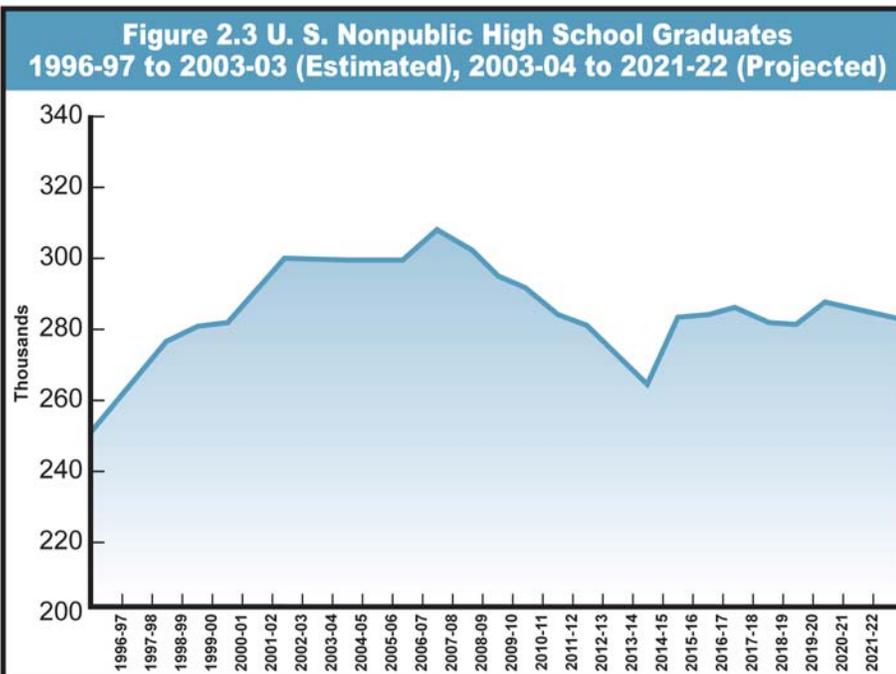# Teaching and Learning
At the Heart of Enrollment Management

Special Report:

SSATB's Symposium is a two-day forum for advanced directors of admission to discuss big-picture issues. The meeting is structured to maximize exchange and learning between and among participants. This year's Symposium brought directors of admission together with school heads to discuss the issues and challenges associated with managing a school's enrollment and to explore the responsibility for the process.

Enrollment management (EM) was born of necessity in the 1970s as "a logical response for higher education when suddenly the marketplace changed from seller to buyer and admissions directors transitioned from gatekeepers to salesmen ... [and] demographic forecasts were dire" (*Kurz and Scannell*). Sound familiar? Today, dipping student numbers and shifting demographics have hastened the adoption of EM in some private secondary schools. But, what does EM mean in this context? How is it different than what we currently do as "admission" every day?

The discussions at this year's Symposium shed some interesting light on these questions, and we thought it worthwhile to share the information with the entire SSATB community. Within this special report, you will find a summary of the discussions and citations of places to go for more information on the topic.

Figure 2.3 U. S. Nonpublic High School Graduates 1996-97 to 2003-03 (Estimated), 2003-04 to 2021-22 (Projected)

From "Knocking at the College Door" (p. 7)
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008

2008 Symposium Participants

Directors of Admission:

Joseph Coleman	VA
Rick Cowan	VT
Dorothy Davis	ON
Jon Deveaux	CT
Dennis Facciolo	FL
Rosetta Gooden	GA
Linda Keating	MA
Laura Murphy	FL
Katherine Rill	PA
Trish Saunders	MA
Mary Lou Stewart	CT
John Williamson	HI
Vicki Wright	VA
Al Zappelli	CA

Heads of School:

John Barrengos	CT
David Faus	MA
Kathryn Gibson	MA
Steven Hahn	NY
Emily Jones	VT
Kip Nygren	PA
Kevin Plummer	FL
Vincent Stumpo	PA
Penny Townsend	NJ
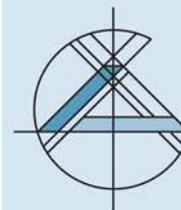
SSATB
CN 5339
Princeton, NJ
08543

