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In our previous essay, we considered the role of institutional financial aid and the practice of enrollment management. In that essay we explored the use of financial aid as a tool to enhance equity, increase prestige, as a revenue enhancement tool, and as a means to shape institutional image in the various markets that comprise our diverse system of postsecondary education. In this second essay on the topic of financial aid, we examine current federal and state financial aid public policy issues and their relationship with the enrollment management strategies and practices on individual campuses.
To put things in perspective, the most recent issue of The College Board publication, “Trends in Student Aid, 2007,” reports that the total amount of institutional financial aid is approaching four times the amount that states invest in financial aid. Nevertheless, state and federal financial aid programs play an important role in the enrollment strategies of colleges and universities. The ways in which federal and state financial aid policies influence enrollment management and enrollment outcomes, however, can vary widely depending upon the wealth, market position and mission of individual institutions. For example, well-endowed institutions such as Princeton or Williams have developed their own definitions of financial need and are so generous with campus-based financial aid that federal financial aid policies are no longer relevant. Regional public or private urban institutions, on the other hand, pay a great deal of attention to how much money students can borrow in any given year and to shifts in the level of funding for Pell Grants and state grants. Finally, financial aid policies at many community colleges discourage students from taking on student loans because they are concerned about problems associated with Title IV refunds if students do not attend their classes and with potentially high student loan default rates that could make them ineligible to participate and result in negative publicity. Despite the range of mission, wealth, size, and location of institutions, it behooves enrollment managers to be the campus experts on shifts in public policy and how such changes affect the students and the institutions we serve. The policy analyst role is increasingly part of the successful enrollment management officer’s portfolio of skill sets.

For most institutions, federal financial aid provides a foundation upon which all campus-based and state financial aid programs are built. Phrases such as unmet need, direct costs, and net costs are used by offices of financial aid and admissions to communicate to students and families how much they will have to pay out of pocket to attend a specific institution. These same phrases are used to create internal metrics that are used to measure institutional affordability among various groups of students or to serve as an indicator of the amount of institutional effort that is being made to assure financial access to low-income ad-
mitted students. Pell Grants and Stafford loans provide a common starting point for nearly all institutions as they build their financial aid packages that ultimately lead to calculations of unmet need or net cost and that determine to significant degrees enrollment and revenue outcomes.

More complex is the impact of state financial aid programs on the enrollment management strategies of colleges and universities. States such as California, Illinois, Indiana, and New York provide relatively generous need-based grants for students while states such as Florida and Georgia have invested large amounts of state funds into merit-based financial aid programs (Bright Futures in Florida and the Hope Scholarship in Georgia). Yet another state model is the voucher program in Colorado that enables students to use their vouchers at any public or private institution in the state. Still other states provide modest amounts of need-based or merit-based financial aid. To make things even more complicated, some states provide more generous financial aid programs for public sector institutions, ignoring the private sector, while other states, such as New York for example, provide more generous scholarships for students enrolled in the private sector. Thus at Georgia public institutions, it is unlikely that senior enrollment managers have to budget large amounts of campus-based financial aid in efforts to provide merit scholarships for Georgia high school students. On the other hand, public and private institutions in the State of New York may have to worry less about providing need-based financial aid for low- and moderate-income students because TAP Grants, along with Pell Grants, enable campus policy makers to keep the amount of unmet need relatively low for needy students. However, both public and private institutions in Alaska have to be more concerned about both merit- and need-based financial aid because the state invests relatively little in any form of financial aid assistance.

Historically, the American Council on Education (ACE) and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), working with senior campus policy makers and financial aid administrators have worked closely to try to influence federal financial aid public policy. In recent years, however, there is a sense that because of the wide gap in the views of proprietary, public community college, four-year private institutions, and four-year publics toward financial aid that ACE has not been able to play as significant a brokering role in advocating for specific changes in federal financial aid. In addition, NASFAA has increasingly become the technical experts on federal aid policy, but they are viewed by some as no longer playing a major role in shaping major elements of federal policy. Although the national office of AACRAO has been active in public policy debates, to date, most enrollment management conferences, other than the College Board Annual Forum, have seldom included a strong focus on federal and financial aid policy, despite the important role these programs play. This may be due to the overriding focus on tactical dimensions of EM in the early years of the profession, as addressed in our previous essays.

Now seems to be a propitious time for enrollment managers to be thinking broadly and deeply about federal and state financial aid policies and their impact. Both federal and state financial aid programs have once again come under great scrutiny from elected leaders and educational policy analysts. There is a growing sense that our current federal system of financial aid is broken. Since the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal financial aid system has evolved from a program focused on providing grants for needy students, to a complicated system that over time has also added programs to provide loans, tax deductions, tax credits, scholarships for low-income students who perform well in STEM-related fields (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics), and loan forgiveness programs for teachers, among others. These changes have made institutional efforts to manage federal, state, and institutional financial aid offices increasingly difficult. In addition, no matter how many efforts have been made to simplify the application for federal financial aid and the method of assessing student eligibility for federal aid, both have become increasingly complex. Federal government investment in financial aid has grown dramatically yet the goal(s) of federal financial aid programs are no longer clear. Ranging from the Spelling’s Commission Report to the soon to be released recommendations of the College Board’s “The Rethinking Student Aid Study Group,” efforts are afoot to make significant changes in federal financial aid programs. To the extent any of these efforts are successful; they will affect changes in state financial aid programs that will in turn influence the focus of institutional financial aid programs. Thus, in this second essay on financial aid, we provide a brief overview of some current public policy debates about federal and state
financial aid policies. We conclude with a discussion of the potential impacts of some of the key policy changes currently being considered, and a call to EM leaders to become more involved in these policy discussions.

THE FEDERAL SCENE

Critiques of the Federal Financial Aid System

There is a spate of critiques of the current federal financial aid system. The broad line of criticisms of the current needs analysis system include the following:

- The needs analysis system no longer reflects real financial need because Congress has overly politicized the ways in which need is calculated.
- Expected family contribution (EFC) does not accurately reflect family income and assets and it is too complicated for the average family to understand.
- The current application for federal financial aid is too complex. In an effort to make sure no student/family receives more aid than they are eligible for, the designers of the FAFSA have designed a questionnaire that only parents from well-educated families can readily complete.

Critiques of federal financial aid policy note that federal financial aid programs have moved so far away from their original focus on providing grants for needy students that it is hard to ascertain the primary goals of federal aid policy. As evidence of this, critics point to the following developments:

- A dramatic decline in the purchasing power of Pell Grants, and a concomitant increase in the use of subsidized loans for low-income students, thus requiring students who are more likely to be averse to borrowing, and who face the prospect of lower incomes to take on unmanageable levels of debt to finance their postsecondary education.
- Federal involvement in loans for which students from middle and upper middle class families have been the principal beneficiaries.
- The use of tax credits and tax deductions for college expenses that principally benefit middle and upper middle class families. What is especially worrisome to many critics is that these programs have the potential to exceed the federal government’s total investment in Pell Grants and that these programs may not have a large impact on the postsecondary enrollment decisions of students and families because the financial benefits of these programs accrue to families after they have had to expend significant amounts of their own funds, and the research is mixed on the extent to which families consider these programs when they make their postsecondary decisions.

The recent creation of SMART Grants, Academic Competitiveness and Teach Grants that create yet another set of policy goals for the federal financial aid system. In addition, critics say both of these programs were poorly conceived and implemented at the federal level.

A significant area of debate in the federal financial aid policy arena is that of student loans. The debate of the relative merits of direct lending and the Federal Family Education Loan Program has received a great deal of attention. What has received less attention in recent years are proposals to move away from our current program of fixed terms of repayment to income contingent loans (ICL). In addition, in this last re-authorization of Title IV of the Higher Education Act, questions about how to best calculate default rates and the impact of any changes in calculating default upon institutional eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs also re-emerged.

- With respect to ICL loan schemes, Australia, England, and New Zealand, for example, have adopted income contingent loan schemes. As Tom Kane at Harvard points out, moving to an ICL program would also remove the necessity of means testing through tools like the FAFSA because repayment would be based on the future income of the borrower, not the past income of the borrower’s family. The other advantage of ICL programs is that they remove much of the risk, and thus potentially much of the risk aversion of low-income students is about taking out loans because repayment is based upon the student’s income level after he or she graduates from or leaves college.

In the last re-authorization of the Higher Education Act proposals were made to alter the time period during which default rates will be calculated. In the past, default rates have been calculated over a one-year period. In the future, calculation rates will be calculated over 36 months. The argument advanced was that this new method provided a more realistic measure of de-
fault rates. Using the new formula, the default rates increased at many proprietary schools, community colleges, and other schools that enroll large numbers of low-income students, and place some of these institutions at risk of losing their eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs.

How Changes Might Influence Enrollment Management Practices

Other proposals have been offered to bring about significant changes in the federal financial aid system, but these represent the major policy critiques levied at our current federal system. For enrollment managers, any changes made to satisfy critics would alter the institutional enrollment management strategies. Income contingent loan programs could alter the perceived costs of attendance because the longer pay back period linked to income could make repayment seem less onerous. This could not only change the amount of financial aid that institutions would need to provide, but alter the entirety of the marketing and program pricing process. Changes in the needs assessment system could result in more low- and moderate-income students electing to enroll in postsecondary education thus increasing enrollments—especially at community colleges and regional public institutions located in metropolitan areas. Any sizeable increase in Pell Grants would also increase postsecondary participation rates yet have differential impact on access of different groups of students and on different institutions. Finally, some of the recent changes in how default rates are calculated could have a significant impact on some proprietary institutions, community colleges, urban four-year institutions, and HBCU’s—institutions that enroll large numbers of low-income students who historically have been at greater risk of defaulting on their loans.

There is no question that changes in Title IV programs influence many of the challenges enrollment managers face. Because of the diverse missions and types of students served by the two- and four-year sectors of our postsecondary educational system, it behooves enrollment managers to stay abreast of these shifts and to keep senior campus policy makers informed of how these changes might influence student enrollments. Monitoring the federal policy scene, a task and responsibility which chief financial aid and chief student records officers already embrace, is a process that increasingly defines EM today.

**THE STATE SCENE**

Talking about trends in state financial aid policies is more complicated; there are 50 states and thus 50 state policies. Because of the wide range of state approaches to financial aid, we make no attempt to highlight current state aid programs. Instead we identify some of the major differences in focus and structure of state programs. Key distinctions between various state financial aid programs are: the scope of state aid programs, the extent to which merit or need are the primary focus of state programs, and the extent to which state aid programs are sensitive to tuition costs. This is a key factor for private sector institutions. States that increase student eligibility for grants or loans as costs rise help to level the playing field between the two sectors. Those states that do not increase student eligibility for grants and loans make it harder for private colleges and universities to compete with their public sector counterparts.

**Merit vs. Need**

The largest area of debate has been the growing investment in merit aid. There are now eight states that spend more on merit aid programs than on need-based financial aid programs. In recent years, there has been a more substantial increase in merit aid at the state level than in need-based financial aid. Since no state has the resources to meet all demands for financial aid that are present amongst its citizens, merit aid programs usually result in smaller investments in need-based state financial aid programs. Thus states are subsidizing students who may have attended college anyway while possibly decreasing enrollment rates among low- and moderate-income students. If states were able to afford adequate merit and need-based programs, merit aid programs would not be so heavily scrutinized; however, few states can afford both types of programs. While our previous essay cautioned against drawing too sharp a distinction between merit- and need-based aid programs, the general reality is that states with generous merit aid programs typically have more modest need-based programs.

State merit programs typically produce unintended consequences that effect institutional enrollment strategy. Certainly, so-called “Bright Flight” strategies such as the
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— Don Hossler
Director of Projects on Academic Success
School of Education, Indiana University

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Georgia Hope Scholarship has kept academically strong Georgia students within the state. However, because students have to maintain high grades in order to keep their scholarships, state merit aid programs also put upward pressure on college grades resulting in grade inflation. They tend to suppress ethnic diversity at some institutions by increasing the number of applicants which, in turn, results in these campuses becoming more selective, which, in turn, typically reduces the number of students who are first generation, low-income and/or students often associated with being from ethnically diverse backgrounds. In addition, large state merit programs can put pressure on public institutions to keep their tuition levels artificially low because if they raise their tuition levels too much, state legislators may not be able to continue to fund popular state merit programs.

Leveling the Playing Field

In an effort to equalize student choice and competition, some states such as New York and Indiana have state financial aid formulas that provide more generous state grants to students who are enrolled at private institutions. The state financial aid system in New York, for example, has a series of aid programs that attempt to level the competitive playing field between public and private institutions. But other states do relatively little to help foster a vibrant private sector. In the State of Washington, unlike states such as California, Indiana, or New York, the amount of funding for a state grant is not very responsive to the differences in tuition between public and private colleges and universities. Insofar as EM is a process of mapping an institution’s market position relative to key competitors in ways including price, net price and net cost, marketing strategy inevitably becomes state specific for institutions with a limited regional draw.

Other Variations

There are additional variations in state financial aid programs that can influence campus-based enrollment management strategies. One example of differences across state policies can be found in the ways in which financial aid programs encourage students to transfer between two- and four-year institutions. For example the states of Arizona, Massachusetts, and Texas provide more generous financial aid incentives for students to transfer from two- to four-year institutions. Finally, some states invest relative amounts of public funds into state aid programs. Alaska on the other hand does not have a state grant program. The primary form of state financial aid comes in the form of loans.

The structure of state financial aid programs can have an important impact on the tasks of senior enrollment managers. They shape in direct and indirect ways the mix of students who apply and enroll. This directly determines the net cost to the student and the net revenue to the institution. They shape the way institutions manage their institutional aid program; generous state grants for needy students can reduce pressure on institutions to fund need-based scholarships for students. Generous state-funded merit programs can have a similar impact on campus investments in merit aid. Because of their visibility, they may also help keep more talented students within the state. The task of enrollment managers is to pay careful attention to the impact that state financial aid programs have on the enrollment behaviors of students, and to develop institutional strategies that take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the unique programs in each state.

THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

There is no question that federal and state financial aid policies exert a powerful influence on the strategies and practices of enrollment managers. Except perhaps for the most selective and most well endowed private colleges and universities, who have sufficient student demand and financial resources to chart enrollment strategies that are relatively independent of public forms of financial aid, federal and state aid policies influence the postsecondary destinations of students and the numbers who enroll in postsecondary education and the way that institutional mission, along with location, size, wealth, and selectivity, shape the focus of campus-based financial aid programs. They help to determine the relative importance of need versus merit, the extent to which diversity and other factors shape the strategies of institutional-based aid programs. In essence, federal and state aid policies influence how institutions set price, manage costs, design their own financial aid policies, and realize their enrollment and revenue goals.

To date, enrollment management as a profession has not played an active role in attempting to shape these policies.
However, there is a growing vacuum in the voice of institutional efforts to influence public policy. Given the number of thoughtful critiques of federal and state programs and the increasing scrutiny by federal and state legislators and policy advocates, the time may be ripe for enrollment managers to get more involved in advocacy for financial aid programs. Perhaps no group of campus administrators is better positioned to understand the full impact of federal and state financial aid policies on student and institutional outcomes. In addition, perhaps no campus administrators are in a better position to understand how current levels of competition for students—numbers of students, diversity of students, and quality of students—are stretching institutional resources and diminishing the ability of campuses to invest more financial aid to enhance access, or to increase the number of students in STEM fields as federal and state resources erode.

In recent annual meetings of professional higher education organizations, there has been a growing effort and interest in updating members about federal financial aid policies, but more efforts are needed. To date, little attention has been given to state financial aid programs at such conferences. As we have already noted, The College Board Annual Forum, and other Board publications, are increasingly making efforts to focus the attention of enrollment professionals on financial aid policy.

At the institutional level, at both private and public schools, EM offices and officers are increasingly called upon to monitor public policy trends so that they can address matters relating to how federal and state aid policies will shape the future of the institution. As Boards of Trustees realize that institutional reliance on federal and state aid sources are critical to institutional financial health, yet cannot be taken for granted, EM leadership must be in a position to speak to such aid as either a strategic threat or opportunity. Many large private and public institutions have professional administrative staffs that analyze public policy and who are engaged in policy advocacy. In the areas of federal and state financial aid it is increasingly important that offices of financial aid, enrollment management and government relations or public affairs carefully coordinate their information and advocacy. The amount of federal and state financial aid dollars available to students has become so large that following these policy trends and engaging in advocacy when necessary has become one of the defining activities of Enrollment Management.

About the Authors

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An Assessment of Urban Students’ Awareness of College Processes
increasing college access for students living in urban areas has been a focus of practitioners and researchers for decades. School districts, nonprofit organizations, and universities have undertaken the task of designing programs that facilitate low-income, urban youths’ transition from high school to college. The purpose of this paper is not to evaluate the success these programs have had in increasing diversity on college campuses; rather, we are concerned with the level of social and procedural preparedness youths possess when they arrive on college campuses. Although a rigorous high school curriculum is essential to postsecondary success (Adelman 2006), academic preparation alone does not guarantee degree completion (Conley 2005). Do youths from urban areas who attended low-perform-

ing high schools have adequate knowledge of college processes? Specifically, in the critical last two months before entering college, of what aspects of college transition are students unaware? We define ‘college knowledge’ as a specific skill set—social, academic, and cultural—necessary for successful transition to postsecondary education and degree completion. Youths who live in middle-class communities with family members who have completed postsecondary degrees learn what it means to be in college through their social networks (Stanton-Salazar 1997). These youths benefit from conversations with family members and peers about how to prepare for college and what to expect. When they have a difficult time making a decision (e.g., which college to select), they have a social support system that offers guidance. Youths from low-income communities generally are less likely to have access to a social network that can provide this level of support and institutional knowledge (Lee and Bowen 2006); as a result, more often than not, they enter college unprepared. Students’

The contemporary college or university campus is a complex and dynamic environment that requires students to navigate myriad institutional processes. College preparedness is not simply a matter of being academically ready for postsecondary-level work, but also requires that students have a procedural knowledge of other university processes—what we define herein as “college knowledge.” This article presents the results of an evaluation of a college preparation program that focuses on college knowledge and provides a road map for designing an effective college knowledge curriculum.

