

 GRAD AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

The Evolution of Graduate Enrollment Management

By Ariana Balayan, Christopher Connor, and Joshua LaFave

Enrollment management (EM) has been a focus of higher education since the 1970s. There is a large base of empirical research on EM, a coordinated effort to support undergraduate students from admission to graduation that has been widely researched. However, there is limited academic research on graduate enrollment management (GEM). What is missing is grounding GEM in literature and viewing the graduate student lifecycle with a cohesive lens. This article provides an academic foundation for GEM while discussing future research areas and encouraging GEM professionals to adopt a scholar-practitioner lens. The authors lay the foundation for the GEM concept, synthesize related literature, and discuss future research directions.

A Fledgling Field

Although enrollment management (EM) has been a central concept in higher education for more than 40 years, its focus has been on undergraduate education. Hossler and Bean (1990) defined EM as “both an organizational concept as well as a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments” (5). The definition may be applicable across colleges and universities; however, EM is grounded in the undergraduate student experience. In recent years, graduate enrollment management (GEM) has been a rising field among higher education practitioners. Yet GEM is the much younger

sibling of EM, without the academic literature base or formal examples in practice.

Out of EM came strategic enrollment management (SEM), as Dolence (1993) described, “a comprehensive process designed to achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and attainment of students.” As with EM, SEM was developed primarily in the traditional undergraduate college context. Significantly, Snowden (2012) wrote existing SEM models and understood concepts do not adequately translate to graduate students. Snowden also stated, “ubiquitous perceptions of SEM are largely influenced by the structures, processes, and professions that constitute SEM in a baccalaureate context,” and existing SEM models are



FIGURE 1 ▶ The Siloed Approach to Graduate Enrollment Management

“insufficient in addressing post baccalaureate education enrollment matters” (2012, 182). It is imperative to study and formalize how SEM applies to GEM and the development and operationalizing of strategic GEM (SGEM).

GEM encompasses all aspects of the graduate student lifecycle. These aspects, depicted in Figure 1, are the key areas that make up GEM. The progression shows marketing and recruitment efforts that drive graduate students to enroll and admissions operations practices to streamline the application and registration process. Next is financial support, followed by student services, advising and retention, and graduation and alumni affairs. These areas are essential to student success but are often silos lacking integration and coordination. The latter typically occurs when a central admissions office recruits students to apply or commit to attending. The handoff occurs either to a decanal academic unit or other offices tasked with supporting a specific graduate student lifecycle function. Figure 1 shows the traditional, siloed GEM model, with clear delineations of each area.

The Emergence of GEM

A definition of GEM arose from a 2013–2014 intraorganizational study by NAGAP, the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management. At this time, the graduate admissions field was shifting to encompass the full graduate student lifecycle. From that study and a companion white paper by the authors, GEM was defined as “a comprehensive approach to the methods by which an institution recruits, admits, supports retains, and graduates postbaccalaureate students...includes codependent

functions working congruently to manage overall enrollment levels and the student experience strategically” (Connor, LaFave and Balayan 2014, 9). This definition mirrors Dolence’s (1993) one of SEM while focusing on the graduate student population.

Perhaps the most developed GEM area is admissions and recruitment. GEM silos may be due to NAGAP’s roots as an organization serving admissions and recruitment professionals. Or, functioning as a silo may be the nature of graduate higher education administrators away from other student lifecycle areas, such as advising, retention, or financial aid.

NAGAP’s research has been informal surveying focused on its membership. NAGAP’s previous studies have not been empirical research, with defined research questions around a problem or critically collecting and analyzing statistically sound data (Creswell 2019). The study outlined below did not follow Creswell’s steps, and researchers used a convenience sample, but not purposefully since the study was not grounded in a formal research design.

Defining GEM, the intraorganizational research project, commenced in 2013. It resulted in the definition of GEM and the foundation for the authors’ subsequent white paper (Connor LaFave and Balayan 2014). The study was conducted by NAGAP’s Research and Global Issues Committee over a year, with focus groups and a closed-ended electronic survey. Questions revolved around NAGAP members’ perceptions of their office and institutional structures, with changing responsibilities. NAGAP then transitioned from admissions to an

EM organization as GEM practitioners were experiencing a shift in their responsibilities.

