



COLLEGE *and* UNIVERSITY

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Educating the Modern Higher Education Administration Professional

An Alternative to
College “Choice” Models
and Frameworks:
The Iloh Model of College-Going
Decisions and Trajectories

Institutional Autonomy
and Academic Freedom
in Hungary:
A Historiography of Hungarian
Higher Education

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How One University
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Student Experience

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Personal Perspective
From Across the Pond)

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College Bubble, and
Saving Higher Education

Enrollment through
International Online
Programs in Which the
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Is Other than English

Book Reviews

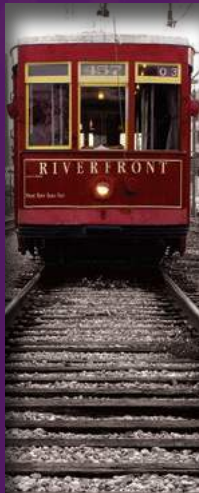
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Were you inspired over the summer to share your thoughts in a commentary, share a project in a campus viewpoint, or share your research in a feature article? Did you read a book on a higher education topic and think, “I should write a review for *C&U*”? The *C&U* editors are always looking for authors!

This edition includes three feature articles. In “An Alternative to College ‘Choice’ Models and Frameworks: The Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories,” Constance Iloh describes an alternative model of college choice that explores the realities of the diversity of prospective students, “from the mainstream to the margins.”

Laura Parson and Ariel Steele present Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Hungary: A Historiography of Hungarian Higher Education.”

Continuing our interview series, Louise Lonabocker, AACRAO past president and retired executive director of student services and university registrar at Boston College, interviews Brad Myers, AACRAO past president and retired university registrar at The Ohio State University.

There are four commentaries in this issue: “Credential Engine: Use Case Scenarios for Registrars,” by Rodney Parks and Alexander Taylor; “Data, the Key

that Unlocks Student Success—Another Personal Perspective from Across the Pond,” by Philip Henry; “Servant Leadership, the College Bubble, and Saving Higher Education,” by James Wicks; and “Increasing Enrollment through International Online Programs in which the Language of Instruction is Other than English,” by Nailya O. DeLellis and Anthony J. DeLellis.

Our two research in brief articles are “Diploma Mills and Counterfeit Operations,” by Allen Ezell, and “The Transfer Mentor Program: How One University Enhanced the Transfer Student Experience,” by Brooke Lockhart. There is also a campus viewpoint article, “Rethinking Institutional Readiness for Online Transfer Student Success,” by Melissa Allen.

We include two book reviews in this edition. Tara Homer reviews *What's Next for Student Veterans? Moving from Transition to Academic Success*, by David DiRamilio, and Adrienne Bricker reviews *Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women*, by David Smith and W. Brad Johnson.

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

An Alternative to College “Choice” Models and Frameworks: The Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories

The decisions to go to college and where are life-altering. Accordingly, college choice theory has been a necessary framework for understanding access and destinations in postsecondary education. The author argues for the need to depart from framing college-going around “choice” and puts forth a timely and context-driven alternative to previous college choice frameworks. In particular, the Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories illuminates the bidirectional relationship among three dimensions (information, time, and opportunity). The paper concludes with new directions for researchers, community members, leaders, and practitioners across the P–20 education pipeline.

Students are among the most important stakeholders in the higher education ecosystem. How they decide on attending college and why they select a particular college have often been considered by way of college choice theory. But what does it really mean to “choose” a college? And are the frameworks for understanding this phenomenon sufficient? I argue that not only is a departure from college “choice” needed, but a three-dimensional ecological model can help us better understand the complexities, realities, and inequities of the college-going decisions and trajectories of today’s students.

College Choice Revisited

In 1987, *College and University* published what would become one of—if not the most—recognized college choice model. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) provided a three-stage linear model that highlights how high school students are *predisposed* to go to college, gather (or *search*) for information about institutions of higher learning, with this culminating in the final stage, in which students make a *choice* about which college to attend. Other notable frameworks rooted in sociology, psychology, economics, and business have considered elements such as costs and financing; family members’ educational background and support; policy; social and

cultural capital; academic performance; and P-20 education environments as they relate to their impact on the college choice process (Hearn 1991; McDonough 1997; Niu, Tienda and Cortes 2006; Perna 2006; Stephenson, Heckert and Yerger 2016). While adding to the literature and even revealing the impact of some elements of social contexts on college choice, such frameworks and empirical works lack attention to the interactions of complex contexts and ecosystems and how they inform college-going decisions and trajectories.

With more than 32 years having passed since its initial development, the Hossler and Gallagher (1987) model remains one of the most-used frameworks for understanding college choice. Knowing that college-going is far from a one-size-fits-all endeavor and often a fragmented process, this paper pivots from a prevailing model and college choice conceptual landscape that may only account for a subsection of students (and might even skew those realities). While this dominant model has added meaningfully to our understanding of the college enrollment process and enrollment management, it is also likely to mask complexities that result in highly stratified and inequitable college-going narratives.

A New Model Without the “Choice”

One of the motivations for the creation of a new model was the opportunity to challenge the idea of “choice” in college choice frameworks. Choice and college-going can become easily conflated in ways that hinder

understanding of the reality of college access. I assert that there are important reasons for halting inclusion of “choice” in such conceptualizations.

Choice is inherently problematic because the term is laced with assumptions that begin to unravel upon consideration of race, time in the prospective student’s life, socioeconomic status, gender, location, and many other important factors. In particular, the framing of “choice” minimizes the role of privilege in shaping college-going “options” and realities (Iloh 2018b). Moreover, information, time, and opportunity are not neutral but, rather, are dimensions that ultimately can expand or reduce one’s college-going possibilities based on a person’s identity, life circumstances, and social position. This calls into question how choice can be situated in a literature that at its best should expose rather than disguise separate and unequal realities in college-going.

Choice in college choice models often considers a student’s attendance in college as a one-time event that likely happens upon graduation from high school. Other models don’t provide much clarity as to what happens for students who are highly mobile, are much older when they attend college, and have obligations that make a “conventional” college-going pathway improbable, for example. With other frameworks, what happens to these “choices” is especially a mystery for students who weave in and out of the same or different institutions of higher learning as they seek to complete a degree or credential. Moving away from choice allows for understanding the role of prior decisions and experiences on future decisions (if any). It will also allow for a better understanding of how options and routes shrink or simply become non-existent. This new model is designed to account for complex college pathways and not just isolated choices at one point. This also makes room for the reality that college as we know it for many students is not a one-stop experience in which one decides to start pursuing a degree at one institution and finishes there without any interruption or other decisions. Ultimately, moving from “choice” contributes to a deeper understanding that the P–20 education pipeline is likely fragmented and complex for a plethora of students who find themselves outside of a linear and trite college-going narrative.

Choice distorts the realities of already complicated narratives. By doing so, it also creates a blind spot in the literature. Hence, the model put forth in this text

does not reference or contain choice at all, and, rather, is a model of college-going decisions and trajectories.

An Alternative Model: The Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories

This new model makes use of anthropology and, specifically, the lens of ecology as its foundation. This is because contexts should be examined synchronously, and researchers should address the interconnections among them (Woolley, Kohl and Bowen 2009). Moreover, an ecological perspective draws attention to relationships between a person and society at large in addition to interrelationships among dimensions and factors that are likely to seem microscopic when considered through other approaches. In the delicate and complicated conundrum of modern college access, the role of ecology and its importance to this model cannot be understated.

The model of college-going decisions and trajectories highlights interactions among three dimensions that determine a person’s college decisions: information, time, and opportunity (*see* Figure 1, on page 5). Each component informs how different prospective students make decisions about higher education pathways amid their complex lives. Unlike the Hossler and Gallagher (1987) model and many other sequential choice frameworks, information, time, and opportunity have non-linear and codependent relationships with one another, even though each is its own separate component (Iloh 2018b). The same model can be used at different points in one’s life to uncover the context and rationale behind different decisions as well as one’s trajectory overall.

Dimension of Information

The information dimension of the model examines the kinds of, quality of, quantity of, and delivery of information shaping a college-going decision and trajectory. “Students with access to multiple sources of credible information are likely able to make more informed decisions” (Iloh 2018b, 236). In understanding the plethora of insights that might be shared with an individual, I consider the distinct qualities of general and/or institutional college information as well as recommendations and warnings. General information tends to be impartial and likely lacks persuasive or cautionary messaging directed toward or against enrollment in

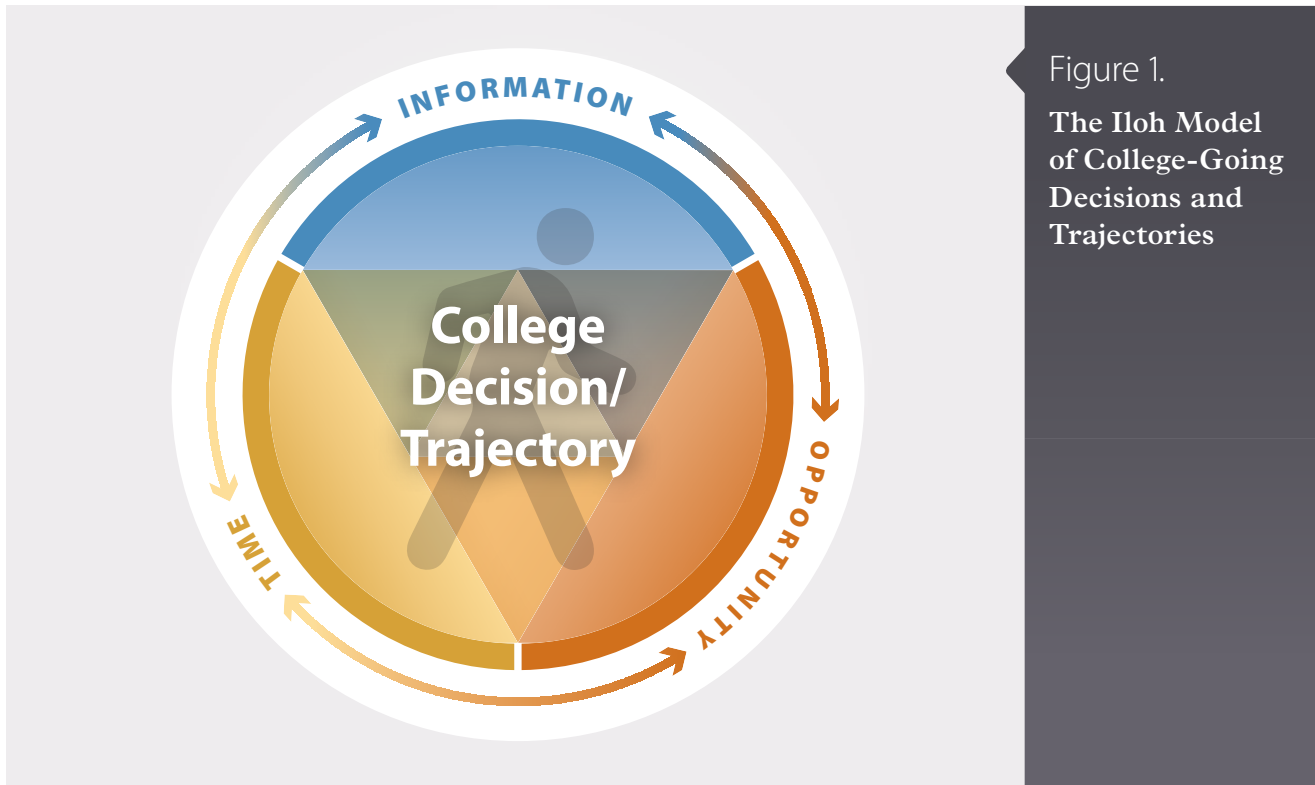


Figure 1.
The Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories

a specific institutional sector or college. Examples of recommendations and warnings, however, might be the following: recommendations (*e.g.*, “I had a great experience at [blank] college and think it would be good for you”); and warnings (*e.g.*, “You should avoid that place, it doesn’t do much for low-income students” or “They do not treat Black people well, and faculty of color often leave so I would be cautious”). Understandably, there can be overlap amongst these important forms. For example, news about low graduation rates, racist incidents, poor retention rates of students of color, or a loss of accreditation may resonate as both general institutional information and a warning. In exploring someone’s college-going pathway, it will be useful to determine if recommendations, warnings, general institutional information, or some combination of two or more are shaping their decision and trajectory.

Delivery is also important to this dimension of the model. The *who* and *how* of the message are significant (Baum and Schwartz 2015) and may even be more important than the message itself. A prospective student who is seeking information may choose an institution with a more streamlined and approachable enrollment process rather than one whose enrollment process seems cumbersome, complicated, and even unwelcoming. In some cases, delivery may be paramount such

that institutions that are more welcoming and proactive may enroll students even at the expense of not providing substantive information. The “messenger” is also important when considering the power of recommendations and warnings especially. A prospective student, for example, may take a recommendation very seriously because it came from an individual they know loves them. The platform or medium by which the message is delivered is also meaningful. Whether it be social media, a website, a conversation, or a billboard, it is necessary to consider the information’s medium. Accordingly, the information dimension takes into consideration manifold elements, including the manner and form by which information is communicated as well as its source.

Information Deserts

College information and the variety of forms in which it is communicated are often cultivated and distributed in ways that contribute to persistent inequities. In *information deserts*, it is difficult to access or find general information about college or the college-going process (Iloh 2018b, 236). The term itself is inspired by the concept of a “food desert,” “a part of the country [lacking in] fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods” (ANA 2011). Information deserts constitute a call to ensure that communities have access to college knowledge

and information that contributes to making the most holistic college decision possible and deters information asymmetry. The term itself also does not mean environments are not rich in information. Use of the term is intended to signal that information related to college-going is an equity issue; the term itself is meant to hold society (not individuals or any specific community or underserved space) responsible for ensuring that general and neutral information is disseminated regardless of a person's context, identity, and life circumstance. Information deserts work in particular favor of institutions that are eager to enroll students but that may or may not provide robust general information about themselves or their programs (Iloh and Tierney 2013).

The context of information coexists and interacts with the other two dimensions in important ways. A student seeking to enroll in college later in life may encounter challenges relative to gathering general information about one or more institutions in addition to the college enrollment process overall. This is because K–12 education and high schools, in particular, are typically the few spaces where information about college might be deliberately shared. In considering the rest of this text and the model itself, it is essential to understand that the information dimension of any person's college decision or trajectory works concurrently with time and opportunity.

Dimension of Time

Time, another dimension of the model, is fundamental to understanding college-going decisions and trajectories. In a simplistic form, time invites understanding of what has transpired during the course of a person's life. Within this model, time is a continuum of simple to more complex forms, from how old someone is to "macro-time." At a more rudimentary level, time helps us comprehend the state of an individual's life at that particular time. Moreover, it invites questions such as: How old is the person? What is the condition of the individual's family? What has taken place in the individual's life?

Within the time dimension, there are multiple questions that can provide insights into a person's educational history and college trajectory. How much time has elapsed since the individual last received college information? How many opportunities does the individual have at this time? How many times has the in-

dividual enrolled in college? Have their opportunities increased or decreased over time? How much time has the person spent pursuing college? Within the dimension of time, as well as others, educational trauma from past college enrollments and educational experiences is also made visible. For example, for some participants in my research studies, higher education is symbolic of things such as heartbreak and even an "[absentee father]" because it constantly let them down, failed to protect them, and was not what it claimed to be as they found themselves starting and stopping the pursuit of degrees at multiple institutions.

More complex forms of time that are relevant to the model include three ecological forms or modalities derived from Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (1998) bio-ecological model: micro-time, meso-time, and macro-time. Micro-time explores immediate occurrences around the person whereas meso-time "covers the lifespan of the individual and is produced by a series of micro-times" (Wagoner, Chaudhary and Hviid 2015, 155). An example of micro-time might be someone finding out that their scholarship application was rejected whereas meso-time could be someone saving incrementally over the course of several years in order to attend junior college. Both meso-time and macro-time are important as they are usually forms of time that are nearest to the individual in the context of everyday life (Skinner, Kinderman and Asburn 2019). Macro-time is "changing expectations and events in the larger society, both within and across generations" (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998, 995) and where both culture and the state of society impact the framing of time (Skinner, Kinderman and Asburn 2019; Wagoner, Chaudhary and Hviid 2015). An example of macro-time as it relates to college-going decisions and trajectories is oversight and regulations shifting for the for-profit college industry, resulting in changes in their enrollment abilities. Accordingly, the model makes room for not only the changes in one's immediate context but also those that reflect changing times in society.

Dimension of Opportunity

The context of opportunity brings into focus one's beliefs and realities about what is possible personally within the landscape of postsecondary education. Accordingly, this dimension illuminates the opportunities that do and don't exist for an individual as well as the

individual's insights into what is a college opportunity and what is not. To be sure, there are thousands of colleges across the country and even more globally, but these institutions may not be or may not register as actual opportunities, depending on an individual's context. Elements that are especially important to consider within the dimension of opportunity are the financial, geographical, technological, political, and family/community contexts and realities for that individual as well as the institutional characteristics of particular higher education settings (Iloh 2018b). Prospective students face many kinds of barriers and constraints, including but not limited to their prior academic performance; financial aid; employment status (including working full-time or part-time); location and/or ability to commute; program offerings and schedule; income; credentials; and family status/needs such as public assistance or child care, all of which make some options opportunities and others impossible (Iloh 2018b). While one's race, gender, age, ability, or other identities should not be viewed as a deficit, it is also clear that opportunities are cultivated in the context of hegemonic structures that limit opportunities on the basis of identity.

Opportunity is also constructed and communicated in the context of one's environment. Throughout their education and training, individuals likely receive indirect and direct messages about higher education opportunity and expected pathways, if any. For example, for-profit college and military recruiters may visit a particular low-income high school frequently whereas no nearby elite institutions intentionally share their information with that school. Conversely, a more affluent school may host a wide range of recruiters—particularly from more selective institutions. This may constitute implicit and even direct signaling. More direct messaging may include high school students being placed into college-preparatory and non-college-preparatory tracks. Schools and social environments may reinforce in conversation and sharing of resources and opportunities, for example, that certain students can pursue enrollment at Ivy League institutions whereas others should consider non-elite institutions, if any. Thus, educational environments, whether colleges or K–12 institutions, as well as other social spaces shape opportunity.

The “climate” of a college or a university is another example of how “opportunities” are considered. Some institutions simply are not viable because of perceived and existing elitism, racism, classism, sexism, ageism,

and a host of other concerns that prospective students believe or know. For someone else, this same reality may not eliminate the college as a viable opportunity because that person's identity would likely be privileged in that collegiate environment. It is for these reasons that colleges need to carefully consider not just what they market and communicate about themselves but also their actual institutional culture and climate to ensure that prospective students can believe that this opportunity will add value to their lives and help rather than harm them.

Empirical Underpinnings of Model

This model is intended to be a capacious framework for the diverse population of individuals pursuing higher education. Accordingly, it was developed from past studies that situated a range of college-going experiences and institutional settings. In previous studies, the author engaged students often at the fringes of how we understand college “choice” and college overall: racially minoritized students, low-income students, older learners, single parents, and non-first-time college students. This model also takes into consideration the heterogeneity of colleges, where the aforementioned students are disproportionately more likely to enroll in institutions characterized by greater access, such as community colleges and for-profit colleges (Iloh and Tierney 2013; 2014). These two sectors in particular are less likely to be included in college choice frameworks.

Using the Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories for Research

Information, opportunity, and time are all significant components of a much larger bidirectional picture. Researchers utilizing this conceptual framework should center research questions, methods, and design that can engage each of these three dimensions sufficiently as well as how they coexist with one another and result in college-going decisions and trajectories. Each of these three dimensions requires a nearness to participants and their realities in a way that positions the participant as expert in participants' experiences and places primacy on the environment and context around them. It is also important to understand and account for changes in college-going decisions and trajectories. In

particular, the time component implies some level of life history analysis of participants to understand what has unfolded over the course of their lives that is pertinent to college going, in addition to the elements of micro-time, meso-time, and macro-time highlighted earlier.

Using the Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories for Practice

Overall, this model suggests that institutions that are committed to equity as excellence must consider the dimensions of information, time, and opportunity for the students they are able to enroll as well as for the students they do not enroll. The following sections consider new directions for practice for each dimension of the model.

Because information deserts may be one of the prevailing mechanisms of stratification and inequities in college-going, this model also presents important implications for making college-going information more widespread and accessible, particularly past the normative years of education. The reality is that information and resources outside of K–12 institutions are scarce for prospective participants in higher education. Moreover, the quality of information across high schools, for example, is likely separate and unequal depending on the school structure, funding, and student demographics. This model illustrates the problems associated with having K–12 education environments as the only spaces where someone, if at all, receives general college-going information. Therefore, I argue it is important to situate college-going information within communities at locations and social institutions also pertinent to the lives of people. In particular, it may be useful to provide college-going information and resources in grocery stores, laundromats, apartment complexes, convenience stores, churches, arcades, malls, employment centers, the department of motor vehicles, and recreational areas (Iloh 2018a). Such information may be presented in a variety of ways, including but not limited to murals, posters, leaflets, billboards, and interactive installations in common areas such as parks or basketball courts (Iloh 2018a). This creates rich contexts where resources and information are available in multiple locations in one’s community.

Time and timing are also tremendously important for new directions in postsecondary education prac-

tice. Many institutions find themselves challenged with enrolling, serving, and supporting students who stop in and out of college and/or attend college later in life. Institutional research and interpersonal ways of gathering information about this population are critical to ensuring that students are not left to fend for themselves in navigating a higher education structure that likely renders their needs and realities invisible. Gathering as much information about students’ prior enrollment, in particular, may help inform how to best help students avoid future pitfalls in their pathway to college completion. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, institutions can learn if and how their current structure disadvantages students whose narrative is not prioritized and effectively served.

While it may be assumed that the time dimension most likely presents challenges for students who fit a post-traditional¹ profile, other groups may also require better practice in terms of how time impacts them. The model accounts for the reality that a decision to enroll is far from where the story ends. Accordingly, the model also brings into focus how people might make decisions that are never realized. For example, a student may decide to attend a college but never enroll because their summer work earnings were insufficient. Another student might decide to attend a college and take a gap year, only to never actually enroll at the institution. This model implores leaders, practitioners, and community members to consider what happens beyond the decision, with special consideration for communities and identities that are faced with many barriers to actually enrolling in and starting college.

This new model can also help scholars and practitioners challenge understandings of high-quality institutions in the 21st century as it relates to real and not just idealized or marketed opportunities. This year, scandals and stories about access to elite colleges have dominated news about postsecondary education. But even with the salacious headlines, selectivity and prestige usually are problematically conflated with institutions’ quality and importance (Berrett 2014; Lombardi, Phillips, Abbey and Craig 2012). This often minimizes considerations of accessibility and opportunity in understanding a college or university’s quality and impact. This model aids those concerned with accurately as-

¹ This term was developed by Louise Soares (2013) as an alternative to “non-traditional student” which problematically reinforces students as aberrations to the postsecondary education landscape.

sessing institutions' ability to increase college access and opportunity by illustrating which spaces may or may not be responsive to the pressing needs and realities of 21st century college going.

