

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND COUPLING OF ENROLLMENT
MANAGEMENT DIVISIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

Enrollment Management has been adopted by institutions of higher education as a strategy for managing enrollment to meet institutional goals, and it increasingly manifests as an administrative division that supports students. Many models of Enrollment Management exist, with the Divisional model being the most centralized; however, even within a single model, institutions have created varying organizational structures and compositions of administrative functions or units. Enrollment Management provides a common purpose and strategy integrating individual units that have significant impact on student enrollment – including student choice and the student experience. Units associated with these functions often include a combination of marketing, admissions, financial aid, registrar, institutional research, bursar, student orientation, retention and advising and career services.

This study aims to understand how institutional goals and environmental factors contribute to the organizational structure of Enrollment Management, as well as how the composition promotes integration between individual subunits. A comparative case study was employed to understand factors that impact decisions pertaining to the structure and composition of the Enrollment Management Divisions at two mid-sized, private institutions. Semi-structured

interviews with the Chief Enrollment Officer as well as directors of the individual units were conducted on institutional priorities, enrollment goals, and scope of operation. Results were analyzed with qualitative software using both inductive and deductive coding to identify themes that answered the research question. The findings suggest that organizational structure can be heavily influenced by the experience and skill level of both individuals within the structure as well as the institutional leaders outside the structure with direct oversight. In addition, the centrality of revenue to decision-making, the culture of the institution, and the desire to enhance legitimacy through prestige all shaped the composition and structure of the Enrollment Management Divisions investigated. The results contribute to the literature that structure should follow strategy, as well as be reflective of the institutional culture; however, results also suggest that the degree of structural coupling could impact integration of subunits and ultimately the overall effectiveness of the Division. This information provides the additional framework of coupling as a consideration for institutional leaders and practitioners of enrollment management.

INDEX WORDS: enrollment management, organizational structure, enrollment management division, structural coupling

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family. You believed in me and supported me through this journey, and I would not be here without you. Thank you for understanding of my lack of phone calls, unresponsiveness to text messages, and my absence from gatherings. Most of all, thank you for taking interest in my work and the encouragement you provided.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem.....	6
Research Question.....	7
Significance of the Study	7
2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	9
Historical Evolution of Enrollment Management	9
Enrollment Management Today.....	11
Enrollment Management Structures.....	14
The Future of Enrollment & Opportunities for Research	20
Theoretical Framework	21
3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	26
Research Question.....	26
Methodology	27
Methods.....	29

Data Analysis	32
Trustworthiness	33
Potential Research Bias and Assumptions	34
4 FINDINGS.....	36
University of Sole	37
Lune University.....	47
Thematic Finding #1 The Influence of Individuals	61
Thematic Finding #2 Culture Embedded in Structure	68
Thematic Finding #3 The Central Role of Revenue	74
Thematic Finding #4 The Quest for Prestige	78
5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....	81
Discussion	83
Implications.....	91
Limitation and Future Research.....	96
Conclusion	98
REFERENCES	100
APPENDICES	
A Interview Participants by Title	107
B Interview Protocol.....	108

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 : Institutional Profiles.....	37

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Student Life Cycle.....	2
Figure 2: University of Sole Organizational Chart	39
Figure 3: Lune University Organizational Chart	49
Figure 4: Internal Influences on the Organizational Structure.....	92

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the United States is facing scrutiny and growing skepticism regarding the return on investment afforded by a college degree. In addition, rising tuition, decreased state and federal funding, and anticipated declines in traditional college-age students are just a few of the pressing issues on the minds of many in the higher education sector (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Russo & Coomes, 2000). While these issues are not new and have evolved over decades, their imminence is undeniable as colleges and universities strive to compete in a saturated marketplace and become increasingly dependent on tuition. For most institutions, tuition from enrollment is the largest source of revenue; but as tuition continues to rise faster than inflation, institutions find that tuition discounting is a necessary tool to be able to achieve sustainable enrollments (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Russo & Coomes, 2000). The need to balance both the revenue and expense associated with enrolling qualified students, as well as to help an institution advance its mission, has resulted in enrollment being a critical component for success.

Over the years, many definitions have been created and revised to define enrollment management. Don Hossler and Bob Bontrager (2015), leading practitioners in enrollment management, defined it this way:

Enrollment management is both an organizational concept as well as a systematic set of activities designed to enable educational institutions to exert more influence over their student enrollments and total net tuition revenue derived from enrolled students.

Organized by strategic planning and supported by institutional research, enrollment management activities center on student college choice, transition to college, student attrition and retention, and student outcomes. These processes are studied to guide institutional practices in the areas 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 (revised in 2001 from Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990, p.5)

David Kalsbeek (2006), another leading practitioner in the field, defined enrollment management more succinctly as “a comprehensive approach to integrating all of the University’s programs, practices, policies, and planning related to achieving the optimal recruitment, retention, and graduation of students” (p.4). These definitions highlight the wide-ranging nature of enrollment management that traverses the student life cycle. The student life cycle, illustrated in Figure 1, is described as the point which begins with recruitment a year or so before a student enters the university and spans through the point of graduation.

Figure 1

Stages of the Student Life Cycle



Enrollment management has evolved in both breadth and sophistication. While initially used to reference a set of practices utilized by an institution to more closely manage enrollment, it has since morphed into an organizational structure designed to create efficiencies, streamline resources, and leverage expertise (Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Vander Schee, 2007). Many different organizational structures have formed to support

enrollment management, depending on the institutional type, enrollment needs and resource allocation available. The model of enrollment management can vary in structure, composition, and strategy across institutions, and even between institutions that may appear quite similar (Kalsbeek, 2006). Due to the similar nature of enrollment management functions, one might assume that there would be a ubiquitous structure for the ideal enrollment management operation or models deemed most effective for particular types of institutions based on goals, mission, and scope. For instance, Kemerer et al. (1982) introduced four distinct conceptual enrollment models. However, leaders within an institution must take into account various considerations before determining what is the correct structure and composition for their specific institution (Barnes & Bourke, 2014; Black, 2004; Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006).

The literature refers to the four models of enrollment management as the committee structure, the enrollment coordinator, the matrix model, and the Enrollment Management Division (Bontrager, 2004; Henderson, 2005; Kalsbeek, 2006). The organizational structure required for these models ranges from no necessary restructuring to a newly created administrative arm. Research presents advantages and limitations to each of these models based on characteristics connected to structure and function. While there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, the Enrollment Management Division is believed to be the most effective model for producing results, because it signals a clear investment on the part of the institution. The divisional model requires the most resources, investment, and cooperation among stakeholders, and it often leads to stronger enrollment outcomes due to a greater institutional commitment (Henderson, 2005; Bontrager, 2004). If an institution lacks the financial resources or support from key stakeholders and institutional constituencies, then the divisional model will not be able to gain the campus-wide support needed to reach its potential.

Once an institution commits to an Enrollment Management Division, the variations of administrative functions incorporated under the Enrollment Management Division are numerous. Practitioners stress the importance of the structure reflecting the institutional mission, values, and leadership, but give little practical guidance as to how divisions should be shaped to align with institutional goals (Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Flanigan, 2016). Composition is identified as a key dimension that should be intentionally assembled based on goals and strategies (Bontrager, 2004). Admission, financial aid, and the registrar functions are often the backbone of an enrollment management organization for many institutions, but more developed models integrate additional administrative units depending on desired outcomes. In a study conducted by Huddleston and Rumbough (1997), seven functional units were identified as the most prevalent under the enrollment management umbrella. Admission, financial aid, and registrar were among the most common units, with the addition of institutional research and planning, marketing, new student orientation, and retention and advising. The academic mission coupled with an emphasis on a student-centered approach should be paramount in determining which units connect within an enrollment management organization (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Henderson, 2005).

In the Enrollment Management Division, some or all of these units may report to a senior leader at the vice president or vice provost level, providing a centralized approach. This person should have expertise in understanding enrollment strategy, complemented by a strong data-driven approach, and create a culture that encourages an open system of collaboration. Hossler, Kalsbeek, and Bontrager (2015) affirmed that the effectiveness of a strategic enrollment management operation, “is a function of the skills of the individual, and their management team, plus the culture of the organization, that determine the success...” (p.44). In addition to

composition, though, the person to whom the Chief Enrollment Officer reports is also an important consideration. Again, variations exist across institutions, but Hossler, Kalsbeek, and Bontrager (2015) emphasized the importance of the person to whom the Chief Enrollment Officer reports be at the presidential or provost level and able to devote time to ensuring that enrollment is at the forefront of conversations around institutional planning and policy. Additionally, they note the benefits of the Chief Enrollment Officer being a member of the president's cabinet or senior leadership team.

Therefore, the absence of a uniform practice or singular organizational model is evident in how enrollment management is defined, developed, organized, and implemented within an institution. Most practitioners agree that institutional type, mission, and culture should inform the structure of enrollment management, but the perspectives on the optimal organizational structure vary widely (Kalsbeek, 2006; Henderson, 2005; Gowen & Owen, 1991). The literature acknowledges that even when institutions are similar in type, size, values, and mission, enrollment management operations vary in both hierarchy and scope. The literature is sparse when examining the outcomes and justification for disparate enrollment management structures within seemingly similar institutions. Enrollment management centralization can create efficiencies, which can result in greater effectiveness, and one example can be found in a student information system that links data across student services (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Hossler & Kalsbeek, 2013). Yet the literature falls short of outlining which services or administrative functions should be located within a single organizational structure.

Despite its infancy within higher education, enrollment management has become quite complex and sophisticated for institutions concerned with long-term enrollment success. Enrollment management evolved to strategically address problems of market competition,

constraints on revenue, and inefficiencies related to resource management with a comprehensive approach. The success of enrollment management can be tied to many key performance indicators, but it must be intentionally designed and properly supported within the organizational structure to achieve balance with the numerous, and often competing, priorities of an institution. Looking ahead to the future of higher education, enrollment management will likely grow in importance and serve as the bedrock for institutions that are thriving, as well as those seeking legitimacy and desiring to strengthen their market position.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this case study is to understand how the organizational composition of the Enrollment Management Divisions at two mid-sized, private institutions differs and the degree to which the difference in composition allows institutional leaders to strategically meet goals related to various aspects of enrollment. Since its conception, enrollment management has attentively focused on the front end of the institutional pipeline of identifying, recruiting and enrolling students. However, it is becoming increasingly frequent for divisional models of enrollment management to encompass a more complete view of the student life cycle that includes retention and graduation, rather than solely focusing on the inputs to the institution. This study examines two institutions that have created Enrollment Management Divisions as part of their organizational operations. One institution incorporates a more comprehensive student life cycle approach in its enrollment division, spanning from prospective student to alumnae and resulting in a greater focus on student services. The second Enrollment Management Division focuses its efforts more on the traditional model of combining admissions and financial aid. The study seeks to identify strengths and limitations of the organizational structure and composition within the Enrollment Management Division. It will assist practitioners and leaders within higher

education in understanding how alignment of services can be structured to achieve institutional priorities.

Research Question

The research question is:

Based on the perception of institutional leaders, what are the internal and external factors that shape how an Enrollment Management Division is structured at an institution?

The existing literature analyzing how specific enrollment management structures manifest in relation to a particular institution's mission and culture is hazy at best. The literature is also vague regarding the strengths and weaknesses within the composition of any particular Enrollment Management Division. Due to the variable nature of enrollment management, it is evident why a uniform organizational structure appropriate for all institutions is not possible or ideal, but the literature documenting outcomes derived from various adaptations of an Enrollment Management Division remains scarce. Addressing this gap in the literature, this case study will analyze the Enrollment Management Division at two institutions, highlight existing differences related to the administrative composition, and connect those differences to outcomes of the overall enrollment management function at each institution.

Significance of the Study

The rise in tuition, continued decreases in state and federal funding, and a predicted demographic decline in the number of high school graduates are just a few challenges on the horizon for institutions of higher education. The need for universities and colleges to be strategic with resources will remain critical, and enrollment management has been one solution to removing barriers between units that has allowed for greater control of revenue and positive outcomes affecting retention. In addition to a centralized approach resulting in better

communication and greater efficiencies, enrollment management is a tool that utilizes predictive modeling and market data to help inform decisions related to institutional strategy.

Enrollment management has been adopted broadly by institutions in a relatively short timeframe and at times in the absence of clarity about its goals or an integrated approach (Bontrager, 2004).

Institutional theory provides insight into the phenomenon of enrollment management and explains some of the proliferation through memetic isomorphism (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Schultz & Lucido, 2011). Critics of enrollment management point to strategies that leverage it as a revenue-generating tool restricting access and equity, a gimmicky marketing ploy, and as another arm that contributes to administrative bulk. However, at its best, enrollment management is woven into the strategic plan, grounded in data, promotes long-term planning, and has guiding principles that support the academic mission and student-experience (Bontrager, 2004; Gowen & Owen, 1991; Henderson, 2005).

Institutions that have implemented enrollment management strategically, by considering specific institutional needs and culture prior to adopting a change management plan, report the emergence of successful partnerships, a shared vernacular and dialogue, and decision-making informed by data (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek & McGrath, 2004; Pollock, 2004). A key dimension to consider when establishing an Enrollment Management Division is the composition of the structure and which of the subunits (or functions) should be included (Bontrager, 2004). Understanding the structural and compositional differences of the Enrollment Management Divisions at two institutions similar in size, type, and mission will provide valuable insights for practitioners of enrollment management and institutional leaders.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Evolution of Enrollment Management

Enrollment management, a rather recent concept within higher education, is both an organizational structure and a set of practices that establishes strategy for institutions to manage resources, improve retention, and help plan for the future. While the term “enrollment management” was coined in the 1970s and the first professional organization emerged in the 1980s, the events in the United States after World War II spurred the demand for enrollment management, starting with the GI Bill of Rights in 1944. The GI Bill provided the first model of a federal financial aid program that aimed to provide access to students who wanted to pursue a college education but may have been prohibited by the cost of tuition (Thelin, 2019; Coomes, 2000). With the barrier of cost removed for many, over one million veterans enrolled in college by 1946 and more than two million had enrolled by 1950 (Thelin, 2019).

A commission appointed by President Harry S. Truman in 1946 to make recommendations on the state of higher education resulted in three major recommendations, each related to equity and access. One recommendation focused on removing financial barriers at the state and federal levels; the second established community colleges in each state that would provide free education through the fourteenth grade; and the third recommended a national scholarship program available for non-veterans. In addition, shortly after the National Defense Education Act was introduced to provide numerous benefits to higher education, including the

National Defense Student Loan (NDSL) Program, the NDSL enabled funds to be available at low-cost loans for students (Coomes, 2000).

Students were benefiting from new financial aid programs at both the state and federal levels, but the majority of the funds went to offset the tuition costs of community colleges or public universities. As a result of the offset of government funds, state institutions kept tuition low, but private institutions did not have the same advantage. Due to the increased demand for postsecondary education during this time, the number of community colleges and 4-year state universities grew substantially. Compounded by the financial incentives that public education offered students, private institutions grew concerned about their footing in the marketplace as they experienced declines in enrollment. In turn, private institutions began to actively market to and recruit students in an effort to secure enrollment (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). In addition to actively recruiting students, institutional leaders also bolstered their fundraising efforts to compete with the tuition incentives offered at state institutions. Private schools' fundraising efforts allowed for the creation of new financial aid programs that offered institutional grants to help offset the cost of tuition. In turn, private institutions could better compete for students who would otherwise decline private schools' admission offers to attend state institutions with lower tuition costs (Thelin, 2019). These early efforts to recruit and provide financial incentives to students served as a catalyst for the practice of strategic enrollment management and comprise the first attempts to respond to the growing pressures of marketization in higher education.

As the final cohort of the Baby Boomer generation graduated high school in the early 1980s, the population of traditional college-age students fell precipitously, resulting in a 20% enrollment decline by the mid-1990s (Bontrager, 2004). The concept of enrollment management spread relatively quickly among private institutions struggling with the declining traditional

college-age population, the saturation of the marketplace, and increased competition from state institutions due to low tuition. Bontrager (2004) wrote, “In this environment, colleges and universities began to employ more comprehensive approaches to enrollment, which moved beyond marketing, recruitment, and financial aid to include sophisticated financial aid strategies, institutional research, and retention efforts” (p.11). While the term “enrollment management” initially described the practice of understanding the overlap of admission, financial aid, and retention efforts, it was further legitimized as an administrative innovation when integrated into organizational structures with the formal role of supporting institutional enrollment goals (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015).

