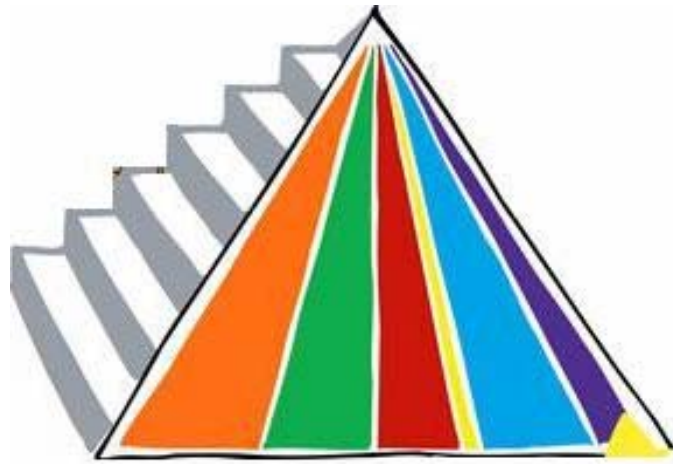


Strategic Enrolment Management Concepts, Structures and Strategies



Pamela A. Bischoff
Douglas College
December 2007

Highlights

Trends

- **From focusing on organizational structures that support Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) to placing it in an academic context.**

While structural approaches are firmly rooted in SEM literature, the last three years have seen a significant shift to refocus enrolment management through the academic lens. The structure or organization of enrolment management within an institution “is not as important as how it connects with academics. The debate over where EM should be [located] misses the point that it cannot succeed unless it is part of the academic fabric of the institution (Henderson).” The right structure will not work if the wrong people are in those roles/positions, and the “wrong” structure can work if the right people, many of whom are faculty, are in those roles/positions.

- **From using the admissions funnel as the key conceptual model to using the enrolment pyramid.**

The “Age of Recruitment”, from the 1970’s to the mid-1980’s, used the Admissions Funnel which largely engaged front-end institutional operations such as recruitment, admissions, and financial aid in enrolment management. The focus was on attracting prospective learners to the door of the institution and converting them into enrolled students. From the late 1980’s onwards, Enrolment Management (EM) evolved into a comprehensive process that touches every aspect of an institution and seeks not just to attract and enrol learners, but to retain them for the duration of their planned educational experience and beyond. While the Admissions Funnel makes mathematical sense, “conceptually it creates a false impression that students flow automatically through the funnel as if drawn downward by gravity. In reality, recruiting and retaining students is more like climbing a mountain. It requires careful planning, effective execution, and technical skills. Thus a pyramid [is] a more useful graphic representation of the process (Bontrager).”

- **Increase attention to attracting and retaining a student body that is appropriate for the mission and academic culture of the institution.**

In the race to achieve optimum enrolments, some institutions have lost sight of attracting the “right” types of students – those that fit with the institution, its academic mission and culture – and that doing so ensures greater success at retaining those students.

The institutional mission enables identification of the market segments the institution should be pursuing. Further, research is a key component to assessing the viability of a learner market and its fit with the institution. Ultimately, the best kind of clientele to pursue is the one where its needs naturally converge with what the institution is able to provide. Pursuing students who do not align with institutional strengths and abilities will result in an unnecessary depletion of resources and could potentially hurt the image of the institution in cases where the students’ expectations are not met. Certainly, there may be markets to which the institution can respond with minor adjustments.

Adoption of Strategic Enrolment Management Philosophy

Adoption of SEM tends to follow a predictive pathway, although the duration of the five stages varies across institutions.

Dolence's SEM Transition Model

Stage	Enrolment Trend	Institutional Messages	Institutional Action
Denial	Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "The downturn is temporary." - "It's just (pick one) demographics/the economy/our competitors." - "<u>We are subject to forces beyond our control.</u>" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form a committee - Discuss options
Nominal	Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "We have to <u>do</u> something." - "We need a 'silver bullet' recruiting/marketing strategy." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fund adhoc, short-term strategies lacking enrolment management expertise - More discussion
Structural	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "This isn't as easy as we thought." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited restructuring - Continue with short-term strategies with minimal enrolment management expertise
Tactical	Building to optimum enrolments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "To achieve optimum enrolments will require fundamental changes." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substantive restructuring - Strategic planning based on reliable data - Strong enrolment management expertise - Targeted funding
Strategic	Achieving optimum enrolments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "<u>We control our enrolment outcomes.</u>" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable organizational structure and funding - Top-level EM leadership - Consistent planning and assessment cycle

A Long Term Commitment

In the final analysis, SEM is not a "quick fix." Rather, it is a systematic approach to deployment of strategic responses to institutional enrolment challenges. "One of the most important SEM disciplines is patience in allowing the implementation cycle not only to play out once, but multiple times. This allows hunch-driven, 'silver-bullet' strategies to give way to the sound planning and careful evaluation required of effective enrolment management. Only then will an institution realize the power of SEM and the potential for charting a stronger future (Bontrager)."

Table of Contents

Background.....	1
Core Concepts	1
The Admissions Funnel.....	1
The Enrolment Pyramid	2
Common misconceptions about SEM	3
Niche Market	3
How are SEM outcomes achieved?	4
Establishing clear goals	4
Promoting students' academic success	4
Promoting institutional success	5
Creation of a data-rich environment	5
Streamlining business processes.....	5
Strengthening communications and internal collaboration.....	5
Core Structures	6
The 4 Structural Approaches	6
The SEM Transition Model.....	7
The Academic Lens... the new approach	8
Core Strategies	9
Academic Success Strategies.....	9
Recruitment.....	9
Marketing and Communication	9
Student Transition and Retention.....	10
Graduation and Beyond	11
Operational Strategies and Tools.....	11
Pricing Strategies	11
Information Management	12
Business Processes and Customer Service	12
Technology.....	12
EM Strategies in Action.....	13
Concluding Remarks.....	16
References.....	18
Appendix A.....	19

