



Enrollment Management Organizational Structures: Profiles of Six Community Colleges

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Methodology & Research Parameters
- II. Executive Overview
- III. Community College Profiles

**SENIOR
RESEARCH
ANALYSTS**
Emma Snyder
Diana Wardell

**RESEARCH
DIRECTOR**
Jennifer Yarrish

I. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Sources

- Advisory Board's internal and online (www.advisory.com) research libraries
- Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) <http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- The Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com>

Additional Reading

Lobasso, T. (2005). "An evaluation of enrollment management models of the 28 Florida Community Colleges." Doctoral dissertation, College of Education at the University of Central Florida.
Retrieved from: http://etd.fcla.edu/CF/CFE0000371/LoBasso_Thomas_200505_EdD.pdf

Research Parameters

- The requesting member is located in a rural area and has a small residential population. Since the peer set of schools with these characteristics is quite small, the Council elected to include interviews with institutions from slightly more populous areas, as well as non-residential campuses. Despite these differences, the Council believes that the information on enrollment management structures is transferable to other institutions.
- Information on the administrative location of retention services is culled from institutional web sites. Therefore, the information is neither exclusive nor comprehensive; it is possible that retention considerations are also handled in other areas of the college.

I. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PARAMETERS

A Guide to Community Colleges Profiled in this Brief				
University	Location	Total Enrollment	Campus Housing	Enrollment Management Position
College A	Rural: Fringe <i>City population: 6,425</i>	1,244	No	Yes; However, the position is currently unfilled, and the college has a hiring freeze in place
College B	Rural: Fringe <i>City population: 23,220</i>	4,603	No	No; However, the college is in the process of creating a specific enrollment management position
College C	City: Small <i>City population: 71,892</i>	4,440	Yes	No; The college formed an enrollment management committee
College D	City: Small <i>City population: 67,720</i>	4,926	No	Yes; dean of enrollment management
College E	City: Small <i>City population: 96,824</i>	4,580	Yes	Yes; executive director of enrollment management
College F	City: Small <i>City population: 55,525</i>	5,435	No	No; Due to financial constraints, the vice president for student affairs oversees enrollment management processes

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; Council Interviews; US Census Bureau

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Challenge

A community college located in the Southwest approached the Council with the following questions:

- *What is the organizational structure for enrollment management at other community colleges?*
 - *Is there a specific position dedicated to enrollment management? If so, what units does this position oversee?*
 - *In what department(s) are enrollment management responsibilities housed?*
- *What are the benefits and drawbacks associated with different enrollment management models (centralized or decentralized)?*
- *In which part of the administration are retention services housed?*

Introduction

Traditionally, enrollment management processes at community colleges have been decentralized, with individual enrollment-related services located in a variety of administrative offices, such as the Office of Admissions, the Registrar, Financial Aid, and Recruiting. However, community colleges are increasingly centralizing enrollment management efforts under a single position (e.g., director of enrollment management) in order to more effectively integrate the institution's marketing, recruitment, retention, and long-range planning efforts into a strategic enrollment plan.

While efforts are being made to consolidate enrollment management responsibilities under a single position, contacts noted repeatedly that enrollment management is a campus-wide effort that must include not only staff from relevant units (e.g., Registrar, Admissions, etc.) but also faculty and other academic positions.

This brief provides an overview of how six community colleges organize enrollment management processes, detailing the associated benefits and drawbacks of each organizational structure.