Conclusion

The students of today deserve the best of higher education's possibilities. The lenses we utilize to understand the social world, frame our research, and develop our praxis can either breathe life into the work or suffocate it. The Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and

Trajectories was intentionally created to illumine what it means to pursue college in the 21st century for the diversity of students who find themselves at the crucial juncture of deciding whether and where to participate in postsecondary education. Moreover, this model was developed explicitly to explore the realities of prospective students from the mainstream to the margins. By positioning three tangible and codependent dimensions embedded in an ecological framework, it is possible to better understand the complexities and vast inequities in contemporary college going while also providing answers and solutions.

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About the Author

Constance Iloh, Ph.D., is an educational anthropologist known for her cutting-edge research and conceptual frameworks that advance understanding of educational opportunity and inequities. Professor Iloh's program of research explores college access and "choice;" institutional culture; the social context of education; and student experiences. Dr. Iloh, who currently serves as an assistant professor at the University of California-Irvine, is highly sought-after for her expertise on contemporary college-going narratives and realities; conditions for underserved students; and open-access institutions such as for-profit colleges and community colleges. Dr. Iloh's work has been featured in *Forbes*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Harvard Law Review*, *Politico*, and *National Public Radio*, who profiled her as a national expert in naming her their Source of the Week. She has published in top education journals such as the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Harvard Educational Review*, and *Teachers College Record*. Iloh has been invited to share her expertise with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, the Community College League of California, the Institute of Higher Education, Telemundo, NBC Universal, and Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Campaign. In 2016, Dr. Iloh became one of the few academics ever named to the change-agents and break-out stars of the *Forbes* "30 under 30" list. You can learn more about Dr. Constance Iloh and her work at constanceiloh.com.

Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Hungary: A Historiography of Hungarian Higher Education

This historiography of Hungarian higher education focuses on the evolution of academic freedom and institutional autonomy at Hungarian institutions of higher education. Through an exploration of trends in higher education policy, structure, and funding, the evolution of institutional autonomy and academic freedom provided a framework for understanding the impact of authoritarian leaders on higher education. Findings suggests that recent legislation poses a critical and immediate threat both to Central European University and, more broadly, to academic freedom in Hungarian higher education. Future research should explore the impact of recent legislation on institutional autonomy and academic freedom in Hungary as well as on inclusion, diversity, and social justice.

Since the conclusion of World War I, Hungarian higher education has undergone several radical changes (Marcus 2014). The shifting of political alliances, foreign occupation, the creation of a new political system, joining the European Union, and, recently, a political shift to the right have all impacted the structure of Hungarian higher education. In April 2017, Fidesz, the ruling party in Hungary, proposed policies that would require internal institutions to have a campus in their home country and an agreement between their home country and Hungary (Karáth 2018, Matthews 2017). In effect, this legislation forced the international top-ranked institution Central European University (CEU) to move most of its operations to Vienna. (In October 2018, CEU announced that it would cease operations in Budapest and move to Vienna [Gorondi 2018a].) This legislation was just the latest in a series of measures passed by the Hungarian government to diminish the importance of higher education for Hungarians (Matthews 2017); it bore similarities to Soviet-era policies that limited institutional autonomy through enrollment quotas, administrative leadership, and financial control (Marcus 2014).

Through an exploration of trends in higher education policy, structure, and funding, the authors of the current study sought to understand the history of higher education in Hungary in order to provide an important perspective on the current state of Hungarian higher

education. In this historiography, the authors explore academic freedom and institutional autonomy as they relate to political shifts in Hungarian higher education. A description of the history of Hungarian higher education in the modern era provides context within which to discuss shifts in academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Second, the authors describe the analytical methods that guided the analysis of Hungarian higher education history. Finally, after presenting their findings, the authors discuss their potential implications and make recommendations for future research. Understanding the history and impact of higher education policy in Hungary will promote greater understanding of the potential impact of recent legislation on Hungarian higher education, especially as it relates to institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

History of Hungarian Higher Education

The first Hungarian university was established by Anjou King Louis the Great in the town of Pécs in 1367 and was ordained by Pope Orbán V (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). Higher education institutions were influenced by both the Catholic and Protestant Churches until the reign of Maria Theresa in the 18th century, when reforms reduced church control of higher education and agrarian and technology programs of study were introduced (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990). The political forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire maintained control over professors, students, and the

curriculum. In the 1870s, higher education in Hungary grew in response to demands for a better educated populace (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002); this led to the creation of a binary system of higher education wherein institutions were organized as universities (theoretical and research emphasis, four to six years of study) or colleges (practical-professional emphasis, three to four years of study); several new polytechnic and engineering institutions were established to meet economic demands (Alesi, Rosznyai and Szántó 2007; Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990).

Pre-World War II

The demand for an educated public resulted in increases in both the number of colleges and universities in Hungary and the number of students attending them (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). Changes to higher education during this period were strongly influenced by the German model (Kozma 1990): Children were organized into different education tracks largely on the basis of their families' socioeconomic status. At the age of ten years, children were assigned to one of three pathways: work, vocational training, or an eight-year secondary school that led to tertiary education (Róbert 1991). In accordance with anti-Semitic trends throughout Europe in the 1930s, a *numerus clausus* was introduced by the Hungarian government to limit enrollment by women and Jewish students (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990).

Post-World War II (1945–1991)

Under communist control from 1945 until 1990, Hungarian higher education governance was centralized, and the Soviet Union's model of education emphasized vocational education and technical training (AACRAO 1972, Morgan n.d., 23). The Soviet-controlled government restricted how many students could be enrolled in each vocational school or university according to the manpower needs of the socialist economy (Róbert 1991). The communist government controlled the awarding of degrees and the curriculum; Marxism and Russian were mandatory subjects (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002; Marcus 2014). Under the Soviet model, higher education throughout the USSR looked similar to the Napoleonic model, which was characterized by specialized institutions, separated

research and teaching, and controlled student enrollment (Kováts, Heidrich and Chandler 2017). Several new colleges, institutes, and universities were founded between the late 1940s and the late 1980s, bringing the total number of higher education institutions in Hungary to 82 by 1990 (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002; Kozma 1990; Vincze 2012).

Post-Soviet Union (1991–1999)

In 1991, Hungary gained independence from the Soviet Union and began developing a democratic society by abolishing the monopoly of the central government (Ministry of Education and Culture 2008). The government consolidated colleges and universities across Hungary, reduced the number of public universities from 66 to 31, and expanded access to higher education by adding evening and distance courses (Kováts 2018, Marcus 2014). Private and church institutions were given permission to found higher education institutions such as Central European University (CEU), which was founded by George Soros in 1991 (Kováts 2018, Witte 2018). In 1993, the Hungarian government signed the Law on Higher Education, which established the accreditation committee, decentralized higher education, and created a budget system (Berde and Ványolós 2008; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). Modifications and amendments to the Law on Higher Education in 1996 created two categories of students: *state-funded*, in which students paid minimal tuition, and *cost-covering tuition*, in which students paid the full amount (Berde and Ványolós 2008; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). In 1999, Parliament further amended the 1993 Law on Higher Education to include an act that transformed the institutional network and structure of higher education by merging public institutions to reduce their number from 55 to 30 (Berde and Ványolós 2008; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002).

The Bologna Process (1999–2008)

In 1999, 29 European countries, including Hungary, signed the Bologna Declaration, which aimed to standardize European higher education (Alesi, Rosznyai and Szántó 2007; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). On March 1, 2006, a New Law of Higher



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Education created the institutional framework for the Bologna-based higher education system in Hungary; ministry supervisors and “economic councils” were assigned to oversee university financial matters and strategic planning (Marcus 2014). The Bologna Process also included transitioning to a three-cycle degree structure: first cycle, or bachelor’s degrees (six or eight semesters, 180 or 240 credits), second cycle or master’s degrees (one or two years, 60 or 120 credits), and third cycle or doctoral degrees (minimum of three years or 180 credits) (EDGE n.d.). In addition, in 2007, the government changed the way in which state funding was allocated to higher education institutions and established enrollment quotas for each profession (Berde and Ványolós 2008). Further, the government standardized entry requirements and cut funding to higher education by 40 percent, in part by creating a merit-based funding model (Marcus 2014) such that only the top-performing students in each professional category could receive state funding (Berde and Ványolós 2008). (Fields of study for bachelor’s degree programs include agriculture, humanities, information technology, social sciences, law and public administration, economics, engineering, medical and health studies, teacher training, sports, science, arts, and art mediation (EC n.d.). Vocational study fields include agriculture, information technology, law, business, medical and health studies, arts, and engineering (EC n.d.).

Current State of Higher Education in Hungary (2010–Present)

In 2010, Hungary underwent another major shift in its political landscape with the election of Viktor Orbán and the return of the conservative Fidesz party to power (Marcus 2014). In 2011, the Hungarian government cut the compulsory secondary school leaving age from eighteen to sixteen years, decreasing the number of students receiving the matriculation certificate required to enroll in tertiary education (Matthews 2017). Between 2010 and 2015, public funding for higher education dropped by 18 percent (as a percentage of GDP), and student numbers decreased by 18 percent (Matthews 2017). In 2012, the government announced that the number of state-funded schools would decrease further, to 10,480 (from 44,000), with 15,000 students now eligible for partial funding (Marcus 2014). Funding was limited to those students in fields believed to be in the greatest

demand in the workforce, such as telecommunications, computer programming, and car manufacturing (Marcus 2014, Matthews 2017). Finally, amendments to the New Law on Higher Education in 2011 required students who received government-subsidized education to sign a declaration indicating that they would stay in Hungary to work for 20 years after graduating in order to repay their funding (Marcus 2014, Matthews 2017). These reforms led to student protests between December 2012 and January 2013 (Marcus 2014). In response, Orbán announced that any student who scored high enough on a university qualifying exam would be ensured state funding (funding was still limited to quotas in each field) (Marcus 2014).

In April 2017, the Hungarian government amended the nation’s Law on Higher Education to require foreign universities without an agreement between Hungary and their home countries to have campuses in their home countries (Matthews 2017). This law required CEU to have a physical campus in New York and to obtain a bilateral agreement of support between the Hungarian and U.S. governments. In August 2018, the Hungarian government said it would stop funding gender studies programs and that it planned to take direct control of funding at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in order to control what research was funded by the academy (Witte 2018).

Critics have viewed these recent shifts in Hungarian higher education policy as evidence of attempts to decrease institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Karáth 2018). In the current exploration, the authors focus on the evolution of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as it relates to political shifts in Hungarian higher education in order to understand the past and analyze the current state of Hungarian higher education.

Methods

Data collection and analysis were guided by the research question “How did shifts in Hungary’s higher education policies impact institutional autonomy and academic freedom?” The authors first conducted a literature review on Hungarian higher education and organized its history along a timeline. In addition to empirical literature, the authors identified Hungarian and European Union policy documents, media reports, and digital media on Hungarian higher education. After organizing literature, policy reports, and digital me-

dia documents chronologically, the authors searched for patterns related to institutional autonomy and academic freedom and organized them into themes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved searching for and building the themes of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Practical analysis explored instances of institutional autonomy and academic freedom in light of political shifts throughout Hungary's history to build an understanding of the current state of Hungarian higher education in light of major political and educational reform. Instances of institutional autonomy were coded to refer to the right of a university to self-govern without the interference of external influences (Abrutyn 2009; Aldrich 1966; Maassen, Gornitzka and Fumasoli 2017; Tapper and Salter 1995). To identify shifts in institutional autonomy, the authors identified changes in accreditation requirements, the oversight of governing bodies, funding models, and political context. To explore institutional autonomy, the authors analyzed literature, policy, and documents to understand how the political environment affected higher education as a whole.

Second, the authors explored document data to determine how the political climate in Hungary related to shifts in academic freedom. The authors coded for academic freedom, which was defined as “freedom to teach as they choose in their areas of expertise, to conduct research and publish on issues pertaining to their expertise, and to enjoy their rights as free citizens” (Austin and Trice 2016, 66). To identify changes in academic freedom, how the political environment of Hungary influenced academic freedom at the level of the individual, academic departments, and institutions was analyzed. Shifts in institutional autonomy and academic freedom were analyzed in terms of organizational reform, political regime changes, education requirements, educational laws, budget and funding reform, centralization—“the dispersion of authority to make decisions affecting the organization” (Maassen, Gornitzka and Fumasoli 2017, 244)—student demographics, and economic demand. Finally, through a process of timeline mapping, coded instances of shifts in academic freedom and institutional autonomy were mapped alongside a political timeline of Hungary's history in order to compare and contrast shifts in higher education with Hungary's policy climate and regime changes.

Findings

Analysis of the data suggests that shifts in academic freedom were related to shifts in institutional autonomy, especially in the case of Hungarian higher education, where decreases in institutional autonomy led to perceived decreases in academic freedom as the government increased its control of faculty promotion, hiring, and funding. Exploration of shifts in institutional autonomy and academic freedom suggest that modern trends in Hungarian education policy echo Soviet-era policies that restricted institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Institutional Autonomy

Efforts to centralize and decentralize Hungary's government have been reflected in the degree of institutional autonomy experienced by Hungarian higher education institutions. Analysis suggests that as centralization increased, institutional autonomy decreased or was eliminated altogether. This relationship was apparent during the Soviet Union's control over Hungary from 1945 to 1989, when greater government control over the Hungarian higher education system dissolved institutional autonomy. Increased centralization of higher education in Hungary allowed the communist government to control how higher education institutions made decisions and to eliminate the autonomy of universities (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002).

However, after the student-led Hungarian revolution in 1956, the Soviet Union loosened its control, and higher education institutions gained more autonomy (Várallyay 2017; Vasilache, Temesi and Dima 2012). As the government decentralized further during the 1970s, autonomy and academic freedom were acknowledged as important principles for university function (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). As Hungary's government and governance of higher education became more decentralized, some institutional autonomy was restored.

The restoration of institutional autonomy continued into the 1990s after the Soviet Union withdrew its forces and Hungary began the process of becoming a democratic state. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the new Hungarian government sought to find a balance between institutional autonomy and a well-managed educational system struggling to expand available pro-

grams of study while accommodating a greater number of students: “The former tendency stressed autonomy of the professionals in teaching, the latter stressed the need for a well-managed process at a new, larger scale” (Csizmadia, Enders and Westerheijden 2008, 440). In response, the Hungarian Parliament signed the Higher Education Act of 1993, which decentralized higher education, reestablished institutional autonomy, and replaced the Soviet model with a modern education system (Pusztai and Szabó 2008). Higher education institutions were under the control of the Ministry of Education. In order to weaken the influence of government power over higher education, Hungary developed an external higher education evaluation system through creation of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) (Teichler 2007). HAC is responsible for the quality assurance of higher education programs and assesses the needs of research and financial feasibility (Teichler 2007).

Hungary sought to balance governance and institutional autonomy as it transitioned into the guidelines set by the Bologna Process in 2005. Institutional autonomy was relatively steady throughout the transition until the major regime change that occurred in 2010, when Prime Minister Orbán’s conservative Fidesz party returned to power. Since then, Orbán’s administration has centralized governance and higher education (Marcus 2014). As of 2018, higher education institutions in Hungary were centrally managed and overseen by four government ministries (Higher Education, Finance, National Assets, and Public Administration) (Marcus 2014). Each institution is governed by a rector selected from the institution’s faculty, a state-appointed ministry supervisor, and a university senate that includes students (Marcus 2014). The university senates rank the candidates for the rector, but the government ultimately controls who is selected as rector (it has rejected the Senate’s recommended candidates at least three times as of 2018) (Marcus 2014). This increased centralization by the Hungarian government has decreased institutional autonomy, and universities have less authority in the decision-making process and greater government oversight. Centralization has further constrained institutional autonomy for higher education in Hungary through budget and funding control, a focus on vocational and technical education, control over who can enroll, and consolidation and fragmentation of higher education institutions (see following).

Budget and Funding Control

The most influential aspect of education reform on institutional autonomy may be control of budgets and funding. Hungarian higher education institutions are funded primarily by the government, so changes in funding models and oversight of budget decisions have had a significant impact on institutional autonomy. One mechanism during Soviet occupation was control of institutional budgets; decentralization efforts in the newly democratic post-Soviet Hungarian government loosened control of budgeting and funding of postsecondary education. The Law on Higher Education of 1993 established a budgeting system for higher education based on student support, training and maintenance costs, and program development and research and set a tuition fee for students (Berde and Ványolós 2008; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium, and Tarrósy 2002; Marcus 2014). This legislation allowed institutions significant leeway to decide where and how funds were allocated, thus reflecting an increase in institutional autonomy.

During the integration of the Bologna process in 2005, the Hungarian government changed how state funding for higher education was distributed: ministry supervisors and “economic councils” were assigned to oversee university financial matters and strategic planning (Marcus 2014), tightening control of the higher education budget and decreasing institutional autonomy. While the demand for higher education in Hungary increased, the resources available for higher education steadily decreased (Berde and Ványolós 2008). In 2007 the government tried to re-introduce tuition, called an “education contribution,” that would cover 33 percent to 50 percent of the cost of higher education (Berde and Ványolós 2008). The government also changed the way in which state funding was allocated to higher education institutions and established enrollment quotas for each profession. This meant that only the top-performing students in each profession would receive state funding (Berde and Ványolós 2008). This reduced institutional autonomy as enrollment decisions were based on the amount of funding available from the government.

Since 2008, Hungary’s higher education system has experienced deeper budget cuts and financial reforms that threaten institutional autonomy. Between 2010 and 2015, public funding for higher education decreased by

18 percent (calculated according to percentage of GDP; Matthews 2017); in 2012, the government announced that the number of state-funded places would decrease significantly—to 10,480, from 44,000 places in 2008 (Marcus 2014). The government also specified that the funding available to students would be focused on majors in certain fields, further reducing institutional autonomy (Marcus 2014). In response to student protests, Prime Minister Orbán announced that any student who scored high enough on a university qualifying exam would be ensured state funding (Marcus 2014). But these changes still restricted funding to certain students—and, thus, to certain universities and programs, which in turn restricted institutional autonomy.

Vocational and Technical Education Emphasis

Changes in institutional autonomy have also been influenced by changes in Hungarian society's expectations and attitudes toward higher education. During the 18th century, Hungarian higher education sought to become a strong intellectual environment on par with Western European higher education. Institutional autonomy was high, and institutions were well-respected (Alesi, Rosznyai and Szántó 2007; Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium, and Tarrósy 2002). Yet expectations of higher education changed drastically during Soviet occupation. Whereas pre-Soviet higher education in Hungary emphasized creating a strong intellectual environment, the Soviet model for higher education in Hungary emphasized vocational and technical training (AACRAO 1972). From 1948 until 1951, communist leadership focused on two principles in the educational system: social equality and an educated manpower according to economic needs (Róbert 1991). The Central Planning Bureau calculated the manpower needs of the communist economy and established strict guidelines for how many students could be enrolled at each vocational school or university (Kozma 1990, Róbert 1991). Education institutions were not allowed to admit more students than the number prescribed by the government, which essentially eliminated institutions' autonomy to admit and enroll students (Róbert 1991).

After the Soviet Union withdrew from Hungary in 1989, the new Hungarian government began to shift back to an intellectual state even as Hungary's higher

education system recovered from control by the Soviet Union. This led to a series of reforms to again make Hungarian higher education competitive with Western European institutions; eventually, it led to the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 and the integration of the Bologna Process from 1999 to 2008. The intention of the Bologna Process was to standardize higher education across Europe: This would help Hungary become a competitive intellectual force once again (Alesi, Rosznyai and Szántó 2007; Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). Yet the focus on intellectualism shifted back to labor when Orbán returned to power as Hungary's prime minister in 2010. Orbán's political platform emphasized economic needs and viewed higher education as a luxury rather than a need (Matthews 2017). With these changes, higher education in Hungary began returning to a model similar to the Soviet model as it emphasized the needs of the Hungarian economy rather than the knowledge economy of the past.

Consolidation and Fragmentation

During Soviet occupation, the Soviet model emphasized specialized institutions, so the number of smaller, more specialized institutions increased, and research functions were separated into research institutions controlled by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Morgan n.d.). This reflected the priorities of the government at the time and further reduced the autonomy of higher education institutions by removing research functions altogether. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Hungary in 1989, the Hungarian government began consolidating and merging institutions, decreasing the number of public institutions from 66 to 31 according to geographic region instead of institutional mission: "dissimilar institutions in common geographic areas would be merged rather than similar universities in different areas" (Morgan n.d., 23). Interestingly, these mergers often reflected a loss of institutional autonomy: institutions do not control with which institutions they will merge or when the mergers will occur. More recently, a renewed focus on vocational education led to increasing fragmentation as institutions began to divide to become more specialized, reversing the consolidation efforts that occurred prior to 2010 (Kováts, Heidrich and Chandler 2017). This threatens autonomy as institutions are limited to government control over their missions.

Student Enrollment

Occupation by German and Soviet forces and later Soviet control over the Hungarian government affected the demographics of Hungary's higher education system by controlling who was eligible to enroll. During the 1930s, when Hungary was occupied by Germany, a *numerus clausus* was introduced that restricted the enrollment of Jewish students at colleges and universities (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990; Róbert 1991). This *numerus clausus* also restricted women from certain programs and limited opportunities for higher education to the gentry, middle class, aristocrats, and the very rich (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990). During Soviet occupation, the communist government set student enrollment quotas that restricted how many students could be admitted and enrolled at each vocational school or university (Kozma 1990, Róbert 1991). At least 50 percent of students had to be from families that were primarily manual workers (industrial workers or peasants), and a *numerus clausus* was established that favored children of manual workers. Both policies restricted universities' ability to make enrollment decisions and thereby reduced institutional autonomy.

After the Soviet Union withdrew from Hungary in 1989, education reforms loosened controls over enrollment, but the Law on Higher Education of 1993 still regulated admission to higher education institutions (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). The categorization of students as either *state-funded* or *cost-covering* shifted the burden of paying for higher education to many students, which restricted enrollment to wealthier individuals. Finally, as discussed above, the Orbán government placed restrictions on the types of majors and fields of study that would receive state funding. Thus, institutional autonomy was limited by additional controls over who institutions can admit and support financially.

Academic Freedom

Analysis suggested that Humboldtian ideals—or, the “freedom (and unity) of education and research” (Kováts, Heidrich and Chandler 2017, 575)—guided higher education policy in Hungary between the 1990s and early 2000s. Government centralization and external governance were focused on supporting institutions through a legal supervisory role rather than on control-

ling what or how research was being conducted (Kováts, Heidrich and Chandler 2017). As a result, academic freedom increased for Hungarian higher education faculty during that period. In contrast, prior to 1989, academic freedom was significantly curtailed; changes since 2010 have continued to erode academic freedom for institutions and individuals, as evident in increasing government control over curriculum and research.

Curriculum

During the reign of Maria Theresa in the 18th century, higher education institutions attempted to modernize by pursuing an intellectual environment that valued academic freedom. Yet the political situation (Hungary was then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire) meant that the government still maintained control over professors, students, and the curriculum, thereby restricting academic freedom (Halasz, Caruso and Grossman 1990). Academic freedom was further restricted in 1949. After the communist takeover in Hungary, a series of reforms were implemented to eliminate academic freedom by imposing strict governmental control over the curriculum and the awarding of degrees (Marcus 2014): A Soviet curriculum was implemented; Marxism and Russian were required courses; admission was based on the ideologies of the administration; and faculty were dismissed if their ideologies did not conform to the Soviet model (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). Because the Soviet government perceived young professionals as a political threat to the communist regime, it moved to restrict the production of intellectuals (Kozma 1990). This control had a negative impact on academic freedom as institutions and faculty had no control over what they taught.

After Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Hungary began political and educational reforms: “At the lowest levels in the system, that is, professors themselves, the changes of political regimes removed barriers in redesigning curriculums, eliminating obsolete and politicized subjects, and aligning teaching with present-day research interests” (Vasilache, Temesi and Dima 2012, 303). Thus, academic freedom increased as professors again were able to make decisions about curriculum and textbooks (Hongrie, Kultuszminisztérium and Tarrósy 2002). This increase in academic freedom continued until the Orbán administration, when the government began reasserting control over curriculum. Most recently,



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Hungary's government announced that it would stop funding gender studies programs and gender research given the government's belief that there are only two genders (man and woman) and that there is no need to do work in this field (Kent and Tapfumaneyi 2018). This latest announcement is considered an attack on academic freedom because the government is limiting research and teaching within a specific field because the field does not support the government's agenda. By controlling how funding is distributed and what programs or courses universities are allowed to offer, the government is impinging upon the rights of individual academics to teach and conduct research in their fields of expertise. Completely eliminating programs such as gender studies or directing funding toward programs the government deems "economically valuable" shows a clear political agenda and demonstrates how higher education operates in an authoritarian regime similar to Soviet-era control over the higher education curriculum.

Control Over Research

Throughout Hungarian history, government-funded research institutions have been founded and subsequently eliminated as a result of institutional fragmentation and consolidation (see above). During the Soviet era, new research institutions were established that emphasized vocational training or training in fields that helped the economy. As a part of institutional fragmentation, the research functions of universities were separated into research institutions under the supervision of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Morgan n.d., Morgan and Bergerson 2000). This adversely affected the ability of faculty to conduct research within their fields of expertise and shifted the focus of research and innovation to research institutions rather than universities. The Soviet Union prioritized the allocation of resources to research institutions where they could control funding, research, and faculty hiring. This had the effect of limiting academic freedom as it did not allow individuals to decide how they would conduct research, and it prioritized resources in the fields of study funded at the research institutions.

While consolidation reduced this fragmentation of the research function from higher education institutions, a similar phenomenon occurred in Hungary after Orbán took office. In 2015, the Migration Research Institute opened after an influx of migrants caused a

crisis in Hungary (Karáth 2018). Since its opening, the institute has published anti-migrant reports "documenting the downside of immigration and the efficacy of the barbed wire fence along the southern borders of Hungary" (Karáth 2018, 585). Another research institution, the László Gyula Institute, named after a historian who studied Hungarian national origins, is scheduled to open in 2019 (Karáth 2018). This institute will be managed by the National Institute for Culture, which is funded by a private foundation run by an outspoken nationalist. Hungarian archaeologists worry that the new institute will compete with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which funds research during the same period (Karáth 2018). These institutes are being established at the same time that institution-based research funding and single-project funding (OECD/EU 2017) are decreasing.

Continuing the centralization and consolidation trend since Orbán took office, advisory and decision-making boards established since 2012 have been populated with political appointees, and resources have been prioritized for new institutions that fit a political agenda rather than for higher education institutions and project-based research. For example, the two research funding agencies in Hungary—OTKA and KTIA, basic research and applied research, respectively—were consolidated into one agency, the National Research Development and Innovation Fund (NKFIA) (OECD/EU 2017). NKFIA allocates all project-based funds (OECD/EU 2017). Further, the National Science and Innovation Board, the policy advisory board for science and research innovation and research founded in 2013, was co-chaired by the prime minister (OECD/EU 2017). The emphasis on research as a core part of the mission of higher education institutions—including colleges of applied science—has grown since Hungary joined the EU and became eligible to apply for European research funding (Kováts 2018), but increased government influence and control threaten academic freedom. Government-funded or -controlled research institutions are publishing work in support of the Hungarian government's political agenda and anti-immigration rhetoric, and independent research or research that might be critical of that work is losing funding or being merged with government-controlled agencies. The ability to guide research choices independent of government intervention is a key aspect of academic freedom, so these shifts have a negative impact.

Finally, in addition to control over government-funded research institutions, the Hungarian government has also adversely affected academic freedom throughout history by only funding research that aligned with its political agenda. For example, during the Soviet era, academics were asked to leave if they were outspoken or did not support the political agenda of the Soviet regime (Ministry of Education and Culture 2008). One academic and grant evaluator recalled the communist funding system during the Soviet era that required applicants to add a “red tail” to their proposals that voiced something “pro-system” or pro-government; only then might they receive funding (Matthews 2017). This “red tail” was apparent again in the grant funding system under Orbán; academics used language reflecting the current regime’s agenda in order to obtain funding (Matthews 2017). Similarly, academic freedom in modern Hungary has been negatively affected as academics have worried that if they were to speak out against the government, they would risk not receiving funding for their research. Some even feared repercussion—institutional or individual—if they were to speak out against the government (Matthews 2017).

When academics are limited in what they can research due to fear of not receiving or of losing government funds, their academic freedom is limited. Because government-appointed ministers oversee higher education funding and research, straying from their agendas could risk academics’ completely losing funding. “The minister of justice plays a role in setting the research agenda, meaning that recipients have to ‘behave well’ in order to continue to receive funding (Matthews 2017, 36).” As Hungary became more nationalist and now continues to push its political agenda among higher education institutions, academic freedom is expected to continue to erode.

Conclusions and Implications

Throughout Europe, governance of higher education has shifted to control via more indirect mechanisms, such as incentives and penalties (Kováts 2018). In contrast, Hungary seems to be shifting toward more direct control mechanisms. While Hungary’s progress after Soviet rule followed a path similar to those of other Eastern European countries (such as the Czech Republic), the current analysis suggests that Hungary diverged from that path after the election of Orbán and

has gradually shifted toward more centralized higher education governance (see Kováts, Heidrich, and Chandler 2017):

At the beginning of the 1990s, the legal-regulatory environment was quite restrictive, which limited the organizational autonomy of [higher education institutions]. However, the level of autonomy gradually increased even if institutions were sometimes required to adopt particular solutions.... [I]n general, regulations became quite permissive until 2011 and provided more opportunity for institutions to define their own structure. After 2011, however, this trend turned back, and the environment became more restrictive once again (Kováts 2018, 78).

As Fidesz gained power in Hungary, led by Orbán, the centralization of the government and increasing political and financial control over higher education curriculum, enrollment, and research was reminiscent of the centralization and elimination of institutional autonomy and academic freedom during the Soviet Union era. Centralization in the Soviet era was evident in the quotas established for programs and enrollment. Those quotas were similar to student funding models under the Fidesz regime, according to which “the number of students in each discipline is determined ‘according to the real market need’” (Matthew 2017). The Hungarian government reportedly perceived higher education as a “luxury” with the country needing fewer students, not more” (Matthews 2017). Orbán disavowed its importance, claiming education was producing people with useless knowledge. For that reason, he pushed the country toward manual labor.

Because the Fidesz party was chosen by a majority of the Hungarian people, its anti-intellectualism may be worse than that of the Soviet Union era, when the policies were put in place by an occupier. As of the writing of this article, academics still have freedom to choose curricula but fear that criticizing the government may have individual and institutional repercussions (Matthew 2017). As policy moves toward more and more government control over higher education and continues to deemphasize the role of the institution in decision making, institutional autonomy and academic freedom continue to erode; this is expected to continue since Orbán and the Fidesz party’s reelection in April 2018. It is ironic that Orbán, who led the Hungarian people out of communist rule, is now leading the implementa-

tion of Soviet-type policies for Hungary. In effect, these policies maintain or increase access to higher education for “traditional Hungarians” (white, Christian, male)—even expanding access to Hungarians outside of Hungary—while decreasing access by migrant and Roma persons.

Implications

Aside from the value of understanding the current state of institutional autonomy and academic freedom in Hungarian higher education, this exploration of the evolution of institutional autonomy and academic freedom informs understanding of the current and future state of higher education in countries with authoritar-

ian leadership (or authoritarian leadership aspirations). As one faculty member in Hungary so succinctly stated, “A threat to academic freedom somewhere is a threat to academic freedom everywhere.” The current work (and subsequent inquiry informed by this work) has the potential to be a key contributor to understanding how institutional autonomy and academic freedom are being adversely affected by Hungarian national policy. There is little research on the influence of authoritarian governments on academic freedom, and there are a significant number of nation-states that formerly followed the Soviet model of higher education. Higher education is continually in flux. It is hoped that this exploration will provide additional insight into higher education reforms, opportunities, and challenges.

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An Interview with Brad Myers

Brad Myers retired from The Ohio State University in 2016, where he served as the University Registrar for nearly 20 years. He has been very involved at a state and national professional level, having served as president of AACRAO and Ohio ACRAO. Brad has also served as an instructor and developer for AACRAO Registrar 101 and 201, both in-person and online, and has been an author and member of the editorial board for three AACRAO FERPA Guides. Brad did all of his academic work at Ohio State, including his JD.

Lonabocker: I've known you for at least 25 years yet after reading your resume I discovered so many new things about you. Let's start with your formative years. Tell me about your dreams back then and what I suspect may have been some unexpected turns along the way.

Myers: Until late in my undergraduate career I had presumed I would attend medical school. I completed my pre-medical classes, worked on the requirements for a major in counseling psychology, and focused on biology-related coursework. But after my junior year I had second thoughts and decided to attend law school. (Note that I am a third-generation lawyer in my family on my dad's side.) Fast forward to my last year in law school, and, again, I considered other opportunities. I had been a very involved student, overscheduled in student activities both as an undergraduate and in law school, and was encouraged to apply for a newly-organized coordinator of orientation role at The Ohio State University (OSU). So while I was interviewing for law positions, I also applied for the position at OSU. I decided if I was hired and it wasn't a good fit, I could always go back to a law career. And if I did like it, I could also consider going to graduate school in higher education. I got the job, and the rest is history.

Lonabocker: You've spent your entire career at The Ohio State University, and you earned your undergraduate and law degrees from there. (Full disclosure: I did the same at Boston College.) Any regrets?

Myers: No real regrets. I thought if I considered a teaching career in higher education, I should attend another institution. Eventually I decided I wasn't likely to go in that direction. After two years in a Ph.D. program in higher education, I also questioned whether I really needed a J.D. and a Ph.D., especially if I wasn't headed toward teaching. I was getting burned out working full-time and going to school as much as possible for those two years, especially after completing nine years in a row of undergraduate and graduate work. I left my Ph.D. program. I have always argued that I was in the right place at the right time when it came to employment, and that included almost leaving OSU a couple of times: once with a formal university registrar job offer at another institution and a second time when I was one of two finalists for an associate vice president of enrollment services position elsewhere. I have thought *what if* I had taken either of those two job offers, particularly the latter one since it would have expanded my professional focus beyond the registrar profession. I was also a candidate for the associate vice president of enrollment services at OSU at one point. But that would still have been at OSU. OSU is so large, complex, and diverse that I still felt I was getting broad exposure to lots of things. On a purely selfish note, remaining in the state system of Ohio has provided me an excellent pension since the number of years in the system is a key factor in the pension algorithm.

Lonabocker: You have contributed to your institution and to AACRAO in so many ways. What stands out for you? What did you learn from those experiences?

Myers: I think my passions are in four directions, and those impact my best experiences.

- ◆ I am, at heart, a student affairs professional, so my student-focused experiences have been wonderful: coordinator of orientation, adviser to student organizations for more than 20 years, engagement with students in a variety of other ways, and commitment to helping students succeed. Let's face it, after my orientation role, my jobs were mostly bureaucratic, so I always sought out ways to engage with students. It was valuable for my administrative roles as well.
- ◆ Organizational and project management: I have had key roles with big projects, for example, a student information system implementation, conversion from quarters to semesters, development of a one-stop center, and the design of our student services building. Within AACRAO, the major accomplishments have been participation on the

program committee, the nominations and elections committee and the board of directors, as well as contributing to several AACRAO FERPA Guides. I am also proud to have helped found what is now the LGBTQIA Caucus.

- ◆ Numbers and detail: I've always liked numbers and detail, so my roles and responsibilities have been a good fit. I've argued consistently that someone needs to be a bit obsessive compulsive to be a good registrar and enjoy the work. For example, I was immersed in numbers and data when we moved from quarters to semesters and implemented the student information system. At OSU, the Office of the University Registrar is responsible for fee assessment, and I enjoyed digging into the numbers associated with the fee assessment process and changes. It's also been wonderful to see improvements in the quality of the student body, higher retention and graduation rates, and additional funding allocated to financial aid—all elements related to student success. Even if the Office of the University Registrar was not directly

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involved in those changes, it has been a satisfying professional experience for me.

- ◆ Policy, particularly academic policy: My legal background aligned with my interest in affirmative action, FERPA, residency issues, and more.

Lonabocker: What were your biggest challenges and accomplishments? Is there anything you would like to go back and change?

Myers: My greatest professional challenge was likely in 2008–2009. I was the university registrar, and we were immersed in implementing a student information system and developing a new student center and one-stop concept. I had key roles with each of those. Then, on a Friday afternoon, I was unexpectedly asked, “How would you like to be the student financial aid interim director on Monday morning?!” So I became the interim director of student financial aid, supposedly for a few months while a search was conducted. Nearly fifteen months later, we finally welcomed a new director. The office was in need of a transformation, and I was tasked with trying to at least start to turn things around prior to the hiring of a new director. Meanwhile all of those other mission-critical projects continued. I never worked harder in my life. I applaud my leadership team in both offices, particularly the Office of the University Registrar, and my support from the Office of Academic Affairs. And, of course, I am grateful to my husband, who “never saw me” and kept the household humming. This was a clear reminder that we cannot be successful without our support networks.

In addition, the staff of both the University Registrar and Student Financial Aid moved to swing space during that time because our new building was under construction, and we had to leave the former residence hall our offices had occupied for many years. To top things off, I was on the AACRAO program committee.

Another example: Going back to the mid-1990s OSU implemented a new budget model. Because we needed to reimburse the university via an internal reallocation for all our computer resources, including CPU time, we began to run a major deficit in Enrollment Services, particularly the Offices of Student Financial Aid and University Registrar. By the early 2000s, when the state budget had a major shortfall, we had also amassed nearly \$6 million in debt in Enrollment Services. Although we were responding to a

negative situation, addressing that deficit was a singular professional experience and prompted major business process changes that were positive in the long run.

Is there anything I would change? Yes. We should have better separated the implementation of the one-stop center and the student information system. Both major projects, both high risk, started at the same time in the summer of 2009.

Lonabocker: I attended Ohio ACRAO (OACRAO) back in the 1990s as a representative of the AACRAO Board of Directors. I remember how everything stopped when it was time for your FERPA Update and a stampede of attendees headed to your meeting room. I knew then I was in the presence of a superhero. That has been confirmed as I witnessed you become more involved across a range of activities. What’s your superpower? Everyone seems to have one these days.

Myers: I’m no superhero! I think folks are just truly hungry for information that can help them do their work better and more efficiently. Particularly in today’s environment, how do we keep up with the constant changes? And I’d like to think I’m a good, fun, knowledgeable presenter. I have enjoy presenting.

Lonabocker: Actually, your response to the challenges and accomplishments question solidifies your superhero status. But since I suspected you would be too modest to zero in on your superpower, I asked some of your AACRAO colleagues. They nailed it. Here’s what they said.

They identified superpowers such as energy and prodigious productivity adding, “Brad hasn’t said “no” to AACRAO, has he?” One identified your superpower as mind-reading noting, “He’s able to translate gobble-dy-gook FERPA situations that people present and, as if by reading minds, re-reframe what they are really asking.” Others noted your powers of insight and attention to detail, citing your ability to be collegial while pushing colleagues to think through—carefully—the implications for proposals. One colleague, daunted at the prospect of reducing observations into anything other than a number of powers, settled on compassion.

Of course, humor was in the mix, describing how you often use humor as a means of deflecting negative energy (a super shield of sorts) and even taking a bullet to protect those dear to you. One col-

league was impressed with your power to create and maintain relationships adding, “For Brad, travel for leisure requires scheduling more visits than sightseeing.” And for your final superpower, you are admired for being, “faster than a rolling buckeye and able to leap tall bureaucracies in a single bound.”

Lonabocker: You’ve been contributing to AACRAO for more than 25 years. How did you first get hooked? What kept you engaged? What did you get in return?

Myers: I joined the Office of the University Registrar in the fall of 1989. Within weeks, I attended OACRAO and the Big Ten Registrars meetings. It was an expectation of the University Registrar Gene Schuster that I would be involved with the profession, and my student affairs perspective (a joiner!) certainly reinforced that. I loved engaging and getting involved with OACRAO and AACRAO. It was a great way to collaborate with professionals who would help you and then vice versa once I became more informed. I have always wanted to give back to whatever I’m involved with. These were major learning opportunities.

Lonabocker: You spent years on the AACRAO program committee. What advice would you give to a new committee member involved in program planning at the state, regional, or national level? What types of programs should they be offering to keep members up-to-date and ready for the next big thing(s)?

Myers: First, I would encourage them to do some research to make sure they have current and hot topics. Strategies might include monitoring listservs, touching base with committee members, reaching out to leaders in the profession, reviewing topics in AACRAO publications, and checking topics that have been trending within other state, regional, or national meetings, especially the larger ones like the Strategic Enrollment Management or the Technology and Transfer Conferences.

Be mindful of deadlines and coordinate with other committees and committee members.

Keep things fresh. Add new sessions, new topics, and new presenters. Spread the wealth and provide opportunities for new members and colleagues to present and become involved.

Stay current with new ways to offer best practices and professional standards such as poster sessions or webinars.

Leaders involved in the conference planning process should encourage all committee chairs to

be actively engaged with their members to be sure they maintain their commitment. There are many demands on their time. Point them toward methods such as those listed above for thinking outside the box and ask them to share their findings. Be sure to work closely with everyone involved in the program to minimize overlap. As the conference date approaches, be sure everyone is prepared, knows the timing of sessions and events, and is ready with backup if everything doesn’t go according to plan.

Have fun. Program planning is the lifeblood of any association and a valuable professional opportunity for everyone involved. It’s also a springboard for other leadership roles.

Lonabocker: Tell me more about the years of your AACRAO involvement on the board of directors, including your term as president. What were the issues considered and decisions made during that time? What sets those years apart? Did you have an opportunity to be involved at the federal level in committee hearings, testimony, or negotiated rulemaking?

Myers: I was on the AACRAO board of directors as vice president for records and academic services when two important things were being considered: the executive director announced his retirement, and major bylaw changes had been proposed. Both initiatives involved many extra meetings, telephone calls, and demands on my time. The conversations and exchanges were intense at times with discussion and disagreements, as would be expected in matters of such significance. But, wow, what an extraordinary opportunity it presented for professional growth and engagement. I compare it to being thrust into a leadership role during a major campus project. It was exhausting and exciting in equal measure. Fortunately, the new executive director was an ideal hire, and I’m proud of the process we deployed to make that happen.

Most of the proposed bylaw changes were approved and have since been implemented, though they were not approved by the membership at the outset. It involved a second iteration of proposed changes, and that exercise was a lesson in process and listening to the membership. The implementation of the changes to the bylaws prompted a lot of discussion about adding vice presidents at-large, adding an external vice president who was not an AACRAO member, and revising the role of the pro-

gram committee and its relationship to the board of directors. It was frustrating at times, but I learned so much from the experience. I respected everyone's genuine right to their opinion, but there was some gamesmanship that was disappointing. I'm a pretty straightforward and transparent person.

When I was president-elect, the discussion about disciplinary notations on transcripts ramped up, particularly for transfer students. I was tapped to work with NASPA, Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education, Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA), Association of Title IX Administrators (APIXA), and this eventually led to an AACRAO Disciplinary Records on Transcripts Work Group to address the issue. I was fortunate to be part of that Work Group.

When I became AACRAO president, we were implementing the decisions that had been reached, enhancing the role of the program committee, developing core competencies for AACRAO professionals, adding webinars and online courses, and adopting a more strategic role for the board of directors. Many of our members have played more tactical roles on their campuses, within their state and regional associations, or as AACRAO committee members. It is a challenge to be a president of volunteer leaders who are busy with competing priorities and simultaneously moving them toward a more strategic approach on the board of directors. Again, it was a wonderful professional development opportunity for me. For an added challenge, I had one of my knees replaced during the year I served as president. That was a personal challenge and remarkably bad timing, but we made it work.

At the federal level, the Department of Education was considering and then implementing the 150 percent Direct Subsidized Loan Limit regulations, which upended enrollment tracking on many campuses. Fortunately, I had been an interim student financial aid director and had a solid working knowledge of the regulations. I also had good relationships with career public servants at the DOE who helped AACRAO and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFA) work together to refine the regulations. The initial regulations were truly unworkable, but after some spirited exchanges and one very helpful in-person meeting at the DOE, changes were made.

On a good note, I was pleased we were able to focus time and resources on the Connor Scholarship. The fund had been in place for many years, but there was no process for awarding scholarships.

Lonabocker: In the past 20 years The Ohio State University has nurtured three AACRAO presidents. What's the secret sauce there?

Myers: I blame Ken Bogard, a former AACRAO president. Ken was the long-time university registrar at Miami University, and his leadership team included both Gene Schuster and Tom Bilger, both of whom went on to become AACRAO presidents. Ken encouraged me as soon as I attended my first OACRAO meeting to get involved both with OACRAO and AACRAO, and, as noted, Gene was supportive as well. It was a legacy of mentoring and encouragement and we all passed it along to Jack Miner. Jack is another student affairs expert who came naturally to involvement in the profession. (Jack will soon be taking a position at the University of Cincinnati.) That personal encouragement matched with the right personality style made the difference.

Lonabocker: Have you ever practiced law? Or do you feel you practice it every day?

Myers: I only practice law on a part-time basis, usually with routine family law, for example, wills and powers of attorney. Perhaps my most significant involvement was to help start and coordinate some legal support services early on for people with AIDS with the Columbus AIDS Task Force. It was very rewarding personally. As I got busier at work, I did less and less actual legal work but always kept my license active. As noted in your question, I do feel I've applied my legal education in many ways throughout my career.

Lonabocker: You've taught Registrar 101 and 201, FERPA, and other professional development workshops countless times. What do you see in the next generation of registrars, enrollment, and student services professionals? What gives you hope for the future of our profession?

Myers: I think the next generation of administrators within our profession need to continue to be very eclectic and collaborative, perhaps even more so than we had to be in the past. Those were always good things to have though. I also think that having a good understanding of applied technology is particularly helpful, or at least having a specialist who can

be trusted and relied on to help make decisions that involve technology. It drives our business so much. I think that a good understanding of data is also increasingly important in today's environment. I do think we have some wonderful up-and-coming folks in the profession!

Lonabocker: Many people think of retiring and taking on a new challenge or just doing something different. Consulting is an obvious choice. Do you recommend it? If so, why? Is there anything you wanted to distance yourself from after you retired?