SSATB is a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance and add value to the private school admission process for schools, students, and families.
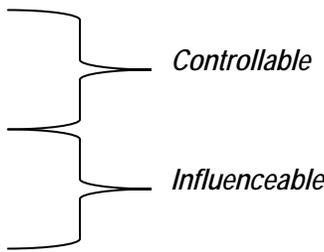
Beginning with the End in Mind
How Data Drives the Enrollment Management Process

As defined by Wikipedia (May 2007), "enrollment management is an organizational concept and a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments … Such practices often include marketing, admission policies, retention programs, and financial aid awarding … Strategies and tactics are informed by collection, analysis, and use of data to project successful outcomes." Yet, what does this mean for everyday practice?

Basically, it means that managing a school's enrollment requires a data-driven and systemic approach for ensuring that students walk through the doors and have a positive and value-laden experience. Because EM ultimately manages and leverages a school's "value," the processes, structures, and methods for defining and quantifying a school's value – i.e. the quality of its teaching and learning – are at its heart.

As **Claude Anderson**, Director of Admission, Moses Brown School (RI) and one of this year's Symposium facilitators, stressed, for EM to be effective, it must be a "mission-driven" set of processes. With mission as the driver, all schools – irrespective of the size, penetration, or competitiveness of their markets – can structure EM using the same tenets.

Primary Components of an Optimal Enrollment Program: [1]

- Mission
- Value Profile   *Controllable*
- Value Experience
- Image Pool
- Competition   *Influenceable*
- Motivation
- External Environment

> *"As we look toward the year 2012, more and more schools will need to pay attention to managing the quantity and also the quality of their enrollments. Without strategic plans to handle enrollment, schools will find it difficult to achieve their missions."*
>
> *~ Claude Anderson*

The controllable components of an optimized enrollment program are mission, value profile, and value experience. As such, the quantifiable strategies for achieving the school's mission must be articulated. Therefore, it is the content and scope of the school's educational program that serves as the basis for defining the *value profile*, which is marketed to prospective students, and that serves as the basis for quantifying the *value experience*, which is delivered to enrolled students. But how? Or as Jim Collins (*Good to Great*) poses, "What about outputs that are not inherently measurable?"

Symposium participants posited that effectively delivering on a school's mission requires the articulation of both short-term outcomes – Was the educational program validated? Were the skills and habits of mind developed? – and long-term outcomes – Is there evidence of transformation? Was the child's path altered? So, regular vehicles and processes for gathering and analyzing data about how prospective, enrolled, and alumni students experience and interact with the school system are needed. As Kurz and Scannell (June 2005) attest, "under the enrollment management umbrella, data is the glue that holds the process together."

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[1] Strategic Enrollment Optimization (SEO) is a model developed by Claude Anderson. For more information, please go to www.PeopleCollaborating.net.

The Director-Head Relationship
Trust + Transparency = Success

Symposium participants agreed: admission often shields trustees and heads from negative messages rather than focusing on the big enrollment picture and communicating the sense that "we're all in this together." Since admission is held responsible for "numbers" without having the positional power or authority to ensure customer/student satisfaction, excellent teaching, good word-of-mouth, and delivery on all promises, a team approach is most assuredly required.

To explore the director-head relationship in schools, **Bob Fricker**, Associate Consultant, Educational Directions Inc., took Symposium participants through a series of exercises. Grounded first in an understanding of one's own personal working style[2] and a reminder that good leaders surround themselves with people of complementary styles, participants were divided into the two role groups and asked to consider the following questions:

- What do you wish the other person understood about your work?
- What is the assistance that helps?
- What is the assistance that impedes or confuses?

Both admission directors and heads agreed that admission "owns the process" of admission but that admission directors along with heads and other school leaders are responsible for enrollment. As heads described, admission officers need to tell me what I don't know, communicate needs, and manage up.

Admission officers want to be involved in senior administrative meetings and want recognition for the value they bring by having a pulse on the community. They want heads to understand the entire year is busy – not just the "admission season" – and the job requires a great deal of face time with prospective <u>and</u> current families. Heads wish admission officers did a better job of managing the anxiety of admission. They want admission officers to understand when the head needs to make decisions.