Increasing college access for students living in urban areas has been a focus of practitioners and researchers for decades. School districts, nonprofit organizations, and universities have undertaken the task of designing programs that facilitate low-income, urban youths’ transition from high school to college. The purpose of this paper is not to evaluate the success these programs have had in increasing diversity on college campuses; rather, we are concerned with the level of social and procedural preparedness youths possess when they arrive on college campuses. Although a rigorous high school curriculum is essential to postsecondary success (Adelman 2006), academic preparation alone does not guarantee degree completion (Conley 2005). Do youths from urban areas who attended low-perform-

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first-year college experiences are critical to their persistence through degree completion (Goldrick-Rab 2007). Students from families without a history of college-going may overcome application and acceptance hurdles, but this does not guarantee that they are fully prepared to successfully negotiate the transition to enrollment and degree completion. These students’ lack of knowledge of college processes becomes apparent upon their arrival on campus (Bloom 2007). Failure in classes the first semester or lack of social connectedness may lead to a perception by the student that completing college is not a realistic goal.

Gaining access to college is a multifaceted process that involves much more than completing applications and securing financial aid. In order for students to successfully negotiate the transition to college and achieve degree completion, they need to understand how to navigate institutional hierarchies, social obligations, and personal commitments (McDonough 1997). Our findings are based on an assessment of knowledge youths possessed who attended a summer bridge program at a large, urban, research university in the western United States. We worked with 90 youths who graduated from low-performing schools in a large urban area. Virtually all of the youths came from low-income families and were either Latino or African American. The youths had been accepted to a four-year college or university; one-third of the institutions were highly selective. The students’ relatively high grade point averages and their sacrifice of nearly a month of their summer break suggest that the students were motivated to be successful in college.

Students completed a college knowledge survey prior to participating in the program. Survey responses were compared with observations during college knowledge sessions during which students discussed aspects of the college transition. We used information gathered from the surveys to develop sessions that targeted aspects of college knowledge that appeared to be lacking. We discuss in the remainder of this article the four most prominent questions that arose. The final section provides an overview of the program we designed to address identified needs.
Access to information about financial aid is one aspect of college knowledge that has received a significant amount of attention (Burdman 2005; McDonough and Calderone 2006; Perna 2007). The issue of financial access is of particular importance to youths from low-income families. Socioeconomic status is a significant indicator of students’ preparation for college (Deil-Amen and Turley 2007; Olivérez and Tierney 2005). For students from low-income families, the perceived cost of college is carefully considered; cost comparisons between institutions may be a deciding factor determining students’ school of choice (Paulsen and St. John 2002). Students’ awareness of the high cost of tuition does not guarantee that they also understand the additional costs of postsecondary education (Bloom 2007). First-generation students may not know that they also need to factor in social expenses, travel costs to visit home, and the cost of books and supplies.

Students who attended our program had basic knowledge of the financial opportunities and obligations associated with attending college. The majority of students understood that completion of the FAFSA was necessary to receive support from the federal government, including federal loans. Students had filled out these forms and had received documents from their universities and the federal government; however, they were unsure of how to interpret the financial aid documents they received in return—whether from their college of choice, grant agencies, or foundations managing scholarships. Students who did not have access to college preparation programs typically set aside these documents because they were unsure of the next steps. For example, one student received a statement informing her that she did not qualify for federal support because her mother had not filled out the FAFSA correctly: her form was missing a few pieces of information. Correcting the form required locating the information and resubmitting the form. Had the student had access to the required information, she could have responded to the financial aid office’s request within a few minutes. Unfortunately, the student did not understand the request and so put the document in her desk for nearly a month. Six weeks before school started, she received from the university a series of letters that she interpreted as denying her financial support.

Some college preparation programs—specifically, those affiliated with a high school course—do not extend through summer, leaving students without a resource to consult when questions arise. Students could have contacted the directors of their high schools’ college prep programs but typically were afraid they would be considered bothersome. Students were unsure of whom to consult when an unexpected situation arose. Throughout the program, we observed that the majority of students did not ask questions until they were given a clear opportunity to do so. Students with concerns they perceived as private or potentially embarrassing were not forthcoming about financial issues until they were asked during individual sessions.

**QUESTION 1:**

“I KNOW WHAT FINANCIAL AID IS, BUT WHAT ABOUT MY SPECIFIC SITUATION?”

Involvement while attending college is one of the strongest predictors of persistence and graduation (Astin 1984; Tinto 1998). Tinto (1998) posits that involvement—in the classroom as well as in the greater university community—and a feeling of integration into the campus community strongly contribute to the likelihood that a student will choose to stay in college. Nearly 50 percent of all students who drop out do so prior to the start of their second year of college (Tinto 1998). Getting involved during the first year increases the likelihood that students will be socially connected with others who have an academic focus. Thus, it becomes vital for students to know prior to their arrival on campus (or early in their undergraduate experience) what opportunities for involvement are available. However, involvement alone is not sufficient. The student must perceive her involvement as beneficial in order for it to positively influence persistence (Rendon 1994).

Students with whom we worked had knowledge of involvement that was dependent upon their participation in related activities in high school. For example, a student involved in student government in high school assumed that student government was an option in college. Many students wanted to continue their involvement in activities similar to those in which they had participated in high school. For example, 93 percent of students involved in sports planned to be on an athletic team in college (ranging from intramural to varsity). More than 60 percent of students involved in speech and debate, student government, cheerleading, performing arts, and community ser-

**QUESTION 2:**

“SHOULD I GET INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS?”

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vice organizations planned to continue participating in these activities. Students connected the reasons they were involved in high school to their intended participation in college: If they participated in activities that were fun or that allowed them to stay physically fit, then they would do so for the same reasons in college. However, few students connected their participation in activities to their success in college (or beyond). Further, students were unaware that postsecondary institutions typically offer myriad co-curricular opportunities.

The majority (67 percent) of students in our program were involved in multiple activities in high school and planned to continue that level of involvement in college. A small group (4 percent) of students were not involved in high school programs; that percentage doubled when students predicted their involvement in activities at college. We were particularly interested in why this group—though representing only a small proportion—did not plan to participate in student activities. Students gave three explanations: employment; need to focus on academics; and lack of interest. One young woman who planned to live with her parents while she attended school explained her need to prioritize employment over involvement. She stated that she would consider joining a student activity if there was time, but she was not optimistic. An other student did not understand why anyone would want to participate in extracurricular activities; her priority was to pass her classes. She felt that involvement in other activities would distract her. A couple of students did not believe they would be interested in any of the activities offered on campus. They connected their lack of interest in high school activities to their perception of postsecondary involvement options. These students did not identify any negative consequences that might result from their lack of involvement in student activities.

**QUESTION 3:**

**"HOW DO I DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIPS?"**

Students discussed and defined relationships in regard to their family, peers, and professors. One of two responses was typical with regard to maintaining family relationships: never visit, or visit every weekend. Responses frequently were dependent on geographic proximity: Students who chose to attend a college or university in the city where their parents lived typically planned either to live with their parents or to visit every weekend. Visits were discussed in terms of maintaining friendships and fulfilling family obligations. Students living at home planned to contribute by assisting with childcare for younger siblings, assisting their families financially, and devoting considerable time to family activities. Students who chose to attend colleges or universities that were more than a five-hour drive from home assumed that visits home would be limited to winter break and summer vacation. These students planned to maintain their familial relationships primarily via e-mail and phone.

Students did not clearly define social relationships. Those who were moving to another city expressed anticipation and anxiety. They cited the residence hall and student involvement opportunities as avenues they planned to use to build a social network. They were unsure whether time would be available to maintain high school friendships. Students planning to attend schools in close proximity to their high schools had significantly more interest in maintaining friendships. In particular, students planning to live with their families prioritized relationships formed in high school and downplayed the importance of creating new social connections.

Students perceived that their relationships with professors would be formal and distant. More than 40 percent of students did not plan to meet with a professor unless they were struggling academically. One student mentioned that he planned to meet with a professor only if he was failing a class; another student commented that she might go to office hours if she was dealing with a crisis adversely affecting her grades. Nearly half of the students misunderstood the purpose of office hours. Viewing student-faculty relationships as adversarial or negative contributes to students’ inability to become integrated into the campus community and reduces the chance that students will seek academic support; each of these in turn may lead to decreased persistence and/or academic performance.

**QUESTION 4:**

**"HOW AM I GOING TO GET EVERYTHING DONE?"**

McCarthy and Kuh (2006) used HSSE and NSSE survey findings to compare the amounts of time students spent weekly preparing for classes in high school and college. On average, college students spent twice as much time preparing for classes as high school students. Students new to the
college environment and unaware of the increased workload are at a disadvantage their first year—the very year most crucial to their continued success in college (Tinto 1998). College preparatory programs that include an instructional component intended to mirror college-level classes can help students anticipate and prepare to meet academic expectations their freshman year.

Students expected that time management strategies that had worked in the past would continue to serve them well during college. Strategies included attending class regularly to get announcements about due dates and setting aside time to study with peers. Students who had not participated in college preparation programs assumed that their class schedule would be similar to that in high school (i.e., six hours a day, five days a week). More than 80 percent of students overestimated the amount of time they would spend in class, and nearly 65 percent underestimated the amount of time they would need to study.

Few students used daily planners to organize their studying in high school. Nearly two-thirds of students used planners to keep track of important events (e.g., birthdays and tests), but they did not use them to plan completion of schoolwork. Many students had few independent strategies to keep themselves organized and relied instead on the structures of high school to remind them to complete assignments. Most students were familiar with the adage that ‘professors do not remind you to turn in your work.’ However, they needed additional strategies for negotiating the independent nature of college-level academic assignments. With fewer assignments and less structure than high school, college inevitably will present students with challenges they have not yet faced. Fewer assignments is one factor that makes college less forgiving than high school. Students who enter college with unrealistic expectations may quickly become overwhelmed by the workload and may struggle continually to catch up and overcome the deficit. Such students are at risk of failing or dropping out of school, particularly if they already feel less prepared academically and have weaker social support networks.

DESIGNING A COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE PROGRAM

College preparation programs (those outside the public school system) are designed to increase individuals’ base of knowledge about college and access to higher education. Given public schools’ limited resources and capacity, these academic enrichment programs are the best places for students from families that do not have a history of college-going to obtain knowledge of postsecondary processes (Swail 2000). Most college preparation programs share the same ultimate goal: for students to attend and graduate from college. Programs have an array of structural designs and short-term goals to achieve this end; however, most focus on college access for low-income, minority youths who are first-generation college students (College Board 2000). These programs have a positive impact on the youths they serve; however, most of them are not in session during the most critical months—those immediately preceding entry and transition to college. Increasing numbers of questions occur to students as the transition to college becomes a reality. Students often need assistance dealing with administrative details and individual emergencies that arise. In this final section, we discuss four aspects of the program we developed to increase students’ college knowledge. The four program components were financial access; involvement and campus life; relationships; and time management.

Financial Access

Successful negotiation of the financial aid process requires more than a single, large-group session during the last year of high school (Venegas and Hallett forthcoming). Securing financial aid is a process. During the summer “college knowledge” program, students had the opportunity to participate in three different types of sessions: large group, individual consultation, and a guided phone conference. The large-group presentation covered general information about loans, scholarships, and award letters. Students asked general questions about financial aid opportunities and the overall process. A professional staff member from the university’s financial aid office facilitated the workshop. Although our program staff possessed a great deal of knowledge regarding financial aid processes, we felt it was important to invite a campus-based expert for this session to allow students to obtain the most direct and accurate information possible. This also gave students experience speaking with someone similar to the financial aid staff at their campuses. Students were encouraged to voice concerns and were given information that would support self-advocacy.

Students who needed extra support navigating the financial aid process were encouraged to sign up for an
individual consultation. These students met with a staff member who was knowledgeable about the financial aid process. Together, the student and the staff member reviewed the award letter and resolved any outstanding issues. Finally, each student was given the opportunity to receive guided support in contacting the financial aid office at the institution he or she planned to attend. The staff member first rehearsed the conversation with the student and then prompted the student with questions throughout the actual phone call. The goal was to empower students by giving them skills that would serve them throughout their academic careers—and beyond.

Involvement and Campus Life
Notice of opportunities for student involvement and information about campus life were disseminated through two primary sources: a series of student involvement seminars and a panel of current college students. The first seminar discussed the importance of being involved in the campus community and the diversity of options available; the second involved the use of online resources. Students browsed the student involvement Web pages at their respective institutions’ Web sites. The purpose of this session was to expose students to the diversity of options and to have them make initial contact with organizations of interest to them. Each student either called or e-mailed three organizations to request additional information. The purpose of this activity was not to force students to commit to an organization but to help them take the first step toward involvement by initiating a dialogue with student leaders at their future campuses.

A student panel was the second component of this session. The panel comprised college students who had graduated from the high schools the program participants had attended. Program participants were given the opportunity to ask the college students about their experiences and to seek their advice about campus life.

Relationships
We were intentional about including professors, teaching assistants, graduate students, and current college students as presenters. The vast majority of students in the summer program had not previously met a professor and did not have a close personal friend or family member who attended a postsecondary institution. The structure of the program enabled the students to participate in classes with professors and teaching assistants, as well as to speak to them in more casual situations. The intent was to expose students to as many of the different groups of people they would encounter during their first year of college as possible.

The relationship portion of the program used problem-solving sessions and seminars on building relationships with professors and discussed the importance of grades. The problem-solving sessions presented students with typical situations that arise in college (e.g., a student does not understand an assignment or does not know what to do if a conflict occurs with a roommate). Students brainstormed solutions and resources that might be available to assist them. Situations that encouraged students to consider professors, teaching assistants, residence hall staff, and campus officers as essential parts of their social network also were discussed.

Time Management
The responses students gave at the beginning of the program exposed the limited information they had about the daily demands and “flexibility” of college life. Consequently, sessions were designed to help students develop the time management skills needed to meet the real demands of college. Students learned how to use daily planners to keep track of course assignments; how to plan to complete assignments; and how to allot time to study for exams. Because most students anticipated being involved in extracurricular activities, they were shown how to use a planner to keep track not only of course assignments but also of meetings, social obligations, and family events.

We deemed the management of time within each class period as important as using a daily planner to keep track of commitments each week and semester. Students were shown how to utilize time management strategies to complete timed exams and to take notes during lectures. The majority of students associated note-taking with writing down every word a professor said. They were frustrated when a teacher spoke too fast for them to record her words verbatim. To ease their anxieties about note-taking, students were encouraged to pay particular attention to main ideas and concepts. We demonstrated how to identify key concepts and organize the ideas presented.

The majority of students had not taken essay exams in their high school classes. Thus, sessions were designed to
teach students how to identify what a question was asking and how to manage the limited time available to write a complete and thorough answer. The first session was a lecture that outlined writing and organizational strategies. After the session, students practiced taking an essay test and were given feedback by writing instructors.

CONCLUSION

A rigorous college preparation program must ensure that students are exposed to and retain accurate and relevant college knowledge. The moment students set foot on a college campus, they must begin to adjust to an entirely new way of life. Students from low-income, urban backgrounds are at a greater disadvantage than their more advantaged peers, and they drop out in greater numbers. Developing skills such as interpreting a financial aid offer, understanding a tuition bill, knowing how to take an essay exam, being aware of opportunities for campus involvement, and managing personal finances eases the potentially jarring transition to college and prepare students for success inside and outside the classroom.

The results of our study confirm the clear gaps that exist between what low-income urban youths know about college prior to their arrival on campuses and what they need to know to make the transition successfully. College knowledge beyond academic preparation is vital, so we must find a way to identify the barriers low-income urban youths face and assist them in overcoming them. Urban youths face many challenges in gaining access to college. Lack of functional college knowledge is a deficiency that can be remedied through carefully planned interventions in pre-college preparation programs.

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Each winter, the best collegiate football programs compete in the Bowl Championship Series. In addition to showcasing their prowess on the field, each school is afforded opportunities to highlight other aspects of their institution in the form of advertising spots. The current study analyzed each of these spots for the 43 university participants using orienting concepts of critical race theory and iconography. The messages and symbolism within each advertisement reveal a great deal about each institution, both through what is included, and what and who are excluded. Through this paper, the authors provide an analysis of how the dominance of whiteness is communicated, as well as how the token multiculturalism that is shown sends a message about each institution.
Higher education in the United States has a mission to provide access to a broad range of students from a variety of backgrounds. From its early roots in creating Jefferson’s educated citizenry to the training of returning veterans from World War II, U.S. higher education has been largely egalitarian. The recent move toward a market focus, with its increased emphasis on private benefits (Zemsky 2003), has called into question the longstanding public mission of these institutions. Today, higher education finds itself in the business of selling a commoditized product to an increasingly savvy customer base of students and parents (Harris 2006; McPherson and Schapiro 1998). The admissions race to attract high-quality and well-financed students makes marketing efforts critically important to universities.

The higher education literature provides only limited evidence of the various marketing strategies and tactics presently implemented by colleges and universities (Kirp 2003). In the current environment, marketing strategies and the projection of image are tremendously significant to institutions—particularly those seeking greater prestige (Brewer, Gates and Goldman 2002; Kittle 2000). Yet we understand very little about how colleges and universities create their institutional image and brand. Our goal in this study was to understand the messages sent out by colleges and universities during nationally televised bowl games.

