Disability and Equity in Higher Education Accessibility

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A volume in the Advances in Educational Marketing, Administration, and Leadership (AEMAL) Book Series

IGI GLOBAL
DISSEMINATOR OF KNOWLEDGE
www.igi-global.com

Published in the United States of America by
IGI Global
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)
701 E. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey PA, USA 17033
Tel: 717-533-8845
Fax: 717-533-8661
E-mail: cust@igi-global.com
Web site: http://www.igi-global.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

CIP Pending

ISBN: 978-1-5225-2665-0
eISBN: 978-1-5225-2666-7

This book is published in the IGI Global book series Advances in Educational Marketing, Administration, and Leadership (AEMAL) (ISSN: 2326-9022; eISSN: 2326-9030)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data
A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

Chapter 2
Tackling the Emerging New Norms in Higher Education in Post-Recession America

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will examine emerging new norms across higher education in the United States following the recession of 2008-09. Colleges and universities face an environment increasingly made up of prospective students and their families shopping and bargaining for the best college deal; institutions are struggling to control student costs by raising discount rates; administrators are seeking to find new sources of revenue and programmatic niches; and faculty are increasingly focused on how to make their curriculum more unique and relevant. Finally, higher education leaders should closely examine long-held recruitment and financial aid strategies, cost structures, academic calendars and mission to meet the new situation. This chapter will summarize the development of the new landscape in public and private higher education, including the growing similarities facing public and private institutions including their common efforts to keep higher education affordable and accessible, and conclude with recommendations for administrators as they navigate their way through the new norm.

INTRODUCTION

The last ten years have been challenging economically and politically for higher education. Small, private residential liberal arts colleges, particularly ones with modest endowments, are at risk in the changing environment as students compare tuition costs and return on investment more closely. Members of Congress and state legislatures, as well as the media, have also called into question the value of a college education. When coupled with the general public perception that the recovery from the 2008 recession exacerbated the income inequality gap, many families are questioning the value of the traditional lib-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2665-0.ch002

eral arts undergraduate degree and whether it will lead to a well-compensated and fulfilling career path (Corkery, 2013). The expected tuition, room, board and fees to attend a private residential college or university now averages more than $43,000 (Kiley, 2012). Many private colleges are having a difficult time 'making their class' as even more selective institutions dig deeper into their waitlists or increase their discount rate in order to stay on target for their enrollment goals (Corkery, 2013).

State support for public colleges and universities has also declined significantly since 2009 (Oliff, Palacios, Johnson, & Leachman, 2013). But the numbers are even more striking over the past few decades. In 1980, states provided 46 percent of the operating support for public colleges and universities, according to the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (Facts, ACE). For example, the University of Virginia only receives a little over 10% of its academic budget today from state support, up slightly in 2016. For all of the University of Virginia's divisions, however, the percentage is closer to 6%, a shockingly low number for a school so closely identified with Thomas Jefferson and the state of Virginia. (Facts, UVa and Johnson, 2013). In some states, such as Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker and the state legislature have imposed a tuition freeze, shutting off a critical additional revenue stream to make up potential shortfalls (Stein, Herzog & Bice, 2014). As a result, many public institutions have undertaken significant personnel and budget cuts in recent years (Oliff et al., 2013). Stagnant or decreased support from state governments have forced public institutions to become more aggressive in their efforts to recruit students from out of state and in their fundraising efforts (Casteen, 2011). As a result, public institutions are making investments by reaching out, often for the first time, to proactively attract students. For example, in the past decade the number of out-of-state students attending Oklahoma's public universities and colleges has more than doubled, with almost half of the increase in students coming from neighboring Texas (Burden, 2014).

Many public institutions are creating new programs to meet a perceived demand in the market place (Lewin, 2013). In some cases, these programs are being delivered in non-traditional ways including online, as well as evening, weekend and summer programs, in order to be more accessible to students, as well as to reduce overhead costs associated with intensive face-to-face instruction (Lewin, 2013). A changing consumer mentality amongst prospective students is forcing higher education to analyze the types of programs they offer and the medium through which they are delivered. This new focus on meeting market demands is a fundamental shift for many institutions that historically did not have to be concerned with catering their curriculum in order to entice more students.