Myers: I think each person needs to decide their priorities for retirement as well as their flexibilities and constraints. That will vary significantly from person to person. I do agree that most folks may benefit from working into retirement and not going cold turkey, but maybe that's just what worked for me since I was very driven. Constraints and flexibilities certainly include children, spouses and significant others, and financial flexibility to name a few. It hopefully does provide a great opportunity to re-evaluate where you are in life and act on that in ways you might not have been able to before. In my first year of retirement, I worked too much between my two part-time jobs, and I decided that one part-time job was enough. Fortunately, I had the financial flexibility to do that. My husband is still working for a few more years until he reaches 65 and eligibility for Medicare. I have health care through retirement, a benefit others may not have. But I also decided that I really enjoy doing volunteer work, mostly for Ohio State and AACRAO, working in the yard more than I had time to do before, reading books other than when I'm on vacation, and traveling a bit more. If someone wants to consult, that's great. It might provide some continued intellectual challenge and added resources. But it may also feel as constraining as regular work. For those considering consulting as an option, I would encourage them to think about what they want to do. For example, I've decided that in spite of the intrigue and challenge, I do not want to do interim work because I don't want to travel for work that much. It would be interesting, but that limits my consulting fluidity a bit. And in spite of enjoying some consulting, I anticipate I won't miss it when I decide to stop. I'm really enjoying life.

Lonabocker: You've been consulting for several years now. How does it compare to being on a campus? What are you learning?

Myers: It's been really interesting to be consulting on other campuses. I enjoy providing ideas and recommendations for these institutions to consider, and I've learned things I can apply to other consulting experiences and to my ongoing volunteer work with AACRAO, for example, Registrar 101 and 201. It's also fun to do, particularly with at least one other person, to exchange ideas, recommendations, and strategies.

Consulting also reminds me as time goes on that I'm not on campus any longer and that the industry is changing and evolving. If I want to keep consulting, I need to stay as current as possible with best practices, professional standards, and federal compliance to be relevant and helpful. At some point I'm not sure it will be worth it to me to try to keep up with changes such as technology. Sure, I can still be an effective consultant, but perhaps not as broadly effective.

Lonabocker: I understand you continue to volunteer at OSU. But what do you miss and what don't you miss about full-time employment there?

Myers: I certainly miss the people in the office, the division, and across campus. If you include the time I spent at OSU as a student, I was there continuously for 43 years. A lifetime! I do miss students and the connections with students, and that's a focus of my ongoing volunteer work.

I also miss some of the project work. It was interesting and engaged my organizational management, communication, and negotiating skills. It was renewing and rewarding to help implement great ideas and continuous improvement. That said, I didn't want to get immersed in the implementation of a new student information system again, which is a current project. That level of project management is all-consuming, and I wanted to have more flexibility in my life.

I don't miss addressing employee relations issues. Does anyone? I do miss the energy of a wonderful staff and leadership team. I don't miss the gamesmanship and the political maneuvering, often just for the sake of power. Increasingly, it felt like a waste of time, energy, and resources. Finally, I miss having tech support!!

Lonabocker: Tell me something we probably don't know about you.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

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Myers: Here's a fun fact: I was the voice of our telephone voice-response system at Ohio State. Years ago, when it was still active, I would be around town and people would often visibly pause if I happened to be talking, for example, with a salesperson in a store. They would recognize my voice, but have no sense of context. If I said something to them directly, they would typically burst out laughing, as would I. It was fun. So there's my legacy, I was the voice of BRUTUS (our tag name for the voice-response system).

And here's another fun fact: After a baseball accident in high school, I had brain surgery, and I ended up with sixteen small metal pins in my skull. Many years ago, I used to ring in airport security, but they have since fine-tuned equipment well enough that it's no longer an issue. Now, about my knee replacement and security, that's another story.

Lonabocker: What have you done and what are you doing now to lead a balanced life?

Myers: I take our dogs to a park every morning to meet some friends and their dogs. I read books, and not just while on vacation. I even joined a book club! I'm doing volunteer work; for example, I serve on the OSU Alumni Association Advisory Committee and with various OSU student activities. I do more yard work, which I never really had time for, so my husband, Steve, always did it. He likes it, but it can be very time consuming. I'm sincerely striving to help Steve have more time to relax. I exercise more regularly, which did not happen before. I take a nap now and then. I'm also doing some organizational work, including a history of Registrar 101 and 201 materials and a history of an OSU student organization I advised for 20 years and continue to help with as an alumnus. I *love* planning trips, and we've been trying to maximize Steve's vacation time to get abroad a bit more. I still have a fairly driven personality and I want to keep busy. But, I *am* relaxing more. Really.

Lonabocker: What's your favorite section of the newspaper?

Myers: I read the newspaper every day, and I still love the feel of newsprint, which I enjoy with the kids

(that would be the dogs) and coffee. Reading the newspaper online just isn't the same. I guess I'm an old fogey. I read the front page and headlines first because I'm interested in current events, and just to confirm that I'm a news geek, I'm usually listening to the news on TV while reading the paper. I also read the editorials, comics, local news, entertainment, and sports (more in certain seasons). I also like to tackle the puzzles.

Lonabocker: Tell me three things you couldn't live without and why. Don't include people or pets.

Myers: I couldn't live without technology, including the internet and mobile devices to conduct research, maintain connections with family and friends, and access entertainment. Other things I couldn't live without: travel, including access to the great outdoors, walking, and cycling, as well as culture, including movies, theater, music, and art. And I'll include reading, cooking, and good wine. They are all great escapes.

Lonabocker: Do you have a bucket list? What's next?

Myers: We're trying to travel internationally at least once each year. We went to the British Isles in summer 2019, and we are planning a cruise through the Panama Canal in 2020, and a river cruise in Portugal and Spain in 2020. I have four more states to visit, including Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, and North Dakota, then I will have covered them all. I want to attend at least one OSU away football game at every Big Ten institution. Nebraska, Rutgers, and the new stadium at Minnesota are on the list. I've been to all the others, multiple times. When Steve retires in a few years, he wants to buy an RV for at least a few years so that we can travel around the country with the dogs to visit friends and family and lots of national parks that we have yet to see. Otherwise, I like to just enjoy life, friends, and family.

Lonabocker: Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I'm glad I came out of retirement to learn more about you, share it with our readers, and be a fan girl for a while.

About the Author

Louise Lonabocker retired from Boston College in 2017 where she was Executive Director, Student Services and University Registrar. She is a Past President of AACRAO, served as Editor-in-Chief of *College and University* from 2003–2013, and co-edited AACRAO's *Leadership Lessons: Vision and Values for a New Generation* with Heather Zimar. She earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Boston College.

Rethinking Institutional Readiness for Online Transfer Student Success

By Melissa Allen

About five years ago, when I came to the University of Florida to launch a new student services unit for UF Online, I watched a seven-minute TED talk by Tom Wujec that had a major impact on my approach to how our institution recruits and provides services to online transfer students. Wujec introduced viewers to Peter Skillman's Marshmallow Design Challenge: Teams of four were asked to build the tallest possible freestanding structure—with the requirement that the marshmallow be at the top of the tower. Groups had eighteen minutes to construct the tower using only 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow.

A resounding body of evidence shows that this seemingly simple-sounding design challenge (in theory) causes major execution problems (in practice) for almost all populations of participants. Rather than having an “orient, plan, build, and ta-da moment” with the marshmallow standing gloriously atop a strong tower, participants of almost all ages and across the globe experience an “orient, plan, build, and uh-oh moment.” Their initial instinct is to start prototyping with the spaghetti, tape, and string, and they dedicate so much time to planning and building the support tower that they fail to take into account the marshmallow's properties—specifically, its weight. The common (and incorrect) assumption is that the marshmallow is light and that it can simply be placed successfully atop the tower at the very last minute. As a result of not accurately understanding the properties of the marshmallow, team members usually watch helplessly as the entire tower collapses at

the end of the eighteen-minute exercise. The teams that consistently “win” this challenge are those that begin with the marshmallow: They study the properties of the marshmallow, involve the marshmallow in the building process from the beginning, and learn more about the marshmallow through trial and error as they build and use that information to enhance their designs.

What I learned—and what I believe other strategic enrollment management (SEM) professionals can learn from this experiment—is an important and simple truth: *We must start with our students (our “marshmallows”) and then dedicate our time and energy to prototyping appropriate solutions.* Who are the students we are trying to support at the top of our institutional towers? What are their ‘properties’—and what incorrect assumptions are we making about them that affect how we design and build our infrastructure and models of support? The reality is simple: We can build a great tower with wonderful design qualities and optics, but ultimately we will lose if we do not accomplish the stated objective: to support the student “at the top of the tower.” Instead, we need support towers specifically designed for our students (acknowledging that the support towers will not look the same if they are supporting different students).

Redesigning Institutional Support Towers

In 2014, the Florida Board of Governors deemed the University of Florida (UF) the state's flagship institute

for online learning; UF Online was born. UF was to offer a portfolio of fully online undergraduate degrees at reduced tuition and fees to increase undergraduate access to the state university system by first-time-in-college and transfer students. When I first came to UF, I was charged with evaluating how student services should be redesigned for fully online undergraduate students. My initial goals were (1) to understand the “support towers” the institution already had in place and (2) to analyze data pertaining to the students who had already been attracted to our brand, admitted to our program, and successfully enrolled in UF Online. Before we made plans to redesign service models, my team and I learned about the existing institutional infrastructure with respect to marketing, admissions and recruitment, and student services and intentionally studied our student profiles, their behaviors, and their needs. (In short, we looked at the “spaghetti towers” that had been built before us. Then we took time to study our “marshmallow”—before we built anything for UF Online.)

Our institutional discovery and data exploration resulted in significant learning that guided how we would launch the UF Online OneStop and the UF Online Recruitment & Outreach Center; it also influenced policy development for UF Online students. While our campus primarily served traditional first-time-in-college students, UF Online was generating high interest from non-traditional transfer students. An overwhelmingly high percentage of UF Online applicants, admits, and enrolled students were transfer students; this was the complete opposite of the freshman-centric landscape of UF admissions. We saw a high prevalence of application abandonment by UF Online applicants who never completed their admissions file, and the UF Online denial rate for transfer applicants was higher than expected (especially for out-of-state students) considering that criteria-based admissions were offered to upper-division transfer students. As we evaluated how we would strategically increase UF Online enrollment, we had to ask new questions and provide alternative solutions because we were serving different students.

Marketing

Questions: How could we encourage more transfer students to apply to UF Online?

As we began actively recruiting for UF Online, we wanted to strategically market the UF Online brand to transfer students. While our campus recruitment efforts are strongly geared toward recruiting and retaining a large incoming freshman class, we wanted the transfer market to hear us loud and clear: “We want you to apply! UF Online is a program for you.” As many of us know, there is a difference between inclusion and a feeling of belonging. In spring 2017, UF Online launched a marketing campaign with a simple and easy-to-understand name: “Finish @ UF.” The campaign highlighted the benefits of UF Online for associate degree recipients from Florida state/community colleges: criteria-based admissions, an existing statewide articulation agreement, and reduced tuition and fees. School-specific “Finish @ UF” creative and collateral were designed for eight of the major state colleges in Florida. Each ad referenced the school’s mascot and ended with “Finish a Gator.” Billboards and bus ads with the campaign ran in the respective local areas of each of the state colleges included in the campaign. In addition, geotargeted digital ads ran in each of the surrounding areas of the campuses of each state college. A transfer-specific “Finish @ UF” page was added to the UF Online website. It became clear that transfer students in Florida were not used to seeing UF ads targeted to them. The “Finish @ UF” campaign generated a lot of student—and academic advisor—interest across the state. The campaign continues to run.

Admissions and Recruitment

Questions: How could we build stronger relationships with transfer students? How could we help transfer students better understand our online admissions requirements? How could we simplify the admissions process for online transfer students and provide them with better support throughout the admissions process?

Now that we had the attention of transfer students, strategic engagement was the next step. UF’s transfer recruitment efforts are decentralized from the admissions office and vary by college. As a result, UF’s participation in transfer fairs was intermittent. For that reason, we made a strategic decision to have a consistent and strong brand presence for UF Online at transfer fairs across the state. In addition, we partnered with state colleges to offer walk-in appointments on their campuses to advise students about UF Online, to set up pathway

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events with Transfer Centers, and to facilitate training sessions about UF Online for academic advisors at the state colleges. Our physical presence on their campuses helped increase brand awareness and build relationships.

While we increased our in-person engagement efforts, we also made some strategic virtual changes. We added transfer-specific application checklists on our website and produced a “How to Apply as a Transfer Student” video that reviewed transfer admissions requirements and answered many frequently asked questions. We also added a prerequisite pop-up on the UF Online transfer application to help students understand the admissions requirements for each major (in case they had not read the transfer requirements on the webpage prior to starting their application). In addition, we launched “Finish @ UF” webinars so transfer students could engage virtually with the UF Online recruitment team. Finally, we developed new strategic partnerships with organizations that engage exclusively with the transfer market. We collaborated with Complete Florida to leverage its existing connections with in-state transfer students and military markets and became highly involved with Phi Theta Kappa, the largest international honor society for two-year college students. These tactics helped us achieve our strategic goals, which ultimately increased brand awareness and generated new institutional channels for prospect engagement.

As we launched the UF Online Recruitment and Outreach Center, we strategically structured the unit in a way that would provide personalized support to pre-applicants, applicants, and admitted students (*see* Table 1). We implemented an assigned admissions officer model so that every prospective student who inquired about UF Online degree offerings built a relationship with a designated UF staff member. Transfer students benefited from this model by having a personal guide to whom to direct major-specific questions. It was conducive to building relationships with pre-applicants from their very first interaction with the admissions office.

Once a prospective student applied, a Student Enrollment Specialist provided personalized support throughout the file completion process. Again, applicants had a single point person to contact with any questions or issues as they worked to complete their admissions file. In addition, we contacted applicants by phone and set up automated email campaigns to proactively contact any applicants who had incomplete files.

The emails provided real-time updates on applicants’ admissions files and indicated exactly which items were still missing. Transfer students—especially those who had multiple transcripts to send to our office—benefited from these concierge-style reminders.

Once a student was admitted to UF Online, the Student Enrollment Specialist remained the student’s primary point of contact throughout the pre-registration process. The Student Enrollment Specialist also called all admitted students to congratulate them on their acceptance and invite them to a new student webinar for a warm welcome to Gator Nation. This webinar, co-hosted by the Student Enrollment Specialist and New Student and Family Programs, provided UF Online admitted students with information about pre-enrollment steps, tips for success in UF Online, key registration dates, and important contact information. Students often took advantage of the open Q&A at the end of the Webinar, which helped proactively address their uncertainty and concerns so they did not turn into issues requiring a later response. As we approached the start of the semester, new students in UF Online received coordinated registration reminders via email and phone. These reminders were strategically timed and always reminded students of resources available to them in case they got “stuck” or didn’t understand the “hidden

Table 1. Roles in the UF Online Recruitment & Outreach Center

Admissions Officer	Serves as first point of contact for prospective UF Online students Acts as a personal guide to pre-applicants Provides general information and major-specific admissions information
Student Enrollment Specialist	Serves as primary contact for UF Online applicants and admits Keeps UF Online applicants informed about the status of their admissions files Helps UF Online new admits navigate pre-enrollment steps

curriculum” of their new institution. In all, we set up a new way to introduce online transfer students to our brand and to proactively walk them through the entire admissions process.



Student Services

How could we provide a better student services model for online students?

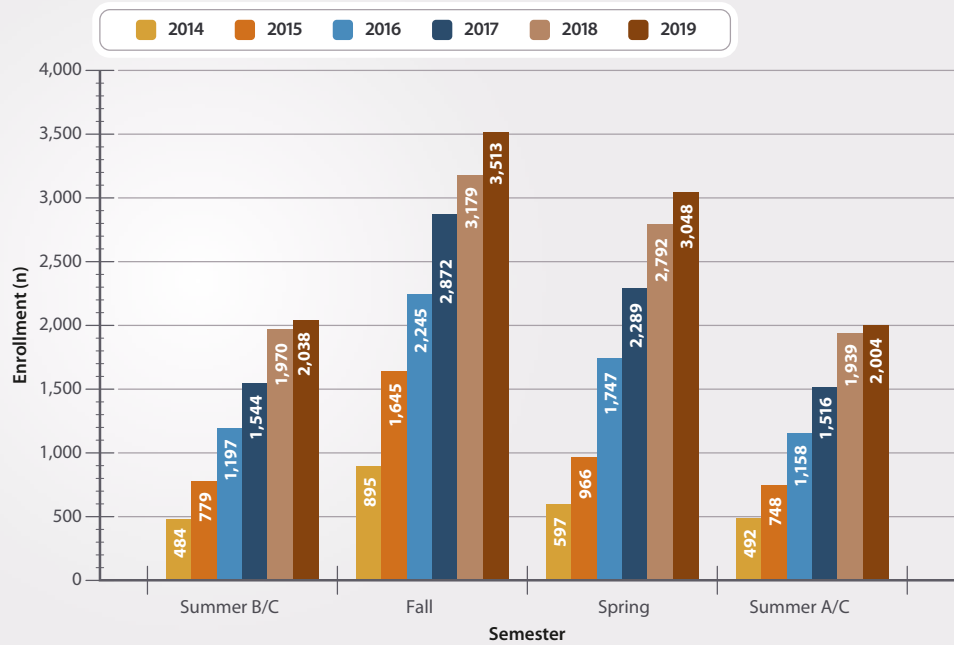
Once students were admitted, the UF Online One-Stop Student Services Center became a primary resource for them. The UF Online OneStop Center is a cross-functional services unit that provides UF Online students with convenient and centralized support on behalf of the Office of the University Registrar, Student Financial Affairs, and the University Bursar. Instead of having to contact three separate offices with multiple questions, UF Online students contact the UF Online OneStop—one website, one phone number, one email address—and speak with staff members who are cross-trained in all of these areas. In addition, the UF Online OneStop oversees all transfer evaluation for UF Online students and serves as a centralized resource for campus partners who interact with UF Online students. To accommodate the various schedules of our diverse student population, the UF Online OneStop has extended office hours Monday through Thursday (7 a.m. until

6 p.m.). This facilitates quicker resolution of issues and reduces the frustrations of students who otherwise might be bounced among different offices.

Final Thoughts

As we reflect on how we achieved a top-five ranking earlier this year in *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Online Undergraduate Programs, and as we look at the program's consistent year-over-year enrollment growth (see Figure 2, on page 38), we never lost sight of our “marshmallows.” The focus of scholars and practitioners regarding transfer success is predominantly through the lens of how students can (and should) prepare for their academic transitions. Yet institutions must be willing to share in the responsibility of transfer success by evaluating the unique needs of each student population they serve. For UF Online, we considered the cross-sectional needs of transfer students and the online marketplace and worked strategically to “support those specific marshmallows.” As we look to the future, our program and our profession must remain

Figure 2.
UF Online
Historical
Enrollment
Trends, by
Semester



committed to pilots, prototypes, and evaluation. Inevitably, the needs of our students—and of higher education—will continue to change as well. So go ahead: Go

get your 20 sticks of spaghetti, your yard of tape, your yard of string, and start building your towers. But don't forget to study the "marshmallow" first.

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About the Authors

Melissa Allen is the inaugural Director of UF Online Enrollment Services at the University of Florida. She came to UF with experience teaching in the state university system and five years of experience in online higher education. She launched and now provides strategic and operational oversight to the UF Online Recruitment and Outreach Center and the UF Online OneStop Student Services Center. Together, these two units coordinate activity to attract, engage, enroll, and retain the highest quality students in UF Online. Under Mrs. Allen leadership, the online program is achieving long-term aggressive enrollment growth using lean resource management, helping UF Online rise in the ranks as one of the best online undergraduate programs in the country

Academic Fraud and the World's Largest Diploma Mill

By Allen Ezell

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of three articles about academic fraud. The first described the history and growth of diploma mills and counterfeit operations. This article provides an in-depth look at the operations of the world's largest diploma mill, Axact, Ltd., a criminal enterprise with more than 8 million customers worldwide that has generated several billion dollars. The third article will detail how to identify diploma mills and Axact websites.

Diploma mills and accreditation mills devalue earned degrees, confuse the public, and defraud students. The investigation into Axact's activities was conducted by the Pakistan Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the British Home Office, Interpol, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Today, only the FBI continues its investigations of the company. Dozens of top Axact executives and others were arrested, jailed, held for fifteen months, tried, and sentenced to seven years for various fraud violations. None has begun his prison sentence. Several fled Pakistan successfully and have never returned; one was caught at the airport.

In October 2016, a Pakistan district judge acquitted 24 Axact officials at trial due to "not enough evidence" and then later admitted he had accepted a bribe (of \$35,209) from Axact. Although the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation aired an award-winning expose of the company in September 2017, it did not have the same impact as a later BBC story (2018). In February 2018, after the BBC published its story on the Pakistan judge's bribe, the Islamabad High Court reversed the

convictions and removed the judge from the bench. (The judge was never arrested, nor was he required to return the bribe money.) Axact defendants then went back into the Pakistan judicial system.

Several prosecutors have been abducted and "re-educated" and then promptly resigned from the case. Several judges have declined to hear these cases outright, and one is reported to have fled the country to avoid the issue entirely. When the former lead prosecutor announced that he was considering getting back into the case, a grenade was thrown at his house. Several FIA "approvers" (cooperating witnesses) have disappeared, and one Axact official was assassinated the evening before he was scheduled to have a press conference during which he allegedly intended to disclose the truth.

The Axact Empire

Since its founding in 1997 by Shoaib Ahmed Sheikh and his relatives and friends, Axact (Pvt.) Ltd., based in Karachi, Pakistan, has sold more than 8 million high school and college diplomas to buyers in 191 countries through more than 4,000 fake websites, 1,000 of which were fake school websites. In 2016, according to Farhan Kamal of the Online Education Unit, Axact entered the online education business around the year 2000. "Registration" fees were as low as \$399 for a fake diploma; others paid as much as \$200,000 to \$400,000 before the upsell. Axact's total revenues reached the billion-dollar mark in 2013–14, the company's heyday.

Revenues were laundered through at least 35 known bank accounts in nineteen countries. (Today there are likely more than 50 bank accounts in more than 20 countries, including several in the United States.) Axact had call centers in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. Call center employees numbered 827 in Karachi (with 3,137 in the office); 82 in Islamabad (with 147 in the office); and 43 in Lahore (with 82 in the office). Total monthly sales goals were \$4.7 million for Online Education; \$4.7 to \$5 million for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)/Cash On Delivery (COD), and \$5.2 to \$6.2 million from UPSELL, totaling at least \$15 to \$16 million monthly from the “education” side of the business.

Today, more than 1,200 employees in Karachi are on the 2 p.m. to midnight shift; more than 500 are assigned to the five call center teams in Online Education, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)/Cash On Delivery (COD). Some are also assigned to web development and online chat support. Approximately 120 employees are at the Islamabad call center, with 80 on the phones. Axact’s sales figures are currently depressed due in part to their decreased internet advertising. The monthly goal is now \$7 million, with \$1.4 million from Online Education (approximately 35 percent of diplomas sold), \$1.7 to \$2.2 million from PLA/COD (approximately 65 percent of diplomas sold), and \$2.2 to \$3.2 million from UPSELL activities. (COD is only available with PLA schools.)

Call centers are staffed by talented, well-spoken young people (most of them male) with no college education. After their three-week orientation, employees choose a fake name and are given the names of one or more fake schools to represent as “registrar” (or a similar title). The Axact “Audit Department” employs “quality assurance auditors” who monitor all “registrars” telephone calls to ensure compliance with company rules and regulations. [Imagine: rules and regulations when the business itself is criminal, defrauding others!] Axact’s primary sales targets continue to be residents of nearby Gulf Region nations: As of May 2015, more than 124,000 known shipments of documents (56 percent of sales) were to the Gulf Region, and 65,000 shipments of documents (29 percent of sales) were to the United States. An estimated two million diplomas were sold between 2015 and 2019.