A significant avenue for university marketing is nationally televised collegiate football bowl games. During these broadcasts, television networks typically provide the two competing universities with a 30-second advertising spot. Understanding the messages and symbolism of these advertisements provides a window into the values, interests, and goals of universities as social institutions. The initial research question guiding this work was: What symbols and images of students do colleges and universities use to promote themselves during television spots aired during the college football bowl season?
RESEARCH CONTEXT

The literature is only beginning to address the ways in which higher education seeks to portray itself to key external constituencies (Morphew and Hartley 2006). Higher education’s response to the current environment has increased its reliance on marketing strategies, particularly the notion of branding that dominates the business literature (Kittle 2000; Toma, Dubrow and Hartley 2005). Branding has been a fixture in business, yet there are remarkable parallels to the marketing strategies employed by higher education. Although some critics (Bok 2003; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004) identify negative consequences of marketing and branding, colleges and universities continue to aggressively pursue such strategies. Further compounding the issue, administrators responsible for university marketing are barraged by consultants and so-called experts who typically have a financial stake in the advice they provide to institutions (Hartley and Morphew in press). The significance of images and their proliferation remain relatively underdeveloped areas of the research.

This study is predicated on the notion that the advertising elements colleges and universities convey to potential students constitute a critical area of inquiry for higher education practitioners. The images, language, and symbols in bowl advertisements demonstrate the values, beliefs, and priorities of the institution and administration. The literature on mission statements provides some information on how institutions communicate with stakeholders (Carruthers and Lott 1981; Lang and Lopers-Sweetman 1991; Newsom and Hayes 1991). The messages mission statements convey demonstrate the values colleges and universities wish to portray to internal and external audiences (Morphew and Hartley 2006). Institutional spots during bowl games are similar to mission statements in that they have internal and external audiences. However, most institutional advertisements do not go through the often exhaustive process typical of mission statement development (Lang and Lopers-Sweetman 1991). The mission planning process can serve a useful role in unifying constituencies around common goals (Bean and Kuh 1984). Marketing efforts are much more reflective of administrative goals related to enrollment and institutional placement. As a result, advertisements during bowl games may reveal the perspective of administrators and the messages they seek to convey.

Central to this study is the idea of how prospective students learn about college and how this learning becomes the foundation for a relationship between the institution and student. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) describe the college choice process as three evolving phases—pre-dispositions, search, and choice—beginning in middle school through high school. At each stage, higher education marketing has influence. Information about college is a key component of the first step while perceptions about institutional attributes (such as quality or campus life) hold primary importance at the choice stage (Nora and Cabrera 1992).

The college choice decision is complex and necessitates examination of multiple factors (Hossler, Schmit and Vesper 1999). The connection between marketing efforts and college choice “rests upon a set of relatively straightforward premises that connect market elements and, particularly, competition, to individual choice” (Oplatzka 2004, p.144). This trend has emerged concurrently with the move away from emphasis of the public benefits of higher education and toward students’ individual gain (Brint 2002; Grubb and Lazerzon 2005).

Information about higher education influences students even beyond the choice process. This increases the importance of understanding how commercials portray higher education. Tobolowsky and Lowery (2006) examined how bowl advertisements influenced students’ expectations of college. Hossler and Vesper (1993) as well as Hamrick and Hossler (1996) demonstrate that alignment between students’ expectations and their experiences leads to high satisfaction. Multiple avenues, to include Web sites and college viewbooks, hold a powerful place in communication between institutions and prospective students (Durgin 1998). Analysis of the symbols and images in colleges’ advertisements enables us to expand our understanding of how prospective students respond to the messages colleges and universities transmit to external audiences.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by a conceptual framework of critical race theory (CRT). As an overarching concept, CRT calls into question the social structures and strata that dominate life at all levels and across communities in America, paying particular attention to the inequities that
exist. Born out of critical legal studies and radical feminism—two movements that gained significant momentum in the 1970s—CRT provides a framework through which the legitimacy of existing social structures can be questioned and challenged. “CRT starts from the premise that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent, and fundamental in defining and explaining how U.S. society functions” (Yosso 2005, 167).

CRT highlights that the markers of race are socially constructed and therefore are flawed in being relied upon as determinants of social stratification. In addition to providing an analytic framework through which race-based dominance and subjugation can be examined and questioned, CRT also serves an emancipatory function: ongoing opposition to the dominance of racial biases that continue to oppress members of subjugated racial groups.

While CRT is a very broad concept, the present study draws specifically on Harris’s (1995) notion of whiteness as property. Four primary elements contribute to the valuation of race as property: right of disposition; right to use and enjoyment; right of reputation and status; and right of exclusion. Race reflects a right of disposition as behaviors that conform to a norm of whiteness are rewarded while nonconformity to such norms is penalized. The right of use and enjoyment is manifest in that those who possess the valued elements of race receive privileges. Rights of reputation and status can best be illustrated by referring to issues relating to college choice among students of color. Students and their families may express a preference for attending a predominantly white institution (PWI) over a minority-serving institution due to the perceived higher value of a degree from a PWI (Feagin, Hernan and Imani 2002). The right to exclude can be seen in a number of ways in American higher education. The continued presence of institutions that were founded for the sole purpose of educating students of color highlights the exclusionary right of whiteness.

The link between race and property rights suggests that white individuals are afforded opportunities on the basis of their race while people of color are excluded from opportunities on the basis of theirs. By examining images and symbols through this framework, we worked to explore the ways in which the property rights inherent to whiteness are perpetuated. Individual rights are so intertwined with property rights that providing for the former without providing for or considering the latter results in little substantive change in the lives of people of color (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). Social rights—most notably, the pursuit of higher education—rest firmly with issues of property. Those with financial resources adequate to cover the costs of higher education are property owners. Further, those with adequate primary and secondary schooling and related collegiate preparation are property owners. This is not meant to imply that all people of color lack the resources to provide adequate opportunities for their children to receive a college education; rather, the property rights that make attending college a more realistic possibility tend to rest in the experience of whiteness.

METHODS

In this study, we utilized content analysis to examine the messages and symbols in the bowl advertisements. We augmented our analysis of individual symbols through the use of iconography (Van Leeuwen 2001), in which symbols are further understood in context through the conceptual framework of CRT. In an iconography, the larger context of images is considered in order to understand the images’ cultural meanings and underlying principles (Panofsky 1970). Importantly, an iconographic content analysis allowed us to understand the images, taking into account the history, mission, and culture of higher education. As a result, the data were analyzed in terms of their face value as well as in terms of the symbolic role that history, mission, and culture play in the study of institutions. Thus we were able to draw conclusions not only regarding the images present in the advertisements but also regarding the larger symbolic role of the portrayal of students of color.

As data from the commercials were analyzed using the conceptual framework of CRT, the primary research question was reshaped: How do the symbols and images of students used during television spots aired during the college football bowl season convey a message of the exclusivity of whiteness and the exclusion of students of color?

Our sample consisted of 43 universities from the six major athletic conferences (Atlantic Coast, Big 10, Big 12, Big East, Pacific 10, and Southeastern) that participated in the 2006–07 bowl season. (See “Institutions Included in Study” sidebar on page 23) Institutions were selected on the basis of their significant television exposure as well as the apparent devotion of significant resources to market-
ing and advertising. Each institution’s television spot was recorded on videotape for analysis; the videotaped commercials were converted to digital files to ease the data analysis process. We searched each commercial’s visual and narrative elements for evidence of the notion of whiteness as property. Message elements such as images, narration, characters, scenes, and music were considered and coded (similar to Tobolowsky and Lowery’s 2006 study). To ensure intercoder reliability, each author separately coded the commercials. A comparison of coding patterns showed that similar themes were identified (Lombard, Snyder-Duch and Bracken 2002).

Content analysis provides a means to systematically examine the content of communication (Berelson 1952). Following Krippendorff’s (2004) guidelines, our analysis focused on four elements central to sound content analysis: (1) We identified a sample with the criteria identified above; (2) we set out to identify a set of discrete themes within the advertisements; (3) we used an inductive approach to examine the emergent patterns from the data and to summarize the data (Strauss and Corbin 1998); (4) we interpreted the patterns guided by our theoretical framework. The images, language, and symbols in the advertisements convey meaning to various external audiences. As a result, content analysis is both an appropriate and valuable methodological approach.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the bowl commercials revealed four themes, each of which relates directly to the four principles of Harris’ (1995) conception of whiteness as property: right of disposition; right to use and enjoyment; right of reputation and status; and the right of exclusion. This section highlights the four main themes identified in the analysis and provides representative examples in each.

- Whiteness is presented as the norm of collegiate experience.
- Universities use wealth and whiteness to portray success.
- Tradition as a source of pride for the institution is demonstrated through dominant images of whiteness.
- When present, images of students of color represent little more than tokenism.

Casting Whiteness as the Norm

The majority of images presented in the advertising spots were of white students, alumni, and faculty. Numerous institutions use images exclusively of white students in their advertising spots: Texas Tech University presents an image of four white women huddled together in a residence hall room; the University of Iowa, focusing on good times to be had at athletic events, shows a fan base of white students; the advertisement for the University of Oklahoma features images of students walking and conversing in a variety of campus settings—each devoid of people of color.

These images suggest that being white is what makes the campus experience valuable. Further, the images of white students highlight the first principle that Harris (1995) associates with property rights of race: conformity with whiteness is rewarded (by being able to participate in the good times shown), and non-conformity is punished (as represented by the exclusion of students of color from these institutions’ advertising images). The right of disposition—of simply being white and possessing the qualities of whiteness—affords white students the opportunity to benefit from all that is shown by their institution of choice.

Selling of Reputation and Status through Successful Alumni

A major marketing approach of universities is selling the individual benefit of higher education. Universities use images of wealth and whiteness to demonstrate success. Most frequently, the commercials use images of white and wealthy alumni to achieve this effect. Oklahoma State University uses country singer Garth Brooks, and Rutgers University uses famed Sopranos actor James Gandolfini to demonstrate the potential success an individual may attain as a result of receiving an undergraduate education from their institutions.

“Crimson is...” begins and is repeated throughout the commercial for the University of Alabama. Drawing on the popularity of its athletic teams (known as the Crimson Tide), the advertisement uses narration in conjunction with images of a multigenerational all-white family posing on the campus quad for a picture as an example of the pride and tradition of the university. With the name of the Bromberg family placed on the screen during the advertisement, an interested viewer could quickly discover via the Internet that the Brombergs are benefactors
to the institution who built significant wealth in the jewelry business. In other words, “Crimson is...” a white family with a long-standing affiliation with the institution. What these advertisements communicate is that by attending these institutions, prospective students can achieve great wealth and success—provided the students are white.

**Tradition of Whiteness**

History and tradition are valuable commodities to higher education institutions (Thelin 2004). Tobolowsky and Lowery (2006) found that honoring tradition was a major theme of bowl commercials in their study. The University of Alabama shows successful benefactors such as the Brombergs. The issue of tradition is particularly difficult for the southern universities in this study as they are forced to balance the aura of history with their racially divisive pasts. Most institutions opted in favor of tradition and history, sending signals (implicit or explicit) of their dominant white cultures. Race and ethnicity portrayals included a range of current students to alumni that largely consisted of a token racial or ethnic minority presence or none at all. Ads include, at best, a token racial or ethnic minority student—or none at all. The most prominent images were of a group of students walking across the quad or in another traditional college setting. Typically, the group (usually four or five in number) would include one person of color. Texas Tech University’s advertisement describes the fun and exciting things its students can do, to include attending athletic events or participating in Greek organizations. The image that accompanies the Greek life narration is of four white sorority sisters.

Tradition equals whiteness. Despite the token presence of people of color in advertising spots, the message remains clear: institutional traditions are based on the experiences of white students. Still images from decades long past convey a sense of the good old days—days to which white students and alumni cannot return, thanks to the enrollment of students of color. The right to use and enjoyment is based in a tradition of whiteness; in being white, one has access to all aspects of an institution. Just as others are excluded from the tales and traditions of institutions, so, too, are they excluded from rights of use and enjoyment.

**Images of Exclusion**

Several advertisements make use of student narrators who extoll the virtues and qualities of their institution. Again, a single (token) person of color is included to provide the appearance of diversity. Nevertheless, the images and symbols clearly attest to a dominant campus persona of whiteness.

The University of South Carolina’s advertisement depicts a white faculty member and a white student discussing the virtue of “the question” and not “the answer.” With its screen caption “Academic Excellence,” the University of Alabama presents two white faculty speaking in a laboratory with a group of students, all of whom are also white. Such images suggest that students of color are not among the group of “best students” who would have opportunities to study under leading scholars.

To portray academic success, the University of Michigan shows four graduates—including a male of color—in regalia. Similarly, the University of Georgia’s commercial includes a student of color as one of four student narrators. (Other images in the advertisement focus largely on white students.)

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**Institutions Included in Study**

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<td>University of California at Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State University</td>
<td>University of California at Los Angeles</td>
<td>University of California at Berkeley</td>
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<td>University of California at Los Angeles</td>
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<td>University of Cincinnati</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ohio State University</td>
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<td>University of Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>University of Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Virginia Polytechnic Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Wake Forest University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>West Virginia University</td>
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</tbody>
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IMPLICATIONS
Exploring the underlying cultural meaning of images in university advertising provides a glimpse into the continuing dominant discourses of wealth and whiteness in higher education. Yet a critical mission of U.S. higher education—particularly public higher education—is serving as one of the primary vehicles for social mobility. University marketing professionals need to consider the damage that exclusionary images may play in keeping the ivory tower closed to potential students. After all, the goal is quite the opposite: to increase the participation and success of all members of society.

The token use of people of color in college advertisements reveals the extent to which diversity is not valued in American higher education. Rather than capitalizing on their time in the national spotlight to appeal to the full range of potential college goers, the institutions in this study choose instead to seek to attract wealthy white students able to pay ever-escalating tuition costs. Token inclusion of people of color in advertisements communicates to prospective students of color that their experiences will be marked by tokenism. This message does untold damage to institutions’ alleged mission to increase access and academic success by all populations.

The exclusion of people of color from most of the images suggests an ordinariness of race and racism (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). The findings of this study highlight that whiteness is the norm and that students defined by that norm enjoy the full benefits of enrollment at the institution. Institutions must address these issues—a tall order given that the images they use likely are representative of their cultures. Existing scholarship indicates that predominantly white institutions (such as those included in this study) feature campus cultures framed by the experiences of white students (Cabrera and Nora 1994); students of color often find the climate within these cultures to be “chilly” (Hurtado 1992).

Bowl game advertising spots draw attention to issues of individual benefits of higher education. Reputation and status most often are associated with institutions (U.S.
News and World Report rankings are a prime example), but the advertising spots suggest that institutional reputation and status can be transferred to individuals. As institutions use prominent alumni, faculty, and staff to showcase their successes, it is paramount to consider who is being showcased. Institutions must consider whether they are contributing to the unspoken (or even unintended) message that success is the result of the combination of whiteness and attendance at the institution.

Commercials’ focus on institutional traditions and history send the message that by being white, a student has the opportunity to become a part of the institution’s traditions and history. By being white, a student has access to the benefits of whiteness established through the institution’s traditions and history. Images used to convey tradition and history are void of students of color. Their absence suggests that they also are absent from institutional traditions and history.

Images and messages used in advertising spots during bowl games serve to build connections with prospective students. But because students of color are almost entirely absent from the advertising spots, institutions’ opportunity to build connections with this important group is severely limited. The lack of connection has the potential to negatively affect institutional diversity as the absence of students of color in the advertisements might send a message to prospective students of color.

CONCLUSION

The marketing efforts of colleges and universities participating in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) each year represent millions of dollars being spent to reach more than 100 million homes nationwide. Used to highlight what is “good” and what sets them apart from their competitors, these institutional advertisements in this study feature images devoid of people of color. These commercials communicate that American higher education, as represented by these “best of the best,” is the province of white Americans.

As Toni Morrison (cited in Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995) suggests, issues of race and racism are so embedded in the discourses of daily life that members of the dominant culture have tuned them out. The ordinariness associated with whiteness has become just so ordinary and “normal” that when we see images of white students in collegiate marketing efforts, we pay little if any attention to what we see. More important, we do not pay attention to what we do not see: difference. Despite the rhetoric of multiculturalism and social justice that has swept across American higher education in recent years, we continue to experience the dominance of whiteness from the perspective of normalcy; institutions continue to send these messages to students, parents, and the public.

The traditions and experiences showcased in the commercials reflect a dominance of whiteness against which students of color continue to struggle. The exclusion of students of color from institutional commercials communicates that each of those institutions is not the place for students of color. The findings of this study suggest there is a great deal more to understand about the ways in which colleges’ and universities’ marketing and communication efforts influence the decisions of prospective college goers. Additional research is needed to examine the quantitative aspects of institutions (such as student demographics) to look for possible connections with the findings of this study. Future research also would increase our understanding of possible influences on messages and college choice. As the role of the media in our society continues to grow—particularly with the explosive growth of multimedia sources of entertainment and advertising—research is needed to determine the extent to which communication efforts are even reaching the public. Further investigations into the ways in which students of color and members of other marginalized groups are excluded from marketing and communication efforts also are urgently needed.

REFERENCES


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**About the Authors**

**Michael S. Harris** is an assistant professor of higher education at the University of Alabama where he directs the Executive Ed.D. program. His research explores the influence of market forces in higher education.

**Brian Bourke** is an assistant professor of higher education administration at Louisiana State University. His research interests include student diversity and the portrayal of American higher education in media.
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And gain new perspective on the present.

In the 40s, postcard postage was 1¢…tuition at Yale was $200 a year…and Alma H. Preinkert’s *The Work of the Registrar: A Summary of Principles and Practices in American Universities and Colleges*, was an indispensable guide to higher-ed administrators.

