Pigs, Snakes, and the Size of the Box: Enrollment Management Made Fun

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UM Background

- Public, Doctoral, Research University
- Flagship university of the USM
- 25,000 undergraduates; 10,000 graduate students
- About 60% of admits first-time freshmen
- 92% of all UG full-time
- Typical freshman class size
  - Fall: 4,000          Spring: 450
- Typical transfer class size
  - Fall: 2,000         Spring: 1,000
Pigs, Snakes, Size of the Box

- “Pig in the Snake” – a large freshmen class moving through their undergraduate experience
- “Size of the Box” – total undergraduate size

Questions for Enrollment Management –

- How do increasingly talented admissions classes impact the overall undergraduate population size?
- What do we need to watch for in managing the size?
- How do we stabilize undergraduate size without compromising quality?
UM’s Increasing Retention

- 1992-93: 59.00%
- 1996-97: 78.50%
- 2000-01: 93.00%

Fall Fresh:
- 1992-93: 84.50%
- 1996-97: 90%
- 2000-01: 93.00%

Spring Fresh:
- 1992-93: 60%
- 1996-97: 70%
- 2000-01: 80%
- 2003-04: 50%
And Improving Grad Rates
Understanding the Impact

- Milestones
  - Peaks in class size, plateaus in rates

- Monitor cohort progressions

- Need to compare number of students entering (inflows) to students leaving (outflows)
  - Consider all sources of students – freshmen and transfers, fall and spring admits
  - Understand all sources of outflow – drop/stop out and graduation PLUS military service, death, other methods for reducing cohorts
Inflows:
Freshmen and Transfers

Fiscal Year Freshmen & Transfer Inputs
(FY 2005 - 2007 Projected)

Enrollments

Fiscal Year


Incoming Fall Freshmen
Incoming Fall Transfers (CP&SG)
Incoming Spring Freshmen
Incoming Spring Transfers

\[ \text{Inflows: Freshmen and Transfers} \]
Outflows:
Graduation or Non-Return

Fiscal Year Freshmen & Transfer Outputs
(FY 2006, 2007 Projected)
Inflows vs. Outflows

Combined Fall and Spring Freshmen & Transfer Inputs vs Outputs
Inflows vs. Outflows

Percent Change in net UG Enrollments from Fall to Fall (Projected Fall 2005, 2006)
Size of the UG Box

Total Fall Undergraduate Enrollment (2005, 2006 Projected)

- Fall 1998: 24,776
- Fall 1999: 24,717
- Fall 2000: 24,638
- Fall 2001: 25,099
- Fall 2002: 25,240
- Fall 2003: 25,446
- Fall 2004: 25,140
- Fall 2005: 24,740
- Fall 2006: 24,693
Impacts

- Improved retention – initial increase in undergraduate size, ultimately plateau
- Fluctuating freshman class size – initially stabilize overall size, ultimately mask “pig in snake” issues
- Improved graduation – shifts in time to degree mean students leave sooner, eventually fewer returning students
- Ultimately outflows catch up to or outpace inflows
- Tuition Revenues – initial growth from “pig” but then decline as “box” shrinks
Thoughts and Future Directions

Political realities
- Freshman class size impacts quality as well as total “size of the box”
- University needs stable tuition revenues
- Role of transfer students

Enrollment management needs to account for changes in retention and graduation rates

Must consider all sources of inflows and outflows

Other approaches – how have you handled this?