Impact of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Strategic Planning on Adult Higher Education Enrollment Patterns

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IMPACT OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT, MARKETING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ON ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT PATTERNS

by

Kinfu Adisu

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
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requirements for the
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Dr. Paula Brush, Advisor

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This qualitative study examined the impact of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning practices (or lack thereof) on enrollment trends in two graduate programs across five Grand Rapids, Michigan–based institutions of higher education. Deans, department heads or program directors associated with the Master’s of Business and Master’s of Education degrees in each institution were interviewed, as were regional administrators and marketing personnel for a total of 15 participants. In addition, the challenges faced by these graduate programs and how such challenges impacted enrollment patterns were analyzed.

Findings indicate that to a large degree the concepts of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning are not well understood. There also appears to be a connection between such practices and enrollment growth in that some common strategic attributes were found within the four of ten programs that had enrollment increases, while such attributes were often absent in non-growing programs. These attributes include having individuals very knowledgeable of the enrollment management concept, offering modified classes and formats, an average use of various marketing methods above those used by non-growing programs, and performing marketing research to support their planning efforts. In addition three of the four growing programs indicated the existence of
an adequate marketing budget, while none of the six programs with declining or flat enrollment indicated such budget support. Key challenges included limited funding, a limited talent pool for adjunct faculty, significant competition among institutions, and regional unemployment.
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Kinfu Adisu
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The early part of the 21st century finds many states faced with scarce resources and tough economic situations. Many public higher education institutions have to do more with significantly decreased state funding. Enrollment management issues, namely student recruitment and retention, decreased revenues, and demographic changes have become major challenges facing higher education administrators.

Data from the Digest of Educational Statistics (2002) reveals that higher education enrollment as a whole has seen steady increases for the past few decades. From the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, overall undergraduate enrollment steadily increased each year, increasing a total of 18% during that decade before stabilizing a bit during the early 2000s. Graduate enrollment had been steady between the 1970s and 1980s, but rose about 34% between 1985 and 2000. Overall, the number of students enrolled in the nation’s colleges and universities is at an all-time high of 15.7 million, and the number projected by the year 2012 will increase to 17.7 million (Agron, 2003).

While it is apparent that there is enrollment growth in most institutions, the federal and state funding for higher education has decreased (Breneman, 1993; Leslie, 1995). Woodard, Komives, and Love (2000) noted that in the 1970s most public institutions of higher education received more than 50% of their funding from sources other

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than student tuition. Today this amount is less than 50%, and most research universities receive less than 30% of their budget from state funding.

As institutions of higher education scramble to cope with declining state funding, it becomes necessary for them to accept changes in the way they do business (Woodard et al., 2000). The attempt by higher education institutions to manage their student enrollment requires them to learn the behaviors of students attending their institutions, and to use that information within various marketing methods. As a result, the past decade has found many educational institutions preparing new promotional literature, increasing recruiting budgets, and spending more time and money on marketing research and direct mail (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

According to Simmons and Laczniak (1992), marketing of higher education is an evolutionary process reflective of four distinctive stages. These stages of marketing encompass sending out brochures as its basic promotional function to having marketing as part of the university’s strategic planning as its highest stage. The stage at which institutions operate is reflective of their commitment to utilizing marketing to advance their enrollment goals. In general, marketing as it applies to higher education means that a college or university exists to provide satisfaction to external and internal constituents who can be instrumental in providing the support and resources needed for institutional survival and development. This concept of higher education marketing means that an institution must be positioned as an attractive package to compete for potential new students, while satisfying its internal budgetary needs (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996). Institutional positioning is the act of designing the organization’s image and potential so
that the organization’s customers understand and appreciate what the organization stands for in relation to its competitors.

Garlene (1999); Hossler, Bean, and associates (1990); and Dolence (1998) suggest that a strong link be made between student enrollment and marketing techniques as borrowed from for-profit businesses. These two concepts, student enrollment and marketing of higher education, came together under a common term called “enrollment management.” Enrollment management is formally defined as the overall effort of the institution to influence the characteristics and size of student enrollment by directing the activities of its various functions (Hossler et al., 1990). It is about people, the systems, the curriculum, the environment, and the attitudes of everyone involved in providing higher education (Garlene, 1999).

Enrollment management is used on many campuses only to describe recruitment and financial aid activities, but a comprehensive approach goes far beyond these two areas. For example, student academic success and persistence are important parts of successful enrollment management. Enrollment management is also a data driven, analytical activity, in which sound research and evaluation is used to improve pricing, institutional positioning and marketing. Overall Dolence (1990) defined enrollment management as a comprehensive approach requiring the need to integrate functions for better recruitment, retention, and graduation of students.

So what is driving the current focus on enrollment management issues? Two major factors, as presented by Swail (2002) and Paulsen (1990) are: (a) demographic changes including an increase in traditional and non-traditional age groups, women, and minorities; and (b) financial issues, including cuts in financial aid, decreases in state sup-
port, and the change from available grant money to student loans beginning in the mid-1980s.

Ongoing demographic changes have a significant impact on educational policy in general and bring great challenges to higher education administrators. Significant increases are occurring in minority enrollment, increasing from 15% in 1976 to 28% in 2000 (Martinez & Martinez, 2003). And the number of women enrolled between 1990 and 2000 increased by 14%, twice the rate of men. In addition, a growing number of students are older, many who attend school as working professionals (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2002).

The second key factor affecting enrollment management is finances. According to Katz (1999), traditional revenue sources for U.S. higher education continue to be under downward pressure. Russo (1999) explains this historic trend as one of decreased federal and state funding for higher education and notes that this impacts students' choice of institutions. As public funding for higher education decreases, institutions are forced to hike tuition and fees, and students make decisions where and when to attend college from a financial point of view. Hossler et al. (1990) mention that this trend began in the 1970s, when competition for funds from the health, defense and other sectors, together with the federal deficit, created a decline in allocations to higher education funding.

Rizzo (1999) notes public institutions have responded to diminishing state support by increasing tuition at higher percentage rates than private institutions. When faced with financial pressure, institutions of higher education are likely to cut costs (with or without cutting quality), raise prices, exit existing markets, pursue new markets, create new products, or pursue any combination of these strategies (Hossler et al., 1990). Driven by
internal budgetary requirements and the need to balance public demands, student enrollment practices and financial needs of the institutions come to a difficult juncture. For example, institutions may lower their admissions standards in order to increase enrollment to remedy the revenue issues. However, lowering such standards may result in higher attrition rates and further loss of revenue. In addition, institutions of higher education are pressured by the various stakeholders (i.e., family, board members and legislators) to maintain traditional educational standards.

Related to the issues of enrollment management and marketing is the concept of "strategic planning." Rowley and Sherman (2001) noted that the business of education is not what it used to be, change is already here, and leaders must therefore understand and respond to these new changes. To do so, Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) suggested the use of a successful business concept: strategic planning. As defined within higher education, strategic planning generally means the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between an institution's goals and capabilities and its changing marketing opportunities (Kotler & Fox, 1995). Rose and Kirk (2001) defined strategic planning as a process used to assess whether an organization is moving in the right direction. This is done by examining internal and external environmental factors, confirming mission and institutional goals and objectives, and developing specific strategies to enable the institution to respond to a current perspective of its future.

Rowley et al. (1997) offered two important reasons for using strategic planning. First, engaging in effective strategic planning will lead colleges and universities towards implementation of such strategies and second, strategic planning will allow institutions of higher education to be proactive and consequently play a significant role in the rapidly
changing academic world. Shapiro and Nunez (2001) noted strategic planning processes are essential to helping campuses address change forces, assess their present state of affairs, identify core values, clarify their goals and aspirations, and develop an action plan to achieve the defined vision.

Although the general notion of planning is not new to education, most educational institutions only acknowledge the need for strategic planning when they encounter serious enrollment and revenue declines, or to determine if admissions or development programs have been poorly managed (Kotler & Fox, 1995). Rowley and Sherman (2002) confirmed that strategic planning often occurs at a time when institutions are in dis-harmony with their environment. This pressure creates a sense of crisis, causing institutions to seek ways of managing their campuses while building on their past experiences and establishing a viable format for future success.

As a result, most institutions of higher education do not have a history of effectively using strategic planning (Kotler & Fox, 1995). This is due to a lack of experience with successful planning practices coupled with doing it only under times of crises. According to Mintzberg (1994), the difficult task of implementing a strategic planning process is not unique to institutions of higher education; for-profit institutions have a similar problem. Understanding the complexity of the process and convincing influential decision makers that there is the need for change are the most important factors for successful implementation of the process.

As part of a strategic planning process, it is apparent that if campus leaders and planners do not acknowledge and confront their campus culture, the full weight of that culture can become a barrier to change (Rowley & Sherman, 2002). Leadership appears
to be a crucial aspect of developing a participative environment and then using it to implement strategy successfully. As stated by Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green (1982), many institutions of higher education have developed master plans with mixed results. Traditional long-range planning efforts often failed to successfully deal with a rapidly changing and a threatening environment. The emerging recommendations regarding good strategic planning is to develop a good fit between an organization’s activities and the demands of the environment around it (Rowley & Sherman, 2001).

In summary, experts recommend that institutions of higher education implement methods to continuously monitor their internal and external environments (Akhter, 2003). As strategic planning places emphasis on identifying factors that hinder the attainment of the institution’s goals, assessing the environment becomes an important part of ongoing planning (Morrison, Renfro, & Boucher, 1984). Since higher education planners cannot easily predict the future, they need to develop the capacity to respond to resulting uncertainty (Kemerer et al., 1982). This can only be done if the institutions link their strategic planning with proper marketing and enrollment management practices.

Statement of the Problem

Enrollment issues have long been a focal point within American higher educational institutions. As a whole, student enrollments are at an all-time high, with a significant increase in adult learners (Kasworm, 2003). Over six million adult undergraduate and graduate students were enrolled in 2000. This represents over 2.3 million adult students enrolled in graduate programs (Aslanian, 2001).
Although economic and demographic changes impact enrollment, student enrollment problems are also affected by how higher educational institutions strategically plan and manage their programs or the lack of such planning and management. Such lack of strategic enrollment management can result in many problems.

For example, institutions of higher learning frequently put forth academic programs without first substantiating demographic needs (Parsons, 1979). Quality enrollment management processes require an understanding of the demographic issues, especially the needs of the college-age individuals. According to Johnson (2000), demographic data provides information regarding students' racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and migration patterns. Once these are known a recruiter's effort can then be directed accordingly. In addition, higher education institutions often do not align their academic programs with business interests within a given community, failing to align the strategic planning with that of the corporate community (Kotler & Fox, 1995). As the result of this misalignment, institutions may face limitations in attracting and retaining future students.

Finally, institutions of higher education are often not willing to implement enrollment management processes, since they are not aware of the benefits of strategic planning in order to coordinate program design with the market (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

A key focus of this research, therefore, is to examine trends in student enrollment and their connection to any strategic planning and marketing activities within the greater Grand Rapids metropolitan area in Michigan, especially as it relates to programs geared toward graduate students. Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan, and its larger metropolitan community (including the cities of Holland and Muskegon) has a
population of 1.1 million (The Right Place, 2003). Despite its size, the Grand Rapids area is the only metropolitan center in the Upper Midwest that does not have a major research university (Grand Rapids Area Higher Education Network, 2004). Instead, there are eight private and seven public institutions of higher education offering programs in the metropolitan area. Many of these programs are offered via a “branch campus” setting for four-year public institutions located elsewhere in the state. No public institution, therefore, has a hometown advantage and all must vie for a segment of the local population within a competitive arena. Some institutions may be faring better than others in terms of enrollment numbers. To this end, it is an ideal location to examine enrollment patterns within “like” degree programs offered by these institutions, and assess any linkage to their marketing and strategic planning efforts.

The overall purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine enrollment patterns in higher education in the metropolitan Grand Rapids area, and to determine what links, if any, exist to any enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning efforts in reference to the institutions’ graduate student programming. In addition, the challenges faced by those programs and how the challenges impacted the enrollment patterns are analyzed.

This research includes five public universities that have branches or centers within the Grand Rapids area. Although there are about 15 institutions of higher education serving the Grand Rapids community, this study took into consideration five institutions: Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University, Michigan State University, and Western Michigan University. These institutions were selected for the following two reasons: (1) a branch campus of the insti-
tution is located within the metropolitan Grand Rapids area, and (2) these institutions have one or more programs that are similar in content and can be compared.

Within these five institutions, this study specifically examines the enrollment patterns in two graduate programs focused on adult learners: (1) Master’s in Business Administration, and (2) Master’s in Educational Leadership/Administration. These programs are selected given their similarity in content and degrees awarded across the institutions under study. These programs also comprise the majority of the students enrolled in the programs offered by those institutions in the Grand Rapids area.

Face-to-face interviews were used to obtain information on the use of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning efforts, from three categories of individuals. One category includes higher education administrators who are directly involved with the two degree programs of interest (i.e., Master’s in Business Administration and Master’s in Education), such as chair or director of each program. The second involves individuals who are in a position to respond to the overall institution’s enrollment efforts, such as regional administrators. And the third involves individuals who are in a position to promote and research marketing strategies for the branch campuses. The specific research questions addressed are summarized in the next section.

Research Questions

1. To what extent, if any, did student enrollment growth occur during the period of 1999 through 2004 in the Master’s in Business Administration and Master’s in Educational Administration graduate programs at the Grand Rapids–based campuses of five
Michigan public Universities? What role, if any, did enrollment management practices play?

2. What specific marketing strategies were employed by each identified degree program area within each of the educational institutions during the time period of 1999 through 2004? To what extent, if any, is there relationship between the marketing strategies employed within each institution and their enrollment patterns in the programs under study?

3. To what extent, if any, was there implementation of strategic planning, and by whom? To what extent, if any, is there relationship between strategic planning implemented and the enrollment growth or lack thereof in these programs?

4. What overall challenges are being faced by these higher education programs, and how did those challenges impact enrollment trends?

Significance of the Study

To date there has been no comprehensive research directed at the enrollment patterns in adult graduate programs in the Grand Rapids area, and how those patterns link to any marketing or strategic planning process employed within those institutions. The interconnection of business to academe, and the importance of higher education planning is often a factor missing from higher education curriculum development (Graham, 1993; Parsons, 1979).

There are several potential benefits to be gained from this study. First, this research contributes to the body of existing research of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning usage within higher educational institutions. Several previous
research studies in enrollment management (Clark, 2000), marketing (Watson, 2000), and strategic planning (Akor, 1993), identify the important benefits higher education institutions gain as the result of implementing these business concepts. While these previous research studies are a good foundation, they do not examine in detail enrollment trends within adult graduate programs and any marketing and planning efforts associated with those programs. Nor do they examine such efforts within institutions competing within the same market environment. This study offers a rare opportunity to examine what is occurring within two similar graduate programs across five educational institutions all attempting to serve students in the same geographic area.