Since 2019, Axact has created at least 27 new websites. Consider the layout, design, and content of two recent fake school sites—trevorfielduniversity.edu

and nationalcreekuniversity.education, both created in early 2019.

In 2015, Axact was known to operate approximately 1,100 websites; 370 fictional high schools, colleges, and universities; 150 accreditation mills; and 400 term paper/research mill sites. According to recorded Axact calls, “Upsell” is when sales personnel impersonate local police and/or state, province, and federal authorities, including FBI agents. They also impersonate officials from the Ministry of Education, Immigration, and embassies and use extortion and blackmail to extract more money from previous diploma buyers. They use counterfeit documents, embassy certifications, and fake U.S. Department of Education emails and U.S. Department of State apostille attestations. A former Axact employee reported that the first “Upsell” was made in 2001 by a senior executive who was able to get \$2,500 from an American student by convincing him he needed additional documents to make his diploma legal. Any scheme or artifice to defraud was permissible at Axact as long as the company made more money.

In the wake of a *New York Times* article (Walsh 2015), the Pakistan Federal Investigation Agency raided the main office of Axact; all senior employees had already gone into hiding or had fled the country. Employees advised that CEO and co-founder Sheikh Shoaib Ahmed had given orders that all Axact business records should be destroyed and computer hard drives removed. (The FIA tracked down these stolen items and retrieved some for forensic analysis, which later led to destruction of evidence charges.) The FIA took approximately 75 employees for interrogation then sealed the offices.

During an hours-long interview, Sheikh shared the location of the Axact printing facility. The FIA seized printing and seal-making machines along with more than 2.2 million diplomas, transcripts, accreditation entity letterheads, and counterfeit State Department apostille attestation documents. The FIA had seized servers, computers, and massive amounts of business records during multiple raids in all three cities where Axact had offices. Bank accounts were frozen (depending on location), and the FIA brought in the organization’s top officers for questioning. The Court granted permission to seize all of Axact’s assets (*e.g.*, yacht, beach house, and the 1,100 motor vehicles registered in Axact’s name). About a year later, due to misinterpretation of a court order, the office premises were returned to Axact officials, as were the seized assets.

Legal Status of Diploma Fraud

Neither the United States nor Pakistan has federal criminal statutes outlawing the advertising, sale, issuance, possession, or use of diplomas issued by diploma mills or the issuance of false accreditation documents by accreditation mills. The United States has federal criminal statutes pertaining to wire fraud (interstate wire communications), mail fraud, and computer fraud, and these have been used successfully to prosecute diploma and accreditation mills. Pakistan does not currently have any cybercrime statutes.

Hiding in Plain Sight

New Axact employees are trained never to discuss the work they do outside the office and are warned of dire consequences should they do so. They are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) that virtually guarantees they'll remain silent about what happens at the office. (They themselves are not told exactly what Axact's products are during orientation training.) Axact maintains a large in-house legal team to ensure that no one breaches the NDA without being sued or visited at their home by enforcers.

Some current and former employees have commented on Axact's sale of fake degrees, pornography, money laundering, and connections with organized crime. The true nature of the company's business has been an open secret in Pakistan for many years. The *New York Times* article made it even more widely known. It has long been rumored that Axact may be providing services for Pakistan's government, military, and intelligence services, including Inter-Services Intelligence.

Axact is highly litigious: The legal team is quick to obtain stay orders and to file defamation cases against websites, blogs, and newspapers. In 2003–04, the president of the Pakistan Software House Association alleged that Axact was a diploma mill. In response, Axact sued for Rs.100 million (\$704,865). Axact has punished former employees and their relatives, even with beatings and torture.

Axact hides among legitimate online education institutions, utilizing similar-looking and -sounding entities. Yet Axact is the elephant in the room, a giant “web” that utilizes fake high schools, personnel and job placement agencies, and scholarship offers to lure potential victims into its lies and deceit. For years, Axact oper-

ated somewhat openly under the umbrella of an information technology company. At Axact's “team meet” in 2013–14, Chairman Shoaib Sheikh unveiled plans for “GalAxact,” a futuristic 3.5 million square foot office complex including five 16-story office towers, a helipad, and a monorail that would enable 20,000 employees to work in a single shift (Axact 2016).

In its “Plan 2019,” Axact made public its vision of “a prosperous and thriving Pakistan”: by 2019, It would make available to every Pakistani—at reasonable prices—food, shelter, health care, education, and judicial assistance (Shaikh 2013). (The population of Pakistan is 204.73 million.) It would also donate 65 percent of its IT export revenues (of which it has none) to charity (Shaikh 2013).

Fake News

Over the last 22 years, Shaikh and his colleagues have utilized social media such as Facebook, Google Plus, LinkedIn, Crunchbase, and others in conjunction with sites such as CNN iReport, PRWeb, and more to publish free press releases that legitimize fake schools—including their student and alumni activity—and corporate pronouncements, etc. All of this activity is readily searchable.

Axact's “Project 2019” goals have not been attained. Diversion is a common tactic. Project 2019 was overshadowed by the announcement at Axact's 20th Team Meet, in 2017, of Plan 2036: Shoaib Sheikh “will make Pakistan the #1 country in the world.”

Because many Pakistanis lack potable water, dependable electricity, clean air, sanitation facilities, and honest law enforcement and judicial systems, Axact has success recruiting new employees on the basis of assurances of a better lifestyle. The company boasts a wide range of amenities that are among the best in the world: yachts, games, movie theaters, prayer rooms, club facilities, gyms, pools, clinics, libraries, kiosks, events, cafeterias, salons, ATMs, beach resorts, and clean bathrooms. It even promises to deliver generators and bottled water to employees' homes. Health insurance is also provided. Axact states, “We offer the most amazing lifestyle at your fingertips” (axact.com/news/lifestyle.asp). Salaries of two to five times the going rate are effective bait. Once employees begin working for Axact, the money proves too good to leave, with the result that most set aside their morals and religious beliefs and convince

themselves that it is acceptable to defraud Americans and others in cyberspace. Axact supervisors repeatedly tell employees that “there are no laws in cyberspace.”

Axact’s Products

Former employees report that Axact is a highly diversified criminal enterprise. It maintains websites offering fraudulent term papers, theses, dissertations, custom research, used cars, travel services, vanity publishing entities, journals, English language institutes, and logo design. Still other sites target teachers, airline employees, and engineers.

Yet fraudulent diplomas remain Axact’s core business and primary money maker. “Education” income streams include:

- ◆ **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):** PLA represents approximately 65 percent of Axact’s education business, with between 700 and 900 fake websites baiting new customers. Among the sites are Baychester, Brooklyn Park, Columbiana, Gibson, Glenford, Hansford, Nixon, Richford, University of Granton, and University of Tulane (uot.education), to name a few. After a five- to ten-minute phone interview about prior education and work experience, customers are “qualified” for their desired degree. Axact even offers a 90 percent “Presidential Scholarship” with only the remaining 10 percent to be paid (terms typically negotiable) to obtain the degree. Axact also now offers Cash on Delivery (COD) and Graduate Now, Pay Later plans: Pay a small registration fee, then pay the balance when all of the documents (“graduation package”) arrives. (COD is only available with PLA schools, which do not have a student sign-on portal.)
- ◆ **Online Education (OE):** OE constitutes approximately 35 percent of Axact’s education business. Approximately 35 fake school websites include log-on buttons that provide access to virtual classrooms. Recorded lectures and videos are available, and online chat personnel guide students through assignments that culminate in a degree (never mind that the learning has been described as being at the “fifth-grade level”). Remember that the Axact “school official” never attended college yet guides customers through their required research, papers, correspondence, and examinations. Thus a façade of legitimate online learning disguises a diploma mill. OE sites include Al Arab, Al Nasr, Branton, Columbiana,

Costa Field (uocf.education), Denton, Gatesville, Gibson, Granttown, Hadley, Must, and Myers Field (mfu.education).

- ◆ **Research and Sponsored Development:** These are the term paper and custom research sites that offer purportedly “custom” research services to the buyer. Former Axact employees advised the author that starting in spring 2002, during “exam time,” the Axact Content Department began purchasing student library IDs and log-in credentials for hundreds of U.S. college and university library websites from hackers and scammers in Pakistan, China, Philippines, and Turkey as well as from the “Dark Web.” This data was used to steal content from library publications that it then sold to its “research customers.”
- ◆ **The “Upsell”:** Soon after a degree and transcript are sold to a customer, the “upsell agent” calls to advise that the diploma and transcript need to be “legalized” through their embassy or ministry of higher education in order to be valid. This required process allegedly adds value to the educational credentials. On occasion, Axact may even recommend transferring credits to a new school because it enjoys a “higher standing.” (I received such an email and telephone call regarding the 2017 Hill University diploma I obtained as a private consultant for a client after retiring from the FBI.) Historically, Axact did not upsell U.S. residents.

Axact profits from the sale of diplomas from more than 1,000 fictional schools by more than 900 salesmen and brokers with weekly goals of at least \$1 million. In 2014 and early 2015, Axact’s “flagship” schools were Must University (which used a mail drop address on Market Street in San Francisco) and Paramount California University (which uses an address in Irvine, California). Axact sales techniques feature phrases such as “advance your career with a global degree,” “executive education program,” and a \$5,000 “exclusive referral discount.” Axact also created a search engine optimization (SEO) department to ensure that Axact schools and other products appear at the top of online search results. Axact also had a group of employees working on “proxy student services” whereby students enrolled at legitimate U.S. institutions were invited to send all their academic assignments to Axact throughout the school year. Axact would then conduct the necessary research, prepare the assignments, and use “spoof-

ing” technology to forward them to the professor as if they were being sent directly by the student—all for a \$40,000 fee.

Identifying Axact Websites

Axact’s (“Vintage 1”) first fake school websites were simplistic, and little effort was given to making the schools appear real. “No books, no courses, no classes” coupled with “check out our sample diplomas and more” and a listing of the “graduation package fees” told the buyer everything he needed to know. “All graduation packages include the following: 1 standard framed diploma, 1 unframed diploma, letter of recommendation, transcript, school ID” all for \$375 (associate) to \$450 (Ph.D./doctorate), with the bachelor’s/master’s/Ph.D. triple combo for \$825 and “delivery in 10 days or less.” See, for example, the websites for Belford High School, Belford University, Rochville University, Lorenz University, Woodfield University, and Belltown University. It is unclear why Axact officials have continued to offer the Vintage 1 package. Just within the past 120 days, Axact established three new websites: InstantDegreesInGulf.com, ArabInstantDegrees.com, and GCCInstantDegrees.com; visitors are promised “100 percent approval,” and samples of school documents are displayed.

Axact schools’ websites (other than those for Vintage 1 schools) look professional and feature stock photos, student models, and fantastic graphics. Most Axact sites have the following traits in common:

- ◆ Older sites have a .com extension.
- ◆ Accreditation mill sites have the .org extension.
- ◆ Beware of .us extensions.
- ◆ The newest schools (within the past year) have .education extensions. (Occasionally .edu is used as part of a school name rather than as an extension.)
- ◆ Rarely, Axact acquires the websites of legitimate schools that had a real .edu extension and uses them to host fraudulent schools with the same initials.
- ◆ Rarely do Axact school sites include an address of any sort.
- ◆ Deep in the site, an address that is either non-existent or a mail drop may be identified.
- ◆ Some sites feature legitimate street names of real schools but no house numbers.
- ◆ Only toll-free numbers are listed.

- ◆ The schools over-sell their legitimacy.
- ◆ A single university may feature numerous logos of supposed accrediting entities (up to eleven).
- ◆ Photos of students are stock photographs.
- ◆ The same dean, faculty members, and students are allegedly employed at numerous schools.
- ◆ “Scholarships” of 70 to 90 percent—including “presidential scholarships”—are available.
- ◆ “Exclusive scholarships” (up to 75 percent of tuition and fees) are offered to students in the United States.
- ◆ A chart listing tuition at competitor schools is displayed.
- ◆ On older sites, a “dancing green or orange box” offers 24x7 live chat with school officials. More modern sites feature an image of a woman with folded arms.
- ◆ No cost per credit hour is listed, only a flat price per degree program.
- ◆ Lifetime “verification” is touted as is U.S. Department of State apostille.
- ◆ website translation is offered for all major languages.
- ◆ Numerous awards “earned” by the school are listed.
- ◆ Tuition ‘fee reduction methods’ are touted, ranging from 7 to 20 percent.
- ◆ A disproportionately large number of enrolled students and alumni are listed for a relatively new school.
- ◆ An excessive number of departments is listed.
- ◆ Domain registration is hidden under a third-party privacy registration.
- ◆ Logos of graduates’ nationally known employers are prominently displayed but with no student names; thus, the content is colorful and impressive but impossible to verify.

Frequently cited statistics relative to the school, faculty, and graduates/students include:

- ◆ 70 percent of faculty hold Ph.D.s in their fields.
- ◆ 70 majors are offered by sixteen diverse schools.
- ◆ 80 percent of alumni work for Fortune 500 companies.
- ◆ “employability” to 100 percent soon after receipt of degree.

Innova University touts its Presidential Scholarship with eligibility criteria “so minimum that 90 percent of applicants qualify.”¹ It also provides a “substantial fee waiver” of 20 percent if tuition is paid in one single payment or “9 percent if paid in two installments.”² Innova University is one of the very few “schools” with a physical address: 2711 Centerville Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19808. In fact, this is the address for Corporate Service Company, which appears to be a third-party company that prevents direct access to identification of its corporate clients.

Another overt novelty on Axact school websites is the offer to become a Certified Educational Associate (broker); a companion chart displays your “Earnings Potential for Online Degree Programs” with blocks reflecting the color of the metal (silver 40 percent, gold 50 percent, and platinum 75 percent) for “commission on our online academic programs.” In other words, depending on your volume of business, a university will kick back the tuition percentages once your referred students pay their tuition. This chart has appeared on numerous sites, including Carden, Gatesville, Port Jefferson, and Martinville Universities.

Political Climate Giving Rise to Axact

Several incidents in Pakistan and neighboring countries may have played a role in the growth of Axact. In 2002, President Pervez Musharraf issued an executive order establishing the new minimum education requirement of a bachelor’s degree for any member of the National Assembly (MNA), the lower house of Pakistan’s Parliament. This new order effectively disqualified nearly 60 of the 107 MNAs elected in 1997 (Afzal 2013). In response, many MNAs obtained fictitious academic credentials.

In 2012, Syed Ahsan Shah, Provincial Minister for Industries, was disqualified by the Balochistan High Court for possession and use of a fake degree. When questioned, he commented, “A degree is a degree! Whether fake or genuine, it’s a degree! It makes no difference” (Khan and Toosi 2010).

Investigations into diploma mills were also launched in surrounding areas. In 2013, the Education Ministry in Saudi Arabia began a campaign against fake cre-

entials, identifying nearly 620 government employees using fake bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees (GEO TV 2013). The Central Bureau of Investigation in India advised the court that “51,156 fake degrees have been issued in the state,” many of them to obtain jobs in higher education (Vyas 2010). As many as 25,000 of India’s 350,000 primary school teachers are estimated to be using fake credentials. At least 1,400 primary school teachers in India resigned in 2015 during an amnesty period.

From 2010 until 2015, authorities in China also conducted sting operations regarding fraudulent academic credentials. One resulted in the arrests of at least 67 ESL and TEFL expat teachers and recruiters on the basis of their possession of fake diplomas and TEFL certificates (ESL 2016). Reports in 2013 indicated that China has more than 100 universities that do not have proper accreditation or permits. Lists of diploma mills have been posted by ShangDaxue.com (Floracruz 2013). These and other types of fraudulent documents are sold openly on streets in China.

Media Attention and Court Cases

In May 2008, Axact filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in New Jersey against Student Network Resources, Inc. (SNRI), “an academic and business-related research service.” Axact alleged “defamation, trade libel, copyright, false advertising, and unfair competition by SNRI.”³ Axact employees had been stealing SNRI research papers on the Internet then selling them as their own. SNRI did its due diligence (through several “controlled buys”) then advised the court that Axact was a fraud, had lied to the court, owned at least 300 websites and at least 544 term paper sites, had links to prostitution, and owned or controlled non-existent universities (including Belford, Rochville, and Ashwood Universities).

After the attorney representing Axact apologized for the false statements made to the court, Axact decided not to contest the matter any longer. In January 2009, the Court entered a default judgment of \$353,373 against Axact plus \$36,720.40 for attorney fees. In retaliation, Axact sued SNRI in Pakistan Court, a common tactic of fraudulent companies—one where the outcome can be controlled.

¹ See innova.university/tuition/scholarship/

² See innova.university/tuition/fee-payment/

³ See law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/new-jersey/njdce/3:2007cv05491/208337/31/.

In November 2009, the U.S. District Court (USDC) in Detroit, Michigan, heard Elizabeth Lauber, *et al.*'s civil suit against Belford High School. Eventually the suit became a class action suit representing 30,000 victims who had purchased Belford High School diplomas and GEDs. Belford High School was charged with violating the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) statute. Salem Kureshi testified via video from Karachi, Pakistan, that he owned Belford High School and Belford University and managed their operations from his apartment. Kureshi stated that he was in no way affiliated with Axact. In August 2012, the court awarded \$22,783,500 to the plaintiffs. No money was collected at that time, but after the May 2015 *New York Times* expose (Walsh 2015), monies were seized from various Axact accounts. Kureshi was determined to be a low-level Axact employee and the video testimony fake. When FIA raided Axact, Kureshi cooperated and became an "approver" (government witness). His current whereabouts are unknown.

A civil suit is currently pending in Superior Court of the State of California regarding Paramount California University, Coronado Pacific University, and Brett Loebel of Delray Beach, Florida; Alameda University is also named.

For at least the last twelve years, Axact has been the subject of stories in the United Kingdom (*The Daily Mail*), Saudi Arabia (*Saudi Gazette* and *Compunet Arab News*), and the United States (<edualliancegroup> and *Edu Alliance Journal* along with <GetEducated.com>). None attracted as much attention worldwide as did that in the May 17, 2015 *New York Times*; it was followed by several other articles and an editorial over the next four years.

In November 2014, Sayyad Yasir Jamshaid, a former Axact employee in Karachi, requested assistance to expose Axact for fraud. He had been employed by Axact as a quality control auditor and was assigned to one of the sales teams that sold diplomas in the Gulf Region. Thinking he had been detected and fearing for his physical well-being, he had quit his job after photographing certain company records and then fled to Dubai, U.A.E. Jamshaid was interviewed for three days in UAE by *New York Times* reporter Declan Walsh and agreed to be named as a source in an upcoming expose, even knowing he was placing himself in physical danger. His family in Pakistan later bore the brunt of his cooperation. After the story was published, several other

former employees shared their stories and documents with the press and law enforcement.

Aftermath of NYT Expose

Shoaib Shaikh, founder and CEO of Axact, offered at least five different explanations after the *New York Times* story was published. Although he claimed the company was innocent (and threatened to sue the *Times*), no lawsuit ever materialized. He later admitted that Axact had issued 147 Ph.D. degrees to customers in the United Arab Emirates. Ultimately, he revealed the location of the Axact printing facility (adjacent to its main office building) and accompanied them there. After seizing approximately 2.2 million blank diplomas, transcripts, school identification cards, accreditation documents, and counterfeit U.S. State Department apostille attestations, the FIA arrested Shaikh and his co-founder, Viqas Atiq.

In May 2015, Altaf Hussain, founder and leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (a secular political party in Pakistan), expressed shock and grief over the allegations. He called for an investigation and said that if the allegations were found to be true, "exemplary punishment should be given to the people involved in it so that no one could even think about committing such a monstrous fraud in the future" (Hussain 2015). Hussain demanded that names of Axact senior management be added to the Exit Control List (no-fly list) and warned that fraud should constitute a wake-up call for the nation (Hussain 2015).

The *New York Times* expose also alarmed government officials. Parliament officials ordered the interior minister to form a special committee to investigate all allegations. The length and breadth of the scandal humiliated Pakistan and kicked off a local and regional media frenzy.

The investigation resulted in FIA armed raids on Axact offices in three cities; the removal of at least 75 employees via Army trucks and police vehicles; the seizure of computers and servers and business records; and closure of Axact's offices. FIA froze bank accounts, seized 1,100 vehicles registered to Axact, and took all of its hard assets using anti-money laundering statutes. The FIA then conducted interviews with hundreds of Axact employees; more than fifteen became "approvers" and agreed to testify. These "approvers" ranged from low-level employees—call center personnel and print-

ing shop managers—to regional directors; their stories were recorded before a judicial magistrate. At least one—Umair Hamid, Assistant Vice President, International Relations—is a high-ranking official. Hamid was not arrested by FIA since he was an approver, but he continued his fake diploma activities even after the FIA shut down Axact.

Hamid traveled to the United States in 2016 to open a bank account for a fake school. He had a business relationship with Brett Loebel regarding Alameda University. Loebel later may have cooperated with the FBI. Hamid was arrested in December 2016 in an FBI sting. After his arrest (for wire fraud), Hamid made a lengthy statement to the FBI. In April 2017 he plead guilty to having helped conduct fraud in the United States. He was charged \$140,000,000 for Axact diploma fraud,

forfeited \$5,303,020 to the U.S. government, and was sentenced to 22 months in federal prison. In August 2018, he was deported. He is believed to be in UAE.

Conclusion

Diploma mills will always be with us—at least as long as we live in a credential-conscious society and fail to verify academic credentials. As long as the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Agency), the people of Pakistan, and federal and province law enforcement support and condone the criminal acts of Axact and similar entities, the reputation of Pakistan will continue to be tarnished. Pakistani officials could easily become a model for the rule of law, but that is not in evidence thus far.

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About the Author

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The Transfer Mentor Program: How One University Enhanced the Transfer Student Experience

By Brooke Lockhart

The higher education landscape is changing rapidly, and with nationwide trends of declining enrollment, colleges and universities are faced with the challenging task of understanding what that means for them. In the state of Missouri, two- and four-year institutions have experienced decreases in enrollment, with an overall decrease of 9 percent since 2013 (Missouri Department of Higher Education 2019). The number of high school graduates is also declining, contributing to the overall drop in headcount at public institutions across the Midwest (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education).

Given continuing enrollment decreases and the need to improve the transfer student experience, “The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges” is a useful resource for institutions strategizing their next steps. The playbook is the result of a study conducted in 2016 by the Community College Research Center, The Aspen Institute, and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. The study outlined three main strategies that institutions could adopt to strengthen the two- to four-year transfer process. The first strategy is to prioritize transfer at the institutional level by incorporating transfer students in the mission of the institution, communicating data to educate faculty and staff across campus about the success rates of transfer students and why it is important to improve those outcomes, and identifying and securing resources needed to support the transfer student process. The second strategy is to build program pathways that align with high-quality instruction by collaborat-

ing with partner institutions to revise and update them on a regular basis, preparing students for four-year programs by offering rigorous instruction and strong academic experiences, and understanding that not all two-year institutions offer the courses students need to create a “clean” two-plus-two pathway. The third strategy is to provide personalized advising for transfer students by dedicating personnel and resources to transfers, identifying advisors who can be assigned to transfers and provide pertinent information (such as choosing a major early), offering a first-year experience specifically for transfers, and ensuring fair financial aid allocation (Wyner 2016).

