

Full Length Research Paper

Enrolment management: The perspectives of university of the Western Cape, South Africa

Mukole Kongolo

CENTRUM Católica, Business School, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Calle Daniel Alomía Robles 125-129, Los Alamos de Monterrico, Santiago de Surco, Lima 33 – Perú. E-mail: mkongolo@pucp.edu.pe.

Accepted 12 January, 2012

Enrolment management is a comprehensive process designed to help achieve and maintain optimum student enrolment through recruitment, retention and graduation rates. Its goal is to manage the overall size and shape of the university, stimulate future enrolment growth and support the development of students, using a coherent and well-planned participation strategy that supports the university's mission, ethos and strategic academic, financial, student development and equity. This study aims to examine well-planned strategies and tactics that shape the enrollment management at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to meet the institutional established goals. The study was based on a documentation method. Information used was obtained from various sources which included literature review, journal articles, magazines and official reports. The findings suggest that the critical relationship between enrolment policy and fiscal management to ensure long-term institutional success was not well understood. While UWC become increasingly sophisticated and proactive in managing its enrolment outcomes, administrators in different departments continued to set goals and pursue objectives without reference to a broader strategy that acknowledged the underlying interconnectedness.

Key words: University students, enrolment, management, approach, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

When discussing students' enrolment to university, it is inevitable that we think of first-time freshmen coming to campus. Most campus recruitment initiatives reflect that assumption, from the organization of a school's home page to the content of its view books to the travel strategies of its admissions staff (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). In the process, we often overlook recruiting a significant group of students who are also interested in enrolling at new university campuses: transfer students. A study by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors noted that one out of every three students who enroll at a university can transfer to another university. This means that there are millions of potential students looking for new campuses where they can continue their university educations (Engel, 2011). The concept of enrolment management emerged during the last decades of the 20th century as a new organizational structure within the two and four-year universities and colleges. The term

enrolment management refers to the ability of institutions of higher education to exert more systematic influence over the number and characteristics of new students, as well as influence the persistence of students to continue their enrolment from the time of their matriculation to their graduation. The rise of the enrollment manager and the cutthroat quest for competitive advantage has been the secret weapon for financial-aid leveraging (Seidman, 1995).

The emergence of enrolment management as a new administrative structure within higher educational institutions originated in North America, but it has also been employed in Europe, Africa, and Asia (Astin, 1993). This phenomenon can be explained by the shifting of public-policy priorities in many countries, that results in governments reducing their subsidies for institutions of higher education, and for students aspiring for a post-secondary degree (Baum and Payea, 2004). Attending college is increasingly seen primarily as a private benefit

to individuals rather than as a public benefit to society. Generally, universities and colleges are being asked to fund more of their own budgets through tuition revenues, while students are required to borrow increasing amounts of money to pay the rising costs of higher education (McDonough, 1997). As a result of these trends, more and more students have come to view postsecondary education as a consumptive decision, and the increased competition for students has caused governmental agencies, university governing bodies and administrators to pay considerable attention to developing more effective student enrolment strategies (Answers.com, 2002).

Enrollment management is a comprehensive process designed to help achieve and maintain optimum enrollment (recruitment, retention and graduation rates). It is an institution wide process that permeates virtually every aspect of the College's function and culture (Seidman, 1995). Enrolment management term is often used at university level to describe well-planned strategies and tactics to shape the enrollment of an institution in order to meet the established goals. Plainly stated, enrolment management is an organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over the new student intakes (Bailey et al., 2006). Such practices generally include marketing, admission policies, retention programs, and financial aid awarding. These strategies and tactics are mainly informed by collection, analysis, and use of data to project successful outcomes. Activities that produce measurable improvements in yields are often continued and expanded, while those activities that do not are discontinued or restructured (Cope, 1981; Morrison, 1992).

Competitive efforts to recruit university students are a common emphasis of enrolment managers. The numbers of universities and other institutions of higher learning such as colleges that have the offices of "enrollment management" have increased in recent years, with the number of universities and other tertiary institutions (Wikipedia, 2011). Enrolment management is also defined as an organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments. Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities concern student college choice, transition to college, student attrition, retention and student outcomes. These processes are studied to guide institutional practices in the areas of new student recruitment and financial aid, student support services, curriculum development, and other academic areas that affect enrollments, student persistence, and student outcomes from college (Black, 2009).

Enrolment management is an open-system and synergistic organizational approach that fosters an organizational atmosphere that makes reporting relationships

among student-service units more transparent. It also fosters an environment where offices and divisions work collaboratively to enhance the quality of the student experience, thus, facilitating the strategic management of enrollments (Baum and Payea, 2004). However, enrolment management can be viewed as a synergistic organizational concept that can be used to link several administrative functions within a college or university in order to optimize institutional enrollment goals. Examples of this approach can be found among the financial strategies of many college campuses, where important linkages have emerged between senior enrolment managers and chief financial administrators. Both private and public colleges use some of their tuition income to fund campus-based scholarships for students (Thomas and Perna, 2004). Tuition revenue accounts for millions of dollars, and campus-based financial aid has become a large expenditure at most universities. Enrolment management efforts have therefore become closely linked to budgeting and campus financial planning. Successful enrollment management strategies and practices must also take into account the growing importance of college and university rankings. For many institutions of higher education, enrollment management has come to involve a combination of student enrollment strategy, budgeting strategy, and institutional positioning strategy (Hossler et al., 1990).

