

Pioneers and Pacesetters: The Faces of SEM

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The Pioneers and Pacesetters introduced here represent the architects, scholars, association leaders, consultants, and campus executives who collectively turned enrollment from a set of disconnected, often intuition-driven, functions into enterprise-wide, evidence-informed strategy linking recruitment, pricing and aid, student services, retention, and learner success. Across five decades, these individuals coined the language, wrote the foundational texts and theories, built the first SEM organizations and conferences, undertook the research, professionalized the field, advanced data analytics and planning frameworks, and translated SEM into practice and scholarship across sectors—from community colleges, regional campuses, and flagship publics to private universities and colleges, graduate and professional programs, as well as system-level organizations.

Documenting them matters because SEM's history is also higher education's recent history: how colleges responded to demographic shifts, competition, affordability pressures, equity imperatives, access, and accountability for outcomes. Capturing who shaped the ideas, the infrastructure, and the norms preserves institutional memory, credits often-invisible leadership, and gives today's practitioners a clearer lineage of concepts and choices that still govern how campuses pursue access, sustainability, and student success.

Their biographies focus on their contributions to SEM, not their degrees, not always their institutions or titles, not all of their publications, or offices held in associations or on boards. These are thumbnail sketches designed to communicate how what they did made a difference in what SEM is today: what they pioneered or what pace they set. They are treated as equals—each gets the same amount of copy, each is a thread in the SEM tapestry. SEM wouldn't be the same without each of them.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years of SEM, today's rising generation of SEM leaders, researchers, and practitioners—who are already shaping the field—will create and advance the future practices and scholarship of this still-nascent profession. This next generation will bring fresh perspectives, bold ideas, and an enthusiasm that will carry SEM into territories still not imagined—and it is their hands that will ultimately write the next chapter of this field's history. The pioneers and pacesetters are bound to those who rise today by a shared commitment to excellence and discovery in celebration of not only where SEM has been, but the extraordinary places it will reach.

As we look ahead to the next 50 years of SEM, we look forward to the “propellers” – the rising generation of SEM leaders, researchers, and practitioners who are already shaping the field and will revolutionize the future practices and scholarship of this still-nascent profession. These propellers bring fresh perspectives, bold ideas, and an enthusiasm that will carry SEM into territories we have yet to imagine — and it is their hands that will ultimately write the next chapter

of this field's story. The pioneers, pacesetters, and propellers are bound together by a shared commitment to excellence and discovery, and we are proud to celebrate not only where SEM has been, but the extraordinary places SEM will reach.

The task of identifying such a list of pioneers and pacesetters is fraught with the anxiety of leaving somebody out. The authors have sought input from multiple colleagues to check the list for missing or forgotten individuals. Those colleagues' good counsel has helped immeasurably in the effort to ensure the list is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. Apologies are due in advance for any remaining omissions.

Read on to meet some of the most interesting individuals in the last 50 years of enrollment management.

* Featured in an interview published in AACRAO's *College & University Journal*

Thomas Abrahamson served in senior admissions and enrollment management positions at DePaul University in Chicago from 1985 to 1994. During his time there, he developed and implemented one of the nation's first sophisticated enrollment management and marketing divisions. For 22 years, he worked at Lipman Hearne, serving as president of its enrollment management division. He co-authored a chapter, "Applying Marketing Strategies in Student Recruitment" in *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments* and co-authored the book, *Net Proceeds: Increased Revenues from Enrollment and Advancement. Guaranteed!*

Janie Barnett served AACRAO for nearly 21 years, retiring in 2019 as Associate Executive Director. With a style described as "passionate, energetic, quick-thinking whirling dervish meets pragmatism, leadership, organization, and aplomb," she played a major role in taking AACRAO from struggling to thriving during her tenure, touching on the areas of meetings, professional development, membership, corporate partners, international relations, and more. That included support for growing the annual SEM Conference to record attendance and nurturing the SEM Endorsement Program, always ensuring that SEM would be a pillar of AACRAO.

J. Victor Baldridge was a prominent higher education researcher and professor at UCLA and Stanford University in the 1970-1980s, with expertise in campus governance and conflict. He was an enrollment management pioneer, co-authoring a seminal book, *Strategies for Effective Enrollment Management* (1982), which created a platform to manage the era's enrollment crisis. The authors called for a comprehensive strategic planning approach, identified a range of organizational options, gave a voice to retention, and advocated for institutional quality. Their work laid a foundation for the SEM scholars and practitioners who followed them.

Ernest Beals was a regional director of the College Board who had a major role in bringing SEM to a national audience. He organized two College Board sponsored conferences which created a pragmatic model of best practice sessions to appeal to more institutions. After moving to Georgia State University as dean of admissions, he served as the first chair of AACRAO's enrollment management committee where he implemented AACRAO University as a conference within a

conference. Most significantly, he was then named a member of the founding committee that created the AACRAO SEM conference.

John P. Bean was a prominent higher education researcher and scholar at Indiana University. His research focus was on student retention and outcomes, and he frequently published in major research journals, which he also served as a consulting editor. He co-authored and edited *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments* (1990), which was the first enrollment management book to be published by a major publishing house (Jossey-Bass). It immediately sparked increased interest in SEM and spurred adoption by more institutions. Bean was an invited presenter at the first AACRAO SEM conference.

Jim Black* began his work in SEM at small colleges and is the founder of the National Conference on Retention in Small Colleges. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, he developed a comprehensive SEM structure and plan with full engagement by the academic colleges of the university. His experiences and his presentation skills were a perfect combination for plenaries, keynotes, workshops, and presentations, as well as multiple publications, including *Strategic Enrollment Management Revolution* (2001) for AACRAO. He served as director of the SEM conference from 1998-2003. He left AACRAO to form a private consulting firm.

