

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

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ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP STARTS AT THE TOP *COLLEGE PRESIDENTS MUST BE VISABLE AND SET THE TONE*

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News on the enrollment front is mixed, adding to the challenge facing college Presidents already beleaguered by financial sustainability issues. The "Millennials," the mini-boom generation now in and just out of college, is being replaced with a much smaller demographic. The good news is that there is still time to plan, because the percentage of high school graduates entering college is projected to increase through 2014. However, it's estimated that in the next decades the number of students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities will drop as secondary enrollment declines. How can our campuses respond?

The conventional wisdom is that admissions offices will have to work overtime to attract more students. We submit, however, that solutions need to go far beyond enrollment management and a plethora of student friendly-communications techniques to comprehensive strategic planning strategies. Following are some key recommendations:

The President must be the driving force in making recruitment and retention a top priority on the campus.

In these times, it's too easy for enrollment issues to be placed on the back burner as fund-raising consumes Presidential time and energy. It is essential, however, that the President remains equally hands-on in both areas. We know of Presidents who have awakened too late to "red flags" which should have indicated negative enrollment trends.

No other area is more vital to an institution's ongoing health and viability than recruitment and retention. It is critical, therefore, that enrollment report directly to the President with an open line of communication and access. In this critical area, Presidents simply cannot afford to take their eye off the ball for even a short period.

The President must create a corporate culture that supports the enrollment operation.

This includes a President who is highly visible at recruitment events, while taking the lead in the institutional philosophy portrayed in enrollment publications and online. This initiative also includes **leveraging facilities to create value.** "Tired" classrooms, grounds and facilities create a drag on the entire enrollment management process; enhanced residences, recreation-fitness facilities and dining services serve as an integral part of the student experience and play a vital role in attracting and retaining students.

As our 2010 book "President to President: Views on Technology in Higher Education" (Council of Independent Colleges/SunGard publications) co-edited with our friend and colleague Jacqueline Powers Dowd emphasizes, institutions must also leverage technology to create a competitive advantage. While expensive, investing in

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ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP STARTS AT THE TOP CONTINUED:

technology also levels the playing field for small and mid-sized institutions.

The President must maintain a balance on enrolling student-athletes.

Most liberal arts colleges are members of the NCAA Division III, which emphasizes student-athletes who fit academically with the colleges in which they enroll. It is important that the President underscore the importance of athletics while at the same time holding the enrollment office to a standard of recruiting student-athletes who mirror the campus population. Student-athletes need to be just that. Recruiting those who do not reflect the institutional profile will inevitably lead to retention problems later, serving neither the athlete nor the institution.

The President must exercise leadership in setting financial aid priorities.

We hear many stories of Presidents getting into trouble over runaway financial aid budgets that are out of control. "Buying" students with steep discounts is a recipe for long-term financial ruin. Contrary to popular opinion, it is possible to attract and retain students, while also improving selectivity, access and affordability. It's all in the planning.

Indeed, thoughtful, strategic planning, which includes but is not limited to, creating strategic partnerships, altering the product-delivery mix, enhancing student-friendly facilities and amenities and leveraging facilities to attract students who are a good fit with the institution is the bedrock upon which all future growth must be based. As an astute admissions dean once remarked, "The ability to respond to the market is a better benchmark of the health of an institution than any short-term tactics."

We could not have said it better.

Dr. Scott D. Miller is President of the College and M.M. Cochran Professor of Leadership Studies at Bethany College in West Virginia. Now in his third college presidency, he has served as a CEO for 20 years.

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They have collaborated on six books, including "President to President: Views on Technology in Higher Education" (2010) and "Presidential Perspectives: Economic Prosperity in the Next Decade" (2010). Both serve as consultants to college Presidents and Boards.