Enrollment Management Today

Fast forward from the 1990s to 2020 and many of the same issues are ongoing in today’s higher education landscape. The population of traditional college-age students experienced steady growth from 1996-2015, but projected declines in the potential student population are on the horizon starting in 2025 (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2020). Even during periods of growth, each institution seeks to enroll the best students possible to move closer to institutional goals and enrollment targets. As a result, a cyclical process has evolved in which there is competition for students, heightened marketization to attract those students, and a need for increased revenue to remain competitive. While not all institutions are concerned about prestige and rankings to the same degree, there is a clear relationship between market demand and the vitality or wealth of an institution. Universities and colleges must compete for students and other resources in an increasingly crowded marketplace. The success of an institution depends heavily upon the tuition revenue generated from students, which is reliant on enrollment stability and success (Zemsky, 2001).

Because of decreases in state and federal funding, public institutions, like their private counterparts, have become more dependent on institutional sources to support operational budgets, and tuition revenue has become a significant source of funding (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kraatz et al., 2010; Russo & Coomes, 2000; Schultz & Lucido, 2011). Academic capitalism refers to how higher education has adopted more business-oriented marketing tactics to recruit students in an effort to increase demand (Schultz & Lucido, 2011; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009; Wellen, 2005). In addition, the emergence of national rankings of higher education institutions has contributed to the heightened marketization among colleges. Prestige of an institution is often a product of its ranking from sources like *US News & World Report*, and ranking positions correlate with student demand and tuition revenue (Hossler, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Wellen, 2004).

Some critics argue that institutions have lost their sense of purpose and strayed from their academic missions to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors, including aggressive marketing to attract students and the arms race to create new buildings or obtain cutting-edge technologies in competition with peers (Hossler, 2004; Kraatz et al., 2010). Enrollment challenges contribute to the marketization of higher ed due to the emphasis on schools attracting top students while simultaneously positioning themselves to compete better in the college rankings. The college rankings have also placed importance on retention and graduation rates, subsequently resulting in greater focus on student success and student outcomes. Institutional leaders have ramped up student support programs and worked to remove barriers that negatively affect persistence; at times, these initiatives have led to reorganization of some units identified as providing student services.

Concurrently, the reductions in state and federal funding combined with the marketization of higher education have forced institutions to prudently manage resources and identify new revenue sources (Bontrager, 2004, Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Schultz & Lucido, 2011). Institutional leaders have indicated that a significant motivation for centralizing enrollment efforts was related to revenue concerns and the notion that centralization would facilitate efficiencies (Schultz & Lucido, 2011). As the percentage of state and federal funds has declined and tuition costs have climbed, the pricing of tuition and institutional financial aid have become cornerstones of most enrollment management operations (Bontrager, 2004; Coomes, 2000; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). Hossler et al. (2015) wrote:

It is becoming increasingly rare to find a college or university that has not made its financial aid office part of its enrollment management organization, which says as much about the changing economic and competitive environment for higher education as it does about the evolving nature of enrollment strategy and the place of aid and differential pricing in achieving enrollment goals (p. 38).

Enrollment management practices recruit students through strategies such as developing financial aid policies, understanding price elasticity based on the market niche, and leveraging tuition discounting. At the same time, these strategies are designed to achieve specific enrollment targets related to diversity, academic strength, gender balance, and tuition revenue gains (Baum, 2007; Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kraatz et al, 2010; Russo & Coomes, 2000). The majority of institutions are tuition dependent, and the revenue generated from tuition is a major source of funding for the operational budget, which is used to pay faculty salaries, support academic programs, invest in the campus facilities, and provide financial aid (Hossler, 2000; Russo & Coomes, 2000; Kraatz et al., 2010).

In summation, marketization, increased competition, a decline of federal and state appropriations, and the necessity of managing revenue created the need for enrollment management. Today, 50 years later, those same factors continue to contribute to the growth and development of the profession. Enrollment management, as a broad and basic concept, is intended to provide a common purpose and set strategy for individual units that have significant impact on student choice and the student experience regarding who enrolls, persists, and graduates from colleges (Hossler, 2004; Huddleston, 2000; Russo & Coomes, 2000).

Enrollment Management Structures

Units associated with these functions often include marketing & communications, admissions, financial aid, registrar, institutional research, bursar (or student accounts), student orientation, retention and advising, and career services (Huddleston, 2000; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). Numerous combinations of these individual units form versions of enrollment management across institutions of higher education, ranging from informal collaborations to formalized hierarchies reinforced by reporting lines. Kemerer et al. (1982) were among the first to document categories of the various structural forms in the early 1980s. They described the four enrollment management models that require varying degrees of institutional commitment, labelling the structures as: the committee structure, enrollment management coordinator, the matrix model, and Enrollment Management Division. Following the introduction of these structural models and enrollment management's continued evolution in sophistication, many other researchers have built upon these models (Black, 2004; Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Vander Schee, 2007).

The **committee structure's** primary function is to create awareness of enrollment-related issues and is the least invasive enrollment model; it is assembled of various institutional

actors from units across campus, including faculty members. It involves no organizational change and is inexpensive; however, it has typically resulted in the least amount of enrollment success due to the committee's lack of authority (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Vander Schee, 2007). The **enrollment management coordinator** model also requires no formal restructuring, appointing a single person to be responsible for the coordination of enrollment-related activities across multiple units. The person assigned to the coordinator position is typically a mid-level manager or the director of admissions, lacking formalized reporting lines and thus relying on the voluntary cooperation of units. It can also be a challenge for the coordinator to raise enrollment issues to the level of senior leadership to enact change.

The third model, the **matrix model**, is similar to the coordinator structure, but the person managing enrollment initiatives is typically a senior administrator, and therefore has more authority and support to make change. This model has been considered more effective at achieving enrollment goals than the committee or coordinator structures because it encourages more ownership. Moreover, the matrix model often confronts little pushback from the campus constituents, since the role is assigned to a senior-level administrator who already holds power in the organization (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Vander Schee, 2007). As a result, enrollment is stacked onto the administrator's additional duties, and it may be a low priority or receive less attention than needed. Finally, the **division model** represents the highest-level of institutional commitment and investment in enrollment. It entails creating a new administrative position by appointing a vice president or vice provost of enrollment and requires significant centralization and integration within the institution. The person in this position most commonly has direct oversight of – at a minimum – admission, financial aid, and registrar functions, but

often oversees a combination of other student-service units such as student success, marketing, and orientation.

While the literature supports the likelihood that the Enrollment Management Division has the greatest potential for delivering enrollment results, it is also the most difficult model to implement and is often met with resistance (Vander Schee, 2007). Creating a new administrative division can be costly and viewed as diverting resources from other priorities such as supporting the academic core (Kraatz et al., 2010). It can also disrupt campus culture to add an additional arm to the administration. Oregon State University is an example of this disruption: institutional leaders successfully implemented a matrix model and then failed when they attempted to commit fully to an enrollment division. As Bontrager (2004) wrote,

College and universities are venerable institutions with long histories and engrained cultures. The higher education arena is rife with conventional wisdom and outright mythology about what it takes to effectively recruit and retain students. In this context, even strong enrollment results sometimes cannot hold the line against inertia, which draws persons and institutions toward historical, more familiar perspectives. (p.169)

In the past, adopting the Enrollment Management Division was a last resort and considered only once it was clear that there was an enrollment crisis. DePaul University, one of the early adopters of an Enrollment Management Division, did so in an attempt to address a budget crisis that resulted in a 30% enrollment decline between the years of 1979-1983 (Kalsbeek & McGrath, 2004).

In the 1990s, however, institutions began to expand the portfolio of enrollment management in various ways to address new challenges (Kurtz & Scannell, 2006). The purpose of more efficiently and effectively meeting enrollment targets, especially net tuition revenue,

continued to be at the forefront, but enrollment management placed new emphasis on retention efforts, career preparation, and alumni engagement. As enrollment management advances, and more institutions have adopted a divisional model successfully, Enrollment Management Divisions have achieved legitimacy and are more widely accepted. For example, a small subset of schools that are members of the Council Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) highlights the rise of Enrollment Management Divisions. A study conducted by Vander Schee (2007) found that in 1997, about 30% of colleges in the CCCCCU reported housing an Enrollment Management Division, but that number had grown to 49% by 2007.

Despite the growing popularity of Enrollment Management Divisions and marked improvements evident at many institutions, organizational structure alone cannot guarantee a successful enrollment management organization. Since no one composition or structure reigns supreme, there are mixed perspectives regarding organizational structure's degree of importance for enrollment management. There is no empirical evidence that organizational or compositional structure alone can account for an institution's enrollment success (Henderson, 2005; Hossler, 2004). Kalsbeek (2006) wrote, "...enrollment management becomes strategic when it focuses not on organizational structures at all but rather the structures of the marketplace for higher education functions and creates the overall climate within which institutions exist and compete" (p.5). Henderson (2005) describes himself as an "unabashed structuralist" and purported that successful enrollment management is less about the division's structure and placement within an institution and more about its connection to the academic enterprise.

However, other practitioners counter this de-emphasis on structure and insist that a division's structure is crucial to the success of enrollment management. For example, Huddleston (2000) contended that a division's organizational structure tends to be the primary ingredient of a

successful enrollment management effort. Flanigan (2016) proposed that organizational effectiveness is a direct result of the interplay between the organizational structure, the leadership, and the institutional culture. Similarly, Ward (2005) stated that "...while structure is important, it is the integrity, competence, and team spirit of key leaders that determine how easily goals may be attained" (p.9). Regardless of the significance scholars attribute to the structure of the organizational model, most agree that organizational structure and composition must align with the institutional mission and culture to be sustainable. The importance of structuring an effective enrollment division aligned with an institution's mission must be underscored, since an institution that attempts to model their enrollment structure after a high-profile competitor while neglecting their own institutional attributes will likely experience failure (Schultz & Lucido, 2011).

The institutional mission and vision should be a starting point when developing an enrollment management approach and attending to the institution's values should help establish the enrollment priorities. Bontrager (2004) illustrated this point: "Any enrollment effort must begin with an understanding of what an institution is trying to achieve, based on the niche it fills in the higher education marketplace" (p.12). The institution's mission helps to identify its purpose and values and should serve as the underpinning for the philosophical approach of enrollment management. The institutional mission also sets the agenda for strategic planning. Weaving enrollment goals into the strategic plan helps to guide decisions connected to strategy, resource management, and desired outcomes for an institution. To effectively integrate enrollment management and an institution's mission, key stakeholders must clearly define and understand the implications of enrollment goals that stem from the strategic plan (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Ward, 2005). Flanigan (2016) stated, "While leaders can influence the

effectiveness of their organizations by how they structure them, effectiveness can also be influenced through the implementation of coherent mission-supporting principles” (p.119). Thus, the structure and composition of an enrollment model should seek to identify synergies among units and functions based on institutional priorities.

In addition to the need for enrollment management efforts to reflect the institution’s strategic plan, the literature also emphasizes the importance of connecting enrollment services to the academic enterprise (Bontrager, 2004; Henderson, 2005). As Bontrager (2004) asserted, “If enrollment management starts with the institutional mission, it ultimately succeeds or fails based on the strength of its link to academics and student success” (p.12). Enrollment goals should be specific and created in full support of the academic program. Bontrager pointed out that “The primary goal of student recruitment is to determine student-institution fit, that is, the degree to which a student’s academic preparation, educational goals, career aspirations, and personal preferences are in line with what an institution has to offer” (p.9). Regardless of where an enrollment division is aligned within an institution, enrollment should emphasize the school’s academic needs, using enrollment as a vehicle to move the institution closer to actualizing its vision.

Finally, in addition to ensuring that the enrollment plan supports the institution’s mission, vision, and is grounded in the academic enterprise, a successful Enrollment Management Division must also be accepted and supported by the different campus constituencies. The president of an institution is responsible for setting and promoting the vision of an institution, and it is important that enrollment has the president’s full support and understanding of the role of enrollment within the institution and the resources needed to foster positive impacts. However, the president’s support alone is not sufficient to integrate enrollment management into

the campus culture, as members of the community such as faculty, staff, students, administrators, and boards of trustees must also be willing to prioritize enrollment management.

Enrollment touches many functional areas and requires both operational and political cooperation across campus to be effective. The likelihood of success for enrollment leaders hinges on their ability to promote a “collaborative and an open systems environment that encourages the broad sharing of information and decision-making and discourages silos” (Hossler et al., 2015, p.33). Enrollment managers must work to create open communication that educates the campus on market pressures and keeps campus stakeholders abreast of enrollment initiatives and databased outcomes. Enrollment management, when studied through a cultural lens, has the potential to be a change agent that is embraced and immersed in campus culture (Barnes & Bourke, 2014).

The Future of Enrollment & Opportunities for Research

The current literature related to enrollment management reflects a growing profession that will continue to develop as institutions face the uncertainty of revenue demands and declines in traditional college-age students. The number of private and public institutions that have moved to centralize their enrollment operations, often by developing an enrollment division, has consistently increased. However, Enrollment Management Divisions can vary considerably in both structure and composition, with few studies accounting for the variations. It is important to understand the variations in missions that can ultimately dictate institutional policies and strategy related to enrollment. Kalsbeek (2006) highlighted this gap, “One finds institutions with similar missions varying widely in their EM organizational structure and one finds identical Enrollment Management structures across institutions with widely varying missions and values” (p.5). The importance for enrollment management models to reflect the institution’s mission and culture has

been noted, but there is not much sustained attention to why an institution would choose to adopt one structure over another.

Enrollment management was born out of a need for a more coordinated approach to predicting enrollment, managing resources, and providing improved student-services. A comprehensive enrollment management organization focuses on the complete student life cycle, from prospective students to enrolled students, and finally to alumnae. Enrollment Management Divisions can respond to market forces and breakdown siloes across an institution, but they can often take years to fully implement and produce results. Despite increased reliance on enrollment management, there are not many studies examining the field, especially on topics highly relevant to evaluating Enrollment Management Divisions' effectiveness. Additional literature relating to assessing the organizational structure, composition, and overall enrollment strategy of different Enrollment Management Divisions would offer a crucial contribution to the growing body of literature on an increasingly vital administrative unit within higher education.

Theoretical Framework

The goals of enrollment management can be as multifaceted as the strategies used to achieve those goals. As a basic concept, enrollment management is the institutional approach used to attract and enroll students. However, in its more complex form, enrollment management involves scanning the environment, understanding the market dynamics, implementing recruitment strategies, leveraging financial aid practices, and overseeing/developing a wide range of programmatic initiatives around student success. Pursuing any of these initiatives involves an investment of money, human capital, and resources, which is further complicated by the reality that initiatives are interconnected and often competing. Enrollment management draws on a

variety of disciplines to inform strategy, but often the theoretical literature supporting enrollment management is rooted in the field of organizational studies (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015).

Theory of New Managerialism

To ensure access to resources, colleges and universities have increasingly adopted business practices commonly associated with for-profit, corporate organizations. The manifestation of marketing strategies, the leveraging of financial aid, and the added emphasis on data collection to inform decision-making exemplify practices traditionally associated with for-profit industries (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). Higher education is not alone in what some view as the “corporatization of business practices” and other non-profit sectors such as healthcare can also point to similar trends. The theory of *new managerialism* or *neo-managerialism* has emerged in the field of organizational studies to describe strategies and efforts of organizations within the non-profit sector to persist (Meyer, 2002; Braun, 1999; Deem, 1998).

Prior to the 1980s, the field of organizational management did not widely incorporate educational organizations into traditional theories that applied to the free-market economy (Meyer, 2002). Deem (2001) wrote, “Debates about new managerialism become more apparent when we see that finance-driven concerns, social and cultural changes, and intensified competition for students and resources” (p.12). As a reaction to the changing environment in higher education, new theories in organization and management emerged to describe shifts in practice and philosophy. Scholars and practitioners often reject the idea of new managerialism in higher education due to its encroachment on the academic freedom and autonomy that have long been a hallmark of higher education (Meyer, 2002; Slaughter & Leslie, 1998). In fact, prior to the 1960s, there was little emphasis on organizational structures in higher education and the primary focus was on institutional culture (Meyer, 2002; Orton & Weick, 1990).

Structural Coupling

Historically, organizational structures in higher education were described as “loosely coupled” or consisting of what Weick (1976) labeled as a series of subsystems that functioned together but remained independent of one another. Loose coupling does not imply that subsystems do not affect one another, but there is often lag time in responsiveness between them, a disconnect in the feedback loop between inputs, process, and outputs, and an element of unpredictability (Weick, 1976). The decentralization of an educational organization can be a barrier to administrators who seek to make institutional change, contributing to the notion that higher education is slow to adapt. However, the benefits of a loosely coupled organization are apparent when there is a malfunction or break in one subsystem, and the other subsystems are less likely to be impacted negatively and continue functioning (Meyer, 2002; Lutz, 1982; Weick, 1976).

