



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans
Department Heads

FROM: Dr. Dan Jones *[Signature]*
Dr. Adolfo Benavides *[Signature]*

DATE: January 24, 2014

TOPIC: Strategic Enrollment Management

During each of the last several meetings of the University Executive Council, we have noted the disappointing enrollment figures for the fall and spring semesters. After three consecutive years of record growth, it now appears certain that the 2013-2014 academic year will show enrollment declines. While troubling, the declines do not yet constitute a crisis, but they are clearly unacceptable. It is incumbent upon each of us to determine the factors that contribute to our current circumstances, and to do all that is within our power to put our university back in a growth mode.

Since the base funding period is mere days away, we must first ensure that we are implementing short-term strategies to increase enrollment during this critical period. Among the strategies that have been suggested, and we believe that you have already implemented, are the following:

- Scheduling a robust offering of flex-entry sections for popular courses this spring
- Building class schedules that are keenly responsive to student needs:
 - Scheduling sections at times and locations that are appropriate to the characteristics of the target student market
 - Providing a balance of face-to-face, hybrid, and online sections that is appropriate to the characteristics of the target student market
 - Building and publishing a predictable, rotating two-year schedule that facilitates planning, with a consequent positive impact on enrollment, retention, and shortened time-to-degree
 - Aggressively recruiting new graduate students for programs receiving special, one-time scholarship dollars
- Implementing aggressive recruitment efforts
 - Hiring highly qualified recruiters for each college
 - Providing intensive training on the program inventory, characteristics of popular degree programs, availability of financial assistance, and delivery formats
 - Setting outcome-based performance metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of the recruiters and for use in annual merit evaluations
 - Reporting results on a weekly basis

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In addition to these recruiting efforts, I am asking you to engage in market assessments of your graduate degree programs. Enrollment declines have been the most significant in two broad areas which have traditionally housed our best-performing degrees: business and education. These numbers clearly indicate that the markets our programs serve are changing in fundamental ways. We need to better understand these changes if we are to restore our competitive position.

To assist you in this assessment, the following data have been provided:

- Ten-year enrollment trends for each of your programs, sorted by CIP code
- The Interlink analysis of projected workforce needs for our region for the next three to five years
- An environmental scan of graduate programs offered by universities in our service area with whom we compete for students (the Hanover Group Report)
- Current and projected demographic data for our service area

In addition to these data, I encourage you to seek out additional resources available from discipline-specific professional associations. The assessments should take the form of SWOT analyses, identifying and evaluating the significance of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they relate to each degree program. In addition to determining which programs in our current inventory have the best potential for growth, I encourage you to think broadly about new and innovative academic programs that may respond more directly to market demand than those we currently offer. As an example, we offer only a very limited number of certificate programs, even though these credentials have proven to be successful enrollment generators at a number of universities in our region. In addition, consider whether existing programs could offer emphasis areas in specific fields with strong and clear career paths. These assessments should lead to the development of specific action plans that incorporate the following steps, among others you may wish to suggest:

- Identification of low-performing programs which have little likelihood of growth, based on market and environmental factors. These programs should be considered for deletion.
- Identification of low-to modestly-performing programs which have stagnant or low growth, but for which there are meaningful opportunities for renewal. For these programs, strategies leading to the restoration of meaningful growth need to be proposed.
- Programs which are currently healthy, and for which demand is projected to remain strong. A simple statement of the rationale for this conclusion will suffice.
- Opportunities for the development of new programs, delivery methods, and locations which present promising opportunities for market appeal and significant opportunity. Please outline these areas and offer the rationale for program development.

For programs in all categories except the first, your report will contain specific enrollment targets by program for the next five years. Please submit your report no later than May 1 of this year, after which time the assessment will operate on an annual cycle with a reporting date to be determined in consultation with the leadership of academic affairs.

While strategic enrollment growth is vital to ensuring that our university receives adequate funding, it is central to our mission as a regional, comprehensive public university. In the words of Professor Mayo, "I will let no ambitious, industrious youth be denied an education if I can prevent it." Our duty is to extend the hand of opportunity to students who seek a better life through education. Responding to the needs of one of the fastest-growing states in the nation requires that we grow as well. I look forward to working with you as we find innovative ways to advance our university into the future.