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To add this bit of history to your bookshelf, order online at [www.aacrao.org/publications/](http://www.aacrao.org/publications/) or call (301) 490-7651.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Member: $35.00</th>
<th>Non-Member: $50.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

www.aacrao.org/publications/
Since the early 1990s, Canadian registrars, admissions officers and student affairs professionals have traveled to U.S.-based conferences in search of the holy grail of enrollment management, finding it at the AACRAO Annual Meeting, AACRAO Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Conference, and other meetings sponsored by Noel-Levitz, SEM Works, the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, among others. The general idea was that Canadians needed to learn from Americans about enrollment management, and there was not a national set of practices within Canada to support the development of a growing set of enrollment management professionals. Building on their 2006 *SEM Source* article on the same topic, the authors reveal similarities and differences in the way SEM is practiced in Canada and the United States.
Shaping enrollment through a focused approach to student recruitment and retention is now acknowledged by many Canadian educators as an essential part of the higher education landscape. Yet some see strategic enrollment management (SEM) as primarily an outcome of the American experience and thus not easily transposed into the Canadian context. It is our view that although SEM’s emergence in Canada has been more recent, many of the issues facing Canadian colleges and universities are similar to those in American institutions. As our profession reaches maturity, there are clearly lessons we can learn from each other—pitfalls to be avoided and innovations to be adopted on both sides of the border.

The difference in approaches to SEM in the two countries is a result of the differing social, political, and economic contexts in which it developed. Although Canada and the United States share some of the same heritage, the American break with England in the late 1700s changed forever its cultural focus from being linked to Europe to charting its own course. Canada, on the other hand, remains well connected to both the United Kingdom and other parts of the world, through membership in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. Canada’s national commitment to bilingualism, multiculturalism and universal health care are examples of a different social and value system than its neighbor to the south. This difference has affected the way both postsecondary educational systems operate in the 21st century.

With more than 3,500 colleges and universities, the U.S. postsecondary education system is heterogeneous in terms
of academic focus, degrees offered, size of enrollments and students served. It is oriented toward providing a holistic student experience where student life is an important part of the college experience. It also operates within the context of decreasing state support of public institutions, increased accountability, increasing tuition levels, significant differences in regional student demand and continuing growth in the not-for-profit institutional sector. This has led to SEM becoming a mainstay at most institutions.

Canada, on the other hand, has many fewer institutions (approximately 95 universities and 135 colleges) and a relatively small quality gap between top-ranked institutions and those ranked lower, which results in most institutions being considered of “good quality.” Until recently there has been less concern for student development and the broader campus experience in Canada than in the United States. Although participation in postsecondary education has continued to increase in Canada, there is an increasing reliance on tuition income and increased public accountability (in the form of key performance indicators and national newspaper and magazine rankings), which has resulted in increased competition among institutions. Although many enrollment practitioners have turned to American colleagues and consultants for “best practices” and ideas for new tactics and strategies, many Canadians remain uncomfortable with SEM’s market orientation.

This paper builds on the authors’ earlier SEM Source essay (Smith and Gottheil 2006), which introduced the topic to North American enrollment managers.

RESEARCH APPROACH

We took a multi-faceted approach to studying comparative enrollment management practices in Canada and the United States. As practitioners of enrollment management on both sides of the border, we began our investigation by talking to some of the leading enrollment management professionals in both countries. Interviews were held with 20 senior SEM professionals. This resulted in a number of conference presentations at the Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) conferences in 2005–08. Topics included retention of special population students, recruitment of underserved student populations, financial aid, and a comparative look at SEM in the United States and Canada. We also presented an AACRAO webinar in 2008.

From the interviews and subsequent conference presentations, we learned that a need existed to verify the qualitative findings of our interviews and subsequent discussions with enrollment management professionals. This led us to administer a quantitative survey of American and Canadian chief enrollment officers in January 2008.

Two surveys were prepared using identical questions. Language was altered to reflect different language use in the two countries. Response options were also varied to reflect certain differences in the focus of enrollment management. For example, in the United States, the focus of targeted recruitment initiatives is on particular underserved groups such as African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. When we posed the same questions to Canadians, we changed the question responses so that they provided options more appropriate for Canadian respondents (e.g., Aboriginal Canadians, new immigrants, and visible minorities). The survey questionnaires were administered using the Web.

The survey sample included an “n” of 274, with an even number of Canadian and American institutions chosen as survey participants. The Canadian participants were selected from the membership of ARUCC and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, complemented with provincial lists of registrarial professionals. The American participants were selected on a random basis from the registration list for the SEM XXVII conference, incorporating even numbers of two- and four-year institutions. The link to the survey was e-mailed to prospective participants the first week of January 2008, with weekly reminders sent the following two weeks. The total response rate was 57 percent, with a 27 percent (41) response rate for the American institutions and a 47 percent (65) response rate for the Canadian institutions.

About the Survey Respondents

Most of the survey participants coordinate one or more of the following areas of enrollment management: admissions, domestic student recruitment, international student recruitment, or marketing. Table 1 includes an area of responsibility profile for the survey participants.

Survey respondents view their knowledge of SEM to be either intermediate or advanced, with relatively few rat-
ing themselves at the beginner level. The perception of advanced knowledge differed between Canadian and U.S. respondents, with 37 percent of the Canadians seeing themselves as having advanced knowledge of SEM, while 46 percent of U.S. participants made the same claim. Figure 1, on page 32 shows the self-perception of SEM knowledge for the survey respondents.

Survey participants represent the major regions of both countries. The Canadian respondents underrepresent francophone institutions. The American respondents overrepresent the South and West regions. Table 2 displays the regions in which survey respondent institutions are located.

Most institutions are public, which under-represents private institutions in the U.S. sample. Most of the U.S. survey participants are employed at two-year undergraduate or 4+ year undergraduate institutions. The Canadian group is comprised of representatives from each of three institutional types (two-year undergraduate, four-year graduate and 4+ year undergraduate), with 55 percent of those responding coming from 4+ year undergraduate institutions. Figure 2, on page 32 provides a breakdown of survey respondents by type of institution.

Canadian respondents are evenly divided between three full-time headcount groupings (1,000–2,499; 2,500–4,999; 5,000–9,999; and 10,000–19,999). American survey participants group most heavily in the 2,500–4,999 FTE grouping, with slightly smaller numbers in 1,000–2,499 and 5,000–9,000 sizes. Most institutions in both groups had

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Areas of Enrollment Management Responsibility</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of Responsibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Education &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Support Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-op &amp; Career Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Recruitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dual Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Year Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grad Recruitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-College Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Accounts &amp; Billing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Articulation</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Institutional Geographic Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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part-time headcount below 5,000. Figure 3, on page 33 describes survey respondents’ institution enrollment by full-time and part-time headcount.

The groups of interest by U.S. institutions include Asian, Black, first-generation, low-income and Native Americans. The groups of greatest interest are Aboriginals and Asian students for Canadian institutions, and Black and

### Table 3. Under-served Student Groups of Greatest Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Canadian Participants (%)</th>
<th>U.S. Participants (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Aboriginal, First Nations, Metis, Inuit/Native American</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced Homemakers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced Workers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francophone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Schooled</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Canadians</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Immigrants</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Students</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole Support Mothers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RESULTS

#### Accessibility

In both countries, increasing access to postsecondary education is seen as key. Groups deemed to be underrepresented, and thus targeted for accessibility programs, differ due to historic immigration and colonization patterns. Both countries are interested in more access for first-generation postsecondary students. Most survey participants indicated that their institution has enrollment goals to achieve a rich representation of diversity in the student population (81% Canadian; 98% U.S.).

Underrepresented student populations of interest to each national group varied. The underserved student populations of greatest interest by Canadian institutions include Asian, Aboriginal, first generation, northern Canadian, recent immigrants, and students with disabilities.
Asian students for U.S. institutions. Table 3, on page 32, identifies underserved student groups of greatest interest.

Two access strategies were identified. More than half of the respondents (55% of Canadian institutions, and 76% of U.S. institutions) work with community organizations to encourage students in grades 7–10 to consider attending post-secondary education after high school. Some institutions (42% of Canadian institutions and 50% of U.S. institutions) offer summer bridge programs for students needing developmental coursework or students who may be in need of additional transition support.

Accountability

There is much interest in public accountability of higher education in both countries. The most common accountability measure is graduation rates (69% in Canada; 62% in the United States). Other accountability indicators include: loan defaults (40% in Canada; 64% in the United States), recruitment accessibility (44% in Canada; 38% in the United States), student retention (1% in Canada; 0% in the United States), enrollment targets (3% in Canada; 6% in the United States), transfer rates (0% in Canada; 5% in the United States) and athletic eligibility (0% in Canada; 3% in the United States). Moreover, a number of institutions reported receiving performance-based funding from government (42% in Canada; 24% in the United States).

Admission Policies

Canadian institutions reported using primarily high school grades/marks (95%), interviews (38%) and essays (27%) as the basis for admission. Other factors in the admissions decisions include non-cognitive factors, auditions, portfolios, personal recommendations, in-house testing/assessments, and university marks for transfer students. American institutions reported using primarily high school grades/marks (65%) and test scores (33%) as the basis for admission; 35 percent used high school graduation as they are open admission institutions. Most American institutions (92%) used a composite of grades from Grades 9–12 to make their decision.

The majority of Canadian institutions have not used test scores in admissions decisions making (59%), and an additional 25 percent have de-emphasized the use of test scores. For U.S. institutions, 17 percent have de-emphasized use of test scores, and 43 percent have never used test scores to make admissions decisions. An additional 39 percent of U.S. institutions have not de-emphasized the use of tests.

Fall admission decisions are generally made on a rolling basis throughout the year (86% in Canada; 85% in the United States). Canadian institutions that do not operate on a rolling basis tend to make their decisions during the March to April period, while American institutions do so...
in January to February. Institutions from both countries make earlier offers to top applicants (57% in Canada; 21% in the United States).

The required confirmation date for Canadian institutions is after May 1 (70%), while American institutions primarily use a May 1 priority deadline (55%).

Financial Aid

Both Canada and the United States have seen cuts in public funding coupled with large tuition increases and some tuition freezes. There is a growing perception by low-income students that they cannot afford to continue their education after high school. This has led to the adoption of differing approaches to financial aid. Leveraging and discounting are used extensively in the United States (38%) but have little presence in the Canadian environment (1%). Canadian institutions provide mostly merit-based scholarship (82% in Canada; 67% in the United States). Nearly all American and most Canadian institutions have a tuition payment plan (56% in Canada; 92% in the United States).

A key difference between the two countries is the role of financial aid. The financial aid program is seen primarily as a student support service in Canada (72% in Canada; 52% in the United States). Many more American institutions see enrollment management as the primary purpose of financial aid (28% in Canada; 48% in the United States). As a result, need-based institutional grants/bursaries are awarded more so by Canadian financial aid offices (63% in Canada; 44% in the United States). Still, a relatively small number of institutions are able to meet full need for low-income students (10% in Canada; 18% in the United States). Interestingly, a similar number of institutions in Canada and the United States report awarding a majority of institutional aid to students with financial need (65% in Canada; 68% in the United States).

A key difference is when the financial aid offer is made. In the United States, awards are normally made before the required admission reply/confirmation deadline (49% in Canada; 73% in the United States); while in Canada it is common for students to receive a scholarship package after the deadline. This supports the notion that financial aid policies in Canada presume local student enrolment.

While participation in athletic financial awards/scholarship is relatively new in Canada, more than half of the institutions offer athletic awards to qualified first-year student athletes (50% in Canada; 65% in the United States). The maximum size of awards is generally smaller in Canada (26% below $3,000; 10% $3,000–3,900; 23% $4,000 or more) than it is in the United States (23% below $3,000; 1% $3,000–3,900; 35% $4,000 or more).

Geographic Draw

A majority of students in both countries are from the local catchment area or within 60 miles/100 km. The rest of student enrollment is drawn predominantly from outside the local area but within the institution’s state or province. A relatively small number of students enroll from other states or provinces. Figure 4 provides a student enrollment geographic profile for respondent institutions.

Transfer agreements with community or technical colleges (47% in Canada; 49% in the United States), 4-year universities (45% in Canada; 44% in the United States), or both (10% in Canada; 8% in the United States) are common in both countries.

Enrollment Marketing

The primary focus of most institutional marketing (95% in Canada and in the United States) is high school recruit-
ments. Institutions also focus on students attending other postsecondary institutions (33% in Canada; 15% in the United States), adults (27% in Canada; 34% in the United States) and international students (17% in Canada; 1% in the United States).

A major difference in the way institutions conduct enrollment marketing is in the area of direct mail. Most U.S. institutions purchase student names for the purpose of generating institutional interest (60%), while Canadian institutions do not make use of this approach due to more restrictive privacy laws in Canada.

As a way of increasing student diversity on campus, American institutions make greater use of advertisements in underrepresented student-oriented publications (32% in Canada; 50% in the United States).

The perception of the effectiveness of recruitment communications varies. Canadian respondents view their recruiting publications more favorably than U.S. participants. American institutions tend to see their e-mail communications as more effective. U.S. respondents view their Web pages as slightly more effective than Canadian participants. Figure 5 displays recruitment effectiveness by communication type.

The types of recruiting publications vary. In Canada, the most widely used publications for recruitment include: viewbooks, direct mail/search brochures, campus visit brochures, academic brochures, parents’ brochures, and financial aid brochures. Popular recruiting publications for U.S. institutions include academic brochures, direct mail/search brochures, viewbooks, campus visit brochures, financial aid brochures and parents’ brochures. Some of the

### Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Publication</th>
<th>Canadian Participants (%)</th>
<th>U.S. Participants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic department/Faculty brochure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions newsletter/tabloid</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult/non-traditional student brochure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic department brochure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar/Catalog</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus visit brochure</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail/search brochure</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact sheet</td>
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<td>Financial aid/financing brochure</td>
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<td>International student brochure</td>
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<td>Parents’ brochure</td>
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<td>Recruiting poster</td>
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<td>Recruiting video/DVD</td>
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<td>Student life brochure</td>
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<td>Successful graduates/alumni brochure</td>
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<td>Under-represented student brochure</td>
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<td>Viewbook for Grade 10 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viewbook for Grade 11 students</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
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![Figure 5](image-url)
institutions’ recruitment materials are printed in languages other than English (56% in Canada; 34% in the United States). Table 4 provides a listing of the type of publications in use by institutions to recruit students.

One way of differentiating between approaches to enrollment management is to examine the number of communications sent prior to application and post-admission. American institutions communicate slightly more in the pre-application phase and about the same as Canadians in the post-admission phase. Figure 6 displays different forms and amounts of communications.

Organization

A large number of institutions (62% in Canada; 51% in the United States) have adopted a formal SEM organization structure. A relatively high number of U.S. institutions (42%) are progressing in the development of a SEM organizational structure.

The type of SEM organization varies considerably between Canada and the United States. Most Canadian institutions use the committee form, while U.S. institutions use either the committee or division forms. This suggests more developed enrollment management programs in the United States than in Canada. Figure 7, on page 37 displays SEM organization types.

Planning

Many institutions equate the use of enrollment management strategies with having a SEM plan. An increasing number of institutions have developed comprehensive SEM plans (28% in Canada; 37% in the United States); more than half (51%) of U.S. institutions claimed that their plan was in progress. Most plans have clearly stated enrollment goals (94% in Canada; 93% in the United States). Specifically, they contain student recruitment goals (94% in Canada; 100% in the United States), student retention goals (67% in Canada; 100% in the United States) and an evaluation methodology for assessing and monitoring performance (71% in Canada; 87% in the United States).

An on-going enrollment research capability is critical to implementing SEM. Most institutions (57% in Canada; 66% in the United States) reported having a data-rich environment to inform decisions and evaluate strategies. Enrollment data analysis is generally provided by the institutional research/analysis office (75% in Canada; 100% in the United States), registrar’s office (52% in Canada; 2% in the United States) or admissions office (7% in Canada; 2% in the United States). The person responsible for enrollment data analysis has knowledge of strategic enrollment management (93% in Canada; 92% in the United States). In addition to ongoing research on recruitment, most institutions also report conducting student retention research (70% in Canada; 83% in the United States).

The frequency of when research to support enrollment communication planning/implementation is performed varies, with more U.S. institutions conducting research several times/year (45% in Canada; 64% in the United States), a similar number conducting research once/year.
(25% in Canada; 22% in the United States), and more Canadian institutions conducting research every two to five years (17% in Canada; 5% in the United States) or not the past five years (13% in Canada; 8% in the United States).

Most respondents reported strong and effective working relations throughout campus in support of enrollment management (53% in Canada; 67% in the United States).

Recruitment

There are considerable differences between U.S. and Canadian approaches to student recruitment, although the differences have narrowed in recent years. Whereas American higher education no longer fears the "recruitment" word, Canada is still transitioning from a liaison outreach effort to one that includes more strategic recruitment. Historic collegial approaches to recruitment in Canada continue side by side with increasing use of targeted print materials, 1:1 marketing, and e-recruiting.

Nearly all respondents (97% in Canada; 95% in the United States) reported competition for postsecondary students to have increased in recent years. Most respondents noted that competition has increased significantly (73% in Canada; 66% in the United States). Others said that it increased either somewhat (24% in Canada; 24% in the United States) or a little (3% in Canada; 10% in the United States). High school liaison is the primary form of student recruitment (75% in Canada; 56% in the United States) in both countries.

Use of new approaches to student recruitment is relatively similar in both countries. More Canadian institutions are employing 1:1 student marketing techniques, and more U.S. institutions are using e-recruiting. Figure 8 shows which new recruitment practices are being used in each country.

Student life is reported to be important to student recruitment (79% in Canada; 75% in the United States).

Retention

Most institutions consider retention and student success to be important issues (89% in Canada; 86% in the United States). However, the way in which institutions focus on retention varies. As an example, retention committees are much more common in the United States (38% in Canada; 62% in the United States), as are the formulation of clear retention goals (39% in Canada; 62% in the United States), and the placement of a single person in charge of student retention (18% in Canada; 31% in the United States). On the other hand, there is considerable buy-in with regard to customer service on campus (90% in Canada; 93% in the United States) in both countries.