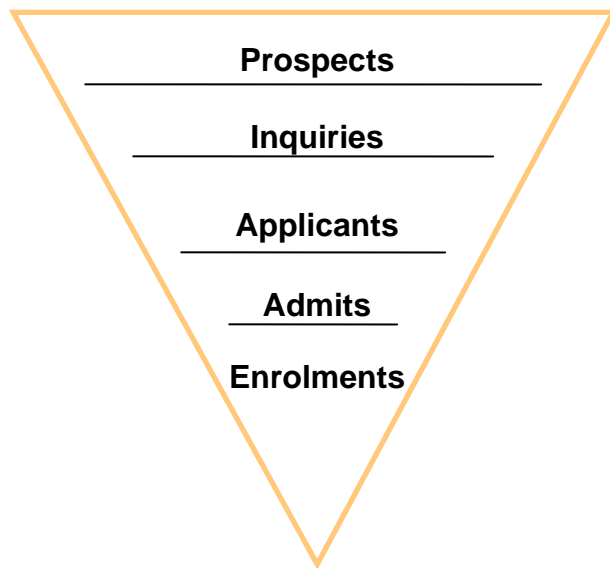
Background

Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) has evolved over the last three decades in higher education, but in the last 5-10 years it has taken on a new significance and more prominent role in post-secondary institutions, both in Canada and the United States. Generally, institutions that have turned to SEM do so as the result of declining enrolment. The factors that influence declines in enrolment can vary, but typically they are the result of changes in population growth and composition in regions that are an institution's traditional source of students, increased competition from private and public institutions, currency and relevance of program offerings, and strong economies that lure learners away from education. Higher education is like many complex systems and as such no single factor is the cause of an institution's decline in enrolment; therefore, no single solution can reverse the trend.

Core Concepts

The Admissions Funnel

From the 1970's to the mid-1980's, the perspective on enrolment management was grounded in the recruitment, admissions, and financial aid functions of post-secondary institutions. These front loading functions supported what is known as the Admission Funnel.



The Admissions Funnel

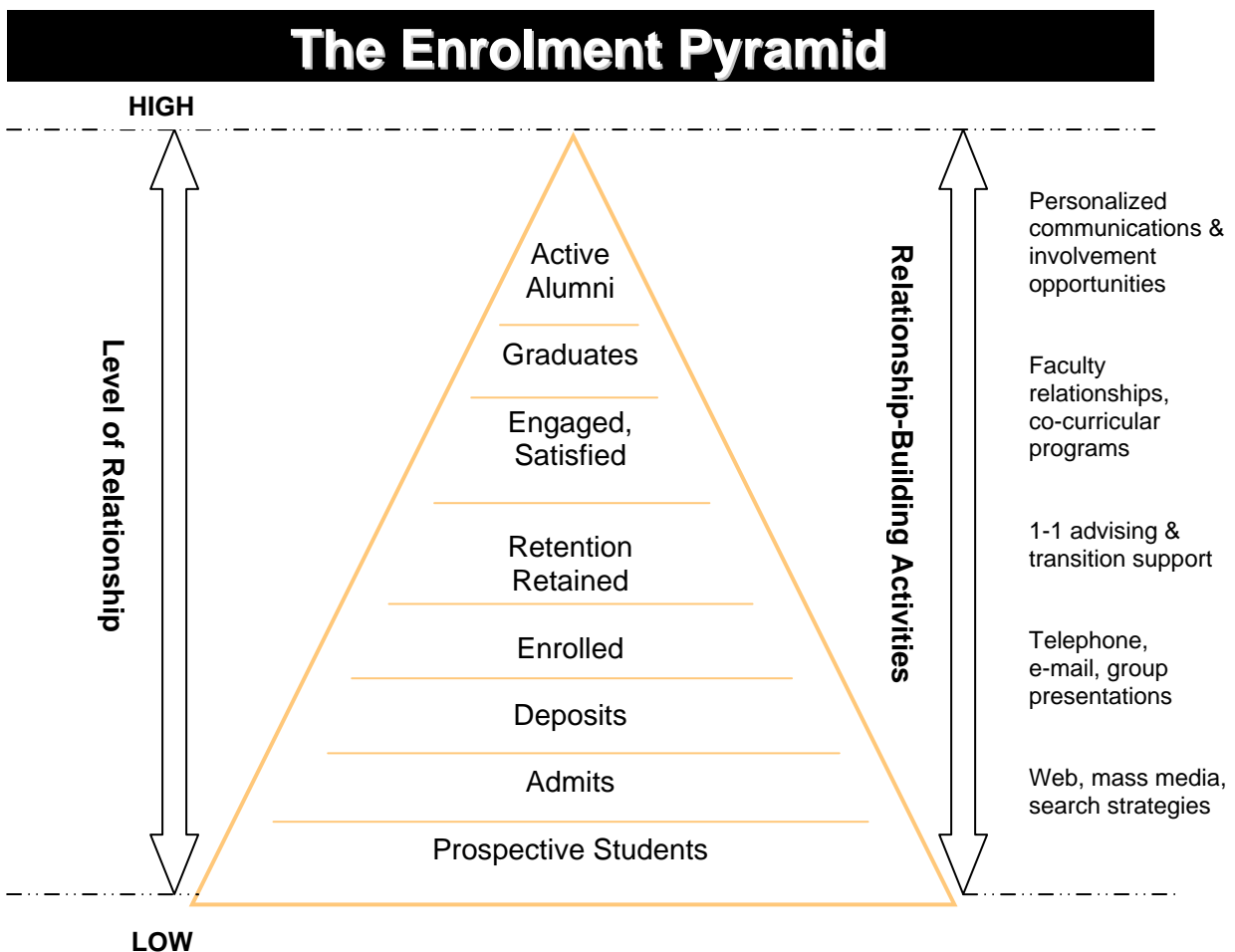
This model facilitated the identification of prospective students and the calculation of conversion rates as they moved through the funnel, from inquiry, to making program applications, to those deemed program eligible and receiving an offer of admission, to the actual enrolment of those receiving an offer.

The Enrolment Pyramid

From the late 1980's onwards, SEM evolved into a comprehensive process that touches every aspect of an institution and seeks not just to attract and enrol learners, but to retain them for the duration of their educational experience and beyond. Michael Dolence, one of the foremost experts on SEM defines it as a:

“... comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students where *'optimum'* is defined within the academic context [emphasis added] of the institution. As such, SEM is an institution-wide process that embraces virtually every aspect of an institution's function and culture.”