HIRING YOUR NEXT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID

John W. Dysart
President
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Selecting the right individual to be your new Director of Financial Aid can be a challenging task. It is a critical decision that can ultimately influence recruitment, retention and discount rates. Those generally charged with making the hire are often disadvantaged. Let's face it, most college Presidents, Vice Presidents for Enrollment and Chief Financial Officers have little or no first hand knowledge of or experience in financial aid. The following tips are designed to assist campus leaders charged with this important personnel selection.

It is often a good idea to give priority to internal candidates for the position.

Other senior staff members within your Financial Aid Office can be excellent candidates. They are already familiar with current institutional policies and practices. They are likely already trained to make use of your computer system and other available technology. Hiring from within also sends a good message to other workers on campus that there are opportunities for career advancement in your organization.

You may also wish to consider administrators at your college or university currently working in other campus departments besides the Financial Aid Office. I have seen men and women from the Business Office, Admission Office, Student Services Division and Development all make successful transitions to be effective leaders in Financial Aid.

Promoting or transferring an internal candidate does not necessarily mean that historic financial aid practices will continue. Look for people who bring new ideas to the table. Sometimes, other staff members working in the Financial Aid Office have different thoughts about how to run the operation. People from other offices can have vastly different perspectives on what the priorities should be in your Financial Aid Office. Understand that making the decision

HIRING YOUR NEXT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID CONTINUED:

to hire from within should not mean unquestioned continuation of current practices. Inquire about greater efficiencies and proposals for better policies and procedures during the interview process.

Candidates from Proprietary Schools

Over the years, I have had tremendous success considering candidates with experience at proprietary schools. These schools are under much greater regulatory scrutiny than their private and public counterparts and tend to produce financial aid professionals who are knowledgeable regarding federal financial aid laws and are attentive to detail. Financial aid administrators at for-profit institutions are often intimately involved in the school's recruitment and retention strategies. It is helpful to consider applicants who come to the interview understanding the important role that financial aid plays in enrollment management.

Consider Experience as a Function of Institution Type and Financial Position

All financial aid experience is not the same. It is important to take into account where a candidate's experience was obtained. A director from a public institution may not be the best fit for a private college or university. Applicants used to a large staff and significant operating resources may not be effective at a small, private school. Financial aid administrators at selective schools may not do well at community colleges. This does not mean that it is impossible for financial aid professionals to move to

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different school types, but those responsible for the hiring process should understand the inherent challenges in such a transition.

There are important differences to think about even when looking at applicants from similar institution types. For private colleges and universities in particular, find out about the institutional aid resources available at the previous school. There are significant differences in endowments and discount rates. Someone coming from a college with a 56% discount rate might struggle at a college dedicating sufficient resources to fund only a 35% discount rate.

Philosophical Allegiance

One of the challenges for enrollment managers seeking to hire financial aid professionals is to determine philosophical allegiance. What I mean is that there are financial aid professionals who see themselves primarily as custodians of federal and state financial aid funds. Professionals whose first allegiance is to regulators might operate as financial aid police

HIRING YOUR NEXT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID CONTINUED:

instead of individuals charged with supporting institutional goals with regard to recruitment and retention. I can assert this because I was trained to be financial aid police!

Make sure you select candidates who understand their role in the enrollment management operation and whose interest is in serving students and the institution rather than regulators and auditors. Financial Aid Directors can be powerful advocates for students, recruitment and retention and still follow every rule and regulation.

Institutional Interests Other Than Financial Aid

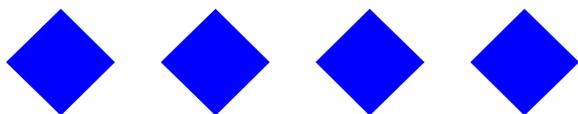
Find out if your candidates have administrative interests outside of the Financial Aid Office. My client institutions have had great success hiring people with backgrounds in admission or the Business Office. I like candidates who express an interest in learning more about other divisions on campus.

