

# Defining the Enrollment Manager: Visionary, Facilitator and Collaborator

by Dr. Gregory Stewart

As enrollments expand, student affairs professionals must recruit and retain students, and manage enrollments. Garland and Grace (1993) note that as a set of strategies, enrollment management provides a systematic approach to attracting, retaining and graduating students, and, therefore, is a critical component in the stable operation of a higher education institution. According to Baldrige, Kemerer and Green (1982), and Garland and Grace (1993), enrollment management involves a host of functions that cross divisional lines, including clarification of institutional purpose, program development, marketing and recruitment, financial aid, orientation, and retention.

As a process, enrollment management helps institutions: develop a keener awareness of their purpose and character in relation to the student marketplace, improve ties to prospective client group, and attract students into and through the institution. Lenington (1996) notes that certain institutions have recognized this need and have established an enrollment management function. The College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) describes the chief enrollment manager as an administrative official responsible for the development of marketing plans for the recruitment and retention of students. The enrollment manager coordinates institutional efforts in admission, financial aid, records and registration, and advising.



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## Method

To examine the qualifications, characteristics and responsibilities of the enrollment manager, I used content analysis to review position advertisements related to the enrollment management position. Enrollment manager position advertisements from more than 46 institutions appeared during a five-month period in *The Chronicle for Higher Education*. I only used positions with responsibilities for multiple offices for our research and noted competencies that higher education institutions seek in applicants for such positions and factors (such as credentials requested from applicants, compensation, staffing, and reporting lines), hoping that college and university leaders could use the data to define or refine the role of the enrollment manager.

## Findings

Enrollment manager models of operation were in place at various higher education institutions across the United States. I reviewed 18 public colleges and universities, 23 private institutions and five community college position advertisements. Seventeen of the 18 public universities, 16 of the 23 private institutions and all five of the community colleges provided a description of the size of the student body. Table 1 provides an overview of the students served.

## Reporting Lines

According to Hossler (1984), the enrollment management coordinator works with unit leaders to examine goals, develop enrollment plans, coordinate efforts to achieve them, and prepare assessment programs. As a staff officer reporting to a high-level campus official, the coordinator can command sufficient visibility within the organization to act as an effective facilitator.

In this analysis, community colleges were most likely to have the enrollment manager report to the president with managers at four-year public institutions least likely to report to the president. Of the 23 independent institutions, four enrollment managers (17 percent) reported to the provost/vice president for academic affairs, two (9 percent) reported to vice president/dean for student affairs, 10 (43 percent) reported to the president, one (4 percent) to vice president for business affairs, and six (26 percent) were unknown.

Of the 18 public institutions, nine enrollment managers (50 percent) reported to the provost/vice president for academic affairs, five (33.3 percent) reported to the vice president/dean for student affairs, two (11.1 percent) reported to the president, one (5.5 percent) to the vice president for information management and analysis, and one (5.5 percent) was unknown.

Three (60 percent) of the community college enrollment managers reported to the president, while one (20 percent) reported to the vice president for student affairs and one (20 percent) was unknown.

## Candidate's Education

Table 2 provides an overview of required education in the advertisements from public, private and community colleges. Only two (4 percent) of the 46 advertised positions listed the bachelor's degree as an acceptable minimum level of education. A candidate must clearly have earned a master's degree to be most competitive for a position at a private institution and a doctorate to be most competitive at a public institution. Overall, 29 (72.5 percent) of the 40 institutions required a minimum of a master's degree.