As an extension of new managerialism, the literature reflects an emerging managerial philosophy within educational institutions moving away from organized anarchies (i.e., loosely coupled units) to more predictable, responsive components that do not act independently. Weick (1976) proposed that if the integrated parts of a system become responsive to one another without maintaining distinctiveness, the system is considered tightly coupled. Under the framework of tight coupling, organizational structure becomes increasingly important, and “we notice a stronger emphasis on organizational effectiveness, accountability, capacity building, and standardization – terms that do not mesh easily with the philosophy of loose coupling...” (Meyer, 2002, p. 516). Tight coupling allows for greater responsiveness, can create efficiencies, and organizations can enact change more quickly (Weick, 1976). Given current evidence that

universities are facing increasing demands for accountability, some institutions have responded by tightening loose coupling structures to meet recent challenges.

From a strategy perspective, effectiveness is attained by conforming to the coupling patterns dictated by a combination of environment and strategy (Raghunathan & Beekun, 1989). Investigating structure, conceived of as part of an organization's strategy, encourages a deeper dive into the dynamics behind the strategy and the formal relationships created to support the organization. Meyer (2002) argued that while there is not "one-best-system hierarchy" that applies universally, "developments in education theory and practice point to the emergence of hybrid models of organization that capture the advantages of centralization and coordination produced by hierarchy while attempting to harness the advantages of more decentralized organizational structures" (p. 518). While Meyer references organizations, his model can also be applied to the practice of enrollment management as a sub-organization of the institution with the subunits connecting its various functions. Viewed through the lens of new managerialism, both the structural and operational variations of enrollment models can be applied to a coupling framework.

Scholars of enrollment management acknowledge that while there is not a prescriptive view on how to best align efforts concerning enrollment, open-systems and accountability are two key ingredients. Hossler and Kalsbeek (2013) stated, "The strategic nature of [enrollment management], by definition, requires that it be responsive to the rapidly changing external environment, and the shifting contemporary landscape for post-secondary education naturally forces institution adaptation in [enrollment management] strategies" (p.13). Models of enrollment management represent a spectrum of structures ranging from decentralized (the committee) to centralized (the division).

Even within the most highly centralized divisional model, there is still a range of coupling that exists across institutions. Admission and financial aid operations are at the heart of almost all Enrollment Management Divisions, but it is becoming increasingly popular to find a range of other student services housed under the enrollment management umbrella, including orientation, retention, student success, advising, and career planning (Huddleston, 2000; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). Institutional leaders and administrators must consider the priorities of the institution to decide how subunits function in relation to one another and how the inclusion of potential subunits under one administrative arm impacts organizational outcomes.

This study utilized the framework of loose coupling versus tight coupling to analyze the different administrative functions within Enrollment Management Divisions at two similar types of institutions. As the researcher, I investigated how the organizational structures align administrative functions related to enrollment to support institutional priorities and how institutional leaders achieve enrollment goals, promote student success, acquire and manage resources, and respond to external changes. Pressure continues to grow on the importance of revenue from tuition and fees, scrutiny of access and equity, and increased focus on student retention. As a result, the challenge is to structure enrollment management in a way that best serves the unique characteristics of each university.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To understand the interplay between institutions and enrollment management, this study sought to examine the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Division model at two institutions. Specifically, I investigated how the institutional mission, culture, and leadership reflects the enrollment management structure. This study is significant because institutions are increasingly reliant on enrollment management as a method for strategically managing enrollment to help achieve goals and manage revenue. While many institutions have adopted Enrollment Management Divisions to achieve enrollment goals related to headcount, diversity, academic profile, and tuition revenue, there are varying degrees of integration and success across institutions. Enrollment management is projected to continue to grow as a profession and become even more central for institutions to remain competitive as they vie for resources. The results of this study will be significant to campus leaders, enrollment professionals, boards of trustees, and contribute to the student experience.

Research Question

The study addressed the following research question:

Based on the perception of institutional leaders, what are the internal and external factors that shape how an Enrollment Management Division is structured at an institution?

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to conduct and present an in-depth and thorough analysis of specific cases, resulting in a smaller sample size (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam, 1988). A qualitative approach to research seeks to understand, rather than measure, aspects of a social phenomenon in a field setting. Qualitative research is particularly effective in allowing for improved understanding of events, roles, interactions, or social situations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and therefore this research approach is the most conducive to exploring the context of organizational structures within Enrollment Management Divisions. Additionally, the use of comparative case studies as a research design allows the researcher to seek greater understanding of the complexity and interactions within a specific context (Stake, 1995). Another key characteristic is that the researcher will serve as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1988). Finally, my constructivist worldview reinforces the premise that multiple realities exist versus a single, objective reality. Agreeing with Creswell & Creswell, I assert that individuals create meaning from their experiences that are subjective in nature and depend on interpretation to construct the truth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Constructivism allows participants to convey their views based on experiences, and the researcher often uses open-ended questions to elicit participants' personal views through discussion. Using a constructivist lens, a qualitative paradigm allowed insight and interpretation of the data and resulted in greater depth in understanding the relationship between an institution and its enrollment management structure.

Specifically, this study used case study research to understand process and to improve practice through in-depth analysis of the enrollment services operation and its meaning for those involved. As an approach frequently used in the field of education, case study methodology is

ideal for understanding and interpreting educational practices that inform policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 1998). A case study methodology examining enrollment management models is particularly advantageous in inquiring into *how* the organizational structure supports the institutional mission and *why* the particulars of that structure exist (Yin, 1994). Merriam (1988) defined a qualitative case study as an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (xiv). Qualitative case studies result in a detailed and rich account of real-life situations, which can expand the knowledge base of a particular field and suggest additional hypotheses for future research.

For this study, I used a multi-case study to compare Enrollment Management Divisions across two institutions. This approach differs from a single case study and seeks to collect and analyze data from more than one case (Merriam, 1988). By analyzing the findings from two cases, I was able to better understand the unique properties in a single case and strengthen the interpretation and validity of the study, as well as strengthen the theory. Merriam (1988) explained, “...cases should be selected for their power both to maximize and to minimize the differences in the phenomenon of interest” (p.154). While the institutions chosen for this study have similar characteristics, such as institutional type, size, a focus on undergraduate enrollment, and housing an Enrollment Management Division, the portfolio of administrative units within each Division differs as evident in the organizational structures. I selected institutions with broad similarities in the type, mission, and commitment to an Enrollment Management Division in an effort to reduce variables that may account for differences within the structure or strategy. Comparing and contrasting data across multiple cases allows the researcher to develop a more informed hypothesis and potentially result in greater generalizability. Therefore, a qualitative

case study of two similar institutions makes the results of this study generalizable to understanding what factors may contribute to the outcomes of Enrollment Management Divisions more broadly.

Methods

Case Selection

Case study methodology allows for particularization of a specific case, versus generalization, and the emphasis is understanding the specific case well and emphasizing its uniqueness (Stake, 1995). Criterion-based sampling guided the selection of institutions in this study. Meriam (1988) wrote, “Criterion-based sampling requires that one establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; one then finds a sample that matches these criteria” (p. 48). For this multiple case study, the primary criterion was selecting institutions that had an Enrollment Management Division. Further, replication logic, which treats each case as an individual experiment and allows for comparison within and between cases, was used to select cases (Yin, 2003).

Similar characteristics in terms of institutional type, Carnegie classification, and a focus on undergraduate students were additional criteria used to identify potential case selections. For this study, the cases examined were two Enrollment Management Division within two universities. To reduce variables, similar type institutions were selected that had commonalities in terms of the institutional type, mission, and size. Each have an Enrollment Management Division, but the Divisions were comprised of different administrative functions reporting to the Chief Enrollment Officer. The institutions selected were identified from a consortium of mid-sized, private research universities that focus on undergraduate education.

Interviews

Within each of these two institutions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key institutional actors who were selected based on the organizational structure. In qualitative studies, especially case studies, interviews offer an opportunity to collect a large amount of data in a short period of time (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Questions were open-ended with the goal of accessing the perspective of the participant through conversation and eliciting data that cannot be gathered through other methods, such as observation or surveys. A semi-structured format is one in which the researcher has devised a pre-determined list of questions to ask all participants, but also allows for flexibility in the order in which the questions are asked, providing an opportunity for the researcher to respond to the emerging perspective of the participant with additional, unscripted questions (Merriam, 1988). All of the study's questions probed the perspective of the participant from where they sit organizationally within the institution in relation to the Enrollment Management Division. A complete list of those interviewed at each institution, as well as the interview protocol, can be found on Appendix A and Appendix B. Due to the current health concerns resulting from the global pandemic, these semi-structured interviews were conducted through the Zoom platform. Audio was recorded for transcription purposes, but video of the interview was not used in the analysis.

Participant Selection

To identify the key participants, purposive sampling was the most appropriate strategy for this qualitative study. Purposive sampling, as defined by Merriam (1988), is “based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p. 48). Stratified purposeful sampling was used to identify key participants at each institution who are intimately knowledgeable about the

operations of the Enrollment Management Division within each case. In this study, the Chief Enrollment Officer at each institution, as well as all direct reports responsible for leading administrative units that are structured under the Enrollment Management Division, were solicited to participate in semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 50-60 minutes. Snowball sampling (Merriam, 1988) was employed as the interviews progressed, resulting in one additional participant who no longer was affiliated with one of the cases but had previously served as the Chief Enrollment Officer. This resulted in a total of 16 participants interviewed and saturation was achieved.

Document Analysis

Within a qualitative case study, researchers often use a variety of sources to make interpretations about the research at hand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, in addition to semi-structured interviews, document analysis was used, and the document types varied based on each institution and the research question. Document analysis is a research method that involves collecting relevant written materials that can be either corroborative or additive to the research gathered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of document analysis is to gather data that “can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track changes and development, and so on” (Merriam, 1988, p.108). However, it is the researcher’s responsibility to authenticate the documents and understand the conditions which the data was produced and by whom. Document analysis helped to shed light on additional questions for the interviews, provide supplementary research data, and used to track any changes or outcomes that may connect to the enrollment management operation (Bowen, 2009). The term “documents” encompasses a wide range of written material. The documents that were relevant for this study consisted of information that details the organizational structure and additional

documents related to the university's strategic plan, mission, and vision. There was also similar documentation collected related specifically to the Division of Enrollment Management as it relates to the goals, vision, and philosophy. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded using in vivo coding, open coding, and selective coding techniques that led to the identification of theoretical codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These theoretical codes were then collectively compiled and interpreted through the theoretical framework of new managerialism and structural coupling.

Data Analysis

The data collected from this study included interview transcripts from individuals at each campus case study, as well as documents such as strategic plans, organizational charts, and mission statements. The proposed research question and the related literature served as guidelines for later analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Documents were analyzed prior to interviews, so that the data extracted helped to guide interview questions for each campus. This initial planning allowed for development of theory-generated codes for that were used for analysis.

To organize the data from multiple sites, a basic level of analysis with broad categories that represent the study's variables of interest formed the case study database (Yin, 1994). MAXQDA, a software program designed for the management of qualitative data, was used to assist with coding. After these broad categories were established and the data organized, a deeper conceptual analysis occurred to produce additional codes. Yin (1994) stated, "At the most abstract level, patterns can be developed to explain the interrelationship of variables" and begin engaging in theory building" (p.155). As the data began to reveal itself in clusters, then detailed, analytic memos regarding how the data was evolving were kept. Interviews were digitally

recorded, transcribed, and coded using in vivo coding, open coding, and selective coding techniques that led to the identification of theoretical codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These theoretical codes were then collectively compiled and interpreted through the theoretical framework of new managerialism and structural coupling.

Trustworthiness

Validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research, and additional steps were taken to ensure qualitative validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using multiple methods of data collection enhanced the analysis of information pertinent to the study and allowed for triangulation to strengthen the study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Triangulation involves bringing multiple sources of data together to help collaborate or illuminate relevant findings to answer the research question being investigated (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Including multiple cases, multiple participants, and using two methods of data collection (interviews and document analysis) in the study strengthened the external validity of the study (Merriam, 1988).

In addition to triangulation, the researcher included a reflexivity statement to clarify any bias brought to the study and the interpretation of the data (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004). Understanding of how the researcher's biases, values, and background may shape the interpretations of the study entailed memos written during the research process documenting reflections and providing insight on how themes or findings from the data emerged. Finally, peer debriefing was employed to ensure that the interpretation resonates with a person other than the researcher. Peer debriefing involves discussing the research and data with knowledgeable colleagues to provide a checks-and-balance approach to ensuring accuracy and that the interpretation resonates outside of the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Potential Research Bias and Assumptions

I, the researcher in this study, understand enrollment management as an administrative innovation within higher education that has been implemented to enhance resource management, meet enrollment goals, and use predictive analysis to inform strategy. There was also the assumption that a universal model cannot be applied to all institutions and that individual characteristics of the institution should be guiding principles to determine the enrollment model. Based on the literature and personal experience, it is unclear how institutions choose to organize and how much of the enrollment model is related to institutional characteristics versus other factors such as mimetic isomorphism. I began with the belief that many factors influence the enrollment management operation at an institution, including culture, past experiences of institutional leaders, market forces and organizational structure, but was unclear as to the degree of influence of the various factors.

Currently, I serve as Assistant Vice Provost and Dean of Enrollment Services at a private, research institution and reports to a Vice Provost of Enrollment. I have been at my institution for the entirety of my professional career and have seen the enrollment operation transform to a more formalized, divisional model over the years. Prior to initiating this research, I observed how changes in the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Division altered the institution's strategic priorities and became curious as to how this manifested itself at other institutions. I experienced firsthand how changes in reporting lines influenced directives and altered the lens through which enrollment operated.

Although my experience contributed to the motivation of this study, I was aware that this could create a bias in my expectations of results. As I continued to learn more about the broader landscape of enrollment management, my curiosity grew regarding how organizational structures

are formed and how structure impact the initiatives, strategy, and outcomes. I also have developed opinions about the philosophy of enrollment, and I tend to be critical of strategies that seek to produce short-term gains or quick financial benefits. Critics of strategic enrollment management view it as a solution to improve revenue generation at the expense of access for underserved populations and as a contributor to the commercialization of higher education. I believe that a balanced approach that focuses on sustainable outcomes is essential and that if institutions use enrollment management solely as a revenue generator, then any success is short-lived and unsustainable. I was aware that this view could influence the type of questions I asked in interviews and the data that I chose to support my philosophy, so other methods of trustworthiness were introduced to keep any bias in check. Identifying preconceived notions to certain organizational structures that could hinder my ability to understand the strengths of varying structures were acknowledged prior to the start of the study.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

This dissertation investigates the varying organizational structures within enrollment management and the degree to which structural coupling of administrative units under enrollment management aligns with institutional mission, values, and goals. This chapter contains the results of the comparative case study methodology conducted to answer the research question:

Based on the perception of institutional leaders, what are the internal and external factors that shape how an Enrollment Management Division is structured at an institution?

The following sections will address relevant details of each case, which include the institutional profiles, the historical context, goals and initiatives, and lastly the thematic finding that emerged from the study. Table 1 provides a side-by-side comparison of a few selected enrollment data points. Although the University of Sole, at 7,000 undergraduate students, has approximately half of the population as Lune University. Both institutions have high tuition rates, and Sole is more generous in awarding financial aid per student, based on the average institutional financial aid awarded and the more generous policy of meeting 100% of demonstrated financial need. In addition, Sole is more selective and tends to retain and graduate students at higher rates. More details related to each institution's enrollment will be explored in greater depth in this chapter, in addition to the relevant findings from the study.

Table 1

Institutional Profiles for 2020

	Sole	Lune
Undergraduate Population	7,000	15,000
Admit Rate	35%	77%
Yield	20%	10%
1 st to 2 nd Year Retention (2018)	94%	89%
% of International Enrollment	26%	10%
6-Year Graduation Rate	86%	71%
Cost of Attendance	\$78,000	\$75,000
Tuition	\$58,000	\$56,000
Avg. Institutional Aid	\$38,000	\$28,000
Avg. Net Price	\$36,000	\$39,500
% of need met	100%	75%

University of Sole

Institutional Profile

The University of Sole is a private university located in a city that can be described as an urban suburban mix. The undergraduate student population is slightly under 7,000 with approximately 5,000 graduate students. Seven schools comprise the university, three of which enroll undergraduate students. In addition, the university is categorized as a tier 1 research university and is affiliated with an expansive medical center and multiple major research centers.

The College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering enrolls the majority of the undergraduate population. In Fall 2020, the admit rate was 35%, and the yield on those students admitted was 20%. First to second year retention rates for first-time entering students pursuing their bachelor's

degree is approximately 94%. The 6-year graduation rate is 86%. The total cost of attendance in 2020-2021 for students living on campus was \$78,000 with tuition comprising \$58,000 of that total. Approximately 80% of first-time entering students received institutional grants or scholarships for an average amount of \$38,000. The university meets 100% of demonstrated need for all incoming students. In Fall 2019, 26% of the undergraduate population was comprised of non-US citizens (National Center for Education Statistics).