Consider hiring an individual who would be attracted to the title of Director of Financial Aid and Assistant Director of Admission. Such a title sends the message that the financial aid professional is expected to be involved in the recruitment plan. I am aware of one leader in a financial aid office whose title is Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management.

Search Firms

Do not be afraid to use the services of search firms specializing in finding candidates for leadership roles in financial aid. I have personally had success working with Higher Ed Strategies. Among other services, they offer assistance in identifying qualified candidates for chief financial aid officer positions (www.higheredstrategies.com-860-386-6729).

Finding a good Director of Financial Aid is an important task. There are steps that can be taken to ensure you hire the right person for your college or university.



CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR YOUR RECRUITING PROFESSIONALS

Christine Gormican Hierl
President
Gormican Hierl Consulting

Pat Riley, longtime NBA coach, said it best with, “a champion needs a motivation above and beyond winning.” For someone who has won five championships and is considered to be one of the greatest coaches in the game’s history, Mr. Riley knows a truth that is often overlooked: It’s not necessarily the big trophy or the title that makes a champion. But rather, it is the ability for that athlete to get up every day and achieve the very best he has to give. Be it a coach or an admissions professional, therein lies the challenge: to motivate and inspire people to achieve 110 percent every day.

Stoking this fire in our admissions professionals is as nuanced as coaxing a 7-foot center on how to take a drop step. But with a few simple changes to your daily routine, you can create your own champions.

Set the Tone in Your Office and Create an Environment for Achievement

If you are frustrated, stressed out or lacking inspiration, chances are your recruiters will be too. You set the tone in your office and create the environment where people can achieve. Just as enthusiasm is contagious in an admissions office, so is negative energy.

Your admissions staff will feel this as long as you feel it yourself. Jot down the motivational factors that sustain you and what you can do to sustain them. This exercise can give you perspective on how to think about supporting the motivations of your recruiters.

Align the Goals of Your Organization with the Goals of Your Recruiters

Are the goals of your organization in direct correlation to the goals you set for your recruiters? If the result of a recruiter’s work does not contribute to the goals of the organization, then the organization is not any better off than if the employees were doing nothing at all.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR YOUR RECRUITING PROFESSIONALS CONTINUED:

It is critical that directors of admissions know what they specifically want from their recruiters. These “wants” should be worded in terms of goals for the organization. This typically happens during a meeting or strategic planning session. We always want to ensure that employees have strong input to identifying their goals and their goals align with the organization.

Employees often feel strong fulfillment from realizing that they are actually making a difference. This realization requires clear communication about organizational goals, progress toward those goals and celebrations when the goals are met.

Find Out What Makes Your Recruiters Tick

A fatal flaw in any organization is painting employees with one brush. This is even more critical in a performance-based environment. It cannot be understated that different things motivate each recruiter. First, find out what it is that really motivates each of your recruiters. This is as simple as asking, listening and observing them. Meet with them one-on-one and make a list of the top three things that motivate each of them. Fill out the list yourself for each recruiter and then have them do it for themselves. Compare your answers and meet with them individually to discuss what they think are the most important motivational factors to them.

Finally, take some time to think of how you will modify your approaches to each individual. Communication is key and no matter what you do, you cannot make these employees successful unless you understand – truly understand, what makes them tick.

Motivation is a Process, Not a Task

Change is inevitable. Organizations change all the time, as do people. It is an ongoing process to sustain an environment where each recruiter can strongly motivate himself or herself. If we look at sustaining employee motivation as a process and not a task, then we will be much more fulfilled and motivated ourselves.

This process also includes cultivating strong skills in delegation. By empowering your recruiters and by giving them

authority within a specific framework, your time will be slightly freed up and they will take a stronger role in their jobs, which means more fulfillment and motivation for both the manager and the recruiter. This process takes time and needs trust to foster.

Build a Clear, Reliable and Comprehensive System

Strong interpersonal relationships are key to motivating your recruiters, but don't rely on just that as your primary tool to inspire.