Second, there is a dearth of research conducted on the specific issues of enrollment management and marketing strategies as they relate to adult nontraditional graduate programs. The focus on adult learners takes into consideration the distinctive needs and characteristics of this group, which makes this study different than previous research on traditional enrollment management.

In summary, there is a clear need for institutions of higher education to make changes in the way they function, because of competition and changing environmental forces (Rowley & Sherman, 2001). To face these challenges, administrators of higher education should rethink how they plan to manage in the future (Herman & Kaufman, 1991; Woodard et al., 2002). Such changes in the ways they manage institutional affairs include the use of enrollment management (Coomes, 2000; Dixon, 1995; Hossler et al., 1990; Rowley & Sherman, 2001), and marketing (Kottler & Fox, 1995; Simmons & Lacziak, 1992). In addition, Rowley, Dolence, and Lujan (1997) suggest the use of a successful business concept, strategic planning to challenge issues confronting higher education.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the concept of enrollment management, marketing of higher education, and strategic planning. In the first section, the historical developments of college admissions processes to the present use of enrollment management are presented. It also details the concept of enrollment management, and its various key areas, goals, and models.

The second section of this review focuses on the concept of marketing. This includes the main purpose of higher education marketing and how the implementation of marketing plans affects the student enrollment. The different stages of marketing models and a successful implementation of marketing plans by some higher education institutions are also discussed.

The third section of this review centers on the concept of strategic planning, its purpose, and use in positioning higher education institutions. How strategic planning increases the strength and competitiveness of higher education institution, and example of successful universities that utilized planning methods, are also included.

The final section in this review includes the issue of enrollment management and marketing strategies in adult nontraditional graduate programs. In addition, reviews of three important research studies related to this topic are summarized.
Historical Development of Enrollment Management

The evolution of enrollment issues reflects a path of increasing complexity, from pure admissions work to the evolving sophistication of enrollment management. At one time, it was not unusual for presidents and faculty members to go on the road speaking to students and parents to keep the enrollments of their schools going (Ingersoll, 1988), although this role of the admissions office is now ancient history. By the mid-1970s, two important forces were in place that dramatically shaped the development of enrollment management practices, which are still in place today (Coomes, 2000; Johnson, 2000).

The first is a set of federal, state, and institutional aid programs to support student access and choices within colleges. To help students enroll in their college of choice, Congress enacted the Education Amendment of 1972. The purpose of this legislation was twofold. It created the Basic Education Opportunity Grant (renamed as the Federal Pell Grant program), which awarded eligible students a financial aid package for use at any college of interest. The amendment also expanded eligibility for the subsidized Guaranteed Student Loan program for middle-income students.

Second is the empirical research on college choice processes and the factors that influenced student attrition. According to Coomes (2000), while policy makers were developing initiatives to expand enrollment, a new line of research to better understand the impact of the college experience was being developed. Clark (2000), in his dissertation research on enrollment management, noted the important role of institutional research on student behavior and programming. He further stated that the data gathered by the institutions is important both for strategic planning and enrollment management,
and can position the university to be competitive in the intended market. Institutional research is a process of utilizing data and information from student enrollment to guide in implementation of programs.

The two forces, access and choice, aided by a growing research base and a significant decline of student enrollment in the 1970s, gave rise to the development of enrollment management as an organizational function. According to Hossler (2000), the concept of enrollment management emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Following the 1980s changes in student aid and expansion of research in student choice and student attrition, a new policy and practice of student needs assessment was developed in the 1990s. The creation of the congressional guideline which created better qualification requirements has also re-enforced this new policy (Duffy & Goldberg, 1998).

Finally came the 1990s, when enrollment grew at only modest rates. As Coomes (2000) explains, colleges began to employ sophisticated marketing techniques and econometric models to target groups of students they felt were most likely to help institutions meet their enrollment goals.

The Concept of Enrollment Management

By the mid-1980s, institutions of higher education became aware that attracting and retaining students requires the sustained and systematic use of institutional resources (Hossler et al., 1990). This competition for college-bound students, coupled with fluctuations in federal funding, forced a transition from a focus on admissions (i.e., simply admitting eligible student who apply) to that of enrollment management (Johnson, 2000). Effective enrollment management requires the use of marketing research techniques to
learn applicant characteristics, how best to reach prospective students, and what they value as they look for a school to attend. Although enrollment management is often thought as just marketing activities, both strategic planning and marketing activities are needed for a successful enrollment management. It is also important for enrollment administrators to learn the characteristics of students who persist in school and those who withdraw, so they can develop effective intervention methods. In general, the main function of enrollment management is to exert control over the characteristics of the students, and to manage the size of the student body. According to Garlene (1999), it is the goal of enrollment management to secure a tight cadre of students that matches the institution so they stay enrolled and graduate. Low attrition and high retention are seen as key indicators of institutional success.

Although a number of formal definitions have been offered by practitioners and scholars (e.g., Hossler et al., 1990; Kemerer et al., 1982; Muston, 1985), all share common elements. Kemerer and associates (1982) note that enrollment management is not just an organizational concept; it is both a process and a series of activities that involve the entire campus. As a process, it includes tracking and interacting with students from the point of their initial contact until their graduation. As an activity, it is designed to attract and retain students. Similarly, Dolence (1998) believes the basic meaning of enrollment management is that each student has a need from the cradle to the grave, beginning with the recruitment, moving on to retention, and ending with graduation and placement. In more detail, Hossler et al. (1990) define enrollment management as the following:
An organizational concept and systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments. Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities concern student college choice, transition to college, student attrition and retention and student outcomes. These processes are studied to guide institutional practices in the area of new student recruitment and financial aid, student support services, curriculum development, and other academic areas that affect enrollments, student persistence, and student outcomes from college. (p. 5)

While the concept is broad and covers a lot of areas, the key areas of enrollment management according to Hossler et al. are: (a) using institutional research to position the institution in the marketplace, examine student attrition and retention, and develop marketing and pricing strategies; (b) monitoring student interests and aligning those with academic program demand; (c) focusing on factors that affect student retention; and (d) matching student interest with curricular offerings in accordance with the mission of the institution.

In the following section the main purpose of enrollment management and what it is intended to accomplish are discussed. Also, four models of enrollment management are discussed.

Enrollment Management Goals

Effective enrollment management not only requires the marketing of the institution and the recruitment of students but also involves other activities such as pricing and financial aid, academic and career counseling, academic assistance, and retention programs (Hossler, 1984). Enrollment management is a process, which influences the size, the shape, and characteristics of the student body through marketing, recruitment, admissions, and financial aid. This process exerts greater influence on academic advising, institutional research, orientation, attrition and retention studies, and student services.
However, the main purpose is always to attract and retain students. These goals, according to Hossler, typically include efforts to increase numbers of new students, plans to diversify the student body, efforts to retain more students, and a desire to enroll more high-ability students or students with special talents, like athletics.

As noted by Dixon (1995), enrollment management proposed four goals: (1) clearly defining the institution’s objectives and promotion of these objectives, (2) bringing all stakeholders in the marketing plans and activities around the institutional goals, (3) making strategic decisions about the role and amount of financial aid needed to bring and retain the desired student body, and (4) making substantial commitments to implement those plans.

*Models of Enrollment Management*

Four models of enrollment management exist as taken from the early work of Kemerer et al. (1982). Moving from low to high complexity in terms of organizational structure and impact, they include the following: (a) an enrollment management committee, (b) a coordinator, (c) a matrix, and (d) an enrollment management division. Dixon (1995) and Hossler et al. (1990) offer four similar models.

These models vary considerably in the degree of organization they require. At one extreme is the enrollment committee, which does not require any organizational change. At the other extreme is an enrollment management division that requires a complete overhaul of the institution’s organizational chart. Each is profiled in the next section.
Enrollment Management Committee

This model involves the development of an enrollment committee, which includes broad representatives from various student service leaders. The purpose is to improve communication and understanding across the campus about enrollment issues. It also helps admissions and student affairs personnel gain cooperation from academic departments, obtain much needed equipment or staffing, and promote the development of attractive academic programs. However, the committee often lacks authority, and is not connected to campus decision-making process (Kemerer et al., 1982).

Enrollment Management Coordinator

This model involves the use of an enrollment management coordinator, usually a person appointed by the president or provost to coordinate various campus activities involving student recruitment and retention. The coordinator works with unit leaders to examine goals, develop enrollment plans, coordinate efforts, and prepare assessment programs. The staff coordinator has some advantages over an enrollment committee, given such committees do not usually do a good job in coordinating, and it is less expensive to have a single individual committed to the task (Hossler et al., 1990). The disadvantage is that such coordinators usually do not have adequate authority, a tool needed to get the job done. Coordinators are also less effective because the individual units in the admissions and recruitment functions remain independent entities and are not centralized.
The Matrix System

This model is more centralized than the first two, in that it links enrollment related functions under the same jurisdiction of a senior administrator (Kreutner & Goldberg, 1981). For example, according to Dixon (1995), a vice president for academic affairs can be charged with leading all enrollment issues, bringing together reporting units of the office of admission, financial aid, registrar, student life, residence hall, advising, and so forth. The disadvantage is that the senior individual may not have enough time to adequately oversee and coordinate all these areas. Also, some of the campus units, such as academic advising, institutional research, and alumni affairs are not covered under this model. Overall, it does not require major changes in institutional structure.

The Enrollment Management Division

As its name suggests, this is a major division of the campus and it is the most centralized of all models. An enrollment management division brings together all elements essential for strategic planning of enrollment management under the same leadership. The advantage over the other three models is that the head of the division has the authority to secure resources. This model has its drawbacks too. There is cost associated with this type of major restructuring. In addition, political realities may prevent the extensive reorganization required to implement it.

In the division model, a vice president or associate vice president is assigned the responsibility. There are usually two reasons for the formation of such a high level
position. One is that it is deemed to be important because the campus is in the midst of enrollment crisis, and second is that the president or senior vice president is a strong advocate of this model (Hossler et al., 1990).

In summary, enrollment management as explained above is a process to influence student enrollment by applying the knowledge of the college choice process (Hossler et al., 1990). Marketing research is utilized to determine knowledge regarding such student choices, which allows enrollment managers to influence the size and targeted student admitted into their institutions. With that link in mind, we turn to a review of marketing in higher education.

Higher Education Marketing

The idea of applying marketing to non-profit organizations had its origin in the writings of Kotler and Levy (1969), Kotler and Zaltman (1971), and Shapiro (1973). These authors argue that marketing is a pervasive societal activity that goes considerably beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap, and steel (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996). Since the 1970s, marketing practitioners and academicians have worked to expand the sphere of marketing from a distribution of print material to sophisticated data collection and research on student behavior (Driscoll & Wicks, 1998).

Marketing Theory and Higher Education

The process by which the producer (i.e., the institution) interacts with the consumer (i.e., the student) is typically referred to as marketing, and is described in a body of marketing theory (Dirks, 1998). This relationship could be applied to sell ideas, to pro-
mote an organization or to sell finished goods. According to Dirks, such exchanges are defined broadly, distinguishing them from quid pro quo transactions. The concept of a market is not restricted to who may participate, and exists for non-profit as well as for-profit enterprises. This relationship also refers to the interaction of two parties.

While considering the concept of marketing and its relation to higher education, Kotler and Fox (1995) define marketing as analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institution’s offerings to meet the target markets’ needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service these markets.

Kotler and Fox remind us that marketing is a managerial process involving analysis, planning, implementation, and control. It manifests itself in carefully formulated programs, not just random actions. Marketing seeks to attract customers by serving their needs, via the selection of target markets, rather than attempting to serve wide areas. Marketing helps institutions to survive and grow by serving their market effectively, and by designing offerings for the target market’s needs and wants. Finally, marketing of services utilizes and blends a set of tools including, program, price, place and promotions.

In general, marketing within higher education is evident in several respects (Dirks, 1998). First and most apparent is that the institution is a producer of educational products and services for its customers, the student population. Second, educational institutions look for a way to attract donations of value. Although this activity is not clearly explained, it is within the concept of exchange as a foundation for marketing.
Third, knowledge-based services are provided to grant and contract funders. Fourth and fifth, educational institutions seek approval and support from the society. This outreach falls under various perspectives, touching on social and cultural environments and relationships. Finally, higher educational institutions’ relationships with their suppliers and personnel are considered to be a market relationship. Although these are different than what we see in for-profit environments, the operation of markets in which higher education participates is consistent with market theory.

Similarities between higher education and for profit business may not be sufficient to conclude that the same marketing methods are transferable to higher education (Canterbury, 1999). Driscoll and Wicks (1998) also challenge the idea that mainstream service marketing concepts apply to universities. They believe the service provided by universities is intangible, it is provided by many people (staff, faculty, librarian, etc.), and the time involved is extensive. The outcome, therefore, cannot be easily identified or measured, nor can the process by which it is acquired be easily assessed. They also feel that a unique aspect of educational service is the lack of a clear exchange. Although students are clearly the important consideration, they don’t pay equivalent to the service they receive because of subsidies (this refers to subsidized and unsubsidized loans to students, and the annual financial support from the federal or state to educational institutions). Therefore, the customer does not pay the true cost of the service. And finally, they believe that a strong marketing orientation may be a potential threat to program quality. This is to say that the institutions’ main focus in marketing their programs should not include lowering the admissions standard to increase the student enrollment.
This is common criticism leveled against poorly designed marketing that does little other than maximize enrollment. Fiske (1979) warned that the universities would not achieve any long-run benefit if they simply increase or decrease their programs to meet student demand. Holden (1995) also suggested that universities should make sure the enrollment performance indicators do not steer academic priorities.

By 1990, all but a few elite institutions of higher education found themselves in a marketplace characterized by what some economists refer to as hyper competition (Klein, Scott, & Clark, 2001). For institutions that were accustomed to more applicants than they could accommodate, this was a new processes they had to get used to. As the result, their initial marketing processes emphasized use of communication methods, such as brochures, print and broadcast advertising, campus visit programs, and college fairs (Hollander & Germain, 1995). Recently, however, a more encompassing adoption of the marketing concept with in higher education is apparent (Klein et al., 2001). These include sophisticated research methods being used in higher education marketing studies (VanDen Heuvel & Devasagayam, 1999), pricing and scholarships being used to make higher education more affordable (Seebach, 1997), student satisfaction being emphasized in communicating about retention and recruitment (Elliott & Shin, 1999), and strategic approaches common in business being adopted (McKnight & Paugh, 1998).

