Strategic Enrollment Planning and Initiative

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The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan was developed by a task-force of 46 members in consultation with Huron Consulting.

The plan is based on primary research, undergraduate student enrollment data, 125+ interviews with students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders across campus and the state, intensive analysis of all input and data, and multiple working meetings between November 2016 and January 2017.

Our process has done much to help understand and identify our place in the market, and ways to improve and invest in recruitment and retention of our students.
Project Overview
Over a 12-week period, Huron conducted 125+ interviews with key stakeholders, analyzed data to understand undergraduate enrollment strategies and key factors predicting student success, and presented opportunities for success to the SEM Taskforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October - November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current State Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organizational Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategy Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conduct kickoff and planning meetings</td>
<td>- Review initial findings for Midpoint Strategy Meeting</td>
<td>- Examine key findings and confirm realistic enrollment goals and priorities with Wyoming leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Host interviews and focus groups with Wyoming stakeholders to understand challenges and opportunities</td>
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<td>- Assess implications and develop business plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use primary research and enrollment data to develop in-depth understanding of market demand, recruitment, and retention</td>
<td>- Assess current organizational structure and portfolio of responsibilities within enrollment offices</td>
<td>- Provide “strategy roadmap” to execute on the goals for enrollment</td>
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<td>- Review research conducted to date</td>
<td>- Catalog campus-wide resources that support transfers, onboarding, and retention activities</td>
<td>- Incorporate additional feedback from Wyoming leadership on “strategy roadmap”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review research conducted to date</td>
<td>- Determine communication strategy to socialize changes for enrollment to the University community</td>
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WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- We need to more closely align student recruitment, financial aid, and instructional capacity with the work of faculty and academic administration to significantly increase enrollment, retention and graduation rates.
- We need to approach this as a coordinated partnership promoting student success.
- This will be best done as we think of ourselves as a multi-disciplinary team that integrates and manages academic preparation, financial wellness, physical and mental wellness, and a sense of belonging, seamlessly for all students.

*Collaborative case management will benefit not only the students, but our staff and faculty.*
ADAPTING TO A NEW ENVIRONMENT

New economic and student realities require a refined approach to enrollment management:

- In the face of declining state support, UW needs to find opportunities to grow net tuition revenue through increased new student enrollment and improved retention rates.
- Intensifying competition for students among institutions of higher education in the region requires a strategic and targeted recruitment approach.
- UW needs to strengthen its position in the regional student marketplace with a relevant and defensible value proposition in order to appeal to a broader, more diverse student audience.
- UW must align college level recruiting and support resources with undergraduate enrollment growth expectations.
- Shifting demographics and academic preparedness among incoming UW students will require that available support services are resourced and aligned with changing student needs.
FRESHMEN ENROLLMENT: UPSHOT

- UW is almost entirely dependent on the state of Wyoming and Colorado’s Front Range for first-time, full time students.
- UW is yielding a lower percentage of admitted applicants, indicating increased competition and a less defined market position.
- There are increasing numbers of less academically prepared Wyoming students enrolling.
- Residents and nonresidents are highly dependent on financial aid.
- Yield across colleges is fairly consistent.
- Colleges who have developed recruiting strategies have seen increases in their academic profiles.
FRESHMEN RECRUITING: SUMMARY

What we have learned:

- UW’s market position among prospective freshmen is unclear. UW competes for students on several fronts, both in-state (regional) and out-of-state (key feeder states).

- Increasing market share within current catchment areas and expanding into new markets will be critical to UW’s ability to meet future enrollment goals.

- UW needs to conduct a “deep dive” into the factors that attract high-achieving resident students.

- The Office of Admissions needs to learn how to leverage data to discern true prospective student interest and focus efforts on those students most likely to apply and enroll.