The survey results showed 80 percent of respondents reported a change to their roles with increased responsibilities in orientation, financial aid, and student services. These findings laid the foundation for the emergence of GEM and a corresponding model, highlighting the expansion of the traditional admissions and recruitment roles to ones that encompass the graduate student life cycle and differentiating undergraduate and graduate EM.

The white paper, “Integrated Interdependence: The Emergence of Graduate Enrollment Management (GEM),” is the most formal document NAGAP has produced. While it is the basis for the formalization of GEM, it was not published in a journal and is now more than five years old. NAGAP has not produced any academic literature, specifically in peer-reviewed publications or books from established publishers. Empirical research studies are of particular importance since the practitioner-based membership has limited work conducted thus far.

Around the same time as the white paper, Balayan (2016) developed and executed an empirical study on the professional development participation of GEM practitioners who were NAGAP members. While this work was one of the only true GEM research studies at the time, the study acknowledged a limitation in the low response rate and NAGAP-only sample. Kania (2018), another study to survey NAGAP membership on social media and e-marketing trends, also saw a low response rate. Furthermore, other intraorganizational and partnered research studies have not garnered a representative sample size.

Recently, NAGAP has partnered with other organizations in the release of reports including Noel Levitz on a report (2020) for marketing and recruitment practices to attract graduate students. The report asserted, “graduate student enrollment has become increasingly important for universities...as traditional undergraduate enrollment has flattened” (1). However, this data came from 79 institutions, of more than 920 NAGAP institutional members at the time, and thousands in the United States. The institutional number also does not necessarily

reflect the full NAGAP membership at the time since there were an additional 700 individual members.

A 2019 NAGAP member survey with the Council of Graduate Schools resulted in a brief by Okahana and West (2019) presenting data on enrollment trends and GEM leaders’ priorities, such as recruiting students from diverse backgrounds. Notably, only 167 (9.7%) of the 1,714 2019 NAGAP members completed the survey. Limited responses to the survey and the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2020) report is a limitation, impacting the results and not representative of all GEM practitioners’ views. GEM practitioners’ potential lack of engagement in research supports the need for further GEM research.

Integrated Interdependence Model

From the 2013 research and white paper, Connor, LaFave, and Balayan (2014) developed the first GEM model. Based on EM, the Integrated Interdependence Model, in Figure 2 (on page 38), was the output of the authors’ understanding of GEM from the practitioner respondents in the study supported by NAGAP. While these elements have existed separately in GEM practice, the model brings them together for the first time.

Core concepts of the Integrated Interdependence Model include ensuring:

- All aspects of EM seamlessly synchronize throughout the graduate student lifecycle.
- Every functional area of the lifecycle has coordinated staff toward student support with advocacy for cross-training and roles that champion more than one functional area.
- The ultimate goal is all aspects of the lifecycle are integrated and interdependent to serve the graduate student from application to graduation and beyond.
- Leadership and stakeholders are engaged in every part of the graduate student experience.
- Bridges are built from academic units and faculty bases to administrative leaders and practices.

To that end, the model is dynamic and serves both the operational and strategic aspects of GEM. Leadership and institutional stakeholders also support a ho-