Some research exists which supports the need to establish marketing methods by institutions of higher education. For example, Watson (2000) studied the use of marketing in public higher education institutions. She surveyed 15 western states public higher education institutions listed by U.S. News & World Report: America’s Best Colleges (1999). One hundred thirty enrollment management administrators, admissions and other
administrators responsible for enrollment, retention, and marketing were sent a survey questionnaire.

According to her results, the utilization of strategic marketing efforts were shown to be useful when used as strategies for enrollment. This study supports the view that non-profit higher education institutions need to look at themselves in the same way that for-profit businesses do. Watson found that competition for four-year institutions existed from other four-year institutions, private four-year institutions, two-year public and private institutions, the job market, the military, and technical and trade centers. As concluded from her data collected, most institutions view marketing as necessary and are taking time to develop strategic marketing plans geared towards enrollment as well as image.

*Stages in Higher Education Marketing*

Over time, the acceptance and focus of educational marketing has evolved. Attracting students continues to be a focus for marketing application, but marketing is also an important tool in attracting financial resources, and enhancing the institution’s image and public awareness (Kotler & Fox, 1995). Simmons and Laczniak (1992) presented a hierarchical model derived from Williford’s (1987, as cited in Simmons & Laczniak, 1992) normative progression in the use of marketing by a university. Their model has four stages. Kotler and Fox also described the evolution of higher education marketing in six stages. In both descriptions, research reflects an institution’s maturity through time and the use of sophisticated marketing to satisfy its resource needs. The following blends together key information from these two models.
Stage One: Marketing as Promotion

This stage mainly involves the implementation of promotional and recruiting functions by the admissions department. Although the admissions director is usually the one responsible for coordinating marketing, the director's role in stage one institutions is left undefined and varies from college to college. As institutional needs and the marketing activities change, the role of the admissions officer as a gatekeeper moves towards recruiting (Reihl, 1982, as cited in Simmons & Laczniak, 1992). The role of a recruiter, as mentioned by Reihl, calls for the admissions officer to coordinate the marketing functions like segmenting the marketing, identify primary and secondary target areas, and conduct institutional surveys that are compatible with the mission of the institution. Overall, within stage one institutions marketing is usually very limited.

Stage Two: Market Research

The realization of the heightened need for marketing research is what transforms stage one universities to stage two and beyond. Increasingly, there is a strong emphasis on using market research to provide information about students and institutions, in order to market or promote the university more effectively (Williford, 1987, as cited in Simmons & Laczniak, 1992). This stage is characterized by such a market research approach, which is comprehensive and is directed to attaining information of strategic value on a continuing basis. These institutions assess their institutional images, gaining further information about prospective applicants and the perception of enrolled students.
**Stage Three: Marketing as Enrollment Management**

Institutions of higher education that embrace true enrollment management are at stage three: a higher level of marketing that integrates all forms of student information. This begins with student admission efforts and continues through alumni status. Generally, this stage requires a considerable commitment of funds. This enrollment management model is not always easy, as there are inherent impediments because of vague institutional objectives and no clear authority is assigned (Muston, 1985). The basic goals of this marketing stage involve becoming more customer-responsive to the need of the students. The following are what Glover (1986) identifies as goals of this stage:

(a) to increase the accuracy of enrollment forecasts;
(b) to find ways to increase the university’s market share;
(c) to ensure that the pricing and student aid policies will be competitive;
(d) to offer academic program and campus experiences that are responsive to the needs and preferences of students;
(e) to increase admissions yield from the pool of accepted applicants;
(f) to maintain academic standard and an enrollment mix that is consistent with the institution’s mission;
(g) to describe, forecast, and improve student retention;
(h) to balance the quality of instructors with both academic values and enrollment demand; and finally,
(i) to follow-up report on student and alumni achievement and satisfaction.
Stage Four: Strategic Marketing Management

This stage includes all of the previously discussed stages, but has them driven and coordinated by a strategic planning process of the institution. The process of strategic planning involves developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution and its changing market environment (Kotler & Murphy, 1981). In higher education, this means developing academic programs that fit with the environment and then selecting market segments that offer the best potential for an institution's limited resources. According to Simmons and Laczniak (1992), the key characteristic of the strategic marketing approach is that the framework operates simultaneously and is always articulated by the institution, its future plans, and what market it can best serve.

In essence, this stage is a new way of thinking about the tasks institutions of higher education have been doing. This involves a transition that is needed in the academy, a shift from short term thinking and decision making to strategic thinking (Rowley et al., 1997). Strategic planning opens up the institution's thinking to a range of alternatives by identifying the best fit between the institution, the resources, and its environment (Rowley et al., 1997).

In its practical purpose and understanding, strategic marketing is a concept that fits within the process of strategic planning. The following will clarify the concept of strategic planning in higher education.
Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a relatively new idea to institutions of higher education. The historical origin of this concept has been linked to its use in the military and the corporate world. According to Dooris (2003), strategic planning was first widely used among for-profit organizations during the 1960s through the mid-1970s. During this same time period, most higher education institutions were enjoying enrollment growth and considerable public confidence, and therefore, any strategic planning used during this time was for expanding and planning new facilities. From the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s, however, higher education institutions experienced challenges from various external factors including demographic, economic, and technological changes. Higher education costs outpaced inflation, and public support weakened, and as the result, ideas about planning changed (Keller, 1983).

In addition, higher education institutions needed to compete with emerging models of higher education while balancing the essence of traditional academic environment (Lerner, 1999). Such emerging models include: web-based education, adult education programs, and evening and weekend classes geared towards professional development. It became necessary for the institutions of higher education to adopt strategic planning methods, so they could accomplish tasks necessary for survival and growth. Rowley et al. (1997) also mention strategic planning as a necessary method to realign the institution with its environment.

Although higher education leaders were commonly adopting strategic planning during the 1980s and 1990s, it was also the time when critical analysis of planning in
general and particularly in higher education was mounting. This criticism was raised because strategic planning was viewed as being a time-consuming process, creating elaborate paperwork mills, being too formal and structured, and discouraging creative and positive change (Dooris, 2003).

By early 2000 the complex environment of college and university campuses were striving to change in response to dynamic environmental forces. Strategic planning became a common process used to address these forces, clarify the current state of affairs, identify the core values, document goals of the institution, and develop action plans to achieve vision (Shapiro & Nunez, 2001).

While the discussions of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning are presented separately, these three concepts overlap during the process of planning. According to Hossler et al. (1990), many higher education institutions incorporate marketing plans and enrollment plans into their overall strategic planning process. Such processes are described in the next sections.

*The Concept of Strategic Planning*

Kotler and Fox (1995) define strategic planning as a process of developing and maintaining strategic fit between the institution’s objectives and capabilities and its changing market. Kemerer et al. (1982) confirm that strategic planning is developing a good fit between the institution’s activities and its environment. Morrison, Renfro, and Boucher (1984) also mention that the main task of strategic planning is to understand the environment, define organizational goals, identify options, make and implement decisions, and evaluate actual performance.
Hossler et al. (1990) note that such planning is for change, is future-oriented, aims towards a goal, can be seen as a process or a product, and involves choosing between alternatives. Rose and Kirk (2001) suggest that strategic planning is used to assess if an organization is moving in the right direction. This basic evaluation occurs by examining the internal and external factors, to see if the mission and institutional goals are aligned. If not, then institutions need to develop strategies to enable their response to a current perspective of their future and to create a clear direction towards those goals.

In summing up these definitions, the emphasis on strategic planning is tied to the need for institutions to change. This change may be driven from the internal structure of the organization or by external challenges faced by the organization, but as the result of the planning process, a new and better way of managing the organization's affairs should evolve. Such planning processes also vary in complexity. According to Hossler et al. (1990), the broader the scope of planning, the greater the complexity of the process. A good example may be planning for a simple thing like a workshop on enrollment management, which is different from a planning process that requires input from the whole university. The term scope refers to the size or magnitude of a project. A plan with narrow scope will involve few people, less time, fewer resources, a single program, and is an end or a means for other process but not both.

We should also note what determines the context of strategic planning in colleges and universities. Five areas are important factors: trends, values, power, stakeholder, and constraints (Hossler et al., 1990). For example, in the case of student enrollment plan, the enrollment manager should be aware that although the trends set a stage for how the new
students are served, the value of the most powerful stakeholder would shape the implementa-
tion of the plan.

In general, strategic planning in education identifies shared vision and purpose so
that curriculum and instructional planning may bear better payoff. According to Herman
and Kaufman (1991), the purpose of educational planning is to convey a future for indi-
viduals, groups, organizations, and society. Basically, planning identifies where to go, the
reason, and criteria to determine if the planning is successful. Herman and Kaufman
emphasize that most approaches to strategic planning tend to concentrate on an organiza-
tion’s survival, well-being, and growth. While the survival of the organization is very
important, the educational planners need to pay attention to the society as a primary
client. This approach functions on the principle that that which is good for the society is
good for the organization and its people.

Educational planners should take into consideration at least two approaches
(Herman & Kaufman, 1991). The first approach in planning takes the survival of the
organization as a primary client, and therefore draws a reactive plan in which it is be-
lieved to be worth fixing what is broken. The second approach takes the society as a
primary client and draws a proactive plan which constructively challenges the status quo.
Herman and Kaufman point to the importance of integrating both approaches; the degree
to which organizational purpose matches the societal purpose is what makes the educa-
tional institution successful.
Traditional vs. Strategic Planning

Over the past twenty-five years most institutions of higher education have tried strategic planning for one reason or another. The enrollment increases during the 1960s, the hope to duplicate the success that many businesses have had, and the need to improve campus performance prompted many colleges and universities to get involved in state sponsored planning exercises (Dooris, 2003; Rowley & Sherman, 2001). As institutions faced enrollment declines during the 1980s, administrators were often caught by surprise because their institutions were conducting planning in a vacuum, divorced from campus realities (Kemerer et al., 1982). Usually, these efforts involved more traditional planning activities, and overall did not serve these institutions well (Dixon, 1995).

The “traditional” planning model in its basic form depends on the assumptions that planning consists of four steps: monitoring, forecasting, goal setting, and implementing. As noted by Morrison et al. (1984), one of the major limitations of traditional planning is that the external changing environment is not taken into consideration.

Strategic planning also includes four steps: scanning, evaluation/ranking, forecasting, and monitoring. A key difference, however, is that the planning model begins with scanning the external environment for issues that pose threats or opportunities to the organization (Hossler et al., 1990). It also identifies crucial subjects that should be tracked during monitoring, and it identifies developments that could be used to adjust the forecast of the internal issues.

Hossler et al. (1990), in expanding on Cope’s (1981) and Bryson’s (1988) work, summarize the difference between the traditional and strategic planning. They noted that
traditional long-range planning is focused on goals and identifies objectives to reach those goals. It is a closed system, mainly depending on internal orientation and consensus building around a blueprint or big plan. Strategic planning, on the other hand, focuses on issues and identifies vision of success to shape the work. It is an open system and takes into consideration the internal and external environmental orientation. It is action-oriented and encourages a timely stream of decisions.

These two models can be merged to form a successful strategic planning process that consists of six identifiable stages: environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting, goal setting, implementation, and monitoring (Morrison et al., 1984). This process allows merging external and internal information thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of institutional planning. Indeed, when used properly, there are wide ranges of benefits to higher education institutions.

For example, according to Akor’s study (1993) on the application of strategic planning in Tennessee public community colleges and technical institutes, most respondents stated that the purpose of strategic planning was generally fulfilled as evidenced by the overall success of the institution, the progressive growth-size, image, reputation, and quality of the institution. All respondents agreed strategic planning was evidenced by finding their niche or fit in the changing environment of higher education. There was also agreement by the majority of respondents that because of strategic planning, the institutions realized the benefits of awareness of comparative advantage, greater unification and coordination, and better preparation for future situations. The majority of respondents also agreed that their institutions became internally strong, there was greater faculty and
top-management cohesion, and further opportunities and threats were addressed as the result of the planning process.

Enrollment Management and Marketing Issues Within Adult Graduate Education

There is a dearth of research on issues such as college choice, student persistence, and enrollment management strategies for graduate students (Hoezee & Hossler, 2003). According to Browning (2000), the limited research on graduate level enrollment has focused on three main topics: (1) why students decide to pursue graduate studies, (2) how they find out about the institution they select, and (3) why they apply to that institution. This part of the literature review discusses issues in enrollment, strategic marketing, and trends in adult graduate education. Although the basic principles and theory of enrollment management in higher education are similar within adult higher education programs, there are specific strategies to be noted (Hoezee & Hossler, 2003).

Increased adult enrollment in colleges and universities represents changing beliefs and attitudes by adults and our society about the importance of the college credential and its link to better opportunities. There are numerous reasons why adults return to classrooms. A good example is that significant societal economic restructuring has influenced about one-third of all jobs causing displaced workers (Kohl & LaPidus, 2000). Most such economic restructuring occurs because of technological and global economic changes, dramatically affecting both the personal and work lives of adults. Kasworm (2003) notes that an increased expectation in adult work environment is requiring access to new knowledge through college enrollment. Life issues like divorce and death of a loved one are also other reasons for adult learners’ decision to go back to college (Aslanian, 2004).
So, who are adult students? While adult learners are generally students pursuing new knowledge and experience to better their personal and professional lives, they bring with them lifestyle, needs, and demands often much different than those of their younger counterparts (McCormick, 2000). Before presenting adult student issues and trends, it is important to define the term; Justice (1997), for example, defines adult learners as:

...learners who return to higher education in their early or mid-thirties, although more numbers are now returning later. Indeed, the most salient characteristic of the new adult learner is the wide range of ages at which they seek higher education and degrees. They come to their education with more experience and a greater sense of themselves. They have established, even if only tentatively, a sense of identity, defined by family, place and obligation, career or work, and membership in religious or community organizations. (p. 28)

The Department of Adult Student Life at Texas A&M University (2004) notes a much broader definition of the adult or nontraditional student. The definition indicates that an adult or nontraditional student is not defined only by age (usually over 24), but they are also students with life circumstances different from the typical traditional student. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, students who are: parents; married, divorced, or single; caring for elderly parents; veterans; returning to school after a long period of time in the workforce or working in their home; entering college not right after high school graduation; full-time, part-time, or temporary employees; and distance learners. Overall, what makes adult and graduate students unique from other traditional students and similar to each other is the multiple roles they assume to attend college.
Growth in Adult Student Enrollment

The presence of adult learners and the number and variety of nontraditional educational opportunities are noticeably on the rise. This increase may be attributed to changes in programming for the adult learners, and such factors as political, economic, and societal attitude towards adult education (McCormick, 2000). Spanard (1990) noted the following historical milestones in the increased presence of adult students in higher education:

1. the G. I. Bill of 1944,
2. the establishment of community colleges in the 1950s,
3. legislative action by the government promoting access and choice for low income students in the 1960s,
4. development of nontraditional educational programs for working adults in the 1970s,
5. competitive job market and the need for additional education in the 1980s, and
6. institutional change to accommodate returning adult learners in the 1990s.