## Candidate's Required Experience

Advertisements' qualification requirements ranged broadly. Table 3 provides an overview of the enrollment manager's required years of experience. Twenty-three (82 percent) of

Table 1  
Size of Student Body Served at Responding Institutions

Students served	Public	Private	Community Colleges
Less than 4,000	3 (16.7 percent)	11 (47.8 percent)	3 (60 percent)
Between 4,000 and 19,000	6 (33.3 percent)	5 (21.7 percent)	0
Between 20,000 and 29,000	6 (33.3 percent)	0	0
30,000 or above	2 (11.1 percent)	0	0
Unknown	1 (5.5 percent)	7 (30.4 percent)	2 (40 percent)
TOTAL	18	23	5

Table 2  
Candidate's Required Education

Qualifications	Public	Private	Community Colleges
Bachelor's required	1 (5.5 percent)	1 (4.3 percent)	0
Master's degree preferred	1 (5.5 percent)	7 (30.4 percent)	1 (20 percent)
Master's degree required	7 (39 percent)	6 (26 percent)	2 (40 percent)
Doctorate preferred	6 (33.3 percent)	4 (17.3 percent)	2 (40 percent)
Doctorate required	1 (5.5 percent)	1 (4.3 percent)	0
Unknown	2 (11 percent)	4 (17.3 percent)	0
TOTAL	18	23	5

**Table 3**  
**Candidate's Required Experience**

Qualifications	Public	Private	Community Colleges
3 years minimum experience	4 (22.2 percent)	0	1 (20 percent)
5-8 years experience preferred	11 (61.1 percent)	6 (26 percent)	2 (40 percent)
10 years experience preferred	0	2 (8.7 percent)	2 (40 percent)
Unknown	3 (16.7 percent)	15 (65.2 percent)	0
TOTAL	18	23	5

**Table 4**  
**Enrollment Manager's Staffing**

Type of institution	Size of Institution	Staffing and Units
<b>PUBLIC</b>		
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment	25,000	80 FTE Adm., financial aid, New Student Orientation and Special recruitment programs
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services	23,000	Staff of 120 Adm., FA, related academic support services and career development
Dean of Enrollment Management	19,000	Staff of 33
Director of Enrollment Management	1,500	7 professionals and 3 support staff Admission, financial aid, enrollment management
Director of Enrollment Management	1,250	5 Professionals and 4 support staff in admission and financial aid
<b>PRIVATE</b>		
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of Financial Aid	14,000	Staff of 14 Admission, financial aid, student marketing, registrar and student affairs

the 28 institutions sought candidates with at least five–10 years of experience. Though the majority of institutions were seeking individuals with director level or higher management experience and skills to manage multiple offices they often assigned to the enrollment manager, some used unique application methods.

One community college wanted two years occupational experience, other than in education, and two years classroom teaching experience. Another public university required a one to two page statement on the applicant's perspective of the changing characteristics of enrollment management at four-year public comprehensive universities. One private institution requested that candidates describe their philosophy of enrollment management in the cover letter.

#### Various Titles

Dean or director of enrollment management was the most popular title for this position at public universities with under 20,000 students. Associate/assistant vice president/chancellor for enrollment services was the most popular title for this position at public universities with more than 20,000 students. Dean or vice president for enrollment management was the most common title for this position at private institutions.

#### Staffing

Overall, six (13 percent) of the 46 position advertisements provided insight into the enrollment manager's supervisory responsibilities. Table 4 provides an overview of the institutions that provided staffing data. Five (28 percent) of the public and one (4 percent) of the private institutions reported supervisory responsibilities. Generally, as the size of the institution increased, so did the support staff numbers.

**Table 5**  
**Enrollment manager's supervisory responsibilities**

Unit	Public	Private	Com. Col.
Academic Advising	3	2	1
Admission	16	22	5
Athletics	0	0	1
Bursar	0	1	0
Career Services	3	2	0
Co-curricular Activities	0	2	1
Continuing Education	1	1	0
Counseling	0	0	2
Educational Dev. Center	2	1	0
Financial Aid	14	18	2
Fitness Center	0	0	1
Graduate Recruitment	0	1	0
International Recruiting	0	1	1
Institutional Research	1	1	0
Multicultural Programs	0	0	1
Orientation	3	0	0
Records	8	8	4
Recruitment	16	22	5
Registration	8	8	4
Retention Programming	0	2	3
Student Accounts	0	1	0
Student ID Service	1	0	0
Summer School	1	0	0
Testing	0	0	1
Veterans	1	0	1
No info. listed	2	1	0
<b>INSTITUTIONS REVIEWED</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>

One community college, with 3,200 students, uniquely advertised for a dean of students and enrollment development, who reports to the president. The dean supervised eight directors, including admission and enrollment development, financial aid, registration and records, co-curricular programs, multicultural programs, athletics, counseling, and the college fitness center. The dean would also chair the institution's enrollment development task force.