The admit rate is considered very selective, but the admit rate at Sole is not so low that it falls in the rarefied categories of institutions that are considered Ivy League, or the tier below the Ivies of elite institutions. The tuition is high, but the discount rate is on the higher end as well, indicating that the financial aid is generous for those who qualify. The international population is large compared to similar selective, research institutions. On average, students are retaining and graduating at solid rates, especially when compared to the national average 6-year graduation rates of private, nonprofit institutions, which was 82% in 2018.

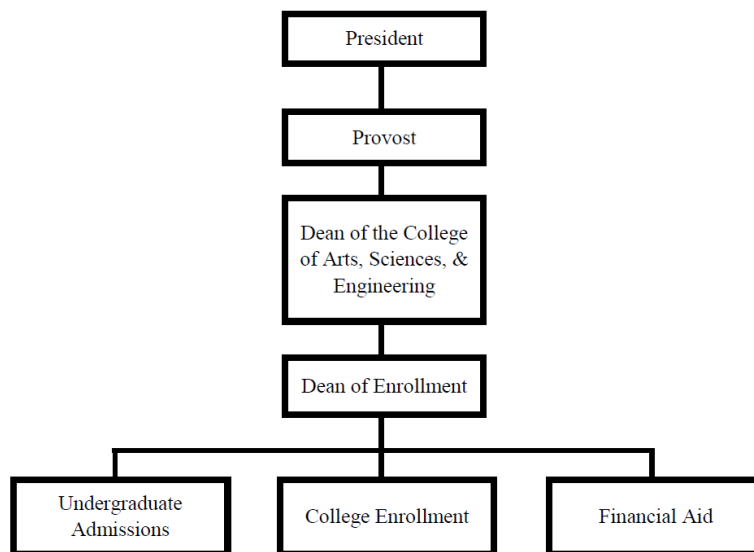
Division of Enrollment Management

The University of Sole was described as “decentralized” by multiple interviewees. The division of Enrollment Management is housed in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering and focuses only on undergraduate enrollment for that specific college. The chief enrollment officer holds the title Dean of Enrollment. This position reports to the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, who was described as functioning as a “college president”, who reports to the provost of the university, and the provost reports to the president. In this structure, the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, in coordination with the Dean of Enrollment, is predominately responsible for setting enrollment targets related to headcount and tuition revenue.

Within the division of Enrollment Management, the Dean of Enrollment oversees enrolling undergraduate first-year and transfer students. In addition to this primary responsibility connected to Admission and Financial Aid, the Office of College Enrollment oversees some (but not all) pre-college programs, student employment, and Veteran Affairs for the university. All of these responsibilities live within three administrative units that report to the Dean of Enrollment, which are the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Financial Aid, and the Office of College Enrollment. Figure 2 presents an organizational chart of the reporting structure.

Figure 2

Organizational Chart for the Enrollment Management Division of University of Sole



Historical Context

The University of Sole is described on its website as one of the world's leading research universities that is not limited by traditional boundaries and strives to make the world a better place. The university is built around the values of academic excellence, innovation in education, social justice, commitment to the community, and transforming healthcare. In the University's strategic plan, the fundamental objective is to strengthen its reputation as one of this nation's

leading research universities therefore, significant investments are being made in the areas of healthcare and the research mission.

Sole's leadership has been in flux for the last few years at various institutional levels, including the appointment of a new president in 2019. A search for the next provost is currently underway and the Dean of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering has been in place since 2018. In June of 2020, a new Dean of Enrollment was hired after his predecessor, who had been in the position since 2003, left the institution. In addition, there has been significant turnover in each of the administrative units under the Enrollment Services Division over the last few years. The Office of Financial Aid has since stabilized, but recent departures in the Office of Admissions and the Office of College Enrollment created several vacancies that remain due to a hiring-freeze put in place with the onset of the global pandemic, COVID-19. The changes in leadership within the senior administration has resulted in newly emerging priorities around the fiscal operation of the university, which has had direct implications for the division of Enrollment Management. In discussing the changes of top-level leadership and the impact of new people at the helm, one interviewee stated, "...the last couple of years have been very, very different" in relation to prioritizing goals and changing philosophies.

The changing leadership's attitudes toward Sole's culture of decentralization have shifted the conversations around greater centralization and better resource management, specifically revenue. Decentralization described the way the university operated as well as the budget modeling, but it also mirrored the culture on campus. As of late, there seems to be a palpable difference in the direction and approach as part of the new university president's vision. In the job posting for the vacant provost position, part of the expectation for the role is to promote the president's vision of "encouraging greater collaboration across schools." The emphasis on

decentralization may have ties to the overall values of the institution as it relates to the student experience. Part of the distinctiveness that the University of Sole offers students is the ability to forge their own paths. They are encouraged to make the curriculum their own to meet their educational interests and pursue their long-term goals. Giving students agency in shaping their curriculum is a way to foster innovation and entrepreneurialism, which was described by one interviewee as being “built around this idea of individualized” pathways. The concept of individualization seems to have permeated the culture too, as another interviewee noted that “uniformity is not the soup du jour around here.”

The ethos of decentralization seems one that the current administration is finding problematic to the University of Sole’s goal to evolve as one of the nation’s leading research institutions. One potential outcome of centralization or moving to more tightly coupled divisions is more effective resource management. One interviewee said, “There is going to be a greater emphasis of trying to centralize things for the university and not have duplication of services across the place as much as possible.” Interviews suggest that change is imminent and has begun to shape the deliverables of the Enrollment Management Division in terms of measurable outcomes of the first-year class, as well as resource management as it relates to personnel. How this change impacts the Division structurally and functionally is still unfolding and was described metaphorically as “we’re still turning the ship.”

Goals and Initiatives

While “the ship” continues to turn, it was clear from those interviewed that it has begun to shape the strategy and measurable outcomes connected to enrolling the first-year student cohort, specifically as enrollment relates to financial aid expenditure and net tuition revenue. One interviewee noted the shift:

I think that what we are being held to, in terms of measurements of success, have changed a little bit. Largely due to finances, and again, this is even before for covid, I think that there is a greater emphasis on finances, both not only spending in terms of budget as a division, but also in terms of how we are maintaining the fiscal health of the institution. I'm not going to say it's a 180-degree turn, but it's pretty close, and so [we're?] being held to net tuition revenue and discount rate... we've really been under a microscope the last two years, more so than ever before.

Under the previous leadership of senior administration, the interviewees reported a misalignment between the revenue goals and the budget realities, which resulted in some significant deficits in terms of aligning institutional priorities regarding enrollment. As a result, the emphasis shifted from the quality and size of the class to focus on achieving revenue goals while also balancing the demographic makeup of the class. The current Dean of Enrollment indicated that his directive is clear:

What I don't hear is we need to up this SAT score or this average GPA, so everyone is very satisfied with the academic quality of our incoming students. We're trying to balance our diversity goals with those revenue goals. We're trying to right size our international enrollment, which has implications for both diversity revenue. In the past, international students have made up as much as 1/3 of the incoming class. It's huge and we feel like somewhere between 20-25% is the right mix.

The quote above also highlights the enrollment tensions that are often at the center of enrollment management. In addition to balancing the percentage of the class that is international, there are also concerns around diversifying the international population enrolling. One interviewee emphasized the need to “figure out how to diversify our portfolio, so to speak, so that we're

mitigating risk factors with epidemiology, geopolitics, natural disasters, [and] anything that impacts the ability for Chinese students to enroll...”

The other focus or emerging priority discussed by most interviewed was the pre-college program, which is managed under the division of Enrollment Management. Pre-college exists at many institutions, providing access to high school students who would like to participate in an institution’s summer programs, which may offer credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing courses. It can also be housed in various areas of an institution, which often shapes the overarching goals of the program (Bontrager, 2004). At the University of Sole, decentralization extends to the pre-college programs. Most of the pre-college programs are under Enrollment Management within the College Enrollment unit; however, not all are supported by this office. The Dean of Enrollment explained:

Here's another decentralized quirk, there are some summer and pre-college programs that are under our direct control, but a few are not. The Laboratory for Laser Energetics, for example, dreamed up their own summer program, who knows how long ago, and that continues to operate. So I'm trying to herd the cats into at least a common Web page that allows the mom of a ninth grader to comprehensively understand all of our pre-college offerings.

The rationale for pre-college living within the Enrollment Management Division is because it is viewed as a pipeline for recruitment. One of the goals of the program is to facilitate connecting with and cultivating relationships with potential future students. The Director of Admissions who views the pre-college program as an asset in their current structure stated, “pre-college, I think is a benefit to... enrollment management because that's very early funnel stuff. So there is an advantage there for sure.”

Another goal is for pre-college to be an additional source of revenue for the college. Prior to 2020, the pre-college was not under the purview of Enrollment Management, and the operating budget was in a deficit when it was relocated. From the perception of those interviewed, historically the pre-college deficit was not much of a concern by those with financial oversight; however, when it transitioned from the academic side to Enrollment Management, the expectation that the finances remain in the black has become a priority. The Director of College Enrollment indicated that the new leadership, specifically the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, has set the expectation that the pre-college program be revenue generating. Therefore, her responsibility was to reduce the deficit and then ensure that future years result in revenue gains. The assumption of the interviewer is that leadership decided that this type of program could be better managed by the Enrollment Management Division, which already has a focus on aspects of enrollment and revenue as they connect to larger enrollment conversations.

As these goals outline, the division of Enrollment Management at the University of Sole supports the institutional mission by focusing on efforts predominately related to attracting, admitting, and enrolling students. As a division, there is little focus on students once they are enrolled at the institution, except in the area of continuing to provide financial aid each year and managing student employment for the entire university. The configuration of the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Division reflects the institutional approach to enrollment management based on the division's emphasis on students prior to their arrival on campus, an emphasis that will emerge as a theme that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Challenges and Limitations

The Enrollment Management Division at the University of Sole expressed concern over some of the same challenges commonly expressed by many institutional leaders in higher education. Shrinking demographics, growing revenue needs, and promoting access and equity for under-served populations are pressing concerns. In addition to these industry challenges, there are also challenges related to achieving new direction from leadership, as well as challenges presented by functional limitations that could be a product of the organizational structure. The latter challenges center around the university's market-position, which are impacted by limitations in the areas of marketing and technology. The Dean of Enrollment expressed, "I don't think we have the kind of nationwide reach that we deserve... to really grow the name recognition and the understanding of what a prestigious education it is."

At the University of Sole, a central marketing division supports the university, but not the individual colleges. The director of admission underscored this:

The folks in university communications will tell you that they are not a marketing department and they're very adamant to that. So that is also a piece that I would say would make some good sense if the university is not going to do it, then the College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering ought to have a marketing division that we in admissions or anybody else kind of works with to get the message out. We just do not have that. A lot of the "marketing" of admissions is really done in-house and kind of pieced together. Up until 2019, there was some staff who specialized in marketing and communications that resided in the College Enrollment unit under the division of Enrollment Management. Though a small operation, it supported all marketing and communication for the Enrollment Management Division. While Admissions had the most robust needs, the marketing staff also supported the Offices of College Enrollment and Financial Aid in communicating to constituencies. In 2019,

when the primary staff responsible for marketing and communications within the Enrollment Management Division left, it was decided to freeze the position and create a small team to handle the marketing needs of admissions that would now reside in that particular unit.

Currently, based on comments from the Dean of Enrollment, the director of Admissions, and the director of College Enrollment, marketing is seen as a weak area within the Enrollment Management Division and the vision of expanded reach that the Dean of Enrollment has is not possible with the current structure. When discussing the university-wide marketing and communications office, he clearly outlined his needs to connect with prospective students:

I've threaded myself in as sort of a conjugate member of that group and I participate in many of their meetings to try to understand our strategy, but what I need is somebody really focused on optimizing our name purchase, lead generation search strategy, focused on our digital strategy and search engine optimization... So there's all of those pieces that I've got to really figure out how to beef up and optimize with some combination of existing staff and probably new staff and how to not step on the toes of university wide marketing communications, how to leverage some of their resources, and that includes even honing the brand and the key messages. What is our story, and how do we tell that story most effectively?

The Dean of Enrollment underscored:

I don't know that we have someone who really understands the overall strategy and intersection of how important it is to build the base of the enrollment pyramid, that prospects to inquiries to applicants, and all the technology tools and the marketing messages that need to thread in and really maximize those conversions.

While there is little empirical evidence, it is becoming more common to connect marketing efforts directly to Enrollment Management to influence messaging and marketing channels to audiences that will result in greater tuition revenue (Hossler, Kalsbeek, & Bontrager, 2015). This is an important consideration and appears to be a disconnect in the structure as it aligns with strategy.

Lune University

Institutional Profile

Lune University is a private university located in an urban area. The undergraduate population is about 15,000, and there are approximately 9,000 graduate students. The university is comprised of 15 colleges or schools, and ten of those enroll undergraduates. In Fall of 2020, 77% of applicants were admitted and 10% of those admitted chose to enroll. The first to second year retention rate was 89% in 2018 and 71% of students graduated within six years. In 2018, 10% of undergraduate student enrolled were non-US citizens and most pay the full amount of the cost of attendance. The 2020-2021 total cost of attendance was approximately \$75,000, with tuition at \$56,000 per year. The average amount of institutional financial aid awarded per student averaged \$28,000 with a net cost of \$39,000. Lune meets about 75% of demonstrated need, but report 100% of first-time entering student receiving some type of financial aid (National Center for Education Statistics).

Based on the admit rate, Lune is less selective than the University of Sole and has less control over some enrollment variables due to having to admit such a large percentage of the applicant pool. The tuition is high when compared to institutions with similar admit and graduation rates; however, the price point is aligned with other R1, private universities. Overall, Lune does not have particularly generous financial aid policies, only meeting 75% of

demonstrated need compared to some competitor institutions that meet 100% of demonstrated need. The high tuition is an enrollment challenge for Lune based on where it is positioned in the marketplace, which will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter. Additionally, the first-to-second year retention rate is strong, but the six-year graduation rate is lower than the administration at Lune would like, as expressed by the interview participants. All of these factors are points of consideration for the leadership at Lune and how they structure Enrollment Management.

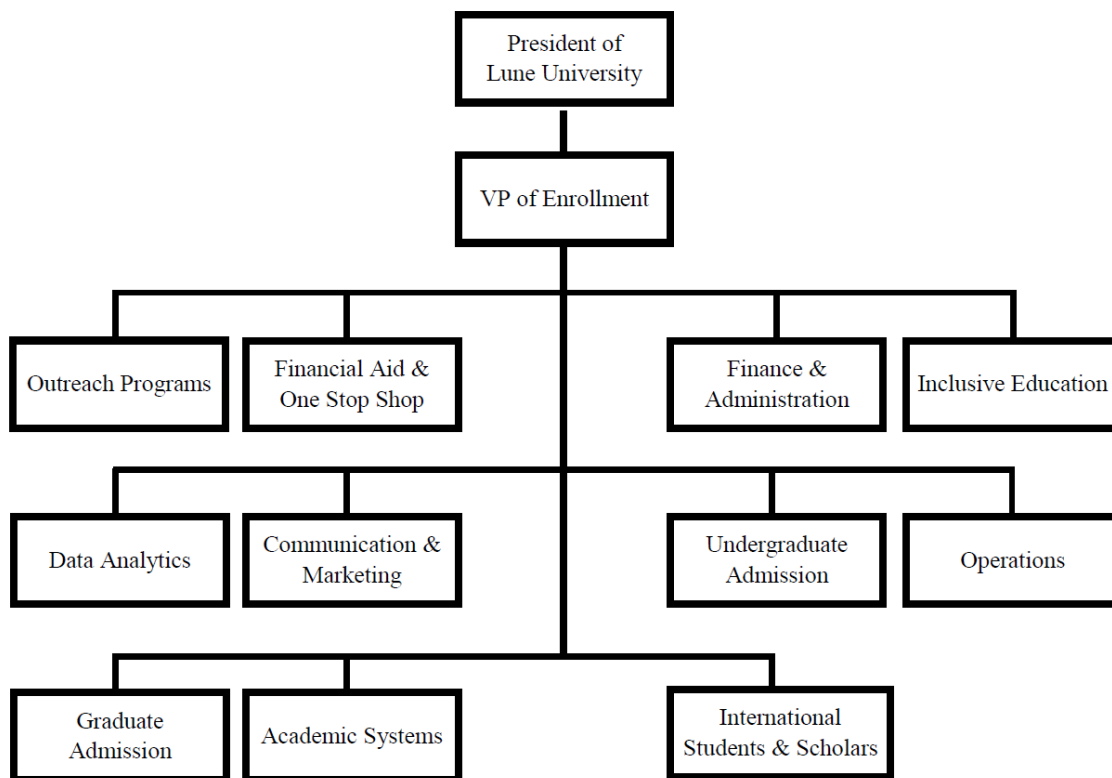
Division of Enrollment Management

Enrollment management at Lune University is large and comprehensive. It is housed under the division of Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMSS), which includes enrollment management and student affairs. The current structure is co-led by two senior administrators who report to the president. The configuration is unique in that it is led by two people, the Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and the Senior Vice President for Student Success, rather than a single person. Despite the EMSS structure representing a combined division of Enrollment Management and Student Success/Campus Life, it does not adequately represent the co-leader model in practice. Through interviews, it became evident that there was more overlap and integration between subunits within EMSS than what a simple organizational chart conveys. Within the EMSS structure, functional areas that report directly to the Vice President for Enrollment include: Admissions (Graduate & Undergraduate), Financial Aid, Bursar, Registrar, Enrollment Analytics, Communications & Marketing, International Students & Scholars Services, Academic Information & Systems, Center for Inclusive Education & Scholarships, Lune Central (One-Stop Shop), Enrollment Operations, and Enrollment Finance & Administration (also reports to the VP of Student Success). The parallel structure for Student

Success side of the division includes: Athletics, Inter-College Advising, Career Development Center, and Student Life (which includes Student Involvement, Diversity & Inclusion, Orientation, Counseling & Health Services, Residential Life, Veteran Student Services, and Center for Learning & Academic Success Services).

