FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

University and College Enrollment Planning Assessment

University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota

Report prepared by
Kent Hopkins and Paul LePore
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University and College Enrollment Planning Assessment

University of North Dakota • Grand Forks, North Dakota

Purpose and Scope

Kent Hopkins, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, and Paul LePore, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Arizona State University, conducted a University and College Enrollment Planning Assessment and related kick-off workshop, in partnership with the University of North Dakota (UND), Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs. The Enrollment Planning Assessment (EPA) campus visit occurred on Monday-Tuesday, January 23-24, 2012.

The purpose of the EPA is to provide an external review of the university’s enrollment planning initiatives for student recruitment and retention, with primary focus on the undergraduate student population for the following six schools and colleges at UND:

1. John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences
2. College of Arts and Sciences
3. College of Business and Public Administration
4. College of Education and Human Development
5. School of Engineering and Mines
6. College of Nursing

The EPA was commissioned by the University of North Dakota and was overseen by Dr. Lori Reesor, Vice President for Student Affairs, and by Paul LeBel, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The EPA’s scope was defined in a variety of communications from Dr. Reesor – in speaking with Provost LeBel, academic deans and her Student Affairs Cabinet. The scope included:

- Helping UND think about enrollment planning and management comprehensively and from an academic unit perspective.
• Determining school and college-based recruitment and retention goals and related strategies.

• Discussing the various aspects of a successful enrollment management program – and providing national best practices and specific examples from the assessment team’s full-time work experience (university and college-based) at Arizona State University.

• Providing an academic viewpoint for the foundation of enrollment planning and data-driven decision-making.

• Considering how to manage efficiencies and increase effectiveness in new student enrollment and retention.

• Strengthening the academic partnership in new student enrollment and retention strategy development and execution.

The EPA became a logical follow-up to an Organizational Review of UND’s Division of Student Affairs conducted by Kent Hopkins in October 2011. Based on the interest from the Academic Affairs community to develop plans and strategies for recruitment and retention, there is great opportunity to build upon the central foundation in Student Affairs for the university’s enrollment management program through this next phase of work – the EPA.

This written report, the fourth and final step in the EPA, is intended to document the purpose and scope of the services to be performed through external, objective feedback. The report expands upon those items discussed during the Next Steps session conducted with Dr. Reesor, Dr. Steve Light – AVP for Academic Affairs, college and school deans or designees and Student Affair Cabinet on Tuesday, January 24 (and full attendee listing is housed under Step Three of this report) and in an exit briefing with Dr. Reesor following the Next Steps session.

This report’s overarching purpose is to aid the university’s efforts to develop a best practices enrollment planning and management program.
Enrollment Planning Assessment Steps

Step One: Pre-visit Preparation

A number of documents were forwarded to us prior to the site visit. Thank you to the school and college staff and undergraduate admissions staff who assembled these advance materials, as they were very helpful in preparing for our on-campus meetings. Those pre-visit documents included:

- College Enrollment Assessment Document
- Supplemental overview documents from the colleges or schools
- New Student Enrollment Funnel figures for first-time freshmen and transfers
- New Student Enrollment Funnel figures for special populations – High ACT (29+), students of color, and gender

In addition, Dr. Reesor and Provost LeBel conducted a phone conference with us on Thursday, January 19 to outline their goals and objectives and to prepare us for our college and school inquiry sessions in advance of the campus site visit. In addition to crystallizing the role and scope of the EPA, it was important for us to understand the importance, from the academic viewpoint, of developing a much stronger foundation for enrollment planning and data-driven decision-making.
Step Two: Site Visit

On-campus Workshop and Individual School/College Inquiry Sessions

As noted in the discussion of the purpose and scope of the EPA, the kick-off workshop was open to any interested faculty or staff who would like to learn more about the principals and planning of a strategic enrollment management plan for UND, focusing primarily on the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

Following the workshop, the school and college inquiry sessions were constructed to discover the opportunities and challenges associated with school and college-based recruitment and retention goal establishment and related strategies.

These face-to-face interactions were helpful in continuing to build an understanding of the current situation and the university’s desired movement to adopting national best practices in enrollment management.

The Enrollment Planning Assessment schedule, prepared in advance with Dr. Reesor and Provost LeBel, is outlined below.

