



# Using SEM Principles to Navigate Difficult Economic Waters

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## Workshop Goals

- Establish a baseline understanding of SEM
- Consider key inputs to SEM organization
- Focused input on core concepts
  - A few, not all
  - Quick overview to stimulate thinking and further exploration during SEM and beyond
- Discussion

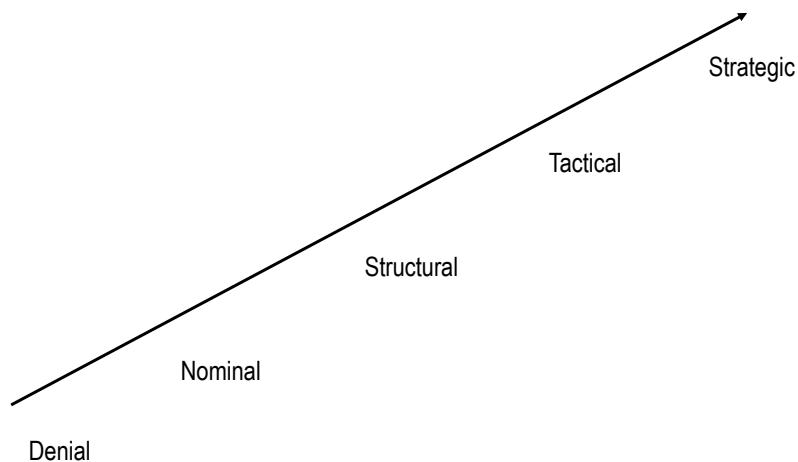
## History of Enrollment

- Burgeoning growth through mid-1960s
- Slight decline following
- Increased competition for students and funds

## Enter . . . Enrollment Management

- Process to manage institutional enrollment
- Stabilize Budgets
- Control Institutional Image

## SEM Transition Model



Adapted from Dolence

# SEM Core Concepts: Purpose and Definition

## Purpose & Definition

### Definitions

Strategic Enrollment Management is a *concept and process* that enables the *fulfillment of institutional mission and students' educational goals*.

~ Bob Bontrager

Strategic Enrollment Management is a comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where "optimum" is defined within the academic context of the institution. As such, SEM is an institution-wide process that embraces virtually every aspect of an institution's function and culture.

~ Michael Dolence

## Purpose & Definition

### The Link to Instruction

- SEM helps accomplish the educational goals of students and institution
- Enrolls students for whom programs or the institution “fit”
- Provides appropriate academic/instructional support

“An institution’s academic program is inexorably co-dependent on enrollment management. The quality of the academic program can only be developed and maintained in a stable environment, and stable enrollments are only possible through sound planning.”

~ Michael Dolence

## Purpose & Definition

### The purposes of SEM are achieved by:

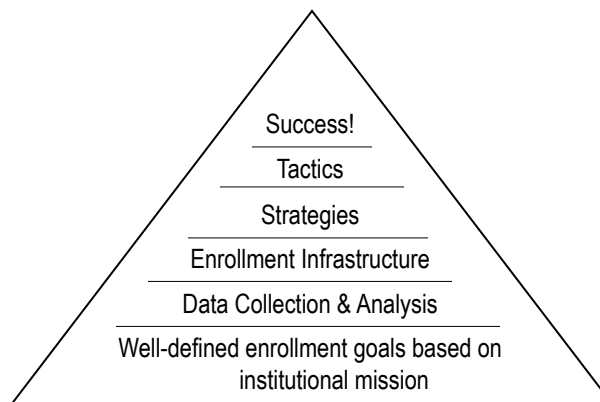
- Establishing clear **goals** for the number and types of students needed to fulfill the institutional mission
- Promoting **students’ academic success** by improving access, transition, persistence, and graduation
- Promoting institutional success by enabling effective **strategic and financial planning**
- Creating a **data-rich environment** to inform decisions and evaluate strategies
- Improving process, organizational and financial **efficiency**, and outcomes
- Strengthening **communications and collaboration** across the campus—especially between enrollment managers and instruction