Figure 3

Organizational Chart for the Enrollment Management Division of Lune University



Historical Context

In 2012, a consulting group was hired by the university to conduct an analysis of the university's administration and make recommendations for greater efficiency and effectiveness. One of the themes that emerged was the need to improve retention and graduation rates, and a strategy called "admit-to-retain" for student recruitment and services was introduced to provide

continuity and management throughout the student life cycle. The vision was that students would be engaged seamlessly by the University from the time they were a prospective student through the point of graduation to ensure their success and persistence.

To achieve this vision of improving the student experience, the organizational structure at Lune shifted from a loosely coupled system to a larger, more tightly coupled system that spanned a wider range of activities. This is a different approach and strategy from Sole, helping to explain the Enrollment Management structure. Enrollment Management was combined with other departments across campus that connected to student life and student services to create a single division called Enrollment Management and Student Success. A Senior Vice President was hired to lead the transition of the newly created Division of EMSS. In 2019, after what was described in interviews as a “successful transition,” that person left the institution for other opportunities. This innovative and expansive structure was serving its purpose, as retention increased five percent as reported from participants, and the president and the Board of Trustees grappled with how to best continue the trajectory of this newly created division. The concern was that no one within the EMSS division had the background or experience to lead both the enrollment management and the student success operations. There was also skepticism about the possibility of hiring someone outside the university with the broad skill set required to lead such a multifaceted division, and so the president promoted two people who were managing the admission unit and the campus life unit. While the organizational structure changed at the top management level, participants relayed that the philosophy and broad goals of EMSS remain the same.

However, although the broad goals of providing a superior student experience continues, participants’ interviews demonstrate that moving from a single leader to co-leaders for the EMSS

division has sparked changes. Many participants have been at the institution since prior to 2014 and described a loosely coupled structure becoming more tightly coupled, and then loosening somewhat as time passes with the co-leader model. Words like “dynamic” and “innovative” were used to describe the institution, but also used when referencing the culture of the EMSS division. One person stated, “[The institutional] culture kind of permeates everything we are doing in enrollment management as well. We’re always thinking about how to build an EMSS team that really embodies that ethos of innovation, of boldness, of creativity.” The evolution of the structure is unique, but well-integrated and reflective of characteristics that the interviewees used to describe Lune.

People who were at Lune prior to 2014, before the integration of EMSS, described a night and day difference regarding collaboration and communication. The two quotes below were from two different interviews and describe the lack of coordination between units when they operated under different divisions:

I think us merging to create the EMSS division was one of the best things we’ve done on campus. In all honesty, prior to doing that, it seemed to be, like a lot of organizations, it seemed to be siloed. You know, each department did their thing, and they did it well, but they kind of did it in a vacuum, you know? I don’t think it was necessarily best for the student experience... It worked from an operational standpoint because everybody did their job. But it wasn’t a flow that was beneficial necessarily for the students.

The Director of Marketing and Communications described how the structure has resulted in his team being able to do their job more effectively:

Understanding the student life experience and what they truly get. What are the benefits, what are the drawbacks, what are the opportunities from a student, all the other offices

under student success... Inclusion and all the diversity offices, all those things that have benefits have made us better marketers because I know what the benefits are, I know what the opportunities are. And I include that in our marketing, our direct messages from our perspective, from our messaging and cultivation. So like having all that information and being closer to it has made a world of difference.

Thus, a tighter degree of coupling and centralization removed silos and provided a shared vision that brought people together.

Prior to the integration, the student experience was a significant concern because it can directly impact retention, graduation rates, application volume, and alumni giving rates. One interviewee shared, “the students used to call it the Lune shaft”, referring to the disappointment of what they thought their Lune experience would be versus the reality of what was delivered. There has been an industry shift in recent years with more schools focusing on providing a high-quality student experience in hopes of creating a competitive advantage that attracts students in a crowded market, and ultimately raising the market-position and the perceived value or prestige of the institution. Hayes (2015) wrote, “To survive in a highly competitive environment, service organizations must satisfy their customers better than what is offered by their competitors. To set the institution apart from competitors, a university must strive to exceed students’ expectation” (p.108). This focus on the student experience aligns with the theory of new managerialism and is comparable to customer service in a for-profit business or corporate model.

In fact, one participant noted, “The thing about Lune is that they aren’t afraid of change. They really run like a for profit business. It’s not steeped in higher ed traditions. I mean, they just don’t really think or care about any of that.” This statement is evidence of Lune University’s ethos and its influence on the institution’s structure, which in turn influences the operation of the

administration and particularly the EMSS division. In fact, many of the participants interviewed come from non-traditional backgrounds themselves, not related to the field of education, which has shaped practices as well. For example, the president has a background in business prior to arriving at Lune; someone else came from a career working for corporate advertising agencies; another was an engineer, and one person came from working at a stock exchange. When speaking about marketing within higher education specifically, the Director of Communications & Marketing spoke directly to the relevancy of his previous experience working in advertising agencies:

I think everyone's still trying to find the way to market colleges and build a structure around it. I do believe now that marketing, which used to be a bad word in higher education 15 years ago, has now become a priority in colleges... Now, with the way enrollment is and the competitive landscape of what higher education is, they need marketers. So it's funny. Again, I came in just being like this guy with an agency and now trying to find the way forward... That's how I think, because that's the way a company would think.

From the context of new managerialism, Deem (2001) discussed the growing pressure for “public service workers [to] retain their existing values about the importance of the services they provide, whilst accepting the necessity of talking about markets, performance indicators, and other business metaphors in certain settings.” The search for continuous improvement in the areas of efficiency, effectiveness, and excellence to provide a competitive advantage is at the center of strategy at Lune University.

Another example of how Lune exemplifies aspects of new managerialism outside of the organizational structure and operations is the emphasis of entrepreneurism woven throughout the

academic mission and through partnerships with corporations. One person stated that the university intentionally “strives to be [an] active player in the city,” and another talked about the city’s influence on decision making, saying, “the outcomes of the city and the successes of the city really play a big role in decision making for the university.” A third person spoke more specifically to how this philosophy has influenced the recent strategic plan:

It's this idea that we sit at the nexus of academia and research and industry. How can we leverage both of those things in tandem to get the best educational experience for our students and to push the institution forward in that way? That's really what our strategic plan is all about. It's about developing those partnerships. It's about meeting the market where it is.

Creating partnerships between the university and industry are not only about how the resources of the city can serve as an extension of student’s academic training, but also how they can generate revenue and improve the student experience. New retail and residential developments have been built near the campus and are seen as an asset by the university community, as one interviewee described:

[The president] made some unique agreements with buildings where we've owned the land, but we've partnered with a company to come in and they build the brand-new buildings. They get most of the revenue from it and we get a portion of it, but this allows us to have current housing for our students and brand-new stuff without having to put additional money out... That's how we got a hotel now that's on campus and a lot more retail stores are now up because you have other property owners that are basically building those properties. They're making the money from it, Lune is getting some

money, and it's allowed us to have some brand-new buildings on campus that we might not have been able to have before on our own.

These types of investments and partnerships have been considered successful and lucrative in improving the campus infrastructure, elevating the student experience, and providing an additional revenue source for the university.

It became evident through interviews how important the ethos of innovation, corporatization, and a focus on the student experience has shaped the structure of the EMSS division. Those who were interviewed believe whole-heartedly in the work that is transpiring at their individual unit-level, the EMSS divisional level, and the entire university. It was said, “We believe in the mission of the university and are willing to work together to achieve success.” The shift from a loosely coupled, decentralized model to a more tightly coupled, centralized model is viewed as having transformed their work for the better and reduced silos. One interviewee’s point of view was “I think what we're doing, the goals that we have, and the mission that we have, I think we're structured appropriately, you know, and I think there is now, because of [the structure], a collegial kind of approach.” Some of these observations connect to broader findings regarding the connection between structure and culture from the cases studied and will be explored in deeper analysis below.

Goals and Initiatives

The expansive organizational structure is an outcome of a goal to improve the student experience. While there are many indicators within enrollment management that can serve as a proxy for the student experience – for example, student retention – ensuring a positive student experience in part begins with the initial inputs and making sure the right type of student is enrolling. As with most models of strategic enrollment management, the goal is to balance the

headcount, diversity needs, financial aid budget, and the academic qualifications of the cohort of enrolling students. This is true of Lune too, as highlighted in the following quote:

It's prospective to alumni. And part of that goes into understanding what makes that prospective student an enrolled student. Why does he come here? What's important to him to be here and then what's important to us from a recruiting standpoint? What is it we're looking for? You want to have a diverse population, and [are] always trying to increase the academic scores. You always want them to be a little bit higher. You know, you'd love to have more people that can afford to pay for it because you don't want to always have to give out more and more financial aid. The more people that you can get that can afford to go to college on their own or at least a significant portion of that, then that's better for you, too. But that only plays a part because you also want to make yourself available to the lower income.

This exemplifies the work that encompasses the co-existing enrollment tensions that often require prioritization. When the interviewees were questioned about prioritizing enrollment goals, everyone within the division expressed that revenue was their top priority as a division regardless of their individual unit or function. All of the work that transpires under the EMSS structure connects back to enrolling a fiscally responsible cohort as one interviewee exemplified, saying, "We rely on tuition revenue. That is our number one goal, and it's my job, no matter what happens, at the end of the day we need to bring in a class to meet certain goals for tuition revenue." All goals and strategic initiatives, whether related to the EMSS division or the individual units, stem from enrolling the right type of student who wants a Lune education, meeting the net tuition revenue targets, and improving how the students are served administratively.

Challenges and Limitations

Based on participant comments and published documents reviewed, the administration at Lune has undergone significant change to the organizational structure to make improvements in the areas of retention and graduation rates, and all of the people interviewed were supportive of the organizational change that occurred. They recognized the benefits of collaboration, shared vision, and improved processes that removed barriers for students; however, they also acknowledged some potential pitfalls. These pitfalls could be categorized into three areas: the size of the division, the decentralization from other areas in the university, and the transitoriness of the last few years as well as the outlook for the future.

The size of the EMSS division represented both a strength and a challenge. The strengths include having a direct reporting line to the president through the VP of Enrollment, as well as having a more robust understanding of what transpires in other units and how initiatives in other units may impact their own area. However, the large size was also raised as a concern. One participant expressed difficulty “keeping everybody fully educated with what's going on, especially when there is turnover...” In addition to managing the flow of information and ensuring people are on the same page, the division’s largeness can also slow down the operation. The VP of Enrollment raised a concern related to the size, which is also emblematic of a system that is tightly coupled:

The size of the unit makes it very difficult for you to have a really good grasp of what’s happening everywhere. And as a resource constrained university, little pitfalls in one unit can impact the entire ecosystem, and so it is really necessary for all the leaders to be in lockstep so that we are looking at those pitfalls and looking at those holes way before it becomes problematic for the entire unit.

In a tightly coupled structure, it is easier to make changes and elicit control from the top, although in the instance that there is a breakdown in one unit of the system then it is more likely to negatively impact the other units of the system (Weick, 1976).

It was expressed that “[o]ne potential limitation is that you're a little bit slower when you have to work in a big structure like that because there are a lot of constituents at the table.” The unit’s size and attempts to standardize processes can unintentionally create barriers to efficiency and speed at which decisions can be implemented. This can cause some tension between subunits as they execute their work, as exemplified in an anecdote regarding the Marketing & Communication unit within EMSS. A colleague within a different subunit of EMSS expressed having to adjust to Marketing & Communications’ need to approve anything and everything being sent to students or to make changes to the department’s specific webpage. She felt this limited her “freedom of changing things” and the speed at which critical information could be disseminated to students, which was of particular concern during the pandemic.

In addition to the division’s size as a potential limitation, decentralization in other parts of the institution were particularly challenging in two ways. First, centralization of the EMSS division meant that some units that were previously housed in other divisions, are now structurally separated. An example of this can be seen with the Office of International Student and Scholars Services, as the department has a more seamless interaction with students with whom they are able to connect earlier in the admission process, but they are decentralized from the Office of Global Engagement that houses study abroad, international travel, and visiting students coming to the United States. The decentralization of serving international students contributes to confusion, both internally and externally, regarding which office manages which responsibilities and can result in students “being sent back and forth between two offices.”

The second instance of decentralization that arose from interviews was the lack of progress that had occurred in other areas of the university. As an interviewee pointed out in relation to the EMSS change:

It doesn't mean the rest of the university came along with us, and I can tell you it didn't...

There are other places that Lune students go to seek support other than EMSS and some of those areas are still where they were 20 years ago. And so navigating that has been a bit of a challenge...Deans often, you know, they kind of live in a world where they can do what they think is appropriate. And I don't question that, but can we be a partner together to maybe bring some solutions for a student experience and also an academic experience that is more in line with what we hear and know that students and families really want, particularly at our price point \$75,000 a year cost of attendance?

One specific example that multiple participants with the EMSS division mentioned was academic advising, which was described as siloed in the academic units. While academic advising at its core is connected to the academic programs, it is also foundational to student success and the retention and graduation rates. The VP for Enrollment acknowledged, "Retention and graduation rates are goals and expectations that we are measured on, but we have very little input and say into advising practices in each school." With multiple colleges that provide undergraduate degrees, it was evident that the experience a student may have in one college could be significantly different than the experience of another student enrolled in a different college. This lack of standardization is common across decentralized units and goes against the grain of the advances the highly centralized division of EMSS has made in creating a holistic student experience.

Lastly, the transitory nature of individuals' and units' experiences within EMSS over the last several years and questions regarding the sustainability of the current model pose some ambiguity about the future:

On the flip, sometimes it can be difficult because we're so fast paced to think about what the priorities should be and kind of pivot between, if I could use an analogy, it's a bit like playing whack a mole, right. And we're so concentrating on hitting the mole that sometimes we don't take a step back and think, is this the right game to be playing? And, I think, is kind of ingrained in our culture, too. We have not done a great job setting strategic priorities for the institution.

Understanding the strategic initiatives and having a clear understanding of the priorities seems to have been something on the mind of institutional leaders with the implementation of the last strategic plan, and those interviewed were hopeful that the latest plan provided the roadmap needed to execute the vision.

Thematic Findings

This chapter presents thematic findings regarding the structure of two Enrollment Management Divisions explored through the theory of new managerialism and the conceptual framework of structural coupling. Similarities and differences were explored between the Enrollment Management Divisions at the University of Sole and Lune University. The section that follows explains the four main findings that emerged from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Through data analysis, four thematic findings were identified: (1) structure could be influenced by individuals in leadership positions and their experience rather than derived from a strategic vision; (2) institutional culture influenced the function of the

organizational structure; (3) the central role of revenue; and (4) the quest for prestige. The findings emerged as relevant themes based on the research question.

The Influence of Individuals on Structure

In both cases, it became evident that institutional actors played an integral role in determining organizational structure, and that a person's skill set or work experience could alter or influence the structure. The influence of individuals occurred at various hierarchical levels within the organizational structure and was seen among institutional leaders outside of the Enrollment Management Division, the Chief Enrollment Officer, and at the Director level within each administrative unit.