An additional major indicator of the changed climate is increased price sensitivity for all students and their families, regardless of socio-economic status and their estimated family contribution toward the price of an education (Oliff et al., 2013). The discount rate has been rising steadily over the past decade and several schools are experimenting with truing up the price of attendance by implementing tuition price resets (Woodhouse, 2015; Lapovsky, 2015). Students are applying to more institutions than in the past in order to seek a college education at the lowest price possible. As a result of this competition, there is a growing focus on outcomes and how a college education can give graduates an advantage in the job marketplace (Corkery, 2013). Colleges and universities are seeing the need to increase institutional financial support for students beyond merit-based aid in order to be competitive, regardless of the students' ability to pay (Corkery, 2013).

As the number of graduating high school seniors continues to either decrease or remain stagnant in many regions of the country, the reduced supply of prospective students will create an increasingly competitive environment (Kiley, 2013). As a result of the changing market for college-bound students, administrators must be prepared to change their traditional approaches to enrollment management and

make investments that show a stronger return on investment for prospective students and their guardians. Colleges and universities will need to change their business models to be as efficient and effective as possible, with the resources available, if affordable and accessible options for a post-secondary education is to be a reality for a greater number of students. Finding alternative financial resources and identifying efficiencies to reduce costs will be important in helping to keep the cost of tuition, fees, room and board at a manageable level.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The line in higher education between public and private institutions is becoming increasingly blurred. While direct public institutional funding is declining as a percentage of the budget as overall spending rise, a significant percentage of students at many schools, dependably rely on federal financial aid loans (Pell Grants, Perkins Loans, Ford Direct Loans) and state tuition grants in order to survive rising tuition and fees. In an increasingly competitive market for students, calls during the 2016 presidential campaign for free college and university tuition became a mainstream issue, at least within the Democratic Party that adopted it as part of its platform prior to its convention (Saul & Flegenheimer, 2016). With decreasing or stagnant populations of traditionally aged college-bound students in many parts of the country, particularly in the college-rich Midwest and Northeast, higher education administrators will be required to reduce their costs to compensate for decreased tuition revenue. Savings might include changing or compressing curriculum and pedagogies to meet a different population of students who are non-traditional or seek a recently emerging field of study, often more pre-professional oriented than the classically liberal arts. Finally, as net-tuition revenue decreases or grows at a slower pace, college and universities must reconsider their operations and seek out consortial arrangements in order to keep their growth in costs at a reasonable level and financially accessible for all.

The Plight of the Liberal Arts College

In a previous publication, Wayne Webster, Rick Jakeman, and Susan Swayze (2016) described liberal arts and sciences colleges as "…uniquely American institutions (pg. 229)." Often, their very existence is due to the philanthropic generosity of wealthy individuals and/or religious or philosophical movements (Thelin, 2004). As private institutions, they receive little direct state or federal government support for bricks and mortar, staff salaries and new programs. Private schools rely predominantly on tuition revenues, endowment earnings, and philanthropic support to balance their budgets (Balderston, 1995). Philanthropic support and earnings off endowed gifts are on a rise during a time when increasing net tuition revenue is a challenge for all but a few institutions (Rivard, 2015). The Dow Jones Industrial Average has more than doubled since 2008 and that has contributed to the rise in endowed and current gifts. By providing high-touch experiences for their students in and out of the classroom, including low student to faculty ratios, liberal arts institutions are not particularly cost-efficient (Stimpert, 2004). Due to their reliance upon private support and tuition revenues, liberal arts and sciences institutions are particularly susceptible to ebbs and flows in the economy.

There are slightly more than 1,600 private colleges in the United States with nearly a third having enrollments less than 1,000 students (Wooten, 2016). For these smaller institutions, many with modest endowments of well under $100 million, there is little room for financial setbacks when compared to

the regional and flagship state institutions or heavily endowed elite private peers (Wooten, 2016). As a result, 'making the class' in terms of admissions efforts and meeting the annual fund goal in fundraising can make the difference between a successful year and one riddled with reductions in faculty, staff, programming or worse.

In 2016, Dowling College in New York, St. Catharine College in Kentucky and Burlington College in Vermont joined a list of small private institutions that plan to shut down (Biemiller, 2016). Shimer College avoided closure by beginning the process of merging with nearby North Central College (Biemiller, 2016). The decision by the Board of Trustees at Sweet Briar College in Virginia to close its doors in 2015 received national attention and sent shock waves through higher education. Sweet Briar has remained open, with great financial difficulty, due to the persistence of alumni. In each of these cases, a heavy debt load, a reduced or stagnant enrollment and a lack of palatable options to change the dynamic led governing boards to make the decision to close their doors (Biemiller, 2016). The Sweet Briar case was particularly disconcerting given that its endowment was a decent $85 million and its US News and World Report ranking was a respectable 116 in 2015. But even at the public level there has been serious consideration given to closing or consolidating some of the more far-flung outposts within states that have a long tradition in supporting public higher education (Herzog, 2015).

