The Essentials of Strategic Enrollment Planning

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The topics are

1. What is strategic enrollment planning?
2. The characteristics of a successful strategic enrollment plan
3. Phases of strategic enrollment planning
What is strategic enrollment planning?
Noel-Levitz suggests the following definition
Strategic enrollment planning is an information-based and ongoing process that:

- Identifies, evaluates, and modifies strategies and enrollment goals; and

- Effectively addresses the following elements…
How the institution serves students, both currently and in the future

The institution’s mission, goals, and capabilities

A changing marketplace and environment
Strategic enrollment planning directly affects an institution in two ways:

**Resources** – since enrollments are directly connected to revenues through tuition or head-count allocations.

**The quantity, character, and quality of the student body** – which shape academic life and hence institutional mission.
The process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution’s goals and capabilities and its changing market
Strategic enrollment planning involves:

- Assessing a changing environment
- Shaping the student profile
- Net operating revenues
- Operating expenses
- Pricing
- Financial aid policies
- Cost of student populations
- Program demand and capacities
- Student retention
- Enrollment management effectiveness
- Auxiliary income
Strategic enrollment planning involves making informed choices.
The relationship between institutional strategic planning (ISP) and strategic enrollment planning (SEP) varies
Strategic enrollment planning is either

An integral part of the institution’s strategic plan

or

Subordinate to the institution’s strategic plan
Strategic Enrollment Plan as subordinate to the Institutional Strategic Plan

- Institutional Strategic Plan
- Strategic Enrollment Plan
  - Annual Marketing/Recruitment Plan
  - Annual Retention Plan
    - Clear Goals
      - Key Strategies
        - Detailed Action Plans
          - Objectives – Timetables
          - Responsibility – Budgets
          - Evaluation
Traditional Planning
= Set goals then develop steps to achieve those goals

Strategic Planning
= Align organization with its environment to promote stability and survival
Strategic thinking is arraying options through a process of opening up institutional thinking to a range of alternatives and decisions that identify the best fit between the institution, its resources, and the environment.
Noel-Levitz phases of strategic enrollment planning

1. Preparation
2. Key Performance Indicators identification
3. Situation analysis and assessment
4. **Strategy development and quantifiable goal identification**
5. Action and support plan development
6. Plan evaluation and modification
Developing a SEM Plan

• Begins with a clearly defined vision as it relates to mission
• Performs an internal and external environmental analysis
• Acknowledges problems, constraints, opportunities, and strengths
• *Outlines objectives, desired outcomes, and strategies to achieve them*
• Determines a budget to achieve each outcome
• Assigns responsibility for strategies to specific individuals
• Sets forth an evaluation mechanism to measure progress and redirect efforts if necessary
1. Select the initial planning committee
2. Introduce the process
3. Establish appropriate KPIs and organize key performance areas
4. Survey the environment
5. Share results with larger audience
6. Develop definition and measurement criteria
7. Measure current performance
8. Establish five-year and ten-year goals
9. Determine strategies (using SWOT) in each KPI area
10. Establish broad-based support
Characteristics of a successful Strategic Enrollment Plan – and common mistakes to avoid
What is a successful enrollment plan?

A successful Strategic Enrollment Plan is one that efficiently and effectively leads an institution to an optimal alignment of its:

- Mission;
- Enrollment;
- Fiscal health; and
- Changing environment.

The successful plan typically consists of the following characteristics…
1. The planning process and the results are more important than the plan itself.
2. Information and data-based strategies, goals, and objectives
3. A solid resource/fiscal plan to support each strategy, goal, and objective
4. Accountability (e.g., scorecards, dashboards, action step responsibility) to monitor progress
5. Well-written summaries of the plan that everyone can easily understand are more important than long, detailed plans.
6. Continuous evaluation and modification of the plan
Phases of strategic enrollment planning
Each planning process is different because each institution’s planning situation is different.
The planning process must be highly customized based on five types of assessment

1. What already exists?
2. What are our objectives for SEP?
3. What are the timelines?
4. What actions are simultaneous to SEP?
Institutional Strategic Planning

- Fund-Raising Plan
- Facilities Plan
- Fiscal Plan
- Technology Plan
- Research Plan
- Student Affairs Co-Curricular Plan

ACADEMIC PLAN

Enrollment Plan
The phases of strategic enrollment planning are

1. Preparation, including developing the planning process, organizing, and assessing available data
2. Key Performance Indicators identification
3. Situation analysis and assessment
4. Strategy development and quantifiable goal identification
5. Action and support plan development
6. Plan evaluation and modification
Our site visit schema

**Site Visit One**
- Begin the Preparation phase, including
  - developing the planning process
  - organizing
  - assessing the available data
- Begin the Key Performance Indicators Identification phase
- Begin Situation Analysis and Assessment Phase
Our site visit schema

Site Visit Two

• Complete the Preparation phase
• Complete the Key Performance Indicators Identification phase
• Continue Situation Analysis and Assessment phase
Conduct external institutional analyses
External institutional analysis examples include:

✓ Perception/image studies of prospective students, parents, counselors, and employers

✓ Price sensitivity studies of prospective students and parents

✓ Competition analyses

✓ Market share and trend analysis of college bound target populations using College Board’s EPS and ACT’s EIS

✓ Demographic projection analyses of high school graduates and other target populations such as adults

✓ Workforce demand projections

✓ Analyses of prospective student, parent, counselor, adult, and employer wants and needs, including academic programs
Conduct internal institutional analyses
Internal institutional analysis examples include:

- Assessment of the relationship of enrollment and institutional fiscal health
- Enrollment and fiscal projection scenarios
- Analyses of student flows into academic majors and courses
- Academic program capacity and demand analyses
- Assessment of student satisfaction, engagement, and what is important
- Incoming characteristic profile of students who succeed of those who don’t succeed
- Price discount sensitivity studies of admitted students
- Graduating student outcome analyses
Our site visit schema

Site Visit Three
Continue Situation Analysis and Assessment

- SWOT analysis
- Assess current supporting data and management reports and its use
- Continue appropriate research and analyses to support the SEP KPI and subsequent strategy development

Begin Strategy Development
Site Visit Four

Complete/continue Situation Analysis and Assessment

- Review data and Research results
- Finalize SWOT based on research findings

Continue Strategy Development and Quantifiable Goal Identification
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Site Visit Five
Strategy Development and Quantifiable Goal Identification
• Continued discussion
• Further drafts of strategies
• First draft of realistic goals

Action and Support Plan Development
• Drafts of support plans
Our site visit schema

Site Visit Six
Strategy Development and Quantifiable Goal Identification
  • Finalized
Action and Support Plan Development
  • Finalized
Plan Evaluation and Modification
  • Developed and Finalized
The phases of strategic enrollment planning are

1. Preparation, including developing the planning process, organizing, and assessing available data
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