The Influence of Institutional Leaders. The interview participants associated with the University of Sole all described turnover at the top levels of the institution and how new leadership had altered their strategic approach and priorities regarding revenue and centralization. The arrival of a new president and a new Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering brought a new focus on a more centralized governance and improved resource management, especially as it pertains to revenue. The Dean of Enrollment underscored the importance of his vision aligning with the new leadership:

I think part of my boss, the Dean of Arts, Sciences and Engineering, coming in, realizing what he needed to do in terms of the fiscal oversight and management and then getting to select his own chief enrollment officer, who would really be in alignment with that.

Ultimately, I think that's what kind of got me the job and what I know going into every meeting, every decision at a strategic level has to be using that as my North Star.

The job prospectus for the new provost search, another key leadership position, was promoting "greater collaboration across schools." In addition to the increased emphasis on net tuition

revenue and discount rate, more efficient alignment and centralization among the individual colleges is expected to be the next provost's main charge:

Going back to this idea of decentralization, the budget model for the universities is very convoluted and very difficult. That's outside of certainly my purview, but I think that probably the next provost that comes in, it is going to be, if not the number one responsibility, the number two. There is going to be a greater emphasis of trying to centralize things for the university and not have duplication of services across the place as much as possible.

These leadership changes have had and will continue to have impact on the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Division through tighter coupling of the admission unit and the financial aid unit to reflect the institutional strategy of increasing revenue. To underscore the expectation of collaboration between these two units, the leadership moved the Office of Financial Aid to be physically located within the same building as the Office of Admission and the Office of College Enrollment.

At Lune, the influence that top leadership exerted on structure was even more pronounced. The president of Lune University had an unconventional background compared to many in academia and his prior experience is from the corporate world. His experience in business likely influenced his approach to strategy and preference for more centralized authority, top-down management, and a focus on the student experience. Because of this, he not only made the decision to overhaul the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMSS), but he also positioned this newly created division to report directly to him. The VP of Enrollment acknowledged that this reporting structure is not common at mid-sized universities and the

reality that a new president in the future may change the placement of EMSS in the organizational structure:

The president has just a couple more years under his tenure. It was his decision that enrollment management report directly to the president, but that might shift with a new president as we move forward.

Lune's current organizational model with co-leaders for the EMSS Division versus a single model leader was a decision not based on the most ideal design, but implemented by the president to minimize disruption and allow for stability:

The board of trustees at the time was grappling with do we go out and do a national search to fill the role of VP for EMSS? Do we tap the current talent we have in-house? And very quickly, and I'll be very honest with you, because of the people, not necessarily because that was the right option, because of the people in the roles that the president decided to have co-leaders of EMSS.

In this situation, the president had significant influence over the structure, and his unconventional background may have played a part in the outcome of appointing co-leaders, but the structure was also influenced by the experience and expertise of the two individuals within the Enrollment Management Division. Thus, the structure was influenced by the person the EMSS Division reported to, as well as individuals within the Division.

The Influence of the Chief Enrollment Officer. At both universities, the Chief Enrollment Officers had considerable sway in the organizational structure of the administrative units that reported to them. At Sole, in addition to the new leadership at top levels of the institution, the Dean of Enrollment began his tenure about one year prior. One of his initial comments was that he has not made significant changes to the organizational structure due to

wanting time to fully assess organizational needs. However, through the interviews, it became evident that some aspects of the current structure within the division were less about strategy and more about his predecessor's own managerial style. An example is the creation of the Office of College Enrollment, which seemed to compile responsibilities that did not otherwise fit squarely within the units of admission or financial aid. The current Dean of Enrollment alluded to the structure, strategy and function of College Enrollment being somewhat convoluted:

One thing that I'm trying to do is kind of rebuild that culture a little bit and then kind of figure out what this college enrollment office is and how that can sort of be optimized.

It's changed a whole lot over time is sort of what counts as college enrollment. I think my predecessor had someone that he felt was really strong, but wasn't the right fit for director of admission, so created a lead position for college enrollment that really allowed that person to grow the scope and the importance of his work.

With the departure of the previous Dean of Enrollment, some employees who worked in Admissions or College Enrollment left too. These vacancies have created an opportunity to evaluate the current organizational structure and function with the Enrollment Management Division. The Director of Financial Aid discussed how the previous model did not make logical sense and was based on individuals' influence/qualities versus a strategic approach, which caused issues to the organizational structure:

They'll finally be able to address where prior leadership was still very much in control of the Admission model and had made it wonky by throwing stuff into someone's job description just to promote them and give them more money and title, but then the job descriptions never fit together and never built teams that could work together, like a marketing team and a recruitment team. It created favorites within the office and then

there were people who got left out. It was a tough work environment, but we're coming out of that now that we have new leadership.

The perception that the prior leadership had created a model based on individuals and had less to do with the goals or long-term vision for the Enrollment Management Division aligned with the culture that was described as siloed and lacking transparency.

At Lune University, the creation of the expansive EMSS Division made it critical to hire the right person with the experience and leadership style believed necessary to execute the strategy behind the organizational structure:

I came to Lune because of the vision of [the previous VP of EMSS]. And by that I mean the vision that EMSS reports up to one person... And [the previous VP of EMSS] had the skill to lead something as large as that, because in my mind, it's probably five people in the country that I know that could really do that job at that scale because it is huge.

In this instance, the structure determined the skill set required. However, when this person left the institution, then the structure was manipulated to fit the current talent pool available at the time. People were upfront about this reality and recognized that the current co-leader model could dissolve at any time if one of them were to leave. The VP of Enrollment reflected on this potential vulnerability to the structure:

[My co-leader of EMSS] and I work really well together, but what if he or myself leave this position and brought in personalities that did not have similar philosophies? Would this unit still function as one unit as it does right now? And is there talent out there that can come in and command or lead a unit as it is right now? So basically saying, are we too big of a unit for an individual to come and really do a good job? And is that skill set

out there? I think that they are very few enrollment managers who could do something like this.

There was universal acknowledgement from those interviewed that the current organizational structure would be in jeopardy if the people at the top of the EMSS Division left the institution.

The Influence of the Unit Director. At the individual unit-levels under the Enrollment Management Division, there was evidence that strategy was less of a factor that influenced function and more about individual skill sets. The opportunity to shape structure within the division at the unit-level is on a smaller scale but emerged as theme that influenced function based on who had capacity to take on additional responsibilities or who was able to be promoted. Previous experiences and strengths of unit-level leaders were highly influential in both cases. At Sole, building positions around individuals appears to have been common practice with the previous leadership:

Student employment used to be under Career Services, so when the person from the career center retired, the former Director of Financial Aid said, "I'll take student employment, I used to oversee student employment." Then when he resigned, since I was the H.R. person for our division, [the former Chief Enrollment Officer] said, "I think you should take student employment it's a good match for your skill set." So it came out of Financial Aid and went to College Enrollment.

Again, the emphasis on skill sets and convenience emerges as something that is considered separately from long-term vision or strategy.

At Lune University, there is more evidence of the prevailing strategy of enhancing the student experience and then modifying the structure to serve that goal, but some of the more tactical decisions about how job responsibilities fit together can be traced to the individual in the

role today. One participant outlined this approach, saying, “So [positions are] really structured based on business needs and people, quite honestly. And so I think my portfolio, like many people at Lune, is a reflection of who I am and my experiences.” When speaking about the rationale behind Lune’s pre-college program residing in the office of Inclusive Education and Scholarship and reporting directly to the VP for enrollment management, the Director highlighted the influence her own background had on where she sat within the organizational structure:

I think part of it is recruitment so that we kind of look at that as a recruitment avenue, and then we do teeter between student life and academic affairs, but part of it is my own background from being at Lune. It could very well change if I leave and someone else comes in, based on their background.

The practice of filling vacant positions or shifting responsibilities depending on talent from within the division has an element of convenience, but it is also a way to create additional opportunities for those whom the organization wishes to retain, as outlined by an interviewee:

Our organizational structure really reflects the people who we have that we want to promote. Because we do a lot of that from within, which is not a bad thing, but one of the downsides to it is...and I use these words on campus all the time, I've never been in an institution where there are more people in positions that are bigger than their skill set. They're there because they work really hard, they prove themselves and they're committed to the university.

Promoting from within the organization can be beneficial to create loyal employees, preserve culture, and reduce turnover; however, a similar practice at Sole seemed to have the inverse effect when the leaders at the top left the institution, as many followed his departure, resulting in

a high number of vacancies. Finding the balance between defining the strategy, implementing structure, and leveraging individual skill sets is a complex, yet crucial element to a successful enrollment management operation.

Culture Embedded in Structure

It has been established that there are substantial differences in the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Divisions at the University of Sole and Lune University. These structures reflect how institutional leaders collectively defined or viewed enrollment management. The responsibilities and expectations of the Enrollment Management Division were directly related to the administrative units that were structurally coupled underneath it. In both cases, the structure also served as a representation of the philosophy and approach of the Enrollment Management Division. The influence of each school's philosophy connected to a larger thematic finding that centered around culture, communication, and identification: ultimately, culture can impact the effectiveness of the organizational structure. This finding manifested differently at each institution.

The Culture of Decentralization at University of Sole. At Sole, the organizational structure is limited primarily to the functions of admission and financial aid and predominately focuses on the front end of the student life cycle, meaning that strategy is centered around prospective students to the point of enrollment. When discussing the institutional view of enrollment, the Director of Admission acknowledged that there has been a historical view of enrollment management that is limited to attracting, admitting and enrolling students, saying, "I think that by and large, enrollment management wasn't necessarily enrollment management from the macro in terms of what happens after the fact, it really was kind of point in time bringing in." Hossler et al. (2015) discussed that one of the defining characteristics of strategic enrollment

management is that the decisions are data-driven (p. 36). At Sole, most of the research-dependent processes center around yield prediction and financial aid budgeting, which was reported to have been a significant step forward and improved the overall enrollment operation:

What I think works really well is again now more than ever, there is a continuous and honest, data driven look at admissions and financial aid as really kind of one thing, it's not admissions over here, financial aid over here for the enrolling students.

Even though this has seemed to have a positive impact on strategy, connecting data points after students enroll to better inform recruitment and admission decisions has not been a priority, as one interviewee noted:

I just don't necessarily think that there was an understanding overall from the university that it's not just a point of entry, it really is what happens after. And so when we're talking about retention now, and we've started to begin talking about it, this is certainly very much in the weeds. But, you know, for example, the students that come in that indicate they have an interest in X major, what does that mean when they hit the ground their freshman year?

Where do they ultimately land and kind of how that goes forward there? From my experience, I don't think that there has ever been a thoughtful conversation about that continual line that really is effective enrollment management.

This view of enrollment management is not uncommon at institutions and reflects the culture of decentralization at Sole. As reported by all the participants interviewed at Sole, the decentralization has resulted in silos, which can add challenges to collaborating with other offices to obtain data. When asked about potential barriers that existed for the Enrollment Management Division, one respondent reiterated how the philosophy of decentralization and loose coupling impacted operations:

I think it's the compartmentalization of different offices within the university. So, you know, if my responsibility is what's two feet in front of me and two feet on either side and somebody else's responsibility is the next two feet and two feet around, it becomes tough. So historically that's not something that we've done a great job with. I'd be remiss if I didn't say that, you know, it's one of the structural barriers.

The decentralization of administrative units outside of the Enrollment Management Division was an impediment to collaboration and broader support of enrollment efforts.

The shift of aligning the Office of Admission and the Office of Financial Aid under one leader allowed for more collaborative work between the directors of each unit, as well as for improved technology that connects data between systems. However, interviews revealed that implementing an organizational structure to create integration across departments habituated to a culture of decentralization has not resulted in a more cohesive team. Despite existing under the same administrative umbrella of Enrollment Management, each unit remained loosely coupled in terms of function and maintained a separateness of identity. This loose coupling also manifested itself in the relationship among staff, and the unit directors of Admissions, Financial Aid, and College Enrollment tended to identify with their particular unit more strongly than the Division of Enrollment Management:

The way I see it, there's not a lot of synergy between Admissions and Financial Aid. And that was always the goal, that we would be integrated like really one team [and] we never really were.

To emphasize the partnership and reinforce the structure of one division, prior leadership relocated the Office of Financial Aid to be closer to the Office of Admission and Office of College Enrollment, but as one interviewee reported, "That kind of forced physical cohabitation

is not integration,” and “you can see still the us versus them between admissions and aid.” The Dean of Enrollment sees this tension as a product of the culture and as one of the areas he is hoping to change in time:

One last thing that I need to do to continue to shore up [the staff] is build more trust, transparency, collaboration within the whole division. And that's a delicate balance of where do people see their team allegiance and how strong do you want that culture within, for example, the Office of Financial Aid? As separate from or as part of the admission team?

He expressed wanting to achieve cohesion without being disruptive to aspects of the structure that worked well together. Moving forward, he expressed needs for elevating the functional work to support strategic goals, specifically thinking about needs around marketing and optimizing technology and where those skill sets sit within the organizational structure.

The Culture of Centralization at Lune University. The expansive Enrollment Management organizational structure at Lune contains administrative units responsible for not only recruiting and enrolling students, but also many other support services that are foundational to current students. The current structure was put in place as a strategic initiative to improve the student experience and in turn improve retention and graduation rates, as well as strengthen the financial bottom line. The structure is representative of the strategy and the institutional view of strategic enrollment management. In fact, in 2014 when the reorganization occurred to create the EMSS Division, the sole purpose was to improve the student experience by adopting what was referred to as the Student Life Cycle Management approach. One interviewee stated, “We want to be with a student from when they’re a prospective to when they’re an alumnus. It doesn't break the chain. It's prospective to alumni. And we got to keep engaged with them the entire

time.” Another person pointed out, “If anything when you create a division of enrollment management and student success, you're sending a message to the people who work in that group that we care about graduating alumni and not just bringing in the class.” Each person interviewed had a clear understanding that their role, regardless of the unit or department they were housed, was to support student enrollment through a holistic approach.

A holistic approach to the student experience identified barriers that had historically contributed to students retaining and completing their degree. It aligned the offices in such a way that it is much easier to identify at-risk students through the use of data analytics and then implement interventions that could offer support along the way. One example of this feedback loop was with students who were majoring in the engineering program; leveraging data on students whom the program had historically not retained now provided early detection to identify underprepared students sooner. The Director of Enrollment Analytics provided this example:

There are a group of students who we bring in to one of our exploratory programs. This is a program that's really designed to help prepare students to kind of take the leap. So, if we don't feel like they're ready for an engineering curriculum yet, this program is really designed to get them ready so that they can transition into engineering without missing a beat.

Changes that view the entire arc of students' trajectories, based on data-informed decisions, have contributed to the positive gains in retention and graduation rates since the implementation of the EMSS structure.

However, other positive changes that have occurred are more difficult to quantify, such as improved communication and breaking down silos. The VP of Enrollment said:

We were a set of very siloed offices that did not talk to each other and that really contributed to retention rates and graduation rates being lower than they should be. And the thinking was that even just merging these administrative offices and building an administrative structure whose mission, vision and leadership was aligned was going to begin the process of improving success in students and also student satisfaction.

Others interviewed also spoke to the cohesion that the organizational structure created by improving communication. Statements like, “We talk more often... It's in the infrastructure. It forces the enrollment team to work with the student team” and “[The structure] makes collaborating easier because then you have a little bit more of that. You know who to reach out to” were frequently echoed.

For those who had been at Lune for a significant amount of time, the changes in working relationships were dramatic; as one person described, “I might say 15 years ago, it was kind of like every man for themselves. And I think now there’s a bit more unity in terms of trying to move Lune forward.” This unity and cross-collaboration of administrative units has allowed for a more cohesive approach to resource management, as the VP of Enrollment explained:

For example, as a unit, we would very quickly identify times in the year where the response rate to students’ inquiries was too high. So the whole unit would come together and say, OK, how do we solve? Who has resources right now that we can apply to this, to this solution, et cetera?

Not only has the integrated structure allowed the EMSS team to remove barriers for students, improve communication among the EMSS Division, and elevate the student experience, it has also allowed individuals to be better at their roles. The Director of Communications & Marketing explained how the staff in his unit have become more effective marketers and used the Office of

Financial Aid as an example: “Because we know it better as marketers or writers or designers, we understand how things should look, how they should feel not just in unifying the messages, but having a depth of message, which was a huge win.” Staff morale was high among the EMSS team members, and it was noted that they tended to identify with the EMSS Division more than their individual unit. It was clear that people aligned themselves with the vision of EMSS, and the mission and values of Lune University, as someone said, “People want to stay here because you want to see Lune reach that apex of moving to the next echelon of universities. I think we're so close to getting there and I think it's a motivation to the community.” Those interviewed believed that the culture of innovation and dynamism was reflected in the integrated structural and functional aspects of the EMSS Division.