According to Aslanian (2004), an authority in adult student enrollment, if there is one societal pattern that can be projected, it is that adult student enrollment will steadily increase. New adult enrollment records are occurring every decade and almost every year. Since 1970, adult student enrollment has risen even at a time when high school graduation numbers were relatively flat. The adult student has had a remarkable impact on higher education enrollment over the past decades. Between 1970 and 2000, the number of traditional students grew from 6.2 million to 8.7 million, a 41% increase, while the
number of adult students grew from 2.4 million to 6.5 million, a 170% increase (Association for Continuing Higher Education, 2004).

As the increase in adult education continues, understanding the organizational factors related to these changes in number and academic programs will help faculty and administrators better handle the emerging issues related to adult education and support continued growth. In a research study conducted to develop an understanding of recent changes that occurred in the size of adult education graduate programs, Burch, Milton, Studdard, and Watkins (2003) studied three factors (program integration, responsiveness to change, and leadership) that contributed to changes in the number of students and faculty in graduate programs. Two research questions guided their study: (1) what factors have had an effect on changes in adult graduate programs during the past 5 years, and (2) to what extent did these factors predict changes in size of adult education programs over the past 5 years? To answer the questions, the study used a mixed-method research design to examine programs offering graduate degrees in adult education. First, qualitative analysis of interview data was used to identify and define factors related to recent changes in programs and generate survey items. Survey methodology was used to measure the faculty and administrators' perceptions of these factors' influence on changes in the size of graduate programs in terms of an increase or decrease in the number of faculty and number of students. The sample for the study included the national directory of Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE), which included 100 members. The response rate for the study was 60% of individuals and 70% of adult education programs.

On one level, this study identified the changes in graduate programs that were already becoming quite visible, such as reorganization and renaming of graduate adult
education programs. Almost two-thirds of the respondents reported changes in leadership in their programs in the past five years. On another level, this study documented factors that are necessary for the graduate programs to thrive. Program integration, responsiveness to change, and leadership were three critical organizational factors that merged from the qualitative interviews with the faculty and administrators in adult education programs.

In conclusion, Burch et al. (2003) noted that:

The finding of this study related to program integration, responsiveness to change, and leadership offer compelling implications and potential guidance for scholars who would design, develop, and administer graduate programs in adult education. Viable programs have strong leadership, are well integrated into the university, and are responsive to changes both within the institution and in society. Although these characteristics may have always distinguished effective programs, it now appears that they are necessary for a program to survive. (p. 9)

*Motivator for Adult Student Participation*

Overall, student affairs professionals are concerned with the main goals that motivate adult student attendance, believing them to be key recruitment and retention factors (Kasworm, 2003). The most recent study by The College Board unveils a similar theme of past studies; most adult students (85%) responded that career reasons are their key college enrollment goals. Five percent or fewer cite college enrollment in response to family transitions, leisure needs, artistic interests, and education in the life areas of health, religion, and citizenship (Aslanian, 2001). In extensive interviews of adult undergraduates by Kasworm and Blowers (1994), the student key motives and goals included four differing themes. Although the key goals are career pursuits, Kasworm and Blowers suggest that it is equally helpful to consider adult life context motivators. They consider
this to be internal life developmental changes, external planning to create a different future life in their adult world, or a combination of the two life context motivators.

Personal transitions and changes foster new understandings or perspectives in individuals or present conditions in which college is viewed as necessary. For example, an adult may enter college because of divorce, job loss, children entering college, or denied promotion because of lack of a college degree. Although some adults react to their changing world, some purposefully and proactively seek a new world of opportunities. In this case, these adults seek new life choices that will provide greater benefits and rewards by returning for further education. A third group of adults is motivated to enroll by both responding to life transitions and proactively planning for goals through college studies. Considering the stated needs, characteristics, and motivating factors of adult graduate students, the following segment of the review will focus on specific marketing strategies.

Marketing Strategies for Adult Degree Programs

The purpose of nontraditional degree program marketing is basically to understand the needs and wants of the adult students. Satisfaction and quality of the educational service delivery will help the institution maintain a better position among its competitors (Harrel & Frazier, 1999; Phillips, 2003). It is important to take into consideration the diverse, complex, and wide-ranging demography in order to have successful enrollment management. This means to implement effective marketing strategies for adult graduate programs, it becomes necessary to differentiate the methods according those different characteristics (Aurand, 1994; Kotler & Andreasan, 1991). As this differentiation becomes necessary, institutions of higher education must plan to add staff with
adult graduate marketing experience. Fong (2001) mentioned that some institutions have already realized the need to increase such support and thus implemented teams of individuals experienced in marketing to support continuing adult education.

Brown (2004) emphasized three interrelated factors critical to developing marketing strategies: evolving technology, competition and collaboration, and shrinking state support. Marketing and promotional tools are improved by the development and use of technology. Institutions no longer have a limitation regarding which geographic area they can serve; in turn this has created creative collaboration and fierce competition (Immerwahr, 2002). The decrease in state funding has also put more pressure on programs to be partially or wholly self-supporting (Pappas, 1996). This raises expectations that marketing will generate additional revenue needed for the survival of the institution. Brown (2004) lists the following four strategies that require commitment of everyone in the institution in order to face the challenges in adult graduate education:

(1) *Integrate marketing planning.* Overall, the institution’s strategic plan is the basis for marketing planning. It is essential that the marketing staff plan be based on market and trend research and institutional data. Such research could be used to guide strategic planners to address a growing market or accommodate changing student needs. The marketing plan compared to strategic planning focuses specially on communicating with the students or the public and contains action steps, timelines, and so forth. The integration part implies the participation of all in the organization interacting with the student while strengthening the relationship and the organization. Developing a positive interaction is the main goal of this process and it could be through bulletin, web site, and conversation with an advisor.
(2) **Know your students.** The foundation of good marketing is understanding the customer, the product, and the fit between the two over a period of time. This will enhance the knowledge required for better serving the customer needs, interests, motivating factors, barriers, and effective communication style.

(3) **Shape programs and services to meet adult needs.** Support services and convenient program delivery are important to adult degree students. They are more sensitive to customer services than their younger counterparts (Hadfield, 2003). A study at the University of New Brunswick (Potter, 1998) revealed the following important issues that could be used in attracting adult students back to part-time study: access to courses at convenient time and in suitable formats, financial assistance being available, creative program completion options, and proactive academic advising to help students and solve their learning needs.

(4) **Stay the course (retention).** While students face serious demands on their time and resources, to retain them in the program the institution should be prepared to stay the course with them. This could be done by offering quality programs with substantive content, creating good support services, setting realistic completion time, and fostering a sense of loyalty among the students.

*Relevant Research Studies on Adult Enrollment Management Issues*

As noted, few studies on adult enrollment management issues exist. The following summary includes research findings from three such studies conducted to examine important issues related to adult graduate programs.
Phillips (2003) focused on a descriptive analysis of marketing in continuing higher education programs within predetermined geographic regions. To evaluate the marketing practices of this group the following research questions were proposed: How are colleges and universities currently marketing continuing higher education? What promotional tools are more effective and which ones are least effective? And what are the major marketing issues faced by continuing higher education administration today?

A written survey and an in-depth phone interview were used to collect the data from continuing higher education administrators in five geographic regions of metro New York, Philadelphia, Delaware, New Jersey, and Baltimore. These five regions were chosen based on the number of academic institutions found within the area, plus the competitive nature that exists among them to attract nontraditional students. The survey was mailed to one hundred institutions. The response rate for this survey was 40%, with 73% being private four-year institutions, while 27% were public four-year institutions. When asked if the overall institutional marketing plan included continuing education programs, 58% answered “yes” while 40% responded “no;” 73% of the respondents used a marketing plan specifically designed for their unit and 95% of the institutions used marketing research; 47% of the respondents mentioned the use of enrollment as a monitor at their institutions, while 43% used internal tracking method; 23% of respondents mentioned the use of multiple promotional communications; 38% mentioned direct mail to be most effective followed by print and radio; and, 30% of respondents mentioned television to be least effective. Finally, 68% percent of participants thought their marketing efforts were effective in recruiting adult students.
In another study, Browning (2000) studied a model that has been used in predicting graduate student enrollment at Phillips Graduate Institute. In an effort to develop a more comprehensive enrollment management plan, the institution sought to develop a model in which graduate student enrollment would be predictable based on student characteristics and patterns of potential student. The two questions were raised is what are the essential elements that are correlated to potential students' decision to enroll, and which predictor is the best predictor?

One hundred sixteen cases were utilized in the analysis, representing all applications receive by the deadline for the 1997–1998 for the Phillips Master's of Art program in Marital and Family Therapy. Eighty-three of the 116 applicants enrolled. The weight in order of significance was: attendance at the student reception was 85.5%, and attendance at an individual information session was 63.6%.

In the third study, McCormick (2000) examined influential factors perceived by adult students in the selection of nontraditional graduate degree programs. A qualitative study was conducted to identify those factors that influenced adult students in selection of nontraditional graduate programs of study over traditional programs. Twenty individuals who had each completed one of two nontraditional graduate degree programs (teacher education or management) were interviewed to find what motivated them in their college selection process. Open-ended interview questions were designed to solicit feedback on what attracted the individuals to nontraditional graduate programs of study, what deterred them from traditional programs of study, how they valued graduate education in general. Both nontraditional programs were described as accelerated and were promoted as lasting approximately 15 months.
Overall, these three studies represent the few studies that have been found on adult enrollment. Although the concept of enrollment management is similar for undergraduate and adult graduate programs, the difference in student needs, characteristics, and marketing strategies in adult programs dictates a separate section in the literature review (Hoezee & Hossler, 2003).

*Suggested Strategies for Adult Higher Education Enrollment Management*

The limited research on enrollment management issues is as they relate to adult graduate students makes it clear that the implementation of enrollment management, marketing strategies, and strategic planning are not “one size fits all” methods. The institutions should formulate a model that will work for their specific populations and market conditions (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996). It is also important to implement a method that uses market research when developing a plan directed towards the nontraditional adult student (Simmons & Laczniak, 1992). Figure 1 offers one such model.

The primary step in such a model is to delegate the responsibility to establish institution-wide strategies to someone who has a practical knowledge of enrollment management, marketing and retention strategies. Fong (2001) mentions that this is a common practice among institutions of higher education that consider establishing such programs. Fong also mentions that leaders in adult higher education now understand that marketing is essential for the overall success of education programs.
Figure 1. Strategic Marketing Planning Process (adapted from Kotler & Andreasen, 1982).
It is well established that effective enrollment management is an intentional, deliberate process that leads institutions toward a thorough examination of their organization (Dixon, 1995; Rowley et al., 1997; Kemerer et al., 1982). Therefore, it is important that institutions begin their quest with questions such as: who are our adult students, where in the world, country, or state are they coming from? What do they like about this institution? How long does it take them to graduate? Why do they leave? What are the challenges they face? How can we attract those students who are fit for our campus environment? What kind of marketing strategies do we need to implement to attract those that we desire to recruit? How much does it cost to do this marketing effort?

In order to effectively market education to adult graduate students, it is necessary to understand the character and needs of the typical student. Aslanian (2004) mentions that to attract adult students to your program, it is imperative for the institutions to know personal characteristics, demographic variations of the student body, lifestyles of the students, and the students’ use of technology.

The second phase in the implementation process will be for the institutions to ask themselves: what is the quality of teaching and learning at our campus? How can we improve? Who else is competing with us? What programs do they have? What are our strengths and weaknesses compared to those competitors?

Adult graduate students present major challenges for the institution’s higher education whose programs and services are geared towards the traditional student. According to Lewis and Benshof (1992), the following additional services are important to better meet adult students’ needs: (a) separate registration, advising, and orientation; (b) greater availability of and access to parking; (c) more evening and weekend course offerings; (d)
special assistance with financial aid and housing; and, (e) better preparation of faculty and staff to meet their needs.

Within this second phase, institutions formulate their strategic plan. Kotler and Andreasan (1996) explain this step in the development process as a time when the institutions should align their strategic fit with their goal and resources and the changing market opportunities. They describe 10 steps that guide such market planning:

1. determine the organization’s goal to which marketing strategies must contribute;
2. find out what are the challenges internally and externally that will determine the success of your program;
3. evaluate organizational resources and skills to deter the external environmental challenges that are identified by your study;
4. determine the specific goals for your marketing efforts;
5. formulate relevant marketing strategies to accomplish these goals;
6. confirm there are necessary structure and system to ensure proper implementation of these strategies;
7. list details of implementation process, time table, and assignment of specific responsibilities;
8. establish benchmarks to assess how successful your process is and measure achievement toward your expected goal;
9. stay on course with the original plan; and
10. measure your performance and adjust the strategy and the process as needed.  

(pp. 23–24)
The third part in the implementation process is to tackle the challenges of persistence among the students. Adult graduate students must cope with multiple roles and responsibilities while continuing education. Early detection of those at risk of withdrawing and follow-up with those who have withdrawn are effective practices (Kerka, 1995). The following are suggested strategies for adult student persistence:

First, it is important to include in the orientation a pre-enrollment counseling to establish expectations and give a sense of university community (Cullen, 1994, cited in Kerka, 1995). The purpose of this counseling is to give the student a wide view of what he/she will encounter during the period of studies. It will help them acclimate from being one of the students to being part of the campus community.

Second, personal attention; staff willing to listen, assistance with personal and financial problems are important issues (Smith & Bailey, 1993, cited in Kerka, 1995). Adult students juggle their life between home and campus. Finding someone to listen to their challenges will alleviate the stress they face in making distinction between home and campus.

Third, managing the culture of the institutions and recognizing adult anxiety about school are essential (Smith & Bailey, 1993). It is usually hard for adults to adapt to a new campus environment, especially when most campuses do not have specific programs that are directed towards adult activities. Lack of such programs force adults students to experience more frustration in completing their studies.

And finally, flexible, convenient scheduling and frequent contact with faculty (including electronic methods) is needed (Hagedorn, 1993). These strategies are particularly important because they make it easier for adult students to make the transition from work...
life to student life. The frequent contact with faculty is helpful as it creates a sense of support.

Overall, Brown (2004) reiterates that adult students face serious demand on their time and resources as they work toward their educational goals. To help them persist, it will be necessary to offer quality programs with substantive content, provide support services, set realistic expectations for completion time, and build a sense of community among students.