The nature of relationships can change greatly; for example, during a low-producing time period. Instead, use reliable and comprehensive systems in the admissions office such as compensation systems, employee performance systems, organizational policies and procedures and weekly meetings.

Sit down with each recruiter to ensure their motivational factors are taken into account when these systems are being built. If for example, family is a motivator for a recruiter, perhaps you might develop a personnel policy that rewards employees with more family time, etc. As with anything, goals and systems must be clear and understood by the recruiter. Finally, good performance management includes identifying goals and metrics to indicate if the targets are being met or not, as well as corrective actions to re-direct activities back toward achieving the goals when necessary. Ensure the goals are specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, timely, extending of capabilities and rewarding (SMARTER).

Celebrate Your Wins

An action that is often overlooked and is critical to long-term motivation is to celebrate achievements. Without acknowledgement of success, even the most stellar of employees can become frustrated, skeptical and even cynical about their team, their office or their organization.

As with any championship team, wins come to recruiting professionals by doing the right thing day-in and day-out and most importantly, creating an environment that inspires people to arrive each day ready to pursue excellence.

Christine Gormican Hierl is an accomplished sales management executive specializing in leadership development, team building, succession planning, management development and management in a multi-location and multi-brand environment. For more information, please visit her website at www.gormicanhierl.com.

NEW FINANCIAL AID REGULATIONS WILL HAVE A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON RETENTION FOR MANY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

John W. Dysart
President
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New rules going into effect in July are likely to present retention challenges for many colleges and universities. The Department of Education has changed the rules with regard to satisfactory academic progress.

Students have always been required to demonstrate that they are making satisfactory progress toward attaining their degrees or certificates. The regulations have included both a quantitative and qualitative measure.

Let's talk about grades. Generally, students are expected to achieve a minimum, cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 by the end of their second year. Many colleges and university have traditionally required a minimum grade point average of only 1.75 or so by the end of the first year. This is the qualitative measure.

Students must also be earning a sufficient number of credits to be making satisfactory academic progress. Generally, students must be earning credits at a rate that ensures they will complete their programs in no more than 150% of the allotted time. For example, for a full-time undergraduate in a baccalaureate program who is expected to graduate in four years, the regulations dictate that the student take no more than six years to complete their four year degree.

The major change is in how much flexibility schools are given to afford students in academic peril a chance to recover. Many schools check academic progress once a year, usually at the end of the Spring semester. Students who have grade point averages below the minimum or who have earned an insufficient number of credits are often automatically placed on probation for a year. This allows students two more semesters to improve their grade point averages or earn a sufficient number of credits and still receive federal financial aid.

The new rules say that automatic probation can only be offered to students at schools who check progress every

term. Thus, if a student is struggling at the beginning of the Fall semester, they can be placed on probation for the following Spring term and still receive their federal aid. If they are not back in good standing at the end of the Spring term, they are subject to having all of their federal financial aid withdrawn. Not much time to recover from a bad semester.

Schools can still check progress once a year, but if progress is checked once a year, schools can no longer automatically place students on probation. Those who fall below the quantitative or qualitative measure are no longer eligible for federal financial aid.

There exists a possibility of appeal for students, but these stricter rules are going to mean eligibility for federal financial aid is often going to be denied to most students after only one year of academic difficulty. The impact of this rule change on retention rates for many colleges and universities is going to be significant.

The change will not have any impact on students who do not rely on federal financial assistance to attend college. However, for many students, ineligibility for federal financial aid will make continuing in college impossible.

If you have not already done so, schedule a meeting with your Director of Financial Aid. Calculate the number of students over the last few years who were automatically placed on probation after the first year of attendance. These are the students you are likely to lose in the future.

Be prepared for the possibility that your retention rates may decline, but also be aware that there may be significant financial implications for your college or university. Losing even another dozen students each year can be material at an institution on a tight budget.

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