VIEW FROM THE TOP

Working the Three-Legged Stool of a SEM Environment: Institutional, Professional, and Personal Resilience

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Enrollment managers face a perfect storm of challenges—demographic shifts, declining student demand, skepticism about higher education's value, policy changes, and technological disruptions. Layer on global and national uncertainties—climate change, political turmoil, and shifting funding priorities—and the pressure intensifies. How can enrollment leaders foster institutional resilience while sustaining their own professional and personal well-being? This article explores institutional, professional, and personal resilience—the "three-legged stool" concept—and their intersection, offering strategies to navigate an increasingly complex landscape.

Institutional Resilience and Sustainability

Given the monumental challenges facing higher education, enrollment managers must help their institutions remain resilient and financially sustainable. Partnering with other areas on campus while ensuring diversification across enrollment streams positions an institution for greater success. New enrollment revenue traditionally comes from first-time, first-year students in the fall semester. However, with shifting demographics and declining student demand, enrollment managers must be strategic and data-informed in this space.

Build Out and Leverage Institutional Value Proposition

For starters, an institution's mission and vision need to be leveraged, expanded, and communicated in a way that resonates with prospective students, their parents, caregivers, and key stakeholders, such as high school counselors. For example, one of the authors worked at an institution where building an authentic and thoughtfully refined value proposition campaign, centered on the tagline "Not For Spectators," resulted in a more than 20 percent increase in applications, leading also to the largest first-year class in history. This language was used in all communication—print, web, on- and off-campus events, and email, as well as multimedia platforms. In countless application essays, students would share anecdotes like, "I should be admitted, because I am not a spectator!"

Furthermore, ensuring a comprehensive, data-informed institutional market development strategy enables the enrollment manager to assess where more time should be spent cultivating and expanding new prospective student markets. Hossler and Bontrager (2015), recommend "creating a culture of data-driven decision making…that includes both internal and external data." By collaborating with campus partners in marketing, development, athletics, career services, and academic affairs, you can identify where the institution has existing strengths. This includes locations where: current students and alumni are concentrated; the institutional brand is strong; athletic coaches are recruiting talented students; employers are providing internships and hiring graduates; and study abroad programs are thriving. This institutional approach, facilitated by a strong enrollment manager, presents a powerful opportunity to enhance enrollment performance and institutional resilience.

New Academic Programs

Similarly, labor force or student interest demands may serve as a source by which new programs can be offered that would grow enrollment revenue. Moody's Investor Services recommends aligning academic programs and capital plans around growing or emerging markets and student interest (Moody's Investor Services 2021). In partnership with the chief academic officer and the faculty, identifying programs where demand aligns with existing institutional strengths and resources, including faculty capacity, could result in enrollment growth without requiring additional faculty hiring or significant new investment. At a previous institution, for example, one of the authors conducted an analysis of student withdrawal data that revealed a significant interest in communications among students. Partnering with academic affairs resulted in the creation of a communications major, which contributed to the institution's highest first-year persistence rate in its history. At another institution, this author experienced creative and entrepreneurial faculty identifying growing interdisciplinary student interest and created programs combining psychology and biology, as well as communications, computer science, music, and theatre. Enrollment in each of the programs thrived.

Alternative Enrollment Periods

Another opportunity is to consider different enrollment terms for new students. Collaborating with student life, a number of institutions are now working to enroll new students during the spring semester when they have additional residence hall capacity, often as a result of higher rates of spring study abroad. Despite a corrected National Student Clearinghouse Research Center report that showed college enrollment actually increased in 2024, some high school students admitted to college opt to sit out during the fall semester, even after being admitted to four-year colleges. Colleges can use National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to identify students who were admitted to their institution and chose not to enroll anywhere for the fall semester, then cull that list for prospective spring term entry students. At one institution, spring term enrollment more than doubled as a result of more intentional efforts, resulting in greater institutional sustainability. Students were admitted for spring from the fall applicant pool and offered an opportunity to study internationally at a series of partner institutions. Other institutions could mirror this practice or develop a separate application process. Partnering with academic affairs, front-end work to ensure transfer course equivalency with the affiliated institution is important, as is ensuring financial aid support for spring students. Third-party organizations also exist that actively work to partner with institutions to help support student deferment for a subsequent term enrollment start.