At the state level, Missouri is working toward the goal of 60 percent of its population holding a higher education credential by the year 2025. In 2016, around the same time that “The Transfer Playbook” was published, the state adopted several college completion initiatives with the passage of Senate Bill 997. The bill comprises legislation mandating college completion initiatives including dual-credit programs, 15 to Finish efforts, a student website, guided pathways, concurrent enrollment, core curriculum transfer, public service loan forgiveness information, and a Wartime Veterans Survivor Grant (Missouri Department of Higher Education 2016). All eight initiatives are intended to help increase higher education credential completion in the state; three of the initiatives relate directly to transfer student success. The fundamentals of Senate Bill 997 and “The Transfer Playbook” supported the need for the univer-

sity to begin evaluating transfer processes. The review began by identifying who the transfer students at the institution were and why they chose to enroll first at a two-year institution.

According to an article published by *Forbes*, a number of factors influence a student's decision to attend a two-year institution. Cost, flexibility, convenience, and academic preparation are among the top reasons (Josuweit 2017). According to the U.S. Department of Education, the cost of undergraduate tuition at public institutions has increased approximately 34 percent over the past ten years (Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow 2018, 602). In many cases, the cost of attending a two-year institution is half that of attending a four-year institution. This can contribute to high school students attending community college first. Students are also attracted by the flexibility and community-based work opportunities that two-year institutions tend to offer. In Missouri, approximately 85,000 students enrolled at public two-year institutions in 2018 (Missouri Department of Higher Education 2019). Given such a large number, it may seem surprising that transfer student enrollment at four-year institutions in Missouri is decreasing. Where are they going?

Many transfer students believe their coursework will not transfer to a four-year institution so choose to end their college career after two years. The three questions transfer students most commonly ask are: Do my courses transfer? How long is it going to take me to graduate? How much will this cost me? There is concern among students at two-year institutions that four-year institutions do not always accept transfer credit. Students also worry that they will have to repeat courses or that a four-year institution will not deem courses equivalent.

To understand exactly what transfer students experience and how they feel about the process, Southeast Missouri State University invited newly enrolled transfer students to share their experience with campus administrators, advisors, and student services staff. As predicted, the most common responses aligned directly with the challenges described above. Indeed, they are challenges that all transfer students face, regardless of their age, location, or program. The focus group confirmed that transfer students accumulate too many credits, are unaware of what courses to take and when to take them, and take longer to graduate than they initially planned. Cost is also a factor in choosing to attend

a two-year institution: Transfer students need to be able to graduate on time with a first bachelor's degree if they are to take advantage of the financial savings they expect when they choose to enroll at a two-year institution. Even if a student chooses the two-year route for other than financial reasons, completing a bachelor's degree in a reasonable timeframe is still important.

In response to learning from the focus group, we initially approached three community college partners to consider a new mentorship program that would begin during community college students' first semester of college. We then collaborated on what the program would look like and how partner schools could help pilot the program. The Transfer Mentor Program was officially launched in 2017 and was also selected to be a Concurrent Enrollment Pilot Program for the state of Missouri under Senate Bill 997. The Transfer Mentor Program minimizes the common issues that students experience during their transition from a two-year to a four-year institution. Students enter the program by completing a form while they are enrolled at a partner school and indicating in which semester they plan to transfer. Student records are created at the four-year institution, and the students gain access to a portal. Within the portal, students can explore resources and event calendars, activate university email accounts, and access the online degree audit system. One of the most important components of the Transfer Mentor Program is that there are assigned mentors at each partner institution. The mentors assist students in the program with advising and course selection while monitoring the online degree audits from our institution.

Additional components include being "locked into" the catalog year at the time students opt into the program and having all applicable fees waived. Thus, when they access their degree audit, they are following the bachelor's degree program requirements that will be in place and will not change as they progress at the two-year institution. The partner schools send an official transcript for each participating student at the end of each fall, spring, and summer semester at no cost to the student. This allows us to award credit as soon as it is earned so students can see how their two-year coursework is applied to their four-year degrees. Because the degree audit system is online, program participants can access their degree audits anytime to plan and track their progress toward their four-year degrees even while they are still attending two-year in-



Strategic Enrollment Management Endorsement Program

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How long is the program?

The SEM-EP is tied to the most recent SEM material and trends in the field. The program is designed to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

What do I receive when I complete the program?

AACRAO will provide you with official documentation to verify your successful completion of the SEM-EP professional development curriculum. Graduates will be listed on the AACRAO SEM-EP national web registry.

Program Eligibility

- Five years experience in the field of SEM (Registrar, Admissions, Recruitment, Financial Aid or related fields as determined by the SEM-EP program committee).
- Individual must be employed (full or part time) by an "accredited" post-secondary institution.
- Provide a one page vita or resume reflecting career experience, professional accomplishments and education.
- Hold a minimum of an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.

Curriculum

The SEM-EP faculty are drawn from highly experienced professionals in the field of enrollment service.

1. SEM 101 Online Course

A four week course to develop a baseline understanding of SEM.

2. Webinars

Three pre-recorded webinars on topics focused on key components of SEM.

3. Field Visits

Visits to three approved institutions of distinct types followed by a written report guided by prescribed questions. In addition, **attendance at the AACRAO Annual Meeting or AACRAO SEM Conference will fulfill one of the field visit requirements.**

4. Capstone Research Experience

All SEM-EP candidates are expected to conduct a brief research capstone project during the course of the curriculum. The assignment focuses on tracking and analyzing a local population of students from the candidate's institution and concludes by reporting conversion outcomes or conducting an annotated literature research project.

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stitutions. Often, they utilize the degree audit system while working with their two-year advisors or mentors during enrollment periods. If a course is not offered at their two-year institution, students can enroll concurrently at both institutions so as to continue progress toward their degree. The Transfer Mentor Program allows students to be more aware of the degree requirements at Southeast Missouri State University and helps minimize their accumulation of credits that cannot be applied directly to their bachelor's degree. Students are encouraged to take as many courses as possible that will fulfill requirements for both their associate and bachelor's degree programs.

When students are ready to transfer to our institution, they apply for admission. Transfer Mentor Program participants' application fees are waived, and their official transcripts are already on file and articulated. This enables the application, admission, and articulation process to move quickly. Program participants benefit from earlier advising and no transcript or application fees, in addition to attending events at Southeast Missouri State University for free.

Currently, approximately 250 students and five community colleges are participating in the Transfer Mentor Program. We plan to expand the program by inviting more institutions to participate. If the program

continues to thrive, additional mentors will be added to provide support to even more participants.

The Transfer Mentor Program is still in an early stage of development. Southeast Missouri State University is eager to collect data by which to assess program outcomes and to adjust as necessary to maximize the benefit for students. We are working to identify success indicators and collect related data. Among the research questions we plan to investigate are: How many credit hours are program participants transferring? How many semesters or years does it take them to graduate with a bachelor's degree? What is the average GPA of program participants before and after they transfer? How many program participants are completing their associate degrees prior to transferring?

Southeast Missouri State University recognizes that transferring from a two- to a four-year institution can be difficult. If obstacles can be minimized by providing advising earlier and offering concurrent enrollment opportunities to help students stay on track, then the transfer experience will be enhanced and students will be better equipped to maximize their associate degree programs. An essential feature of the Transfer Mentor Program is that it allows students to focus on being students. The partner institutions are working together to take care of everything else.

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Brooke Lockhart is the Assistant Director of Admissions at Southeast Missouri State University with the majority of her career working directly with transfer students. She has presented regionally and nationally on the importance of community college partnerships, articulation agreements, and the Transfer Mentor Program that was established at her institution. She also serves on the statewide Committee on Transfer & Articulation (COTA) for the Missouri Department of Higher Education. This committee encourages best practices among two-year and four-year institutions and provides recommendations to the state regarding transfer policies and procedures. Lockhart earned both her M.S. and B.S. at Southeast Missouri State University.

Credential Engine: Use Case Scenarios for Registrars

By Rodney Parks and Alexander Taylor

To increase the transparency and utility of higher education, registrars should support the adoption of a universal credential registry. By connecting information about credentials and their value, Credential Engine's registry creates an ever-expanding atlas of educational possibilities for students. Many registrars, however, have yet to recognize the institutional value of this resource.

In recent years, the number and types of credentials that learners can attain have increased rapidly. This growth has been enabled by disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence and asynchronous collaboration platforms. These technologies harness the power of the Internet to democratize access to learning pathways, but they also create uncertainty with regard to credential taxonomy, validity, and relevance. A Credential Engine report found that in the United States alone, education providers ranging from traditional colleges and universities to massive open online courses (MOOCs) and online boot camps offer approximately 300,000 unique credentials. While the proliferation of pathways offers enormous potential for learners of all types, innovations in the delivery of higher education are currently outpacing the development of essential credential frameworks.

While the number and variety of credentials have grown tremendously, so, too, has the number of learners. A large swath of the formerly "nontraditional" student population is entering or reentering the higher education ecosystem. Older learners are pursuing postsecondary education both to acquire skills relevant to the

information age and to improve their economic mobility. Reports indicate that learners ages 25 years and older now account for approximately 27 percent of the U.S. undergraduate population (Blumenstyk 2018). While these learners often have prior work or learning experiences that may qualify for college credit, many still encounter challenges when seeking to obtain that credit.

Some colleges and universities are adopting practices that inform the evaluation of credits from non-institutional sources. A notable example is the American Council of Education's (ACE's) work to standardize prior learning assessments, with specific attention given to knowledge and skills obtained through military service. Guided by ACE's recommendations, a number of institutions now have articulation agreements for the assignment of credit for learning in the military.

Other non-institutional learning pathways have inspired partnerships between postsecondary education providers and employers. In 2017, Northeastern University and IBM developed an agreement that grants individuals who earned specific IBM digital badges credit toward three master's-degree programs. Such solutions, initially conceived to accommodate non-traditional learners, are seeing widespread adoption as institutions aspire to better serve all learners.

In the future, these solutions will likely take the form of credential frameworks deployed in accordance with universal interoperability standards that facilitate the use and interpretation of credentials regardless of their issuer or owner. Credentials will no longer be issued on

paper; rather, they will be organized as HTML and accessible through JSON-LD and machine-readable code. In the borderless realm of the Internet, these digital credentials will populate comprehensive, interactive databases through which learners can search for and compare alternative learning pathways.

Future learners and education providers will participate in a transparent and empirical credentialing ecosystem. This ecosystem will promote accessibility (all credentials can be viewed unabridged by any party); equity (learners and providers share credentials on a level playing field); quality assurance (information is validated by a single trusted party or no party, as by a distributed ledger); and responsiveness (the credential ecosystem is representative of the market's changing needs and patterns).

To increase the transparency and utility of the credentialing marketplace, registrars should support and promote the adoption of the Credential Engine (CE) Registry. Institutions of all types should publish their existing credentials and learning outcomes, competencies, and related information in the registry. These en-

tries are complemented, when applicable, by transfer articulation agreements and school of record agreements. At most institutions, this information exists in isolation, limiting its utility and accessibility. Once uploaded to a common registry, it will become part of an ever-expanding atlas of educational possibilities.

With these data posted in CTDL format, students can view how credentials and credits connect to programs at other institutions, regardless of their source. The institutional transfer process is one immediate and foreseeable beneficiary of this system. Today, an estimated 38 percent of postsecondary students transfer to another institution within six years of the date of their first matriculation (Shapiro, *et al.* 2018). Scaled adoption of the CE Registry would provide transparency to what is currently an opaque, resource-intensive, and highly localized process. Articulation agreements could be built into the open repository, enabling users to see how their credentials would be articulated by various education providers. Institutions also could utilize this system to create advanced standing pathways and articulation agreements for recruitment.

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Transfer Course Equivalencies

This table contains previously evaluated courses from other institutions along with the corresponding Elon course equivalent. If the course you are interested in does not appear in the table, please submit a [request to transfer credit](#) form to ensure your eligibility. Please refer to the section "Work at Other Institutions" in the Academic Catalog for the rules governing transfer of credit. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

I want to search for course equivalencies by...

Institution
 Elon Course
 Elon Core Curriculum
 Badges
 Other Credit Types

(I know what Elon courses I need credit for)

Section

MTH ▼

Elon Courses

MTH*210 ▼

Transfer Course Equivalencies

This table contains previously evaluated courses from other institutions along with the corresponding Elon course equivalent. If the course you are interested in does not appear in the table, please submit a [request to transfer credit](#) form to ensure your eligibility. Please refer to the section "Work at Other Institutions" in the Academic Catalog for the rules governing transfer of credit. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).


I want to search for course equivalencies by...

Institution
 Elon Course
 Elon Core Curriculum
 Badges
 Other Credit Types

(I know where I will be transferring a badge from)

Entity

IBM ▼

Entity	Title	Elon Course	Elon Credit	Elon Title	Badge
IBM	Tech Data - Advanced Statistical Analysis Using IBM SPSS Stdistics (V25)	ISC*111	4	Data Science and Visualization	

Elon University has also already modified Colleague, our student information system, to accept assessment-based credit and badges found on the CE Registry. These alternative digital credentials, similar to our credit-based courses, would be posted to Elon's transfer articulation table. The goal of the new table design is to allow students, enrolled or prospective, to evaluate how all types of credentials will transfer, not just credit from other institutions. The articulation of non-academic credentials allows Elon to recognize knowledge learners have gleaned from a variety of sources and experiences. As a result, Elon will be able to collaborate with multiple industry and community partners that teach valuable skills that have yet to be articulated into the classroom.

Like any articulation table, Elon's allows students to search equivalencies by various criteria—*e.g.*, institution, Elon equivalency, or specific Elon Core Curriculum requirement (Expression, Civilization, Society, Science, etc.)

By fall 2019, Elon will add Badges and Other Credit Types to the articulation table, expanding the types of credit accepted. For example, for badges, Elon will display the entity awarding the badge (*e.g.*, IBM), the title of the badge, and the course equivalency. A future enhancement would be to hyperlink the badge to a badging source (if available).

While the CE Registry offers clear benefits for students, it also offers significant benefits for higher education professionals such as registrars and admissions

officers. Data from the registry may help institutions develop enrollment management strategies that promote regional economic development and institution-employer partnerships. Colleges and universities could view local/regional credentialing data and identify gaps between existing academic programs and the skills needed by employers. This in turn could lead to the creation of new academic programs and certificates that would align with the needs of our institutions' employer partners. Such initiatives will benefit institutions and employers as our students develop the competencies employers seek in recent graduates.

This system also improves the credential appraisal process that employers rely on in their searches for talented and work-ready graduates. Today, there is poor communication to employers about graduates' readiness for the workforce. The CE Registry would lend visibility to learning outcomes and signal to employers more precisely graduates' knowledge and skills when they have earned particular credentials. This post-traditional system empowers learners to curate and share their experiences, skills, interests, and learning goals rather than simply submit a standard application for employment.

The potential benefits of mining the registry for data seem robust, but only if institutions are willing to add all their credentials to the registry. As is true of most innovations, adoption rates have been slow. But unlike some forms of institutional change, the rewards of the registry could be tremendous. Institutions that join the registry have the potential to derive significant benefits.

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Data: The Key That Unlocks Student Success (Another Personal Perspective From Across the Pond)

By Philip Henry

A couple of years ago, I wrote a brief article for *C&U* that I hoped would provide a U.K. perspective on the enormous power and strategic value of the student-related data that university registrars have at their disposal. I listed what I considered some of the traditional prerequisites for being a successful registrar: governance, leadership, political acumen, and a forensic understanding of systems (and processes and the technologies that support them). I highlighted one critical requirement of a registrar: to be able to understand and use key data at both the operational and strategic levels. The Report of the AACRAO Professional Competencies and Proficiencies Working Group (2015) also identified the analysis and interpretation of data as one of the ‘core proficiencies’ of a registrar.

My aim then was to highlight the invaluable and, sadly, oft unsung contribution registrars can and do make to their institutions. Now, I want to encourage the effective use of data as a strategic tool to enhance student outcomes and support student well-being. In my experience, this is a so-called no brainer—and a win-win for every institution. To be clear, these are personal views developed over almost 40 years in higher education across a wide range of institutions in the United Kingdom and overseas. These views have been influenced greatly over the past 30 years through my engagement with national professional bodies in the United Kingdom, including the Association of Heads of University Administration and the Association of University Administrators. They were enriched further

through my collaboration and discourse with AACRAO, the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC), and other higher education organizations in North America.

My focus here is on optimizing outcomes such that students achieve their full potential during their higher education journeys. This means that no student drops out or fails unnecessarily where there was an existing intervention (academic, counseling, or other) that could have prevented it. Too often I’ve heard academic and professional staff alike say, “If only we’d known, we could have helped.” I believe that now we *are* able to know, and we *can* do something about it. First, I’d like to consider the key role that higher education plays in our world.

Higher Education’s Impact on Politics

Higher education is a vast, international endeavor with the potential to deliver life-changing opportunities to students. National governments around the world recognize higher education as a vital component in economic, social, cultural, and environmental success. Higher education also has the potential to influence electoral outcomes. The U.K. Liberal Democratic party’s u-turn on its promise to abolish university tuition fees virtually wiped out the party at the 2015 general election. Its decision instead to support the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government’s proposal to *triple* tuition

fees from £3,000 to £9,000 contributed significantly to the loss of 49 of its 57 seats at Westminster in that election. This political calamity included party leader Nick Clegg's own seat in a constituency that includes a large number of students. (He had been deputy prime minister in the coalition prior to the election.)

As I write this article, proposals for free college are central to the U.S. Democratic party's platform for candidates seeking the nomination for president. Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat running for president, has declared that she would make public colleges free and cancel student-loan debt for millions of borrowers. The plan, which would cost \$1.25 trillion over ten years, would cancel student-loan debt for 42 million Americans and make every public college free (The Chronicle of Higher Education 2019). Clearly, student debt is a political issue on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Benefits of Higher Education

Higher education is key to ensuring future global stability and peace—something the sector has recognized for a long time. In “Education for International Understanding and Its Contribution to Higher Education” (2011), a paper for the World Universities Forum, Colin Power, of the University of Queensland (Australia), highlighted the importance of higher education in areas such as international understanding, peace studies, conflict resolution, and sustainable development:

Throughout history, universities have operated as borderless communities of scholars committed to the pursuit and sharing of knowledge. Frequently, they have been at the vanguard of movements defending peace, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Today, they are the most internationalised of the public institutions operating in the global market (Power 2011).

More recently, in a speech at the University of Baltimore, former U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen defended the value of higher education as “a protection against the pressures of technological change and globalisation” (Harrison 2016).

Even with the ongoing political furore over increasing tuition fees and student debt, recent surveys in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States indicate that there is still significant public support for higher education. The survey “Americans' Views of

Higher Education as a Public and Private Good” indicates that 76 percent consider public investment in higher education to be “good” or “excellent” (Drezner, Pizmony-Levy and Pallas 2018).

In November 2018, Universities UK published a report by Britainthinks that showed that 78 percent of the public was positive or neutral about U.K. universities (48 percent positive and 31 percent neutral) while 9 percent expressed a negative view. While this is not an overwhelming endorsement, it demonstrates significant support for higher education in the United Kingdom at a time when public opinion is deeply divided over Brexit.

A nationwide survey conducted by Abacus and commissioned by Universities Canada assessed how Canadians feel about the role of universities today and in the future. A large majority (78%) expressed a positive overall feeling toward universities while only 3 percent expressed a negative view (Anderson 2017).

It seems that higher education is still considered a public good. That said, it is in direct competition for funding within overall education budgets—not to mention other sectors of the economy, including health and welfare, defense, transportation, infrastructure, etc. Nevertheless, higher education has been generally successful in maintaining its share of GDP spend over the past several years. Figure 1 (on page 57) shows how the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada have continued to invest significant proportions of their GDPs in higher education despite the increasing demands of other sectors of their respective economies.

“Paying the Piper”

This level of national investment in higher education comes at a cost: regulation, scrutiny, and accountability. The result has been further demand for evidence that the investment continues to make sense given all the other pressures on national budgets. This has increased the scale of national, regional, and local oversight. (Higher education is probably one of the most regulated sectors of the economy.) Indeed, higher education's stakeholder population has mushroomed, with each having its own particular area of focus and concept of value.

In addition, each has its own specific reporting requirements. Over time, areas of expertise have developed to ensure that stakeholders' needs are met. This has had a significant organizational impact, including

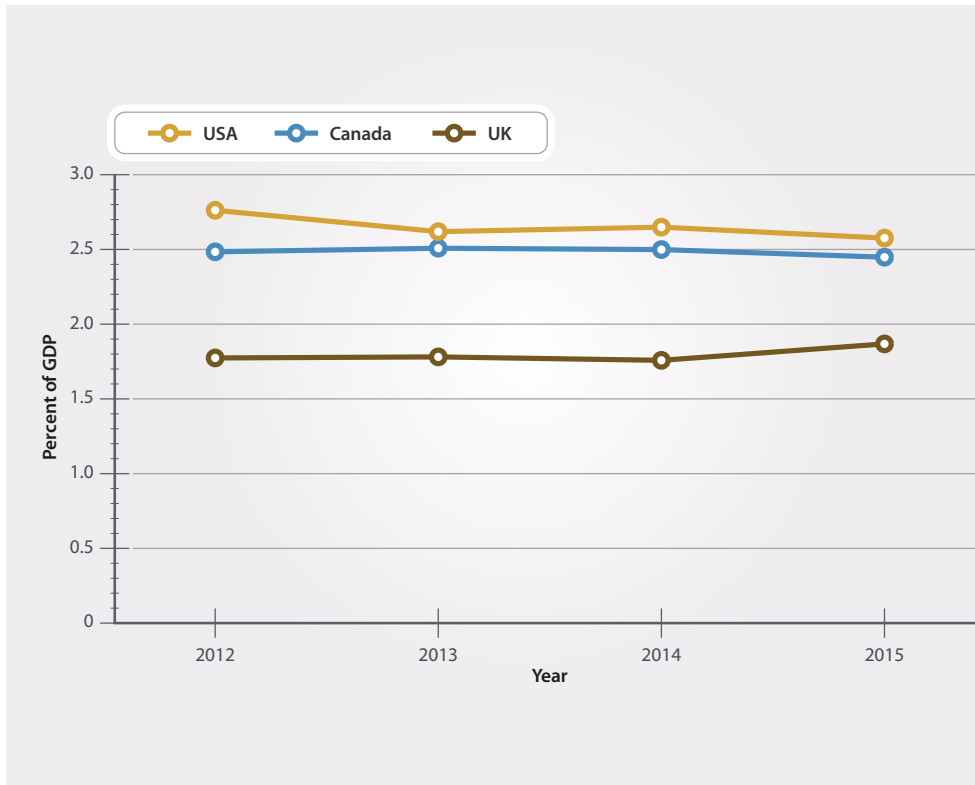


Figure 1.
Percent of GDP spend on tertiary education: United States (USA), Canada, and the United Kingdom (UK)

the creation of specialist units (national and regional/statewide) to manage the growing demand for data. In the United Kingdom, significant examples include the Higher Educational Statistics Agency, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the Office for Students, and U.K. Visas and Immigration.

Clearly, it makes sense for institutions to do this. However, a major drawback has been the inadvertent creation of organizational and data silos that can make the sharing and effective use of data extremely difficult. (I will return to this point later.)