In order to succeed it is evident that private liberal arts institutions will also need to revisit their curriculum and niche in the marketplace. Private liberal arts colleges will need to work harder to provide an experience that shows outcomes in terms of graduate school or work placement and tangible return on investment that accounts for skills that employers value (Hartocollis, 2016). Further, the practice of advertising high sticker prices in order to portray quality, while quietly giving severe discounts, will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis (Hartocollis, 2016). As the economy has changed since the 2008 recession, so will the business practices of our nation's unique liberal arts institutions in order to remain an affordable option for prospective students.

Reduction in State Support Causes Public Colleges and Universities to Change How They Conduct Business

As state budgets slowly rebound a decade after the recession, the discretionary support for public higher education has not resumed at pre-recession levels. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* highlighted the cuts in funding in Wisconsin and Illinois and subsequent efforts by peer institutions to poach star faculty from the UW-Madison and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campuses (Gardner, 2016). While officials at these preeminent flagship institutions deny that they have lost many faculty, they have been forced to invest significant dollars to retain star professors and ensure the quality of their academic programs, while simultaneously considering reductions in investments in other places (Gardner, 2016).

The reduction in state support for higher education is not isolated to the upper Midwest, indeed there has been a nationwide ripple effect. Between 2008 and 2013, state spending for public higher education decreased nationwide by $2,353 per student, which represents 28 percent reduction in support (Oliff, et al., 2013). During that time period, every state in the nation reduced funding for higher education except for North Dakota and Wyoming where the natural gas and oil booms swelled state coffers (Oliff et al, 2013). Of the states that reduced higher education funding between 2008 and 2013, thirty-six reduced their funding by more than 20 percent and eleven cut funding by more than 33 percent (Oliff et al, 2013). During this same period, public higher education tuition rose by an average of 27 percent nationwide

when adjusted for inflation, which is a troubling statistic considering that public colleges and universities educate over 75 percent of undergraduates in the United States (Oliff et al., 2013).

It is clear that for most public higher education systems business will continue to change to meet the new post-recession norm. The significant increases made to tuition to offset state reductions are compounded by the deep cuts many institutions have made in their budgets in order to stay financially sound. Between 2009 and 2011, the University of Colorado reduced their faculty and staff lines by 339 positions, even during a time of enrollment growth of 2,100 students over the same period (Oliff et al, 2013). The University of California system underwent even larger staff reductions while also reducing salaries by four to 10 percent and consolidating or eliminating 180 programs in response to the reduction of state funding (Oliff et al., 2013). The University of Louisiana tackled personnel and academic programs, while also cutting funding for athletics, scholarships, and research (Oliff et al, 2013).

The long-term consequences of a diminished public higher education system, which has traditionally provided the most financially accessible venue to seek a post-secondary degree, are yet to be determined. However, it is not unreasonable to predict that the number of undergraduates pursuing a four-year degree may decrease. Further, those that do go on to pursue a degree may be forced to pursue professions for which there is an assumed higher level of return on investment such as engineering, business, health professions, and sciences in lieu of studies and careers in history, languages, and the arts.

A Changing Consumer Base for Higher Education

Higher price sensitivity and reduced government support for higher education shines a bright light on the declining pool of recent high school graduate applicants for American private and public colleges and universities. According to a Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) report, high school graduates in the United States peaked at 3.4 million in 2011 (Kiley, 2013). It is predicted that high school graduate numbers will remain stagnant until 2020, when some moderate growth is expected (Kiley, 2013). However, the projected growth in 2020 and beyond is expected to be limited in comparison to the rapid growth that occurred between 1990-2011 (Kiley, 2013). The reality has already started to hit home. In Wisconsin, the two-year state colleges collectively took a 22.3% hit in total enrollment from between 2015 and 2016, University of Wisconsin (UW)-Stevens Point's fell by 6.8% and UW-Milwaukee lost 4.7%, compared with final enrollment numbers from the previous fall. Overall, the UW System could lose about 5,000 students and tens of millions of dollars in revenue in the 2016-2017 academic year. Seven of the 13 four-year UW campuses also lost total enrollment (Herzog, 2016).