At many institutions, summer is generally a time when enrollment on campus is small. The traditional academic calendar, systemically supported by ten-month faculty teaching contracts, leaves campus buildings underutilized. However, current students may be taking courses at other institutions near their home in the summer. Working with the registrar's office, an assessment of what courses current students transfer in could result in additional course offerings in the summer, either in person or virtually. Also, partnering with faculty to develop on-campus summer academic or enrichment programs for high school students or adult learners serves as an alternative source of enrollment revenue. For example, one of the authors worked at an institution that offered a high school summer scholars' program, which drew more than 150 students to the campus in the summer. Students enjoyed their time on the campus to such an extent that more than 60 percent of the program's participants later applied to the institution. The summer program generated additional enrollment revenue while also bolstering the following fall's applicant pool. At the same institution, based on information provided by the university registrar, the author identified a meaningful population of current students transferring math courses taken in the summer. This led to exploring the option of offering a summer online math course at the institution to generate additional enrollment revenue while reducing the number of current students taking summer transfer courses at another institution.

Enrollment Modality

Given the increased familiarity with online and hybrid learning since the COVID-19 pandemic, offering more of these courses, particularly during the summer, can be a great way to increase enrollment. This is especially true if physical classroom capacity is a constraining factor or the targeted student population is more inclined to enroll in coursework that does not require frequent in-person attendance. According to The Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) Project survey, two-thirds of colleges were considering adding online programs to help sustain enrollment (Quality Matters and Eduventures Research 2023). When considering offering courses online, institutions must weigh the costs and benefits of building their own platform versus partnering with a third-party vendor (Online Program Manager or OPM), who already offers one. This involves joint collaborative work with enrollment management, academic affairs, institutional marketing/communications, and information technology. For some institutions, building and sustaining an internal infrastructure for high-quality course delivery, as well as marketing and recruiting new online programs, may not be feasible due to resource constraints or desired implementation timelines. One author worked at an institution where a third-party vendor was hired to launch the online education program; however, more than 50 percent of the tuition revenue generated had to be returned to the third-party vendor, resulting in a financial loss. The contract with the third-party vendor was eliminated, and the institution had to start from scratch in working to initiate online learning. Further, OPMs have faced challenges in recent years, whether due to regulatory scrutiny or their own unsustainable financial models (Coffey 2023). Some OPMs are moving away from long-term revenue-share models, instead providing a fee-for-service model that may be more appealing to some colleges and universities (Palmer 2025).

Transfer Enrollment

Transfer student enrollment serves as an opportunity to diversify both the campus community and enrollment tuition revenue streams. As only 16 percent of community college students transfer and earn a bachelor's degree, enrolling an increased number of community college students is an option for institutions to consider (Schwartz 2024). According to research by the American Council on Education, transfer course equivalency and credit flexibility are often barriers for transfer student enrollment (American Council on Education 2025). In fact, one author worked at two institutions where transferring math credit was so restrictive, it adversely impacted transfer student enrollment. A central topic of discussion between faculty and enrollment management was a unique calculus module. This module, specific to their institution, wasn't offered at two-year or even other four-year institutions, including some highly selective research universities. Financial aid packaging practices, residential life (including both the availability of appropriate housing and the programming needs, which may vary), and campus culture may also be impediments to robust transfer enrollment. Developing holistic transfer recruitment, enrollment, orientation, and retention strategies requires collaboration among faculty/academic affairs, student life team members, and the enrollment team. Creating articulation agreements with community colleges is a key part of a broader strategy to simplify course transfers. This holistic approach can significantly boost the enrollment of transfer students. While not one-size-fits-all solutions, the agreements serve as a starting point. They offer clearly communicated pathways allowing students to know and understand which courses to take that will transfer to the destination four-year institution.