The Enrolment Pyramid (depicted below) captures the learner focus of SEM and that we recruit to retain students – the pyramid communicates this vision. At each stage of contact, an institution must identify learner needs and expectations and coordinate resources to meet those needs in order to strengthen the relationship and move learners through the various stages towards graduation and beyond – developing a “lifelong relationship [with the learner] necessitates different activities” (Bontrager) as they move towards the pinnacle.



While the Admissions Funnel makes mathematical sense, “conceptually it creates a false impression that students flow automatically through the funnel as if drawn downward by gravity. In reality, recruiting and retaining students is more like climbing a mountain. It requires careful planning, effective execution, and technical skills. Thus a pyramid may be a more useful graphic representation of the process (Bontrager).”

Essentially, SEM is a concept and process designed to facilitate the achievement of an institution’s mission and the educational goals of the students it serves. It is also the recognition that an institution must move from enrolment by chance to enrolment by design – there is an inextricable fit between the purpose of an institution and the students it serves.

Common misconceptions about SEM

Common misconceptions and sometimes barriers to implementing or moving the SEM agenda forward within an institution are that SEM is:

- a quick fix;
- solely an organizational structure;
- an enhanced admissions and marketing operation;
- a financial drain on the institution;
- an administrative function separate from the academic plan and mission of the institution

(Bontrager & Kerlin, 2004)

To be sure, the success of any SEM plan and structure within an institution is largely determined by institutional commitment *within the academic context* as noted by Dolence.

Niche Market

A number of factors play into an institution determining its niche in the education market; they include a SWOT analysis, assessing the institution’s range of influence, historical status, current competitive status, etc. For Community Colleges, the challenge lies in thinking beyond the traditional mindset about their niches (e.g., low tuition, small classes, convenient location, open admissions, etc.) and thinking about the not-so-obvious niches that will make the difference and set them apart from their competition, such as:

- **Distinctive Programs** – programs whose excellence “casts a glow over all programs” (Bontrager & Kerlin) at the institution. It is also a way to maximize the impact of limited marketing budgets;
- **Geographic reach** – promote programs with an appeal and market beyond the institution’s typical catchment (e.g., nationally-marketable programs);
- **Special Populations** – Carve out special target markets that no one else is serving or doing so ineffectively, such as, Mature Adult Learners, First Nations, Persons with Disabilities, New Immigrants, etc. Grassroots communications strategies work most effectively for the equity groups.

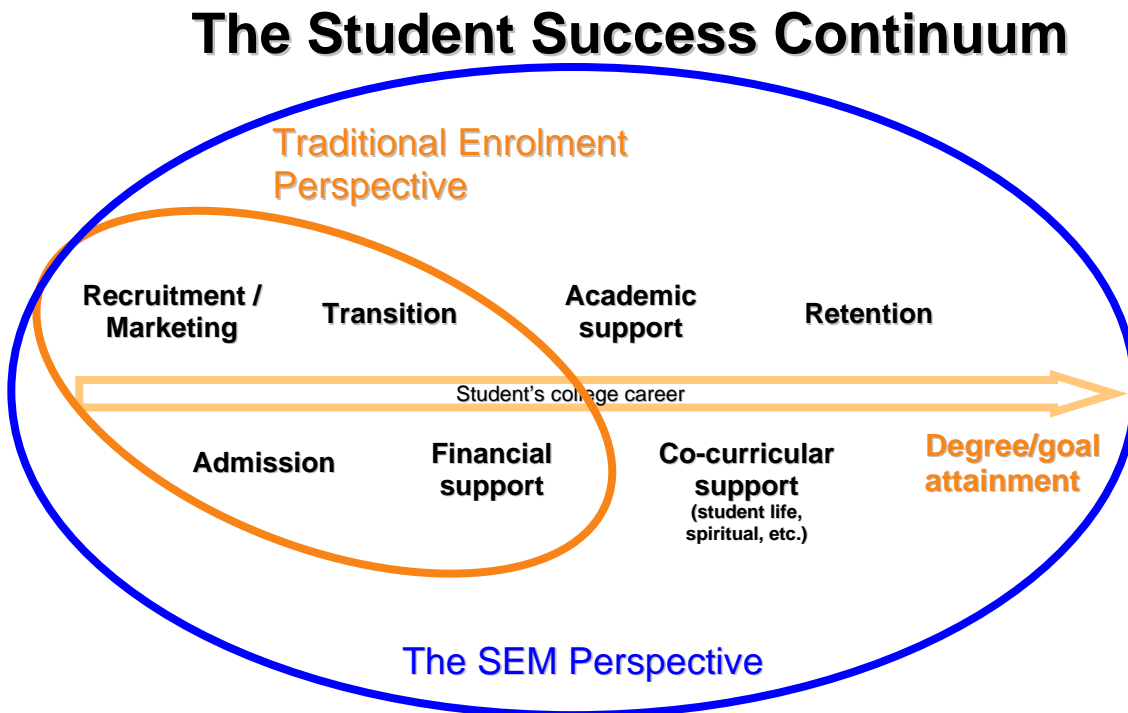
How are SEM outcomes achieved?

Establishing clear goals

An institution needs to set targets for the number and types of students it seeks to serve, each in alignment with the academic plan and institutional mission. The classic conundrum with setting enrolment targets is balancing internal stakeholder expectations of better vs. more vs. fewer students while achieving optimum enrolments. A clear enrolment plan with a focus on the academic mission of the institution will make evident the key metrics that the institution needs to monitor. Once identified, the institution will be able to establish benchmarks and set realistic, and even stretch, targets for each metric and start to measure and evaluate progress towards its goals.

Promoting students' academic success

The academic success of students served by the institution is achieved through improvements to access, transition, persistence, and graduation. The following graphic depicts the student success continuum:



The traditional enrolment perspective focussed on functions typically associated with the admissions funnel, whereas the SEM perspective captures all elements along the continuum. The SEM perspective also reflects current thinking around supporting students' academic success and the shared responsibility across functional units to fostering that success.