The problem

Enrolment management is the process of defining enrolment goals and establishing procedures to reach these goals, thereby providing an institution with the mechanisms to control its size, shape, and character. Enrolment management is a holistic approach which consists of a number of interdependent activities. The activities of enrollment management include clarification of institutional mission, long-range planning, academic program development, marketing and recruitment, retention, and career planning and placement (Fretwell, 2011). Responsibility for enrollment management begins with the campus president and extends throughout the institution, with the involvement of faculty being of critical importance. Deans and chairpersons of academic units are also in a key position to participate in and influence enrollment management. In addition to encouraging the central office administrators and others to clarify the mission of the institution, deans and chairpersons can work with the faculty in re-examining the mission, function and vitality of their own academic units (Hossler, 1985).

Enrolment management is a term used frequently in higher education to describe well-planned strategies and tactics to shape the enrollment of an institution and meet established goals. Enrollment management refers to the traditional task of setting and meeting the goal of assembling a student body that comprises a predetermined

and advantageous mix of students in terms of quality, number, and diversity in all its forms (Levitz, 2011). Plainly stated, enrolment management is an organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments. Such practices often include marketing, admission policies, retention programs, and financial aid awarding. Strategies and tactics are informed by collection, analysis, and use of data to project successful outcomes (Jantzen, 1991). Activities that produce measurable improvements in yields are continued and/or expanded, while those activities that do not are discontinued or restructured. Competitive efforts to recruit students are a common emphasis of enrollment managers. The numbers of universities and colleges instituting offices of enrollment management have increased in recent years. These offices serve to provide direction and coordination of efforts of multiple offices such as admissions, financial aid, registration, and other student services. Often these offices are part of an enrollment management division (Wikipedia, 2011).

Each year, higher educational institutions make contacts with thousands of prospective students. However, sometimes, these experiences are filled with risks. To avoid mishaps in admissions, risk management officers must engage in a risk management review of practices and consider implementing, where necessary, modifications to policies, procedures, and activities that need to be made to ensure a positive campus experience for both the visitor and the campus community. The following four main risks involved in publishing recruitment materials and using social media include: risk of misrepresenting the facts in writing and in speech; risks associated with the admission applications and their follow-up; and risk of misusing social media and e-communications (Hundrieser, 2011). Seidman (1995) argued that the primary goal of enrolment management includes:

1. Stabilizing enrollments (reverse declining enrollment, control growth and plan for fluctuations).
2. Linking academic and student service programs.
3. Stabilizing finances.
4. Improving services (shorten response time to students, increase satisfaction and reduce paperwork).
5. Improving access to information (putting our information systems to optimum usage).
6. Reducing vulnerability to demographic changes.
7. Responding to economic forces (expansion, recession, employment rates).

Given the aforementioned description, the purpose of this study was to investigate enrolment management at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on the one hand, and to suggest on some important issues related to the topic on the other hand.

Main objective

The main objective of this study was to critically examine the importance of providing direction and coordination efforts of multiple offices at the UWC as part of an enrollment management services.

Specific objective

1. To examine the importance of enrolment management in improving yields at inquiry, application, and enrolment stages.
2. To examine how enrolment management can increase net revenue, usually by improving the proportion of students capable of paying most of unsubsidized tuition fees.
3. To examine how enrolment management can increase the demographic diversity by improving retention rates and increasing applicant pools.

More-advanced enrolment managers tend to focus much on retaining admitted students by deciding whom to recruit and accept. They smooth out administrative hassles, guarantee at-risk students the advising and academic help they need, and ensure that the different parts of the university's bureaucracy work together to get students out the door with a degree (Quirk, 2005). This study attempts to answer to the following two main research questions:

1. Why enrollment management?
2. "How enrolment management strategies and tactics have assisted UWC to meet its goals"?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on information obtained from a document methods study. In all cases, secondary sources of information were used. Although, it might be argued that the primary-secondary distinction is blurred, the difference is clear in so far as primary sources are considered to be the original written materials of the author's own experiences and observations (Bailey, 1994). Secondary sources are the materials derived from someone else as the original source. Therefore, this paper investigates enrolment management at the University of the Western Cape using mainly secondary sources of information and literature review of previous studies. Secondary sources include data from official documents (for example, statistical reports, annual reports, inter-office memos, and financial reports), mass media (printed and audio-visual, newspapers, magazines, journal articles and newsletters), and personal documents, bibliographies, memoirs and personal letters to the press (Barker, 1998). The examination of these various sources assisted the research in examining enrolment management at the University of the Western Cape, as the focus of this study.