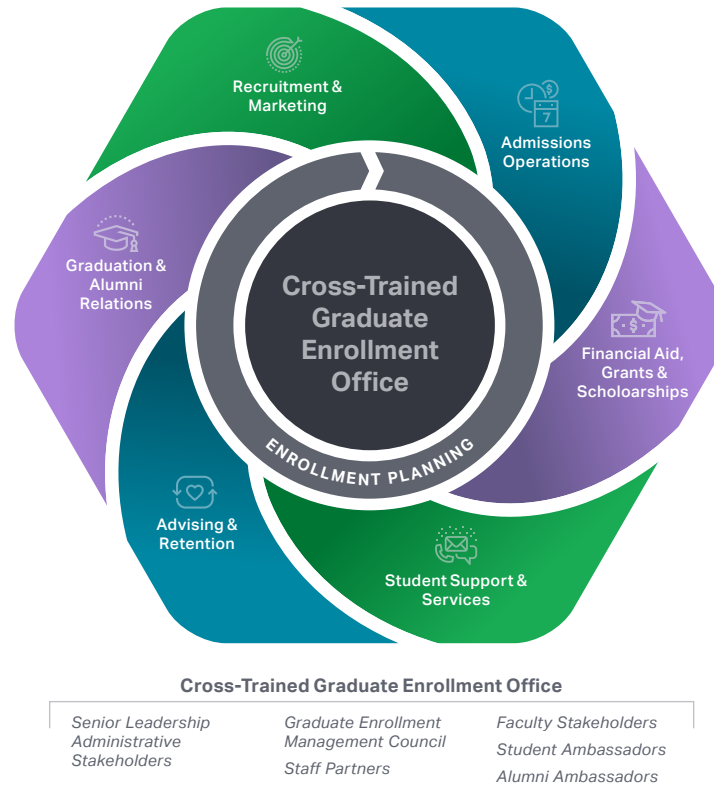


FIGURE 2 ➤ The Integrated Interdependence Model of GEM

listic view of codependent functions working together to recruit, support, retain, and graduate students. Even though Kranzow and Hyland (2011) do not mention GEM, they support this model as “the cycle begins and ends with the recognition of the interdependence between enrollment management, and student and academic affairs” (25).

While the model forms the basis for a distinguished branch of enrollment management, it is not a one-size-fits-all prescription for each institution or office. There is a need to uncover GEM in practice at institutions of various sizes and types, such as large public or small private, to develop potential adaptations further. While the application of integrated interdependence may vary, a key is to create a seamless graduate student experience across the lifecycle. From marketing efforts to alumni relations, a through-line supports graduate students to choose the best fit program and then provides the academic and student support resources to foster success and persistence to graduation and beyond.

Ideally, each school or program at an academic institution would have its infrastructure to support GEM functions. Still, in many cases, this is not realistic or financially viable. Therefore, recruitment, admissions, and student services are either handled at the institutional level, academic unit level, or more likely, multiple entities may collaborate in that support. However, some educational unit-based infrastructure supporting EM can be particularly beneficial at the graduate level as responsibility and ownership ultimately lead to enrollment successes or failures. Figure 3 (on page 39) details a Nexus Model of Integrated Interdependence, further linking cross-trained offices with each other and institutional stakeholders.

Each institution, academic unit, department, or program has unique characteristics that must be reasonably understood and respected. For example, an institution may choose to invest resources toward a one-stop shop from the first point of contact to graduation and beyond. They may decide to leverage campus partners and, in



FIGURE 3 ► Nexus Model of Integrated Interdependence

some cases, external constituents. Furthermore, an institution may choose to create a hybrid model that takes pieces from the ones above.

The key in any of these models is to create a seamlessly integrated experience supporting graduate student success, interdependent on recruitment and admissions. Ultimately, the student experience and actual employment outcomes drive recruitment and admissions instead of the latter existing in a silo. Fundamentally, various examples show consistent themes. These themes include GEM organizational review structures, identifying efficiencies, and shared execution of duties while working to shape a differentiated experience for students. Ultimately, the institution's size, scope, and often organizational culture will dictate the supporting infrastructure.

Distinguishing Undergraduate and Graduate EM

Typically, at the undergraduate level, a university recruits and admits students to the institution's intended major. The front-end processes of admissions and recruitment are managed mainly by an undergraduate admissions office. There may be input from academic units and programs based on preferred academic qualifications. Still, an undergraduate admissions office is primarily responsible for shaping incoming freshman and transfer students based on desired institutional quality and demographic metrics. Undergraduate student support services typically comprise multiple university units, emphasizing retention and increasing four-year graduation rates. Moreover, the number of undergraduate students is generally significantly more

TABLE 1 ► Undergraduate versus Graduate Enrollment Management

Enrollment Management (Undergraduate)	Graduate Enrollment Management
Primarily centralized recruitment	Primarily decentralized recruitment
Coordinates all aspects of student lifecycle under one umbrella	Emergence from fractured/complex to coordinated and interdependent
Higher staff levels	Do more with fewer staff
Definitive starting and stopping points within primary responsibility (<i>i.e.</i> , admissions handles admissions)	Evolution of staff roles beyond primary responsibilities (<i>i.e.</i> , recruitment and retention services)
Campus leadership in tune with enrollment issues/needs	Perceived lack of knowledge and support from campus leadership
Academic quality = institutional	Academic quality = niche/program-based
Models based on enrollment management: Enrollment committee, coordinator, matrix and enrollment management division	Models: Mostly admissions-based (centralized, decentralized, hybrid)
Emerging model: Building bridges to academic enterprise	Emerging model: Service orientation and strengthening existing connection to faculty

significant than the number of graduate students at university or college, determining the priority level.