Promoting institutional success

Facilitating effective strategic and financial planning are the cornerstones to institutional success. According to Bontrager and Kerlin, the key elements to financial planning are:

- Pricing
- Targeted, strategic investments
- Improving efficiencies
- Financial Aid leveraging
- Planning for the long term

Further, that net revenues realized by the institution should be used as seed money for new initiatives, enhancements, contingencies, etc.

Creation of a data-rich environment

A data-rich environment enables data-driven decision-making and supports timely evaluation of strategies. Generally, educational institutions already are data-rich operations, but investments need to be made in systems that enable data mining and analysis so trends and relationships can be revealed and leveraged to improve the student experience at each level of the pyramid.

Streamlining business processes

Business practices need to align with an institution's academic mission and the operational processes tied to SEM initiatives. "Students do not see enrolment as a railroad track with a number of stations where they must stop... [they] see enrolment as a seamless process, non-stop rather than stop and go... [and they want] to customize access, eliminating those unneeded services. (Henderson)"

Strengthening communications and internal collaboration

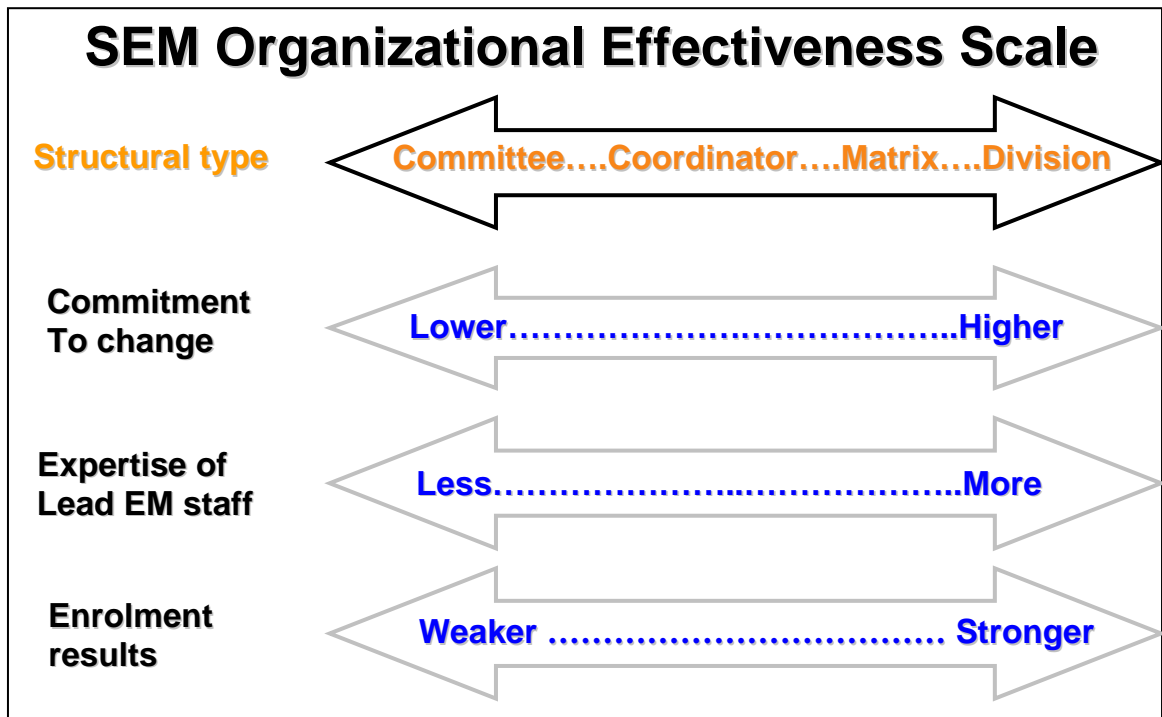
Vertical communications (top-down) convey the institution's vision, while horizontal communications (across and among staff) open up dialogue and complete the feedback loop necessary to support and enable institutional success. Vertical and horizontal communications emphasizes the relationship that every member of an institution plays in enrolment management.

Special considerations for Community Colleges include "open door" or open enrolment programs, and accommodating flexibility in program development and delivery in the context of other institutional initiatives and support services.

Core Structures

The 4 Structural Approaches

In 1982, Kemerer, Baldrige, and Green developed what are known as the 4 Structural Approaches to Enrolment Management in higher education. The four structures are: Committee, Coordinator, Matrix and Division (see Appendix A for structures.) Each structure reflects the level of SEM organizational effectiveness along a continuum in terms of institutional commitment to change, internal expertise and achieving optimum enrolment outcomes.



Generally, the Division model is seen as the most effective structure, but committees can also be effective in the short term. The effectiveness and success of a structure is directly dependent upon accountability and collaboration.

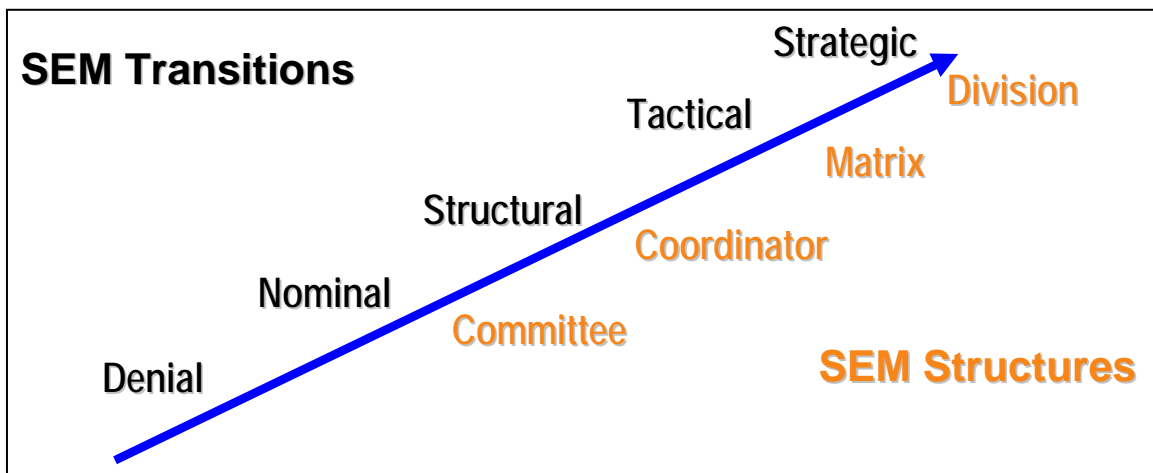
It is important to note that institutions organize for SEM in different ways and those structures will largely be determined by its history, mission, internal expertise, and niche market; however, structure will also be driven by enrolment trends and internal institutional messages. There are five distinct stages to the SEM Transition Model developed by Dolence that reflect an institution's structural state.