The overall reduction in recent high school graduates also adds urgency to specific demographic shifts that will force colleges and universities to reexamine the programs they offer, the way pedagogy is practiced, and the marketing efforts needed to attract a robust student body. Even as traditional-aged prospective student numbers are in a decline, the number of non-traditional students aged 25 and older is expected to increase by 20 percent between 2009 and 2020, eventually making up 42 percent of college students (Kiley, 2013). An increased number of non-traditional students, many of whom are balancing their studies along with work and family needs, is requiring institutions to consider more weekend, evening, as well as hybrid courses that incorporate online learning (Kiley, 2013; Lewin, 2013).

Embedded in the reduction of traditional-aged students (18-22 years old) is data that further details why colleges and universities will need to examine what students they target for enrollment and how to support them while active students. Among graduating high school seniors, there will be a 13 percent reduction in white students between 2008-09 and 2024-25 (Kiley, 2013). In contrast, between 2008-09

and 2027-28 Hispanic students will grow from representing 14 percent of the graduating high school senior population to 22 percent (Kiley, 2013). The changing demographics will require colleges and universities to examine their admission, academic support and student support services as Hispanic students are more likely to be first-generation students with less successful retention rates. (Kiley, 2013). New administrators, staff and faculty with Spanish language abilities and a better understanding of Hispanic culture will be in demand to assist with Hispanic student retention as this population surges into higher education (Hernandez and Lopez, 2004).

There are also geographic disparities that will leave some regions of the country flush with traditional-aged students and some areas seeing a double-digit reduction. In particular, the Northeast and the Midwest regions will see significant reductions in the number of graduating high school seniors over the next 10 years (Kiley, 2013). Of the 19 states in those regions, only New York, Kansas, and Nebraska will see any growth in traditional-aged students and that growth will not likely occur until after 2020 (Kiley, 2013). In contrast, states in the Southern and Western parts of the United States are anticipating growth in traditional-aged students, with much of that growth being amongst Hispanic students (Kiley, 2013). The projected shifts in demographics will undoubtedly require both public and private institutions to examine how they market to and support a changing population of traditional and non-traditional college-bound students.

Impact of Finances and Changing Demographics on Student Accessibility

American higher education faces a rapidly changing demographic of prospective students, who are also increasingly price-sensitive and outcomes focused. This change, when coupled with reduced state support for public systems, leaves private and public education with no choice but to examine how it recruits, supports, teaches, and finances its operations in support of students in order to remain economically viable and affordable. Colleges and universities will also need to address inefficiencies in their academic and administrative practices to enable them to be more nimble and control their costs of operations. Higher education will need to find and enhance alternative revenue sources including philanthropy and alternative curricular offerings.

Controlling the cost of education is essential if colleges and universities are to remain financially viable and affordable. A major component in ensuring that a post-secondary education is accessible is ensuring that it is affordable. This is particularly true for lower income students who are more likely to make their decisions about college based on price and affordability (St. John, 1990). As the demographics of the average college or university student evolves, the curriculum and pedagogy must also advance to provide educational opportunities that are in demand and accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One: Colleges and Universities Will Need to Seek Ways to Reduce Redundancies in Academic and Administrative Functions

Every college or university has national and regional institutions that are benchmarked as aspirants or peers. There is a third category, not often talked about, and those are schools that an institution does not consider either a peer or an aspirant, even though they may share some commonalities, particularly

geographic proximity. For a variety of reasons that might include size, reputation and demographics, among others, these schools have traditionally been perceived as incompatible partners by each other. In the new landscape of higher education, where finding efficiencies and making the most of comparative advantages must become the norm, the walls between aspirants, peers and non-traditional partners should disappear. Consortial collaboration, joint agreements and partnerships between public and private institutions, community colleges and four-year schools must continue to expand and move towards finding greater efficiencies in academic and administrative areas. An interesting example of this new kind of collaboration is a Mellon Foundation-funded partnership to promote the digital humanities between very different types of institutions in Tennessee: Vanderbilt University, an elite urban national university, Tennessee State University and Tougaloo College, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and Berea College, a rural private liberal arts school. (Vanderbilt, 2016)

At the state level, organizations of private colleges and public universities must begin to reduce overlap by better pooling resources in areas such as health care, technology, retirement funds, legal and lobbying expenses. The Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges (WAICU), a 23-member organization of widely divergent types of institutions, has been extraordinarily successful and nationally recognized for its ability to reduce health care premiums, cutting technology costs and gaining leverage over pension plans by pooling retirement resources (WAICU, 2016).