International Enrollment

A report by the Oxford International Education Group recommends that institutions in the United States look to international student enrollment to diversify enrollment streams that also generate additional tuition revenue (Bhandari 2024). While certainly an opportunity, a study by the National Library of Medicine cites a decline in international student applications as a result of more restrictive U.S. immigration policy (Feeney, *et al.* 2023). Additionally, a 2023 report by the Institute for International Education shows intensifying competition for international students who are increasingly attending institutions in Europe, Canada, and Australia (Irwin-Hunt 2024). According to a report by the American Data Initiative, U.S. institutions, on average, cost more than institutions in these countries (Hanson 2025). For other international students, given the current geopolitical environment, institutions in these countries are perceived as more welcoming and supportive of international students. Hence, working to grow international enrollment may not serve as the productive opportunity it once was. However, if the institution has current enrollment pipelines in specific countries or regions of the world, or is located in proximity to certain countries, leveraging international student enrollment is a valuable opportunity. One of the authors worked at an institution in a Southeast Asian country where such a pipeline existed, accounting for more than 60 percent of international student enrollment. The partnerships established and created in the country continued to be leveraged and cultivated, resulting in a consistent annual enrollment stream. The same author worked at another institution where, at one point, 50 percent of the enrolled international students came from a single country in Asia. However, given the institution's proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America, tied to a commitment from the institution to enroll more students from the Western Hemisphere, international student enrollment from this region increased over time by 66 percent. This involved more aggressive recruitment activity, developing partnerships with specific college-going high schools, and a commitment to meeting a student's demonstrated financial need. Conducting a careful examination of institutional, national, and global data is a critical step to take before making decisions about if, where, and how to invest in growing international student enrollment.

Adult Learners

Another source of enrollment diversification tied to sustainability pertains to the part-time or full-time adult learner population. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2022, more than two-thirds of adult learners were employed either full-time or part-time while pursuing a bachelor's degree (NCES 2023). Partnering with academic affairs to package existing curriculum into badges, certificates, or credentialing courses can be a cost-effective way to attract adult learners seeking professional development. This strategy leverages current offerings to create new enrollment opportunities. This is where two-year institutions or adult learner centers at four-year institutions can work to meet the work-life-education balancing needs of this population. For example, one of the authors conducted work at a two-year institution where badge and credentialing programs were created to meet the community's employment needs. The same author had experience with an institution that offered teacher certification courses within the education department, which were scalable with the existing curriculum, resulting in enhanced enrollment. This approach also creates an opportunity to partner with the alumni affairs office. It provides a way to engage alumni who want to develop their professional skills, change careers, and reconnect with faculty, peers, and the institution itself. One of the authors worked at an institution that offered alumni opportunities to return after graduation, post-bachelor's, to take courses at a reduced tuition rate to enhance their career competencies.

Graduate Enrollment

Outside of the undergraduate level, an additional opportunity for enrollment growth lies on the graduate side. A 2024 Council of Graduate Schools report shows that applications and enrollment for both master's and doctoral programs continue to increase (Lanier 2023). Similar to offering new programs at the undergraduate level, collaborating with academic affairs to assess labor market demand or the current graduate school market in the region could lead to enrollment growth through new graduate-level programs. Similarly, in concert with academic affairs, assessing current faculty capacity and expertise should drive the development of graduate programs where demand exists, resulting in additional enrollment revenue. When it comes to graduate courses, an additional consideration is their modality. Online and hybrid courses offer greater flexibility. At one institution, one of the authors worked to build and grow an accelerated M.B.A. program that attracted growing enrollment due to the demand for business degrees in a streamlined cohort format. In two years, the program grew by 23 percent. At the same institution, working with the business school dean, the author helped develop a cohort-based part-time M.B.A. in an executive format that enrolled more than 50 new students in one year. In addition to growing student demand and enrollment, more liberal arts institutions are offering or exploring +1 programs that marry a bachelor's degree to a master's degree, allowing students to earn two degrees over four or five years. Based on one of the author's research, Elon University and Claremont-McKenna College have each meaningfully increased enrollment in specific +1 program offerings.

