

An Enrollment Manager's Guide to PDP Mastery: Insights from the Trenches

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Monte Schaff, the Dean of Enrollment Management at United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) in Bismark ND, offers advice on the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) for managers, deans, and vice presidents of Enrollment Management. Schaff encourages enrollment managers to leverage the PDP for Strategic Enrollment Management initiatives and use it to enhance institutional strategies related to student success.



Why should enrollment managers heed Schaff's words? His was an unusual path to Enrollment Management. Before his current role as Dean of Enrollment Management, he worked in the Office of Institutional Research at UTTC, where he was deeply involved with the PDP, as the Institutional Research Analyst. He was responsible for the institution's data loads and assisted with analyzing results. Additionally, he served as a mentor for Achieving the Dream's PDP Onboarding Courses and assisted with the development of PDP training materials for the Association for Institutional Research (AIR). He and his coworkers presented the report Using Retention Data to Inform Practices to Promote Student Success at the 2022 AACRAO SEM conference. This presentation was formally recognized by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center as an Outstanding AACRAO SEM Research Presentation.

Strategic Initiatives in Enrollment Management

Schaff's goal in enrollment management is to make PDP data actionable rather than merely interesting. Recognizing the importance of data literacy among institutional stakeholders, Schaff collaborates with the Office of Institutional Research on various initiatives, such as "data walks" and faculty data discussions, to engage staff and students in discussions of enrollment trends and student-performance data. This approach is designed to foster a comprehensive understanding of the student lifecycle, from admission to career services, emphasizing a holistic view of student success. The recommendations below help support an institution's initiative toward developing a strong culture of data.



Dean Schaff's Recommendations for Enrollment Managers

Build Data Literacy: Engage staff in conversations that promote the understanding and regular use of data within specific institutional contexts. This reinforces a common understanding of data concepts.

Foster Collaboration with Institutional Research (IR): Maintain strong collaborative ties with the IR department to ensure a seamless flow of data insights and analyses. This partnership is crucial for aligning enrollment strategies with institutional goals.

Leverage Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) for Strategic Insights: Use PDP data to identify trends and areas for improvement in student enrollment, retention, and success. Develop strategies to address specific challenges identified through data analysis.



Engage Faculty and Staff in Data Conversations: Initiate data walks and other interactive forums to discuss data insights with faculty, staff and students to help foster a shared responsibility for student success.

Customize Data Tools: Work with IT and IR to develop user-friendly dashboards and reports that make PDP and institutional data accessible and actionable for nontechnical staff.

Benchmark Against Peer Institutions: Use PDP benchmarking tools to compare institutional performance against peers. Use these insights to set realistic goals and strategies for improvement.

Focus on Student Success: Ensure data-driven strategies align with enhancing student success, from enrollment through graduation. Incorporate student feedback to refine and improve services and support.

Dean Schaff summarizes by indicating that the PDP can be a useful tool for Enrollment Management, however, those in Enrollment Management need to provide their staff and other institutional stakeholders with intentional data engagement opportunities to analyze and discuss the data presented within the PDP. Building data capacity will help institutions to fully integrate the PDP into their strategic enrollment management initiatives, and ensure the PDP becomes a tool for decision-making and institutional change. While still a work in progress, Schaff looks forward to more PDP data-sharing activities with the college community and other participating PDP institutions.