## Purpose & Definition

### What SEM Is Not:

- A quick fix
- An enhanced admission and marketing operation
- An administrative function separate from the academic mission of the institution
- Solely an organizational structure
- A financial drain on the institutional budget
- An overnight process

## Purpose & Definition



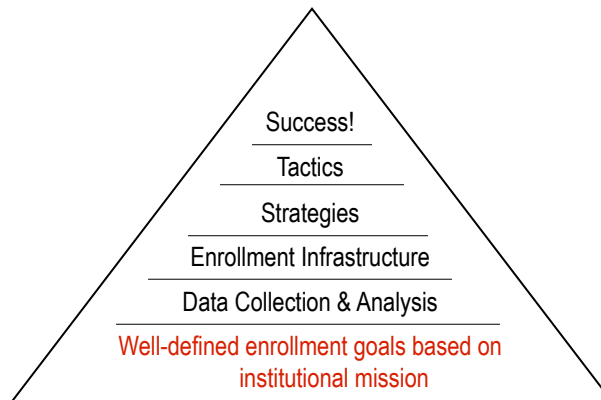
© Bontrager

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

- Do you know what your institution's mission is?
- Is the mission still applicable to your institution?
- Does the mission define who your institution serves or enrolls?
- How strong is your working relationship to your institution's academic or instructional division?

## SEM Core Concepts: Developing Enrollment Goals

## SEM Model



© Bontrager

## Enrollment Goals

### A Different Take on Institutional Mission: Niche



## Enrollment Goals

### A Different Take on Institutional Mission: Attributes, Values, and Brand

*An attribute is a characteristic, peculiarity, or distinctive feature of a person or thing.* ~ Jack Trout

- Identify the college attributes and values that matter the most; the most effective are simple and benefit-oriented.
- Values are much more complex and difficult to identify, but critical to the process.
- Determine your brand promise (niche/attributes/values), focus on it, and deliver on it as well as you possibly can.
- Remember, the flip-side of your attributes and values is that they will develop into student expectations for services based on your brand.

## Enrollment Goals

### The Classic Conundrum

- All may want better students
- Administration may want more students
- Faculty usually want fewer students
- Departments may be reducing capacity
- All want to guarantee access, but not diminish quality

## Enrollment Goals

### Key Concepts in Determining Enrollment Goals

- Enrollment goals are mission driven and focus on big picture objectives:
  - e.g., Promote greater access to higher education through widespread, timely and accurate information regarding financial aid options.
- Should emerge from and operationalize the institution's strategic plan.
- Define types of students and proportion of students within each type that would best fulfill institution mission
- Forward looking, long-term
- Represent the student life cycle/success continuum
- Are understood and supported throughout the institution

## Enrollment Goals

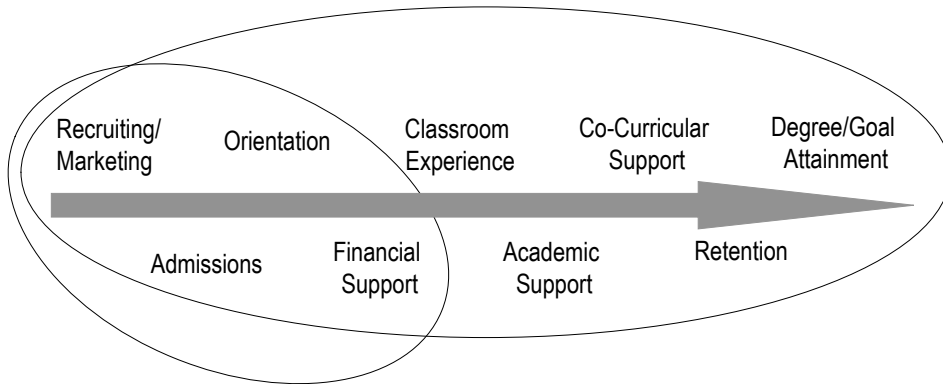
If only it was as easy as:

**WANTED**

*Anyone and everyone who wants to learn.  
Those with "hard luck" stories preferred.  
willing to pay full tuition.*

# Enrollment Goals

## The Student Success Continuum



# Enrollment Goals

## Not One Goal, But Many . . .

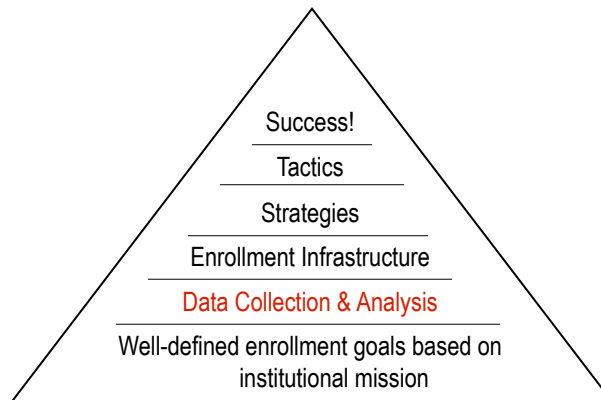
Transfers	Headcount/FTE	Gender	State Mandates
New Markets	<b>YOUR GOAL HERE</b>	Religious Affiliation	Institutional Values
Age	First Year Students	Degree Completion	Race/Ethnicity
Target High Schools	Programs	Service to College District	Residency

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

- Do you have institution-wide enrollment goals?
- How well aligned are your institutional mission and your enrollment goals?
- Are your enrollment goals supported and understood across the institution?
- Do your SEM goals align with your institutional (and instructional?) strategic plans?

## SEM Core Concepts: Data Collection & Analysis

## SEM Model



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## Data Collection & Analysis

- “Count everything that moves!”  
--Old SEM Proverb
- “Track relentlessly what works and what doesn’t.”  
--Slippery Rock University
- “Data is not the plural of anecdote.”  
--Scannell & Kurz

## Data Collection & Analysis

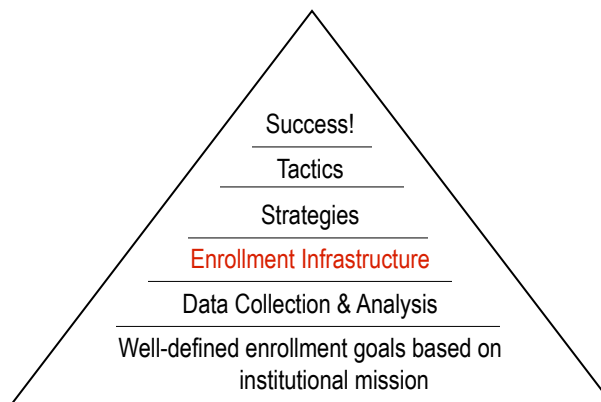
- Getting everyone on the same page
- Accessibility of data
- Relevant vs. interesting data
- Avoid anecdotal data
- Information gathered to make decision will be used for making decision
- Will drive additional questions: create a “parking lot”

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

- How accessible is your data?
- Does your institutional research area have the resources to support SEM needs?
- Does your institutional research area need additional support?
- How data-driven are your decisions?

# SEM Core Concepts: Enrollment Infrastructure

## SEM Model



## Enrollment Infrastructure

### Critical Components:

- Structure
- Staffing
- Skills
- Systems
- Service

## Enrollment Infrastructure

### Structure

- Executive Level Support
- No one “right” SEM organization: Matrix, Committee, Division and Coordinator Models
- Phase I needs vs. long term sustainability
- Who should be included?

### Staffing

- Leadership
- Decision Making
- Are staff deployed strategically?

## Enrollment Infrastructure

### Skills

- Do you have the right skills within your staff?
- Are your skill sets adaptable?