Jon Boeckenstedt is widely regarded as one of the most influential data analysts and thought leaders in enrollment management. He is perhaps best known for his blog, *Manage by the Numbers*, where he demystified complex enrollment data and made it accessible to practitioners across the field, challenging conventional wisdom on topics like standardized testing, college rankings, and tuition discounting. Boeckenstedt also contributed to a SEM culture of transparency and evidence-based thinking, pushing enrollment managers to question assumptions and rely on honest interpretation of data rather than trends or anecdotes.

Bob Bontrager was a successful SEM practitioner at Oregon State University, but his most significant impact on SEM was at the national level as an influential thought leader. He served as the assistant executive director of AACRAO for SEM initiatives from 2006-2015 during which he chaired the AACRAO SEM conference, launched AACRAO consulting as a major association service, and extended AACRAO SEM's reach internationally. He co-developed the SEM Frameworks concept for process, structure, and planning and co-edited the seminal *Handbook of SEM*. He was a mentor to many on this list and to many who will contribute in the future.

John M. Braxton has built his career as a professor at Vanderbilt's Peabody College advancing the scholarly and practical foundations of SEM. His research on college persistence has addressed and advanced SEM's core retention pillar. With Don Hossler, he established a framework for connecting the needs of enrollment professionals with the work of higher education researchers. His research on the institutionalization of SEM demonstrated the wide adoption of SEM structures across higher education sectors. Through his body of work, he stands as one of the most influential voices bridging SEM research and institutional practice.

Guilbert Brown is the rare budget officer who understands SEM, and he could translate "budget-ese" to "SEM-ese". He served as chief budget officer at multiple institutions through a 30 year career in which he became increasingly proficient in, and supportive of, SEM. He was the co-author of a major AACRAO SEM book, *SEM and Institutional Success: Integrating Enrollment, Finance, and*

Student Access. He presented his blended approach to finance and SEM at AACRAO, as well as national business (NACUBO), research (AIR), and planning (SCUP) organizations.

Kimberley Buster-Williams has a 30-year track record of SEM success at multiple institutions, making her a nationally recognized practitioner. She is currently an integral leader in innovative SEM work at George Washington University, focused on retention and learner success initiatives. Since 2016, she has also served as Assistant Director of the SEM Endorsement Program and is an AACRAO senior consultant, as well as a frequent SEM presenter and author. Reflecting her passion for both SEM and higher education history, she is the author of a valuable reference work: *History of American Higher Education: A Primer for Enrollment Managers*.

Marc M. Camille became president of Albertus Magnus college after serving as a nationally recognized senior SEM officer at multiple Catholic and private colleges. He has achieved spectacular SEM success as president at Albertus with a 54% enrollment increase and designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution. His mission-driven approach to enrollment prioritizes serving underrepresented students and reframes institutional success around student outcomes. He is the author of "Ethics and Strategic Enrollment Management" in the *Handbook of Strategic Enrollment Management*. Camille epitomizes the moniker of "SEM president."

Frank Campanella was the first to use the phrase "enrollment management" in a 1974 memo at Boston College. He was a new executive vice president, charged with addressing the college's dire enrollment and financial crisis. In the memo, he outlined a new approach that would put admissions, financial aid, and registrar into a combined operation. Of the 15 people receiving the memo, 14 were opposed; only one liked it: the newly minted admissions dean and former physics professor, Jack Maguire. Campanella got approval from his president and moved forward with the plan, centralizing the three operations under Maguire to implement.

Douglas L. Christiansen is Vanderbilt University's chief enrollment strategist and a nationally recognized SEM leader in enrollment strategy, access, equity, and revenue modeling. Under his leadership, Vanderbilt has grown significantly in both selectivity and diversity. In 2009, he spearheaded "Opportunity Vanderbilt" — a groundbreaking no-loan financial aid program that has raised over \$183 million and reduced student borrowing by 73 percent, becoming a model for universities across the country. He has served as chair of the Board of Trustees for the College Board, and sat on the National Task Force on Admissions in the 21st Century.

Tom Colaner was the regional director of ACT in Ohio for 35 years. He was instrumental in designing ACT's Enrollment Information Service (EIS) that provided institutions with marketing and yield data by population segments using ACT data. Ohio's ACT council also sponsored an annual conference, which Colaner used as a model for the first national ACT Enrollment Planners conference in 1986. Its success was an impetus to AACRAO's SEM programming, and Colaner was a member of the committee that created AACRAO's first SEM conference, intended to be in partnership with ACT. The AACRAO Board presciently decided on sole sponsorship.

Paul Combe was the financial aid officer in Maguire's "Grand Design" team at Boston College (BC). He redirected aid to new students instead of reserving it for continuing students. He co-authored "An Econometric Model for Packaging Financial Aid" (1983), which explained and embraced a new financial aid philosophy for BC. He later became President & CEO of American Student Assistance

and held leadership roles with NASFAA centered on need analysis standards and delivery. He has dedicated his career to making student debt more manageable by advocating for nonprofit education debt management and advocacy services.

Michael Dolence was one of enrollment management's most innovative thinkers; and as he began working with AACRAO, his influence was in many ways transformational. His strategic planning background put the "Strategic" in enrollment management. His early legendary workshops and plenary sessions helped make AACRAO the professional association for SEM. He was a founder of the AACRAO SEM conference and wrote the first AACRAO SEM publication, the 1993 *SEM Primer*, introducing the foundational concept of "SEM in the academic context". His second AACRAO book, *Cases from the Field* (1996), showcased rising SEM stars and programs.