EM’s early ideal of a single, cohesive unit managing all aspects of enrollment across multiple disciplines and schools has seldom been realistic at the graduate level (Williams 2008). Moreover, a university or college may have several different academic units with other priorities and needs, each with another layer of an even more diverse set of educational programs. Graduate enrollment may be managed centrally at smaller institutions; however, it can quickly become a challenge to work at a larger institution without an appropriate academic unit-specific infrastructure to support recruitment, admissions, student success, and retention. While it may make sense for senior leadership at a university or college to create one office of admissions for prospective undergraduate and graduate students, it may not serve the graduate student and be aligned with the Integrated Interdependence Model.

Hossler (1984) describes the functional areas of EM as (1) student marketing and recruitment, (2) pricing and financial aid, (3) academic and career counseling,

(4) academic assistance programs, (5) institutional research, (6) orientation, (7) retention programs, and (8) student services. Within functional entities, both undergraduate and graduate enrollment share the necessity to accomplish each. However, the execution of these elements may look very different between undergraduate and graduate EM contexts. There is also a necessity to support a broader student population with very different needs across the functional areas Hossler identified.

Kalsbeek (2006) wrote on four prominent orientations for EM, administrative, student-focused, market-centered, and academic. These philosophical orientations support an institution’s goals and priorities

and help drive its approach across all functional areas on the campus. However, at the graduate level, these orientations look very different within decanal units on campus, departments, and even specific graduate programs. Anecdotally it is a hybrid of these viewpoints that define specific GEM strategies. Further work on applying these orientations in a graduate context is recommended.

Table 1 is a side-by-side comparison of some of the fundamental differences between undergraduate and graduate EM. This table is not definitive and does not define how each institution perceives these concepts. Still, it was the most formal representation of concepts from the 2013 NAGAP member survey results.

GEM practitioners often do more with fewer resources and staff than their undergraduate colleagues, even when graduate enrollments are rising (Okahana and West 2019). In fact, given the COVID-19 global pandemic, many universities and colleges are now beginning to look introspectively at the appropriateness of organizational structures to support GEM. While GEM does not provide all the answers for successful EM, it

does point toward dynamic and adaptable universities with a broader focus than undergraduate EM.

GEM in the International Context

The internationalization of U.S. higher education focused on both research and political contexts (Todoran and Peterson 2019). While research is undergraduate student-centric overall (Bedenlier, Kondakci, and Zawacki-Richter 2018, GEM is increasing interest across global higher education. It may be in part due to the changes in international student mobility patterns, enrollment increases and decreases (Okahana 2017), degree completion, concerns related to resource constraints, and the desire in many countries to examine educational infrastructures that support internationalization efforts. Recently, based on heightened demand of the applicability of internationalization efforts, the Integrated Interdependence Model has been increasingly shared through global channels. This has primarily been through conference presentations and workshops as opposed to research studies and publications. It is now actively represented in international forums, as in the examples below. However, empirical research is needed to understand further international graduate students and how to best support them through the lifecycle.

- Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) (Connor, *et al.* 2016; Connor, LaFave, and Kouwenaar 2017)
- Symbiosis International University (India) Summer E-Academy on Internationalisation (Connor 2020a)
- International EM workshops held at universities in countries within the European Union (LaFave and Connor 2020; Connor 2020b)
- European Association for International Education (EAIE) (LaFave, Longoni, and Snijders 2015; LaFave and Longoni 2017; LaFave and van Rest 2017; Kapur, Connor and LaFave 2019)
- EAIE's two and a half-day workshop on this topic as part of their annual Spring Academy series, coled with international colleagues and brings participants from across the world (LaFave, Longoni and Alexander 2018; Connor and Longoni 2019)

Literature Review

The Scholar-Practitioner Approach

EM and SEM have been discussed widely in academic literature, but most often in the undergraduate context (Bontrager 2004; Henderson 2012). There is much work needed to fill the gaps in the literature, supported by Smith (2014), “few empirical studies look specifically at professional administrators’ day-to-day participation in graduate enrollment management” (4). One way to accomplish this in the fledgling field of GEM is to engage in a scholar-practitioner role rather than only the latter. “A scholar-practitioner is a link connecting the worlds of academic scholarship and everyday work environments” (Seefeld 2015, 1). According to Seefeld, data-driven decision-making, a significant EM and GEM component, can be served by the scholar-practitioner supporting those decisions with empirical evidence. Furthermore, Hossler and Kalsbeek (2013) posited “the process of enrollment management depends heavily upon strategic and empirical research and data analysis to guide its efforts” (1). Taking on a scholar-practitioner role would legitimize the best practices in GEM identified by practitioners alone and develop a formal baseline for GEM that does not currently exist.

Scholar-practitioners inform both everyday practice and longer-term strategy and policy across campuses. This contributes to a practitioner-researcher loop (Braxton and Hossler 2019), with work based on empirical research where practitioners contribute essential topics to conduct that research. Applied to EM and GEM, this means practitioners no longer have to partake in “trial-and-error forms of institutional action” (Braxton and Ream 2017 95). Current GEM practitioners can operate from a lens of scholar-practitioners to develop the Integrated Interdependence Model and others in action.

Snowden (2012) encouraged those in postbaccalaureate (graduate, professional, and continuing education) EM to research, publish, and further the conversation. The following will synthesize many existing sources while showing the disparity of current GEM sources compared with EM. The publications below are on GEM areas; however, the term itself is rarely mentioned. Fur-

thermore, specific subjects such as program choice are discussed, often in a siloed approach to graduate education, without the groundwork in establishing the concept of GEM. This is the crux of the assertion to formalize GEM and shift from practitioner identities to scholar-practitioners, to develop a bonafide area with robust academic research.

Searching for GEM in the Literature

In discussing GEM research, the authors focused on peer-reviewed work, including empirical research. The concept of GEM is underdeveloped in this context, as only a small number of studies cover GEM compared to undergraduate EM and SEM. Books and journals from The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers have been leaders in publishing research on GEM topics. Snowden's (2012) is among the first chapters devoted to the graduate population in a book on EM or SEM. It also seems to be the only one since. Significantly, the practitioner-focused *College and University (C&U)* and *Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly (SEMQ)* journals are crucial to the presence of GEM in research, the former with two foundational articles and the latter with the most GEM articles in existence.

Perhaps the proclivity of *SEMQ* toward the EM practitioner is a purposeful alignment of the practitioner's dominant role among EM, SEM, and now GEM professionals. However, the volume of GEM-related publications in these sources and others pale compared to those in undergraduate EM and SEM. Again, it is essential to note that the GEM-related publications exist without the formalization of GEM in the academic space. *SEMQ* is instrumental in moving the GEM conversation forward. Volumes from 2013 to the present feature ten articles listed in the Graduate and Professional Schools area (AACRAO 2018) and are likely the most significant collections of GEM-related articles. However, among the *SEMQ* and *C&U* articles, such as Clayden (2019) and Paris (2020), the white paper (Connor LaFave and Balayan 2014) is consistently cited as the definitive source on GEM.

Taking a step back to explore GEM across the literature, searching a central academic database for the term "graduate enrollment management" in peer-reviewed

texts from any year yields eleven results (and newly published Puckett 2021 as the 12th). Conversely, there are more than 600 EM sources with the same search criteria and 149 for SEM. Turcotte (1983) seems to be the oldest source on enrollment at the graduate level and remains the only article on "graduate enrollment management" in the *Journal of College Admissions*. Kranzow (2019), in *C&U*, supported this: "Despite rapid growth, a number of aspects of graduate student enrollment have yet to be examined in the literature" (15). Additionally, there are articles related to GEM that do not always mention the term itself. The majority of the publications are from *C&U* or *SEMQ* and represent strategic enrollment planning and faculty involvement in recruitment efforts. Some of those eleven articles are discussed below, representing growth in GEM literature but a far cry from the base on undergraduate EM and SEM.