Literature Review Summary

In summary, this review emphasizes the changing climate in the way business is done at higher education institutions. The shift in demography and the funding shortfall has exacerbated this change and the need for higher education to adopt business-like methods in its daily operations. It is suggested that the use of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning activities comes in handy. While the concept of enrollment management is broad, the key area includes using institutional research to position the institution in the market place, examining student attrition and retention, and developing marketing and pricing strategy.

Marketing in essence complements this process. It entails the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchange of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. While strategic planning encourages a clear formulation of where a higher education institution is and where it wants to be in the future, it necessitates a new way of thinking. This involves a transition that is needed in the academy, a shift from short-term thinking.
and decision making to strategic thinking. Such strategic planning opens up a range of alternatives by identifying the best fit between the institution, the resources, and its environment. The concepts of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning overlap during the process of planning. Many higher education institutions incorporate marketing plans and enrollment plans into their overall strategic planning processes.

Several previous research studies in enrollment management (Clark, 2000), marketing (Watson, 2000), and strategic planning (Akor, 1993), identified the important benefits higher education institutions gain as the result of implementing these business concepts. Although Clark (2000) did not find a correlation between implementation of enrollment management practices and graduation rate, overall it was deemed to be beneficial in managing enrollment issues. While these previous research studies are a good foundation, they don’t examine in detail enrollment trends within specific graduate degree programs and any marketing and planning efforts associated with those programs.

To this end, the research proposed for this dissertation study will examine if the need for these concepts is understood well enough to have made a difference in the area of adult higher education enrollment trends. To what extent are these business tools being utilized? Did the use or implementation of these concepts actually impact the enrollment trends in the two programs (Master’s in Education and Master’s in Business) at the five institutions under study? Overall, this study offers a rare opportunity to examine what is occurring within two graduate programs across five educational institutions all attempting to serve students in similar competitive environment and same geographic area.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, a description of the method and procedures used to gather data for the study are presented. The research questions are restated, and information provided regarding the population under study, the research design, data collection method, and analysis.

The overall purpose of this study is to examine the impact of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning on enrollment trends of two similar graduate programs within five public higher education institutions in the Grand Rapids area. The following research questions address this topic.

Research Questions

(1) To what extent, if any, did student enrollment growth occur during the period of 1999 through 2004 in the Master’s in Business Administration and Master’s in Educational Administration at the Grand Rapids-based campuses of five Michigan public universities? What role, if any, did enrollment management play?

(2) What specific marketing strategies were employed by each identified degree program area within each of the educational institutions during the time period of 1999 through 2004? To what extent, if any, is there relationship between the marketing strategies employed within each institution and their enrollment patterns?
(3) To what extent, if any, is there implementation of strategic planning? To what extent, if any, is there relationship between strategic planning implemented and the enrollment growth or lack thereof?

(4) What overall challenges are being faced by these higher education programs, and how did those challenges impact enrollment trends?

Research Design

A qualitative design was used for this research. This approach was chosen because it allows rich data from multiple sources, including an interview with various individuals within the institutions under study. A more specific description of this method is the phenomenological data analysis, which includes the process of data reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes and a search for all possible meanings (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) further defines qualitative research as

an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Rossman and Rallis (1998) noted that within qualitative research, interviews should take place in a natural setting, such as the individual’s office or home. It also uses multiple methods that are interpretive and humanistic, such as interviews and document analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Wolcott (1982) explain the core concept of natural setting, with the following recurring features:

(1) qualitative research is conducted through contact with real life situation;
(2) the role of the researcher is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study;

(3) the researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors through attentiveness without including any preconceptions;

(4) the researcher isolates certain themes and expressions that can be reviewed and maintained in their original forms throughout the study;

(5) a main task is to explicate the way the subjects in a particular setting manage their day to day situations; and

(6) relatively little standardized instrumentation is used at the outset. The researcher is mainly the standard of measurement.

These core methods were incorporated within this qualitative research project.

Data Collection Procedures

This study focused on examining enrollment trends and issues within the following two programs across five higher education institutions: (1) Master’s in Business Administration, and (2) Master’s in Educational Leadership/Administration. These programs were selected because of their similarity in content and degrees awarded across the institutions under study. These programs also comprise the majority of the students enrolled in the degree programs offered by those institutions in the Grand Rapids area. It should be noted that these two types of graduate programs, while similar in content, are titled using slightly different names depending on the institution. To that end, the actual degrees associated with this study were: Master of Science in Education, Master’s in Educational Leadership, Master of Science in Business, Master of Business
Administration, Weekend-Master of Business Administration (WMBA), and Executive-Master of Business Administration (EMBA).

This study was originally planned to include the collection of actual enrollment data from 1999 through 2004, and the perceptions from individuals at both the department level and institutional level. At the department level, at least two individuals directly associated with each program were planned to be interviewed, e.g., deans, chairs, and program directors. At the institutional level, it was planned to include at least two individuals from each institution’s admissions or registrar’s offices. Thus a total of at least 25 individuals were to participate in the study.

However, the participant selection and the enrollment data collection did not go as planned for several reasons. First, it was found via initial phone contacts that the registrar and admissions officers were not as knowledgeable and involved in adult graduate student enrollment as the department heads and regional administrators. As a result, it was decided to conduct interviews of only department and regional-level individuals (i.e., those working most closely with the degree programs). Using a snow-balling technique, whereby these interviewed recommended others to interview, three marketing individuals were also included. Overall, interviews were held with 15 total participants, including eight department heads, four regional administrators, and three marketing professionals.

Second, it proved beyond the scope of this study to acquire accurate enrollment data for ten of the degree programs under study. Each institution had different definitions and data reporting systems, and what was collected represented a comparison of apples and oranges. Instead the decision was made to focus on enrollment trends (rather than actual numbers) as offered via the perceptions of individuals interviewed.
The following universities took part in the study: Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University, Michigan State University, and Western Michigan University. To secure confidentiality of the participating institutions, they are assigned a numeric identification of institution 1 through 5 (with such numbers initially assigned randomly). Individual participants are assigned alphabetical identification. For example, the departmental directors for the education programs are represented by the letter “A,” the departmental directors for the business programs are represented by “B,” the regional administrators are represented by “C,” and the marketing professionals are represented by “D.” Table 1 depicts those actually interviewed for this study. There are some differences depending on the institutions, since the level of willingness to participate in this research study varied by institution and program.

Table 1
Interview Participants and Their Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution ID</th>
<th>Department Heads</th>
<th>Regional Administrators</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interview was initiated with a discussion of the consent agreement. The participants were clearly reminded to seek clarification if there were any issues not well understood before signing the consent form. The right of the participant to decline the
interview was also mentioned accordingly (refer to Appendix A). Also, the participants were asked if they were interested in receiving the results from this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using 17 semi-structured interview questions. These questions were initially reviewed by two individuals currently working in the field, who evaluated the questions for content and clarity.

The interviews took place at the participants’ choice of location. For most interviews, the researcher traveled to the participant’s office. The interviews were conducted over a five-month time period. The length of the interviews averaged one hour. Although some handwritten notes were taken, in all cases the interviews were recorded using an audio tape recorder. The audiotapes were subsequently transcribed to a text form for coding.

The interpretation process required the following steps (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). First, each interview was transcribed and documents analyzed to organize and prepare the data for analysis. Second, to obtain a sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning, the comments were decoded to convey a clear idea of what the participants were saying, their credibility and use of information. Third, the detailed analysis with a coding process began. Coding is the process of organizing the material into categories before attempting to explain those categories. This involved labeling those categories with a term that was actually used by participants. Fourth, the coding process was used to generate description of the categories or themes for analysis. Fifth and final,
a narrative passage was used to convey the findings of the analysis and make an interpretation or meaning of the data.

Limitations of the Study

Respondent bias that may pose a limitation on this study is of two kinds. One is the assumption that participants in the study (i.e., department heads, program directors, etc.) would understand the concept of enrollment management, or at least have some idea. Their responses may have been biased given their limited understanding of the subject matter.

Another is that the respondents may have held back valuable information because they were not confident in the interviewer's ability to keep the names and institutions anonymous. For example, questions regarding the enrollment data, increased and decreased enrollment, and budgetary issues and how much it has changed through time may have been viewed as sensitive in nature.

Another limitation is that no "hard" data were collected regarding enrollment, marketing strategies and methods, and strategic planning efforts by the programs. All issues were captured via participant perceptions, and as such different individuals may mean different things when saying the same words. For example, using a certain marketing method "a lot" will be interpreted differently by different people.

A final limitation is that there may have been an issue of the participants not understanding the questions clearly, as English is the fourth language for the researcher.
Summary

This qualitative study attempts to ascertain the impact of implementation of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning practices (or lack thereof) on enrollment trends in two graduate programs among five Grand Rapids-based institutions of higher education. Deans, department heads or program directors in Master’s of Business and Master’s of Education in each institution were interviewed, as were regional administrators and marketing personnel. Interviews were recorded, with such audiotapes transcribed into a text form for convenience of coding. The research questions were used as a basis for coding to translate the response from the interviews into the final results of this research study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the qualitative data collected regarding the impact of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning on adult graduate enrollment patterns in five higher education institutions in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. The study focused on enrollment patterns and issues within their Master’s of Education and Master’s of Business programs during the period of 1999 through 2004. A qualitative method with a descriptive phenomenological analysis was used to delineate the data collected through semi-structured interviews. The research questions and associated findings are included in this chapter, organized by restating each research question and then offering key themes. Conclusions regarding these research questions and resulting themes are presented in Chapter 5. Please note that there are fewer quotes offered in this chapter when compared to other qualitative studies because the data were profiled via more tables.

Research Question #1

Research question 1 examines to what extent, if any, student enrollment growth occurred during the period of 1999 through 2004 in the Master’s in Business Administration and Master’s in Educational Administration graduate programs at the Grand
Rapids-based campuses of five public universities, and what role, if any, enrollment management played. Data for question 1 were collected by asking participants about their enrollment patterns, the extent to which they have enrollment management practices focused on adult graduate programs, and the extent to which their enrollment management efforts contributed towards an increase in enrollment or lack of it. Two major themes evolved for this research area.

**Theme 1.1:** Overall there were limited enrollment increases, and participants usually attributed such enrollment patterns to institutional enrollment management efforts or other issues. Table 2 presents the trends in that three of five business programs reported enrollment increases, while two decreased. One of the education programs increased, one remained steady, and three noted declines. Only one institution had increases in both their business and education programs.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Graduate Degree</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* + Overall Increase  – Overall Decrease  = No change

Analysis of data revealed a limited connection between those programs that showed increased enrollment and their enrollment management practices, including the availability of budgets to support such practices. For example, in institution 1, where both the education and business programs claimed increased enrollments, the participants...
described their focus on marketing, and the availability of funding to support such efforts. They also used a formal three-step recruitment process whereby prospective students are first contacted via advertising or attendance at an education fair. If the student calls for information, a call center receives the message and distributes information to the student. The student is also invited to meet with an advisor, who explains the program of interest, admission requirements, length of time it takes the student to complete the program, and financial issues. As noted by participant 1B, a business department chair in that institution, “this process contributes very significantly to the increase in student enrollment, as it helps the students navigate through the admissions process and gives them an idea of how long it takes to graduate and how to access funding if it is needed.” This individual also mentioned that after a student is enrolled, they are handed off to a student services area, which works with the student regarding any academic issue that may occur throughout his or her program. The other part in this process includes the administrative service unit which is located at the main campus. This unit provides financial aid advising and facilitates the admissions process. Participant 1C, a regional administrator for this institution, states “we raised our enrollment by 10% last year,” and notes this is reflective of the work they put in from the time they received a call to the time a student completes the program. Further explaining this process, 1D, the institutional marketing representative, noted they have created a call center in which the marketing section is in charge. The call center initiates the first contact after the student calls in for information. The student is then given information on time and location regarding application to the program of choice and orientation. Sometimes the call center helps the students to fill out the application and return it to admissions office.
Institution 2 realized increases in its business program, but decreases in its education program. As explained by 2B, the director of its business program, “We have a very good MBA and it is different from the other MBAs in the state. ...word is getting out that we have a very relevant and applicable MBA for today’s business needs. And enrollment is growing.” 2C, this institution’s regional administrator, and 2D, their marketing representative, also reiterate the enrollment increase at their institution within their business graduate program. They mention that over the last five years their business program has increased roughly at 15% per year, with the most recent increase from fall to fall at 24.5%. This, according to 2C, the regional administrator, is attributed to increased marketing and outreach to local officials and newspapers. On the other hand, 2A, who is director of their education program, indicates “there really isn’t an increase. Our Master’s of Science in Education degree program has been around for a while, but those numbers have dropped off significantly.” 2A also mentions “there are two factors contributing to the drop in enrollment, one is that we don’t have centralized admissions process for graduate programs, and not having a good marketing program is another one.” Thus a mixed picture of enrollment and efforts exists for this institution.

For institution 3, which remained steady in business, and had a decrease in education, participants noted efforts to improve, but they were in the early stages. Participant 3A, their education department chair, notes: “The graduate council has developed a plan aimed at marketing and growing the graduate program. It is still in its infancy. We are holding our own in terms of either a small increased growth in our program or small declines.”
Institution 4 had no increases in either program. Participant 4A, who is the education department chair, notes: “There was no enrollment increase in our program because of lack of systematic enrollment management efforts, and this is being studied to find how it could be reversed.” Participant 4A similarly mentions “we did not have an increase in enrollment because our program is not competitive, there is no budgetary support, and there was no systematic enrollment and marketing efforts as the result.” 4B, the business program chair mentions that “our enrollment has decreased since, I think the beginning of 2001. But certainly in 2002, 2003, and 2004.” This was attributed, however, to the local economy, not institutional efforts.

Participants from institution 5 reported they had increases in business, but decreases in education. Participant 5B, their business department chair, mentions that, our enrollment for business grew steadily every year since I came to this program ten years ago, and this is attributed to our marketing efforts. The institution also offered convenient weekend classes, and offered credit for job experience within their executive business program.

Also according to 5B, “in early days the program was a closet program in specific program name. So, for marketing our MBA program we had to make an effort to advertise and hold information sessions which gave us exposure to prospective students.”

On the other hand, 5D, their marketing representative, comments on their education program by stating, “the enrollment in education seems to be steady with the certification programs, while there is no increase with the administration program in the last few years. This is because we did not have much of any marketing done.” Thus, mixed enrollment patterns and efforts existed for this institution.
Theme 1.2: Most participants did not clearly understand the concept of enrollment management. Table 3 indicates only 5 of 15 participants understood the concept of enrollment management, even after giving all participants the definition. Six of the participants defined enrollment management as only the use of marketing methods to increase enrollment, rather than a broader realization that enrollment management encompasses marketing as well as strategic planning and retention strategies.