- The Office of Admissions must work closely with their recruiting partners in the Colleges to develop an integrated recruiting plan.
### Why UW: Student Voices

**What we have learned – student focus groups**

#### Why did you choose UW?
- Friendly, accessible, accommodating recruiters
- Guidance counselor and family/alumni connections, caring and supportive
- Low student debt/affordability, small class sizes, study abroad opportunities
- Sense of pride, involvement, student life balance
- Ability to transfer credit
- Specific academic majors/programs/ opportunities

#### What would you change about UW?
- Registration and advising (frustrating, stressful)
- Orientation (confusing, overwhelming)
- Academic experience (course and academic predictability, lack of clear deadlines and guidance)
- Communications, residential experiences

### What keeps you at UW?
- Expanded horizons, outdoor activities, not competitive to get involved
- Supportive, comfortable, second home, hidden gem, safe
- Great value education
- Faculty relationships, research opportunities, academic support, sense of belonging
- Culture; events bring community together.
FRESHMEN: STUDENT SUCCESS UPSHOT

UW’s first-to-second year retention rate has improved, but is lowest among its peer group.

- The level of academic preparation is a significant factor in the likelihood to return after the first year
  - On average, retained students entered UW with a GPA of 3.5 and ACT of 25, while non-retained entered with a GPA of 3.2 or less and an ACT of 23 or less

- Regardless of residency, first-generation students are less likely to retain
  - Average WY resident retention rate is 79%, but for first-gen WY students, it is 73%
  - Average nonresident retention rate is 76%, but for first-gen nonresidents, it is 70%
  - Average nonresident Colorado retention rate is 76%, but for first gen, it is 58%
Students who receive a D, F, or W are far less likely to retain.

The fewer number of credits attempted and earned by a student, the less likely they are to retain.

+ Those who earn **12 or fewer credit hours are < 74% likely to retain**. Those who earn 13+ are > 83% likely to retain.

Ability to pay and **level of unmet need** is a factor in retention

+ For those retained, on average, their calculated unmet need is $0, and their average family contribution to their college costs is nearly $16,000.

+ For those not retained, their estimated family contribution to their college costs is a little over $11,000, and their average unmet need is over $5,000.

A majority of freshmen who do not return to UW **transfer to a Community College**
FRESHMEN: STUDENT SUCCESS SUMMARY

What we have learned:

- A student’s academic preparation is highly predictive of a student’s performance in the first year. UW needs to leverage information gathered during the enrollment process to inform student support efforts.

- A student’s credit progression in the first year is a significant factor in their success at UW. Strong advising and course planning is necessary to improve the chances of students returning their second year.

- Targeted and coordinated support services are needed for those students most at risk – first-generation students and students admitted with support.

- The level of unmet financial need has a negative impact on the retention of non-residents. The availability of need-based aid to lower current gaps will be necessary as UW looks to increase non-resident enrollments.

- With such a significant number of students leaving UW to enroll in Community Colleges, there is an opportunity to maintain a relationship with these students in an effort bring them back to UW.
TRANSFER: RECRUITING UPSHOT

- Application from Transfer students are fluctuating. UW has been able to offset fluctuations with increasing acceptance rates and maintaining yield.

- While UW’s relationship with the Wyoming Community Colleges is critical, as 75%+ of transfer enrollments come from Wyoming. Non-resident transfers are sourced primarily from the same markets as non-resident freshmen.

- Transfer students demonstrate a high level of financial need and the availability of scholarships is a key factor in enrolling.
  
  + The majority of incoming transfer students have an estimated family contribution to costs of $0, so their need is very high.

  + When an incoming student receives $0 in institutional aid from UW, average yield is around 49-54%. However, when they are offered $1,000+, their yield rises to 75%+. When institutional aid is $8,000+, their yield rate is 100%.

- While Transfer enrollment is declining on average, interest in Health Professions and Engineering are experiencing high levels of interest.
What we have learned:

- Recruiting transfer students is **currently under-resourced**. There is little capacity to guide students through the recruitment process and provide credit evaluations in a timely fashion.

- **Cultivating the resident transfer population** must be a top priority for UW.

- There is **potential to extend UW’s reach** with transfer students to the Front Range.