RESULTS

University of the Western Cape (UWC)

The University of the Western Cape is a public university

located in the Bellville suburb of Cape Town. UWC is located at about 12 miles north of Cape Town in the Tygerberg suburb of Belleville. Its attractive campus includes an important nature reserve, and the mountains of the Cape Peninsula and Stellenbosch provide beautiful landmarks to the east and west. The UWC is readily accessible by car, taxi, bus or train, and even has its own railway station, Unibell, on the Southern boundary of the campus. The UWC is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society. Originally established by the South African Parliament for colored people of the Western Cape, UWC has a history of creative struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantage. Among academic institutions it has been in the vanguard of South Africa's historic change, playing a distinctive academic role in helping to build an equitable and dynamic nation. UWC's key concerns with access, equity and quality in higher education arise from extensive practical engagement in helping the historically marginalized participate fully in the life of the nation. Since then, UWC has grown to become one of the most diverse universities in South Africa. Its excellence and quality of education has been complemented by its faculty and staff, and brought to life by its students (Interstudy News, 2011). The UWC alerts to its African and international context as it strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society (UWC, 2009).

Enrolment management and student development at UWC

The goal is to manage the overall size and shape of the university, stimulate future enrolment growth and support the development of students, using a coherent and well-planned participation strategy that supports the university's mission, ethos and strategic academic, financial, student development and equity, and its emphasis is mainly on:

1. Client-oriented organizational culture and quality of student life;
2. Effective enrolment management plan
3. Client-oriented organizational culture and quality of student life;
4. Effective enrolment management plan
5. Significant student leadership development programmes;
6. Effective student development plan and administrative services;

7. Significantly improved access, retention rates, and lastly, student equity.

As a national university, the University of the Western Cape has emphasis on some points which in particular is aimed at, as provided thus:

1. Advancing and protecting the independence of the academic enterprise;
2. Designing curricula and research programmes appropriate to its southern African context;
3. Furthering global perspectives among its staff and students, thereby strengthening intellectual life and contributing to South Africa's reintegration in the world community;
4. Assisting the education of disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed;
5. Nurturing and using the abilities of all in the university community;
6. Developing effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable;
7. Seeking racial and gender equality and contributing to helping the historically marginalized participate fully in the life of the nation;
8. Encourage and provide opportunities for lifelong learning through programmes and courses;
9. Help conserve and explore the environmental and cultural resources of the southern African region, and to encourage a wide awareness of them in the community;
10. Cooperate fully with other stakeholders to develop an excellent and, therefore, transformed higher education system (UWC, 2009).

Institutional enrolment goals and objectives

At a minimum, enrolment goals should address the following four dimensions of institutional enrolment, namely: student quantity, quality, diversity, and capacity management. Depending on the institution, other goal categories may include student persistence and net revenue. Regardless of the goal categories selected by an institution, the goals should be data-driven and not purely inspirational, be specific with clearly defined benchmarks and timeframes for achievement, and involve those responsible for the achievement of goals in setting the targets (Black, 2001). Institutional objectives must flow from the established goals, providing a granular perspective of how goals will be achieved. The detailed objectives limit the possibility of focusing solely on bottom line results while fostering an institutional awareness of the dynamics related to achieving goals (Levitz, 2011). The goals and more importantly, the objectives provide the foundation for strategy development. Strategies that are not linked to one or more objectives should be carefully scrutinized to determine their value to the institution. Without clearly

defined goals and objectives, enrolment areas are prone to engage in a flurry of activity that has little importance to the institution (The College Board, 2004). Strategies for strategy's sake are almost always counterproductive. They dilute the focus on and resources applied to the strategies that matter most (Dolence et al., 1987, 88; Townsley, 1993). While this may be strategically prudent, this investment should not occur at the cost of cultivating a relationship with current students. No successful business ignores its existing customers. Higher education institutions can ill-afford to cease romancing students once they enroll. Universities should be intentional about communications and interactions with current students with a plan and related resources (Clagett et al., 1993; Fennell and Miller, 2011).

Enrolment management: Key offices and tasks

The university's office of institutional research plays a major role in successful enrolment management efforts. The more enrolment management professionals know the characteristics, attitudes, and values of prospective students, the better they will be able to design effective recruitment and orientation programs. Studies conducted by institutional researchers can inform strategies to enhance the success of first-year students, and institutional research professionals can examine the impact of various forms of student financial assistance upon matriculation decisions and the academic success. A strong institutional function is a critical element of a sound enrolment management effort (Black, 2001; Answers.com, 2002). The office of admissions at the UWC plays a key role in enrolment management efforts. The first order of business for enrolment managers is to ensure that their institution has broad marketing efforts in place to make the institution visible and sufficiently attractive, so that desirable prospective students are motivated to seriously consider them. These marketing efforts should be segmented to appeal to different types of students, emphasizing different strengths of the institution. Once prospective students have expressed interest, UWC campus needs to provide them with the right information at the right time in order to be perceived as a good match, and thereby attract applications (Hossler et al., 1998).