One other significant element is the introduction of performance-based funding mechanisms. In general, these approaches are focused on institutions (rather than individual students) to assess various measures of their effectiveness, however those measures may be defined.

Students as Stakeholders

In recent years, students have become increasingly influential stakeholders in higher education—and rightly so. Arguably, because they are generating the debt, they should have a say in how their student experience is delivered. The U.K.’s Office for Students (OfS) was established as a key element of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. It has extensive (some

might say draconian) powers over higher education in England. The act provides for the OfS to provide advice to Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales with the appropriate consent of the relevant devolved authority (Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament, and National Assembly for Wales). The OfS states in its initial business plan for financial year 2018–19:

A fundamental component of our approach is the use of measurement, data, and evaluation to inform and improve the way we regulate. We track our performance and that of the sector using a set of key performance indicators and measures.¹

For years, students have been represented on key committees at departmental and institutional levels. This is an essential component of good governance: ensuring that key stakeholders—including students—have input into how their institutions are run. Section 1.4 of the United Kingdom’s Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance states:

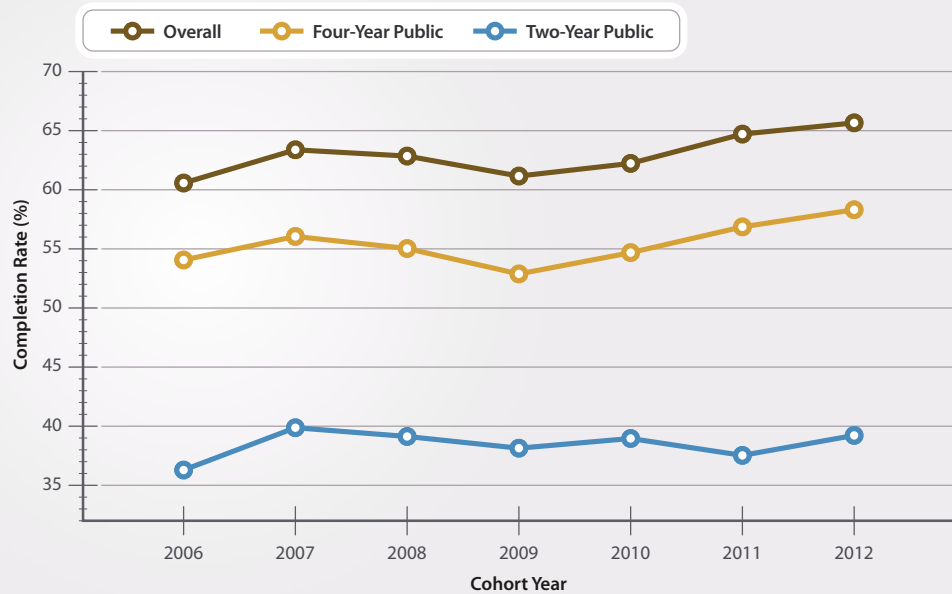
Student and staff members of the governing body share the same legal responsibilities and obligations as other members and must not be routinely excluded from discussions” (CUC 2014).

¹ See <officeforstudents.org.uk/about/our-business-plan/>.

Figure 2.

Cohort Completion Rates in the United States, 2006 Through 2012*

Note: In 2011, current dual-enrolled students (those enrolled in college courses during high school) were removed from the cohort of first-time students. This affected two-year more than four-year sectors.



The concept of the student as a stakeholder is well-established, especially with regard to representation. But has this led to better outcomes for students?

The Student Experience

Should we be concerned about the “student experience?” The obvious and correct answer is “Yes, of course,” though there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what constitutes the student experience. For the purposes of this article, I will consider two aspects of the student experience: student progression/graduation outcomes and student debt.

As a precursor to this, it is worth saying that I have never encountered a situation in which a student was deliberately disadvantaged in a way that might have contributed to a poor outcome. On the contrary, I have witnessed teaching and professional staff doing their utmost to help students—often without the students ever knowing. I would never have believed this when I was a student, and I am confident that many students today are equally unaware of this support.

That said, are things improving for today’s students, who are incurring record tuition debt on their higher education journeys? If we look at the output evidence from the United Kingdom and the United States, there

is some good news. The most recent U.K. student progression data show that full-time undergraduate student *non-progression* is holding at 7.5 percent (it had been increasing) (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2019).

In the United States, the National Student Clearinghouse Signature Report of December 2018 shows steady progress on cohort completion rates. Figure 2 shows the trend across seven entry cohorts.

In the United Kingdom and Canada, no comparable entry cohort analyses are available, so Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data have been used. (See Figure 3, on page 59.) It is important to emphasize that tertiary graduation rate is defined by the OECD as the *estimated* percentage of the population who will graduate over their lifetime, by gender. This means that it is *not* an entry cohort analysis but rather a national population statistic. Yet it, too, indicates no improvement.

Though not directly comparable, these graduation rates provide some evidence of a flat or gradually improving trajectory.

Now consider what is happening with regard to student debt. In the United States, the Institute for College Access and Success reported in September 2018 that 65 percent of students who graduated from pub-

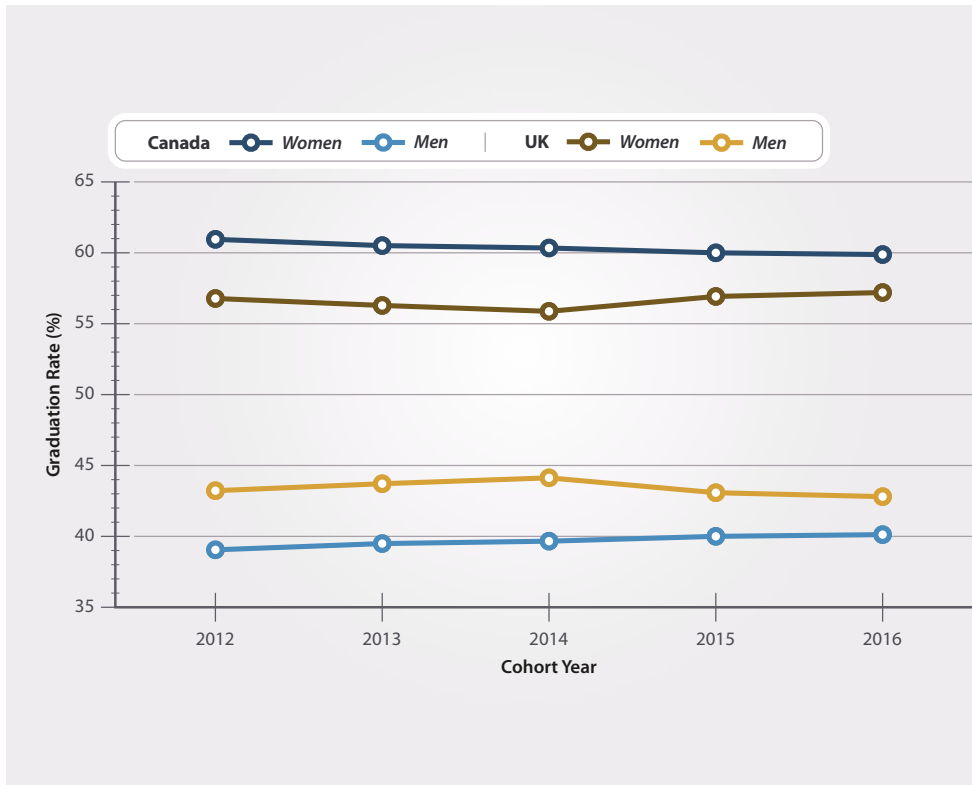


Figure 3.
OECD Tertiary
Graduation
Rates, 2012–2016

lic and private non-profit colleges in 2017 had student loan debt. They owed an average of \$28,650, 1 percent more than the 2016 average of \$28,350. The United Kingdom’s devolved governmental arrangements for student tuition fees make simple comparisons extremely problematic. Nevertheless, looking at the largest group of students in the United Kingdom (those in England), the Student Loans Company (SLC) reported in June 2018 that the average student loan debt was £34,800 (US \$44,890), a 7.3 percent increase over the previous year’s. The most recent data from Statistics Canada show that bachelor’s graduates had an average debt of Can\$26,300 (US \$19,480) (Ferguson and Wang 2014, 29).

In summary, the rate of increase in student debt—especially in the United Kingdom—far exceeds improvements in student outcomes measured by either progression (retention) or graduation. It is worth noting that tuition fees were first introduced in the United Kingdom just over 20 years ago, in September 1998, at which time they were just £1,000 (US \$1,290). The maximum fee has now increased to £9,250 (US \$11,930). This has prompted much debate about the efficacy of the present arrangements, especially given mushrooming student debt since 1998. So where does this leave us, and what more can be done to improve student outcomes?

The Use of Data to Improve Student Outcomes: The Way It Used to Be

For many years, and certainly since the introduction of tuition fees in the United Kingdom in 1998, I have maintained a personal focus on improving student outcomes. This was always the right and proper thing to do. As student debt in the United Kingdom skyrocketed, it seemed to me that institutions should—and must—do everything in their power to help students achieve their full potential. More than fifteen years ago, one of the only means at my disposal by which to effect any improvement in outcomes was to focus on curriculum development and admissions policy options. This was code for “if we recruit students, let’s make sure our programs are designed in such a way that those students get the best possible results from their experience with us.”

The challenge then was accessing, processing, and reporting on relevant data. All of this I could do, but it took a long time. As an academic registrar (roughly equivalent to a U.S. registrar), I had access to all of the data on student intakes as well as results from the student information system (SIS). I networked with colleagues in other academic and support departments to access other key data that they held. At the end of each

academic year, I extracted data for all of the students at the institution. I analyzed institutional student outcomes (progression and graduation) based on a wide range of criteria, including qualifications on entry, ethnicity, disability, gender, etc. I used institutional data to make internal comparisons and national data to determine how the institution was performing in comparison to its peer group.

The timeline is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Timeline

Period	Activity
September to October	Gather, check, and validate data from the SIS and other sources.
October to November	Analyze the data and draft a report.
December	Present the report to the University Senate.
January to February	Revise the report in response to Senate comments.
February	Present the revised report to the university governing body.

Tables 2–4 (on pages 61–62) illustrate anonymized samples of the types of analyses that were completed. (These are only three of some 20 tables included in the report. Because the U.K. honors degree is three years in duration, progression is only relevant for Year 1 to Year 2 and from Year 2 to Year 3.)

This was—and is—extremely powerful information. I could see at a glance which groups of students were most likely to succeed and, conversely, which were more likely to drop out or fail to progress or graduate. My report included general and program-specific recruitment policy recommendations as well as recommendations for the development of specific interventions to help identified groups of students achieve better outcomes. This was the predictive analysis of its day and very valuable for influencing the ways in which future cohorts of students would be supported through their studies. I knew the value of the data I was able to access, analyze, and report on and their strategic value to the institution.

Yet there was a downside that was a real source of personal concern. Although there was vital information that could and would be used to help future students, my report did absolutely nothing for those students

who had been in difficulty and who had dropped out or failed during the academic year I was reviewing. The timeline for capturing and analyzing the data and producing the relevant reports meant that the most senior institutional committee, the Board of Governors, was reviewing the report a full five or six months *after* students had failed and/or dropped out. It was simply too late to facilitate any intervention to enable students to recover from the situations in which they found themselves. This was irrespective of the particular circumstances that obtained; the students were already gone.

The Dynamics and Challenges of Student-Related Data

Student-related data are dynamic by nature, so effective oversight is fraught. Things can—and do—change, even on a daily basis. All academic departments and almost every administrative office at every institution trap student-related data and process them. These dynamics were a major factor that contributed to delays in being able to access accurate data, especially outside the SIS. Recall my earlier observation about organizational and data silos related to key stakeholders. As these organizational units grow and develop, their focus on their particular areas of specialty blinds them to wider institutional requirements for accessing and processing student-related data. I should make it clear that access to relevant student-related data in these units was never withheld. Rather, there was a time-consuming process for justifying access to the data (this got quicker over the years), and then even more time was required to locate, access, and validate specific data sets. (One reason for the latter delay was that many of the units used their own databases, and these weren't always consistent with the SIS.)

Despite the fact that almost all of the data that were needed to make a real difference to students were there, accessing them was too burdensome and time consuming to facilitate the interventions that are so critical to successful outcomes.

Data as the Key to Improving Student Outcomes

Much has changed in higher education during the fifteen years since I produced these reports, but my focus is still on data and how they can be used to support stu-

Table 2. Students in Full-Time Honors Degree Programs Progressing From Year 1 to Year 2 and From Year 2 to Year 3, by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Academic Year 200W-X				Academic Year 200X-Y				Academic Year 200Y-Z			
	Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3		Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3		Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
A	79	68	71	86	68	75	78	100	81	88	83	42
B	76	82	78	92	67	72	73	81	78	110	82	87
C	71	117	63	93	60	119	64	122	73	131	72	101
D	64	11	86	14	87	15	83	12	83	12	69	13
E	78	103	67	82	70	66	79	53	75	68	79	52
F	81	902	84	1,004	81	804	80	889	80	892	85	747
G	78	88	79	112	72	93	85	97	86	71	82	88
H	62	13	75	12	56	18	33	6	88	16	89	9
Total	79	1,384	80	1,495	76	1,262	78	1,360	80	1,388	83	1,139

Table 3. Students in Full-Time Honors Degree Programs Progressing From Year 1 to Year 2 and From Year 2 to Year 3, by Disability

Disability	Academic Year 200W-X				Academic Year 200X-Y				Academic Year 200Y-Z			
	Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3		Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3		Year 1 to Year 2		Year 2 to Year 3	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
A	71	41	77	56	69	29	78	49	80	30	88	25
B	100	2	100	4	67	3	100	3	67	3	100	2
C	80	5	80	10	0	2	80	5	100	5	100	1
D	88	8	86	14	87	15	80	10	57	14	94	17
E	87	84	81	119	79	81	77	111	85	91	84	102
F	80	5	80	5	43	7	50	6	100	8	83	6
G	60	5	43	7	33	3	40	5	0	3	33	3
H	100	1	100	4	100	1	100	1	-	-	100	1
I	75	4	100	2	50	2	80	5	50	4	50	4
J	79	1,229	80	1,274	76	1,119	79	1,165	80	1,230	83	978
Total	79	1,384	80	1,495	76	1,262	78	1,360	80	1,388	83	1,139

dent success. There is a clear trend in this direction, too. The Chronicle of Higher Education’s (2019) report “The Truth About Student Success” states, “Developing the capacity to collect, analyze, and apply student data is fundamental to student success” (11). The same report identifies “administrative silos, which prevent fruitful coordination and collaboration across institutional departments” as one of the top three obstacles to

student success. The Institute for College Access and Success (2019) declared, “Schools must dedicate funding to turning data insights into action in order to most effectively help more students succeed” (7).

It is now much easier and quicker to access, process, and report on key student-related data. These data can be used to identify not only potential populations of students who may be in need of support (the domain

Table 4. Honors Degree Classification, by Gender

Gender	Academic Year 200W-X					n	Academic Year 200X-Y					n
	%						%					
	1ST	2.1	2.2	3RD	ORD		1ST	2.1	2.2	3RD	ORD	
A	8	44	38	6	4	660	11	40	36	8	6	708
B	6	39	41	7	6	580	8	36	42	9	6	616
Total	7	42	40	7	5	1,240	9	38	38	8	6	1,324

of traditional predictive analytics), but also—and more important, in my view—individual students who may be at risk, however risk is defined. Crucially, the speed at which these data can be processed means that it is now possible to effect appropriate and timely support that makes it much more likely that an at-risk situation can be recovered and contribute to a successful outcome for the student. The lesson is straightforward: If we *can* do it, we *must* do it.

Drivers for Change

Several key developments will result in institutions making more effective use of student-related data to deliver real benefits to their students. Let me repeat: This is the right and proper thing to do. The sort of historic justifications for not doing so—primarily related to cost (*e.g.*, time, effort, and systems functionality)—have been eclipsed dramatically by the ‘cost’ of *not* doing so.

Drivers include:

- ◆ the political imperative: the growing debate over student debt and perceptions of value for money;
- ◆ the financial imperative: student retention; and
- ◆ the technological imperative: the growth of 21st-century software that can access even remote data sources and process and report on them in almost real time.

The political imperative has been referred to already: There is increasing pressure on higher education to deliver value for money. Political parties ignore to their peril the growth in student debt and pressure to address this problem—including all the challenges that doing so will bring. Increased scrutiny will help institutions overcome internal issues such as “trapped” data and accessing them promptly.

Pressure on national spending will intensify the scrutiny of institutions to ensure that money spent on higher education continues to be justified. (We will still have to “pay the piper.”) Retaining and supporting students is a financial imperative at a time when there are serious uncertainties about student demand. In an article in *The Washington Post*, Jeff Selingo (2018) argues that U.S. higher education is headed for a supply and demand crisis and questions whether “the next generation of college students will make the same choices as their predecessors and travel far distances to attend college.” In the article, he refers to Grawe’s (2018) prediction that “...unless something unexpected intervenes, the confluence of current demographic changes foretells an unprecedented reduction in postsecondary demand about a decade ahead” (45).

In the United Kingdom, the University and Colleges Admissions Service (2019) reports that the number of domiciled applicants has decreased by 0.7 percent whereas the numbers of EU and non-EU applicants have both increased by 0.9 percent. Brexit could have a significant detrimental effect on both EU and non-EU applications. In “Demand for Higher Education to 2030,” Bekhradnia and Beech (2018) predict that the demand for higher education in England alone will increase by 50,000. They postulate that Brexit could result in a decrease in demand by 56,000 and speculate that if participation rates increase at the same rate as they have over the past fifteen years, there could be a net increase in demand of 300,000. (I am skeptical that this level of demand will be realized, not least because of the cost to U.K. taxpayers.) One of the main findings of the Office for National Statistics’ (2019) report “Overeducation and Hourly Wages in the UK Labour Market; 2006 to 2017” creates even more ambiguity: “In 2017, 21.7 percent of those who graduated before 1992 were overeducated whereas the corresponding figure for those who graduated in 2007 or later was 34.2 percent” (2).

As Sally Weale, education correspondent for the U.K.'s *Guardian* newspaper states, "Almost a third of U.K. graduates overqualified for their job" (*The Guardian* 2019). In its white paper "Enhancing Student Success in Higher Education," the Higher Education Academy (2016) highlights interesting statistics from the Guardian Higher Education Network (2015): "More than 8 percent of students drop out in their first year...it costs the university around £33,000" (US \$42,470) (3).

Although these levels of uncertainty do not affect every institution to the same degree, they are compelling and suggest that circumstances may force institutions to focus much more on the need not only to recruit students but also to ensure that they are retained and succeed to the best of their ability. This is likely especially given increasing numbers of students from traditionally underrepresented and minority populations in the United Kingdom and the United States as well as the significant increase in the number of international students in Canada.

The technological imperative is relatively simple to understand: We can undertake analyses and process-

ing more easily and more quickly than ever before. The availability of cutting-edge 21st-century software means that the historic obstacles of data access and processing time are things of the past.

The types of predictive analyses I was doing all those years ago is still extremely valuable; in terms of its power to enable us to help students, it becomes priceless when combined with a range of other real-time data. Critical conversations and interactions with students can occur within a timeframe that ensures that students receive the help they need when they need it most: *i.e.*, now! Additional data feeds can include proxies for student engagement such as attendance at lectures/tutorials/laboratory classes, access to and use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), etc. When these are combined with artificial intelligence, there is amazing potential for the powerful win-win of student success.

Artificial intelligence adds a further step-change in the use of analytics. It is particularly adept at discerning patterns and correlations in data that would remain hidden with normal analyses. Using historic student outcomes and achievements as well as current

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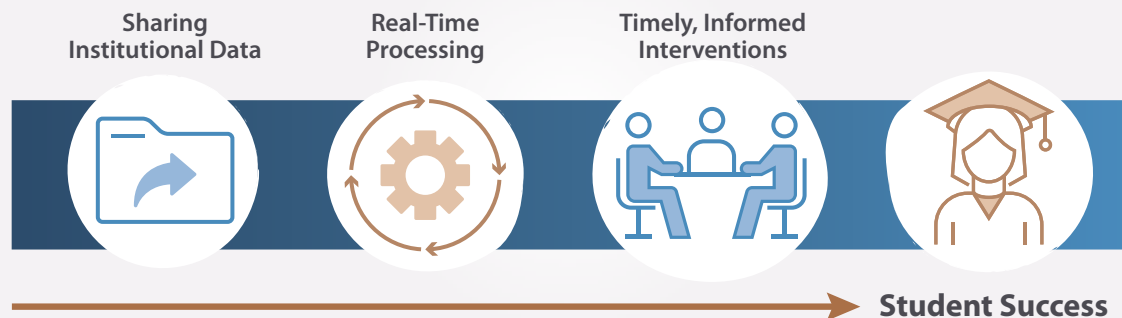
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achievement outcomes and statistical data on real-time engagement, artificial intelligence can reveal patterns of activity that contribute to success and, conversely, to failure or withdrawal. Machine lessons learned can then be applied to deliver routine analytics on individual students based on their record and activity profiles. This, in turn, facilitates the crucial early interventions to ensure that help, advice, and guidance can be provided when they are needed.

As Figure 4 illustrates, it’s really a very straightforward process.

Conclusion

So, is there a real issue that needs addressing? I believe the answer is “absolutely!” Knowing what we do about our student populations and the challenges and struggles they will face on their journeys through higher education (about which *we* know so much), we owe it to them to help them reach their full potential.

Are there solutions to help with this? The simple answer is “yes.” If your institution has the software development expertise to handle new technologies, then you can begin the journey to make a real difference to your students now. Unfortunately, as good as our internal institutional software development capacity is, there may be real limits to our ability to retain and nurture such a cutting-edge resource for as long as would be necessary to maximize the technologies involved. In other words, institutions may be unable to afford the software development costs associated with cutting-edge technologies.

The good news is that affordable solutions *do* exist, especially when weighed against the enormous benefits of student success. And unlike the heavy annual overheads of traditional information systems, these solutions are often “pay as you go.” Typically, this means using a software as a service (SaaS). The real beauty of such solutions is that unlike the traditional ongoing and costly arrangements of the past, SaaS arrangements can be adjusted as technology develops.

The best of these 21st-century systems can demonstrate their real added value through cloud-based solutions that minimize their impact on existing IT infrastructures. They access multiple data sources seamlessly, overcoming organizational and data silo problems, and deliver early alerts customized to meet specific risks. Because they will be handling your data, they must meet the most stringent data security requirements, especially in regard to sensitive data. They apply artificial intelligence in order to provide the most comprehensive insight, and together with a fully integrated communications system, they facilitate routine interactions—including emails and full case management functionality—among students and academic and professional staff. Exemplars of where this is being used successfully in the U.K. include, the University of Hull, University College London, and Southampton Solent University.

This takes me back to comments in my previous article: No other individual in the university enjoys the registrar’s unique position as an essential conduit between students and virtually every aspect of their inter-



Managing Academic Space: A Guide for Higher Education Institutions

by Amanda Vásquez and Craig Westman

how to effectively manage space can result in increased productivity, cost savings, and overall efficiency. Part case study and part how-to guide, *Managing Academic Space* uses the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) as a case study of how to significantly increase efficiency of space use.