William (Bill) F. Elliott served Carnegie-Mellon University for 38 years as one of the first vice presidents for enrollment in the US. He played a pivotal role in CMU's transformation from a regional technical school into a globally recognized institution. His emphasis was on both financial aid and recruitment of underrepresented students. Elliott is widely credited with laying the conceptual groundwork for what is now known as financial aid leveraging and founding CMU's Summer Academy for Math and Science (SAMS) for underrepresented minority students. Many SEM practitioners visited Carnegie-Mellon for tutorials from Elliott.

Brent Gage* is the associate vice president for enrollment management at the University of Iowa. Throughout his career at multiple four-year institutions, he has transformed recruitment and processes to grow enrollment and created significant operational efficiencies. Gage is nationally recognized in the development and implementation of predictive analytics to shape enrollment while minimizing institutional costs. He is a highly popular and effective presenter and contributor to the SEM literature. His SEM consulting with AACRAO has provided exceptionally insightful and useful guidance at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

John Gardner* has been called "a household name" in student success. As the founder of the "First Year Experience" movement, he has put students and their support at the core of American higher education. His work in building support and success for first-year, second-year, transfer, and senior-year students was foundational to making retention coherent, strategic, and essential in colleges and universities. In turn, his passion for students was a major impetus for student success as a pillar of SEM. He holds 12 honorary doctorates, and, in 1998, he was named by *Change* magazine as one of 11 national "agenda-setters" in higher education.

Luisa M. Havens Gerardo* serves as the Vice President for Enrollment Management at the University of Texas at Arlington. She has held executive leadership roles at Virginia Tech, Florida International University, and the University of Texas at El Paso. She has worked tirelessly to expand pathways for diverse and underrepresented populations, including transfer students, veterans, low-income, and first-generation students. She is a sought-after national voice on topics ranging from data-informed enrollment strategies to institutional transformation initiatives, process reengineering, and leadership development.

Eric S. Godfrey co-authored the landmark 1980 "Enrollment Management: A New Vehicle for Institutional Renewal" (*College Board Review*), a case study of the enrollment management program introduced at California State University at Long Beach. The work developed a

systematic approach from concept to process to outcome, identifying major functions and activities associated with enrollment management and positioning them within four functional groupings. This was one of the early frameworks that helped define enrollment management as a formal discipline in higher education, significantly influencing future work.

Jay Goff* earned his SEM credentials with his extraordinary contributions to the successful rebranding of the University of Missouri-Rolla as the Missouri University of Science and Technology. He took that expertise to a successful run at St. Louis University and then to George Washington University where he is pioneering the incorporation of career services into SEM to strengthen learner success. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated an uncanny ability to hire excellent staff and make them even better. He is a prolific presenter at national conferences with a reputation for packed content and packed ballrooms.

Jody Gordon* is the rare SEM professional who has an equally deep understanding of both Canadian and US enrollment management, allowing her to apply elements of each to her SEM planning work. Her background as a chief student affairs officer also informs her commitment to learner success. As AACRAO's senior managing consultant, she has worked with institutions in both Canada and the US, as well as internationally, with particular success in community college systems. She is co-author of two books in the AACRAO SEM Trilogy and is a prolific SEM conference presenter. She was the first recipient of the SEM Award of Excellence in 2009.

Melanie Gottlieb* is the executive director of AACRAO, and the first woman to hold the position in its 126-year history. In service to SEM, her leadership focuses on policies and technologies for solutions that support and improve the success of “new normal” learners, those with increasingly diverse life experiences, who take nonlinear pathways to learning. She is a passionate advocate for equitable transfer learner and credit mobility, practices that achieve it, as well as the tools and policies to sustain it. In her role at AACRAO, she also brings a national voice to support assessment and recognition of prior learning credentials.

Susan Gottheil was a SEM leader in Canada where she contributed significantly to the literature, emphasizing the comparative differences between SEM in Canada and in the US. She was a co-founder of the Canadian SEM Summit to promote SEM in the Canadian context. However, she was also instrumental in introducing her American colleagues to Canadian SEM approaches such as the emphasis on partnership between faculty and learners in student success. Her insights and intellect contributed in major ways to the SEM literature generally, as did her leadership as co-coordinator of the AACRAO SEM conference.

A. Steven Graff was a College Board regional director who was instrumental in introducing enrollment management to a broader national audience in the 1980s. The College Board had published Don Hossler's first enrollment management book in 1984, and Graff partnered with Hossler that same year to organize the first conference to have “enrollment management” in its title. The conference brought together researchers and practitioners to discuss this new topic in a systematic way. The 1986 conference coincided with the College Board publication of Hossler's second book. The conferences were discontinued after 1987.

Kenneth C. Green began his career as a higher education researcher at UCLA/HERI where he co-authored the 1982 book *Strategies for Effective Enrollment Management*, a major early part of the

SEM literature. It was instrumental in introducing enrollment management to a broader audience. Among other areas, it advocated for a student affairs role in retention, stating presciently, "Once students are enrolled, student life is a key element keeping them enrolled." In the 1990s Green became one of the leading national authorities on technology and computing in higher education.

Tom Green is a successful SEM practitioner who became a major SEM thought leader on SEM planning, learner success, and financial aid analysis. He co-created the SEM Frameworks concept to guide SEM process, structure, and planning. He was part of the original AACRAO consulting team, and led AACRAO's multiple SEM programs, including consulting and the SEM conference, from 2015-2022. His expertise extended SEM's reach through partnerships with major national foundations for community college SEM planning for adult learners and equity, as well as computerized learning records (CLR) to assist learner engagement and success.

