

Rigorous SEM Readiness Assessment



Position your Campus to Lead in a Rapidly Evolving Environment

The Urgency for Transformation

The modern higher education landscape is facing a volatile mix of demographic shifts (the “enrollment cliff”), evolving state funding models, and a sharper focus on successful post-graduation career outcomes. Building a foundation for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is no longer just an administrative exercise – it is a financial and operational imperative. Too often, institutions rush into full-scale SEM planning without the necessary underlying infrastructure, data maturity, or governance, resulting in fragmented systems and expensive, time-consuming course corrections and a loss on their return on mission (ROM). The first step in ensuring your enrollment and institutional goals are aligned is to assess your institution’s SEM readiness.

The Solution: The AACRAO-ESG Partnership

Education Strategy Group (ESG) and the consulting arm of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO Consulting) have partnered to provide a comprehensive, data-inspired Rigorous SEM Readiness Assessment. This high-impact “on-ramp” bridges the gap between high-level strategy and on-the-ground execution by combining ESG’s policy and workforce alignment expertise with AACRAO Consulting’s deep operational and technical mastery in admissions, registrar services and enrollment management. We ensure your institution is not just reacting to market shifts, but structurally positioned to lead through them.

Why Invest in SEM Readiness?

Based on hundreds of experiences in developing SEM plans we often see institutions prematurely launching a full-scale SEM plan without a focus on building the internal capacity necessary to sustain one. Our preliminary diagnostic approach can help!

- **Radical Efficiency & Significant Cost Savings:** By conducting a rigorous diagnostic of your registrar, admissions, and enrollment functions first, we identify exact technical gaps to optimize resource allocation. This prevents the sunk cost of stalled implementations and avoids the 15–20% re-work costs common in misaligned projects.
- **Immediate Enrollment Momentum:** Absent this preliminary diagnostic SEM plans often falter because key personnel are often excluded. Our inclusive approach involves registrars, enrollment managers and admissions officers from day one, which accelerates time-to-market for new programs, reduces learner melt, and improves admit-to-enrollment conversions.
- **Future-Proof Enrollment:** With a focus on post-graduation success, we help you build the infrastructure for greater learner mobility, turning short-term workforce training into on-ramps for degree programs. By aligning your strategy with regional labor market data, your institution becomes an indispensable economic engine.

A Proven Framework for Lasting Success – The Readiness Objectives

Our collaborative model centers on producing a comprehensive gap analysis and roadmap designed to achieve three critical goals before you begin a full SEM plan process:

1. Socialize the Need: Align campus stakeholders on why comprehensive transformation is necessary.
2. Formalize Governance: Build the leadership structure to oversee long-term enrollment health.
3. Prepare for Plan Development: Develop the precise technical knowledge to begin the SEM planning process.

A Three-Tiered Leadership Architecture

To prevent your SEM plan from becoming a siloed initiative, we implement a framework that clearly delineates leadership:

- Executive Steering Committee (ESC): Chaired by the President or Provost. ESG provides executive coaching to ensure the SEM strategy aligns with state economic goals and institutional mission.
- SEM Operational Task Force (OTF): Chaired by enrollment officers and/or registrars. AACRAO provides an audit of the Student Information Systems (SIS), and other supporting products, to help clear technical roadblocks.
- Regional Advisory Council (RAC): Made up of local employers and K-12 partners. Together, we ensure your enrollment goals synchronize with regional labor market demands for long-term resiliency.

Tailored to Your Unique Mission

Our assessment design is not one-size-fits-all. We provide customized schematics based on your institution type:

- The “Economic Mobility” Model: Focused on Workforce Pell integration, non-credit to credit on-ramps, and technical ability to track short-term credential outcomes.
- The “Holistic Learner Lifecycle” Model: Focused on traditional recruitment funnels, retention, financial aid leveraging, and brand differentiation in a declining demographic market.

The Bottom Line: Return on Investment

This partnership delivers a rigorous return on investment by eliminating fiscal waste. Institutions can expect to avoid \$30k–\$100k in SEM re-work costs, gain immediate access to new funding streams, and prevent misaligned investments.