifts to the states, the competition for state resources has intensified. Enrollment growth and court challenges of funding formulas have driven the push for greater K–12 spending; public safety demands have
fueled corrections expenditures; rising health care costs have driven dramatic increases in Medicaid spending (in fact, Medicaid surpassed higher education in FY93 as the second-largest single consumer of state general funds spending). (See Figure 2.) The evolving face of federalism, as exemplified by welfare reform, is likely to place even more of a fiscal burden on states’ shoulders.

What does this mean for higher education? It means that institutional and system leaders should not be lulled into a false sense of security stemming from the current run of economic prosperity. A sudden downturn could spell significant trouble for higher education spending at the state level. Especially vulnerable are student financial aid programs not funded by a dedicated revenue source (e.g., a lottery). In sum, institutions should view the expected cooling trend in the economy as an opportunity to examine their readiness for leaner times, and adopt strategies for maintaining and growing their enrollment bases in expectation of those times.

**Resources**

- The Beige Book (Federal Reserve)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (Consumer Price Index)
- National Association of State Budget Officers
  - State Expenditure Report
  - Fiscal Survey of the States
- State Policy Reports (Federal Funds Information Service)
- State Budget and Tax News (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- State Revenue Report (Center for the Study of the States, Rockefeller Institute of Government)
Give Your Resumé the Electronic Edge

Even if you are not looking for employment in a technical field, there’s a good chance you’ll need an electronic version of your resumé to be competitive in your job search. In the past, paper documents highlighting experience and education served job hunters just fine, but these days traditional resumés may not be enough to entice employers anymore. Now many organizations prefer to receive computer-friendly scannable resumés and online resumés when searching for potential job candidates.

A scannable resumé is created when your paper resumé is electronically scanned or “read” by an employer’s computer and stored in a database as a computer file. An online resumé is one you create using word processing software and e-mail or post on the Internet. Each type of resumé requires attention to particular guidelines.

Many companies now use electronic scanners to help process resumés they receive through a system called “automated applicant tracking.” Once a hard copy of your resumé is scanned into a computerized database, an employer can use a software program to search for keywords to match your qualifications to specific job requirements.

There are several design points that can help get your resume noticed. First, keep it simple! Scanners respond best to clear concise language and simple layouts. Avoid fancy fonts and formatting that may not scan properly into a computer system. If the computer can’t read it, your resumé will be lost in cyberspace. Also, use relevant keywords. These keywords must coincide with specific job requirements. Use nouns rather than verbs; keywords tend to be nouns or noun-phrases. For example, use “project supervisor” rather than “supervised project.” To become familiar with good keyword descriptors, check classified ads, review job descriptions, or talk with members of professional associations in your field.

A scannable resumé offers several advantages over paper resumés. Once your electronic resumé is in a database, it can be retrieved easily during a keyword search. This serves you better than a paper file sitting idly in a filing cabinet, where personnel representatives must wade through stacks of other resumes to finally, hopefully, come across yours. Your scanned resumé also remains in the database for an extended duration, making it available for consideration for a variety of openings over time.

An online resumé allows you to use the Internet as another resource to gain exposure and assist you in your job hunt. Job seekers can e-mail or post their resumés online via company home pages, resumé banks, professional association home pages, classified ads, bulletin board services, and news groups. Employers can also post job announcements by using many of the same mediums and can search resumé banks for potential employees.

To develop an online resumé, create it using word processing software, then save it as a generic “ASCII” text file. ASCII text is a universal text language, which allows different word processing applications to read and display the same text. This type of text is simply words; there are no formatting mechanisms such as fonts, margins, graphics, or tabs. Each word processing software (like WordPerfect or Microsoft Word) saves files in its own format, making it difficult to send information if you don’t know which program the receiver uses. ASCII text enables your document to be retrieved and reviewed by prospective employers using e-mail or the Internet, no matter what kind of computer applications they use.

There are several advantages to e-mailing your resumé. First, it saves money on processing and postage. Also, your resumé

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will end up in the same type of computerized database where the scanned paper resumés are stored. As with the scanned resumé, this allows your resumé to be accessible during keyword database searches. Additionally, by e-mailing your resumé, you exhibit your understanding of technology and make a positive first impression.