### Systems

- Processes & Work Flow
- Strategic Use of New Technologies or Services
- Exceeding Student Expectations (and outpacing peers)

### Service

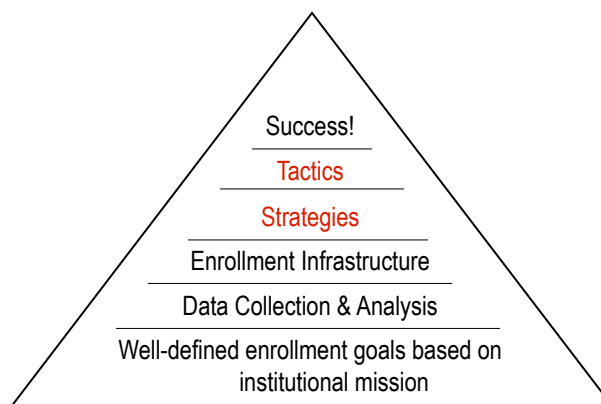
- How are you meeting student needs?
- Overcoming institutional history, culture and precedent

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

- Institutional Readiness Audit: How do you rate?
- What is missing in your ideal SEM Team and why?
- What immediate structural, staffing, skill, systems and service issues do you see?

# SEM Core Concepts: Strategies & Tactics

## SEM Model



## Strategies & Tactics

### There is a Difference:

- Goals = Big picture; driven by campus leadership team
- Strategies = Enrollment targets; driven by SEM team
- Tactics = How you get there; driven by affected department

## Strategies & Tactics

### Goal:

Promote greater access to higher education through widespread, timely and accurate information regarding financial aid options.

### Target:

The number of students who apply for financial aid will increase to 75% of all degree-bound students.

### Strategy(ies):

The Financial Aid Office will develop a comprehensive outreach program to include workshops in all area high schools, development of FAFSA completion days, and communication plans to current students who do not apply for aid.

## Strategies & Tactics

Not One Strategy, But Many . . .

Transfers	Headcount/FTE	Gender	State Mandates
New Markets	<b>YOUR STRATEGY HERE</b>	Religious Affiliation	Courses
Age	First Year Students	Degree Completion	Race/Ethnicity
Target High Schools	Programs	Service to College District	Residency

## Thoughts to Ponder . . .

- Do your SEM goals operationalize the institution's strategic plan?
- Do your SEM strategies operationalize your SEM goals?
- Do you SEM strategies operationalize your enrollment targets?
- Do you know what your enrollment targets are/should be?

# SEM Core Concepts: Promoting Institutional Financial Success

## Institutional Financial Success

- Pricing/tuition strategies
- Targeted, strategic investments
- Improving efficiencies
- Financial aid leveraging
- Planning for the long term
- Increasing net revenue

# Institutional Financial Success



# SEM Case Studies

## SEM Resource List

Black, Jim (Ed.) (2001). *The Strategic Enrollment Management Revolution*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Black, Jim (Ed.) (2004). *Essentials of Enrollment Management; Cases in the Field*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Bontrager, Robert (2004). "Enrollment Management An Introduction to Concepts and Structures." *College and University*, 79 (3): 11–16.

Bontrager, Robert (2004). "Strategic Enrollment Management: Core Strategies and Best Practices." *College and University*, 79 (4): 9–15.

Kalsbeek, David (2006). "Some Reflections on SEM Structures & Strategies (Part One)." *College and University*, 81 (3): 3–10.

Kerlin, Christine (2008). "A Community College Roadmap for the Enrollment Management Journey." *College and University*, 83 (4): 10–14.

## Upcoming AACRAO Opportunities

AACRAO *SEM Essentials* Online Course (forthcoming this Fall)

2009 AACRAO SEM Conference: *Unlocking the Potential of SEM*. November 8 – 11 in Dallas, TX — <http://www.aacrao.org/sem19/index.htm>

*Strategic Enrollment Management in Community Colleges*, AACRAO (new book forthcoming November 2009).

## Closing Pearls of Wisdom

- Instruction **MUST** be involved.
- It takes time.
- It takes energy!