Key Observations and Recommendations

- 1) **Three key models of enrollment management emerged from conversations with contact institutions:**
 - **Decentralized, administrative oversight:** Enrollment management responsibilities reside broadly under a vice president for student services (or analogous title).
 - **Decentralized, committee oversight:** A college-wide committee with representatives from a range of administrative departments provides oversight.
 - **Centralized:** A director of enrollment management reports to an institutional-level administrator.
- 2) **There is not a general consensus on the most effective model for enrollment management.** Some institutions staff a director of enrollment management, while others have decentralized systems that consist of committee management or oversight by the vice-president of student affairs. While there are tradeoffs, both models can be successful. In general, centralized models provide a greater level of coordination for enrollment management processes, while decentralized models can maximize financial resources and encourage broader engagement in enrollment initiatives across the campus community.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3) **When deciding on the organizational structure for enrollment management, consider administrator expertise, existing reporting structures, and budgetary limitations.** Several colleges with whom the Council spoke developed an enrollment management organizational structure that reflected the professional expertise of key administrators.
- 4) **The most successful enrollment management efforts are those that enjoy broad support from the college, regardless of the organizational structure they take.** Relevant units within student affairs (e.g., registrar, financial aid, etc) must be involved in enrollment management, but faculty and staff from academic affairs should also contribute to the effort in order to make effective use of all campus resources.
- 5) **Enrollment management efforts tend to focus more on recruitment than retention.** Retention is not an area commonly overseen by directors of enrollment management (or similar positions). A review of institutional web sites reveals that retention efforts are housed in a variety of offices across campus (e.g., student services) as opposed to being centralized under enrollment management.
- 6) **Establishing a centralized enrollment management position serves the following functions:**
 - **Integrates recruitment and retention efforts.** The enrollment management position helps facilitate new programs that encourage interaction between these administrative areas.
 - **Integrates academic affairs and student affairs staff.** By creating an official organizational connection between these separate administrative entities, enrollment management efforts can help ensure that both segments of the institutional community take ownership over enrollment issues.
 - **Generates new recruiting practices.** Contacts note that having a single point person for enrollment management allows for innovation in enrollment-related initiatives. At one college contacted, several new recruitment programs were developed within a year of the enrollment management position's creation.

The Benefits and Drawbacks of a Centralized Enrollment Management Structure

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links and integrates previously discrete enrollment management functions, paving the way for economies of scale • Allows for increased accountability and efficiency through the creation of a dedicated position • Visible prioritization of enrollment management by senior administration • Facilitates greater campus commitment to enrollment management efforts (e.g., recruitment and retention) • Provides a vehicle for faculty and staff involvement in retention efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the creation and funding of an upper-level position • Isolates key functions in one area of the administration (e.g., student affairs) • Can lessen a sense of responsibility for enrollment initiatives on the part of faculty and administrative staff • May necessitate redesign of organizational structure which can be time consuming and costly

III. COLLEGE A

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Director of enrollment management
Current Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment management is housed in the Office of Student Development. • The director of enrollment management reports to the dean of students, who reports directly to the president of the college. However, the position is currently unfilled and the college has a hiring freeze in place, which has stalled reappointment. • When the director of enrollment management is staffed, the position is supported 50 percent by the college and 50 percent by a federal Talent Search grant. When the director is engaged in Talent Search activities, he or she cannot take part in any official or direct recruitment or retention activities, due to the specifications of use for grant funds. • In addition to a dedicated enrollment management position, there is a college-wide Recruitment and Retention Committee which is co-chaired by the director of enrollment management and the director of marketing and public affairs. This committee is responsible for advising on issues of recruitment and retention, and consists of representatives from the faculty, staff, athletic department, Upward Bound, student support services, as well as several students.
History of Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts believe that the director of enrollment management position was created within the past five years in order to focus more attention on retention issues.
Responsibilities of the Director of Enrollment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving as co-chair of the Recruitment and Retention Committee • Coordination of orientation • Oversight of the Student Ambassadors program (scholarship students who complete recruitment, public relations and general outreach duties) • Coordination of Student Activities • Administration of the student satisfaction survey • Oversight of scholarship applications • Retention efforts* <p>The director of enrollment management does not have any direct reports.</p> <p>*The director of enrollment management is not solely responsible for recruitment initiatives or coordination, since this area of engagement is considered a college-wide responsibility.</p>
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention efforts are coordinated by the director of enrollment management. Talent Search efforts also influence retention, though in an unofficial capacity. • Faculty involvement is also identified as being extremely important to retention efforts, and the school has an informal early alert program that allows faculty to identify students who are experiencing academic difficulties.

III. COLLEGE A

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Increases responsiveness to student feedback:** A dedicated position can engage with students and, when necessary, elevate key issues to senior administration. Contacts note that because the school has no official counseling staff, the director of enrollment management can partially serve this function.

Cons:

- **Fails to dedicate sufficient staff time to enrollment management duties:** Even when the director of enrollment management position is filled, this job title—and its attendant responsibilities related to recruitment and retention—only comprise half of the employee's duties.
- **Lessens faculty inclination to address enrollment management concerns:** Faculty and staff hand off responsibility for student concerns to the director of enrollment management instead of taking a more active role in addressing problematic issues.
- **Fragments campus structure, which can hinder coordination:** The college is spread across five campuses, and contacts report that it is difficult to have only one person responsible for coordinated efforts across all five locations.