Student Retention

The last opportunity for building institutional sustainability through new enrollment revenue streams is potentially the most impactful in both the short- and long-term for colleges and universities: increasing student persistence to graduation. In *Sustainability in Higher Education: Stories and Strategies for Transformation*, Barlett and Chase (2013) provide case studies of institutions that were able to positively impact enrollment through increased persistence efforts. First and foremost, student learning and success, whether implicitly or explicitly stated in a mission or vision statement, are fundamental to the purpose of higher education (Birnbaum 1991; Bolman and Deal 1991; Chickering and Reisser 1993; Ewell 1989). Thus, working to improve student persistence is incredibly mission-driven (Kezar and Kinzie 2006). From a value proposition brand perspective, increased student persistence most often equates to more students having a positive experience at the institution. Those students (and their influencers, such as peers, parents, supporters, teachers, and high school counselors) are then more likely to promote the school, boosting the value proposition and often resulting in greater interest from prospective students within those spheres of influence. Fiscal sustainability via direct tuition, room, and board revenue is enhanced as well if more current students remain enrolled at the institution. Research studies show it costs more to recruit a new student than it does to retain a current one, making a focus on student retention economically efficient (Cuseo 2010). Finally, while ideally not the primary driver for institutional attention to student retention, rankings agencies have shifted their methodologies in recent years to recognize and reward institutions that are successful in retaining and graduating students (particularly students from low-income households). For example, within the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings guide, 42 percent of a national institution's rank is tied to persistence and graduation rates (Morse and Brooks 2025). While the role of rankings in student behavior regarding college choice can be debated, strengthening these metrics through an improved student experience, which involves partnerships between student life and academic affairs, has the effect of benefiting students and serving the institutional mission while enhancing institutional brand perception and revenue. At two institutions, one of the authors, working in collaboration with campus partners, contributed to an increase in student persistence, resulting in the highest first-year retention rate in the institution's history. At one institution, first-year persistence increased from 86 percent to 90 percent and at another from 90 percent to 94 percent. At each institution, the growth in enrollment resulting from increased student persistence returned over an additional $1 million in tuition revenue.

Professional Resilience and Growth

To be truly resilient, institutions must embrace a holistic approach to enrollment management that reflects a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional factors that impact student enrollment. Enrollment strategy and institutional strategy must be integrated, and all institutional leaders, not just those with "enrollment" in their title, must ensure that the areas they lead are actively engaged in creating the conditions that support both new student enrollment and the retention and graduation of current students.

That said, enrollment managers wear many hats, often serving as their institution's chief revenue generation officer, responsible for financial sustainability. It's a high-pressure role that demands expertise in data analysis, branding, technology, fundraising, compliance, and more. As Basko (2022) reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Educatio*n, enrollment management is "perhaps the toughest job in campus administration" (Basko 2022). Beyond enrollment strategy, today's leaders must understand curriculum trends, labor market demands, and institutional perception. This requires a broad skill set, balancing deep content expertise with a generalist's adaptability.

To build professional resilience, enrollment leaders need:

- A clear, mission-driven vision that resonates across campus leadership
- Institutional thinking, ensuring enrollment strategy aligns with broader decision-making
- Analytical and strategic skills, combined with curiosity and openness to new ideas
- Strong leadership and team development, motivating and supporting staff through challenges
- Resilient enrollment managers lead with purpose, adapt to uncertainty, and invest in their teams—ensuring both institutional success and personal sustainability.

Professional Growth

Many of the aforementioned competencies cannot be mastered without perhaps the most critical skill required for professional resilience: self-awareness. By gaining a deeper understanding of their strengths and areas for growth, and then engaging in relevant professional development, enrollment managers position themselves to serve their institution and team more effectively. As cited by Goleman in *Harvard Business Review*, emotional intelligence, or understanding one's emotions, reactions, strengths, weaknesses, and impact on others, has tremendous benefits for any leader, including the enrollment manager (Goleman 2004). Improved communication, better emotional regulation, strengthened decision-making, and the capacity to create a more positive work environment are a few of the benefits that come with enhanced self-awareness (Goleman 1996).