The most widely-used retention practices in Canada include: services for students with disabilities, emergency financial aid, student services consolidation, Aboriginal student services, one-stop enrollment services, first-year experience programs, supplemental instruction, gender programs or services, and peer tutoring. In the United States, the most commonly cited retention practices are: services for students...
with disabilities, first-year experience programs, emergency financial aid, student services consolidation, one-stop enrollment services, gender programs and services, supplemental instruction, residence life programs, and learning communities. Table 5 provides a list of reported student retention practices.

In Canada, academic advising is primarily provided by professional advisors (60% in Canada; 38% in the United States). In the United States, faculty members deliver most of the academic advising to students (40% in Canada; 62% in the United States).

LIMITATION
Our examination of enrollment management is descriptive. We did not study the relative effectiveness of enrollment management approaches undertaken in the United States and Canada.

CONCLUSION
SEM has evolved in both Canada and the United States over the past few decades. Practitioners are now adapting to changes in demographics and immigration patterns; educational systems and the academic preparedness of students; and evolving competitive markets. There is much that enrollment managers in the United States and Canada can learn from each other. Certainly SEM works in different cultural contexts, and the application of SEM must account for these differences. Some strategies work well in both cultures, whereas others do not.

This paper reveals that Canada is well on its way to development of its own brand of enrollment management. Although much remains to be learned from the American experience, Canada has developed a wide array of its own SEM practices, which American enrollment managers could benefit from examining.

REFERENCES

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In state houses around the country, one of the common higher education themes is affordability. As tuition costs have increased at rates exceeding that of inflation, students and families have pressed their legislative representatives to examine these increases. Affordability is a term used by various constituent groups, and its definition varies widely according to the context in which the term is applied.

In the broadest sense, affordability is the perception that a product is worth its price. That perception can translate into one student’s willingness to pay and another student’s ability to pay. A scholarship may offer sufficient incentive to a “no-need” student who now sees greater “worth” in attending a particular school that has already met his academic and personal expectations. A grant may remove the last remaining financial barrier for an academically qualified yet “high-need” student who has never dreamed that he might be able to fulfill his aspirations for a better life. One key to the affordability quotient is the numbers of “crossover” students who enroll (i.e., those who are scholarship eligible and who also have significant need), thus qualifying for scholarships as well as grants. The purpose of this paper is to describe the strategy we used to reach our enrollment goals of increasing access of high-need Hoosiers to Indiana’s flagship campus and enhancing the diversity of our freshman resident students.
ASSESS CURRENT STATUS AND DESIGN FUTURE STRATEGIES FOR FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Indiana University (IU), with faculty leadership and the administration’s endorsement, embraced a new set of freshman admissions policies during the 2005–06 academic year. While the academic content portion of the new admissions guidelines is not to be implemented until 2012, the goal of reshaping the freshman class profile has become a high priority for all stakeholders.

In summer 2006, four primary recruitment goals were outlined: First, the quality of the freshman class as measured by high school grade point average and standardized test score needed to increase. The trajectory of this increase in the freshman class profile needed to be calculated with the rest of the primary recruitment goals, which, if not managed correctly, could be seen as competing. The second primary recruitment goal was to increase the diversity of the freshman class as measured by ethnicity and socioeconomic status. This goal acknowledged that as the freshman profile began to change, Indiana University needed to ensure the continuation of a hallmark of her student body: diversity, broadly defined. The third recruitment goal was to build upon our strong international presence and increase the number of international students studying in Bloomington. This goal clearly supported the diversity initiative but was more specific in identifying the importance of international students studying on campus and recognizing the inherent value of providing a world view to all students. The fourth recruitment goal was to make an IU education affordable for Indiana residents. For the University, a continuing core value was that talented students would be assured that they could obtain a world-class education without regard to family income.

To achieve this goal, it was imperative for our strategic plan to link need-based financial aid programs with our recruitment efforts.
In assessing data from the past several recruitment seasons, the aforementioned four goals were further defined and established. Additional data sources from the College Board, ACT, and other key research entities were utilized to determine the current market share Indiana University enrolled in key demographic areas and to begin modeling how our recruitment efforts might proceed with new tools. As we began recruiting the entering class of 2007, the guiding principle was that we were an organization in transition. The organization would be establishing new goals and benchmarks in order to reach different outcomes, so different strategies and tactics would be required.

**REVIEW NEED-BASED AID PROGRAMS AND RELATED RESEARCH**

The Carolina Covenant, developed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), represents the gold standard for affordability programs, not only for its students but also because UNC has enthusiastically promoted the concept in the higher education community. Others have joined in the mission to ensure access by high need students, as documented on a Web site maintained by UNC at [www.unc.edu/inclusion/initiatives.pdf](http://www.unc.edu/inclusion/initiatives.pdf). By introducing the Carolina Covenant, UNC signaled a shift in public university financial aid strategy. In an era of increasing commitments to merit-based scholarships, the University introduced a need-based program that has served as a model for other institutions. In recent years, public and private higher education institutions across the country have renewed their commitments to need-based programs.

Education foundations have continued to embrace the initiatives of student access and success, disseminating research findings and papers related to college costs, access, persistence, and affordability. Examples include the Lumina Foundation, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Pathways to College Network of the Educational Resources Institute (TERI), and The College Board. Several states have organizations that support or administer programs to promote and/or finance access to higher educa-

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tion by high-need students. In short, the movement to examine affordability and access by high-ability, low-income students has begun.

**DEVELOP SUPPORT FOR NEED-BASED INSTITUTIONAL AID ON CAMPUS**

Abraham Lincoln once said, “That some achieve great success is proof to all that others can achieve it as well.” His statement reflects our new initiatives and the fundamental belief that talented young people should have an opportunity to study at the state of Indiana’s flagship institution, regardless of family income.

Throughout summer and fall 2006, our efforts to garner support for the affordability initiatives moved to the Board of Trustees and key legislators in the Indiana state house. The Board of Trustees was very supportive of the initiative to provide need-based aid to Hoosier families. It was encouraging to garner such strong support from the outset.

The IU president convened an Affordability Task Force chaired by the vice provost for enrollment management. In determining the size of the task force, the focus was on creating a representative group that was small enough to be effective. The task force was charged with recommending to the president a program that would benefit middle- and low-income Indiana families. Providing assistance to families with financial need was paramount.

Affordability Task Force members included legislative liaisons, IU Foundation staff, faculty leaders, diversity leaders, and admissions and financial aid staff. The proposals to be considered were designed by the vice provost and the associate vice provost/financial aid director. The president’s charge was that the task force complete its review in a matter of weeks for presentation to the Board of Trustees, so that at least one proposal could be implemented for the following year. The energy level was high and enthusiasm great.

Because the institutional culture of Indiana University is supportive of access, we began with some advantages. While the concept of assisting low-income families was admirable and resonated with most of the key stakeholders, the reality of such assistance required a sizable investment. Thus, it was critical to gain the support of administrators ranging from IU’s academic deans to its vice presidents in central administrative positions. Our initial strategy was to build campus support for the concept of helping low-income students realize their dreams of attending Indiana’s flagship campus. Working with key stakeholders on campus, our affordability concept gained momentum. Within a few months, we had obtained strong campus support to invest millions of dollars in high-need Indiana students qualified to attend IU’s flagship campus.

**DEVELOP SUPPORT FOR NEED-BASED INSTITUTIONAL AID WITHIN THE STATE OF INDIANA**

To paraphrase Woodrow Wilson, who once said that a good leader’s ears should ring with the voices of his constituents, our goal for meeting with key state legislators was simple: Allow the legislators to share their perspectives and ideas and introduce for an initial reaction some concepts we were considering. The meetings were designed to enable us to listen to the legislators’ concerns, to share the general direction we were exploring, and to determine whether any synergy existed. Generally speaking, key state legislators were supportive of our goal of helping middle- and low-income Indiana families. Trust that the University would develop programs supportive of their ideas was established.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, though also a bit curious. Some seemed skeptical as to whether we would go as far as we were intimating or whether instead we might scale back our good ideas because of the cost of implementation. As we listened to these key stakeholders,
it became clearer that our goal with the new financial aid initiatives should be to create programs that built on existing state programs. If our initiatives complemented the goals of current state programs, we were confident that they would be universally supported by the state leadership, regardless of political party. Figure 1, on page 43, illustrates the financial commitment of the proposed IU Covenant award. Legislators could easily see the need gap, once covered by student loans, that would be picked up by this new financial aid initiative.

**DESIGN AN ACCEPTABLE NEED-BASED AID PROGRAM TO COMPLEMENT ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

In 1990, during Evan Bayh’s tenure as governor of Indiana, the 21st Century Scholars Program was initiated. Indiana students qualifying for the federal school lunch program in the 7th, 8th, and sometimes 6th grades are invited to sign a pledge that they will stay in school, not commit a crime, not use drugs, and take college-preparation classes. Mentoring support is offered during the students’ middle and high school years, and it continues once they enroll in college. A database of all eligible students is maintained by the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI) and is shared with high schools and colleges in the state. Once accepted by a college, the students must meet the application deadlines defined by the SSACI and Satisfactory Academic Progress standards set by the schools if they wish to receive a monetary award to pay their instructional fees each year. The state recognizes annual fee increases and funds the program accordingly. The 21st Century Scholars Program has enjoyed consistent bipartisan legislative support since its inception. The diversity of student participants is exceptional, and the majority continue the high-need status established in their earlier years. Figures 2 and 3 compare the ethnicity of freshmen Covenant recipients with that of all enrolled freshmen; they demonstrate the significant concentration of underrepresented students in the Covenant population.

Our vision was to offer to 21st Century Scholars the opportunity to graduate debt-free from Indiana University Bloomington. It’s important to note that we did not create a free ride; rather, we calculated student financial aid eligibility in the same manner as for all other need-based aid; i.e., the Congressional Methodology of needs analysis applied to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). A student’s full need, up to the standard cost of attendance, would be met with gift aid as long as he (or she) continued to qualify for a 21st Century Scholar Award to complete a bachelor’s degree as a full-time student at IU Bloomington. Some of the significant attributes of the 21st Century Scholar Program include:

- Easy identification of potential participants who are in middle school.
- External database through the State of Indiana of all possible participants long before award commitments for college enrollment.

**FIGURE 2. 2008–2009 AY Freshmen Resident Cohort Ethnicity**

- White (84.1%)
- Hispanic/Latino (3.2%)
- Black/African American (7.1%)
- Asian (3.9%)
- American Indian/Alaska Native (0.3%)
- Other American (0.1%)
- Refused to Answer (1.0%)

**FIGURE 3. 2008–2009 AY Freshmen Resident: Covenant**

- White (62.3%)
- Black/African American (25.8%)
- Hispanic/Latino (6.8%)
- Other American (1.9%)
- Refused to Answer (0.2%)
Pre-existing mentoring programs, as mandated by the state, while participants are enrolled in middle school, high school, and college.

Eligibility requirements and application deadlines already accepted and publicized by the state.

Ongoing fiscal commitment of the state to offset the cost of instructional fees.

Significant representation of ethnic minority groups among participants.

Significant financial need of the vast majority applying for college entrance.

Endorsement and acceptance by influential Indiana state legislators and U.S. senators.

With the help of an outside vendor, we created a brochure to send to all current 21st Century Scholars (at any age), all Indiana high school guidance counselors, all 21st Century site representatives throughout Indiana, state legislators and Indiana congressmen and senators, 21st Century mentor staff within the University, as well as other stakeholders inside and outside the University. The brochure was designed and mailed in six weeks, accompanied by official IU press releases. In fall 2007, 264 freshmen newly enrolled at IU received 21st Century Scholar Covenant awards valued at a total of $1.2 million for the academic year. They qualified for an additional $3 million in state and federal grant aid. We projected that by the time they graduated, each would have avoided an average debt of $15,000—debt which their 21st Century Scholar predecessors had accrued. Ethnic minorities represented 37 percent of the recipients. The Covenant Program is to be phased in over four years, for a cohort cost of $6 million. The mentoring program has been in place since the inception of the 21st Century Scholars Program. IU became the first school in the state to offer a Covenant with 21st Century Scholars.

Figure 4 shows the financial background of Covenant recipients, according to data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). These students come from the lowest income categories with the lowest Expected Family Contributions (EFCs).

**ALIGN NEED-BASED AID PROGRAMS WITH STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT GOALS AND PROJECTED FUNDS**

Having built support for the concept of a need-based financial aid program to help Indiana families, we proceeded to finalize our funding. Initial estimates for our programs totaled millions of dollars and represented a significant commitment from the campus.

Although our long-term strategy is to gradually reduce the size of our freshman class, we decided to enroll a larger—than anticipated class for 2007 and to commit a portion of the additional tuition revenue to need-based financial aid support. In essence, we followed a basic economic principle: Increase revenue while committing a percentage of the increase to new initiatives. This approach was supported by all the key stakeholders on campus and was approved by the administration as a reasonable methodology, allowing fundraising and other budgetary options to be initiated as additional cohorts enrolled. Because one of our enrollment goals was to enhance the academic quality of the freshman class, we also redefined scholarship eligibility and diverted some merit-based funds to our new need-based aid initiatives.

We desired a different “need” measure that could be predicted (generally) by families, high school counselors, and our own admissions directors. We examined Federal Pell Grant eligibility, and that became our measure of high need for subsequent analyses. The Department of Education provides the option of online FAFSA completion; the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that is automatically generated makes it

![Figure 4: 21st Century Scholars Covenant Recipients: 2008–2009 AY](image)
possible to determine financial need provided that the applicant also has an idea of the college’s cost of attendance. As we were evaluating our potential to predict Federal Pell Grant eligibility for high school students—and even younger students—we discovered that it was possible to use a student's participation in the federal lunch program as an indicator of high need. As a result, we developed two paths to reach our enrollment goals: one required Pell Grant eligibility and one required that students be eligible for the Indiana 21st Century Scholar Program.

The 21st Century Scholar Program assures qualifying students that the State of Indiana will pay their instructional fees to attend college in Indiana as long as they continue to meet eligibility criteria. Because IU utilized the same criteria for enrollment, for continued academic performance, and for FAFSA submission, we could state that admitted students would qualify for the 21st Century Scholar Covenant as long as they received 21st Century Scholar fee remission awards from the State of Indiana. The 21st Century Scholar fee remission values significantly contained the costs to the institution for meeting students’ remaining needs. Another welcome result was that almost 40 percent of Covenant recipients came from ethnic minority groups. Generally, these students qualify for Pell Grants; in many cases, they also qualify for Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, which further limit the fiscal commitment of the institution. Because the 21st Century Scholar Program began when Evan Bayh was governor, our Web site opens with an endorsement from him, though he now serves as U.S. Senator.

One of the unanticipated outcomes from the Board of Trustees’ meeting was its strong support for another need-based program similar in nature to the 21st Century Scholar Covenant. Almost at the same moment, our Affordability Task Force realized that we had an opportunity to create a hybrid financial aid program that would include merit-based as well as need-based eligibility criteria. The Board of Trustees must be commended: it is rare to enter a meeting with one proposal for need-based aid, to be roundly applauded for the effort, and then to be asked to develop additional programs to help more families.

We returned to an earlier affordability proposal—one that required Pell Grant eligibility—as our second plan. This plan allows a more comprehensive and yet more transparent needs assessment than targeting eligibility to a level of adjusted gross income or to a definition of poverty level. Nationally, Pell Grant eligibility is a commonly accepted indicator of high need. It also has potential for future need-based reporting applications as federal agencies and the U.S. Congress require more careful assessments of affordability and access.

To complement the 21st Century Scholar Covenant, which applies a state-based template for eligibility, we created a “promise” to all full-time Indiana resident undergraduate degree candidates on campus: If they qualified for the Pell Grant Program as full-time students and had a 3.0+ GPA as upperclass students or an 1150+ SAT composite score as entering freshmen, we would pay all of their instructional fees with gift aid. As a result, we had programs that not only reflected our interest in making Indiana University affordable to our neediest students from Indiana but that also reflected our goal of increased academic quality within our undergraduate population.

In fall 2007, 407 undergraduate degree candidates received IU “Pell Promise” awards valued at a total of $1.2 million for the academic year. They qualified for an additional $1.7 million in state and federal grant aid. Ethnic minorities represented 10 percent of the population. Figure 5 shows the financial strength of Pell Promise recipients, based on data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). (Note that Pell Promise recipients tend to be middle income.)
Because both the 21st Century Scholar Program and the federal Pell Grant Program are funded as entitlements, there is a high level of certainty that funding will continue into the future. The overlap between Pell Grant eligibility and eligibility for other federal and state grant scholarship programs is significant, which causes the amount of institutional funds actually required to meet students’ needs to be less as a result.

**NEXT STEPS WITH NEED-BASED AID AND OUR STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Fall 2008 represents our second cohort of students receiving this aid. As for any new programs, we continue to assess, evaluate, and modify our strategies. Our commitment has expanded to include consideration of new funding sources and the addition of a full-time team member who commits a portion of his time to researching possible funding streams from foundations and other sources. Many donors to IU’s capital campaign have contributed in direct support of these efforts. As we review our student population in the light of our four enrollment goals, affordability initiatives will continue to be a crucial part of our strategic enrollment management effort and the culture of Indiana University.

We continue to focus on how best to educate low- and middle-income families in the State of Indiana as to the financial aid available to them at IU. To date, we have focused on showing middle school and young high school students and their families that there is hope, that the American dream is still alive. We often say that our need-based programs are “hope” programs in that they provide hope to families who often have difficulty finding hope in their lives. Because our belief in the program’s ability to change a person’s future is so strong, we cannot understate the importance of further developing and enhancing our communication strategy.

We plan to expand our outreach programs to ensure that students continue to qualify for the Covenant and/or the Promise awards by meeting all application requirements and deadlines and that they understand the requirements for “Satisfactory Academic Progress.” Our publicity plans through the Offices of Admissions and Orientation will become more systematic and deliberative and will include implementation of a Customer-Based Management (CBM) system.