The office of financial aid on the other hand as a dual purpose: (i) to provide state and campus-based / need-based financial aid to enable students to attend the institution of their choice, and (ii) and the growing use of campus-based financial aid to reward academic merit and other special talents to enable the university to attract a desired number of students with the academic ability and other special talents they are seeking. Historically, institutions of higher education relied primarily upon endowed gifts to fund campus-based scholarships. However, during the twentieth century,

more institutions began using part of the tuition students pay to fund scholarships. This practice is often described as tuition discounting. Student retention efforts are an important aspect of enrolment management efforts. Few universities have formal retention offices. Instead they have retention programs that can be organized by a range of academic and student-life offices (Coomes, 2000; Gaither, 2000).

The analytical approach

Ultimately, the analytical approaches and many of the strategies used by enrolment managers are not the problem. The same financial aid analytic techniques used to identify the price thresholds of National Merit Scholars could be used to optimize scholarships and grants for low-income students. The same marketing campaigns that might be employed to communicate with valedictorians could be used to communicate with first generation rural high school students. The problem is not with the concept of enrolment management; if there are problems it is with the goals established for enrolment managers. Enrolment goals are established by boards of trustees, presidents, and provosts. It becomes the task of enrolment managers to achieve those goals (Hossler et al., 1998). It is important to note that enrolment managers do not play a role in establishing enrolment goals for their institutions, but the criticisms of enrolment management should ultimately be focused on the goals of prestige, influence, rankings, and revenue that are being pursued by the university. All university Vice Chancellors (VCs) want to make decisions to advance their institutions, in order to build and sustain a great faculty; encouraging environments where excellence in teaching and learning takes place; having great facilities with superb research facilities (Coomes, 2000). Current financial aid practices at many institutions make some of the trade-offs associated with enrolment management strategies abundantly transparent. Once senior campus administrators, enrolment managers, and critics of these practices understand that all institutional revenue is fungible to pursue institutional goals, they are free to examine some of the trade-offs being made with current financial aid strategies (Hossler et al., 1995).

Connecting enrolment and fiscal management

Financial aid provides the clearest example of the trade-offs inherent in enrolment management strategies. In a society that values equal opportunity for all, it is hard to argue in favor of early admissions, but many institutions continue this practice because it helps them achieve their enrolment goals. It can be argued that at least these policies are largely transparent. In contrast, institutions that do not accurately provide their scores of their

retention rates, add to the growing cynicism around the university admissions process that high schools students show (University Business, 2006). The financial pulse of your institutions with a fiscal indicators inventory is for your institution to use its fiscal resources to its greatest advantage to fulfill its mission and meet expectations within and beyond the campus. In an era of escalating costs and reduced resources, it's a question that every institution of higher education should be asking (Quirk, 2005). Figure 1 describes the way in which the connection of enrolment and fiscal management of the university can be represented. Yet leaders at many institutions fail to understand the critical relationship between enrolment policy and fiscal management in ensuring long-term institutional success. While institutions have become increasingly sophisticated and proactive in managing their enrolment outcomes, campus administrators in different departments often continue to set goals and pursue objectives without reference to a broader strategy that acknowledges their underlying interconnectedness (Coomes, 2000). In light of these eight key revenue-related enrolment issues (Figure 1), the fiscal indicators inventory identifies the data points that should be tracked and the questions to be asked in each area, with examples of approaches taken by the university that is successfully meeting its enrolment and revenue goals (Seidman, 1995).

If it is not able to achieve a firm grasp of these issues and the related metrics for its campus, it may need to invest in additional research and analysis in order to obtain the information necessary to guide its decision making. Enrolment professionals may be expected to play a significant role on their campuses, one that completes their evolution from the role of gatekeeper to that of counselor, recruiter, marketer, enrolment manager in history of higher education (University Business, 2006).

Institutional positioning

Firstly, it important to know yourself and the position of your institution. This helps to implement good approach to enrolment management for the institutions. According to the University Business (2006), the ancient injunction (Figure 2) provided the importance of the institutions operating in a dynamic environment of higher education as it is for individuals. Before UWC can fully assess the relationship between enrollment management and fiscal reality, it must first have an unambiguous sense of the institution's current and desired market position by asking itself the following questions: Where it stands relative to its key competitors in the province? Does it have a clear fix on its top 5 real competitors? Where is it in terms of its desired position? Does UWC has tracked its share of the available student market over time? The answers to these questions would ultimately drive the fiscal issues and decisions that need to be taken. The use of formal

market research can yield even more precise information about the competition UWC faces at various stages of the selection process. Since UWC most important competitors may vary at each stage, it is essential to collect such information throughout the enrolment process (Thomas and Perna, 2004).

Once it has the list of key competitors, the selectivity cost matrix (below) offers a simple, yet revealing tool to help it analyze its current and desired institutional position. The x-axis represents selectivity, usually measured by acceptance rates and/or the academic credentials of new students. The y-axis represents cost, either tuition or fees, or estimated average net cost of attendance after institutionally funded financial aid (University Business, 2006).

The institution should be placed on top of its competitors on the chart according their position on each axis. This will give a quick snapshot of its market position relative to that of its current and potential competitors, as well as how it will need to move in order to reposition itself to upper right high selectivity, high cost: typically top-tier universities with large endowments and highly competitive (Baum and Payea, 2004).