Major GEM Sources Highlighted

Williams (2008) is a seminal work that is frequently cited (Pickett 2001; Campbell and Smith 2014). Williams' article is one of the first peer-reviewed pieces to mention GEM, especially in a profession and juxtaposed against EM. Williams noted, "to be successful; GEM participants must work proactively to build and maintain relationships across administrative silos" (57). Collaboration across GEM departments and the institution itself may positively impact all aspects of the student lifecycle. This aligns with the Integrated Interdependence Model to integrate offices from admissions to student services and academic units. Since its publishing, there has been a lack of follow-up work, another display of GEM's nascency in academic literature.

Another formative text to move the concept of GEM forward among limited empirical research is Campbell and Smith (2014). Written at the inception of NAGAP's movement from graduate admissions to GEM, Campbell and Smith conducted a study of 33 graduate admissions practitioners on their professional identity. Interviews revealed coordination between admissions and recruitment with retention and alumni relations and GEM. The findings illustrated three significant graduate identities admissions professionals: the gatekeeper, translator, and

innovator. The latter represents the shift from traditional roles rooted in admissions to all-encompassing GEM and makes this text a significant contribution. However, as with Kania (2018) and Balayan (2016), the low sample size of Campbell and Smith's study leave much to be desired in building an empirical research base representative of GEM practitioners.

SEM Q published an increased number of GEM-centric articles in the last few years. Green (2020) mentioned the "growing research on graduate-level SEM" (1) when referencing two articles published in that issue. Ruger (2020) presented GEM case studies at multiple medical colleges. Ruger's study was another small sample, with 33 survey respondents and seven interviews, yet it furthered the discussion on GEM practitioners' roles and noted siloed areas at medical colleges. While this work is on GEM, it does not mention the term, as in Hassanien (2020) and Clayden (2019). Notably, the white paper is the only source cited to define GEM as with those two articles. Mathur, *et al.* (2019) also likened the work of supporting students through their degree to the need for campuses to apply the Integrated Interdependence Model.

Hassanein's article is among the first to discuss SEM planning and execution across the graduate functional areas. One specific institution was studied related to recruitment practices and student support while considering its strategic goals. The author included Henderson's (2017) Student Success Continuum's Model, applicable to the graduate student lifecycle, albeit built for the undergraduate one. Ruger (2020) and Hassanien's work build on the limited body of studies specific to GEM.

Clayden (2019) mentioned the white paper as it supported the article's thesis: "[M]ost SEM materials are geared toward institution-wide efforts at the undergraduate level. Efforts and material at the *graduate* level are still somewhat in their infancy" (1). Clayden detailed a study conducted at one public university on how a public-private partnership may benefit graduate student recruitment and retention. An organizational chart within GEM areas is presented, aligned with the authors' assertion that there be well-defined models across the student lifecycle. The study results showed utilizing an external partner resulted in enrollment growth.

More articles are written on some areas of the graduate student lifecycle over others. Domains such as recruitment and marketing are seen in the academic literature more than onboarding, advising, or alumni relations. Retention also has more developed literature than other GEM areas, with studies such as Eshghi, *et al.* (2011) a retention study for graduate business programs or Casstevens, *et al.* (2012) on social work graduate programs. One specific gap is in admissions operations, with the practitioner lens of data-driven GEM efforts and technological tools such as CRMs not often explored in literature.

Again, focusing on the beginning of the student lifecycle, Kranzow (2019), in *C&U*, discussed graduate program choice, with factors such as financial considerations, gender, and life role driving the decision to pursue one graduate program or another. Poock and Love (2001) also examined program choice on the doctoral level, including demographics that influence enrollment choices. Twenty years ago, Poock and Love pointed to the lack of research on this topic, distinguished from the research base on undergraduate school choice (Hossler, Braxton and Coopersmith 1989). Other studies on graduate program choice, including Dearie, *et al.* (2020) and Mertz, Eckman, and Strayhorn (2012), are limitedly representative with small sample sizes and only one or two institutions explored.