The SEM Transition Model

Dolence's SEM Transition Model

Stage	Enrolment Trend	Institutional Messages	Institutional Action
Denial	Down	- "The downturn is temporary." - "It's just (pick one) demographics/the economy/our competitors." - " <u>We are subject to forces beyond our control.</u> "	- Form a committee - Discuss options
Nominal	Down	- "We have to <u>do</u> something." - "We need a 'silver bullet' recruiting/marketing strategy."	- Fund adhoc, short-term strategies lacking enrolment management expertise - More discussion
Structural	Variable	- "This isn't as easy as we thought."	- Limited restructuring - Continue with short-term strategies with minimal enrolment management expertise
Tactical	Building to optimum enrolments	- "To achieve optimum enrolments will require fundamental changes."	- Substantive restructuring - Strategic planning based on reliable data - Strong enrolment management expertise - Targeted funding
Strategic	Achieving optimum enrolments	- " <u>We control our enrolment outcomes.</u> "	- Stable organizational structure and funding - Top-level EM leadership - Consistent planning and assessment cycle

The previously noted SEM structures align with Dolence's Transition model as follows:



As can be seen, with movement up the continuum there is a correlation between type of structure and achieving optimum enrolments. Certainly the solution seems simple –

move to a Division structure to achieve an institution's goals – but case studies from the field demonstrate that doing so is easier said than done.

During the 2004 the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) SEM Conference, representatives for Everett Community College and Oregon State University described their journeys through structural change at their institutions. For instance, Everett Community College in Washington State moved from Denial to Nominal over a 6 year period from 1996 to 2002, and between 2002 and 2004 they were still making progress, though slowly, from Structural to Strategic.

Oregon State University was in the Denial stage in the early 1980's – a period in which they experienced a 14% decline in enrolment and their internal messages were, "It's demographics" and "We're the land grant university, we'll be ok." Between 1985 and 1989 they had achieved a Nominal state though enrolments were still in decline. By 1990-1995 they had shifted to a Structural state and while enrolments had gone up, they dropped again by 22% compared to 1980 enrolment levels. The university recognized that serious changes needed to be made and moved to the Tactical stage over a 7 year period (1996-2003) – a period in which their strategic investments led to strong enrolment growth, up 37% (+5,500).

The key message in these examples is that it takes time to produce results and those results require accountability, collaboration, and commitment from all levels of an institution. The end product of an enrolment management plan is not so much about the plan itself but a commitment to change and a model for making decisions strategically to achieve optimum enrolments and retention of learners.

The Academic Lens... the new approach

While structural approaches are firmly rooted in SEM literature, the last three years have seen a significant shift in viewpoints on structuralism towards the need to refocus enrolment management through the academic lens. Stanley Henderson writes that "when Dolence popularized the concept of strategic enrolment management (SEM), he, in effect, threw down a challenge to the structuralists that many would ignore at their peril." Henderson emphasizes *the academic context* used in Dolence's definition of SEM, pointing out that "The academic context in Dolence's mind was an umbrella concept that made structure important only to the extent that it facilitated the involvement of the academic enterprise in enrolment management. Nothing else was so important in EM as keeping it in the academic context."

SEM through the academic lens opens the door to the underlying character and spirit of an institution's academic culture. Further, it "makes structure the servant rather than the master of enrolment policy and strategy (Henderson)." The six guiding principles presented by Henderson for the new EM ethos are:

- **Shared responsibility** – when SEM reflects institutional identity and culture, it becomes an institution-wide strategy owned by each member of the community

- **Integrated institutional planning** – if enrolment management does not align with academic and strategic planning, institutional functioning is compromised
- **Focus on service** – business practices need to align with the academic mission and be student-focused
- **Key performance indicators** – an internally developed mechanism for measuring institutional health
- **Research and evaluation** – use the tools of the academic enterprise (data, surveys, research) to help identify successes and areas that need attention
- **For the long haul** – enrolment management is a long-term commitment and it evolves as the institution does

The bottom line is that the structure or organization of enrolment management within an institution “is not as important as how it connects with academics. The debate over where EM should be [located] misses the point that it cannot succeed unless it is part of the academic fabric of the institution (Henderson).” The right structure will not work if the wrong people are in those roles/positions, and the “wrong” structure can work if the right people are in those roles/positions.

Core Strategies

Core Strategies generally fall into two categories: Academic Success Strategies and Operational Strategies and Tools.

Academic Success Strategies

Academic success is arguably one of the most important enrolment outcomes for an institution and the students it serves. In 1993 Dolence noted that “it is the curriculum, academic policy, and the corresponding choices students make to attend, persist, and drop out that drive the planning, implementation, and evaluation of an institution’s recruitment and retention programs.” Effective management of these issues will influence institutional enrolment levels and competitive placement within the education market.

Recruitment

The first strategy typically employed under the banner of academic success begins with the recruitment of students that fit with the institution. In this sense, the recruitment process plays an important role in retention as it seeks students whose academic preparation, educational goals, career objectives and personal preferences fit with what the institution has to offer and its culture. Recruitment is also the starting point of building a relationship with students and influencing their decision to apply, enrol and later to remain with the institution. Creating meaningful interactions and experiences is an important element at each stage of a student’s experience, but particularly so in the initial stages.

Marketing and Communication

Targeted marketing and communications strategies occur at each level of the enrolment pyramid. At the outset, the main strategy is to create and/or raise awareness of the

institution, differentiate it within the marketplace and aid recruitment. As noted by Bontrager:

“... marketing efforts are built on three main components: image management, market segmentation, and relevant communications. Image management and market segmentation emanate directly from institutional mission. It is the mission that provides direction to the way the institution portrays itself in the higher education marketplace. Consistency of the content and visual representation of institutional image is critical in these times of intense competition and massive amounts of stimuli in the marketplace.”