At the regional level, arrangements such as the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), a group of fourteen private liberal arts college spread across five states, has worked well together since 1957. Even though the financial situations, endowment sizes, student populations and national reputations of the institutions are varied, these schools have pooled their resources to combine their study abroad programs with a centrally located office in Chicago managing all of the programs. The ACM also provides space for faculty to work together and learn from each other as well as some shared institutional research data. Most recently, the ACM was awarded an $8.1 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to promote a more diverse professoriate that has opened the door for a new level of collaboration (ACM, 2015). Other regional academic groupings, such as the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA), the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) and the Colonial Academic Alliance (CAA), provide similar types of opportunities for small college faculty and institutions.

Some of the oldest of consortial arrangements were born out proximity and the basic economic principle of comparative advantage to promote more comprehensive academic options at less cost. They now also include administrative and athletic cost sharing. The Claremont Colleges in California have worked together since 1925 on academic collaboration and since 1972 Pitzer and Pomona College, two of the Claremont schools have combined their athletic programs into one. Together they are able to play 21 varsity sports as a single team, the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens. The arrangement saves money and allows the two schools to field a larger number of men and women's varsity teams (Pomona-Pitzer Athletics, 2016).

These kinds of shared agreements have intensified since the 2008 recession and are borne out of economic necessity as small colleges reach out to each other during tough financial times. Even long-time academic and athletic rivals have found new ways to work together. St. Olaf and Carleton, located within minutes of each other in rural Minnesota, have increased their collaboration of library services, information technology, management operations and academic programs. External grants have helped create incentives for schools that have historically competed for students and prestige to find common ground by working together (Mellon, 2013).

Partnerships between public and private institutions also must become more common. More schools need to follow the example of the University of Massachusetts, an institution that has since the 1950s

worked closely with four private college located near its flagship campus at Amherst, on inter-institutional collaboration. The collaboration, among other things, has recently done combined work with local K-12 educators, planned shared emergency preparedness tabletop exercises and hosted a poetry celebration (Five Colleges). At a more micro level, important regular programming needs to take place where there is a special common purpose. For the past decade Marion University, a private Catholic college in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin has done joint programming with the public University of Wisconsin-Fond du Lac and Moraine Park Technical College and a nearby private liberal arts school, Ripon College, on promoting diversity and toleration in the county. The program has helped to provide a regular, civil and high profile forum that has defused some of the recent national events dealing with race and inequality that have roiled other campuses (HEDIT).

Recognizing the need to build transfer pipelines from two-year institutions, public and private schools must also continue to build more seamless articulation agreements between two and four year institutions. Four-year colleges, looking to bolster enrollment must accelerate the pairing up with two-year institutions trying to help their own graduates continue their education. Some more prestigious liberal arts institutions are already turning to nearby community colleges as an important feeder of qualified students who will enter during their junior year (Murray, 2014).

In higher education's new economic climate, colleges and universities are often being asked by prospective students, trustees and alumni to provide greater services, with new majors and labor intensive career placement centers even though there are may be fewer financial resources available. In order to maintain and develop high-touch academic programs and quality administrative service, consortial programs help schools retain a comprehensive curriculum and student life support while controlling costs in order to remain financially accessible. At the larger level, schools must discard long held prejudices about developing close working with aspirants, peers and non-traditional partners to find ways to jointly bring costs down while maintaining quality, service and choice for its student body and employees.

Recommendation Two: Colleges and Universities Will Have to Reconsider Their Curriculums, Calendars, and Delivery Methods Based on Market Demands

Biology, psychology, business, chemistry and nursing are the top five disciplinary fields in which at least 40% of Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) have reported an increase in the number of full time faculty over the past ten years (Morphew, Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2016). Conversely, more traditional liberal arts areas: education, English, foreign languages, history and religion round out the top five fields in which at least 20% of institutions reported a decrease in the number of full time faculty over the past ten years (Morphew et al, 2016). The CIC numbers are an indication of how market demand is setting a priority on which faculty lines get filled.

In order to meet the new demands of prospective students and protect tenured faculty, some colleges have found creative ways to reimagine their curriculum to meet the new discerning generation of prospective students. Moving away from a distribution requirement model that for a generation has allowed students to pick and choose how to fulfill their requirements that too often leave some classes oversubscribed and others virtually empty, the new model has distinct economies of scale and marketing benefits. Agnes Scott College in Georgia adopted a core curriculum, known as Summit, which emphasizes "the acquisition of five essential leadership skills – critical thinking, writing, public speaking, teamwork and digital literacy" (Agnes Scott, Summit). Every Agnes Scott student must take an introductory course

focused on global learning, manage a digital portfolio and work with a four-adviser team that includes academic, peer, career and Summit advisers. Trinity University in Texas has similarly adopted Pathways with six curricular requirements that emphasize "the necessary skills and disciplinary perspectives to navigate complex questions at Trinity and in their post-graduate lives" (Trinity University, Pathways). Similar to Agnes Scott, the Pathways requirement uses existing faculty to teach required core courses that emphasize critical reading, writing and analysis, discussion, digital literacy and engaged citizenship.

