

 SEMQ REVIEW

# *Prioritizing Enrollment Management: Effective Practices and Strategies for Student Success and Completion*

MERIWETHER, J. L. (ED.) 2025. NEW YORK, NY: ROUTLEDGE. 206 PP.

*Reviewed by Ariana Balayan*

In *Prioritizing Enrollment Management: Effective Practices and Strategies for Student Success and Completion*, editor Meriwether compiles a timely and practitioner-focused contribution to the enrollment management (EM) literature—a field still relatively underexplored outside of publications such as those by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). This text brings together voices from across higher education, with actionable insights that span the full student lifecycle and offer practical guidance for embedding EM principles into institutional operations.

Written in an accessible style with clear thematic framing, the book is especially well-suited for early- to mid-career professionals seeking a comprehensive introduction to EM in the student success context. In today's increasingly competitive and resource-constrained higher education environment, the contributors make a compelling case for integrating EM into institutional strategy as a means of achieving sustainable enrollment and student success outcomes.

The volume comprises thirteen chapters, each addressing key facets of EM—from marketing and recruitment to student retention and technology infrastructure. While the case studies presented are sometimes not grounded in literature or sufficiently developed, they remain applicable to practice across a wide range of institutional types.

Chapter One explores the integration of marketing and recruitment within strategic enrollment management (SEM), highlighting its role in institutional financial sustainability. The authors argue persuasively for repositioning EM from a reactive to a proactive function that plays a central role in institutional planning. The authors emphasize the necessity of data-informed strategy and cross-functional collaboration to adapt to an evolving educational landscape.

Chapter Two focuses on aligning EM initiatives with institutional strategic planning. Key considerations include labor market analysis, new program development, and student outcomes. The importance of faculty en-

agement is underscored as critical for program success and enrollment viability. This section also advocates for partnerships with external market research firms and regional, aligned institutions to develop new academic pathways and dual-degree offerings.

Chapter Three is among the most practical contributions, drawing from foundational SEM scholarship by Bontrager and Hossler. It addresses core EM areas such as recruitment, financial aid, and infrastructure, while also advocating for a more inclusive approach that moves beyond revenue maximization. A strength here is a detailed community college case example, which outlines office and reporting structure with an instructive model adaptable to a variety of institutional contexts.

Chapter Four revisits the role of faculty, positioning them as “change agents” in SEM. Though focused primarily on undergraduate contexts, the chapter offers broadly relevant strategies for strengthening collaboration between academic units and EM offices. Recommendations include formal mechanisms for faculty input, shared goal-setting, and increased transparency in enrollment reporting.

The fifth chapter centers on student success and retention, emphasizing the need to align SEM planning with institutional mission and strategic priorities. While the framework presented draws from a dated model, the discussion of how to create purposeful and personalized support systems remains relevant. Suggestions for developing local partnerships with other educational institutions and employers add a practical dimension, which is supported by the previous chapter.

Chapter Six turns to admissions technology and communications. Acknowledging that not all institutions have customer relationship management (CRM) systems, the authors make a strong case for technology investment to enhance recruitment analytics and communication strategies. The chapter details CRM implementation processes and advocates for a multi-channel communication approach to maximize yield.

Chapter Seven addresses equity and access, exploring the intersections of higher education, wealth disparity, and student achievement gaps in the United States. Although foundational retention theory is introduced,

the chapter lacks a direct connection to SEM, weakening its contribution to the central theme of the book. Nonetheless, its emphasis on support during the first year and advocacy resources is valuable.

Chapter Eight provides a more scholarly discussion of retention, highlighting proactive planning and institution-wide responsibility. Emphasis is placed on early alert systems, remediation, advising, and creating a sense of belonging. The financial dimension of persistence is especially salient, with recommendations for adjusting budget models to account for student credit loads and attrition.

Chapter Nine focuses on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), outlining opportunities for enrollment growth amidst demographic shifts. The authors advocate for personal recruitment strategies such as direct and on-the-spot admissions and emphasize the importance of affordability and retention. Attention to recruiting Hispanic and Latinx students is timely, as changing demographics reshape the higher education landscape.

In Chapter Ten, the relationship between residence life and EM is explored. The authors argue that campus housing can support student success through retention-enhancing programming and any necessary facilities improvements. EM professionals are encouraged to collaborate closely with residence life staff and leverage housing as a key component of the student experience.

Chapter Eleven, the only one to address international and graduate recruitment, underscores the financial and cultural benefits of a global student body. The authors stress the importance of relationship-building, cultural sensitivity, and federal compliance. However, the minimal treatment of graduate enrollment more broadly leaves a gap in the book’s coverage.

Chapter Twelve turns to leadership communication, emphasizing transparency and trust-building across campus stakeholders. The authors encourage EM leaders to foster a culture of inclusion and positivity, particularly in recruitment-related events and high-level messaging.

The final chapter offers forward-looking guidance and presents some of the most concrete takeaways in the text. Topics include stakeholder engagement, track-

ing key performance indicators, and communication strategies—from CRM emails to internal budget communications. The chapter synthesizes earlier themes and reinforces the book's emphasis on intentional, data-informed SEM planning.

Despite its strengths, the volume has some limitations. Several chapters are relatively brief, occasionally leading to superficial treatment of complex issues. The lack of a more robust theoretical framework and limited engagement with scholarly literature may detract for readers seeking academic rigor. Additionally, the omission of author biographies reduces the reader's ability to assess the contributors' contexts and expertise.

*Prioritizing Enrollment Management: Effective Practices and Strategies for Student Success and Completion* is a welcome addition to the limited long-form literature on EM and SEM. Its emphasis on practical strategies makes it particularly useful for professionals in the early to mid-stages of their careers. While a stronger theoretical grounding and more comprehensive coverage of graduate education would enhance its value, the book nonetheless provides a solid foundation for understanding and applying effective EM practices. A future work could build on this book by incorporating original research, in-depth case studies, and more attention to the evolving needs of post-baccalaureate student populations.

## About the Author



### Ariana Balayan

Ariana Balayan, Ed.D., is the Assistant Dean of Enrollment and Marketing for the Tufts University School of Medicine Graduate Programs. There, she oversees strategic initiatives and everyday operations of

recruitment, admissions, and marketing for competitive health science and research graduate programs, as well as manages the admissions and marketing team. Prior to Tufts, Dr. Balayan served in various leadership roles in graduate admissions at private and public institu-

tions. She is a thought leader in graduate enrollment management, specifically in strategic planning and model development. Dr. Balayan has been published in major academic journals, a preeminent textbook, and delivered many regional and national presentations.