Another pocket of GEM research relates to diversity, equity, and holistic review in graduate admissions, as seen in *Holistic Admissions* (Sandlin and Sedlacek 2020). Noncognitive variables, such as evidence of resilience and leadership, are considered when taking a holistic approach to application evaluation instead of cognitive factors alone, such as GPA and test scores (Sedlacek 2017). Posselt has conducted significant work (including 2015 and 2019), often qualitative and concerning underrepresented minority students in the application process and the role of faculty and admissions committees in doctoral science education. Posselt's book (2016) seems to be the only one of its kind to delve into case studies of graduate faculty admissions committee review processes across multiple college campuses. While work in this realm is critical, it delves deeply into one

specific area of graduate admissions and focuses on the beginning of the graduate student lifecycle. Based on Posselt and in general, further research could develop additional work on implications for student success, retention, and persistence to graduation.

With Posselt (2016) and Cano, *et al.* (2018), faculty engagement in graduate admissions and recruitment may be another significant focus for practitioners to explore through research studies further. This may be particularly relevant at decentralized or academic unit-based GEM models. Still, more research is needed to examine the models themselves before the faculty's role within them.

Imperative for Future Research

The recent publication of more articles on GEM topics, many in *SEM_Q*, shows movement toward establishing and developing GEM in academic literature. More work is encouraged to build research on the overarching concept and consider the whole graduate student lifecycle. GEM's lack of formalization in the academic context has stunted the field's growth. Compared to EM and SEM, GEM is in its adolescence. This metaphor for graduate-level EM or SEM comes from Snowden (2012), yet GEM has not grown much past its adolescence in the years following this assertion. GEM can continue to grow in adulthood through scholar-practitioner-focused research and a grounding in GEM professionals' needs.

As the broader concept of GEM in academic literature takes shape, next will be designing and conducting research studies to examine the Integrated Interdependence Model and others in practice across various institutional types, geography, and program offerings. Case studies will provide insight into GEM's establishment, fostering, and support by institutions. Once this framework is developed, researchers can conduct several deeper dives related to the interplay of the significant areas of GEM. This includes a study of how GEM helps socialize graduate students to a university from awareness of the institution through graduation. Another imperative for future research will be to delve into each of the significant areas of GEM, such as student support services and the student experience. As GEM models are further defined, a third major undertaking will be to apply SEM concepts to formalize SGEM toward the unit and institutional planning and engaging inefficient, coordinated practices.

The need for empirical research in GEM invites studies beyond admissions and recruitment on graduate student persistence to graduation, best practices in onboarding students, and bridging academic and administrative EM (Snowden 2012), as faculty members are crucial to recruitment retention of graduate students. Ultimately, it would lead to a further understanding of the graduate student lifecycle as a whole and GEM practitioners' role within it.

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About the Authors



Ariana Balayan

Ariana Balayan is the Assistant Dean of Admissions and Recruit-

ing at UMass Chan Medical School. She holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Nova Southeast-

ern University and has collaborated to develop the first formal model for graduate enrollment management.



Christopher Connor

Christopher Connor is the Assistant Dean and Chief Enrollment Officer, School of Engineering and

Applied Sciences at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (SUNY). With more than 20 years of experience in higher education, Connor's experience includes serving in leadership

roles in undergraduate and graduate education both from an institutional and academic unit perspective. In his current role, he focuses strategically on all aspects of the student lifecycle. During his tenure in the UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, graduate enrollment has risen 47 percent to the highest in school history, which includes a 28 percent increase

in international enrollment and a 155 percent increase in domestic enrollment levels. Connor was recently awarded the 2019 Chancellor's Award for Professional Service by the State University of New York (SUNY) system, and the operations under his direction were awarded the 2020 IELTS USA Best Practices Award in International Enrollment Management.



Joshua LaFave

Joshua LaFave is the Director of Graduate Business Programs in the David D. Reh School

of Business at Clarkson University and

holds an M.B.A. He has been in graduate enrollment management for sixteen years and has collaborated on the creation of the first formal model for graduate enrollment management. LaFave

oversees the entire student lifecycle of graduate students in business programs for both residential and online students.