The advantages of the Summit and Pathways curricula are significant for Agnes Scott and Trinity students but they are also smart institutional moves. The new core course model offers students discernable skill development necessary for the workplace, no matter what their job throughout their careers, and allows tenured faculty in areas with low class enrollments to shift some of their course load towards the newly mandated core curriculum, thus cutting down on the numbers of under-enrolled courses while preserving tenured faculty in majors that may have declining numbers of students.

Colleges and universities that are willing to take a hard look at their curriculum should also be willing to examine their academic calendars. The industry is still oddly bound to a 19th century agricultural model where students used to go back home to work on the family farm. Most schools still begin in late August or early September and run through May-June on a quarter, trimester or dual semester system. While many schools also have added a January or May term to promote study abroad or more experiential learning, in many parts of the country (particularly in New England, the Pacific Northwest and the Upper Midwest) the best weather of the year occurs when campuses are devoid of students. The idea of year round school has historically not fared well and there are clearly additional costs to running a school for a full calendar year. The "Beloit Plan" introduced in 1964, brought national recognition to the small Wisconsin college, but was abandoned in 1978 because it was financially difficult to maintain.

Instead, of adopting an expensive year-round model, some colleges and universities, particularly those in colder climates where heating costs and snow plowing are larger concerns than air conditioning, should consider an academic calendar where the campus is closed from Thanksgiving until early March. Students desiring seasonal work during the holidays could still find employment to help pay for school and faculty would have time for research and development, but during the winter instead of the summer.

Colleges and universities also ought to consider adopting vigorous models that allow student to graduate in three years. Hartwick College in New York aggressively advertises its three-year Bachelor's degree by saying that you can still have the classic undergraduate experience, but "in three-fourths the time, for three-fourths the cost (Hartwick College, 2016). The financial cost is augmented by the fact that not only will the student not be paying for a fourth year of an undergraduate experience, but could also be earning money from a job or getting a jump on graduate school. In this same vein, institutions must continue to develop joint programs with graduate schools that shave a year off the undergraduate-graduate experience.

The continued benefit of loosening up the acceptance of online course transfer credits by colleges and universities up and down the prestige ladder is clear. With 3.5 million students enrolled in online degree courses and the number of 18-24 year olds taking online courses for credit doubling since 2012, most schools are either already offering, or at least considering the acceptance of, some online transfer credits (Hart, 2016). The downward spiral of the for-profit sector and skepticism about massive open online courses, has stayed the demise of the residential colleges and universities at the expense of the Internet for the time being (Pope, 2014). That said, colleges and universities must continue to keep up with advances in distance learning, allowing for a certain number of online credits and adopting appropriate uses of technology into the traditional residential experience as necessary.

Institutions must not be afraid begin to ask the "why-do-we-do-it-this-way?" questions when it comes to the curriculum, academic calendar and distance learning in the next decade. As a new generation of faculty and administrators who grew up entirely in the Internet-Smart Phone-Amazon era enters academic leadership, questions about the traditional ways courses are offered should be challenged with greater frequency. The system must be flexible to be able to react to a generation of students used to doing what they want, when they want it. This means higher education should be increasingly open to new models of course delivery and even what months (or how long) their students spend in residence on campus.

Recommendation Three: Colleges and Universities Must Continue to Be Thoughtful About Marketing, Student Support, and Financial Aid Leveraging

In the spring of 2013 St. Mary's College of Maryland, the public honors college of the state, missed its class by about a third, falling 150 students short of its goal of 470 incoming students. The President and others administrators eventually lost their jobs over the shortfall and the College was forced to make difficult budget cuts to make ends meet (Bishop, 2013). The President of the conservative American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) Anne D. Neal took to the *Baltimore Sun* to criticize the St. Mary's administrators for acting "more like slick ad-men and marketers, offering more boutique courses instead of the fundamentals that characterize a college-educated person, ready for the challenges of career and community" (Neal, 2013). But Ms. Neal's ideologically driven analysis missed the mark. St. Mary's College made tactical mistakes in its financial aid strategies and admission recruitment that were fairly easily remedied in the subsequent three years and more normal class sizes have returned.