Fred Hargadon was that individual who is sometimes so far ahead of their time that their work anticipates concepts and structures not yet imagined. "Dean Fred" should be recognized as that precursor for SEM. Given his years as dean of admissions at Swarthmore College, Stanford University, and Princeton University, The New York Times called him "the dean of deans" in 1964. He recruited Black students in the 1960s. He pioneered holistic review at Stanford. He created no-loan financial aid programs at Princeton. His legendary admit letters began with a breezy "Yes!" When his classes arrived on campus, he made sure they **knew** that **he** knew them.

Joe Head* was director of admissions at Kennesaw State University and chaired an AACRAO task force on credentialing in 1995-96 that recommended the association provide certification for professional development. When the national association declined the recommendation, Head developed the certification program through Georgia ACRAO. He continued to advocate for the concept at the national level, and in 2012, AACRAO created an endorsement program for AACRAO members working in SEM. He then served as the first director of the SEM Endorsement Program (SEM-EP) from 2012 through 2016.

Stanley E. Henderson* was AACRAO's first vice president for enrollment management, where he chaired the founding committee of the AACRAO SEM conference. His many contributions to the SEM literature include one of the first histories of SEM, a C & U article on SEM in the academic context, and co-authoring two books in the AACRAO SEM Trilogy. His SEM practice includes innovative one-stop service and integration of SEM and student affairs units to build community and a sense of belonging. He was an original AACRAO senior consultant and received an AACRAO Lifetime Achievement Award for "Outstanding Leadership in the SEM Profession."

Don Hossler*, a professor, researcher, and administrator at Indiana University, is the academic voice of SEM. His 1984, 1986, and 1990 books gave SEM its academic grounding with definitions, concepts, and models growing out of his research. He was the co-originator of the first enrollment management conferences sponsored by the College Board and became a mainstay in the AACRAO SEM conferences as plenary speaker and presenter. His research contributions have continued, and today he is recognized as the "SEM Guru". Rising SEM professionals regularly greet him at conferences with "I quoted you in my dissertation."

Cedric Howard, currently vice chancellor at Seattle Colleges, came to SEM through student affairs and exhibits the ties to both fields through prioritization of learner achievement with measurable results. In his vice presidential role at SUNY-Fredonia, he implemented and sustained its SEM plan to achieve a 30% enrollment increase, garnering national media attention. His commitment to building partnerships, whether with campus colleagues or in the community, is deep and the results are extraordinary. This comes as the result of an inherent ability to inspire trust in his interactions, whether as a day-to-day colleague or as a consultant.

Thomas Huddleston* has been called the "Godfather" of SEM because of his focus on marketing and communications as the organizing medium of enrollment efforts. He has never used the term "enrollment management", but throughout his career, he has developed organizational structures that incorporate what might be called "classical enrollment management" with emphasis on the holistic learner experience. This emphasis made him one of the first to assign accountability for retention to specific staff. At the University of Central Florida, he was instrumental in the design of transfer partnerships to facilitate learner success.

Betty Huff has a rich experience with building SEM organizations. She was a founding leader at Cal State-San Marcos where she created an enrollment services framework and developed the campus's SEM plan. She also implemented enterprise-wide SEM organizations at the University of Memphis and UC-Santa Barbara. Internationally she brought her organizational development and evaluation expertise to reviews of CSU partners in Japan and China. As editor-in-chief of *College & University* journal, she worked to foster more faculty research and broaden understanding of how AACRAO members could strategically contribute in the academic context.

William Ihlanfeldt served as director of undergraduate admission and financial aid and then as dean of admission and financial aid at Northwestern University, where he radically changed the approach to student recruitment and admission. He introduced the concept of blind admission, considering a student without regard to family financial need. He also was a pioneer in the recruitment of marginalized and underrepresented groups. In 1980, he authored a book entitled, *Achieving Optimal Enrollments and Tuition Revenues: A Guide to Modern Methods of Market Research, Student Recruitment, and Institutional Pricing*.

Scott Ingold served as associate vice president of enrollment management and registrar at the University of Miami and an adjunct in Education. He attended the first AACRAO SEM conference in 1991 and became interested in a SEM grad program after talking with the conference's co-founder, Ernie Beals. He subsequently collaborated with Paul Orehovec in enrollment management to create the first SEM graduate credentials in the U.S. in 1999, informed by SEM principles of strategic vision, learner success, and data-informed decision-making. The SEM-infused program expanded to an executive EdD in higher education in 2011.

Doris Ingersoll was a co-founder of The Enrollment Management Center, Inc., a private consulting firm that worked with many of the earliest institutions implementing enrollment management. The firm has worked with over 500 colleges and universities to create and develop their enrollment management programs to more effectively meet the goals of the institution. She was co-editor and contributing author for the 2012 AACRAO SEM book, *Strategic Enrollment Management*:

Transforming Higher Education, where she focused on change management and constructive conflict cultures in SEM.

Ronald Ingersoll is a pioneer in enrollment management and served as President of the Enrollment Management Center, where he worked with many early schools launching enrollment management efforts. He was among the first practitioners to take a systematic, data-oriented approach to enrollment management. His 1988 book, *The Enrollment Problem: Proven Management Techniques*, was one of the first publications to address enrollment management as an enterprise-wide effort. He was co-editor and contributing author of AACRAO's 2012 SEM book, *Strategic Enrollment Management: Transforming Higher Education*.

