Academic Reorganization: Enrollment & Student Services Response
Aligning recruitment resources to maximize enrollment and increase efficiencies
February 27, 2018

Overview
During Central Michigan University's current academic reorganization process, a proposal was submitted to realign the marketing functions from University Communications to the Enrollment & Student Services Division. The purpose of the proposal was to align better recruitment processes and resources for addressing key challenges the university faces. Discussions around the proposal have continued among senior leadership. This document provides context for the discussion and how such a proposed re-alignment could optimize enrollment at the institution.

Importance of Marketing in Higher Education
Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is defined 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. Effective enrollment management requires the capacity to both guide and support institutional marketing strategy and tactics.

According to the early work of Kemerer et al. (1982) and later used by Dixon (1995) and Hossler et al. (1990), there are four models of enrollment management. These models move from low to high complexity in terms of organizational structure and impact. They include:

1. an enrollment management committee;
2. a coordinator;
3. a matrix; and
4. an enrollment management division.

Out of the four models, the most complex and most effective is an enrollment management division that brings together all elements essential for strategic planning of enrollment management under the same leadership. This structure includes resources around student marketing functions for the institution. The fourth structure, divisional enrollment management, has distinct advantages over the other three models, as the head of the division has the authority to secure resources and respond swiftly.

The divisional approach is supported by current industry trends, emphasizing an increase of student marketing functions reporting directly to enrollment managers.

- According to Garlene (1999); Hossler, Bean, and associates (1990); and Dolence (1998), a strong link can be made between student enrollment and marketing techniques borrowed from the for-profit business sector. These two concepts, student enrollment and marketing of higher education, came together under a common term called "enrollment management".
- Hossler (1984) states effective enrollment management requires: marketing of the institution, recruitment of students, activities such as pricing and financial aid, academic and career counseling, academic assistance, and retention programs.
- EAB cites in the 2016 Enrollment Management Benchmarking Survey that 72% of Admissions Marketing/Communications offices reported to the Enrollment Management unit, with another 20% of Enrollment Management offices dedicating staff time to the function.
- The Chief Enrollment Management Officer (CEMO) portfolio was described in the AACRAO SEM Core Concepts 2017 publication. In over 81% of the cases, the CEMO was either directly responsible for or held delegated authority over the recruitment marketing function.

Enrollment Management at CMU
At CMU, enrollment management is an ongoing process, reflecting the evolution of optimizing resources, understanding ever-changing student needs, and securing ideal enrollment at the University. In 2011, CMU created Enrollment & Student Services to "address the current and emerging needs of the university" around enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. From its original vision, ESS has evolved to respond to the trends in higher education, create cross-campus synergies, and support student success.

 2011 – Enrollment & Student Services was created
 2013 – Introduction of the first Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan
 2013 – Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) established
 2015 – ESS integrated a large portion of Global Campus and Graduate Recruitment
 2017 – University released CMU's Strategic Plan 2017-22 "Advancing Excellence"
 2017 – University created Business Development and Business Engagement offices
 2017 – CMU Academic reorganization process begins
 2018 – ESS finalizes Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 2018-22
 2018 – Recruitment Council and Retention Council formed

As stated in the previous section, enrollment management works best when a division has complete access to resources to execute on the University's recruitment vision. The transfer of

Marketing into the ESS portfolio is a natural progression to address the challenges CMU faces around recruitment by confronting key gaps in the current organizational structure. Current gaps include:

- <u>Lack of collaboration</u> – While collaboration is highly encouraged between recruitment and marketing teams, recruitment stakeholders do not get final input and sign-off on enrollment projects/initiatives. Furthermore, communication reports are often one-way, as recruitment teams are not given access to marketing campaign performance and analytics. In short, the relationship provides coordination but lacks true collaboration.
- <u>Resource coordination</u> – Under the current structure, two different units have different budgets addressing similar goals around recruitment.
- <u>Lack of ownership</u> – Identifying the true owner of the marketing strategy is currently distributed between the ESS and UComm Divisions, as the strategy is created by ESS and then executed only upon UComm approval. This means that while ESS has responsibility for recruitment outcomes it does not have control of a critical factor impacting these outcomes.
- <u>Unclear collaboration process</u> – Academic departments want further involvement in recruitment opportunities and messaging but lack the framework for participating in this collaborative process.

Perceived benefits
By realigning marketing functions under ESS, there are several benefits for the University. While many of these benefits were articulated in great detail in the proposal, three main benefits are worth reiterating.

1. <u>Maximization of resources</u> – Having the student marketing functions operate under ESS creates opportunities for unifying resources and ensuring resources are spent wisely. As a majority of colleges are tuition-driven and have limited resources, enrollment managers must be equipped with the full set of tools they need to attract incoming students and be successful.
2. <u>Increased processing efficiencies</u> – Re-aligning marketing functions under ESS creates a greater opportunity for recruitment synergy, allowing real-time response to enrollment trends by removing bureaucratic barriers. Under the current structure, it can take several weeks for a recruitment campaign to move from idea to execution, needing buy-in from many individuals.
3. <u>Performance accountability</u> – Marketing success or failure can be only evaluated based on performance. However, this is a difficult task to assess when one unit sets the strategy, and another unit executes. As student demographics continue to shift dramatically, performance evaluation and accountability are increasingly important. CMU needs

mechanisms to shape marketing messages and programs according to what is of interest to today's population of available students.

Areas of concern

While there are several significant benefits for moving student marketing functions under ESS, there is an area of concern that should be considered around consistency of brand/design. Separating marketing from University Communications (and their larger public relation efforts) could result in an inconsistency of brand experience. Since maintaining and building the overall brand are integral parts in keeping the marketplace familiar with the CMU image, offerings, and impact, such a transition should build in a process for coordination on these overarching aspects of the University's brand.

Conclusion

After reviewing the current trends in enrollment management and CMU's unique opportunity around re-aligning Marketing to ESS, it is clear there are several advantages which support moving forward with this proposal. By pursuing the committee's recommendations, ESS has a unique opportunity to meet the enrollment goals of the University while optimizing the student experience, from the first contact through graduation.

Reference

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