We are expanding our analyses of IU’s various financial aid populations to include a trend analysis of these particular program participants. As we confirm that the Covenant and Promise programs are effective paths to attaining our enrollment goals for new freshmen as well as our retention goals for student persistence, we’ll be able to determine what changes to the programs are needed as well as what other affordability programs have potential.

Tom Mortenson’s Pell Institute and the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance are nationally recognized sources of information regarding Pell Grant recipients and related access issues. Each allows us to benchmark local trend data against national statistics.

Most exciting in our development of the Covenant and the Promise programs is our campus’s and key stakeholders’ embracing of the concept of affordability. It is common on our campus today to have many different leaders discussing issues that years ago were not commonly discussed. While many levels of government in Indiana continue to discuss higher education affordability, the state’s flagship institution provides guidance and serves as a model for others.

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In a time of widespread dialog about college costs, affordability, and access, “merit aid” is often the victim of scathing verbal attacks. Merit aid is a prevalent, albeit somewhat mysterious, reality in undergraduate admissions. Often decried as a mechanism of social inequity, few public commentators address the broader realities that necessitate merit aid. In challenging economic times like these, such awards are all the more important for families and institutions alike. In fact, students, educators, and the public coexist with merit aid much like life in Bedford Falls from It’s a Wonderful Life. It isn’t perfect, but it’s better than we might realize, and it’s home.

A few of the more strident critics feel great empathy for the high college costs that many students incur, and use that empathy as a somewhat narrow lens to advocate that merit aid be eliminated, that it was never born, so to speak. But, if it turns out that American higher education really is a wonderful life, we should be careful what we wish for. Just as a nation without merit aid would be a far less desirable alternative than it might seem from here, George Bailey never expected that, without him, Bedford Falls would have become the dismal burg of Pottersville.

While the current dialog regarding financial aid and college costs for students and families has mainly focused the public’s attention in a positive way, at the same time, there is also a lot of simplistic discussion with respect to the concept disdainfully referred to as “merit aid,” which can be more comprehensively identified as “non need-based aid.” This type of grant or scholarship, funded by colleges and universities, is awarded irrespective of demonstrated financial need (determined through submitted financial aid applications) and discounts the education cost for families. It can be awarded for a wide variety of reasons and in a variety of circumstances, though most observers focus their attention on awards based on academic achievement or high standardized test scores.

But, the criticism of non need-based aid as a concept is akin to blaming the hammer because you don’t like how one craftsman is using it. It’s not the hammer’s fault that the building is a brothel and not a library. Many other craftspeople use hammers to build far more noble structures. When strategic financial aid, which includes non need-based aid, is employed optimally, it is awarded in full support of the institutional mission, and offers many easily overlooked social benefits.
A misperception that is supported by many major media outlets is that “merit aid is bad” because it rewards wealthy students at elite institutions, taking money away from equally deserving low-income students who are then left outside the university gates. Many perceive that institutional aid dollars are a finite resource, that any dollar given to a family that doesn’t “need it” is by definition a dollar that can’t be offered to a lower-income family. This common misunderstanding is perpetuated by hometown stories that highlight individual students—a scholarship recipient who feels guilty for receiving such a large award, and a stellar low-income student who is facing daunting college costs with insufficient financial aid. The implications are thinly veiled or explicitly stated; the wealthier student didn’t need the big scholarship because she can afford to pay the full sticker price, and if that money weren’t being “wasted” on the wealthy, there would be more available for needier students and families.

At face value, this is an easily accepted and compelling narrative. It’s a version of “the rich get richer” at the expense of everybody else. Unfortunately, the anecdote is far too simplistic and doesn’t represent the broader reality of non need-based financial aid in undergraduate admissions today. While a few highly-selective institutions offer overt non need-based aid through scholarships and grants, most elite institutions at the top of the U.S. News & World Report rankings do not. On the other hand, Rochester University, an example of an excellent institution that competes with some of those elite colleges and universities, has a non need-based aid budget of $12 million of a total financial aid budget of $55 million. The growth of non need-based aid over the past 20 years has been the greatest at moderately-selective and less-selective institutions.

The reality is that recipients of non need-based aid are predominantly middle-class and upper-middle-class families, and the scholarships seldom cover anywhere near the full tuition, let alone room and board or other standard expenses. Instead, they offer modest reductions from the full sticker price of a college education with the hope that the student will choose to enroll. In a competitive environment, enrolling desirable students is a matter of sophisticated, data-driven strategy rather than annual inevitability. As a competitive necessity, the vast majority of institutions must offer financial discounts through scholarships and grants to lure students away from both more prestigious and less-expensive institutions, to compete with institutions that fall both “above” and “below” their position in the selectivity spectrum. And in attracting additional students that would otherwise not enroll, non need-based aid often increases, not decreases, overall revenue.

“Say, don’t you know where coconuts come from?”

Nearly all higher education institutions, not just publicly-funded state institutions, charge a tuition price that is below, sometimes well below, the estimated total cost to educate its students. And wealthier institutions, with larger endowments, utilize more of their endowment resources to subsidize the educational costs for students. Harvard is the most often cited example, where experts estimate that it costs Harvard University over $80,000 to provide education to a single undergraduate student at a list price of about $45,000, and a net price, after factoring in grant aid, frequently much lower (and getting lower every day).

These non-tuition resources allow some institutions to offer more for less to students and families. Institutions like Saint Xavier University, with a $13 million endowment, or Mount Ida College with a $10.5 million endowment, do not have the stockpiles to offer such impressive subsidies to prospective students. By contrast, the top ten institutions in the 2007 National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) endowment study combine to a value just north of $143 billion. Less wealthy institutions are forced to charge a list tuition price much closer to their true “cost of education.” This is the primary reason why tuition prices among private institutions don’t vary as widely as their selectivity and perceived quality.

So, other than the occasional strong personal affinity, why would a student with a choice opt to attend a less-selective (or perceived “lower quality”) institution? One compelling reason is net cost. To put it bluntly, money matters. Not all families that are ineligible for need-based aid are truly “rich.” Most are solidly within the nation’s middle class. By definition, many institutions will exclude families that would otherwise not enroll, non need-based aid is a very real dilemma considering offers from multiple
institutions. A student admitted both to Harvard and to the University of Rochester is likely to select Harvard because of the perceived difference in prestige. However, those odds can change if Harvard charges the full price and Rochester offers a scholarship of $20,000 per year.

“Oh, you mustn’t say things like that.”

The criticisms beg the question: What would happen to the landscape of American higher education if “merit aid” disappeared altogether?

Imagine a higher education world in which Rochester and countless other institutions could not use financial incentives to lower net cost and entice students of upper-middle-class means or greater away from more prestigious universities. Like the shock of witnessing a joyless Pottersville where cozy Bedford Falls once sat, so too would higher education be shockingly different.

The distribution of students would become unrecognizably skewed without the impact of strategically deployed institutional financial resources. The influence of Potter’s deep endowment pockets would be far more powerful than they are even today.

More of the wealthiest and highest-achieving students for whom tuition price is not a barrier would be concentrated at the wealthiest and most elite institutions without financial incentive to make a different decision. These prized students would shift up the selectivity spectrum and not only rob less selective institutions of revenue, but of talented students who share positive peer effects with those around them. Without increased capacity at wealthy schools, the changes would impact future admissions decisions and eventually push many middle-income students toward lower-cost schools. The current system, stratified as it already is, would be markedly more so in terms of student ability and socioeconomic status. With moderate and less-selective institutions (who educate the vast majority of students in the country) unable to entice students with non-need awards, they’d lose many of their best students to more selective competitors.

In the end, we’d see an even more divided educational system, utterly dominated by the wealthiest institutions. Ironically, this is the exact scenario that policymakers seek to avoid. Without the ability to attract students who don’t qualify for need-based aid with financial incentives, many non-selective institutions might even simply close their doors due to lack of revenue, reducing the diversity of offerings in our educational landscape. The thousands of less-selective and less-prestigious institutions, for whom “filling in the gaps” of lost students is not easily achieved, would be forced to raise tuition prices out of fiscal necessity. Without resources to raise need-based grants in tandem, the cost for low-income students would also rise. So, more of these low-income students would have to elect public education, further stressing their limited budgets and capacity. Other students might simply conclude that college was not affordable and choose not to enroll at all. It wouldn’t take much to set off such a spiral of unintended consequences.

“I want to live again. Please, let me live again.”

While critics believe they have staked out the moral high ground by advocating that financial aid dollars only be spent to assist the less-fortunate lower-income students, there are complex realities in the higher education marketplace that many haven’t fully considered. In fact, a world without non-need-based aid would work against the very outcomes they desire. Should their wishes ever be granted, they would doubtlessly find themselves like George Bailey, begging to take it back. They would realize that, despite the imperfections and the challenges, the higher education world in which “merit aid” is prevalent and widespread really is a better world than the Pottersville we’d create without it. And we’d all scream, “Clarence, please! Please! I want to live again!”

About the Author

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The Coaches’ Graduation Rate:
A Catalyst for Academically Responsible Behavior

By Gerald S. Gurney and Jerome C. Weber

One of the most important distinguishing characteristics of sports in the United States is the industry that has been based on athletic competition between college teams. In other countries it is professional and club sports that are wholly the focus of publicity and public adulation. In the United States, in addition to our national focus on events such as professional football’s Super Bowl, professional baseball’s World Series, and professional basketball championships, we have college football’s Bowl Championship Series, and the NCAA men’s basketball championship, appropriately named “March Madness.” These competitions absorb us fully from late August to March. An equally competitive recruiting season occurs on a year-round basis, focusing our attention on the newest crop of potential superstars. However, we must acknowledge that the visibility of college sport comes with a price. We read with regularity of the transgressions of coaches who, under pressure to win, violate the regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the organization whose ostensible purpose is to ensure the well-being of its student athletes. We also read of institutions that attempt to purchase athletic championships at the price of their integrity by admitting student athletes they know have little or no chance of ever graduating. This is particularly troubling when the institution knows in advance that the student athlete will remain on campus for only one year of preparation for professional sports. Student athletes often view college only as a necessary precursor to employment in professional athletics if only they can perform well enough in college athletic venues.

What has evolved in the name of intercollegiate sport is an enterprise in which all of the participants—universities, presidents, alumni, athletics directors and players—have been swept up in an activity that focuses almost exclusively on winning and that is often corrupted by the huge numbers of dollars involved in the revenue sports of football and men’s basketball. This industry is often run by individuals who believe in the benefits to be derived from participating in these programs regardless of what the facts tell us about the ancillary benefits that are supposedly derived from these programs.

How did we arrive at this point, and why only in the United States? As the cartoon character Pogo so clearly stated many years ago, “We have met the enemy and it is us.” College sports is of our own making, and for those of us involved in these programs, if we do not like what we see, we have only ourselves to blame. These programs were not forced upon us, we chose to initiate and nurture them to achieve our own goals. The traditions of American higher education evolved early in our history to ensure that the
running of colleges would be entrusted to “practical” men who were engaged in business, as opposed to academicians alone. Thus, boards of control, whether referred to as regents, trustees, governors, supervisors or some other appellation, whether elected or appointed, and whether serving on boards of private or public institutions, were, and continue to be, composed largely of lay persons rather than academicians. Donald Chu (1989) describes how this orientation toward dollar balances and student enrollments became focused at Swarthmore College in the early 1900s on “...a strengthening of the applied fields of study such as engineering...” and “...the development of the ‘life of fun’, that is, social activities and sports. The extracurricular and big-time football was then married, comfortably or not...” Similarly, Chu describes “...examples of the power of the American college president to rapidly and radically alter institutional programs and orientations with respect to academics and sports.” The University of Chicago gained prominence when Amos Alonzo Stagg built its football program into a national power. Watterson (2000) demonstrates the alliance of football and money in the 1894 Harvard/Yale football game when he informs us that Harvard’s receipts from that game were in excess of $15,000 and Yale’s as much as $20,000. From its very beginnings money, sport, controversy and the potential for corruption found a home in college athletics in the United States. Indeed, that relationship has remained largely unchanged over the years except for the scale of these elements.

It should come as no surprise that what has evolved is a system of great visibility, great expenditures, great popularity and, in some instances, widespread corruption. As almost all college football fans know, perhaps the most ignominious of the many scandals over the years occurred at Southern Methodist University in the 1980s. In this case, as in many others, the Board of Trustees of SMU saw football as the mechanism it might use to attract attention and gain public support. While SMU was probably not unique in paying players to enroll on their campus, or for performance in games, it was the direct involvement of coaches, administrators and even members of the Board of Trustees, one a former governor, in these illicit activities that resulted in the NCAA imposing the “death penalty” on SMU, a penalty from which the institution’s athletic program has never fully recovered. It is noteworthy that this was the only instance in which the NCAA imposed such a penalty. The behavior exhibited in this example is obviously related to a win-at-all-costs mentality, coupled with the separation of control of the football program from the institution as a whole.

Today we find institutions’ coaches who are lavished with lucrative salaries out of proportion with the remainder of higher education and who are judged solely on the basis of their win-loss records. In an atmosphere fueled by their agents, head coaches of the revenue sports are typically the highest-paid individuals on their campuses. In addition, coaches sometimes appear to hold institutions hostage when rumors of hiring interest from another institution surface, resulting in renegotiated contracts. In this atmosphere of high risk and high reward, it is no wonder that college presidents struggle with attempting to address the balance between the athletic enterprise and the academic enterprise. Head coaches of the NCAA’s 119 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions, those competing at the highest level, now earn an average annual salary in excess of one-million dollars a year, with the highest paid exceeding four-million dollars a year (Weiberg and Upton 2007).

While the dollars involved in college athletics, particularly football, are enormous, the idea that athletic programs produce vast revenues for their institutions is simply wrong. In fact, in fiscal 2006, the last year for which data is available, the NCAA reported that only nineteen of the FBS schools generated revenues in excess of expenses (Fulks 2008). The distortions that these financial incentives create exceed financial matters alone. Given the importance of a famous coach on campus, some have even attempted to influence academic decisions in ways that benefit their programs, and to threaten to leave if their demands aren’t met. The head football coach at one institution basically threatened his institution when student athletes to whom he had promised admission were turned down by the admissions office. He publicly threatened to leave if changes in admission policy related to football recruits weren’t implemented (Associated Press 2007). The president initially said he would address the changes requested and eventually acquiesced to the coach’s demands. Not to be outdone, another coach expressed his view that since the NCAA, following extensive study, had established initial eligibility requirements, those should be used to determine admissibility of student athletes, regardless of the
individual institution’s admissions policies (Morris 2007). The absurdity of this recommendation may be clearer if one imagines that coach’s reaction to a recommendation that if a student is deemed eligible for an athletic scholarship at any FBS school, that student should be able to claim a scholarship at any other FBS school.

Contrary to the written provisions of the NCAA’s National Letter of Intent, in big-time sports it is clearly the coach with whom the prospective student athlete affiliates, as opposed to the institution. While it is true in some unusual cases that an individual athlete may choose a particular school for academic or family reasons, it is usually the coach who makes the difference in the selection of school when it is time to sign the Letter of Intent. What this means is that it is the coach who determines whether there is a “goodness of fit” between the student and the institution in an atmosphere in which recruitment of the outstanding athlete is the key to success for the student athletically and academically, for the athletic program and for the institution. While a coach’s system, game plan or ability to motivate players are important elements that can determine the outcome of games, winning and losing are ultimately dependent on how well the coach is able to recruit outstanding talent. Unfortunately, this competition for athletic talent often is engaged in without regard to the student’s academic preparedness and fit with the institution’s academic demands. This lack of attention to the “student” component of the student athlete can create problems for which the coach is totally unaccountable.

To its credit, the NCAA, under the leadership of Myles Brand and the increasing influence of its Board of Directors, has attempted to address the issue of academic outcomes through the academic reform program it began in 2003. Central to this effort are the models of the academic progress rate (APR), a measure of team retention and eligibility through a formula, and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), a graduation rate designed to remove student athletes from the measurement if they transfer while eligible, while adding transfers who enter the institution. The NCAA developed minimum thresholds to identify teams that are
underachievers. These teams can be punished with loss of athletic-related financial aid, public letters of censure, limits on practice and playing seasons, disqualification from NCAA championships and post-season tournaments, and ultimately, provisional membership status.

In addition to these efforts, some institutions have attempted to address the issue of student athletes’ graduation rates by providing financial incentives to coaches’ contracts. While the contractual academic incentives are small in relation to the head coaches’ total salaries, they can be as much as $100,000 to $300,000 (Eichelberger and Levinson 2007). For example, one men’s basketball coach, Tubby Smith, receives a $100,000 bonus each time the graduation rate reaches or exceeds 50 percent (Grovum 2007). In a year in which this coach might sign two student athletes, if one graduates, he receives the bonus. These incentives are often based on the federal graduation rate or the NCAA’s GSR. Both rates reflect seven-year-old cohorts by the time they are published. For recruiting purposes, some coaches advertise their graduation rates as the exhausted eligibility graduation rate, reflecting the graduation rate of only those student athletes who exhaust their eligibility at the institution, a figure that fails to provide an accurate picture of academic success. Some coaches’ recruiting comments offer no discussion related to academics, preferring instead to focus on the prospect’s bright future in professional athletics. What is clear is that many coaches may profit from graduation rates reflecting years when they were not present at the institution, while others simply omit any reference to academics whatsoever. What is abundantly clear is that academic performance incentives, while potentially lucrative in some instances, pale in comparison to the athletic performance incentives typically written into head coaches’ contracts, making the athlete side of the student athlete equation a far greater financial incentive for the coach. A better measure of a coach’s attention to the academic achievements of his or her student athletes is necessary, one that reflects how an individual coach’s recruits have done academically, meaning whether or not they graduate from the school to which the coach recruits them.