Whether through feedback from performance evaluations, formal and informal 360-degree assessments, or the use of tools like Clifton Strengths, Hogan, or DISC, the enrollment manager can gain important insights about their skills, performance, and the perceptions of others. This self-awareness enables a more informed approach to identifying and engaging in professional development opportunities. If done with transparency, it also sends a powerful message to the team. One of the authors collaborated with a high-performing enrollment leader who sought to develop an even greater level of self-awareness by the end of their first year and proactively requested a 360-degree assessment. The leader's openness in not only requesting feedback from direct and skip-level reports, but also in sharing the findings—both affirming and challenging—with the whole team, played an important part in shifting the culture of the office to one that embraced feedback as normal and professional development as valuable and expected.

It is that kind of behavior from an enrollment manager that fosters a cultural ethos that supports professional development and advancement opportunities for all team members. This also requires a financial commitment to professional development for all staff members, such that they have opportunities to participate in conferences, workshops, coaching, and training. Additionally, building professional development programs within the enrollment management unit itself can support the professional resilience and growth of both the team as a whole and its individual members. For example, at one institution where one of the authors worked, they developed an Emerging Leaders program for high-achieving, less experienced professionals. This cohort program exposed the group to other institutional leaders on topics such as finance, human resources, diversity, and IT. Program participants also engaged in learning experiences that focused on self-awareness, decision-making, and various leadership approaches and styles. Finally, the group explored the higher education landscape and current headwinds, providing a broader context for their work and contributing to their professional resilience. The outcome of these efforts was that the enrollment management area had the lowest employee turnover of any area at the institution.

Ensuring professional development for staff members as well as for enrollment management leadership is critical not only for individual professional growth but also for institutional resilience. Staffing issues are at a critical point nationally as expectations of the current workforce have changed during and since the global pandemic. Data from the 2023 College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) report on staff retention suggest that burnout and voluntary staff attrition from higher education institutions is at a high-water mark (Bichsel, *et al*. 2023). Indeed, 36 percent of staff surveyed who work in enrollment management indicated that they were likely or very likely to look for other employment within the next twelve months, second only to student life staff at 39 percent (Bichsel, *et al*. 2023).

Further, the study determined that supervisors in higher education were "less likely to seek other employment if they have more power to advocate for their staff, receive more resources and support in their supervisory roles, receive adequate management training, and have more power to allow flexible schedules for their staff." Thus, building professional resilience by investing in the professional development and empowerment of leaders on campus, including enrollment managers, is not only in the best interest of the individual; rather, it helps to build institutional resilience through minimizing attrition of those leaders. Unfortunately, in the authors' experiences in higher education, professional development may often be one of the first areas to be cut when budgets are tight. Presidents, CFOs, CHROs, and other institutional leaders should carefully consider the short- and long-term effects of eliminating investment in the professional development of enrollment management leaders.

Personal Resilience

Being an enrollment manager in higher education today is not for the faint of heart. It is a taxing job, also coined by Eric Hoover at *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as "the hottest seat on campus" (Hoover 2014). Exceeding enrollment headcount targets can result in unexpected strains on campus infrastructure—too few rooms and beds in residence halls, too few faculty for introductory-level classes, not enough space and staffing in dining halls—that can leave colleagues across campus, students, and their parents frustrated and scrambling. Falling short on enrollment targets, particularly net revenue targets, may result in financial strain on the institution. At tuition-dependent institutions, enrollment managers may feel responsible for people's livelihoods. Both authors have been asked by staff members outside of the enrollment units at different institutions whether their teams would achieve enrollment targets, as the employees were concerned about losing their jobs if not. The weight some enrollment managers carry can indeed make it difficult for them to leave the office.

Hence, given the previously mentioned headwinds in higher education today and the stressors associated with enrollment management, developing an intentional focus on practices that strengthen personal resilience is essential for success. Resilience is not only about bouncing back quickly from adversity; it is also about carving out time and space to actively recover, reflect on, and learn from whatever the challenge was. Rather than simply "plowing through" or completely disengaging and then moving on, by practicing active recovery, one returns stronger than before. In *The Power of Full Engagement*, Loehr and Schwartz (2003) address the neuroscience of resilience, suggesting that it is something that can be developed over time through certain practices. We can categorize resilience practices into four primary areas: mindset, physical health, mental and emotional health, and social connections.