Lesson Learned:

Contacts report that they are satisfied that the director of enrollment management position is located in the Office of Student Development. This facilitates easy, if unofficial, interaction between the enrollment management, registrar, and financial aid staff, which are also housed under the office of student development.

III. COLLEGE E

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Executive director of enrollment management
Current Organizational Structure	The executive director of enrollment management reports to the vice president of student services (VPSS), who reports directly to the president of the college.
History of Organizational Structure	<p>In the 2008-09 academic year, after a five year hiatus, the president reinstated the position of executive director of enrollment management. While contacts are not certain as to either the reasons for suspension or reinstatement of the position, possible explanations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current president is a former dean of enrollment management and believes in the value of having a dedicated enrollment management officer. • A dedicated executive director of enrollment management lessens the VPSS's responsibilities.
Units Overseen by the Executive Director	<p>Areas overseen by the executive director for enrollment management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Counseling and Advising • Veterans Affairs • Career Services • Special Student Populations <p>Areas not overseen by the executive director for enrollment management includes the Office of Financial Aid and the Registrar (see below for more information).</p> <p>Contacts comment that it might be advantageous if the Registrar and Financial Aid Office reported to the executive director for enrollment management. Advantages would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased communication between all entities relevant to enrollment. • Centralized oversight of all entities relevant to enrollment. Specifically, the executive director of enrollment management works in close physical proximity to the Registrar and the Financial Aid Office and has frequent, unofficial contact with staff. The VPSS, who currently oversees these units, has more minimal daily interaction. <p>Despite the advantages that might be achieved by shifting reporting lines, one possible reason for the fact that financial aid is not located under enrollment management is because the VPSS has a strong background in financial aid and has a sense of ownership over this unit.</p>
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	According to the college's web site, retention efforts are organized and overseen by Student Support Services and the Student Learning Center.

III. COLLEGE E

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Increases access to senior leadership:** The executive director of enrollment management prefers reporting to the VPSS instead of directly to the president. This opinion is based on his feeling that it is advantageous for enrollment management if the unit's issues are brought to light by the VPSS as opposed to an administrator further down in the college's organizational structure.

Cons:

Contacts did not note any negative aspects of the enrollment management position or organizational structure.

Lessons Learned:

The college has ensured that each unit that reports to the executive director remains easily identifiable as its own entity to current and prospective students (Career Services, Admissions, etc.). This ensures that students can still easily locate and access these services.

III. COLLEGE D

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Dean of enrollment management
Current Organizational Structure	The dean of enrollment management reports to the vice president of academic affairs and student services, who reports directly to the president of the college.
History of Organizational Structure	The position of dean of enrollment management was created two and-a-half years ago so that College D could increase its focus on recruiting and enrollment trends. Prior to the creation of the position, the academic counseling unit oversaw recruitment.
Units Overseen by the Dean of Enrollment Management	<p>Areas overseen by the dean of enrollment management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Counseling • Retention • Financial Aid • Administrative Records • Student Activities • Career Coaches (a community college counseling program that is in community high schools) <p>Areas not overseen by the dean of enrollment management include the Registrar, which reports indirectly to the dean of enrollment management.</p>
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	Retention efforts are consolidated under the enrollment management division title.

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Increases ability to expand recruitment activities:** Prior to the creation of the enrollment management position, the vice president for academic affairs and student services oversaw the areas that the dean of enrollment management currently oversees, including recruitment. Under this configuration, recruitment activities did not extend past visiting high schools. Since the creation of the enrollment management position, several new recruiting programs have been implemented (see below for an overview of these initiatives).

On-Campus Visits: College D invites high school students on campus several times a year (usually on Saturdays) to tour the campus. Contacts explain that this strategy is successful for increasing enrollment (which rose an average of 8 percent between last fall and spring semesters). Specific activities at these on-campus events include:

- A campus tour
- Departmental meetings with faculty
- Introduction to campus clubs

In addition, transfer students have the opportunity to meet with:

- Transfer alumni to discuss the transition
- A faculty member who is dedicated to transfer students

III. COLLEGE D

In-Class Visits: In the spring, the dean of enrollment management invites local high school students to visit a class during their spring. Thus far, feedback from participating high school students has been overwhelmingly positive.