The Central Role of Revenue

The literature on enrollment management speaks to the role the division plays in allowing institutional leaders to exert more influence over their student enrollment and the division's direct connection to revenue that is critical to tuition-dependent institutions (Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Vander Schee, 2007). However, the degree to which revenue was a driver of decisions, some of which did not always align with the long-term strategy was a theme found in both cases. Interview participants at both institutions were quite clear that their number one charge was generating revenue.

At Sole, it was highlighted by those interviewed that revenue had moved up on the list of priorities to be the number one directive from leadership and the most pressing goal for which the division was evaluated. The Dean of Enrollment identified the revenue goals as his “North Star”, stating that “The primary goals right now are really revenue related, kind of rebalancing things and ensuring that all in all, we're meeting those revenue goals.” Ironically, this was stated

almost identically by someone at Lune, “Chief among our goals right now is revenue and making sure that we are a fiscally sound institution. That's also part of our strategic plan as well.” These statements outline the heavy reliance on Enrollment Management Divisions to generate the revenue from tuition to finance most other mission important initiatives at the university.

Lune’s initiatives around creating a high-quality student experience connect to the desire to increase market position and improve retention rates, but ultimately the driver is to secure greater revenue from these outcomes. Additionally, the need for revenue must be balanced as much as possible with other competing enrollment goals, as the VP of Enrollment stated:

Headcount, discount rate and net tuition revenue: I would say those are the primary goals that will be measured on...We are a tuition revenue driven institution. Right now close to 80% of the revenue comes from first-year undergraduate full-time enrollment. And so I think that's perhaps why the current structure sits as it does...

The structure at both institutions is such that it supports the revenue goals, and combining Admission and Financial Aid units is one method institutions rely on for strategic enrollment management to secure revenue. The Director of Financial Aid at Sole stated it well:

...net tuition revenue is how admissions can come together to share the goal and how we shouldn't think about admissions, thinking about a headcount and financial aid, thinking about an aid budget. We have to jointly be working toward a net tuition revenue target.

However, at both institutions, despite revenue being at the top of the list of priorities, it is not the only priority. There are other aspects of enrollment that are high priorities, and as is often the case, they can detract from the revenue and create enrollment tensions. For example, enrolling students from under-represented populations and providing access to low-income students is a value in both the Lune and Sole communities, yet investing in these initiatives directly reduces

the tuition revenue. One interviewee summarized this well by acknowledging the nexus of decisions:

Lune was kind of the next step in a progression of institutions that were thinking about how to best influence the student experience and there are multiple goals in enrollment management: It's about revenue, it's about diversity, it's about prestige, it's about academic profile, it's about rankings, about all those pieces. So how do you balance that in a way that optimizes as much as you can? Because you can't optimize all those things. It's just not possible. And it might be possible, but it comes at such a high cost that most institutions are not in a position to make it happen.

Typically, to make more revenue, substantial investments are required in areas that will help move the university towards its goals. This is often true for universities that have high tuition and must demonstrate the return on investment for students who attend in order for the institution to succeed in a competitive market. One interviewee saw the tuition price tag at Lune as a hinderance that they have worked to overcome. The high sticker price helps to generate revenue, while simultaneously posing a challenge to enrollment if there are not enough students able or willing to pay the high cost:

We have to work really hard given our price point. Families are always, on the enrollment side, about quality. In fact, in my opinion, that's the only thing families really are willing to pay for at these very high-priced private institutions. It's quality and the academic experience. That can mean lots of things, but it's perceived quality.

The quality that students are looking for often requires investments in resources, amenities, and personnel. Despite the emphasis on the student experience at Lune and the enrollment successes over the last few years, the budget allocated to EMSS has been reduced year after year. When

speaking about student experience and the investment in personnel needed to provide a high touch service model, it was underscored through the interviews that operational and personnel budgets were not where they needed to be to achieve the goals:

It's the most amazing, efficient, lean staffing model that I've ever really seen or been a part of. And yet somehow, we deliver. Like I said, it's because of the individual effort, but we as an institution will never achieve our potential. And that's the other thing that the structure represented to me. It was a sign of investment that finally Lune maybe is going to step up and invest so that we can provide the kind of experience that we want to provide... But we have to have the tools and the resources to do that.

The University of Sole has also experienced budget cuts recently, and units have been expected to produce better results with fewer staff. The Dean of Enrollment came in during a time of budget cuts, and he admitted that he was concerned about the outcomes:

Decisions were made last summer to furlough people and that was like super scary for many of my folks, and it also presented some real strategic risks that, you know, where are we going to be able to get all the work done during the summer that we needed to sort of load the cannons for a big fall recruitment cycle that's unlike any we've ever seen before due to the pandemic.

This practice of reducing and constraining resources that support the administrative arm that is responsible for generating revenue poses a complex dichotomy when the institutional leadership at both universities rely so heavily on enrollment to produce revenue.

The Quest for Prestige

The prestige of an institution is often associated with market-position (Toma, 2010). Market-position relates to the consumer's perception of the brand; in the case of higher

education, then, market position is often determined by rankings and brand recognition. The consumer's perception can also be defined in terms of the perceived value of the educational benefits or the return on investment that a student may experience based on graduating with a degree from an institution. Kalsbeek and Zucker (2015) stated, "It is a market structure within which students compare, consider, and choose among their higher education options and opportunities and which is the context for the competitive maneuvering between colleges and universities in pursuit of their goals and aspirations" (p. 80). The market position of the institution may help to guide the strategy, and ultimately shape the type of enrollment management structure that could be most effective.

At Lune, the focus on improving the student experience related directly to its market position. Kalsbeek and Zucker (2015) found a positive correlation between retention and degree outcomes and institution market position, meaning that the higher the retention and graduation rates then the higher an institution's market position. This finding is significant because market position and the perceived value of an institution often are tied to demand and selectivity. Lune's leadership recognized a disconnect between the high price point, their desire to raise graduation and retention rates, and improve the student experience, so they decided to create an Enrollment Management Division that could bring various student service departments together to remove barriers that deter success and improve retention and graduation. The approach of focusing on the student experience, and indirectly improving market position, led to the centralized EMSS Division within the university.

The University of Sole, however, is perceived on average to have a higher market position, perhaps leading to greater focus on the front end of the student life cycle because although most institutions have room to improve retention rates, the retention rate was not seen

as an impediment to the university. The Dean of Enrollment at Sole observed that enrollment has not been a “problem” and therefore does not seem to be garnishing much attention from other constituencies at the university, such as the president or the Board of Trustees. The lack of a crisis or a real “enrollment problem” could reflect a difference in market position as represented by admit, yield, retention, and graduation rates when compared to Lune. Without a crisis impending, then perhaps the need for a more integrative approach to enrollment management is not needed and the expense and potential strife of reconfiguring the organizational structure is seen as unnecessary and not in alignment with strategy.

However, despite not having an enrollment crisis, members of the Division thought that even with the frontend focus on the student life cycle at Sole, their structure could be improved. One of their highest priorities was reducing the reliance on international students to generate revenue, and the Dean of Enrollment specifically mentions that they have greater brand recognition in Shanghai than Atlanta. Additionally, there currently seems to be a gap between the marketing needs of the Enrollment Management Division that are not supported by the larger university marketing division, so that is a consideration that may impact their structure.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This comparative case study has sought to understand how two private, midsized, research institutions organized their Enrollment Management Divisions, and how the structure aligned with the institutional goals, mission, and culture. Enrollment management is an administrative innovation that emerged in the 1970s to help institution officials connect enrollment to the broader fiscal operation. As the need to coordinate enrollment in an intentional and strategic way has grown due to reliance on tuition, demographic shifts, and increased competition for resources, the various models and approaches to strategic enrollment management have developed in sophistication.

The literature documents various models of enrollment management that institutional leaders employ, ranging from a committee of campus partners to creating an administrative division led by someone with expert knowledge of enrollment presiding over individual units and coordinating enrollment and retention-related initiatives. Strategic enrollment management operations vary significantly depending on institutional type, mission, size, and goals. However, the divisional model signifies the largest commitment to enrollment management due to the resources required to create an administrative branch within the organizational structure. Yet even looking across the landscape at institutions that have an Enrollment Management Division model, the units housed under Enrollment Management vary widely.

Practitioners of Enrollment Management recommend that when creating an effective enrollment management operation, institutional leaders should consider the importance of

linking areas such as admission, financial aid, orientation, retention, and other student support services to establish a campus-wide approach toward a unified vision (Huddleston, Jr., 2000; Schulz & Lucido, 2011). This study sought to examine the organizational structure of two Enrollment Management Divisions and how these structures reflect institutional goals and culture by addressing the following question:

Based on the perception of institutional leaders, what are the internal and external factors that shape how an Enrollment Management Division is structured at an institution?

To answer the research question, a comparative case study was used to examine the organizational structure of the Enrollment Management Divisions at two mid-sized, private, research universities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 participants across the two institutions, and the interviews included the Chief Enrollment Officer as well as the directors of the subunits that report to the Chief Enrollment Officer. From these interviews, a qualitative analysis was conducted using a priori and in vivo coding to identify themes. Four themes emerged to answer the research question of which factors are most influential in determining how institutional leaders choose to organize their Enrollment Management Division: (1) structure could be heavily influenced by individuals in leadership positions and their experience, rather than derived from a strategic vision; (2) institutional culture influenced the function of the organizational structure; (3) revenue was often central to decision making and at times contradictory to other enrollment initiatives; and (4) the pursuit of prestige to enhance the perceived value of the institution in order to better compete for students and secure the bottom line.

Discussion

The Influence of Individuals on Structure

One of the most recurring findings was the impact that individuals had on the organizational structure at all levels within the Enrollment Management Divisions, including the person to whom the Chief Enrollment Officer reports, the Chief Enrollment Officer, and the leaders of the functional units. The experience and backgrounds of the players at the table influence the structure. Not only are the effects of individuals visible in the organizational structure and strategy, but also determined where specific job functions lived within the structure.

Leaders' influence on structure often starts with the influence of the president and the president's interpretation of the mission and vision of the institution. The president's previous experiences can heavily shape their view and the centrality strategic enrollment management plays in moving the institution toward their interpretation of the mission. At the University of Sole, partly due to the decentralized nature of the institution, strategic enrollment management primarily pertained to the front end of the student life cycle and played more of a supporting role to the institutional goals. The placement of the Enrollment Management Division within the overall university structure also speaks to the supporting role that enrollment fulfills. However, at Lune University, a slightly larger institution in terms of the number of schools for undergraduates and the larger quantity of students, the EMSS Division takes a more central role within the university and thus has a greater reach. With the VP of Enrollment reporting directly to the president, the president is much more likely to influence the strategy and priorities related to enrollment.

The experience, strengths, and philosophical approach of the Chief Enrollment Officer influences the structure as it pertains to their priorities and expertise in relation to the enrollment needs for the institution. At the University of Sole, the departure of one Chief Enrollment Officer and the hiring of another provided a prime opportunity to shift strategic priorities. Similarly at Lune, the departure of one Chief Enrollment Officer in the newly created organizational structure left a gap that was considered difficult to fill. In an effort to minimize disruption, the structure was modified to promote internally and create a co-leader model based on each leader's strengths. Modifying the structure to accommodate a co-leader model versus a single leader kept the organizational structure intact, but it was acknowledged that despite the structure looking similar on paper, the cohesiveness established under a single leader had loosened.

Lastly, the individual unit-level is where the greatest fluidity was noted at both institutions in terms of the functional alignment and responsibilities. At this level, there was some shifting of the organizational structure based on individuals in each role, but it was more related to specific job functions and promotions into larger roles. One participant specifically described their portfolio as “a reflection” of who they were and of their “experiences.”

Ultimately, at all levels of the organization, individuals have varying degrees of influence on the structure and the degree of coupling within the division. The fluidity based on individual characteristics and strengths cannot be ignored and must work in tandem with both the structure and the strategy. Two identical organizational structures are likely to interact differently and have varying results based on the individuals who fill the structures. Hossler et al. (2015) asserted that various organizational models exist, “but what matters is the particular institutional context and idiosyncratic character that dictate how such alignments function and evolve” (p. 33). The people matter. While the structure helps to create the vision and strategy, the individuals

within the roles determine the degree of coupling and interconnectedness. As one interviewee stated, “You could step back and say this is the perfect structure for an institution and then struggle for decades hiring people to fill those roles... it’s about moving the place forward today based on the financial resources and the talent available.”

The Central Role of Revenue

In this study, the importance and priority for the Enrollment Management Divisions to generate revenue to maintain, and ideally elevate, the fiscal health of the institution was critical to the overall institutional strategy as it relates to strategic enrollment management. Revenue is a topic that every single person interviewed mentioned as their top goal in their role within the Enrollment Management Division and the data point on which their success is most heavily based. The emergence of enrollment management in the 1970s was in response to declining demographics, market competition, and the need to align enrollment goals more strategically with the financial needs of the institution (Bontrager, 2004; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). These same factors are on the minds of many institutional leaders today, including the two institutions used in this study. In the U.S., data on birth rates estimate that the number of high school graduates will peak in 2025 just shy of 4 million and then begin to decline for the next decade (WICHE, 2020). The northeastern and midwestern areas of the U.S. are expected to experience the largest declines in high school graduates; since both Sole and Lune are located in one of these areas, each will have to contend with declining enrollments unless they can compete more successfully within their own geographic region as well as draw students from other regions of the country, or they can attract more non-traditional students such as adult learners. Today, enrollment management has evolved to encompass a larger view around resource management.

Bontrager (2004) wrote, “The overarching goal is not simply to increase total revenue, but at the same time to reduce institutional costs in order to improve net revenue” (p.13).

At the University of Sole, participants discussed the emphasis on revenue coming down from the new leadership, and this re-prioritization of enrollment goals has had both operational and structural repercussions. The Dean of Enrollment underscored “the primary goals right now are revenue related...ensuring that all in all, we're meeting those revenue goals and shoring up some structural deficits that were kind of left unchecked for a long while.” Similarly at Lune, even with an intense focus on net tuition revenue, the EMSS Division has experienced budget cuts for a number of years; as one person stated, “Every year we’re having to shrink and shrink.” These statements demonstrate the importance of the Divisions to generate revenue through the enrollment of new students, but also challenges pertaining to resource management.

The finding that revenue influences strategy and structure alone is not remarkable, but the heightened degree to which decisions are made surrounding revenue and resource management was significant at both institutions. It should be noted that both institutions use Responsibility Center Management (RCM) as the budgeting model, which tends to promote decentralization because revenue-generating units are responsible for managing their own revenues and expenditures. Despite different structures and strategies, but both using an RCM approach, led to the assumption that the differences were not a product of the budgeting model. The organizational structures that the universities implemented leverage resources to eliminate some areas of duplication and create more efficiencies. For example, at Sole, the College Enrollment unit supports HR functions across the Division, reducing the need for each unit to have a staff person who is responsible for HR related needs. At Lune, units such as Marketing and Data Analytics work to meet the needs of the entire EMSS Division. Ultimately, though, the strategy

each institution implemented to achieve revenue goals differs. While University of Sole has limited the reach of enrollment management to primarily new students, Lune University has leveraged strategic enrollment management to encompass the complete student life cycle. The institutional leaders at Lune consider the need to provide a high-quality student experience to improve retention and graduation rates, create devoted alumni, and attract more students to the institution, but all of these connect back to generating additional revenue and improving market position. As the need to manage resources and to increase revenue plagues institutional leaders, studies show that more and more institutions are centralizing their enrollments to compete for resources and the structures are shaped by revenue considerations (Schulz & Lucido, 2011). Despite differences in the structural approaches, the main priority of the divisions at both Sole and Lune is to leverage resources and secure revenue.

Culture Embedded in Structure

This study examined two different organizational structures of Enrollment Management Divisions at two private research institutions that each had disparate philosophical approaches to enrollment management. The model at the University of Sole was geared toward new student enrollment, and Lune University emphasized the student life cycle by integrating administrative units that support students. While a singular definition of enrollment management or an ideal structure is absent from the literature, the complex interplay between strategy, structure, and culture has been observed (Bontrager, 2004; Flannigan, 2016; Penn, 1999). Ultimately, the structure of Enrollment Management should reflect the strategy and take into consideration the institutional culture to create an effective enrollment management operation that supports the institution in achieving its academic goals, business goals, and best supporting students. In both instances, the Enrollment Management Divisions at Sole and Lune reflect the philosophical

approach and strategy employed at each institution (Black, 2004; Flanigan, 2016; Hossler & Bontrager, 2015; Kalsbeek, 2006; Schultz & Lucido, 2011).

While the structure mirrored the strategy at both institutions, campus-wide culture within the structure influenced the overall functioning within the Divisions. Interesting differences in relationships between the subunits of each model emerged that reflect differences in institutional culture, and interviews revealed that combining administrative functions under a single structure did not necessarily result in integration.