Enrolment management organizational models

The literature on enrolment management often discusses various administrative approaches for dealing with enrolment management efforts. Following Answers.com (2002), some of these tasks include the following:

1. The enrollment management coordinator: An academic is charged with organizing recruitment and retention activities. Usually it is a midlevel administrator, such as the dean of admissions or financial aid, who is asked to coordinate offices such as admissions, financial aid, registration and records. A major disadvantage is that the coordinator model provides no formal mechanism for linking enrollment concerns into the decision-making agenda of senior level administrators.
2. The enrollment management matrix: The enrollment management matrix is a more centralized approach. In the matrix model, an existing senior level administrator, such as the Dean Student Affairs, academic affairs, or institutional advancement, would direct the activities of the enrollment management matrix. In this model, administrative units such as financial aid or student retention are not formally reassigned to a Dean Student Affairs. Instead, the administrative heads of these units continue their existing reporting relationships, but they also become part of the enrollment management matrix.
3. The enrollment management division: The most centralized organizational model is the enrollment management division. In the division model, a Deputy Vice Chancellor or a Dean can be assigned the responsibilities for most or all of the administrative areas

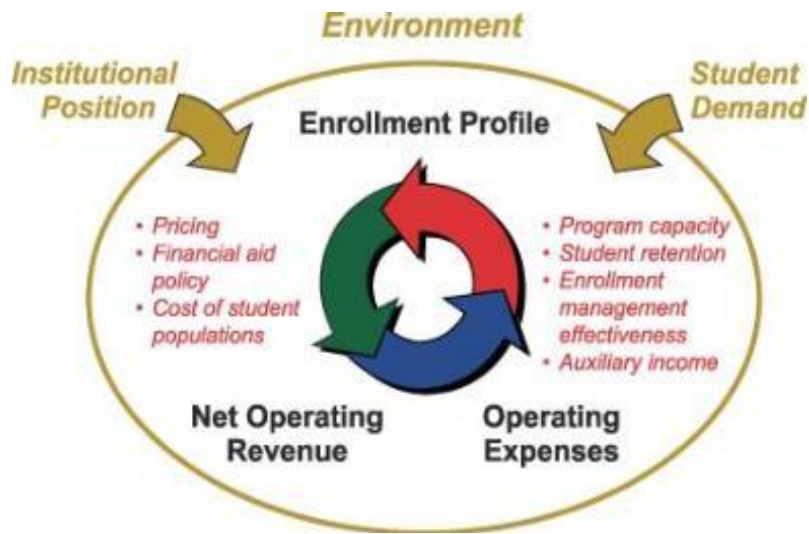


Figure 1. Connecting enrollment and fiscal management. Source: University business (2006).



Figure 2. Importance of institutions operating in a dynamic environment of higher education. Source: University business (2006).

that influence student enrollments, housed within one large functional unit. This model requires high levels of administrative support, and the Deputy Vice Chancellor Student Affairs or his Associate generally has to become a strong advocate of this model. One major advantage of this model is that an enrollment management Deputy Vice Chancellor can carry enrollment-related concerns directly to the Vice Chancellor and the board of academics.

Most experienced enrollment managers place more emphasis on strong working relationships with other key administrators on campus than on advocating for a specific organizational model. Another recurring theme is the need for a senior campus administrator, such as the Vice Chancellor, to provide visible and consistent support for the institution's enrollment management efforts. In

universities of all sizes, support from the top management appears to be more important than a specific administrative structure established to manage enrollments (Fennell and Miller, 2011). The pressures on institutions to maximize revenue and the attention on the characteristics of enrolled students, enrollment management is likely to remain an important administrative focus at most institutions of higher education in South Africa (Answers.com, 2002).

Proposed enrolment management strategic focus at the UWC

Following Hierl (2011), a good plan is like a road map showing the final destination and usually the best way to

get there. Many views on roadmap as a dated tool are like a soothing electronic voice, telling trusting drivers where and when to turn. Just as you need to know where you were going on the road, so goes the need to know your final destination when it comes to your succession planning efforts for your admissions teams. Without a plan in place and a full understanding of where you are going ahead of time, your offices will get lost in the detail. Succession planning is a process of ensuring availability of competent personnel to take over a position when an incumbent leaves. It ensures that the business operations continue without disruption. This is especially critical in our admissions offices when our staffs often need months to learn our campuses' product, schedule, process and methodology. Many enrollment professionals understand the importance of succession planning but fail to grasp the true essence of what succession planning is (Morrison, 1992). It is more than identifying a successor and equipping him/her with the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies of the predecessor. Rather, a good succession planning exercise requires understanding the critical challenges the admissions office has currently and will face in the short to medium term as well as the skill sets that the personnel require to lead the team through such challenges (Fennell and Miller, 2011).