Jan Jantzen was the long-time director of admissions at Emporia State University in Kansas in the 1970s who moved to Xavier University in Cincinnati in the late 1980s to remake Xavier's enrollment program. In an effort to capitalize on the university's Jesuit ideals, he recommended a service fellowship to foster community engagement, having a major impact on Xavier's identity and viability. In SEM-world, Xavier became part of a new emphasis on learner success. Jantzen introduced Xavier's approach on the new AACRAO enrollment management committee and gave valuable input to the first AACRAO University and the first SEM conference.

Doris Johnson was the assistant executive director of AACRAO in 1991 and staffed the founding committee that created AACRAO's national SEM conference. She was an active member of the committee, contributing significantly to the final program structure and content. Her notes of the founding meeting are the definitive record of the seminal interactions in the "room where it happened." She was the point person for the conference moving forward with regard to arrangements, budgets and conference registrations. Her final data and budget report were instrumental in the AACRAO board of directors decision to continue the conference.

David Kalsbeek* developed leading edge SEM organizations at St. Louis University and Xavier University, culminating at DePaul University where he created a "cradle to endowment" model of SEM mirroring the learner journey from recruitment to happy alum ready for annual giving. He was a bulwark of the annual AACRAO SEM conferences, delivering plenaries and presentations at nine of the first 10 of these events. His ability to pack data and analysis into his presentations sparked discussion in conference hallways and back home. Today his SEM orientation models (2006-2007) remain the basis for understanding SEM culture.

Stanley J. Kania III is a national presenter on scholarship and practice in graduate enrollment management and a co-editor of the first book published on graduate enrollment management (GEM): *A Comprehensive Guide to Graduate Enrollment Management: Advancing Research and Practice*, which encompasses original research and case studies that focus on the complexities within the field of graduate enrollment management. He is assistant dean of admissions at Drexel University's College of Medicine and previously served as a board member of NAGAP The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management.

Frank R. Kemerer was a prominent scholar in education law and policy who co-authored *Strategies for Effective Enrollment Management*, published by AASCU in 1982. This book was a first introduction to SEM for much of higher education and became a foundational text for many of the first practitioners, who attended author workshops. The book discussed organizing for enrollment

management, linking recruitment and marketing, and staked out a role for retention in SEM. In 1986 he would co-author *Enrollment Management and Its Context* with Don Hossler, offering early definitions of SEM as a process influencing student body make-up.

Christine Kerlin was one of the first SEM practitioners in community colleges (Central Oregon Community College and Everett Community College) and became the first community college contributor to SEM conference sessions and publications. Today, she is a nationally recognized leader and expert in community college SEM. She was co-creator of AACRAO's Essentials of SEM online course and of the LinkEx concept, which positions SEM as an add-in, not an add-on to combat "initiative fatigue". Her publications and presentations are especially invaluable in guiding SEM environmental scanning and data-informed decision making.

Wendy Kilgore is the Senior Director of Research for AACRAO. She has enrollment services experience at both the state community college system and individual institution level, as well as extensive consulting experience across multiple higher education sectors. Her broad-based research expertise and familiarity with emerging trends make her a respected voice in shaping higher education practices and policies. Her series of periodic surveys of chief enrollment management officers, as well as her broader Eye on Research blog, provide invaluable insights and benchmarks for the changing responsibilities and challenges of SEM leaders.

Leonard Kreutner co-authored the landmark 1980 "Enrollment Management: A New Vehicle for Institutional Renewal" (*College Board Review*), a case study of the enrollment management program introduced at California State University at Long Beach. The work developed a systematic approach from concept to process to outcome, identifying major functions and activities that became known as the matrix model of SEM. This early structural model became one used by Kemerer, Baldrige, and Green to illustrate possible approaches to SEM structure and function, significantly influencing future work and helping to define SEM as a formal discipline.

Marsha V. Krotseng was director of planning and institutional research at the University of Hartford (RI) and the co-author of a case study (presented at the first AACRAO SEM conference) in an AACRAO book, *Strategic Enrollment Management: Cases from the Field* (1993). Hartford undertook an early SEM initiative to return to enrollment health. A collaborative university-wide effort created a data-driven system to monitor and analyze all aspects of the enrollment cycle, including, significantly, retention rates. This information flow made the campus SEM proactive, giving meaning to a campus sign quoted in the case: "It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark."

Robert Lay was director of enrollment management research at Boston College under the newly established enrollment management division implemented by Jack Maguire. He is a pioneering figure in the application of market research and data analytics to higher education enrollment management. His work transformed admissions from an intuition-driven process into a data-informed discipline during a critical period of demographic and institutional change. One of Lay's most significant contributions was bringing competitive market analysis to college admissions.

Tomikia LeGrande, before becoming president of Prairie View A & M University, was vice president for strategy, enrollment management, and student success at Virginia Commonwealth University where she demonstrated extraordinary leadership in strategic positioning of the university and its

emphasis on learner success. At PVAMU she has continued her SEM emphasis on the learner experience by launching PV Cares, a first in the nation commitment to providing a CARE team to each undergraduate consisting of an academic advisor, a financial aid counselor, and a career coach. She exemplifies the title "SEM President".

Scot Lingrell* was the first Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs for the University System of Georgia where he pioneered one of the first system-level SEM plans in the nation. As a SEM thought leader, he champions data-driven decision-making, cross-agency collaboration, and operating what he describes as "on the bleeding edge"—encouraging enrollment professionals to move beyond best practices and embrace entrepreneurial, forward-thinking strategies to meet the challenges ahead. He was the first recipient of the AACRAO SEM Award of Excellence at four-year institutions in 2009.