Spring Visits: In April, College D invites high school students to visit campus and learn general information about the college.

New Student Survey: College D implemented a “new student survey” that asks newly matriculated students their opinion about the recruitment and application process, in order to determine what can be improved upon during the recruiting process.

Future Programming: In the future, the dean of enrollment management hopes to implement the following programs:

1. In the spring, College D will invite students who applied but did not enroll in the college to visit campus. This will give College D the opportunity to understand the reasons why applicants do not enroll.
2. Facilitated by high school Career Coaches, College D will survey seniors about their post-secondary plans. Then based on these survey results the school will target recruiting efforts towards students who have not yet committed to attending a specific institution.

Cons:

Contacts did not note any negative aspects of the enrollment management position or organizational structure.

Lesson Learned:

Contacts stress the benefits that are generated by having staff and faculty from across the institution willing to collaborate on enrollment management efforts. This is a greater determinant of success than the enrollment management organizational structure.

III. COLLEGE C

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Not applicable; the college formed an enrollment management committee
Current Organizational Structure	<p>Due both to a lack of funds and the new and emerging nature of enrollment management on two-year campuses, College C does not centralize enrollment management responsibilities under a specific position. Instead the college has developed a committee to oversee enrollment management. The committee consists of the following people, and reports to the college’s president:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of College Relations (<i>Committee co-chair</i>)* • Dean of Student and Enrollment Services (<i>Committee co-chair</i>)* • Vice President for Institutional Advancement/Administration (oversees IR, Foundation, IT, Campus services) • Instructional Dean • Two faculty members • Director of Fiscal Services • Several staff members from Student Services • Dean of Community Learning/Head of the Branch Campus and External Learning • Director of Institutional Research <p>The Dean of Student and Enrollment Services was selected as a co-chair of the committee due to her areas of oversight. The Director of College Relations was made a co-chair in order to ensure that the committee’s work and enrollment management efforts were not viewed as only a student services function—this pairing of appointments provides a measure of institutional credibility.</p> <p>Contacts note that in hindsight, it would have also been helpful to have a representative from the college’s foundation. The committee has undertaken a number of discussions about the importance of using financial aid as a tool in enrollment management, and representatives from this entity are currently disengaged from these conversations.</p> <p><i>*See below for specific units overseen by committee co-chairs.</i></p>
History of Organizational Structure	The enrollment management committee was formed approximately three years ago.
Units of Oversight by the Chairs of the Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director of College Relations – This position oversees: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communications b. Media Relations c. Publications d. Some marketing efforts 2. Dean of Student and Enrollment Services - This position oversees: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Admissions b. Registrar c. Financial Aid d. Career, Academic, and Personal Counseling e. Student Life
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	According to the college’s web site, retention efforts are organized and overseen by Disability Services.

III. COLLEGE C

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Creates broad support for enrollment management efforts:** The committee includes representatives from across the college, which allows for broad support for enrollment management efforts. Contacts note that the faculty participation on the committee is particularly important.
- **Eliminates internal conflict over where to house enrollment management:** Having an enrollment management committee eliminates any debate over the benefits of housing an enrollment management position within student or academic affairs. Specifically, contacts note that while there is a logic to the decision to house an enrollment management position within student affairs, there is need for academic affairs to be involved as well. Contacts note that housing the position within student affairs can cause faculty and academic affairs staff to disengage from the process.

Cons:

- **Split responsibilities result in decreased efficiency:** Contacts explain that because the committee co-chairs have numerous responsibilities on campus, it has taken a significant amount of time for the two leaders to coordinate enrollment management efforts. Thus, for reasons of efficiency and focus, it would be helpful to have a dedicated enrollment management coordinator.

III. COLLEGE B

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Not applicable, the college does not currently have a dedicated enrollment management position; however, contacts explain that they are in the process of creating this position.
Current Organizational Structure	Currently, College B does not have a dedicated enrollment management position. Instead, enrollment management duties are situated within the office of the dean of students and responsibilities are shared between the registrar, admissions, and recruiting.
Pending Changes to the Organizational Structure	<p>New Structure: Although the new structure has not yet been finalized, it is likely that the Registrar will soon oversee enrollment management. Should this organizational change take place, the Registrar's title may change to reflect the new position (e.g., director of enrollment management). Specific goals of this new structure have not been articulated, but broad aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus more on recruiting nontraditional student populations • Strengthen marketing efforts • Increase enrollment <p>Impetus for Change: Within the last four months, a new president and vice president for student services began at College B. The new president arrived from an institution that had a separate position for enrollment management, and the VPSS (promoted internally) has wanted to place an increased focus on enrollment management for several years.</p>
Units Overseen by Registrar Under New Structure	Under the proposed organizational structure, the registrar will oversee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Registrar • Admissions Office • Recruiting
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	According to the college's web site, retention efforts are organized and overseen by the Continuing Education department.