The NCAA’s academic reform program, the Academic Performance program (APP) has done little to change the culture in the sports of football and men’s basketball, its primary sources of revenue. The NCAA academic reform program punishes institutions but fails to establish shared accountability with head coaches who contribute directly to the success or failure of graduation. Making and publicizing a Coaches’ Graduation Rate (CGR) would provide a clear reflection of the head coach’s decisions related to prospective student athletes’ academic promise, institutional fit, and graduation. The rate would follow coaches throughout their careers and could be used in concert with other relevant information when hiring, termination, or academic performance incentives are being considered.

Head coaches exercise great influence on the outcome of their student athletes’ academic achievement, and should have some accountability for their teams’ graduation. The head coach selects the population of students admitted to the institution in a particular sport. The head coach, in addition to evaluating athletic potential should be responsible for evaluating academic potential relevant to his or her particular institution. Admissions decisions based on the NCAA’s “minimum qualifier” standards, without input from campus faculty and academic support personnel, may pay little or no attention to academic potential. Once on campus, the environment created by subtle or overt messages from the head coach greatly influence the time and attention paid by the athlete to academic matters. Too often the message to the student-athlete is clear; athlete first, student second. What is needed is greater accountability and visibility in describing how successful a coach is in recruiting student athletes who successfully complete their academic careers.

What is proposed is a Coaches’ Graduation Rate that accomplishes this purpose. The CGR would establish an accurate win-loss record and a standard for accountability for individual coaches that would also serve as a reminder that the academic potential and institutional fit for his/her recruits are real considerations in addition to athletic potential. Currently there is little basis for addressing or evaluating this aspect of student athletes’ lives. Institutions, college presidents, prospective athletes, parents and the public deserve better. What is needed is a consumer index that is highly visible and easily understood.

The concept is simple. Once named a head coach, the CGR begins with the first recruiting class. Each student who signs a National letter of Intent or a financial aid agreement is identified and attached to the coach’s future CGR. After six years, whether the coach remains at
the institution or not, the graduation rate is established. Student athletes who transfer while academically eligible at the institution are removed from the coach’s CGR. The CGR becomes a basic graduation win-loss record. If the coach is terminated or leaves, the CGR remains and is reactivated at any time he or she assumes another head coaching position. The CGR could be used as a measurement for academic incentive for the head coach as it reflects forethought in signing promising student athletes who can be academically successful at the institution. The CGR could also serve as a public measurement that a head coach will carry from one institution to the next. If the rate reflects a strong record of recruiting student athletes who graduate, the coach should enhance his/her chance of being retained or hired. A poor record could serve as reason to consider someone else. College presidents might be reluctant to hire a coach with a CGR reflecting poor graduation rates. Parents of prospective student athletes could use the CGR as a consumer index when considering their children’s academic futures. The CGR should not be used as a substitute for published institutional graduation rates, but instead should serve as an additional instrument for shared accountability between the institution, the president, the coach, the student athlete and the parents.

It might be argued that an instrument such as the CGR focuses too heavily on the coach alone, and that many additional factors influence graduation rates. That, of course, is a fair observation. However, the CGR, addressing the issue of recruits’ academic success as measured by graduation rate is a useful piece of information, particularly as measured over time. The CGR provides relevant and useful information specifically related to the individual coach, the most important individual in most student athletes’ decisions regarding where to attend college. At a time when there are increasing calls for academic reform in intercollegiate athletics, the CGR is a useful mechanism to provide information related to how well or poorly the coach does in addressing the academic life of his/her recruits. The CGR should only be used in concert with other relevant personnel considerations when making decisions affecting a coach’s employment or compensation, but it certainly should be part of those considerations. The Coaches’ Graduation Rate, at worst, is intended to bring the coach into the equation of academic accountability and, at best, could even be a catalyst for academically responsible behavior.

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How would you describe the climate of your office environment: sunny and bright, or rainy and gloomy?

Webster’s Dictionary defines morale as an emotional or mental condition with respect to confidence or hardship. Morale in the workplace is measured individually by departments. Events such as layoffs, cancellation of overtime or of benefits programs, low wages, and employee mistreatment all play a part in morale.

I’ve been an employee for 20 years, working in many leadership capacities in various work environments, noting leadership and how leaders manage their offices. I have learned that employees mirror their leaders; employees are a reflection of their leaders.

*What is a leader?* A leader has the capacity to establish direction and to influence and align others toward a common goal, motivating and committing them to action and making them responsible for their performance. Leaders are the frontrunners of an office, setting precedence and giving credence to office standards.

*Reflection* is imperative. It addresses such questions as what do you do? How do you do it? And why do you do it that way? Reflection is a blueprint of your career’s journey. One way to make your reflection evident is to journal thoughts and actions either daily or weekly; you will be surprised at your growth.

When you think of yourself as a leader, ask these questions:

- Do you shape your life and career?
- Do you affect the quality of others’ experiences?
- Do you inspire or influence others?
- Do you work to achieve specific goals by working or coordinating the efforts of others?

There are three types of leaders. The *authoritarian* leader is the head, with no collaboration from others. The *participative* leader welcomes others’ opinions and values collaboration. The *delegate* cedes all responsibility to employees without accepting any personal accountability. Which type of leader are you?

The participative leadership style is the most effective because it allows the leader and employees to work as a team. Team building strengthens the workplace, allowing everyone to work toward a common goal.

In 2003 Rush University Medical Center (RUMC) established its mission, vision, and values, called ICARE: Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence. RUMC believed that to produce the highest-quality patient care and customer service, it was necessary to develop a mission that would be evident in its effort to be the medical center of choice. Rush University therefore
adopted the same mission. With these values in place, the Rush community now is able to put itself clearly into perspective.

In relation to innovation, our associate provost has allowed the Student Services Department to choose the paint color for our workplace; we can play music, and we continue to encourage students to submit suggestions as to how we can serve them better. What might you do to improve your office environment? It might be as simple as buying flowers to brighten up the office; taking your staff to lunch once a month...whatever you decide might constitute a change for the better.

Collaboration has resulted in discussion and resolution of any number of issues. When a leader allows employees to discuss their ideas and to comment on the leader’s vision for the office, he or she allows employees to function as part of a team. Don’t be afraid to establish an “open door” policy.

Accountability allows everyone who is part of a team to take responsibility for his or her actions. Do not be afraid to admit your frailties; instead, make every effort to correct them. Accountability can be likened to a relay race:

When one member does not perform well it affects the whole rhythm of the team, causing its members to fall short in performance.

If as a leader you have entrusted your employees with a task or assignment, be sure to also give them a deadline. If the task is not completed in the time given, the team should be held responsible. Note that by virtue of being a team, the office has a clear mission. Employees should verbalize and understand the consequences of not completing assignments. You may wish to offer employees the opportunity to take on a more challenging responsibility (emphasizing, of course, that with that responsibility is accountability).

Respect should be an even exchange: Do not merely expect respect as a leader, but be sure to respect the members of your team. Zig Ziglar (2008) states, “It’s your attitude, not your aptitude, that determines your altitude” (thinkexist.com). Sometimes how you speak to a colleague is even more important than what you say. Being cognizant of your tone and words can make you a better leader.

Excellence is everyone’s goal. Excellence—in customer service, in team building, and in leadership—is a day by day process. Always strive toward excellence, but don’t forget along the way to recognize those who have helped you.

Dr. Michael Prislm, from the University of California, Irvine, gave a presentation on how to promote excellence in a department. He stated, “To promote excellence you have to, first, define your mission then solicit input from your employees, specify roles, and acknowledge success and foster advancement” (Prislm 2007).

The ICARE Mission Vision and Values fosters harmony and balance. Adopting them as your own will not make your office perfect; preexisting issues can always stagnate a mission. Nevertheless, as the leader of your department, you set the tone. Use your authority in a way that will promote change for the betterment of all.

To help you develop a better workplace, I included the following pointers regarding morale:

- Build a great foundation (your mission) in your office.
- Know what your office is lacking.
- Discourage procrastinating (procrastinating can hinder growth).
- Recognize strengths and use them.
- Challenge yourself and your employees.
- Create, maintain, and embrace a positive atmosphere.

KNOW YOUR TEAM

It’s important to know your employees’ characteristics, goals, interests, and work styles. Knowing your team will help you decipher what tasks and challenges they can manage. Knowing your staff’s lack of ability also can help you set targeted goals for improvement; ultimately, these goals will help your staff become better employees.

What can help you assess your employee’s morale? Major changes in office structure; employees being laid off; lack of communication; joylessness; low energy; co-workers who don’t get along; a gloomy atmosphere; stress; any of these characteristics may suggest low morale. Or perhaps morale isn’t low; you just want your office to be characterized by more enthusiasm, a sense of excitement, more smiles.

Boosting office morale is not an expensive proposition. Little things are sure to evoke a smile or appreciation from your employees. For example, you could host a monthly lunch; give gift cards; recognize birthdays; compliment or otherwise acknowledge staff contributions; create an em-
ployee of the month award; celebrate secretaries/professionals week. At the very least, say thank you when a task or project has been completed: it’s free and it doesn’t hurt.

DIFFICULT STAFF
When an employer has to work with a difficult person (or staff), I always encourage the employer to (1) schedule a meeting with the staff; (2) set standards, expectations, and, most important, a mission for your office; (3) expect change; however, if “change” does not come, let the employee know how he or she has fallen short (do not wait until evaluation time to do so; instead, address the issue as soon as possible); (4) give the employee a time span for improvement; (5) keep notes of your conversation and document the employee’s actions. If the employee does not improve, follow your institution’s human resource policy and procedures.

Some people, no matter who is in charge, will not humble to authority. Rest assured this is not a reflection on you; rather, this is a troubled employee. Termination may prove necessary.

In conclusion, practicing ICARE mission, vision, and values everyday will give you a strong, competent, balanced and rich workplace.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world...”
—Ghandi

CONCLUSION
Practicing ICARE mission, vision, and values every day will give you a strong, competent, balanced, and rich workplace. Self-effective learning includes reflecting on what you do, how you do it, and why you do it. Reflection is imperative as it provides a blueprint of your professional journey. Journaling will help make your reflection evident, whether you record your thoughts and actions on a daily or weekly basis. You will be surprised at your growth.

REFERENCES

About the Author
KRISTY PETERSON has been an admissions counselor and recruiter at Rush University for nearly 10 years. Her interests at Rush University are increasing diversity, and building office morale.

Peterson received a B.A. from DePaul University, and a Master’s in Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She currently is a researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she is conducting a School Finance Adequacy, ten-year, Longitudinal Field-Test Project for the Renaissance 2010 project.

Peterson has created a transitional program, which continuously provides resources, personal guidance, a professional educator track, and strong mentorship to help students matriculate through pre- and post-high school and prepare them for quality higher education. There is a follow-up plan that will allow students to continue collaborative efforts resulting in success as a college student and graduate. She served as facilitator to pilot this program for the Donald Peterson Foundation, which prepares high school students from various Chicago and suburban areas for college.

She can be reached for questions or comments at Kristy_R_Peterson@rush.edu.
Enable yourself to think globally.

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Assessment in the registrar’s office is a necessary state of mind. Engaging in assessment activities in the registrar’s office is necessary to ensure ongoing accountability, ongoing input from constituents, and ongoing targeting of resources to meet organizational goals as well as to benchmark for long-term planning. Necessity aside, engaging in assessment activities in the registrar’s office affords a way to productively engage those we serve in a two-way dialogue about the functions we perform and how, when, and where we do so. Were she involved in the conversation, Martha Stewart might say, “It’s a good thing.”

The Office of Assessment at Georgia Tech offers the following statement about its purpose that gets to the core of what this process is about: “In essence, the Georgia Tech Office of Assessment exists to help decision-makers make more informed decisions. Through assessment, we facilitate Georgia Tech’s ability to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Institute’s initiatives so that decisions truly enable the best opportunities for our students.”

But what are we assessing? Assessment could focus on the role of the registrar’s office in student learning outcomes, or it could focus on assessing the services and overall performance of the registrar’s office. For now, we are concentrating on the latter.

In the first paragraph, the question “why” was answered. But we could go further and add that pursuit of excellence should encompass all aspects of our institutions and that a culture of excellence cannot and should not exclude administrative or enrollment service areas that are the “face” of the institution in so many ways.

Now that we agree that assessment is a necessary and good thing, how do we go about doing it?

Various tools and strategies are used effectively by institutions large and small, public and private, to collect assessment data. A commonly used tool is the online survey. A review of registrar Web sites will yield examples of surveys that range from a simple customer comment card to a more comprehensive survey that asks in-depth questions about various aspects of services provided. Some institutions have included on their Web sites a feedback mechanism to ensure that future development of the registrar’s office home page is guided by user input.

In addition to online surveys, the registrar’s office also may survey walk-in traffic using a form that customers fill out as they leave the office. In many instances, institutional surveys such as ones given to graduating seniors or other selected groups of students include questions about the registrar’s office that provide useful feedback. Surveys can
be useful tools regardless of the simplicity or complexity of the questions posed.

While ongoing input is helpful—and a good thing—a five-year reality check is critical for assessing the impact of changes that are made along the way and for setting the stage for decision making over the long run. Engaging every five years in a comprehensive survey that addresses all the different aspects of the registrar’s office provides benchmarking information and is a good way to collect information on how various decisions have affected the organization and/or on perceptions of the organization.

Other methods of gathering input and feedback also can be useful in making decisions. Focus groups are particularly useful for gathering input on specific questions or issues. Some registrars have formed advisory boards that include faculty, students, and staff and that provide insights into perceptions of the office on campus and that help with both the “marketing plan” for the office as well as such practical issues as setting priorities for the office, particularly in areas such as technology where there are often competing needs or wishes.

For institutions not already engaged in this process, getting started can be daunting. The SWOT analysis is one way to kick start the thinking process and identify some areas that may need further examination.

**SWOT Analysis** [also known as TOWS analysis] is a powerful technique for understanding your Strengths and Weaknesses and for looking at the Opportunities and Threats you face.

*Used in a business context, it helps you carve a sustainable niche in your market. Used in a personal context, it helps you develop your career in a way that takes best advantage of your talents, abilities, and opportunities* (MindTools.com 2008).

The other important thing to keep in mind is that you must have a plan. Planning is about understanding where you are, setting a course for where you wish to go, and working within an appropriate institutional context or setting relevant goals. Assessment is measuring the success or effectiveness of activities you undertake to meet your goals and gathering feedback in a consistent manner to guide further planning and decision making. Our sage colleagues would tell us to keep our plans simple and to be realistic. We have to manage our resources effectively, and we have to manage expectations of our offices equally as effectively.

It could be argued that assessment, when done properly, takes different forms and requires us to look at our offices in a comprehensive manner, taking into account parallel activities that might not fit neatly into a traditional definition but that affect and inform each other. For example, core competency modeling for staff and managers in the registrar’s office likely would not come up in a routine discussion of assessment activities. But perhaps it should be part of the standard routine. If the results of a customer service survey seem to indicate that the staff are lacking in certain skills, then a core competency modeling activity can target those competencies or skills and ensure that training resources are used effectively for a specific goal to meet a specific need.

Assessment is a set of activities that enriches our perceptions and that enables and empowers us to pursue excellence. The registrar’s office is at the core of our institutions; as such, it is in a unique position to lead the way in this arena.

**REFERENCES**


*Editor’s Note: A follow-up article will focus on core competency modeling and will appear in Volume 84, No. 4 of College and University.*

**About the Author**

RETA PIKOWSKY is the Registrar at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Her 25 years of experience in higher education began at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in an academic department. Her current interests include core competency modeling for staff and managers in the registrar’s office, career development for staff in the registrar’s office, and training programs to serve both internal and external audiences.
Reciprocity agreements are contracts between two or more parties whereby students pay reduced tuition rates. The rate of reduction is determined by the parameters set forth in each individual state’s agreement but may range from a modest reduction in fees to a waiver of full non-resident tuition. In addition to providing tuition relief, reciprocity agreements have expanded educational choice for student beneficiaries and have limited unnecessary duplication of academic programs and educational facilities for academic institutions and states. Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and Florida have adopted several unique reciprocity agreements (agreements upon which we will elaborate), but first we will summarize the aspects of other programs.

Agreements vary in service to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Some programs have enrollment capacity limits whereby only a specific number of students may receive assistance. In some programs, student participants pay the same tuition rate as in-state students; in others, a special rate is calculated. Table 1, on page 66, contains a general summary of interstate reciprocity agreements.

TANGENTIAL STATE RECIPROCITY

Officials in neighboring states typically explore the concept of reciprocity to prevent duplication of costly programs. Authorization to enter into reciprocity agreements with neighboring states was one of the first responsibilities assigned to the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board. Minnesota has increased student access to higher education through reciprocal tuition agreements with Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, two institutions in Iowa, the Canadian province of Manitoba, and affiliate membership in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Reciprocity agreements have expanded educational choice for students and have
reduced costs to the taxpayers of participating states. In the 2005–06 academic year, approximately 13,595 students from Minnesota and 11,418 students from Wisconsin participated in the reciprocity program.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education has approved tuition reciprocity agreements with Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Advantages of reciprocity for Kentucky include: broader access and opportunity for citizens in a region; reduction of unnecessary duplication of academic programs; and cost reduction by utilizing academic programs in other states. Kentucky has been a leader: its agreements have benefited thousands of students. (See Table 2.)