- **Coordinated support services are needed** to onboard the diverse transfer student population.

- Access to **scholarships and financial aid have a significant impact** on a transfer student’s decision to enroll at UW (an issue the University is currently addressing).
TRANSFER: STUDENT SUCCESS UPSHOT

- Around 79% of transfer students retain after their first year at UW.
- Transfer students have fairly **significant unmet need** and very low family ability to financially pay for college.
- The most predictive **positive drivers of retention** for Transfer students are
  - Being a nonresident child of an alumni or relative of a graduate.
  - Their **prior college cumulative GPA**, with those entering with a 3.0 GPA having the highest likelihood.
  - The **number of credits transferred** from their previous college. Those who transferred in 63 prior credits retained at 84%+, while those who transferred in less than 60 hours retained < 75%. Those who achieved an associates before transferring retain at 81% - 88% rates, versus those who did not, who retain at 71%
- The most likely **negative driver** for retention for Transfer students was being a **first-generation student**.
What we have learned:

- A transfer student’s **academic preparation is highly predictive of a student’s performance**. UW should design robust onboarding programs for at-risk students to develop the necessary skills for success.

- **Credit progression in the first semester/year is equally significant for transfer students.** In addition to strong advising and course planning at UW, proactive collaboration with UW Community College partners on academic planning and 4 year degree plans can improve credit production.

- Early engagement and **targeted support services will help reduce attrition among non-resident and first-generation transfer students.**

- The **level of unmet financial need is a significant factor for all transfer students.** The availability of need-based aid to lower current gaps will be necessary as UW looks to increase transfer enrollments.
5-Year SEM Plan
5-YEAR SEM PLAN

Purpose:

- To provide the University of Wyoming with an action plan to guide the sequence of steps over the next 5 years to increase undergraduate enrollment.

Assumptions

- The following assumptions were made in the creation of this plan based on our understanding of the market and the University’s feasibility for growth:
  1. The greatest potential to increase headcount in the short-term is in the areas of student success and transfer student enrollment.
  2. First-time, full-time enrollment is seen as a long-term growth opportunity that reflects the multi-year prospect development timeline for traditional age students.
  3. UW will finalize and operationalize a university-wide strategic plan that defines its educational mission, aligns the student educational experience with market demands, and differentiates itself from in-state partners as well as out-of-state competitors.
Growth Considerations

- The University of Wyoming will need to **effectively support the needs of students currently enrolled** prior to any major growth to avoid exacerbating current retention issues that could harm the UW brand.

- To successfully grow the UW student body in a stepwise fashion that ensures success, **UW should execute its strategic enrollment plan intentionally, monitor progression metrics regularly, and adjust the plan as needed**. UW will also remain committed to growing the community in a way that promotes inclusivity and diversity.

- **Effective growth requires an investment** in new (or repurposing of existing) resources, so appropriate ratios of student support (faculty, student support staff, etc. to student) are maintained.

- UW should assess it’s true **capacity with regards to course availability by school (particularly key gateway courses), and absolute physical constraints** (classroom space, housing) to ensure a reasonable, sustainable growth rate.

- For the purpose of this plan, we conservatively anticipate a **2% annual growth rate for all freshmen**, a **5% annual growth rate among transfer students**, and an annual 0.5% gain in cohort retention rates.
A sequenced growth plan, with goals for headcount and geographic diversity at each step, will provide UW with a strong foundation to invest in shaping its future class*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Student Type</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-State Wyoming</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out-Of-State Colorado</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-Of-State Other</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 % Annual Retention Lift</td>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5% Transfer Retention Lift</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total New Headcount</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>8,480</td>
<td>8,611</td>
<td>8,728</td>
<td>8,815</td>
<td>8,888</td>
<td>8,972</td>
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* Enrollment projections reflect undergraduate students at the Laramie Campus only.
STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