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Provides potential to leverage registrar's access to data:** The college can more uniformly and consistently leverage the registrar's access to institutional data to inform enrollment management practices.

Cons:

- **Generates potential tension over uses of data:** Currently, recruiting and admissions do not always use data to inform their practices. Thus, there could be a potential clash of ideas about how best to use data to guide the process of enrollment management.

III. COLLEGE F

Overview of Enrollment Management Structure	
Position Title	Not applicable; due to financial constraints, the vice president for student affairs oversees enrollment management processes.
Current Organizational Structure	Currently, the vice president for student affairs (VPSA) oversees enrollment management.
History of Organizational Structure	<p>Although there was once an enrollment management position, which was held by the current VPSA, the college eliminated the position due to financial constraints, at which time responsibilities reverted back to dean of admissions and dean of students positions. When one of the deans retired and the other was shifted into a different position, these responsibilities then came directly under the VPSA.</p> <p>During the current VPSA's three year tenure as the dean of enrollment management, he restructured the admissions and registration process. He oversaw Financial Aid, Recruiting, Counseling, and the Department of Education's Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (the members of this staff who were involved in retention), and in order to improve enrollment management, several processes and programs were put in place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUNRISE: The program's name is an acronym meaning "The System U Need for Registration, Information, and Student E-mail." This is an online system that allows students to print their grades and schedules, pay tuition and fees, register for classes, and access student e-mail • Online advising and advanced web resources • Centralized recruiting efforts
Units Overseen by Vice President for Student Affairs	<p>Currently, the VPSA oversees the following units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment Management • Student Records • Financial Aid • Counseling Center • The START center (Student Testing, Admissions, Registration and Transcripts), which is a "one-stop shop" that allows students to apply and enroll at the college
Administrative Location of Retention Efforts	Retention efforts are organized within the Title II Strengthening Institutions Program. When the college had a dean of enrollment management, this position oversaw the members of the Title III staff who worked on retention issues.

Pros and Cons of Enrollment Management Structure

Pros:

- **Eliminates a position from the student affairs payroll**

Cons:

- **Potential to interfere with integration of admissions and recruitment efforts:** Specifically, there is no point person to coordinate and strategize with regards to recruiting. In better economic times, enrollment does not naturally grow, and therefore the college will struggle to increase its enrollment without this targeted position. For now, the VPSA charges academic counselors with recruiting efforts.

III. COLLEGE F

Lessons Learned:

Contacts note that successful recruiting requires the involvement of academic affairs within the enrollment management process. The current VSPA was the college's Interim VP for academic affairs for two years following his tenure as dean of enrollment management, and during his time in academic affairs he had the opportunity to develop strong relationships with faculty. This makes it relatively simple for him to garner faculty support for recruiting efforts; however, this is a feature of individual relationships rather than the existing reporting lines. Official partnerships between academic and student affairs could assist in the enrollment management process.

Contacts also note that targeted recruiting efforts have the added benefit of creating opportunities for a dynamic professional environment within the institution itself. This contact has observed that at many institutions, recruiting offices are energetic places where young employees are given early professional training. Failing to focus on recruiting therefore costs the campus this professional development opportunity.

Professional Services Note

The Advisory Board has worked to ensure the accuracy of the information it provides to its members. This project relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and The Advisory Board cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information or its analysis in all cases. Further, The Advisory Board is not engaged in rendering clinical, legal, accounting, or other professional services. Its projects should not be construed as professional advice on any particular set of facts or circumstances. Members are advised to consult with their staff and senior management, or other appropriate professionals, prior to implementing any changes based on this project. Neither The Advisory Board Company nor its programs are responsible for any claims or losses that may arise from any errors or omissions in their projects, whether caused by The Advisory Board Company or its sources.

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