Resumé banks are another online venue where job seekers can display resumés. These services act as an intermediary, matching applicant qualifications with employer needs. Some of these services are free, while others are fee-based. Some resumé banks require you to fill out a form, or they furnish software to enter your qualifications instead of accepting your version. Make sure the resumé bank includes the type of employers you want to reach. Find out about the competition in its talent pool. The larger and better qualified the talent pool, the greater the chance that employers will search a particular resumé bank. Ask if the service can provide you with feedback and the number of times your resumé was looked at or selected for review.

Don’t forget confidentiality! Information transmitted electronically is like sending a postcard. Every word is available for anyone to read. Consider your current employment status and whether your job search must remain under wraps. Before deciding on a particular resumé bank, find out what security measures it offers. Some charge extra for confidential service. Some replace your name with a number, and your current employer’s name also can be removed. If you are e-mailing your resumé to one of these services or posting your resumé to a Web site, consider withholding your phone numbers and your home and business addresses. These can be mailed with a list of references after you’ve been contacted by an interested employer.

Traditional paper resumés are still useful. Some employers don’t yet use computer scanning. If you’re wondering how to submit your resumé, contact employers to inquire if they use an electronic applicant tracking system. Also, online resumés with ASCII text have a bland appearance, so it’s a good idea to have a fully formatted, more aesthetically pleasing hard copy of your resume for follow-up purposes, like interviews.
Could you talk about references and resources for information about international education and credentials? I recently received a questionnaire from John Bear, author of *Bear’s Guide to Earning Degrees Nontraditionally*. His cover letter contained the following statement that has piqued my interest.

“Some of your colleagues use certain reference books as their first ‘hit’ on whether a given school is ‘OK’, and yet the various reference books (from the U.S. Department of Education’s *Directory of Post Secondary Institutions to the International Handbook of Universities*) have some major inconsistencies in what they include and exclude.”

I’ve always considered the *International Handbook of Universities* to be the “bible” for foreign university-level institutions. Obviously, if I don’t find a school listed in that publication I would look for it elsewhere, e.g., in the *World Education Series* publications. However, I’ve occasionally had difficulty in finding institutions that we eventually determined to be university-level.

I’d be interested in your comments about some of the standard printed resources for foreign institutions, including the criteria used for inclusion/exclusion and their limitations, and what inconsistencies exist, if any, among comparable publications.

Maureen Breed  
Director of Registrar Services & Operations  
Syracuse University

Maureen,

This is one of the most common questions asked of the staff in AACRAO’s Office of International Education Services by college and university staff responsible for the evaluation of foreign educational credentials. It is not so much a question of, “Is there a resource,” as much as a question of, “How do I use this resource?”

You mentioned the *International Handbook of Universities*—let’s start with that valuable resource, and a companion resource, *World List of Universities*. Both are prepared by the International Association of Universities (IAU)/UNESCO Information Centre of Higher Education, International Universities Bureau. There are several things to keep in mind when using these two publications. First, IAU depends on receiving up-to-date, correct information from each government agency, academic body, and the universities that is included in the publication. IAU does not have the staff to do their own research, verification, and writing. Not all of those providing information are able to provide all the information that the publication could print.

Second, some countries have different definitions of “university level” institutions than we might have in the U.S. Institutions that might be graduate-level only might not be listed because by that country’s definition, graduate-only institutions are not really considered to be a “university.” Sometimes outside the U.S. postsecondary teacher training is conducted in “Teacher Training Institutions” that are not considered “university level” and therefore would not be listed in these two resources.

Third, while the *World List of Universities* is a more comprehensive listing of universities, the information on the institutions listed is very basic. The *International Handbook of Universities* entries do provide more information on each of the institutions listed; however, institutions have to pay a modest fee in order to be listed. Some institutions simply cannot afford the modest fee to be listed.

I tell those contacting us on this topic that if they find an institution listed in either of the resources listed above, they can be reasonably certain that the institution is recognized in its country and is authorized to grant degrees. If the institution is not listed, you probably need to do more research before deciding to not recognize certificate, diplomas, or degrees it awards or not allowing transfer credit for studies completed at the institution.

There is a third resource generated by the IAU, and it combines information found in both of the print resources plus additional data that are not contained in either of the previously mentioned publications. The World Higher Education Database, 2000 is the successor to the World Academic Database, 1997/98 and contains listings for over 14,000 institutions in over 180 countries. And the cost of this CD-ROM is less than the cost of the two print publications. (The World Higher Education Database, 2000 is available from AACRAO, with a discount off the list price for AACRAO members.)

For more information on international resources read *College & University* Summer 2000, Volume 76, Number 1.
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