The real possibility of falling short of class size goals has become commonplace at all but the top public universities and most elite private colleges. Most schools now hold their breath on May 1 (National College Decision Day) with worry about whether or not their class will come in on budget. With tuition making up the lion's share of most budgets, missing a class has real short and long-term ramification. Since students are applying to more colleges than ever before, simply expanding the funnel of applicants is no longer a guarantee or a predictor of class size. Financial aid strategies and excellent admission counselors matter now more than ever. The NSSE study of incoming first year students show that the single most important factor that determines where a Pell-eligible or a non-Pell-eligible student matriculates is financial aid and price (Eagen, et al, 2016). Therefore, financial aid offices that propose less aggressive tuition relief than their main overlap schools run the risk of losing out by small amounts of aid to their competitors. Private schools must be careful to not try to set artificially low discount rates. The end result will more likely than not result in a smaller class, paying slightly more instead of a larger class paying slightly less. Schools will have little option but to pick their poison but the focus should stay on the bottom line and net tuition revenue.

Secondly, colleges and universities must have a realistic sense of their target student and relentlessly recruit them. Making sure that the target student knows that they are the center of an institution's mission includes offering generous financial aid, even when they may not need it and are not academically top students. St. Mary's College of Maryland's historical success in bringing in a class has depended, in large part, on drawing excellent in-state students from suburban Washington and Baltimore who come from middle to upper class families. Making this happen year after year requires savvy admission counselors with experience who know the territory and can make a personal pitch as to why the college works for a prospective student and their families. The year prior to the admission debacle, St. Mary's College changed top personnel in the admission office and abruptly switched towards a need-based

strategy, pivoting away from its more merit-based history that had successfully targeted its bread and butter students (de Vise, 2012). That is not to say that there is not a place for an appropriate mix of both need and merit aid at a place like St. Mary's.

Some schools have found success shocking their price structure by implementing a tuition reset and thus "truing up" the sticker price and the discount rate (Lapovsky, 2015). While some schools have experienced victories by using a tuition reset and increasing net revenue, the jury is still out on the long-term viability of this idea. The risks to institutional reputation and the challenges of being the first to change the pricing game in a specialized marketplaces carries numerous potential rewards and perils.

Short of a dramatic pricing readjustment, institutions must continue to do better on the blocking and tackling tactics that draw students in. Schools that do not proactively reach out to high school sophomores and juniors, fail to stay cool on social media and ignore the investment required to bring high school and middle schoolers to campus for special academic, artistic or sports activities also run a long-term risk of missing class numbers. Sophisticated electronic "touches" and techniques that go beyond mass emails and the multi-cultural view book are required to stay relevant. These small connections with prospective students remain important, as do highlighting student and institutional success in scholarship, athletics and in career placement in local, regional and national media outlets.

For all but a select few nationally prestigious institutions, taking care of the backyard is as important, if not more important, than finding new pockets of students. For flagship state universities with strong national and international academic reputations, the ability to go beyond the state line and find more out-of-state high payers is a way to increase the bottom line by finding new revenue. Similarly, the "Flutie Effect" that correlates institutions that do well in high profile NCAA athletic competition with strong admission classes also remains potent (Silverthorne, 2013). It is also worth pursuing the international student market as an area of growth. But to view it as a panacea for admission problems is perilous for some schools, particularly ones that don't offer strong pre-professional programs or have modest scholarships programs or support for international students. According to the International Institute of Education (IIE) more than half of the almost 1 million international students studying in the US in 2015 came for training in Business Management, Engineering and Computer Science. All but a handful of the top schools at any institution type receiving international students are in, or at least near, major metropolitan areas. That said, the international student market has been growing at a fairly steady clip over the past twenty-five years and there are certainly niche markets open to explore to many different types of institutions (IIE, 2015).

Any increase in international students also means increased student support services for a host of issues that start with cultural and legal matters that include student visas and coping with what it is like to navigate the rules and peculiarities of the American educational system. The University of Iowa is still playing catch-up, having rapidly increased its Chinese student population from 568 in 2007 to 2,842 in the fall of 2015 (Pestotnik, 2015). The need for a robust student support services program is also of critical importance to a growing number of American students who come to college with mental health challenges (Gruttadaro & Crudo, 2012).

Administrators must continue to be thoughtful, proactive and mindful of their institution's place in the higher education universe as they move forward with financial aid strategies, marketing and student support services. Finding a magic bullet to increase the number of students in a class is a fantasy. For most institutions bringing in a class is plain hard work that relies on a number of variables coming together each year. Radical shifts designed to attract more students have the potential to do as much damage as

good. Administrators should move with caution and take care to do market research before making bold changes or expending resources in financial aid or marketing.