Mindset

Having a positive mindset isn't just about seeing the glass half full. *The New York Times* bestselling author of *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor (2010) cites through his own and others' research that if you can raise someone's level of positivity in the present, their brain experiences something called a "happiness advantage." According to Achor, the brain performs significantly better in a positive state than it does in negative, neutral, or stressed states. Also, your intelligence rises; your creativity rises; your energy level rises; and your resilience rises. Enrollment managers, through a mindset shift that can be developed by simple practices like gratitude journaling, can strengthen their ability to feel greater agency. This helps them view tough situations as interesting challenges to be overcome, rather than overwhelming obstacles over which they feel powerless. The approach sets the tone for team members as well and, with other favorable circumstances, has the potential to lead to a more positive work environment, a greater sense of empowerment among employees, and stronger staff retention.

Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the attention being paid to the importance of personal resilience, particularly in terms of physical health, mental and emotional well-being, and social connections. We know that regular physical exercise can strengthen neural pathways and result in a stronger ability to adapt and manage stress. Outdoor activity has been shown to be even more effective in strengthening cognitive function; getting up from the computer and walking around campus for fifteen minutes can result in greater focus and increased productivity (Boere, *et al.* 2023). In addition, practicing mindfulness and meditation techniques—as simple as short, deep breathing exercises in stressful situations or before bed—can improve emotional regulation and support adequate sleep. This allows the enrollment manager, who often faces frequent challenges outside their control, to respond and adapt to stressful situations without overreacting. During the pandemic, one of the authors worked at an institution in New York, a state acutely impacted by the virus. Recognizing the mental health consequences of the situation, the governor's office partnered with Headspace, a mindfulness company, to offer free meditation and mindfulness content through their application to all state residents. Further, the author's institution also purchased and made available a mental health application with direct links to virtual counseling services.

Given the level of isolation people felt, the ability to find community and camaraderie in a largely virtual work environment was crucial for success (Hwang, *et al.* 2020). Being personally adaptive and flexible with team members showed the importance of care for others and helped sustain enrollment managers and their teams professionally. Institutions that provided flexibility showed lower levels of employee turnover and higher levels of morale (O2 Employment Services n.d.; Center for Human Capital Innovation n.d.)

Post-pandemic, it remains crucial to ensure that enrollment managers maintain strong social connections, as the role can be particularly isolating. One of the authors, recognizing this need from her own time as a chief enrollment management officer (CEMO), created an executive leadership circle for those still in the role. This confidential group meets monthly to focus on professional and leadership development, peer coaching, and building a strong, regular base of support with others facing similar pressures and experiences.

Mentors and Coaches

Personal resilience for enrollment managers can also be assisted by enlisting the help of a mentor(s) or, in some cases, a coach. These individuals provide support and guidance for the enrollment manager objectively, outside of the day-to-day stressors. Mentors or coaches can help ensure an enrollment manager remains elevated above distracting noise and outside of the weeds of a prospective challenge, while providing guidance and expertise.

Mentors often share similar professional backgrounds with the enrollment manager and can offer a wealth of experience, wisdom, and knowledge. They may be a previous supervisor, another leader within their own institution, or perhaps someone the enrollment manager has met at a conference or through a professional organization. Having a mentor, or a network of mentors (some refer to this as their own "advisory board") can be particularly helpful when seeking advice and guidance in enrollment management content areas or institutional organizational dynamics.

Leadership or executive coaches play a slightly different role. Rather than giving advice, effective coaching begins with the belief that clients are capable, resourceful, and deeply knowledgeable about their own personal and professional growth. The coach's role is to draw out this wisdom by fostering curiosity, asking insightful questions, and offering gentle challenges that inspire the client to expand into their fullest potential. Coaches may or may not have content-specific knowledge of the client's area of expertise; rather, they are more focused on building the foundational skills, as defined by the client, to raise their performance. Executive coaching is shown to have positive effects on cognitive behavioral activities, self-efficacy, and resilience, among other outcomes (Nicolau, *et al.* 2023). One author sought an executive coach to strengthen executive presence and confidence in working more directly with a board of trustees for the first time. She attributes, in part, the success in advancing a major institutional pricing initiative at that institution, which required a trustee vote, to the effective board collaboration skills and leadership presence developed in her work with an executive coach. Now, as a certified executive coach, the same author works with enrollment managers, sometimes as a coach and other times as a strategic advisor.