#### Responsibilities

Institutions listed 25 service units that divide the various responsibilities of enrollment managers (see in Table 5). The enrollment manager at all of the institutions indicated that admission and recruitment were among the supervised units.

Fourteen (78 percent) of the 18 public institutions, 18 (78 percent) of the 23 private and two (40 percent) of the five community college managers supervised the office of financial aid. Eight (44 percent) of public, 8 (35 percent) of private and four (80 percent) of community college managers supervised registration and records.

Three (17 percent) of the 18 public, two (9 percent) of the 23 private and one (20 percent) of the five community college managers supervised the office of academic advising. The enrollment manager supervised the office of career services at three (17 percent) of public institutions and two (9 percent) of private institutions. Three (17 percent) of the enrollment managers at the public institutions supervised the orientation office.

I listed more than 17 other service units of various responsibilities of enrollment managers at public, private and community colleges. One public institution, with an enrollment of 21,500 students, assigned the assistant vice president for enrollment management and services to coordinate a system-wide strategic enrollment management council. The council would approach enrollment planning as encompassing all academic, student affairs and administrative areas at that institution.

#### Compensation

Only two (4 percent) of the 46 institutions (both community colleges) made reference to the enrollment manager's compensation. These small numbers were strangely opposite for admission and registrar position listings. Commonly, advertisements mentioned salaries for directors of admission (Stewart and Holly, 1995), and 19 percent of 80 registrar position advertisements made reference to the level of compensation in a 1996 review (Stewart and Brown-Wright, 1996).

The College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) annually surveys higher education salaries. The figures in Table 6 are based on a survey response from 1,415 colleges and universities in 2002–03. I listed admission, financial aid and registrar salaries because these positions provide a possible path for promotion to an enrollment management position.

**Table 6**  
**2003 Median salaries of admission and enrollment professionals**

Position Title	All institutions	Doctoral	Comprehensive	Baccalaureate	Two Year
Chief, Admission Officer	\$68,000	\$85,841	\$65,000	\$66,800	\$53,525
Associate Director	\$46,329	\$56,844	\$43,740	\$43,200	\$44,256
Registrar	\$59,206	\$80,922	\$58,159	\$51,960	\$52,154
Associate Director	\$45,000	\$56,665	\$41,000	\$38,971	\$45,444
Director Student Fin. Aid	\$60,356	\$80,107	\$60,129	\$54,036	\$56,180
Associate Director	\$44,000	\$55,999	\$42,362	\$38,355	\$41,706
Director Academic Advising	\$52,194	\$63,748	\$50,950	\$48,880	\$49,833
Chief, Enrollment Management	\$88,550	\$109,970	\$89,198	\$87,534	\$62,447

Note: The figures are based on a survey response from 1,415 colleges and universities.  
 Source: College and University Personnel Association

### Conclusion

I identified five major challenges/skill areas for enrollment managers throughout the various advertisements:

- Institutional data and research were essential components for planning and implementation of an enrollment strategy. Enrollment managers were expected to be able to interpret the information and provide direction for action from the data.
- The enrollment manager was to be exceptional at promoting teamwork among various constituencies on campus.
- Enrollment was an institution-wide issue. The enrollment manager was expected to lead the way in the stability of the enrollment.
- The enrollment manager was expected to be aware of technical possibilities related to the implementation and maintenance of a student information system and technology used to serve students in general.
- Financial resources were limited throughout higher education institutions, so the ability to advocate for resources and effectively spend funds was a critical skill for enrollment managers. Collaboration with the institution's advancement and grant administration personnel was necessary.

Institutions sought a creative, forward-looking, dedicated and experienced professional with the leadership, communication and supervisory skills to oversee key functions that ensured the successful recruitment and retention of students for enrollment manager.

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