Space use and management is an integral part of operating a college or university. From scheduling classes to events, understanding

"For those integrally involved in managing space as well as those new to the increasingly important issue of utilization and scheduling, studying this Guide is time well-spent. Exploring the eight chapters and related information will provide leaders with insights on issues of space management currently utilized at their institution and their impact on students, faculty, and the community, as well as a wealth of new considerations — woven together in a publication that you will want to read, share with others, and implement."

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actions with their institutions. This key role transcends the operational (*e.g.*, the gathering, assuring, and processing of data) and stretches well into the strategic realms of institutional endeavor by, for example, enabling a holistic, corporate perspective on the student/institutional interaction. The transformational impact of using student-related data to inform timely and specific interventions is truly awesome. The successful implementation of these technologies enables institu-

tions to acquire wisdom and genuine insight into the relationships between them and their students. This, surely, is crucial to creating a framework for long-term institutional sustainability in a volatile higher education environment focused increasingly on the needs and aspirations of students.

This is a true student success win-win opportunity—for everyone.

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Philip Henry is a semi-retired former U.K. Registrar and Secretary with almost 40 years' experience in higher education. He has been active in staff development in the United Kingdom (Association of University Administrators, Academic Registrars Council, and Association of Heads of University Administration), in the United States (AACRAO and a number of state and regional associations including Ohio ACRAO and SACRAO), and in Canada in the Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges in Canada (ARUCC). He is passionate about student success and ensuring that students get the very best experience possible at their institutions. He advises universities on student success and support, institutional governance and compliance, and transnational education. He provides advice to software companies on how best to develop their products to best meet the requirements of institutions, staff, and students.

Servant Leadership, the College Bubble, and Saving Higher Education

By James Wicks

It is not hyperbole to say that the quality of administrative leadership on today's college campuses affects *everything*. On the negative end of that spectrum, problems are myriad, but few issues threaten the enterprise of U.S. higher education like student unpreparedness for life after college. According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2018), organizational leaders are notably dissatisfied with their new college-educated employees. Whereas new college graduates gave themselves high proficiency ratings in areas like leadership, oral and written communications, professionalism and work ethic, and critical thinking and problem solving, nearly half as many employers agreed with those ratings. In the starkest case, 89 percent of college graduates rated themselves highly proficient in professionalism and work ethic whereas only 43 percent of employers agreed with those ratings.

This is disappointing news for those who believe that the purpose of a college education is more than just the creation of better job opportunities. While degree attainment does benefit one's financial prospects, it no longer necessarily means making meaningful contributions to one's place of work, much less to society. It is a harsh new reality along a continuum that once saw U.S. colleges and universities as stewards of the whole student, emphasizing reflective citizenship, character, discipline, self-actualization, critical and skeptical inquiry (Bastedo, Altbach and Gumport 2016; Cohen and Kisker 2010; Delbanco 2012), and, more broadly, the goals of "better communities and a better society" (Sutton 2016, 4).

Higher education professionals should feel compelled to ask, "What happened?" What have institutional leaders done to spawn a generation of reportedly disappointing contributors to society? Under the guise of employment readiness, they have prioritized the success of "the institution" over the success of individuals and have made higher commitments to their institutions' survival and immediate reputation than to the holistic development of their students and personnel.

Since 2012, campus executives increasingly have reported concerns about maintaining student enrollment (*The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2014), focusing on students' lack of funding for tuition as well as increasing competition from other institutions. Likewise, leaders increasingly pledge more resources to student recruitment instead of high-quality education to attract students (Carlson 2013). These priorities are further evidenced by a decrease in full-time faculty appointments in contrast to an increase in more affordable part-time, non-tenure-track faculty appointments (Kezar, Lester, Carducci, Gallant and McGavin 2007), which frees up funds to combat decreasing enrollment. Many executives have admitted that they have relied on strategies of improving their campuses' market appeal and competitiveness by raising student tuition rather than cutting operational costs (*The Chronicle of Higher Education* 2014).

Leaders who prioritize the development of their institutions over that of their students and personnel contribute to what Lawler (2016) describes as the "college

bubble,” wherein college costs incurred by students expand inversely with the quality of education, and students are progressively insulated from the “tough imperatives of the marketplace” (108). Lawler (2016) argues that these environments promote the privileges of campus life “without the corresponding responsibilities” (108) and that, ultimately, students leave college barely prepared to pay their debts, much less contribute to society.

In this scenario, students are not viewed by executive administrators as ends in themselves; rather, they are viewed as parts fitting into a larger schema of institutional success; they are “cogs in the machine.” Indeed, over the last several decades, campus leaders have been selected precisely for their ability to view students and personnel in this way and to use their skills to diagnose institutional issues, prescribe a remedy for those issues, and successfully convince followers to apply the remedy.

While it is true that leaders can accomplish organizational goals using a skills-based approach (Northouse 2019), their long-term success and perhaps their entire legacy rests on their ability to develop students and

personnel as a significant force for positive local and sometimes national and even global change. To address the problem of student unpreparedness, today’s leaders in higher education should adopt a more holistic approach to individuals’ development: They must become servant leaders.

The executive who practices servant leadership leads by example in terms of moral and ethical conduct and exhorts the development of others as *the* fundamental principle of organizational success. The servant leader is aware of and empathetic to individual students’ as well as faculty and staff members’ needs and practices stewardship by taking responsibility for others’ holistic development. This is achieved, according to van Dierendonck (2011), by choosing service over “control and self-interest” (1234). In other words, servant leaders do not solve organizational issues by identifying and diagnosing broken “cogs” with their own authority or expertise. Instead, they facilitate problem solving by helping others confront their personal values in turbulent times.

Unlike the skills approach, servant leadership is behavioral, meaning it emphasizes what a leader *does*

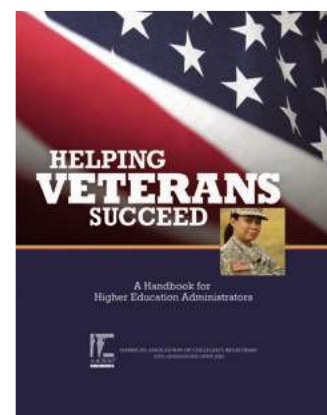
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rather than what a leader *knows*. It also emphasizes leading by example and setting standards of excellence through action rather than commands. In practice, this means showing respect for faculty expertise, reaching out to a variety of faculty rather than just those who seem like-minded, and attending departmental events to demonstrate support (Perlmutter 2015). It also means telling the truth (Jenkins 2017), even if the truth is not knowing the whole truth (an idea that runs counter to leadership styles that prioritize skill and competence above all else).

Essentially, servant leaders value people on campus more than the campus itself and work to bring out the best in *everyone*. And because they lead by example, servant leaders are likely to demonstrate early on that students and campus personnel are ends in themselves. In such an environment, faculty are not encumbered by self-censorship for fear of losing their jobs. Instead, they trust the administration to honor their interests and to value their academic integrity, especially when it

is threatened. Faculty are encouraged to pursue controversy in the classroom, compelling students to grapple with issues in ways that challenge their values. Such is the best way to serve and prepare students for life in a diverse society where they will inevitably be challenged—and which, frankly, is not inclined to defer to their sensitivities. By doing this, faculty themselves become servant leaders, helping students learn not only *what* to think but *how* to think.

Such an environment is not possible where executive administrators choose control over service and rely strictly on competencies, skills, and institutional authority as the source of their leadership. If campus leaders really want to prepare students to succeed after college (which means not only getting a job but also keeping it through exceptional performance and contributions), they will treat them as ends in themselves, properly serve them, and put an end to the “bubble” that is threatening higher education as we (used to) know it.

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Advancing Global Higher Education

Enrollment through International Online Programs in Which the Language of Instruction Is Other than English

By Nailya O. DeLellis and Anthony J. DeLellis

In their goal to reverse decreases in student enrollment, many U.S. higher education institutions lower, subsidize, or discount tuition. Some invest vast amounts of talent and money in revamping their branding and marketing or building new student centers, recreational facilities, and more. They compete with one another by employing increased numbers of student recruiters and by spending student fees, donor contributions, and sometimes even general funds in their quest for more successful intercollegiate athletic teams. Some incur substantial debt in order to build student amenities with the hope that such efforts will ultimately result in increased enrollment.

There is another strategy that has not been attempted and that may warrant consideration. An untapped pool of millions of non-English-speaking prospective students is living abroad. Through expanded international online education, U.S. colleges and universities could serve a population of well-qualified international students who do not speak English, who do not need to travel to the United States, and whose recruitment and enrollment would not require institutional expenditures for new student amenities or higher profile athletic teams.

What is suggested is not online language instruction but rather teaching subjects online—*e.g.*, biology, management, statistics, and others—in languages other than English. For example, a U.S. college or university

might offer an online doctoral program in public administration in Portuguese; a master's degree in managerial epidemiology in Mandarin; or a certificate in agricultural pesticide safety in Russian.

Eliminating Barriers

Academically qualified students abroad who want to receive higher education from U.S. institutions encounter four major barriers: (1) English language proficiency; (2) a visa for study in the United States; (3) funding to travel to and to pay for living expenses in the United States while studying; and (4) funding to pay tuition and fees. Offering programs online in which the language of instruction is other than English would eliminate three of the four barriers: the need to learn English, the need to obtain a visa, and the need to fund travel to and living expenses in the United States. The remaining barrier would be funding for tuition and fees.

Pool of Non-English-Speaking Potential Students

The population of non-English-speaking potential students is huge (*see* Table 1, on page 72).

Among the nine languages with the most first-language speakers (*see* Table 1), only 379 million are first-

Table 1. Numbers of First-Language Speakers of the World's Most Widely Spoken Languages

Language	First-Language Speakers (n)
Chinese (all dialects)	1,311,000,000
Spanish	460,000,000
Arabic (all dialects)	391,000,000
English	379,000,000
Hindi	341,000,000
Bengali	228,000,000
Portuguese	221,000,000
Russian	154,000,000
Japanese	128,000,000

¹ SOURCE: Eberhard, Simmons, and Fennig 2019

language speakers of English; 3.234 billion are not. Only a fraction of the latter could be expected to meet the English-language requirements for study in the United States. Of the remaining perhaps more than 2 billion people, a large number may be interested in pursuing online education offered by U.S. colleges and universities and have the means to pay for it. Even if that number were only one in a thousand, the pool would number at least 2 million potential students in any given year.

Structures, Policies, and Curriculum Already in Place

Many U.S. higher education institutions are already poised to offer entire degree or certificate programs online in languages other than English. For example, an institution that has existing online certificate or degree programs already has the structure, delivery system, curriculum, and student policies in place. Often, these were developed over decades and at great financial cost. In comparison, translating and delivering online programs in another language would require only a relatively small additional investment.

Pool of Teaching Faculty

Residing in the United States and elsewhere are Western-educated, well-qualified, bilingual individuals who have the capacity to teach online in their disciplines and

to do so in languages other than English. Such individuals can be recruited to teach full time or part time while residing on campus, at a distance, or even internationally.

There may be risk in building a program with faculty who must have ternary competence: subject matter content, online teaching ability, and bilingual fluency. On the other hand, the relative rareness of such individuals may render a program, once established, resistant to competition. Further, the rareness of such programs, once established, may attract qualified faculty in the same or other disciplines and thereby facilitate future expansion.

Costs

It may be necessary to engage the services of translators, interpreters, and agencies to review and vet the credentials of prospective students. It will be necessary to construct and maintain new websites and to translate application materials, syllabi, and institutional policies. Further, it may be necessary from time to time to staff a course with an English-only faculty member. In such cases, the services of an interpreter would be necessary. Finally, some programs—notably those that are hybrid rather than wholly online—will require face-to-face meetings with students at certain points in the program. Depending on the nature and location of the student cohort, it may be possible for faculty to travel to meet with them in their home countries, adding travel costs. This cost may be reduced if part-time online faculty reside in the countries where the majority of the students reside. All of these expenses would add costs to the program. Some of the costs are start-up only while others are recurring and could be charged as additional program fees.

Call for Exploration

Offering U.S. academic programs in languages other than English is an idea that warrants exploration. One way to approach this would be for colleges and universities to focus their market research on one program and one language at a time. Thus, institutions could consider their respective strengths, capacities, and international relationships and then determine the extent of demand for their proposed online offerings. For example:

- ◆ Institution A might explore demand for a doctoral program in health services research to be taught online in Russian.



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- ◆ Institution B might explore the demand for a master's program in statistics to be taught online in Arabic.
- ◆ Institution C might explore the demand for a certificate program in international financial management to be taught online in Spanish.

This is not to suggest that an entire school should offer instruction in another language but rather that selected new programs should augment existing traditional programs.

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Conclusion

Higher education leaders have tried many approaches to addressing the enrollment issues that threaten some institutions. Despite notable successes, a national challenge continues to exist. This proposal for offering online programs to non-English-speaking students in their own languages is not a singular solution to the problem of declining student enrollment. Yet it may constitute a partial solution with potential for growth beyond initial offerings.

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What's Next for Student Veterans? Moving from Transition to Academic Success

DIRAMIO, D. 2018. COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA: STYLUS PUBLISHING.

By Tara Hornor

What's Next for Student Veterans: Moving from Transition to Academic Success provides a thoughtful discussion of the importance of institutional investments in student success and focuses on far-reaching practical applications. The book comprises eleven comprehensive chapters ranging from a focus on veteran experiences and perspectives to programs and academic outcomes. In addition to examining implications and recommendations, the authors provide a rich discussion of the importance of considering the next evolution of student support services for veterans in transition. DiRamio (2018) hopes this discussion will prompt action on college campuses and challenges each reader to “ask yourself how you can provide leadership at your school in order to serve those who have served” (xv). The authors also provide a helpful conversation about historical enrollment patterns of student veterans, underutilization of veterans’ education benefits, and perspectives during the college choice process that suggests there is significant work ahead in enhancing veteran academic outcomes and experiences at higher education institutions.

DiRamio states that the purpose of the book is to “present findings from a second wave of research about student veterans, with a focus on data-driven evidence of academic success factors, including persistence, retention, degree completion, and employment after college.” An associate professor of higher education ad-

ministration at Auburn University, DiRamio has published extensively on veterans in higher education and is a Navy veteran himself.

A major strength of the text is its utilization of practical examples and its focus on implications for policy and practice. The text provides practical advice and detailed discussions regarding initiatives to improve the transition and educational outcomes of veterans. For example, some chapters are dedicated to social support services and disabled veteran services. The chapter on peer support is particularly helpful for academic and student affairs professionals seeking to make evidenced-based continuous improvements in programming for student veterans. The text provides a compelling case that peer advising programs can help student veterans overcome both their reluctance to access support services and their apprehension about being stigmatized. “Peer programs capitalize on the central tenet of *nemo resideo* (“leave no one behind”) and the importance of the buddy system, which are woven throughout the military ethos, beginning in the early days of basic training and carrying through battle” (Diramio 2018, 95).

The text provides insightful discussion of studies such as the 2010 National Survey of Veterans and Operation College Promise that have yielded valuable data on student veteran progress toward degree attainment. The 2010 National Survey of Veterans was adminis-

tered to assist the Department of Veteran Affairs in its strategic planning efforts to enhance veteran services. The survey provided a mechanism to monitor trends and compare the characteristics of a cohort of veterans who utilized benefits. To provide a more holistic view of student veteran enrollment and academic outcomes, the discussion includes insights from the Million Records Project, a collaborative research study utilizing databases from the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Education. The Million Records Project included a sample of more than one million student veterans who used benefits between 2002 and 2010. Utilizing data from the National Student Clearinghouse, the project provided more accurate depictions of student veterans' time to degree and enrollment patterns in various higher education sectors.

The authors' focus on the benefit of evolving research and institutional practices is refreshing and makes the

text more of a practitioner's handbook. Of particular note is the authors' dedication of an entire chapter to important areas of concern that have been identified in the research literature as important focuses for the future, including enhancing staffing and collaboration, improving faculty and staff training, adopting flexible transfer credit policies for military schooling, strengthening workforce preparedness, improving mental health and substance abuse services, and fostering educational equity. The text also includes several helpful case studies from institutions already tackling this important work—among them the California Community College System and Thomas Edison State University. The thought-provoking chapters provide a valuable resource for facilitating important discussions about enhancing veteran support services.

Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women

JOHNSON, W. B. , AND D. SMITH. 2016. BROOKLINE, MA: BIBLIOMOTION. 212 PP.

Reviewed by Adrienne Bricker

Athena Rising: How and Why Men Should Mentor Women is written for men, by men, as a guide to mentoring women. It provides background on and practical advice relating to the challenges of mentoring women while also making it clear that elevating women in the workplace is critical for the organizations in which we work. The authors, Johnson and Smith, describe it as a call for men to “lean in to the task of mentoring women,” echoing Sandberg’s (2013) call for women to lean in to their careers. The two men who wrote *Athena Rising* grounded it in the mentoring literature and interviews with 20 senior women in higher education, the military, and the corporate sector.

The book is in two parts: The first half provides background on women in the workplace, mentoring in general, and the challenges of male-female relationships; the second half translates this information into 46 practical tips and insights for men to consider as they mentor women in their organizations. The first chapter opens with a biographical sketch of Katie Higgins, a Navy captain and the first woman selected as a pilot for the Blue Angels, the renowned Navy flight

demonstration squadron. The authors dub Higgins an “everyday Athena,” a nod to the Greek goddess of arts, reason, wisdom, and war. They use the term throughout the book, encouraging men to search their organizations for “everyday Athenas” to mentor—women who approach their work lives with courage, wisdom, character, and promise.

Part I: Background Intel

Women are less likely to speak about and take credit for their accomplishments. A woman's attractiveness can undermine the perception that she is competent. Assertive and even aggressive men are rewarded at work while women must carefully decide each day where the line is between being assertive and abrasive. The early chapters of *Athena Rising* spell out facts like these that are quite obvious to those who identify as women. The authors present the information in a way that is accessible to men and others who are aware that these issues exist in the workplace but are not sure why or what they are supposed to do about them. The authors do

not shame readers for being unaware that socialized expectations of women differ from those of men. Neither do they hesitate to call upon men to set aside assumptions that they actually understand the experiences of women or are powerless to do anything to change the situations of individuals within their organizations.

Chapter 2 explains in understandable terms how men and women are socialized to behave differently in both one-on-one and group settings. The authors acknowledge that the ideas presented are stereotypes, but they are rooted in social science research. For example, men are socialized to seek competition whereas women are socialized to avoid it, especially in settings where men are present. Avoiding competition has implications in the workplace. Women more often prioritize cooperation, learning in groups, and sharing at work. These are strengths in nearly every field, but if bias toward cooperation drives women away from competitive fields and causes them to achieve fewer promotions and pay raises, then inequity will persist.

The authors suggest that when men network and mentor, they engage in homosocial behavior—that is, they tend to offer preference to their own gender. Most mentees of men are men and thereby prevent women from gaining access to valuable knowledge and connections possessed by influential men in their organizations. The exclusion of women from networking activities may be deliberate, but the authors suggest that it can also be unintentional. Often, such activities happen outside of work hours—perhaps on the golf course or at a bar. Women might opt out of such activities because of family and personal priorities; worse, men may not invite women because they assume this. Further, women may decline invitations to bars or parties because they are sensitive to the optics and potential misperception of a developing relationship with a male mentor.

In answer to a question on many readers' minds, the authors describe why women cannot rely solely on other women to be their mentors. In many industries, very few women are in positions of influence and power and can deliver the career supports a mentee would need. The authors also introduce the concept of *silent betrayal*, when women “avoid mentoring junior women, owing to competition for the few positions open to women or out of concern for the extra visibility and scrutiny that may accompany same-gender sponsorship, especially if the mentee doesn't perform well” (22). There is a lot to decipher in that concept, but the authors use it to

bolster the argument that men must mentor women if their organizations are to realize the potential of half of their respective workforces.

The first half of *Athena Rising* concludes with chapters on why men are reluctant to mentor women, the biological and psychological differences between men and women, and further reinforcement of the narrative that men must take a strengths-based approach to mentoring, and this means nurturing the strengths of both men and women. The authors posit that only when men are seen mentoring men and women at equal rates—and are vocal with colleagues about why they are doing so—will cross-gender relationships begin to normalize.

Part II: Mentoring Women: A Manual for Men

The second half of *Athena Rising* is organized into five chapters containing a total of 46 elements, insights, or pieces of practical advice for men to bear in mind while mentoring women. The beginning of this section encourages men to know themselves and to focus on humility. Men are urged to reflect ahead of time on which “man scripts” they employ in cross-gender relationships (examples include father/daughter, knight/maiden in distress, seducer/seductress). These scripts jeopardize successful mentoring by reinforcing power dynamics and undercutting the success of the mentee. By contrast, building genuine friendship and trust will prevent reversion to these archetypes. Readers are also discouraged from assuming that any of their formative personal and professional experiences were anything like those of women; rather, they are encouraged to remain curious and inquisitive about the experiences of others.

The authors acknowledge that men's fear of their mentoring relationship being judged or misunderstood as sexual, concern over saying the wrong things, and general inexperience and anxiety may lead men to believe that mentoring women is a minefield and discourage them from mentoring women altogether. Such thinking is reframed immediately to highlight that women experience real minefields as they try to understand who the genuine career helpers are in their workplaces.

The authors are most successful when they focus on the importance of men including women among their mentees; this emphasis gets lost in the instructional second half of *Athena Rising*. In fact, the second half

of the book feels repetitive at times, as concepts from the first half are restated in a more directive way. Regardless, practical steps offer a variety of ways to attend both to the career development and psychosocial aspects of good mentors. Considered separately from the focus on gender, they are far more accessible than theoretical and empirical work on mentoring for men and women alike.

Reflections

The authors use plain, often colloquial language. As a deliberate stylistic choice—“So, guys”; “Fellas, listen up”; “Gentlemen, it really is simple”—this crosses quite frequently into patronizing territory, though some readers may find it relatable and readable. More troublesome is that the book itself plays into stereotypes of men. For example, the subtitle for a chapter on the biology and psychology of men and women in relationships is “Becoming a Thoughtful Caveman.” Acknowledging that I identify as a woman and that characterizations like this are a device, I wonder how men regard the “Me, Tarzan, you, Jane” trope used several times.

The authors use the terms *gender* and *sex* interchangeably but always refer to relationships as *cross-sex* rather than *cross-gender*. It is troubling that the whole thesis of this book reinforces the gender binary and is heteronormative. (The second sentence of the preface is “We are writing this book for our genetic brothers”

[xiii].) Such a lens is fathomable as a device for a book that seeks to help men overcome the particular challenge of mentoring women in a way that is appropriate and supportive. However, to not at least acknowledge diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation is surprising, if not problematic. Even a brief introductory section—on what the book includes, deliberately excludes, and why—would have bolstered the credibility of a work that generally describes gender differences in a helpful, if didactic, way.

In sum, the authors do what they set out to. Issues of writing style and inclusivity aside, *Athena Rising* is still useful. It could be added to the toolkits of men who are unsure whether they are connecting with women at work in helpful ways and who seek actionable ideas as to how they, personally, can foster inclusion in their organizations. I also recommend *Athena Rising* to women who find themselves in contexts designed to uplift women, such as affinity groups, mentoring programs, and areas where women are underrepresented (technology and senior leadership are common examples). These initiatives are often composed entirely of supportive women; this book helps build understanding about why men are also required in these spaces. Women and men alike will find language and ideas in *Athena Rising* that are useful to engage men as mentors so they can support women and other marginalized persons in the workplace.

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