The other author worked with an executive coach for several years, who provided feedback on maintaining a broad-based perspective when facing challenges. The coach also supported the author in developing consistent strategies to achieve a better work-life balance. For example, in one operational instance, the coach encouraged an analysis of data regarding enrollment deposit trends that influenced the decision to admit more students from the waitlist, despite others who recommended not taking that action and sticking to the original plan. The outcome resulted in the achievement of the institutional enrollment target. This same executive coach also assisted the author in approaching work with greater empathy for others, helping them better understand the perspectives of others. This resulted in greater adaptability and better management of work stressors, knowing the author could lean on someone else, thus building a more personally resilient toolkit.

Conclusion

In today's challenging higher education landscape, successful enrollment managers must cultivate the three-legged stool of resilience across institutional, professional, and personal dimensions—often simultaneously while creating and fostering numerous campus partnerships. Navigating the intersection of institutional and professional resilience requires entrepreneurial thinking and creative problem-solving, both within and beyond the realm of enrollment management. This includes developing diverse institutional and enrollment strategies while fostering leadership and professional growth. Equally important is balancing professional and personal resilience, which means leading, motivating, and managing teams effectively through training and empowering staff while prioritizing personal well-being. Ultimately, the interplay between institutional and personal resilience entails a strategic vision for institutional sustainability, embracing innovative approaches, and maintaining flexibility and adaptability in the face of resistance and stressors. True success lies in maintaining this delicate balance: driving institutional resilience and sustainability, strengthening professional resilience, and developing a mindset and practices that ensure personal resilience.

To add to this, achieving true resilience requires institutions to take a holistic approach to enrollment management—one that recognizes enrollment as a shared responsibility across the campus. No enrollment leader should have to "go it alone."

The most effective institutions foster cross-campus collaboration, where, for example:

- provosts and faculty align academic programs and pedagogy with student needs and market demand;
- student life teams use data to enhance belonging and engagement; and
- CFOs prioritize facilities that support learning, safety, and community.

When all stakeholders embrace their role in student enrollment and success—partnering with a strong, resilient enrollment leader—institutions position themselves for sustainable growth and long-term viability.

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Laurie Koehler, Principal and Founder of Koehler Consulting, LLC, is based in the Washington, D.C. area, and is an innovative strategist and transformative leader with more than 25 years of experience in enrollment management, retention, and marketing. Koehler now uses her expertise as a consultant, strategist, executive coach, advisor, and facilitator for colleges and universities, their leaders, and teams.

Koehler previously served as vice president for marketing and enrollment strategy at Ithaca College, where she was part of the president's senior team. She also spent six years at George Washington University, where her success in delivering positive results and guiding teams led to multiple expansions of her portfolio. Koehler also held roles at Bryn Mawr College, Miami University, Cornell University, and the University of Virginia, where she earned her B.A. and M.Ed. degrees.

John Haller

John Haller, Ed.D., is a higher education consultant and professor. Most recently, he served as the Special Assistant to the President, Strategic Initiatives at Denison University. For ten years, he served as the vice president of enrollment management and new student strategies at the University of Miami. At Miami, he led the shift from a merit-based financial aid strategy to a hybrid model that meets 100 percent of students' demonstrated financial need. Also, the institution realized a 30 percent-plus increase in applications and a 50 percent-plus increase in yield. The institution realized a decrease in student indebtedness ($10,000) and the highest freshman retention (94 percent) and six-year graduation rates in the university's history (82 percent).

Dr. Haller also served as the associate provost for enrollment management at Saint Joseph's University and had roles in student success at Drexel University, M.B.A. admissions at Vanderbilt University, and undergraduate admissions at Denison University. He is an honors graduate in economics and statistics from the University of Michigan, received master's degrees in business and higher education, and earned his Ed.D. in higher education from the University of Pennsylvania.