The institutional mission enables identification of the market segments the institution should be pursuing. To identify viable markets it is necessary to conduct market research to assess whether a market is a fit with the institution:

- Does the target market have needs that fit with the institutional mission and expertise?
- Is there interest in the market for what the institution has to offer?
- Do societal needs converge with what the institution is able to provide?
- What is the size of the market?
- Are there any barriers to reaching the market if deemed viable?

Ideally, the best kind of market to pursue is the one where its needs naturally converge with what the institution is able to provide. Pursuing students that do not align with institutional strengths and abilities will result in an unnecessary depletion of resources and could potentially hurt the image of the institution in cases where students' expectations are not met. Certainly, there may be markets to which the institution can respond with minor adjustments.

Another tool used in marketing and communications strategies is predictive modeling. “This tool uses the characteristics of students who have chosen an institution in the past to predict which prospective students will enrol in the future (Bontrager).” This mechanism assists recruiters in identifying and recruiting prospects that are the most likely to enrol with the institution.

Ultimately, image-building for institutions must be based on thoughtful market research and testing of communication strategies. “Institutions waste countless dollars each year on communications strategies that are not tested with the target audience. Often these decisions are made by campus decisionmakers who mistake personal preferences for effective communications (Bontrager).”

Student Transition and Retention

Once a student has chosen the institution, the focus needs to turn to strategies aimed at transitioning them into post-secondary life. Many institutions start to build bonds with new students by holding early registration and orientation programs during the summer months, while others offer pre-college programs that include bridge programs intended to

support academic preparation (e.g., remedial studies, training in study skills, etc.) These types of programs “have a powerful effect in relieving pre-college anxieties for both students and parents (Bontrager).” These types of orientations are also seen as critical elements to student retention. Some institutions even extend transition programs throughout the first year experience via leadership development, peer mentoring, faculty mentoring, etc.

Graduation and Beyond

Graduation does not signal an end to the relationship that an institution has built with a student. In fact, it’s the beginning of nurturing an alumni relationship for a variety of reasons. Typically, alumni have been viewed as donors to their alma maters, but they can also be engaged for promotional purposes highlighting their professional achievements and how their education enabled their success. Also, alumni, as parents or mentors, can influence future generations to enrol with the institution.

Operational Strategies and Tools

Pricing Strategies

The management of pricing strategies revolves primarily around price elasticity, net revenue, and financial aid leveraging.

Price elasticity speaks to how much the market will bear in terms of what it is willing to pay for a commodity – in higher education this concept relates to the cost of tuition. When tuition becomes or is perceived as too high for the value, this generally leads to lower enrolments and a decline in revenues. “Price elasticity refers to this interplay of the cost of tuition and willingness of students to pay (Bontrager).” Control of tuition pricing is generally not an issue with private institutions, but most public institutions have little control over the setting of tuition levels and associated increases are generally legislated by state or provincial governments.

“The concept of net revenue recognizes that the process of attracting and retaining students requires significant investment in recruitment and retention efforts, including grants and scholarships that are funded from institutional resources (Bontrager).” For this reason, an institution must be strategic in its investments that support enrolment management efforts. Further, enrolment management investments must be supported by business plans that include projected *Return On Investment* (ROI) for the short and long term, and accountability for outcomes.

Financial aid leveraging, also known as tuition discounting, “is a strategy that combines the concepts of price elasticity and net revenue to determine the appropriate amount of institutionally funded financial aid needed to entice specific students to enroll (Bontrager).” This pricing strategy is designed to attract target populations or minimize the effect of price elasticity for other applicants. Many U.S. institutions have used this as one of their main enrolment management strategies as a result of restrictions placed on setting tuition levels noted above; however, recent “studies have shown that after initial encouraging results, institutions are prone to applying the strategy too broadly, with

negative net revenue results over time (Bontrager).” Utilization of regular evaluations and adjustments is key for financial aid leveraging to be an effective pricing strategy for public institutions.

Information Management

Enrolment management strategies are highly dependent upon market research, customized communications with students, calculations of conversion rates and net revenue and understanding the dynamics that affect student attrition. In order for an institution and its enrolment managers to effectively monitor and respond to changing conditions in a timely manner they must have access to large amounts of data. However, a data-rich environment is not enough, having the tools and people with the skills and ability to analyze and interpret the information into meaningful knowledge is essential to decision makers. This makes enrolment management “highly dependent on institutional research and information technology” (Bontrager) to enable the provision of information and transform it into the knowledge needed by decision makers.

Business Processes and Customer Service

“Successful SEM operations place a high premium on the analysis and continuous improvement of business practices, seeking to provide the highest level of service in the shortest time possible. This issue is less a management issue than a cultural one (Bontrager).” It just makes good educational and fiscal sense to develop an integrated system that reduces or eliminates duplication of effort in planning and delivery of programs, courses and services. To do this, critical business processes must be identified, examined, streamlined and monitored to ensure continuous improvement of services to all stakeholders (students, parents, staff, etc.). An institution needs to anticipate and respond to learner needs in order to retain them. In order for SEM initiatives to be successful, the personnel who are the keepers of these critical business processes need to be a part of the process improvement from the beginning – people are more likely to support what they help create. An institution can nurture this type of cultural change by establishing expectations and rewards (e.g., employee of the month or similar recognition program), communicating with staff about SEM goals and their role in helping the institution reach them, and providing staff with development opportunities relevant to their role and professional aspirations.

Technology

“The ability to evaluate, conceptualize, purchase, implement, and continually maintain information technology is a required set of skills in the SEM organization (Bontrager).” While technology can provide solutions to SEM operations, caution must be exercised. Technological solutions “should be evaluated carefully not only for their ‘wow factor,’ but more importantly for their ability to deliver cost-effective improvements to enrolment operations (Bontrager).” In this sense, technology plays an important role in the review and examination of core business processes and the interplay with information management – the data we collect, how we collect it, how we manage and leverage it, and how we analyze and report out on it.