Evaluating strategies

It is important to identify what works and change what doesn't work. Enrollment management begins with student contact. It is a deliberate process that requires time for planning, full implementation and development of the information that will sustain the efforts for up to three years from planning to implementation. It is based on a team effort which crosses traditional college organizational lines. Enrollment management focuses on the longitudinal care and comprehensive education of students, and it should be linked to UWC's mission and operational planning goals. UWC is dedicated to providing for the comprehensive educational needs of its students with accessible and flexibly scheduled programs and services of high quality (Fennell and Miller, 2011). In so doing, the University affords students the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and guidance for personal development and societal benefit. Further, the University values and works toward the economic, social and cultural well-being of the residents of Western Cape and the country. Both University management team and personnel recognize the dignity and worth of each person, the differences and shared interests among individuals and groups, the contributions of diverse cultures, the value of creativity, and the need to rely on reason and cooperation to achieve UWC's goals. These beliefs express a confidence in the University, a commitment to the communities served, and optimism about the future of humankind (Seidman, 1995).

Focus on students

Given that students have choices in selecting higher educational institutions they wish to study, enrollment management should establish early on a client relationship with UWC students, parents and the population. Both student's perspectives and needs should always be kept in the forefront when developing and offering services, launching new programs and initiatives, and evaluating enrollment management plans. In addition to marketing UWC programs, enrollment management should be concerned with creating the best learning and teaching environment for students. Therefore, the College needs to balance such factors as academic program development, faculty development, academic policy formulation, recruitment policies and procedures, student life programs, as well as retention policies and procedures (Answers.com, 2002). One way of increasing enrollments is to increase the number of prospective students. Prospective students who usually come through referrals of others have a much higher yield rate than those that come from other types of referrals, such as mailing lists. Building an active referral network requires an information system able to record and track students. Ways to increase referral student include targeted high school guidance counselors and faculty, alumni and other significant groups, churches and community organizations. Public relations which provide a positive image of the University of the Western Cape in the province can also increase referral student (Seidman, 1995).

Student characteristics

To accomplish these practical objectives, enrolment managers must first understand the factors that influence college choice-student characteristics, environmental factors, and institutional attributes. Similarly, enrolment managers must understand the effects of an academic environment and student background characteristics on satisfaction and performance (Karemera et al., 2003). Without in-depth insights as to causation for related enrolment behaviors, only by chance will enrolment organizations engage in the recruitment and retention strategies that are most likely to produce optimal results. As noted, student characteristics represent a vital component to understanding initial and continued enrolment choices. The student characteristics depicted in the Enrolment Management Systems are not intended to be an exhaustive listing, yet identified characteristics represent many of the attributes that influence enrolment behavior and student success (Black, 2009). A student's ability to pay for university studies often influences their enrolment behavior. Based on a study conducted by the College Board (2004), students from low income families and disadvantaged background university students were

disproportionally less likely to attend university due to perceived or real financial barriers. When students from these populations did enroll in postsecondary education, they were concentrated at lower-priced institutions (Baum and Payea, 2004; Thomas and Perna, 2004).

Marketing strategies

Marketing is the process of putting the right product before the right audience at the right price by including the following four elements: place, product, price, promotion (Sevier, 1998). Curriculum is the product in education; it includes academic programmes and services. When a product appeals to a well-defined segment of the prospect base that segment is called a "niche." Current niches at the UWC's prospect base include specific program offerings in all faculties. In addition, the development of UWC as a premier University offering traditional medicine training is an emerging niche (Answers.com, 2002). Finding prospect groupings with common interests and characteristics is known as "market segmentation." Identifying market segments and describing their characteristics is a function of market research. Market research can identify the types of students that are attending particular parts of the UWC programmes (Grove, 1992). Market research can also help UWC uncover new opportunities. It can also help identify other market niches and populations and could provide insights into price sensitivity, especially for specialized training programmes (Sevier, 1998). Market research is an integral part of enrollment management. Not only it must contain a solid institutional research component but needs to be extended beyond a description of student characteristics. Market research needs to be sensitive to UWC demographics, including lifestyles, purchasing power, and buying behavior. Marketing strategies are also an integral part to retention. Students recruited by the University are those that should also be retained (Fretwell, 2011).

Retention strategies

This paper uses three definitions to describe retention; course, program and student retention. Generally, within these descriptions, retention can be defined as a student's satisfactory progress toward his/her educational objectives. Within this context, students who are recruited and enrolled at UWC should reasonably expect that the programs, policies, procedures and interventions necessary for students to successfully complete their programs are in place. Recruitment and retention are inexorably linked. It is essential from the enrollment management perspective that recruitment and retention be coordinated (Gaither, 2000). In order to coordinate recruitment and retention, universities must focus on both

student and institutional enrollment decisions and the factors that influence them (Fretwell, 2011).

The investment institution makes in student retentions tends to pay tremendous dividends in terms of more revenue from returning students, increased graduation rates, and coming closer to fulfilling your campus mission. Given an increase in diversity of students, significant shifts would take place in the demographics of UWC enrolment. These student demographics would bring more diversity to campus by broadening the cultural atmosphere of the universities. UWC should to adjust to the diverse needs of its incoming students in order to maintain a quality university experience. Also UWC should be ready to take advantage of the tremendous enrollment opportunities these changes can bring (Levitz, 2011). Other studies have revealed that many key assumptions on which enrollment management practices can be based need to be challenged and modified. Universities have often acted on the basis that students are most vulnerable to dropping out within their first three months of enrollment by creating "success-centered" classes. When we delve further into what motivates students to persist until graduation, we find that "it is total employee commitment and involvement that makes the difference (Fennell and Miller, 2011).