Table 3
Participant Understanding of Enrollment Management Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. + Understood   - Did not understand   M: Defined EM only as marketing

Most participants who did not understand the concept of enrollment management associated the concept with the definition and types of marketing used to enhance student enrollment. As an example of those who consider enrollment management and marketing the same thing, the regional director for institution 1 describes the enrollment management effort as: “marketing is in charge of it and the call center is under the marketing umbrella.” On the other hand, one of the few who clearly understood the broader concept of enrollment management, the business program director for institution 5, comments:

we have a system of weekly statistical reporting of inquiries, confirmations and applications from our students so we can track historical data compared to same time last year or how much of recruitment events were
made. It is not perfect, but this triggers how many mails and brochures should be sent out or how many recruitment events should be made to balance what we want to do.

Research Question #2

Research question #2 examines what specific marketing strategies and methods were employed by each identified degree program, and what relationships exist between the marketing strategies employed within each institution and their enrollment patterns in the programs under study. To examine this research area, the following types of interview questions were asked of participants: what specific marketing strategies and methods they used to promote the two graduate degrees under study, and the extent to which they incorporated marketing research as part of their planning process. In addition, they were asked the extent to which they perceived their marketing strategies and services have contributed to an increase in enrollment or lack of it for the two programs under study, and if they had an adequate budget available to support their marketing efforts.

Theme 2.1: Most respondents mentioned the use of four or more different marketing strategies and a variety of marketing methods. Although various marketing strategies were used by each identified degree program, most participants mentioned the use of on-site advising, multi-year course offering, and assistance for class registration. The next common strategies mentioned were an early enrollment option and off-campus library services. The least used strategies were a simplified application, tuition payment options, and competitive pricing, followed by rolling admissions and modified class schedule or format. Table 4 summarizes these strategies, as listed by frequency of use.
### Table 4

Marketing Strategies Used by Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-site advising</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with Registration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-year course offering</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus library service</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early enrollment options</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling admission</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified class schedule/format</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive pricing</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified application</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition payment options</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Used</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  X: Have used – Have not used

While marketing strategies were the focus of this question, the participants also indicated the use of various marketing methods to promote their programs. There are distinctive differences between marketing strategies and marketing methods used by institutions of higher education, but it is important that both are present to successfully promote the institution. Marketing strategies are broader institutional efforts to offer services more appealing to the students. Marketing methods on the other hand are ways to deliver campus information regarding programs, the institutions’ strength as their achievements to the prospective students. Such methods are a systematic medium of presenting what is available at the institution, often generally understood as marketing.
communication tools. Table 5 reflects the participants’ knowledge of marketing methods used in their programs, as listed in order of average use across all programs.

Table 5
Marketing Methods Used by Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Ave. usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open house</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brochures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct mailing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Web banner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average Usage</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 4: have used a lot; 3: have used some; 2: rarely used; 1: never used

The most utilized marketing methods are open houses (3.7), followed by brochures (3.2) and direct mailing (3.0). At the same time, television (1.7), radio (1.9), and newspaper (2.1) are the least used marketing methods.

Theme 2.2: Few programs had an adequate or established marketing budget although most used marketing research techniques to support their efforts. Annual budgets to support marketing strategies or methods for adult graduate education were also a point of discussion. When asked the amount of their marketing budget and how much it has changed through time, only three of ten program representatives could name a figure and believed that amount was adequate to meet their needs. All other respondents mentioned
their programs do not have a set budget, and often only received what is left over after other priorities.

For example, IB, the business program director for that institution, notes “our marketing budget is not set; we get what is left after student services and IT. This did not change much over time.” As another example, the education program director for institution 3 states: “funding for marketing is very small relative to the overall budget. Although the College of Education is involved in the marketing that takes place at the university level, it is not doing its own marketing at the graduate level.”

On the other hand, the business program director for institution 5 notes “We have been very effective; our marketing budget is probably looking $100,000–$150,000 per year. The focus is also not only this area as it includes international recruitment.” This was one of the three program representatives who believe their marketing budget was adequate as reflected in Table 6.

Table 6
Budget Allocation and Use of Marketing Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate budget</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used market research</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: X: Yes

Also as shown in Table 6, six out of the 10 programs indicated they incorporated marketing research as part of their future planning. The main purpose of marketing
research is to support successful implementation of programs through evaluation of what worked and what needs to be changed. It is a way to make sure the intended plan is what will help the institution reach its enrollment goal. For example, the business program director for institution 1 indicates “we track every quarter how many responses we get from each type of advertising. Brochures work well and it is easy to track. We do this on two levels, how much it costs and how many inquiries we receive because of the advertising.”

In explaining this effort, the marketing manager of institution 2 says:

We are a relatively new college within the university and we have not developed graduate program here in Grand Rapids. We offer them on behalf of the main campus, much like any of the regional colleges would do. I can tell you this, over the last couple of years we continue to make greater emphasis on marketing research with each new program. Right now, we are looking at a new initiative that is neither graduate education nor undergraduate. It is really more about being service oriented and bringing some new services to the students. In doing it, this will be the most marketing research that we have ever done on a new initiative.

The regional director for this same institution stated “We do a marketing survey for bringing new services, not only for graduate education. Marketing research is commonly used to improve services and this practice is not out of the ordinary.”

As a final example of programs using market research, 3B, the director of a business program, mentions “We do some research to see what we are doing and getting a feel of what is effective and how the numbers are changing, always looking at the external environment as well to see what factors are playing out there.”

On the other hand, as an example of the four programs who generally indicated they do little or no market research, 3A, a director of education, notes “although the
university has a marketing department which deals with the institutional task, we are not involved or we as college do not do much of any marketing research."

Theme 2.3: There appears to be a relationship between the marketing strategies employed and program enrollment patterns. As Table 2 had shown, enrollment patterns indicate an increase in both the education and business programs at institution 1, in the business program at institution 2, and in the business program at institution 5. In looking at any common marketing strategies and methods used by these programs, they appear to understand the enrollment management concept (see Table 3), they offer a modified class schedule and format (see Table 4), and their average usage points in marketing method is 2.6 to 2.9 (see Table 5), except for institution 2. In addition, all of these programs used market research as part of their planning efforts, and three of the four noted an adequate marketing budget existed. Table 7 indicates programs with enrollment increases and common factors that may have contributed to such increases.

Table 7

Programs With Increased Enrollment and Their Similar Strategic Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Attribute</th>
<th>Institutions/Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate marketing budget</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understood enrollment mgmt.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified classes and formats</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage of marketing methods</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performed marketing research</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: X: Yes. Average usage of marketing is on a 4.0 scale, with 4.0 being high and 1.0 being low usage of marketing methods.
On the other hand, Table 8 indicates the five programs that did not have enrollment increases. Of these five programs, none indicated they have an adequate marketing budget, only two had modified class schedules and formats, only one claimed to have knowledge of enrollment management, their average usage of marketing methods range from 1.1 to 2.4, and only two of the five actually performed marketing research.

Table 8
Programs With Decreased Enrollment and Their Similar Strategic Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Attributes</th>
<th>Institutions/Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate marketing budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understood enrollment mgmt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified classes and formats</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average usage of marketing methods</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performed marketing research</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: X: Yes. Average usage of marketing is on a 4.0 scale, with 4.0 being high and 1.0 being low usage of marketing methods.

Even without specific data to compare (similar to that compiled for Tables 7 and 8), most participants verbally affirmed the relationship between marketing strategies employed and their enrollment patterns in the programs under study. Participants with enrollment growth, such as the regional representative for institution 1, noted,

I think it has a lot to do with events and being face-to-face. Our enrollment is up … also the center is taking initiative on the retention of students. All these are because of good strategy in marketing and reports compiled for tracking. We track every quarter how many response we get from each type of advertising.
Even participants who claimed there were no enrollment increases within their programs mentioned they could have done better if they had the resources to implement marketing strategies. For example, the regional director for institution 5 noted, “there is definitely a relationship between our marketing efforts and our enrollment, it seems like when we do have money to advertise, and we do get more people enrolled in education.”

The director of education for institution 2 also mentions, “I see relation in that, I think for our Master’s of Science degree, not having a good marketing program has definitely contributed to the decreased enrollment in that program.”

**Theme 2.4: There are factors outside marketing strategies affecting enrollment.**

Participants mention other factors outside formal marketing strategies and methods which they believe impact their enrollment patterns. These include the reputation of the institution, name recognition, and their alumni association.

For example, 3B, director of that institution’s business program, indicates “we think the name recognition, alumni connections and the institution’s sport team achievements are some of the factors that help market our programs.” 3A, director of the education program for this institution, also mentions, “that has been started through an alumni advisory board, and there is an effort right now to meet with a user’s group of superintendents, principals who are out in the field trying to advance the name of the university.”

Participant 1B, director of a business program, also reiterated the relationship between using their alumni organization as a marketing tool by noting, “I think a lot of our new students come from old students. And part of our marketing strategy is to work
with our old students to bring us new students. We do more targeted advertising. And there is no question that is where our students come from.”

5B, director of a business program, mentioned in similar terms that:

participation of alumni is one of the tools that help us hold a successful open house ... they volunteer to help at the open house and this has helped to convince the prospective students in such that they hear from their likes that are successful as the result of graduating from our business program.

Director of business for institution 2 describes the value of reputation as a marketing tool by stating, “If we can get the word out via students that are in the program, via professional associations, via whatever literature or publication that students make, and presentations that we are asked to participate, that will take care of our marketing needs.”

Research Question #3

Research question 3 examined to what extent, if any, there was implementation of strategic planning and by whom, and to what extent there was a relationship between strategic planning implementation and the enrollment growth or lack thereof in these programs. Data for this question were collected from participants by asking questions such as the degree to which specific strategic plans were developed prior to the decision to offer the graduate programs at their Grand Rapids location, whether they could describe the implementation process, the extent to which those strategic plans were updated, and via what process. Four major themes resulted for this research area, with Table 9 summarizing these themes across the 10 programs.
As shown in Table 9, five out of ten program representatives understood the broader strategic planning concept, four of ten were aware of such implementation in reference to their Grand Rapids-based graduate programs, and only three believed there is a connection between strategic planning and their program enrollment increases or decreases.

*Theme 3.1: One-half of the respondents did not understand the broader concept of institutional strategic planning, often confusing it with evaluation efforts.* Five of 10 program representatives noted limited understanding of the concept of strategic planning and its implementation process. Most others offered comments that described evaluation activities rather than strategic planning efforts. Such data reveal that the use of strategic planning as overall guidance towards a successful future for their institutional goals is not well understood.
The difference between strategic planning and program evaluation is that program evaluation is a process used to see if implementation of a particular strategy is working in the way it is intended or not. Such evaluation usually covers the time and cost associated with the implementation effort. On the other hand, strategic planning is a much broader concept and it is mostly a practice intended to clarify the path and goals of an institution. Strategic planning can have numerous programs within the broader implementation effort. Program evaluation is therefore only a small part of the strategic planning process.

As an example of confusing evaluation and strategic planning, 4C, a regional administrator, notes “at the end of the semester a student satisfaction survey is reviewed carefully to see what should be done to satisfy the students’ need and concern. We also evaluate every year’s enrollment to see where we are and discuss how much work is needed.”

While strategic planning is not well understood by some of the candidates, others were fairly versed in the relevant concept. For example, in describing the process of planning prior to their new programs in Grand Rapids area, 2A, the director of the education program in this institution, mentions,

part of the plan usually is first looking for if there is a need for it. The university requires that we do needs assessment for instituting any new program. What is the need in terms of nationwide, statewide for our programs. Once we determine there is a need and can justify, and then a program is put together. For example, since Special Education is certified by Michigan Department of Education, the program is put together based on the state standards for special education teachers. Then we put that through the university approval. Once everybody approves the program we open the program for enrollment.

4B, a business director, also explained the process and implementation of strategic planning as follows,
We are doing that certainly now. We meet with an advisory board. We did a survey of graduate students. We will do a survey of industry people here very shortly. There are current students, whether we are meeting their needs.... Those kinds of things have to be addressed. In the MBA program in particular, I know we do that kind of market survey.

Another example is the statement by participant 1A, a director of education, pertaining to overall planning:

Those are some of the things that developed out of the new reorganization we went through in the last year or two. At the end of every year we are responsible for the evaluation of our goals. What worked and did not work is examined to help establish goals for next year.

Theme 3.2: Most participants were not aware of initial or current strategic planning activities regarding the Grand Rapids-based graduate programs. When asked if they were aware of any institutional strategic planning regarding their Grand Rapids-based graduate programs, only four of ten participants mentioned they did. Others indicated that they were not around at the time the Grand Rapids programs were developed and/or mentioned some minor planning efforts, but not at a level to be considered strategic planning.

For example, 2B mentions that, “we have an on-going process of faculty meeting that occurs every week. It’s voluntary, brown bag lunch, and among the items discussed besides emerging trends in business education, is marketing strategy and how to promote the college.” The regional administrator for this same institution mentions,

we were involved in the strategic planning to bring the Masters of Business in Administration program because of the perception that the main campus filled with more traditional-aged students that do not necessarily resonate well with the off-campus program, where we are serving an almost 100% population of non-traditional students.
A few noted that strategic planning goes on at their regional level, although not well connected with the larger institution. For example, 1B, a business director, mentions that “their planning has no connection with the main campus. It is all internal. We set our own Grand Rapids organizational goals and metrics and the marketing unit then takes those and engages it into strategic planning.” The regional administrator for this same institution affirms “there was no participation in the institutional planning, except some things related to the operation of the Grand Rapids branch.”

Others did not know for sure if strategic planning had occurred, and only assumed it had. For example, participant 3B, a business director, mentioned that it “may be the planning may have been done before I got hired in. I assume there was strategic planning associated with the programs being offered, but I don’t know.”

In a similar view, 4B, a business director, comments that “I am assuming there was some strategic planning done and we saw establishing the Grand Rapids branch as a good market opportunity.”

The other six programs either noted no awareness regarding any institutional strategic planning focused on their Grand Rapids-based programs. For example, 5C, a regional director, notes “that would be the campus folks, they decide what they are going to offer and how, that kind of thing and they pull us in terms of what they need ... so, basically it is not something we do.” 3A, an education director, also mentions, “I think that is something the graduate council would do, where representatives from each college sit on ... like graduate directors.”

*Theme 3.3: There appears to be some link between awareness of strategic efforts and enrollment patterns, but most participants noted no such link.* Table 9 indicates that
three of four representatives from growing programs were aware of and could describe specific strategic planning efforts surrounding their Grand Rapids-based programs, while only one of the six representatives from flat or declining programs had such awareness. In addition, although only three of ten programs noted that a link exists, two of those three were from growing programs. Yet, these patterns are still weak.