Recommendation Four: Private and Public Institutions Need to Seek Growth in Philanthropic Support and Partnerships to Help Control the Rise of Tuition

While there is growth in philanthropic efforts in Europe, Asia, Canada and Mexico, private support for the public good in many ways originated and remains the strongest in the United States (Jackson, 2014). This legacy of giving back is particularly true for higher education, given that many American colonial colleges and universities started as the result of philanthropic gifts and support from religious denominations (Thelin, 2004). While originally tied to religion, individuals began to play an increased role in the founding and funding of colleges and universities with institutions such as Rutgers, Bowdoin, and Denison serving as namesakes for their benefactors (Rudolph 1962/1990). The Morrill Land Grant Acts of the 1800s provided early federal and state support for flagship public institutions (Thelin, 2004). The GI Bill following WWII furthered the investment of government in higher education (Thelin, 2004). As public support for higher education decreases and tuition revenues become more unpredictable, schools will need to return to their original roots in seeking enhanced private philanthropic support, and other types of private partnerships, with a greater sense of urgency.

The concept of a 'campaign' has become better understood in recent years as many elite public and private institutions are pressured to consistently increase fundraising targets as the demand to meet the financial needs and wants of faculty, staff and the students increases. Campaigns are typically focused on helping the institution reach specific targets and goals, often with a focus on capital projects and within a certain time period. Colleges and universities are increasingly finding themselves constantly in a 'campaign ready' mode when it comes to staffing, resources, and engagement activities in order to help provide annual support for operations and set the stage for the next major fundraising drive. Annual and campaign support for faculty development, student scholarships and programmatic activities, is increasingly important. Campaigns and annual fundraising activities are also critical in helping colleges and universities increase the size of their endowment, which helps offset the cost of operations in perpetuity. While many elite private institutions and flagship public institutions have excelled in engaging and soliciting supporters, many institutions have not made the necessary investment in their development efforts. The lack of focus on fundraising and outreach has left many private institutions overly dependent on tuition with modest income from their endowments. Similarly, many publics remain overly dependent on tuition revenue and support from annual appropriations from the state capitol, which has not rebound since the recession. The new norm in American higher education will require all institutions to make philanthropic support a larger revenue priority.

While higher education can often look at corporate support with a wary eye, particularly when it comes to supporting research in fields where that corporate benefactor may benefit, greater collaboration between higher education and the private sector must be considered. Many highly visual collegiate athletic programs already benefit from sponsorships from Nike, Under Armour, etc. and many music departments receive instruments on loan from industry leaders like Yamaha. More can be done to institutionalize sponsorship of college and university programs. With an aging population, it is not inconceivable as the demand for nurses and other health care technicians' increases that health care systems would consider strategic alliances and partnerships with higher education health and nursing programs to ensure an adequately trained pipeline of health care professionals. While health care systems would gain a stronger

source for employees, colleges and universities would benefit from this relationship through financial support from the health care partner as well as an increased job placement rate which would help them in recruiting more quality students. Similar arrangements could also be considered in other academic fields including accounting, marketing, and other health related professions.

Unlike tuition revenue, and predicting the ups and downs of state appropriation process, philanthropic support and corporate sponsorships allows higher education administrators to more reliably control and predict their financial pipeline. The elite private institutions and the flagship public universities have already enhanced their ability to be nimble and more independent from various external factors by enhancing their philanthropic and private investment resources. Other private institutions, and less known public colleges and universities, will need to begin to think more externally for revenue as their ability to rely on increased revenue from tuition and state support remains unpredictable.

CONCLUSION

The landscape for American higher education has shifted, likely permanently, as result of the 2008 recession. A new norm exists that has resulted in reduced government support for higher education, a consumer mentality for prospective students that is more focused on earning a degree at a reduced cost, and a focus on creating degree programs that appear to create greater post-graduation job opportunities for its graduates. The make-up of today's students will result in colleges and universities needing to alter their marketing, pedagogy, and student support services to better accommodate a new population. Additionally, the need to further efforts in engaging philanthropic and corporate sponsorship support is evident to meet the gap left by reduced government support and stagnant tuition revenues. These many factors lead us to conclude that American higher education must take its future in its own hands. Public and private institutions must take ownership over their mission and their delivery on their mission in order to remain financially sound. Creating a path toward fiscal sustainability must be done in order to honor the mission of America's college and universities, which is to provide an education and pathway to success for all who seek it. Keeping the cost of a college education affordable is essential to ensuring accessibility for prospective students and their families.

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