Louise Lonabocker* was a member of Jack Maguire's "Grand Design" enrollment management team at Boston College, initially as University Registrar. In 1998, she was appointed Executive Director of Student Services and University Registrar leading Boston College's one-stop organization, which included financial aid, student accounts and related divisions such as student loans and student employment. Lonabocker supported SEM's emphasis on research and data as the Editor-in-Chief of AACRAO's *College & University* journal from 2003 to 2013. She also co-edited AACRAO's *Leadership Lessons: Vision and Values for a New Generation*.

Jerome "Jerry" A. Lucido*, after a career as a successful SEM practitioner, became the founder and executive director of the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy and Practice (CERPP) at the University of Southern California. CERPP is an independent research center serving admissions and enrollment specialists and is committed to fostering equity and expertise in educational access, admissions, and outcomes. The center launched a Leadership in Enrollment Management certificate program for professional development and organized an annual conference for SEM scholars and professionals.

Jack Maguire* is the father of enrollment management. With the support of his vice president, Frank Campanella, this former physics professor created a Boston College team of admissions, financial aid, registrar and research professionals that came together to jointly address marketing, strategic financial aid, and—significantly—retention, all jointly informed by data and research for market prediction and institutional response. This "Grand Design" had outstanding people using the right information in the right organizational structure. As Maguire wrote, "to the organized go the students." It would transform higher education.

Philomena Mantella was an early practitioner of SEM at several private and public universities before joining Northeastern University to oversee enrollment management and student affairs in support of a student-centered mission. She later became senior vice president and CEO of Northeastern's Lifelong Learning Network before being named president of Grand Valley State University (MI). She was always committed to the strategic nature of SEM, writing of the "inextricable bond between the strategic direction of the university and its SEM plan." She was mentored by many of SEM's "founders" and presented at the first SEM conference.

James Maraviglia* was a national pioneer in digitizing SEM. At Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, he built the technology that implemented the university's belief in building relationships and making

connections throughout the student life cycle. His CRM development with a national venture capitalist would eventually include not just e-mail, but video messaging, text messaging, broadcast messaging, instant messaging, VIP microsites, web casting, virtual viewbooks, GPS guided tours, 4G phone apps, and more. Cal Poly became one of the most sought-after CSU campuses, and Maraviglia's innovation remade the voice of SEM.

Robert Massa has practiced and shaped enrollment management in multiple private colleges over his 50 year career. At The Johns Hopkins University, he was one of the first in enrollment management to bring data and research into the enrollment process. His work at Dickinson College changed the face and image of the college. His take on developing SEM plans was a major chapter in AACRAO's 2001 *Strategic Enrollment Management Revolution*. His expertise has made him a spokesperson for SEM in the national media, repeatedly featured in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and on CNN and legacy television networks.

Alicia Moore is vice president for student affairs at Central Oregon Community College and a recognized national SEM contributor of practice and publication. At COCC, she has been a champion for learner success around SEM planning, one-stop services, mandatory pre-advising programs, re-energized orientation, and new facilities, resulting in an 84% enrollment increase. She is an expert and author on communications as a SEM tool for making student connections. She practices what she preaches: her engaging personal communication style connects her to audiences across the country as an acclaimed presenter, mentor, and consultant.

Chris Munoz was deeply involved in the development of SEM through his work at Cal Lutheran University and the University of Dayton and as a presenter and author nationally and a mainstay of AACRAO's SEM conference. His cutting edge approach to recruitment, focused both on targeted marketing and technology, realized remarkable enrollment gains. When he retired from Rice University, his last stop, as vice president, the campus spoke of the "Munoz Effect", which had "literally revolutionized our operation", noting a 107% increase in applications with nearly a third more freshmen of higher quality and greater diversity.

Ray Muston was a University of Iowa researcher and the first to use the phrase "strategic enrollment management" in print in the third book on enrollment management, published by the ACT National Center for the Advancement of Educational Practices and focused on enrollment management practices at state universities. The book is based on a survey of academic and student affairs officers at the largest state university users of ACT data. The study revealed a high degree of role ambiguity and organizational resistance to enrollment management strategies, demonstrating a need for clarity and coordination in organization.

Barmak Nassirian has over 30 years of experience as a nationally-known expert on multiple facets of the higher education sector. His expertise includes institutional finance, academic policy, accreditation, and federal student aid. He served as associate executive director of AACRAO from 1998-2013. He played an instrumental role in raising AACRAO's visibility and influence on Capitol Hill, particularly in relation to federal student aid policy. He was an advisor to many SEM practitioners, who benefitted from his understanding of higher education's federal relations. He was an early supporter of AACRAO Consulting as a service to the membership.

Mariea Noblitt was an early SEM practitioner best known for her work at Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management. As director of admissions, she reorganized the school's structure, reengineered its customer service, and reenergized its staff. Most significantly, she tackled the acquisition of new technology that could streamline process and track progress. She lowered the acceptance rate from 48% to 14%, saw yield grow from 32% to 52%, and the school's national ranking went from 15 to 5. Significantly, this case, featured in the first AACRAO SEM conference, was also one of the first examples of graduate SEM.

Paul M. Orehovec was an early SEM innovator and national leader with NASFAA and the College Board. As executive vice president for enrollment management at the University of Miami in the 1980s, he was establishing new positions and directions for enrollment using intense data analysis and mathematical techniques for policy development as he worked to engage the entire campus with EM. In 1999, he collaborated with Miami's School of Education to create the first graduate credentials in enrollment management. Eventually, the holistic institutional approach of EM would become the basis for the entire Miami MSED program.