EM Strategies in Action

Here is a sampling of EM strategies that are being used by higher education:

Pre-Registration Strategies

- ▶ Early awareness promotion of scholarships and financial aid opportunities, timelines, deadlines to High School students via recruitment efforts and information pamphlets distributed with regular school communications going home to parents.
- ▶ Recording contact information and program preferences of prospects to enable tailored communications and proactive follow-up by Recruitment staff. This contact information can also be used by Advising/Admissions to phone students for undersubscribed programs or to cross-market programs if their first choice program is full.
- ▶ Track incoming calls to registration offices by 3-digit telephone exchange prefix and day, week, month, and year. The volume of calls against historical patterns can be used as an “early warning system” of demand or lack thereof for an upcoming enrolment term by small geographical area. This information can be used as a trigger to tactically increase or focus marketing efforts.
- ▶ A coordinated communication strategy for High School Counselors (e.g., a webpage dedicated to their information needs, the kinds of resources they need, and the kinds of information the institution wants them to know about courses and programs, entrance requirements, etc.)
- ▶ A tuition fee reduction (\$5-10/course) for students that register in a course by a specified date.
- ▶ A student ambassador program or a student volunteer tour guide program to assist with campus tours and recruiting at special events.
- ▶ A “Steps to College” poster produced in a number of languages that is intended to communicate what students in middle and high-school need, grade by grade, to do to prepare for college. Included in the publication are instructions and important deadlines, such as financial aid. The poster is widely distributed and is seen as a simple way to reach parents, especially those who may not have had a college experience.
- ▶ The California State University system has developed an Early Assessment Program for Grade 11 students to take a voluntary test to assess their preparedness for College-level Math and English. The test can be taken online and students can use the results to address any skills gaps before graduating from high school. The adoption rate for taking the test has been high, about 70% of eligible students have taken the Math test and 77% have taken the English test.

Post Registration Strategies

- ▶ Customized event-driven e-mails to students. For instance, a congratulations e-mail is sent to students who successfully complete a course when triggered by entry of a successful letter grade into their student record. This e-mail is used to communicate:
 - Suggestions of 1-3 courses to take based on what other students have taken in similar programs (which the student has not already taken)
 - Contains a hyperlink to the course description web pages for the suggested courses
 - Has a hyperlink to a course evaluation survey to obtain student feedback on the course just completed
- ▶ Offerings analysis used to identify low and high enrolment courses and programs, aggressively market those with high enrolment potential, remove those that are underperforming, and introduce offerings in place of those dropped
- ▶ Development and delivery of hybrid programs that blend applied and academic disciplines (e.g., Youth Justice Worker at Douglas College, Applied Psychology at Kwantlen, Bachelor of Technology (Trades and Technology Leadership) at TRU-OL, etc.)
- ▶ Peer mentoring programs. Research shows that most students leave college in their first year and that “front loading” retention strategies, such as senior-freshman peer mentoring is an effective mechanism for transitioning freshmen into college life.
- ▶ Exit interviews with dropout students to determine issues that led to their decision. The information can be used in combination with other data to develop early intervention strategies appropriate to recurring issues.
- ▶ Process to identify students “at risk” for dropout. Identification of “at risk” students is generally based on analysis of historical trends of drop outs by student characteristics, program, timing of dropout, and exit interviews.

Pre and Post Registration Strategies

- ▶ A webpage dedicated to the information needs of parents (e.g., FAQs about the institution, important application deadlines, entrance requirements, fees, etc.)
- ▶ Targeted publications for various purposes/stakeholders (e.g., Campus Visit brochure, Financial Aid brochure, Scholarship brochure, Student Newsletter, Parent Newsletter, etc.)
- ▶ Use technology to seamlessly communicate with prospects, automate admissions processing (virtually paperless), and build campus relations. Registration for campus events and services is online self-serve and each student can customize their own web

portal views. The system also facilitates content management and communications with parents and high school counsellors.

Concluding Remarks

Within the planning cycle, SEM informs, enables, and evaluates institutional goals, structures, and strategies against defined outcomes and associated metrics. The SEM implementation cycle as noted by Bontrager is as follows:

CLARIFY GOALS

- ▶ Link to institutional mission
- ▶ Number of students
- ▶ Types of students
- ▶ Net tuition revenue

CONDUCT RESEARCH

- ▶ Performance indicators
- ▶ Student outcomes assessment
- ▶ Market research

CREATE A SEM ORGANIZATION

- ▶ Structure
- ▶ Composition
- ▶ Philosophical alignment
- ▶ Direct/dotted-line relationships

ASSESS STAFF RESOURCES

- ▶ Staff alignment
- ▶ Staff development
- ▶ Reward systems

REVIEW, RENEW, AND INITIATE CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

- ▶ Coordinate student success strategies
- ▶ Link to academic policy and program
- ▶ Link to institutional finances
- ▶ Link to strategic planning

ASSESS STRATEGIES

- ▶ Outcomes assessment
- ▶ New, replacement strategies

EVALUATE AND ADJUST

- ▶ Feedback loop
- ▶ Continuous evaluation and change

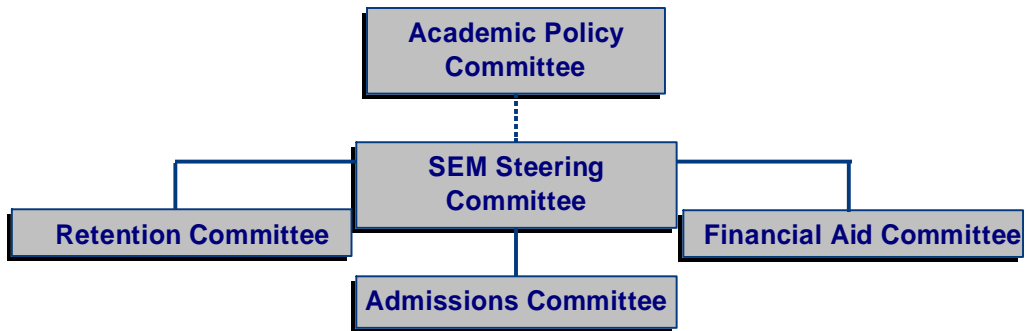
In the final analysis, SEM is not a “quick fix.” Rather, it is a systematic approach to deployment of strategic responses to institutional enrolment challenges. “One of the most important SEM disciplines is patience in allowing the implementation cycle not only to play out once, but multiple times. This allows hunch-driven, ‘silver-bullet’

strategies to give way to the sound planning and careful evaluation required of effective enrolment management. Only then will an institution realize the power of SEM and the potential for charting a stronger future (Bontrager).”