From a perceptual point of view, only three participants voiced a belief that a relationship exists between strategic planning and enrollment patterns. For example, a regional director for institution 1 notes the relationship between the institution’s strategic planning and the increase in program enrollment,

the president develops his goals, then our college and division develops goals based on him and then there are regional center goals that go along with those. This is how increased enrollment is achieved, so there is relation between what is planned at the institution level and our enrollment at the regional center.

3B, a business program director, also mentioned that there is relationship between strategic planning and an increase in student enrollment at their programs,

such strategic plans are set and if we were not on top of it our enrollment would probably be down even more than what they are and if our evaluation outcome points to the need to alter the process, then we follow a new and improved process to attain the same goal.

Research Question #4

Research question 4 examines what overall challenges are being faced by these higher education programs, and how those challenges impacted enrollment trends. Data were collected by asking about the greatest challenges facing their Master’s degree in Business or Master’s in Education being offered in the Grand Rapids area, if they could
describe the efforts being made to overcome these key challenges and what role, if any, enrollment management practices played within those efforts. Four themes resulted in this area, with Table 10 summarizing these challenges across programs. Please note that the absence of an X indicated they did not specifically mention such a challenge, not that such a challenge might not exist at all.

Table 10

Challenges That Impact Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Institutions/Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough marketing</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of quality faculty</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not realizing extent of competition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional unemployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: X: Specifically mentioned. Absence does not imply they do not have such challenges.*

Table 10 indicates four key challenges facing the programs under study. Four of 10 programs specifically mentioned the need for more marketing, four programs mentioned the shortage of quality faculty, six of the programs indicated they did not realize the extent of the competition among the 15 or so institutions in the Grand Rapids area, and three programs indicated unemployment affected their enrollment. These are detailed in the following themes.
Theme 4.1: More marketing efforts are needed. Four of ten programs noted inadequate marketing efforts were one of their greatest challenges. For example, 4C indicates that "we need to do better with customer service to maintain enrollment and also increase our marketing efforts."

In addition, the education director for institution 2 states:

I think that marketing is our biggest problem. I don't think we do as good a job marketing our master's degree programs as we should. I think part of that is the university's unwillingness to allow a graduate school, as a centralized location. Although there is a lack of marketing effort, we have full enrollment in some of the programs like special education, but some of our programs are not fully enrolled and those need a lot of marketing and we have not done a very good job at doing that.

IB, a director of a business program, notes the challenging issue of marketing their Grand Rapids based programs, "Well, the marketing piece of that we are working with the campus community to try to mobilize more of our resources and get them more engaged and more involved."

Theme 4.2: For various reasons, the lack of funding or a limited talent pool has created a shortage of quality faculty. Four of ten programs noted weak faculty or program issues as key challenges. Considering the decline in funding for higher education, it is becoming hard to hire experienced faculty. This is evident in the way 4A, a chair of an education department, mentions this challenge,

I think the biggest challenge is finding competent professors who are student-oriented and they understand basically what goes on in the real world. I mean we have too many people who have never had any higher education experience or have never had any K-12 experience teaching classes.... What I see is the master's program enrollment that is basically leveling off. A lot of that has to do with that we need to improve the quality of our teaching and become a lot more student-oriented in those different places.
In a similar view, 2B, business program director for institution 2, mentions “we have a challenge such as a lack of faculty that will affect the future enrollment in our programs, it is very hard to find professors with a practical work experience to teach the classes.” The director of education program for the same institution also notes, “one of the biggest challenges we face in our education program is lack of faculty, and I think this is tied to the general issue of not having a strong centralized graduate structure at our institution.”

4A, director of an education program, reiterates the challenge regarding lack of quality faculty: “we probably have had some teaching and advising that has been second- or third-rate and have not been as tuned into student’s needs as we should be.”

Theme 4.3: There is significant competition among institutions of higher education recruiting from the same student population in Grand Rapids area, and most underestimated this impact. Six of 10 programs did not realize how tough the competition is getting among the institutions in the Grand Rapids area. There are about 15 private and public higher education institutions with varied attractions including pricing.

For example, 1B, the business director for this institution indicates that a general challenge that we face is that our institution is not competing well in the Grand Rapids market. The reason for this challenge has to do with our Master’s of Science in Administration degree program, where there are increasingly more other schools coming with MBA programs. The student recognizes MBA. They don’t recognize MSA.

As another example, 4A, a education program director, notes, “The down spiral has occurred because of increased competition. We have been asleep. We need to create teaching and advising that will be better than what we have now.”
**Theme 4.4: Unemployment in Grand Rapids area is one of the main factors that impacts enrollment, but institutions of higher education have little control over this issue.** Participants note it has been quite common around Grand Rapids to hear about employee layoffs. This has affected the adult student enrollment since some of the enrolled receive their tuition fees covered by their employers.

For example, 3B, a business program director, indicates “I think the greatest challenge is unemployment of middle managers or middle-level young professionals in West Michigan. And I don’t have any idea of what we can do to overcome that, besides us focusing on other sectors perhaps.”

The director of the business program at institution 2 also indicates that the steady loss of business in and around Grand Rapids has been a factor in declining enrollment in Business programs. Since most of our students that are funded for their studies through the employee tuition reimbursement program, if the businesses fail to turn a profit they usually cut the reimbursement programs. I think we cannot do a lot about this type of situation.

On the other hand, 4B, who is the director of a business program, indicates “I am not sure if any amount of marketing could have helped during the last couple of years,” referring to the fact that there is wide unemployment and workforce reduction by the Grand Rapids area companies. This participant goes on to say:

our business program in Grand Rapids area targets the working adult professionals who are usually reimbursed by their companies for their tuitions. Since the area companies are losing business and reducing their workforce, their first target is to cut back on employee benefits which in turn impact the number of students going back for professional development.
Summary of Results

The following is a summary of the key results from this research study. The main findings are listed in the order of resulting themes.

Theme 1.1: Overall there were limited enrollment increases, and participants usually attributed such enrollment patterns to institutional enrollment management efforts or other issues. Three of five business programs reported enrollment increases, while two decreased. One of the education programs increased, one remained steady, and three noted declines. Only one institution had increases in both their business and education programs. Those with increased enrollment often mentioned marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts. Those with decreases noted limited efforts.

Theme 1.2: Most participants did not clearly understand the concept of enrollment management. Ten of 15 participants did not understand the concept even after receiving the definition. Six of the participants defined enrollment management as only the use of marketing methods to increase enrollment, rather than a broader realization that enrollment management encompasses marketing as well as strategic planning and retention strategies.

Theme 2.1: Most respondents mentioned the use of four or more different marketing strategies and a variety of methods. Although various marketing strategies were used by each identified degree program, most participants mentioned the use of on-site advising, multi-year course offering, and assistance for class registration. The least used strategies were a simplified application, tuition payment options, and competitive pricing.
Theme 2.2: Few programs had an adequate or established marketing budget, although most used marketing research techniques to support their efforts. Only three out of ten program representatives could name a set budget figure and believe that amount was adequate. All other respondents mentioned their programs do not have a set budget, and often only received what is left after other higher priority expenses.

Theme 2.3: There appears to be a relationship between the marketing strategies employed and the enrollment patterns. Similar elements for the four programs that had enrollment increases include: all mentioned they understood the enrollment management concept, they offer a modified class schedule and format, their average usage points in marketing method is above those used by non-growing programs (except for one institution), they all used market research, and three of four noted an adequate marketing budget existed.

The six programs that claimed decreased enrollment also had some similarities. Only one understood enrollment management, two had a modified class schedule/format, the average usage in marketing methods is below those used by growing programs, there were only two who did marketing research, and none indicated adequate marketing budgets.

Theme 2.4: There are factors outside marketing strategies that are affecting enrollment. These include the reputation of the institution, name recognition, and their alumni association.

Theme 3.1: One-half of the respondents did not understand the broader concept of institutional strategic planning, often confusing it with evaluation efforts. Five of ten program representatives noted limited understanding of the concept of strategic planning.
and its implementation process. Most others offered comments that described evaluation activities rather than strategic planning efforts.

Theme 3.2: Most participants were not aware of initial or current institutional level strategic planning activities regarding the Grand Rapids-based graduate programs. When asked if they were aware of any institutional strategic planning regarding their Grand Rapids-based graduate programs, only four of ten participants mentioned they did.

Theme 3.3: There appears to be some link between awareness of strategic efforts and enrollment patterns, but most participants noted no such link. Table 9 indicates that three of four representatives from growing programs were aware of and could describe specific strategic planning efforts surrounding their Grand Rapids-based programs, while only one of the six representatives from flat or declining programs had such awareness.

Theme 4.1: More marketing efforts are needed. Four of ten programs specifically noted the lack of funding for marketing efforts as a key challenge.

Theme 4.2: For various reasons, lack of funding or limited talent pool has created a shortage of quality faculty. Four of ten programs mentioned weak faculty or program issues as a challenge to their programs.

Theme 4.3: There is significant competition among institutions of higher education recruiting from the same student population in Grand Rapids area, and most underestimated its impact. Six out of ten programs did not realize how tough the competition is getting among the institutions in Grand Rapids area.

Theme 4.4: Unemployment in the Grand Rapids area is one of the main factors that impacts enrollment, but institutions of higher education have little control over this
issue. Three business programs mentioned this to be a challenge, since many of the business students receive their tuition and fees covered by their employers.

Next, Chapter 5 will take these results and draw conclusions in light of previous research findings on enrollment management issues.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Summary and Interpretation of the Results

The overall purpose of this study was to examine adult graduate enrollment in five higher education institutions within the Metropolitan Grand Rapids area and determine what links, if any, exist to any enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning efforts. In addition, this study set out to determine the challenges faced by two graduate programs (i.e., Master’s of Education and Master’s of Business) across these five institutions and how such challenges impacted their enrollment patterns.

Enrollment management issues, namely, student recruitment and retention, decreased revenues, and demographic changes, have become major challenges facing higher education institutions. The attempt to overcome these challenges requires such institutions to understand the wants and needs of their adult learners so they can use this information to design proper marketing strategies (Kotler, 1997), while considering the competition of the market place (Harrel & Frazier, 1999).

The change in demography, decline in state funding, and intensity of competition in the geographic area of Grand Rapids, Michigan, necessitates an understanding of the impact of enrollment management practices or lack thereof. A decline or an increase in adult students’ enrollment in area universities does not happen by accident. The time of “build it and they will come” is gone. Adult graduate students’ needs and expectations
are different from the undergraduate traditional age students that higher education institutions are accustomed to (Aslanian, 2004). These differences must be understood by the main campuses of these institutions if they want to attract more students to their branch campuses. In addition, it is in their strategic advantage to thoroughly understand and apply concepts of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning in order to increase the number of students who successfully complete their programs.

In general, the findings of this study are not encouraging. Representatives for six of the ten programs of study, across four of the five institutions, need to do some self-evaluation. Although there are three business programs and one education program with increased enrollments, six other programs have flat or decreasing enrollments. These latter six programs need to examine the strengths and weaknesses of their programs as well as their institutional practices regarding enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning. Although not definitive, data do indicate a connection between declining enrollment and efforts that are missing: lack of proper implementation of enrollment management, less use of marketing to promote the programs, and lack of clear institutional strategic planning.

Enrollment Management

The five public institutions within this study are competing with at least nine other institutions of higher education to enroll students from the same population of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. An institution can only compete well if it clearly presents the strengths of its programs, defines its target population, and implements its marketing strategies (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996). In addition, institutions also should
establish a profile of their own students and find a means to know what is out there. This involves knowing what type of students fit into their programs, which institutions are competing to recruit these students, and how many resources should be allocated to implement enrollment management strategies (Hossler et al., 1990).

Yet, some of the institutions in this study had limited awareness that attracting and retaining students requires a systematic use of their resources via enrollment management practices. Ten of the 15 individuals interviewed did not understand the concept of enrollment management even after receiving the definition. Six of the participants defined enrollment management as only the use of marketing methods to increase enrollment, rather than a broader realization that enrollment management encompasses marketing as well as strategic planning.

For that reason, it is imperative that all have an established formal enrollment management program, or at least a designated body that will look after the process of recruitment, admission, and graduation of their respective students. It is the purpose of enrollment management programs to address the need to learn the characteristics of the applicants that could stay enrolled and graduate (Garlene, 1999; Johnson, 2000). The ability of an institution to retain and graduate more students is considered to be one indicator of a successful program.

Not only did most of the participants in the study not understand the concept of enrollment management, but many did not appear well aware of the competition. Indeed representatives for six of ten programs noted one of their greatest current challenges is not recognizing the extent of the competition. According to Garlene (1999), declining enrollments are second only to declining appropriations as the reason for colleges’ and
universities' financial problems. This is why enrollment management is an important factor in accomplishing institutional goals while remaining financially viable.

Marketing Graduate Education

As mentioned by Coomes (2000), colleges and universities historically began using marketing techniques and econometric models only when they felt it would help their institutions meet their enrollment goals. Kotler and Fox (1995) define marketing as a carefully formulated program designed to achieve institutional objectives through analysis, planning, and implementation of various strategies.

One purpose of graduate education marketing research is to understand the need and wants of the students. Satisfaction of students in the way education service is delivered will help the institutions maintain a better position among the competitors (Harrel & Frazier, 1999; Phillips, 2003). Adult students are more sensitive to services than their younger counterparts (Hadfield, 2003). It is quite helpful that they have access to courses at convenient times and in suitable formats, financial assistance, creative program completion options, and academic advising to help students fill their learning needs (Potter, 1998). Many of these can be viewed as broader marketing strategies to meet the needs of adult students.

An enrollment management implementation effort for adult graduate students is served well when marketing research is incorporated with in the process (Simmons & Lacznia, 1992). This is to say, the main purpose of the implementation effort is also to satisfy the students by understanding their characteristics and needs as well as to find which strategies and methods worked and which did not (Aurand, 1994; Kotler &
When new students arrive, it becomes necessary to do this again to find if what worked in the past is still what is applicable. Marketing research is a way of life in adult higher education; it could be to improve the programs, the services, or quality of instruction.

In this study, most respondents mentioned the use of four or more different marketing strategies and a variety of methods, including the use of on-site advising, multi-year course offerings, and assistance for class registration. The least used strategies were a simplified application, tuition payment options, and competitive pricing. Few programs had an adequate or established marketing budget, although most used marketing research techniques to support their efforts.