Northern Kentucky University (NKU), Cincinnati Technical and State Community College (Cincinnati State), and the University of Cincinnati (UC) have joined forces to increase access to associate degree programs and to encourage articulation for baccalaureate and master’s degrees. The Ohio/Kentucky Reciprocity Agreement has been in effect since July 1991. Undergraduate and graduate reciprocity agreements for students from selected counties in northern Kentucky and southwestern Ohio created many benefits for students, institutions, and states. Dr. Robert Appleson, former Assistant Provost at Northern Kentucky University and one of the writers of the Ohio/Kentucky Reciprocal Agreement, notes that the agreement has provided many benefits to NKU. Because participants have earned associate degrees at Cincinnati State and UC, enrollment

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Participating States</th>
<th>Program Specifics</th>
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<td>National Student Exchange</td>
<td>All states except DE and ND. Also includes DC, 3 U.S. territories, and 6 Canadian provinces.</td>
<td>Agreement among NSE members (all states’ assisted institutions). More than 2,400 students participated in 1992–93; per 2008 data, 3,500 students exchange annually.</td>
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<td>New England Board of Higher Education</td>
<td>CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, and VT</td>
<td>Agreement among 260 New England public institutions; more than 8,000 participants in 2006–07; rates vary by institution, with some students paying 50% greater than in-state tuition.</td>
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<td>Southern Regional Education Board</td>
<td>AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV</td>
<td>Undergraduate and graduate study; proof of residency and acceptance into participating program. Florida, North Carolina, and Texas participate only at the graduate level. North Carolina and Texas do not permit Academic Common Market (ACM) consideration for online or distance learning programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE)</td>
<td>AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, ND, OR, SD, UT, WA, and WY</td>
<td>Tuition is 150% of the in-state tuition rate. Most undergraduate fields available.</td>
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### Table 1: Interstate Reciprocity Agreements

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### Table 2: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Reciprocity Agreements

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<th>State</th>
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<td>FTE</td>
<td>Credit Hours</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>20,658</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>22,364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>13,666</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>8,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>4,741</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>21,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>2,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
in NKU’s upper-division classes has increased; moreover, these students do not need remediation. Hiring full-time faculty capable of teaching upper-division courses has proven more cost effective and has improved the academic reputation of the University.

Geographical setting was one of the primary reasons the NKU-UC-Cincinnati State reciprocity agreement was developed. Situated just seven miles from the heart of Cincinnati, less than 20 miles from the Indiana border, and in the fastest-growing region in Kentucky, Northern Kentucky University’s metropolitan location provides challenges and opportunities. A challenge is its proximity to a major student population that ordinarily would be assessed non-resident fees. On the other hand, an opportunity is a university education for commuter students who cannot conveniently be served by their own state’s education institutions. In fact, reactivity and cooperation combined to make it possible for benefits to accrue to students, institutions, taxpayers, and state governments. Given NKU’s unique location, the prospective student population, and the University’s mission, agreements with the states of Ohio and Indiana to promote student access to higher education seemed logical. (A later version of the agreement added Southern State Community College as a fourth participating institution.)

The Kentucky & Ohio Undergraduate Tuition Reciprocity Agreement 2007–13 covers six counties in Kentucky and nine counties in Ohio. It defines resident status as follows:

1. During the period of this agreement, the Ohio Board of Regents will consider residents of Bracken, Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton Counties who attend the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, or Southern State Community College, or Southern State Community College under this agreement as qualifying for Ohio resident tuition rates, and as Ohio residents for the purpose of allocating funds to the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, and Southern State Community College.

2. During the period of this agreement, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education will consider residents of Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Hamilton, Highland, and Warren Counties who attend Northern Kentucky University under this agreement as qualifying for Kentucky resident tuition rates, and as reciprocity students for the purpose of allocating funds to Northern Kentucky University.

The NKU-UC-Cincinnati State-Southern State reciprocity agreement is designed to be offered in areas which are non-competitive and, in some cases, non-existent at the student’s local institution. Funds are saved when institutions are not required to provide start-up costs for new programs. For example, Northern Kentucky University does not offer a program in Aviation Maintenance Technology but Cincinnati State does. Therefore, a student who wishes to major in this area could attend Cincinnati State and pay in-state rates. Northern Kentucky University saves funds because it does not have to add this popular program to its course offerings. This saves the University money each year—particularly for high-cost technical programs—because it is not required either to start up new programs or to maintain existing programs offered by the University of Cincinnati’s two-year colleges, Cincinnati State, or Southern State.

**THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET**

One coalition of states publicizes the economic benefit of an agreement to serve students. The Academic Common Market (ACM) is helping students in Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states cut the costs of undergraduate and graduate study at out-of-state institutions. This arrangement among the 16 SREB states (including Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia) allows participating students to pay in-state tuition while studying outside their home states. There are only two requirements: (1) acceptance in a program to which a state has made arrangements to send its students; and (2) proof of legal residency in a participating state. Approximately 1,700 new students are certified each year. Florida, North Carolina, and Texas participate only at the graduate level. This means that a Florida resident going to another state or a resident of another state coming to Florida is eligible for reduced tuition only if he or she enrolls in a program at the graduate level. Further, North
Carolina and Texas do not permit ACM consideration for online or distance learning programs (www.nbog.or/forstudents/upi/acm.php). All eleven of Florida’s state universities are ACM participants. During 2005–06, the top three programs in the state of Florida that attracted ACM students from other states were Library and Information Studies at Florida State University, Taxation at the University of Florida, and Library & Information Sciences at the University of South Florida (personal communication, April 10, 2008).

Information from the SREB (2008) states that “one of the primary functions of the ACM is to assist states in offering jointly what they cannot offer alone. States are asked to indicate to SREB the programs that are unavailable through their own institutions and to which they want to gain access in other states.” Annual reviews based on the changing needs of participating states are conducted to add or delete programs. A state may request access to specific programs which have not been included in the Academic Common Market.

One ACM offering is marine biology. Institutions in Kentucky do not have marine biology programs, but Kentucky residents have the opportunity to attend institutions which offer marine biology programs without being assessed nonresident fees. Other popular ACM offerings include folk studies, nuclear engineering, art therapy, diplomacy and international commerce, forensic science, and animal health technology.

The Academic Common Market/ Electronic Campus Program

The Southern Regional Education Board conducts an innovative program that combines the tuition benefits of the Academic Common Market with the distance learning capacity of the Electronic Campus. This initiative makes selected programs available at in-state tuition and through distance learning.

Residents of all 16 SREB states may participate in the SREB Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus (ACM/EC) program, which affords states and students significant savings. States do not have to provide costly, specialized programs that are available to their residents through the Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus initiative, and students who enroll in other states’ programs do not have to pay the higher tuition rates usually charged to out-of-state students. However, Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus waivers of out-of-state tuition are available only if certain conditions are met:

- No public college or university in the student’s home state (state of residence) offers a degree program in his or her chosen field of study.
- The program is available in another SREB state that participates in the ACM/EC.
- The program is available through distance learning.
- The student meets the admissions requirements of the college or university that offers the program.
- The student is certified as a resident of his or her home state.

THE NATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE

The National Student Exchange (NSE) is a domestic counterpart to study abroad programs. Founded in 1968, tens of thousands of students have used NSE to participate in exchanges among a group of U.S. colleges and universities. The tuition reciprocity practiced by NSE member colleges and universities makes the exchange option affordable. In 1992–93, the National Student Exchange placed more than 2,400 students for exchange. By 2008, NSE had grown to 200 member campuses in 48 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, 3 U.S. territories, and 6 Canadian provinces. NSE currently places nearly 3,500 students for exchange annually. All NSE members are state-supported, regionally accredited, four-year, degree-granting institutions. NSE is a nonprofit organization that is self-supporting through annual membership fees and student application fees.

THE NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

The New England Regional Student Program is an interstate program of educational exchange among institutions in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. This agreement is established at 150 percent of in-state tuition for all out-of-state regional students. Established in 1957, the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), administered by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) on behalf of the region’s six states, helps to reduce the financial burden of attaining a college degree. In 1993, the RSP was a voluntary agreement among 84 New England public colleges and universities; in 2008, the RSP is a voluntary agreement among 260 public and independent colleges,
universities, and graduate schools. This allows New England residents to attend at reduced tuition rates out-of-state but regional public institutions for specific degree programs not offered by their home-state public institutions.

John C. Hoy, former president of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), stated,

In academic year 1992–93, the RSP provided more than 100,000 individual tuition exchanges. One reason, frankly, for the growth and depth of the program is that the states have kept policies straightforward, uncomplicated, and readily understandable to students and parents. The RSP provides reduced tuition to students seeking access to highly specialized programs of study within New England’s public colleges and universities; in turn, it allows public institutions to channel their limited resources toward improving existing programs rather than toward duplicating programs already available at other New England public colleges and universities.

The current president of NEBHE, Evan S. Dobelle (2005), writes about the future and thinks globally:

This 50th anniversary of the New England Board of Higher Education offers an important opportunity to look forward. NEBHE’s priorities over this next half-century will evolve. But a few goals will always remain constant: to expand access and opportunities to a greater number of our citizens; to strengthen the bonds between campus and community; and to prepare the region for success in the global marketplace.

As we act regionally, more than ever before we also need to think globally. Our future depends upon global economic relationships and foreign immigration here at home. Cultural exchanges, such as the Yale-China Association, which recently celebrated its centennial, familiarize our students with the countries that will be our partners and competitors over the next several decades. We can do more by encouraging public and private colleges to require a year’s study abroad. We need to build international

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<th>State</th>
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<th>NEBHE³</th>
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¹ Tangential Interstate Reciprocity.
² National Student Exchange; (institutions within states).
³ New England Board of Higher Education.
⁴ Southern Regional Education Board.
⁵ Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education; (undergraduate).
cultural competency among graduates, so they can be ambassadors to the global community.

THE WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE) was established by western states to promote and facilitate resource sharing, collaboration, and cooperative planning among member states and their colleges and universities. WICHE seeks to fulfill its mission in a variety of ways: implementing and administering interstate exchanges of students; providing research, analysis, and policy options for state and institutional officials; and facilitating problem solving based on cooperative action. Through WICHE-sponsored Western Undergraduate Exchanges (WUE), students in a number of western states may enroll in programs at two-year and four-year institutions in participating states. Tuition for WUE students is in-state tuition plus 50 percent. In all cases, the sum is considerably less than nonresident tuition. Virtually all undergraduate fields are available to WUE students at one of the more than 100 participating colleges and universities in Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Table 3, on page 69, contains a summary of the 50 states’ participation in reciprocity agreements.

CONCLUSION

Indiana State Representative Bob Bischoff, in referring to the Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio agreement, describes the primary benefit of a reciprocity agreement: “The people who will benefit the most will be the students who have the dream of pursuing a college degree but worry that they don’t have the money or the access to an institution to see that dream come true.”

Reciprocity agreements have given students access to many more programs and educational options than were available in the past. Students are no longer cut off from educational opportunity simply because of political boundaries which resulted in programs being cost prohibitive. Families and students already struggle to meet the increasing cost of higher education without this additional burden. Reciprocity provides greater access without the added cost of out-of-state fees. Reciprocity agreements benefit institutions by eliminating the high cost of program duplication. Reciprocity truly benefits students, colleges and universities, and states.

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About the Authors

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ANGELICA KENNEDY is the Assistant Director at Good Samaritan College of Nursing, she previously served in admissions at the University of Cincinnati. She received her bachelor’s of fine art degree in electronic media and her master’s of education degree in educational leadership both from the University of Cincinnati.
The central argument of *Education’s End*—that humanities teaching should return to focus on the meaning of life—seems noble, if idealistic. In clear and passionate language, Kronman strikes at concepts that have come to define humanities education, including political correctness (in the form of diversity and multiculturalism) and the research ideal that often represents the highest end of professional practice in academe.

In the Introduction, Kronman uses his experience as a Williams College student in the early to mid 1960s to illustrate how college study introduced him to the meaning of life. Positioning himself as the product of an earlier era in American higher education, Kronman argues that since the late 1960s, the authority of humanities teachers to teach about the meaning of life has eroded. The following questions frame Kronman’s primary argument: (1) Why did the question of what living is for disappear from college instruction? (2) Why is the research ideal inimical to the study of life’s meaning? (3) Why are diversity and multiculturalism incongruent with studying life’s meaning? and (4) What are the effects of the disappearance of teaching about life’s meaning from colleges and universities and the prospects for its return?

Chapter 1 examines the question of life’s meaning and why it does not fit well in the curricula of research-oriented institutions: It is a personal question that no one else can research and answer on anyone else’s behalf. Further, we cannot place any objective distance between ourselves and our lives as a whole. We can only answer the question of what life is for from “inside” our lives. While humanities study cannot create objectivity in one’s inquiry into life’s meaning, Kronman suggests that examining the works of great authors and artists for meanings of life that they have found can serve as a fruitful course of study for college students.

Chapter 2 traces the history of higher education in the United States. Kronman divides this history into three stages: (1) the “age of piety,” from 1636 to the Civil War; (2) secular humanism—from the Civil War to the mid 1960s; and (3) the current phase, from the late 1960s to the present. According to Kronman, the meaning of life held sway in college education from the beginning. In the early days, when colleges existed primarily to train clergy, God alone defined the meaning of life. Secular humanism had its beginning in part as a result of the growing
emphasis on research, which suggested a greater variety of ways to explore life’s meaning. Secular humanism saw its demise in the late 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement and the continued rise of the research ideal.

Chapter 3 describes the rise of research in the nineteenth century. Academics began to work primarily to advance knowledge in their fields rather than for pure interest or pleasure. The Bildung ideal of development in a particular direction—as opposed to older ideals of a well-rounded life—contributed to the movement away from older outlooks on good scholarship. Kronman sees definite value in research, especially in the natural and social sciences, but he notes that the ability of research to describe truth in the humanities is less clear. Kronman argues that the research ideal made the meaning of life an invalid subject for study, thereby leaving a void in the humanities that diversity and multiculturalism came to fill. Thus, the research ideal created the precondition for the rise of political correctness.

Diversity and multiculturalism emerged from the Civil Rights Movement. In Chapter 4, while noting the importance of the movement in expanding higher education access, Kronman writes that diversity and multiculturalism have a less innocuous side. Undergirded by a crude version of constructivism which holds that claims for being natural or authentic simply conceal ulterior power motives, diversity and multiculturalism place non-Western works of art, literature, philosophy, etc. on par with Western classics. Kronman argues that Western works ought to have a privileged place in American higher education as students can study works that are in direct “conversation” with one another, whereas introducing non-Western works forces conversations and uproots works from context. The replacement of secular humanism by diversity and multiculturalism has come to mean that religious institutions monopolize teaching on the meaning of life. Young people can no longer count on colleges and universities to provide a secular setting in which to answer the question of what living is for; instead, such discussions are restricted to closed circles of family and friends.

Chapter 5 closes out Kronman’s core arguments by juxtaposing science and the humanities. While the sciences have reached a high point in their credibility with the public, the humanities are in crisis. Science continually expands our powers over the natural world, but we always reach a limit. The humanities remind us of our self-contra-dictory existence: We seek to expand our human powers beyond limits that define us as human. In short, we need the humanities to remind us of our humanity. Kronman believes that many students and their parents would welcome instruction on the meaning of life—to counter the inherent fundamentalism in any religion and to respond to the waning of political correctness. Kronman suggests that research and study of the meaning of life ought to coexist in the humanities. College represents the last best opportunity for students to explore what living is for; colleges and universities and humanities teachers in particular must again allow for this exploration.

Education’s End will resonate with any reader who has an interest in humanities instruction. By reminding readers of the oft-forgotten values of humanities study, Kronman validates the sentiments of students and teachers who seek to cut through the constructivism-based theory that has infused humanities study in recent decades.

A key critique of Kronman emerges when one asks whether the meaning of life represents the highest goal of humanities instruction. After finishing Education’s End, this reviewer reread a few works of literature from his undergraduate days, this time from a non-theoretical viewpoint. I did not find the meaning of life in Paradise Lost, but I rediscovered a formally brilliant epic poem. The search for life’s meaning represents a noble goal but not the goal to which humanities study ought always to aspire. Further, seeking the meaning of life in a given work could blind students and teachers to other aspects of the work. Stripping away decades of politically based humanities instruction has value in itself, whether or not life’s meaning takes the place of theory.

From another perspective, readers could take issue with Kronman’s argument for the centrality of Western works. The meaning of “conversation” between works underlies this critique. Beowulf and The Odyssey both form part of the Western tradition of epic poetry, but do they converse with each other? If so, how does that conversation enhance instruction on life’s meaning? The Beowulf poet may have had knowledge of Homer and may have composed Beowulf to create an English epic poem in answer to the older Greek tradition. But does cultural congruence and the conversation that it underscores better equip students to discover the meaning of their own lives than reading Western works alongside non-Western works? Couldn’t a skillful instruc-
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tector bring together Japanese and Western writings on World War II to look at life’s meaning in the face of catastrophic events? Conversation between works does not necessarily make them more suited to the exploration of life’s meaning when it is defined solely by culture. Rather, the coherent presentation of works—whether Western or non-Western—could foster a more fruitful examination of what living is for. On a more practical note, the case for granting precedence to Western works could form another project and seems forced amidst Kronman’s core arguments.

Reading *Education’s End* should prove as thought-provoking for college and university administrators as for students and faculty. However, it raises a concern unique to administrators: Does the meaning of life have a market? Admittedly, Kronman does not seek to delve into how colleges might engineer the return of secular humanism, but one cannot help but inquire into the mundane concerns of implementation. Even a cursory glance at present-day students’ reasons for attending colleges will reveal that there is no ready market for instruction on what living is for. For example, “The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2007” (as cited in Hoover 2008) reveals that 66.2 percent of freshmen at four-year institutions agree strongly or somewhat that “the chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one’s earning power.” No doubt the percentage in agreement would increase if the survey included a broader range of students from different institutional types.

Kronman seems to assume that the average college student is between 18 and 22 years old and attends a traditional four-year college. Such students are increasingly rare, as are those for whom financing a college education does not cause at least some concern. When finances cause concern, students grow more likely to see their education as an investment that ought to pay a return. Any attempt to reintroduce the meaning of life into the college experience would need to consider who college students are today and their reasons for attending college. For example, could student affairs personnel—who often are attuned to the nuts and bolts of attending college—work with humanities departments to introduce co-curricular programming on life’s meaning? Though not apparent, the meaning of life certainly represents a practical concern. The challenge would remain for colleges and universities to realign themselves to convince students of its practicality.

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**About the Author**

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