Intervention strategies

Both poor academic preparation, study skills, poor self esteem and personal conflict can contribute to academic underachievement at UWC. Each of these three factors requires different intervention strategies. As such, intervention systems to be used should have a diagnostic capability to refer students to the treatment / counseling most appropriate for them to succeed. UWC should use intrusive intervention with students identified as having special needs. Intrusive intervention would take the form of advising and counseling and would involve prescriptive academic skills or tutoring programs. Freshman student orientations can be very effective in helping a student achieve his / her goal. In addition, intervention strategies should also focus on faculty and staff (Paulsen, 1990). Cross-cultural sensitivity, diversity of learning styles, and effective teaching and learning environments, are all effective retention initiatives currently being undertaken at UWC.

Research shows that most students leave university the first year so it is important to "front-load" retention and intervention strategies. The key elements in intervention strategies are; knowing when and with whom to intervene (Levitz, 2011). Enrollment management relies on research. Research should provide strategic information on District demographics, trends and student behavior. Does the College sufficiently target market its recruitment activities? Do academic programs attract students? Does advising and counseling, orientation and student life

programs help students adjust to the College? Course information, demand analysis, closed section tracking etc. are also data that are needed. Process and program evaluation are essential to the enrollment management process. Evaluations can take the form of surveys, program reviews, focus groups on service effectiveness, or surveys of student needs and priorities. Evaluation can be either quantitative and/or qualitative (Answers.com, 2002).

Conclusion

Enrollment management at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) requires the interaction and cooperation between different offices and services of the institution. The goal is to manage the overall size and shape of the University, stimulate future enrolment growth and support the development of students, using a coherent and well-planned participation strategy that supports the university's mission, ethos and strategic academic, financial student development and equity. An effective enrollment management plan can only succeed with support from top-level administration. In addition, an enrollment management task force would be more suitable for quality implementation and environmental scanning committees. Enrollment management is an important concept which needs time, effort and a University wide commitment to implement. It requires a comprehensive campus cooperation at the heart of enrollment management. It is seen as the integration of many office functions, practices and procedures that describes the challenge to make enrollment management work. Enrollment management can optimize enrollments, services and resources by making UWC a premier institution that puts students first.

The holistic approach to enrolment management represented in this study represents a construct through which enrolment managers and institutional leaders can strategically focus on enrolment dynamics. However, it is simply a tool for gaining the proper perspectives on UWC's internal organizational strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats that determine enrolment outcomes at the institution. This concept/ system will be useless without proper institutional willing-ness to act and the discipline to stay focused. The team is encouraged to identify the antecedents for a successful application of this concept and to ensure that all antecedents are in place before proceeding. Enrollment management is an approach to control the size of university's enrollments through better understanding of the factors that influence its enrollment patterns, and the establishment of structures and procedures to contact more potential students. It influences university's decisions concerning attendance and choice to retain those students who enroll. In addition, institution attempts to control the shape of its

academic programs by identifying strengths and weaknesses by matching programmes to student and community needs. Finally, enrollment management is being used as a means of exercising control over the mission of the University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UWC should devote as much attention to student retention as it conducts student recruitment. It should consider enrolment management as an organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable the institution to exert more influence over their student enrollments. Such practices should include marketing, admission policies, retention programs, and financial aid awarding. These strategies and tactics should be informed by collection, analysis, and use of data to project successful outcomes. Competitive efforts to recruit students are a common emphasis of enrollment managers. Failure to continuously improve enrolment management strategies can lead to less number of applications, decreasing net revenue as a result of accepting students who cannot pay most or all of unsubsidized tuition, decreasing demographic diversity, low retention rates and decreasing applicant pools.

If the institution wanted to grow by 6% during next year, then it must recruit 6% more students. However, UWC could accomplish that goal by recruiting 3% more and increasing student retention by 3%. It is far more cost effective to retain current students than to recruit new ones. This is true when considering what it takes to recruit new students in the increasingly competitive conditions and at the same time increasing students' retention requires university wide commitment. Rigorous advising to recruit and guide students through the university experience, engagement from the faculty, and strategic retention planning are just some of the important elements UWC needs for successful retention initiatives. This study was about enrolment management at the UWC, further study should investigate the offices in charge of enrolment and how they are organized in dealing with enrolment at the UWC.

REFERENCES

- Answers.com (2002). Enrollment Management in Higher Education. Retrieved 28 November 2011 from: <http://www.answers.com/topic/enrollment-management-in-higher-education>.
- Astin AW (1993). What matters most in college? Four critical years revisited. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barker TL (1998). Doing social research, 4th edition, New York, Free Press.
- Bailey KD (1994). Methods of social research, 4th edition, New York, Free Press.
- Bailey TR, Leinbach DT, Jenkins D (2006). Is student success labeled institutional failure? New York: Community College Research Center at the Teachers College, Columbia University.