The results of this study also reveal a possible relationship between the number and intensity of various marketing strategies and methods employed and enrollment patterns. The four programs that claimed enrollment increases exhibited some common elements: they understood the concept of enrollment management, they offered modified class schedules and formats, and their average use of various marketing methods was above those used by non-growing programs. In addition, these growing programs all performed market research as part of their planning efforts, and three of the four noted an adequate marketing budget existed. For the other six with flat or declining enrollments, none indicated they had an adequate marketing budget, only two had modified class schedules and formats, only one claimed to have knowledge of enrollment management, their average usage of marketing methods was less than the use of the growing programs, and only two of the five actually performed marketing research.
In addition to the listed marketing methods, some of the participants mentioned the effective use of alumni as a successful recruitment method. Some of the institutions have very organized alumni organizations that could be called in to help during recruitment functions in various places where open houses or education fairs are held. Although this method is a very effective way to recruit students into programs, it is advisable that institutions begin to introduce their students to such functions. If a student is not served well while they are on campus, this may prove to be difficult to find helpful volunteers after graduation. So, it is important that alumni organizations find a means to contact students and introduce them to this effort while they are on campus.

Strategic Planning

Kotler and Fox (1995) define strategic planning as a process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution's objectives and capabilities and its changing market. Strategic planning has become a common process used to address the competition, clarify the current state of affairs, identify the core values, document goals of the institution, and develop action plans to achieve the institution’s vision (Shapiro & Nunez, 2001). It is important to understand the purpose of strategic planning. It opens up the institution’s thinking to a range of alternatives and creates clear goals for the future (Rowley et al., 1997).

The findings of this study reveal most respondents were not sure of any real initial or on-going strategic planning regarding their Grand Rapids-based programs. Most did not actually understand the strategic planning concept and at times described evaluation and the collection of survey data as similar to strategic planning. There appears to be
some link between awareness of strategic efforts and enrollment patterns, but most participants noted no such link.

Overall, most of the participants did not think there was a relationship between strategic planning and enrollment increases, yet this study found that three of four representatives from growing programs were aware of and could describe specific strategic planning efforts. Similar to this study other research has indicated that those implementing programs are often not involved in strategic planning efforts regarding those programs. Yet, according to Herman and Kaufman (1991), success is contingent upon institutions of higher education actively encouraging program staff and faculty to participate in both initial and on-going strategic planning.

It is imperative that institutions involve their members to participate in strategic planning of their programs. A successful strategic planning process consists of six identifiable stages: environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting, goal setting, implementation, and monitoring (Morrison et al., 1984). This process allows merging of external and internal information, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of institutional planning. Indeed, when used properly, there are wide ranging benefits to higher education institutions.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Recommendation One

The use of actual detailed enrollment data from the institutions under study would have increased the objectivity of this study, and future studies should strive to accomplish
this. But there are two issues with acquiring such data: one is that the enrollment data in each program is kept in different ways. According to United States Department of Education, institutions of higher education often report fall enrollment data. Yet, since most of the education programs in this study enroll more students during the summer season, and one must consider this variation. Also, it should be noted that institutions are more often protective of such enrollment data especially in a very competitive market environment like Grand Rapids.

Recommendation Two

This study may have been much easier to conduct if the issue of strategic planning was omitted. This is because most of the participants in the interview did not have a clear idea how these three concepts of enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning were associated. Instead, it would be best to address the entire issue of strategic planning and its various components within a separate study.

Final Observations

In conclusion, this research has identified the status of ten graduate programs across five institutions of higher education, and how ready and engaged they are in the competitive adult graduate education arena within the metro Grand Rapids area. A core finding is that some links exist between various enrollment management, marketing, and strategic planning efforts (or lack thereof) and enrollment patterns. The other core finding is that, overall, most participants had little real understanding of these concepts. Beyond these results, a few other points are worthy of note.
The first is the issue of limited control for those at the regional level. The challenges the institutions face are well understood by regional directors, department heads, and program directors. But their agony in finding a remedy lies in the hands of the decision-makers within the larger institution. The use of business concepts, such as marketing and strategic planning, are often not well accepted by everyone in higher education, because the leaders may not foresee that funding and implementation of such methods will enhance the institutional effectiveness (Mintzberg, 1994). Thus only a few felt like they received adequate budgets to do the job they knew needs to be done. It is like the story of corporate American leaders who were in doubt of spending money on training and implementation of quality control techniques until they figured out they were losing at the market place.

Another interesting observation was that the implementation of enrollment management or the use of marketing research and planning was never associated with student retention by most of the participants. Institutions of higher education should not use enrollment management or marketing research methods just to enroll more students and enhance their revenues. They must also create conducive campus environments that will encourage students to stay and complete their programs. This is a decisive marketing strategy, a grand strategic planning. One should imagine how the reputation of an institution could be strengthened if prospective student or adults in their study pick up a brochure or visit the university’s web site and find that “75% of our students complete their program within four years instead of the national average of 35%.”

Although such marketing would be an important part of a strong enrollment management program, it is not the only way to increase enrollment. Marketing efforts can
only introduce the programs or the institutions to targeted population through various methods (e.g., open house, radio). After such recruitment, there should be more efforts to retain students so they can complete their education in reasonable time.

For example, to enhance the success of a graduate student, it is imperative that a student receive advice from a professor or a professional counselor at the time of enrollment and during their study. According to Johnson (2000) and Garlene (1999), this is very important help for adult students’ persistence and completion of their program. Similarly, modified class schedules or format, and multi-year course offering will help the student to plan ahead and also accelerate the time it takes to graduate. Indeed this was one common component found across the four growing programs in this study, but not in all of the flat or declining ones. In addition to attracting graduate students, such on-site advising and modified class schedule/format may also contribute towards retention. One must take into consideration that adult graduate students juggle time between family, work, and their education and providing these services is one good strategy to keep them on track.

Overall, although the concept of enrollment management and its various components is not new to higher education, it appears only in its infancy stage within the programs studied. A few institutions and programs appear to have a better start on their efforts (and also display enrollment increases in a very competitive market), while others barely know the language. This is not to imply that representatives from all programs involved with this study are not working hard, nor fully committed to success. Instead, key enrollment management gaps including limited knowledge and inadequate marketing budgets were found between the programs with enrollment increases and those without.
such increases. The research and knowledge on these issues are available, but for reasons beyond the scope of this study, they have not readily infiltrated the regional branches of most institutions within this study.
Appendix A

Consent Document
Hello ________________,

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to take part in this research. It will be time well spent as the outcome of this research may benefit your institution in understanding the competitiveness of higher education in the Grand Rapids area.

As institutions of higher education face decreased state funding and demographic challenges, it becomes necessary to implement such business concepts that may enhance their competitiveness in education delivery. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning on adult graduate enrollment trends. This study is being done in partial fulfillment of my doctoral research and will be published as a doctoral dissertation.

This study will include two graduate programs, Master in Education and Masters in Business, in five Grand Rapids based state institutions. I anticipate that this study will begin in May 2005 and go until June 2005. A qualitative method will used to conduct this study. As participants in the interview process, you are expected to spend about 1-1/2 hour responding to a semi-structured open ended question with a possibility of follow-up interview if clarification is needed.

Any risk of participation in this interview will be minimized as such though the following steps: a copy of the interview will be attached to this letter for your review and result of your part of the interview will be given to you for your review. Your request to omit any portion of your interview from the dissertation will be honored.

To protect your confidentiality, your name and position will not used. Also, your institution’s name will not be in such a way that it could be directly associated to any specific information. The initial reading of this information will be done by members of my dissertation committee at Western Michigan University. If need be, I will provide the names. Doctoral dissertations are published as a public document that can be accessed by any interested persons.

Please be aware that you can refuse to participate in this study, you can stop the interview at any time, and you can decline to answer any of the questions during the interview.
Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question. My name is Kinfu Adisu. My number is (616) 241-4240 and my email is kadisu2003@yahoo.com. My faculty advisor is Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer. Her office number is (269) 387-3596. You can also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293 or the vice president for research at (269) 387-8298.

I appreciate for taking the time to participate in this study. Your input is very valuable for completion of this research. I look forward to working with you on this project. Your signature below indicates that you read and understood the purpose and requirement of the study and you agree to participate.

_________________________ ________________________
Signature Date

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

Consent obtained by: ______________________ Date: ______________________
Appendix B

Initial Email to the Admissions Officers
Hello ________,

My name is Kinfu Adisu and I am a graduate student at Western Michigan University. As a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University’s Department of Education, I am required to conduct a research for the dissertation. I am pleased to be at this stage in the process of completing the degree program.

My research topic is to study the impact of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning on adult graduate enrollment. This includes two graduate programs, Masters in Education and Masters in Business at five state institutions in Grand Rapids area. A qualitative study is used in this study. I am planning to conduct a face to face interview with programs directors, department chairs and admissions officers. These are individuals most aware of their institutions’ adult graduate enrollment challenges.

I am asking for your participation in this interview process. While there is not reward for participating in this research, your valuable experience in the area of study makes it necessary to include you in the research.

Also, I am requesting your assistance in providing the enrollment data for students enrolled in Masters of Education and Masters of Business classes during the period of 1998 through 2004 in your Grand Rapids campus. As an individual responsible for the university’s admissions I believe you have a first hand knowledge of enrollment in the two programs under study. I will collect the enrollment data at the time of meeting for the interview. The result of this research will be available to you once the study is completed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question. I appreciate your assistance in this research.

Kinfu Adisu
Doctoral Candidate, Teaching, Learning and Leadership
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
616-241-4240
kadisu2003@yahoo.com
Appendix C

Initial Email to the Department Heads
Hello ______________,

My name is Kinfu Adisu and I am a graduate student at Western Michigan University. As a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University’s Department of Education, I am required to conduct a research for the dissertation. I am pleased to be at this stage in the process of completing the degree program.

My research topic is to study the impact of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning on adult graduate enrollment. This includes two graduate programs, Masters in Education and Masters in Business at five state institutions in Grand Rapids area. A qualitative study is used in this study. I am planning to conduct a face to face interview with programs directors, department chairs and admissions officers. These are individuals most aware of their institutions’ adult graduate enrollment challenges.

I am asking for your participation in this interview process. While there is no reward for participating in this research, your valuable experience in the area of study makes it necessary to include you in the research. The result of this research will be available to you once the study is completed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any question. I hope to hear from you.

Kinfu Adisu  
Doctoral Candidate, Teaching, Learning and Leadership  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
616-241-4240  
kadisu2003@yahoo.com
Appendix D

Script of Follow-up Phone Call to the Interview Candidates
Hello ___________,

My name is Kinfu Adisu and I am a graduate student at Western Michigan University. As a doctoral candidate, I am in the process of conducting a research on the impact of enrollment management, marketing and strategic planning on adult graduate enrollment patterns. Your institution is one of the five selected to participate in this study.

This phone call is a follow-up to my letter of invitation for an interview with you. Although you can decline to participate in this study, I like to mention that your input is highly appreciated. I would like to extend the invitation again for your consideration.

Please let me know if you are interested to know more how you can participate in the interview. Also, I will be pleased to send you the interview outline ahead of time to enable you think about your response in advance.

I appreciate your assistance in this research.

Kinfu Adisu  
Doctoral Candidate, Teaching, Learning and Leadership  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
616-241-4240
Appendix E

Department Heads and Program Directors: Semi-formal Interview Questions
Enrollment Management. Enrollment Management is a process, which influences the size and characteristics of student body through marketing, recruitment and admissions, services provided to students (i.e., advising, financial aid), and overall strategic planning. The main purpose is always to attract and retain students. The goals include effort to increase new students, plan to diversify the student body, retain more students, and the desire to enroll students with special talents like athletics.

(I) Enrollment Management

1- To what extent do you have enrollment management practices focused on adult graduate programs?

2- Which one of the following guides your enrollment management practices?
   (a) Committee
   (b) Staff coordinator
   (c) Matrix system/senior administrator
   (d) Enrollment management division

3- How is your enrollment management related to your marketing effort?

4- To what extent, if any did the enrollment management efforts contribute towards an increase in enrollment or lack of it?

(II) Marketing, Recruitment & Specific Program Services.

(1) During the past five years, to what extent have you used the following specific marketing methods for your Masters in _______ offered at your Grand Rapids location, and how effective do you believe each has been?
   a. Brochures
   b. Open forums/Education fairs
   c. Newspaper
   d. Radio
   e. Television
   f. Web banners
   g. Direct mailings to targeted audience (if used, how do you acquire names & addresses from)
   h. Other

(2) What is the approximate annual budget available to support marketing strategies for your adult graduate programs? Who determines this amount each year and generally how it is to be utilized? How much funding or other market support does the main campus provide? How has this funding amount changed over time?

(3) What segment of the population and/or geographic area have you targeted during the past five-year for your marketing promotions?

(4) To what extent have any of the following specific marketing strategies been used (now or in the past) for your Masters in ________ offered at your Grand Rapids location, and how effective do you believe each has been?
   a. On-site academic advising;
   b. Modified class schedules and formats;
   c. Multi-year course offering plans to facilitate degree completion in reasonable time:
   d. Assistance with course registration or other enrollment issues;
   e. Availability of early enrollment options;

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f. Simplified program admission application procedure;
g. Rolling admissions decision policies to give applicants a quick response;
h. Off-campus library resources and other research support tools;
i. Competitive pricing;
j. Tuition payment options and/or other financial aide support;
k. Other?

(5) To what extent overall, do you perceive your marketing strategies and services having contributed to an increase in enrollment or lack of it during the past five years?

(6) To what extent do you incorporate marketing research as part of your planning process?

(III) Strategic Planning

(1) To what degree were specific strategic plans developed prior to the decision to offer the graduate programs at the Grand Rapids location? To what extent did such plans include specific information to your Masters of _______ program?

(2) Can you describe that strategic planning process (i.e., who was involved; about how long did it take; what feasibility work was completed, etc)?

(3) To what extend are those strategic plans updated, and via what process? And, since enrollment management depends on knowledge of your student needs and characteristics, how often do you do this critical inventory?

(4) To what extent are your strategic plans/goals for these programs at the Grand Rapids location aligned with overall university plans/goals for their adult graduate programs?

(5) To what extent do you consider your overall strategic planning (both initial and on-going efforts) as a contributing factor for increase in enrollment of adult graduate students or lack thereof during the past five years?

Challenges Facing Adult Graduate Programs in Grand Rapids

1- Identify what you see as the greatest challenges facing your Master’s Degree in _________ and/or other adult graduate programs being offered through your institution in the Grand Rapids area, and why?

2- Describe the efforts being made to overcome these key challenges, and what role (if any) enrollment management practices are playing within those efforts?
Appendix F

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
Date: August 25, 2005

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
   Kinfu Adisu, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 05-07-10

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Impact of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Strategic Planning on Adult Higher Education Enrollment Patterns" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: August 15, 2006
REFERENCES


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