Joseph H. Paris is a scholar-practitioner focused on the intersection of institutional effectiveness and college access and informed by his professional experience in enrollment management and higher education marketing. He is co-editor of the first book published on graduate enrollment management (GEM): *A Comprehensive Guide to Graduate Enrollment Management: Advancing Research and Practice*. He serves as Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Delaware Valley University. Paris is a board member of NAGAP The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management and AACRAO's Research Advisory Board.

Angel B. Pérez* is a nationally recognized leader in higher education access. As CEO of NACAC since 2020, he founded the Center for Reimagining College Access and advanced the principle that enrollment/student success work must prioritize building pipelines, pathways, and partnerships that connect talent to opportunity and success— regardless of a learner's background or zip code. His advocacy for the SEM principles of learner access and success extends to policy advice to governmental leaders, and his book *The Hottest Seat on Campus* has become an essential resource for navigating increasingly demanding roles in this profession.

Ange Peterson began her SEM journey as director of admissions/enrollment services at Pittsburg State University (KS). Her partnership building with feeder community colleges there led to the University of Central Florida where she was instrumental in creating DIRECTCONNECT TO UCF, the largest transfer partnership in higher education with SEM-influenced tools such as auto-admission, joint advising, and curriculum alignment. Her mantra was "It's always about the people," focused on learners and her staff. Interpersonally, she was a natural with senior officers in consulting, giving her the nickname of "President Whisperer."

Kevin Pollock retired as president of Central Carolina Technical College, the third community college presidency he held. His presidential work was informed by his time as a student affairs vice president and his early work in SEM. He led student success initiatives, creation of early and middle college programs, development of pathways for all college programs, curriculum reform, and record enrollments and state funding. He is a national expert on student success models, has

presented at more than 130 conferences, and authored more than two dozen publications, including one of AACRAO's SEM Trilogy volumes. He is the quintessential "SEM President."

Michael V. Reilly* served as Executive Director of AACRAO from 2012 to 2021. During that time, he championed the development of SEM competencies/proficiencies. He argued that "no SEM framework will succeed without...all AACRAO professionals." He was instrumental in creating AACRAO's online journal *SEM Quarterly*. In the first issue he asserted it was a milestone similar to the creation of the SEM conference, writing in "SEM and the Future of AACRAO", "Not unlike the decision more than 20 years ago to launch the SEM Conference and take the field to new levels, the AACRAO board agreed to embark on this new initiative, *SEM Quarterly (SEM-Q)*."

Michele Sandlin served five institutions with distinction, including Oregon State University, where she was the driving force behind the creation and implementation of a research-based holistic admissions program that grew enrollment and met access and preparedness goals. She would become an industry-leading expert on holistic admissions as a part of SEM, authoring a definitive book on the subject. As an AACRAO managing consultant, she also became an expert in SEM planning for community college systems, culminating in a Lumina-funded project for four state systems. A hallmark of her work was her mentorship of other SEM professionals.

James Scannell was an original member (director of admissions) of Maguire's "Grand Design" team at Boston College. His 25-year career continued at Cornell and the University of Rochester, as he built his expertise and his contributions to the SEM literature on increasing demand through data analysis and development of strategic communications, as well as innovative financial aid. At Rochester he was one of the first SEM leaders to include career placement in his SEM portfolio, co-authoring a book, *Shaping the College Experience Outside the Classroom*. In 1996, he co-founded a consulting firm (later acquired by Ruffalo Noel Levitz).

William Serrata* became president of El Paso Community College in 2012 after serving seven years as vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at South Texas College. He was deeply involved in AACRAO SEM as a contributor to the SEM literature and as co-ordinator of the SEM conference from 2011-2015. He is nationally recognized for leadership in enrollment management, particularly in community colleges, with respect to enrollment growth and learner success with an emphasis on first-generation and Hispanic populations and establishing a college-going culture.

Doug Shapiro, co-founder of the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center in 2010, established over a dozen national reports and benchmarks that have fundamentally reshaped how institutions, policymakers, and researchers understand student pathways through higher education. He pioneered a shift in the field from completion metrics toward a more comprehensive view of student success — one that accounts for non-linear routes to a degree. A frequent voice in national media and policy conversations, Shapiro's work has made large-scale, longitudinal enrollment data a cornerstone of SEM practice nationwide.

Wayne Sigler spent 20 years as director of admissions at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where he built one of the elite admissions programs in the US, realizing a 63% increase in freshmen while meeting diversity and quality goals. His influence in SEM began as chair of the AACRAO enrollment management committee. He created the nationally recognized Tri-O

leadership/management system and authored AACRAO's first *SEM Core Concepts* book. His presentations at national conferences were routinely standing room only. In 2008, he received AACRAO's APEX award for excellence and achievement in administration and the profession.

Clayton Smith is a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor after serving 12 years as vice provost and dean of students there. His research examines comparative enrollment management in Canada and the United States, allowing SEM professionals to compare and share best practices. He also looks at the faculty role in SEM and the impact of change management on successful SEM implementation. He was co-founder of the Canadian SEM Summit, was one of the first AACRAO senior consultants, served for six years as director of the national SEM Conference, and is currently editor-in-chief of *SEM Quarterly*.

Robert M. Smith was provost and then president of Slippery Rock University (PA) facing a 10-year enrollment decline. He embraced SEM, educated himself on its moving parts, and enticed a faculty member to implement a program at SRU with remarkable results that brought national attention. He personally led SRU teams to AACRAO's SEM conferences for years and was the facilitator of the AACRAO Senior Officers Symposium for 10 years. AACRAO awarded him its inaugural Award for Excellence in SEM Leadership. He was also recognized as a "First-Year Student Advocate" by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Monique Snowden began her professional career as a software developer and business analyst/consultant for a global technology firm. This background gave her a strong foundation for her expertise in the strategic assessment, implementation, and utilization of technology and analytics to improve and sustain institutional enrollment and student success. This expertise, fueled by her commitment to access and attainment, makes her a valued contributor to the SEM literature and the institutions she has served. She was an inaugural member of the editorial board of *SEM Quarterly* and is on the editorial board for *College & University*.