- Baum S, Payea K (2004). Education pays 2004: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society. Washington, DC: The College Board.
- Black J (2001). Strategic Enrollment Management Revolution. Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers.
- Black J (2009). The enrollment management and marketing nexus, SEM WORKS, NC 27455. Retrieved 3 November 2011 from: www.semworks.net
- Clagett C, Kerr H (1993). Tracking and understanding your students. *Plan. High. Educ.*, 22: 9-15.
- Coomes M (2000). The Role Financial Aid Plays in Enrollment Management. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cope RG (1981). Environmental assessments for strategic planning. In N. L. Poulton (Ed.), *Evaluation of management and planning systems*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. *New Dir. Inst. Res.*, 31: 5-15.
- Dolence M, Miyahara D, Grajeda J, Rapp C (1987-88). Strategic Enrollment Management and Planning. *Plan. High. Educ.*, 16(3): 55-74.
- Engel C (2011). Understanding the enrollment motives of college transfer students. Retrieved from: <http://blog.noellelvitz.com/2011/08/25/understanding-enrollment-motives-college-transfer-students/>.
- Fennell F, Miller S (2011). Fostering Student Success: Vision, Emotion and Connectivity. *The Enrollment Manager Review*. Retrieved on 3 Nov 2011 from http://www.dwyereducationstrategies.com/enrollment_manager/.
- Fretwell G (2011). Enrollment management challenges for Canadian higher education. <http://blog.noellelvitz.com/2011/01/07/enrollment-management-canadian-colleges-universities/>.
- Gaither G (2000). Promising Practices in Recruitment, Remediation, and Retention. San 3. <http://blog.noellelvitz.com/2011/09/07/strategic-enrollment-management-era-changing-demographics/>.
- Grove J (1992). The marketing aspect of enrollment management: Evaluating the impact on recruitment and retention in institutions of higher education. Unpublished master's thesis, Oklahoma State University.
- Hierl CG (2011). Succession Planning Roadmap Critical to Your Enrollment Management Effort. Retrieved 4 November 2011 from: http://www.dwyereducationstrategies.com/enrollment_manager/.
- Hossler D (1985). Enrollment management: A paradigm for student affairs professionals. *NASPA J.*, 23(2): p. 2-8.
- Hossler D, John P (1990). *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hossle D, Schmidt J, Vesper N (1998). *Going to college: How social, economic, and educational factors influence the decisions students make*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hundrieser J (2011). Four risks that admissions directors must manage with recruitment materials and social media. Retrieved 4 November 2011, from: <http://blog.noellelvitz.com/2011/09/13/risk-management-admissions-part-1-recruitment-materials-technology/>.
- Interstudy News (2011). The University of the Western Cape. Retrieved 7 November 2011 from: <http://www.interstudy.org/universities/20-university-of-the-western-cape>.
- Jantzen J (1991). Enrollment management: The model, the manager and the message. *J. Market. High. Educ.*, 3(2): 129-139.
- Karemera D, Reuben LJ, Sillah MR (2003). The effects of academic environment and background characteristics on student satisfaction and performance: The case of South Carolina State University's School of Business. *Coll. Stud. J.*, 37(2): 298.
- Levitz N (2011). Strategic enrollment management in an era of changing demographics Mabry. *Enrollment Management*, ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges Los Angeles CA. <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-926/management.htm>.
- McDonough PM (1997). *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Morrison JL (1992). Environmental scanning. In Whitely MA, Porter JD, Fenske RH (Eds.), *A primer for new institutional researchers*. Tallahassee, FL: The Association of Institutional Research.
- National Center for Educational Statistics (2003). *Enrolment in postsecondary institutions, fall 2001 and financial statistics, fiscal year 2001*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Paulsen MB (1990). *College choice: Understanding student enrolment behavior*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education and George Washington University.
- Quirk M (2005). The Best Class Money Can Buy, *The Atlantic Magazine*, November. Retrieved on 6 Nov. 2011 from <http://byliner.com/matthew-quirk/stories/the-best-class-money-can-buy>.
- Sevier RA (1998). *Integrated marketing for colleges, universities, and schools*. Washington, DC: Council for Advancement and Support of Education.
- The College Board (2004). *Trends in student aid 2004*. New York: Author.
- Thomas SL, Perna LW (2004). The opportunity agenda: A reexamination of postsecondary reward and opportunity. In Smart JC (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*, Vol. 19. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Seidman A (1995). *Parkland College Enrollment Management Model*. Champaign, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.ED 384 375). Center for the Study of College Student Retention. Retrieved 7 Nov. 2011 from: http://www.cscsr.org/article_enrollment_management.htm
- Townsley M (1993). A strategic model for enrollment-driven private colleges. *J. High. Educ. Manage.*, 8(2): 57-66.
- University Business (2006). *White Paper: Connecting Enrollment and Fiscal Management. Solution for Higher Education Management*. Retrieved on 5 November 2011, from: <http://www.universitybusiness.com/article/white-paper-connecting-enrollment-and-fiscal-management>
- UWC (2009). *Enrolment management and student development*. University of the Western Cape. Retrieved from: http://www.uwc.ac.za/index.php?module=cms&action=showfulltext&id=gen11Srv7Nme54_8247