At the University of Sole, decentralization puts the Enrollment Management Division on the periphery and reflects the institutional philosophy of strategic enrollment management as one that focuses on the point of entry with less emphasis on outcomes once the student enrolls. This strategic approach, combined with the historically siloed culture, seems to have produced mixed results in terms of effective integration. Integration was most effective between the Dean of Enrollment, the Director of Admissions, and the Director of Financial Aid. However, when compared to the expansive Enrollment Management Division at Lune, there was not the same level of interdependence between the subunits.

The integration of the various subunits under the Enrollment Management Division was drastically different at each institution and reflected the way that individuals within the subunits tended to identify. Previous literature on loose versus tight coupling speaks to the potential of hierarchical controls to contribute to coordination and efficiency, but also the reality that individual and group self-interests that manifest themselves can undermine the top-down integration (Boyd Crowson, 2002). Hansen (1999) also discovered that strong inter-unit relationships and a high degree of communication lead to efficient sharing of “highly complex” knowledge. Improved communication, interdependence between subunits, and sharing of

complex knowledge related to strategic enrollment management was an outcome of the EMSS structure according to those interviewed at Lune. Those who had been at Lune prior to 2014 reported that culture today is stronger than prior to the creation of the EMSS Division.

At Lune, this elevated collaboration and interconnectedness has resulted in a shared vision for the EMSS Division, as well as the larger university. Additionally, it created a shared vernacular that serves to connect the subunits to the EMSS Division around and has had positive effects on staff morale. The leaders of the individual subunits were more likely to identify with the EMSS Division than they did their individual unit. Lastly, multiple participants reported feeling supported by the institution and EMSS, as well as valued for their input in the decision-making processes of the EMSS Division.

The Quest for Prestige

Kalsbeek and Zucker (2015) stated, “In general, stronger position schools demonstrate a broader market range and greater geographic diversity, while lower-tiered schools almost invariable are tied to a more localized or regional territory” (p.90). In addition, this emphasis on market-position emphasizes tenets of new managerialism and the focus on performance indicators, competition, and student choice. In the 1970s colleges and universities began utilizing marketing techniques to stand out from their competitors and to attract students. This was among the first dimensions of new managerialism when more traditional business approaches, such as marketing to specific audiences, began to evolve within the industry of higher education. Hossler et al. (2015), noted that it is becoming more common, especially at private institutions, for the organizational structure to be one where the chief marketing officer reports to the chief enrollment officer. When this is not the case, there is potential for tension between the marketing division and the Enrollment Management Division, or the admission unit, as to strategy and

prioritization of audiences (p. 34). This tension reflects the marketing challenges that interview participants from the University of Sole described. However, at Lune University, the marketing function lived within the Enrollment Management Division and seemed to be advantageous in creating consistent messaging and branding to key constituencies such as prospective students, parents of prospective students, high school counselors, and alumni.

Marketing is critical to most enrollment management operations, especially for the admission office, but the right technology must be in place to allow for the dissemination of the institutional messages and then the ability to gather feedback in the form of data points that can help inform the overall communication strategy. Elements of new managerialism and loose coupling are evident in the focus on marketing, technology, and optimization of resources (Meyer, 2002; Weick, 1976). Technology has become critical in an effective strategic enrollment management operation (Kilgore & Gage, 2015) and touches many aspects of enrollment management from communications to segmented populations, to providing predictive analytics, to creating efficiencies that enhance the student experience. Kilgore and Gage (2015) underscored, “It is now the norm for multiple systems with high levels of functionality to be interwoven to meet the needs of SEM and student expectations” (p.432). Both marketing and technology can be considered an asset or barrier for any enrollment operations, and it must be factored into the larger decisions on strategy.

Lastly, as this study has explored, strategy and structure are intertwined, and the structure must support the strategy. A similar symbiotic relationship can be seen between revenue and the quest for prestige. In order to move ahead in market position, large financial investments are typically essential; however, resources are also a premium and finite. At Lune, one of the perceived internal barriers for improving the market position or the prestige of the institution is

the retention and graduation rates, which affect both revenue and enrollment. This poses the question of will a broad, comprehensive approach to enrollment continue to be beneficial in moving Lune forward to its goal? At Sole though, their strong retention and graduation rates are not of concern and therefore resulted in a more limited approach to strategic enrollment management. This outcome suggests that the focus of the enrollment concern at a particular institution factors into the design of the structure and the strategy, which are derived from a desire to enhance institutional effectiveness and provide financial stability commonly associated with higher rankings and strong market-position.

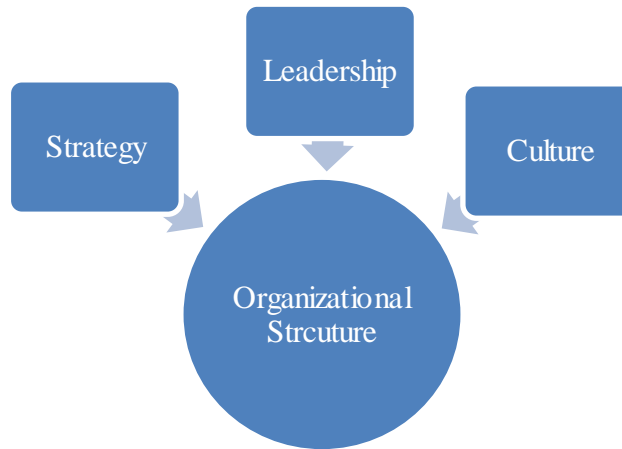
Implications

As institutions of higher education look forward to the future, how they evolve and stay relevant will mean the difference between thriving or having to close their doors. With over 4,000 institutions of higher education, it is more critical today than ever that institutions be able to differentiate and create sustainable enrollment models. In this study, a qualitative comparative case study was used to investigate two institutions similar in type, size, and mission, but with different approaches to strategic enrollment management. Each institution had invested in an Enrollment Management Division, but the composition of functional subunits within the Enrollment Management Division differed. The difference in the structure reflected the institutional strategy and the culture. In this study, the University of Sole took a frontend, input-focused approach that was a less integrated model once a student enrolled, and at Lune University a more comprehensive approach to the student life cycle from prospective student through alumnus informed the strategy. Both institutions are tuition dependent and revenue-focused, so a logical question may be: if structure reflects strategy and each institution has revenue as their number one priority, then what determines strategy?

Identifying which factors shape strategy is a critical question as institutional leaders identify competitor institutions that are achieving their enrollment targets or succeeding in securing resources, and then consider emulating aspects that seem to contribute to success, and thereby legitimizing a structure or strategy different than their own. The sections that follow will discuss implications of this study's findings as it relates to the organizational structure and the degree of coupling that emerged through interviews and document analysis. Institutional leaders and practitioners of enrollment management need to create a structure that aligns with strategy while also allowing for the flexibility to leverage talent available, create an open system of communication, and prioritize goals clearly in conjunction with a strategic approach for moving toward those goals when considering the organizational structure of an Enrollment Management Division. According to Hossler et al. (2015), "The fact remains that structure should follow strategy, and the optimal approach is likely the organizational integration and alignment that best fits the institution's particular strategic situation and strategic intentions and its existing strengths, achieving the integration of core activities..." (p. 42). This statement connects to the findings in this study that support that the culture of an institution, the philosophical approach to enrollment, and the strategy must be in alignment with the organizational structure and composition of the enrollment management model. Figure 4 offers a visual representation of the factors that are specific to each institution and must be considered fully to create an effective Enrollment Management model structure.

Figure 4

Internal Influences on the Organizational Structure



The interaction of these factors is important for those who seek to leverage enrollment as a competitive advantage as part of a broader strategic plan. Inventory and discussion of these factors must be assessed, in addition to clarity around the prioritization of realistic, achievable goals, to ensure the foundation of an effective Enrollment Management organization.

Firm, but Flexible Structure

Findings from this study suggest that within the Enrollment Management Divisions at the University of Sole and Lune University, the organizational structure was highly malleable based on individuals from within the Division. At Sole, with the arrival of new Dean of Enrollment, the problematic nature of previous leadership promoting individuals who did not align with the strategy resulted in a mismatch of job titles and responsibilities in addition to having a negative effect on staff morale. When asked about the rationale of the reporting structure or their portfolio, individuals at Lune acknowledged that sometimes the sum of their past experiences shaped their position and thus influenced the structure.

Based on the findings from this study, there are implications regarding how set an organizational structure should be and when compromises should be made to alter the structure based on an individual's strengths and past experience. Shifting the organizational structure frequently to accommodate the talent pool could result in a misalignment with the strategy and derail progress of initiatives. However, it could be equally problematic to create a structure without considering the current talent pool or the likelihood of being able to find and secure the ideal candidate from outside of the organization. Finding the right balance of creating a structure that aligns with strategy, but also allows for a degree of flexibility when new challenges/situations arise seems to be the best approach. This is also supported by the literature, which reports that hybrid models of organizational structure can harness the benefits of coordination produced by centralization, and simultaneously allow the flexibility of decentralization (Meyer, 2002).

As in any profession, enrollment management services must be equipped to adapt to changes in personnel. When turnover occurs, then it is important to take inventory of the current status of the organizational structure and the progress of both current and future initiatives in relation to strategy to assess strengths and limitations of functions. In addition, in the event turnover is significant, either in terms of volume or key leaders within the structure, it is important for the culture – if it is a strength of the organization – to be intentionally reinforced. It is especially important for the Chief Enrollment Officer to create a shared vision that people can understand and identify their role in moving the institutional toward achieving its enrollment goals, which support the larger strategic plan.

Creating an Open System

This study supported findings in literature from the field of strategic enrollment management that an open system is best to facilitate a shared vision, promote collaboration between subunits, and involve other constituencies in the challenges and efforts related to enrollment. Hossler et al., (2015), spoke to the importance of “open systems environments to encourage the broad sharing of information and decision-making and discourage the creation of organizational silos that operate independently of one another” (p. 33). In this study, the two Enrollment Management Divisions differed in structure and composition, and interviews revealed the importance of culture as it relates to integration and communication. More knowledge sharing occurred in a culture of centralization with tighter coupling of subunits, promoting a deeper level of integration that could ultimately lead to a higher degree of effectiveness.

Open systems that promote communication between all levels of the organizational structure can identify problems and adjust more quickly. Clagett (1995) purported, “Successful enrollment management depends on an information base that is comprehensive, targeted, and continuously updated to inform enrollment management policies and to monitor their effectiveness” (p. 18). It is incumbent upon the Chief Enrollment Officer to create infrastructures that promote enrollment information sharing and data exchange at and between all levels of the Division, as well as relevant constituencies outside of the Division. Additional improvements to technology systems that combine information from various departments and provide pertinent data to all members can provide greater responsiveness and customer service.

Prioritization of Goals

As a growing number of institutions, both public and private, adopt models of enrollment management to align enrollment and fiscal priorities, it should not be seen as the solution to all problems. Bontrager (2004) found that “institutions often lack specific enrollment goals, or, if such goals do exist, they represent more of a wish list than objective goals derived from careful data-gathering and analysis” (p.13). Institutional leaders must be realistic in their expectations and concrete in their prioritization of goals. It is the role of the Chief Enrollment Officer to educate leadership about the complex, often diametrically opposing forces of pursuing any enrollment outcome. For example, if promoting access to under-served populations by enrolling more minority students is a goal, then institutional leaders should be aware of potential unintended consequences such as increases to the financial aid budget or decreases in tuition revenue. If multiple goals exist, then prioritizing these goals is essential to manage expectations and create shared vision.

Strategic enrollment management is based on performance, so outcomes should be tracked and measurable. Data-informed decisions are critical to any model of strategic enrollment management, and it is important that institutional leaders invest in the infrastructure that allow for tracking and retrieving of data. It is the role of the Chief Enrollment Officer to set realistic expectations prioritizing which outcomes are most important based on the institution's mission, the vision of the president, and how to achieve goals, not simply to focus on the institutional outcomes but on the outcomes for students too.

Limitation and Future Research

This study examined different structures and compositions of Enrollment Management Divisions at two mid-sized, private institutions to shed light on the question of how institutions

organize, the relationship of subunits, and how external factors can influence structure. The rationale for a qualitative approach to this study, specifically the use of a multi-case study consisting of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, has been documented. However, there are limitations that should be acknowledged. For example, while interviews allowed for large amounts of data to be collected from the perspective of those from within the institution and presenting/exploring two cases strengthened the overall validity of the study, it was a time-consuming process to collect and analyze all of the data. Balancing time constraints and understanding who was essential in the selection of participants was important in the data-collecting phase. In addition to careful consideration of the number of feasible participants to select to interview, it should also be noted that interviews are intimate encounters that depend on trust, which can be difficult for the researcher to foster due to time constraints.

Another limitation of this study is the researcher's natural subjectivity shaping the research. Bias is a factor in any study, but one that is especially important in a qualitative case study because it is "one of the few modes of scientific study that admit the subjective perception and biases of both participants and research into the frame of reference" (Merriam, 1988, p.39). The researcher has been thoughtful about the approach, as evident in the previous section "Potential Research Bias and Assumptions", but ongoing awareness and objectivity was essential to producing a sound study. Peer-review helped to reduce bias and increase the overall trustworthiness.

Finally, generalizability may be limited based on the qualitative approach and the focus of the site selection (Stake, 1995). Each institution was selected because of some broad similarities in an attempt to reduce variables and strengthen validity; however, generalizability to institutions that do not fit into the category of private, mid-sized, and focused on undergraduate

education may find the outcomes are not applicable to their challenges or environment. Before broader generalizations can be applied, additional research with a larger and more diverse set of institutions is needed. In this study, differences in the integration of the subunits were observed, as well as differences in the degrees of centralization and structural coupling that raise questions of correlation or causation in the outcomes.

To extend the research further, interviewing mid-level and frontline staff could help further the understanding of the impact of structure, as well as talking to faculty about their perceptions of the efforts of the Enrollment Management Division. As enrollment management continues to evolve in scope and greater attention is placed on the student life cycle, then measurable performance indicators should be defined to determine if a more centralized approach to the structure of administrative units results in a greater degree of student satisfaction and the effect on retention and graduation rates. Also connected to the topic of centralization, studying the relationship between structural coupling and staff morale could generate beneficial findings. More specifically, does tighter coupling of administrative units result in more connection around a common vision that integrate units to encourage a team approach? Hautala et al (2018) point to findings of Vuori (2015), which suggest that if higher educational organizations stay loosely coupled, then organizations will be further away from the ideals of modern and efficient educational organization.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify how institutions effectively combine Enrollment Management Divisions to align with strategy, goals, and to further the institutional mission. As higher education faces significant challenges related to its funding model, then it is expected that the pressure to identify new revenue streams will increase. Meyer (2002) wrote, “More

conventional control-and command-oriented managerial thinking (frequently originating in the world of private enterprise) seems to be back, welcomed under labels such as ‘new managerialism’. We notice a stronger emphasis on organizational effectiveness, accountability, capacity building, and standardization...” (p.516). The findings from this study support the literature that structure, composition, institutional type and philosophical alignment are important considerations when establishing an Enrollment Management Division, but the results contribute to the existing literature by suggesting that the degree of coupling between subunits within the Division is also an important consideration. Structural alignment, as well as an infrastructure that supports an open system by removing silos can help institutional leaders to think creatively and leverage resources to best support enrollment and student success.

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Appendix A

Interview Participants by Title

University of Sole

Dean of Enrollment

Director of Admissions

Director of College Enrollment

Director of Financial Aid

Lune University

VP of Enrollment Management

VP of Student Success

Director of Enrollment Analytics

Director of Communication & Marketing

Director of Finance and Administration

Director of Financial Aid & Lune Central (One Stop Shop)

Director of Inclusive Education & Scholarships

Director of International Scholarships & Student Services

Director of Operations

Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Former VP of Enrollment Management and Student Success

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

- 1) Culture represents the values of a community and can be thought of as the personality of an organization. In a few words, how do you describe the culture of your institution? Of the Enrollment Division?
- 2) What does your institution expect enrollment to accomplish? What are the expectations of the division and what the top three goals on which your measured?
- 3) How does your unit support the goals of the division?
- 4) Who are the most influential voices that shape the goals and deliverables of the Enrollment Management Division? Can you provide examples of how they shape your work?
- 5) To what degree of integration exists between the subunits under enrollment management? Which office do you work most and least with?
- 6) What are some successes that have resulted from the current configuration of the Enrollment Management Division?
- 7) From your perspective, what would you say are strengths of your current enrollment management structure? What could be changed to achieve the goals of EM and the institution?
- 8) How does the current arrangement of subunits with the enrollment management division impact decision-making?
- 9) How would you configure the Enrollment Management Division differently?
- 10) When you think about the current organizational structure (or design) is there anything additional thoughts that you would like to share?