Immediate:
- Hire AVP for Enrollment to enhance Recruiting, Admission, and Onboarding operations
- Establish a SEM Governance Committee
- Establish UW Student Success Action Sub-Committee (Monitors At Risk Students)
- Establish an Orientation / Onboarding Team; Link Cowboy Connect to Orientation

Short-term
- Implement Peer-to-Peer Advising Model within the Colleges
- Connect data collected during enrollment to SIS for advising and student support
- Leverage historical course enrollment data to inform future needs and planning
- Roll-out an advisor communication plan to promote consistency in approach
- Enhance financial aid communications and promote financial literacy
- Centralize the withdrawal process; Understand why students leave to re-engage

Mid- to Long-term:
- Enhance WyoWeb Portal; Turn on degree planning tools
- Expanded adoption of CRM to support retention efforts (Case Management Tool)
- Create block tuition rates to incentivize students to take higher course loads
- Expand course offerings outside of current clustering (10am-2pm)
- Create centralized oversight of each College’s course offerings
TRANSFER INITIATIVES

Immediate:
- Establish Transfer Center support and structure
- Leverage existing Outreach Coordinators and personnel on WYCC campuses
- Work with existing Wyoming Transfer Council to create WYCC Advisory Board
- Make Transfer orientation mandatory; reserve seats in courses for transfer registration
- Establish Transfer Student Peer-Mentor Program
- Enhance Transfer student website; Aggregate important resources in a central place

Short-term
- Link to Transfer evaluations on WYCC websites; Post articulations and 2+2 agreements
- Make Transfer orientation mandatory; reserve seats in courses for transfer registration
- Host accepted Transfer student programming, both on campus and regionally
- Automate credit evaluation process to best extent possible (Link TreQ to Banner)

Mid- to Long-term:
- Establish a transfer liaison within each college
- Identify and cultivate out-of-state CC relationships with coordinators (CO & NE)
- Establish Transfer Advising Days in collaboration with UWC/WYCC
- Create a dual admission program with WYCCs
FRESHMEN RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Immediate:
- Enhance brand platform, prospective student website, and social media presence
- Examine effectiveness of current prospect development campaigns
- Rethink admission application user experience and content; Remove major declaration
- Create a prospective student score and academic preparedness index
- Develop a “yield” and “summer melt” strategy; maintain touchpoints to build excitement

Short-term
- Identify and collect key data points for data warehouse; Share with Student Support staff
- Examine the frequency, content, and recipients of College-level recruiting reports
- Optimize current recruitment territories
- Create distinct calls to action in recruiting materials; Establish expectations and deadlines
- Enforce 7/1 application deadline; Provide a single admission decision to students

Mid- to Long-term:
- Consider membership with the Common Application to increase awareness
- Implement pre-registration prior to Orientation; Consider block scheduling
- Enhance WyoWeb Portal (Admitted Student Portal); Link to important resources
- Develop admitted student engagement and yield plans by College
- Create targeted high school student fly-in programs (resident and non-resident)
- Consider admission deferral option; Admitted to UW upon completion at a WYCC
STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT ROADMAP

Some very simple concepts have emerged from the planning process.

- In the short term, growth in the student body will come from a focus on improving retention and outcomes for the students we already have and on growing the number of transfer students we enroll.
- Long term opportunities exist in recruiting more first-time full-time students.
- All of this will require much more coordination and collaboration across our Office of Admissions, colleges and departments, our marketing and institutional communications group, and our faculty.
SEM – IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

➢ Shared governance structure – volunteer response remarkable
  ▪ Undergrad Enrollment Governance Group
  ▪ Student Success Action Group
  ▪ Advising Redesign Action Group
  ▪ Transfer Success Advisory Group
  ▪ Student Data Advisory Group
  ▪ Orientation and Onboarding Advisory Group
  ▪ Marketing and Communications Advisory Group
SEM – NEAR TERM STEPS

- Enrollment management functions transfer from Student to Academic Affairs.
- Search to hire AVP Enrollment Management, plan for Transfer Success Center, and coordinated advising model implementation.
Thank you!