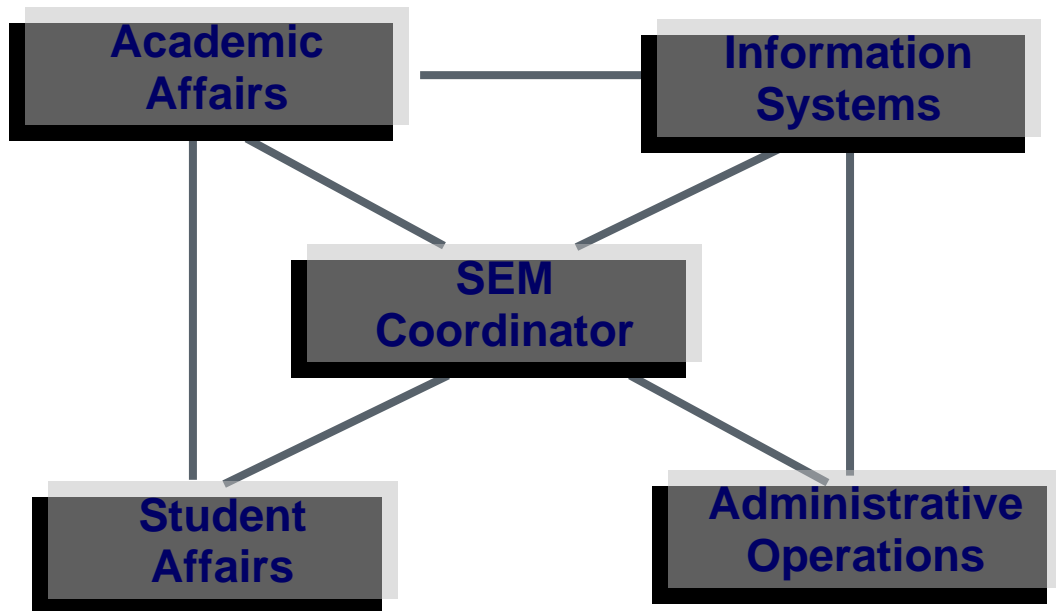
References

- AACRAO Consulting. "Finding the Academic Context: The SEM Role for Faculty." June 29, 2007. <<http://consulting.aacrao.org/2007/06/29/the-sem-role-for-faculty/>>.
- Black, Jim. "Defining Enrollment Management: The Structural Frame." <http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:1hwy44LTt4cJ:www.semworks.net/content/resources/docs/defining_enrollment_management_structural_frame.pdf+Henderson+Strategic+Enrolment+Management&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9&gl=ca>.
- Bontrager, Bob. "Strategic Enrolment Management: Core Structures and Best Practices." College and University Journal, Vol 79, No. 4. Spring 2004.
- Bontrager, Bob, C. Kerlin. "Strategic Enrollment Management: Core concepts and Strategies." November 2004. Orlando, FL: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- Bontrager, Bob, C. Kerlin. "Creating Effective SEM Organizations." November 2004. Orlando, FL: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- Henderson, Stanley E. "Refocusing Enrollment Management: Losing Structure and Finding the Academic Context." <http://www.umd.umich.edu/fileadmin/template/emsl/files/EMSL_Office_Documents/CUJ8003_henderson.pdf>.
- Massa, Robert J. "Strategic Enrollment Management: An Introduction." Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA. July, 2003. <http://www.aacrao.org/sem13/preconference_reading.pdf>.
- The College Board. "The Enrollment Management Review." Volume 18, Issue 1 Fall, 2002. Editor: Don Hossler Associate Editor: Larry Hoezee. Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning. <http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/highered/pub/emr/EMRFall02.pdf>.
- The College Board. "The Enrollment Management Review." Volume 20, Issue 3 Spring, 2005. Editor: Don Hossler Associate Editor: Larry Hoezee. Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning. <http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/highered/pub/emr/EMR-Spring-2005.pdf>.

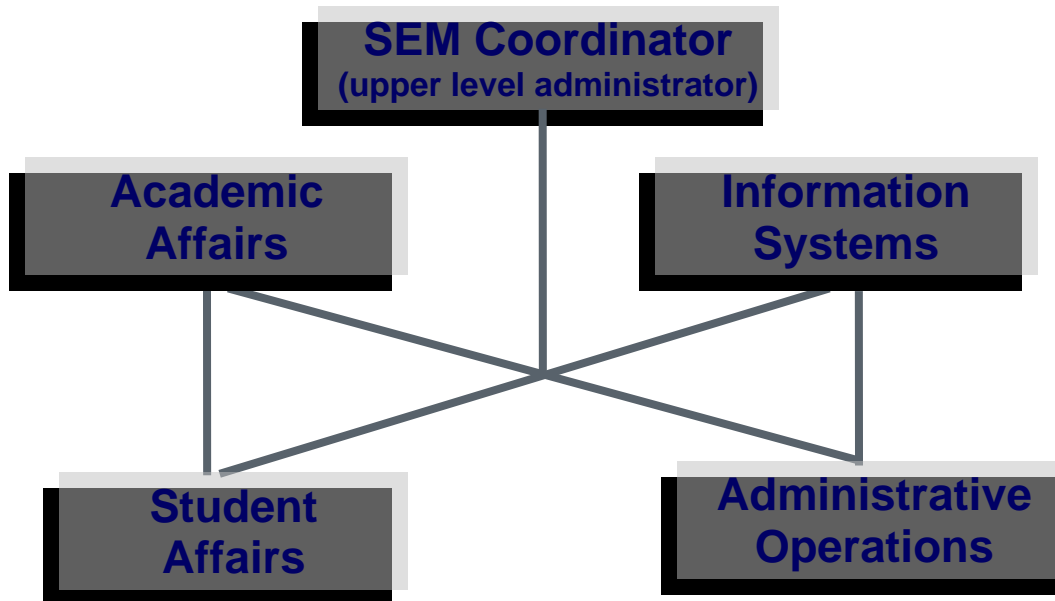
Committee Model



Coordinator Model



Matrix Model



Division Model