In discussing the assistance that is helpful, heads point to directors who come up with recommendations and options (solutions not just problems), follow through and offer evidence of that follow through, are proactive vs. reactive, demonstrate good data analysis, and provide "mission-consistent nudging." Directors point to heads who are supportive of admission decisions and back-up those decisions within the internal community, provide access to the Board while at the same time act as a buffer with Board members, keep his/her direct reports accountable in measureable ways, and remind everyone that enrollment is a community effort.

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[2] Participants completed the *Gregorc Style Delineator* (Third Edition), a Myers-Briggs-type self-assessment instrument. For more information, please go to www.gregorc.com.

Pertinent Decision Data

In 2007, Noel-Levitz, Inc., a higher education consulting firm, defined eight types of admissions data that have proven useful over time in meeting enrollment objectives …

1. **Historical Trend Data**
   - For developing effective benchmark comparisons

2. **Operations Research**
   - For tracking the effectiveness of specific practices

3. **Cost-Benefit Studies**
   - For maximizing resource allocation

4. **Market Research**
   - For determining key influencers

5. **Secondary Data Sources**
   - For gathering big-picture data

6. **Student Price Response Data**
   - For determining price sensitivities by group

7. **Institutional Self-Assessments**
   - For soliciting feedback on performance

8. **Predictive Modeling**
   - For identifying students likely to enroll

Excerpted from "How to Use Pertinent Decision Data in Your Admission Office to Enroll the Students You Want." Available online at www.noellevitz.com.

Enrollment Management
Structures & Methods

So far, we have discussed the process of EM – what it is (an integrated set of related activities), what it needs (data), and what it entails (a systemic, mission-driven effort). Now, we take a quick look at the structure of EM to further inform our thinking.

Because SSATB member schools are not easily compared with big, higher education institutions, we must look for information to *apply to* the unique context of private secondary schools. One such information source is small private colleges which, like most SSATB members, are "heavily tuition dependent and are challenged each year to maintain and grow student enrollments" (AACRAO Consulting).

An AACRAO Consulting article titled "Organizational Models for Enrollment Management at Small Colleges" describes four EM models of coordination management. First outlined by Kemerer, Baldridge, and Green (1982), the four models of coordination continue to be cited and developed by authors today.[3]

Model	Degree of Restructuring Necessary	Authority
Committee	Low	Influence
Coordinator	Some	Networks
Matrix	Moderate	Cooperation
Division	High	Direct

As the excerpted table shows, EM also can be defined according to the structure adopted for implementing it, and, depending on the model, the degree of restructuring required and type of authority exercised differs. Whether the school's goal is to simply raise awareness of enrollment management issues, to coordinate related departments/offices, to bridge the work of related departments/offices, or to mandate cooperation between and among related offices, the EM structure established will have significant impact on what can be achieved.

Recommended Reading:

- Erdmann, David. *The Four Ps of Healthy Enrollment: Making the Case for Independent Schools in Uncertain Times.* http://www.nais.org/publications/ismagazinearticle.cfm?ItemNumber=144326.
- Kurz, Kathy & Scannell, Jim. *Enrollment Management Grows Up: Enrollment Managers Share Their Current Approaches.* University Business Article. May 2006. http://www2.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=23.
- Kurz, Kathy & Scannell, Jim. *Only Data Can Lead the Way.* University Business Article. June 2005. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0LSH/is_6_8/ai_n13816991/pg_4.
- Symmonds, Ian. *Trend One – The Strategic Role of Pricing.* Ian Symmonds & Associates (OR). Fall 2007. http://www.iansymmonds.org/ISA/10_Trends.html.

In addition to the information sources cited throughout this report, SSATB provides the tools and resources to help educators realize the benefits of **Data-Driven Admission**. These free member services are valuable **data sources** to inform your enrollment management efforts. For more information about the tools and reports available, please contact us at data@ssat.org.

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[3] For the complete article, please go to http://consulting.aacrao.org/2008/01/03/organizational-models-for-enrollment-management-at-small-colleges/