Jerry Sullivan was executive director of AACRAO from 1998-2012. He brought a national reputation in financial aid, including a one-year stint at the Department of Education leading the reengineering of the financial aid delivery system in 1995 and directing one of the first university implementations of the Direct Lending program. His background in financial aid, an essential part of SEM, made him a SEM-friendly ED and led to his support for the establishment of AACRAO Consulting and growth of the SEM conference. His outstanding leadership resulted in a reinvigorated national association, including its leadership in SEM.

Roger Swanson was the personification of SEM in the academic context: an English professor who migrated into administration at Arizona State University to become dean of admissions and financial aid and associate vice president for student affairs. He was nationally recognized for expertise in SEM, organizational structure, professional development, and leadership. He authored 200+ publications, including the 1997 AACRAO book, *Becoming a Leader in Enrollment Services*. In 1993 he became associate executive director of AACRAO and directed the SEM conference from 1993-97. He was later a consultant for Noel-Levitz.

Roger J. Thompson has a proven record of enrollment growth and strategic planning across multiple major institutions. At Indiana University, he pioneered a merit-based scholarship approach that became the institution's signature aid program. At the University of Oregon, he

spearheaded a 10-year strategic enrollment plan that consistently outpaced its targets in 13 of 14 years. His work expanded traditional SEM boundaries to encompass financial literacy, student wellness, and first-generation student support — rooting sustainable enrollment success in the full student experience. He is now president of St. Mary's of California.

Vincent Tinto is an internationally acclaimed scholar whose research on higher education focuses on student success and the impact of learning communities on learner development and achievement. His seminal work, *Leaving College*, is the standard text for theoretical and policy perspectives on student success and has influenced every aspect of higher education touching this area. His work has been increasingly cited in SEM as retention/learner success has become a SEM pillar along with recruitment. He was an invited presenter at the first AACRAO SEM conference in 1991 and advised many early SEM practitioners.

Christopher W. Tremblay is equally organized and creative—not a typical combination—but it has made him a deeply effective SEM practitioner and contributor. He was a major SEM player in the development of SEM at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and has taken SEM to a UM-Ann Arbor college. He has led SEM-EP, AACRAO's professional endorsement program, to record enrollment, enhanced by his networking abilities, and is editor-in-chief of *College and University* where he is a frequent contributor. He is a consummate researcher, accessing and retrieving material, as one colleague commented, "like an academic vacuum cleaner".

Melvin "Mel" Tyler was a consummate practitioner of the SEM structural model that combines student affairs and enrollment management. As vice president of student affairs and enrollment management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, he modeled how to use SEM principles to enhance enrollment and success of underrepresented populations and was repeatedly recognized by learners for his support. He was also a model of mentorship for his staff, choosing, shaping and supporting his direct reports. He was generous in sharing his work nationally as an author, presenter, and consultant.

Janet Ward had the rare ability to be both a strategic visionary and a highly effective problem solver. As such, she articulated a new level of understanding about data management, database development and analysis to SEM and its practitioners: what data could do (the vision) and how to use it (the problem solving). Her work at Seattle University (WA) established her expertise in data management and use, but her communication skills were what allowed her to repeatedly fill conference meeting rooms to standing room only and made her articles and chapters must-read. She flawlessly translated "data-ese" into how-to implementations.

Richard "Dick" Whiteside* was a preeminent practitioner of SEM at the University of Hartford and Tulane University. He was instrumental in raising Tulane's national profile and in its recovery from Hurricane Katrina, which made him an expert in crisis management. He later transitioned to consulting work with Royall & Company and EAB. He was one of the first, and among the most valued, presenters at the SEM conference, as well as a frequent contributor to the SEM literature. His SEM insights were illustrated with his legendary storytelling and humor, which both educated and entertained his many standing-room only audiences.

Robert "Bob" Wilkinson is an expert in strategic planning, institutional research, and assessment within the broader context of institutional effectiveness. His impact on the development of SEM

came from his work at Pittsburg State University in Kansas where he helped to create its SEM operation. He had an acclaimed ability to put data and assessment into everyday language in service of learners through institutional effectiveness. He was a frequent presenter and contributor to the literature for AACRAO, other national organizations, and state entities such as the Texas Higher Education Commission.

Amanda Yale, a faculty member at Slippery Rock University, engaged with SEM to help reverse a 10-year slide in enrollment, eventually becoming SRU's chief enrollment management officer. Slippery Rock became a national poster campus for successful SEM implementation, and she was its principal spokesperson. She and her colleagues earned national recognition for exemplary programs in marketing, recruitment, retention, and first-year initiatives, always data-informed. "If it moves, measure it," was her mantra. She was an originator of AACRAO's Essentials of SEM course, which she taught for a decade.

Acknowledgements:

A special shout-out to unsung hero Heather Zimar, who has professionally overseen the publication of a dozen books on SEM and nearly 300 articles on SEM during her tenure thus far at AACRAO. We are grateful for Heather's contributions for facilitating the sharing of this knowledge so future generations can learn from these first 50 years of SEM.

MAIN HISTORIES

This article stands on the shoulders of several documented histories about the field of enrollment management. These include publications by Don Hossler, Jonathan Epstein, Stanley E. Henderson, Wayne Sigler, Jody Gordon

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