**Sunday, January 22**

6:00 – 8:00 pm  Dinner and Discussion: Goals and Objectives for the Planning Assessment – Provost LeBel and Dr. Reesor

**Monday, January 23**

8:30 -10:30 am  Workshop and Discussion: Defining Successful Elements for the Development of a University Enrollment Management Initiative

10:30 – noon   Enrollment Planning Session I – Engineering and Mines

12:30 – 2:00 pm  Enrollment Planning Session II – Aerospace Sciences

2:00 – 3:30 pm  Enrollment Planning Session III – Arts and Sciences

3:30 – 5:00 pm  Enrollment Planning Session IV – Business and Public Administration

5:00 – 5:30 pm  Day One Debrief with Dr. Reesor and Dr. Steve Light, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Tuesday January 24

8:00 – 9:00 am  Enrollment Planning Session V – Nursing

9:00 - 10:00 am  Enrollment Planning Session VI – Education and Human Development

10:00-11:00 am  Data Management

11:00am – noon  Next Steps

12:30 – 1:45 pm  Lunch and Exit Briefing with Dr. Reesor

The workshop power point presentation was provided to Dr. Reesor at the completion of the site visit and is included as an addendum to this written report.

Step Three: Executive Briefing and Preliminary Recommendations

At the conclusion of the EPA, we met with Dr. Reesor and the following individuals to present an executive briefing of preliminary findings and recommendations. In this briefing, the major themes contained in this written report were shared with Dr. Reesor and her senior cabinet. Those major themes are outlined in the report section, Assessment Observations and Recommendations.

- Harmon Abrahamson, Associate Dean – Arts and Sciences
- Lisa Burger, Interim Executive Director of Enrollment Services
- Hesham El-Rewini, Dean – Engineering & Mines
- Cara Halgren, Associate VP and Dean of Students
- Denise Korniewicz, Dean – Nursing
- Steve Light, Associate VP for Academic Affairs
- Jill Novotny, Administrative Officer, VPSA Office
- Patrick O’Neill, Associate Dean – Business & Public Administration
- Lori Reesor, VP for Student Affairs
- Dan Rice, Dean – Education & Human Development
- Judy Sargent, Director of Residence Services
- Bruce Smith, Dean, Aerospace Sciences
Step Four: Written Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Following our on-campus site visit, this written report documents and expands upon those discussions from our Next Steps session and individual briefing with Dr. Reesor on Tuesday, January 24. It is important to note a two-day EPA is not adequate to understand fully all of the complexities and nuances of the university and college- and school-based enrollment enterprise at the University of North Dakota. However, we believe we were able to accurately assess the current state and provide recommendations to Dr. Reesor and her senior cabinet during the exit briefing – and now through this written report.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with you in this EPA. Any errors in interpretation or omissions are the responsibility of the assessment team.

Assessment Observations and Recommendations

University

1. Establish an Enrollment Management Executive Council/Committee with representation from the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Academic membership would focus on the school/college level. Membership could include the following individuals. The council/committee would meet every two to three weeks during the 2012 calendar year to place structure and energy around university enrollment initiatives.

- Steve Light, Academic Affairs chair
- Lisa Burger, Interim Executive Director of Enrollment Services, possible co-chair (new Assistant Vice President for Admissions and Financial Aid should co-chair when hired)
- Harmon Abrahamson, Arts and Sciences
- Matthew Cavalli, Engineering & Mines
- Lucy Heintz, Nursing
- Patrick O’Neill, Business & Public Administration
- Kent Lovelace, Aerospace Sciences
- Designee, Education & Human Development
- Designees, Division of Student Affairs, including possibly the Dean of Students and the Vice President for Student Affairs (at least at beginning)
2. Identify enrollment working groups that would provide detailed production schedules to the Executive Council/Committee for the following priority enrollment initiatives. These work groups would be in addition to the retention planning group that has already been formed.

- Data Exchange
- Information Technology
- Marketing, Communication and Web Development

3. Establish school/college new student enrollment targets and retention and graduation rate goals. Goal establishment will add focus to the university’s enrollment planning initiatives.

4. There are opportunities to influence new student enrollment for the fall 2012 cycle. In most college and school meetings, we discussed the importance of connecting with admitted students during the yield (admit to enrolled) decision-making time of February-June.

5. Data exchange and the use of data in decisionmaking must improve. UND schools/colleges are hungry for data. They want and need more information and more easily accessible information regarding university and college- and school-based recruiting and retention. The Data Exchange working group must form quickly and make significant progress in the use of data in the information and decision-making processes for enrollment planning and management.

6. The Data Exchange group should compile historical new student enrollment funnel reports for the college and schools – down to the program level – for the last five years, and provide most current funnel figures for the fall 2012 in the same schema. Treat Online enrollment as a separate population for reporting purposes.

7. The Data Exchange group should compile historical retention, persistence and graduation rate reports for the colleges and schools for, at least, the last five years, and provide the most current fall-to-spring retention figures for those first-time freshmen and transfer students who entered UND in fall 2012. Treat Online enrollment as a separate population for reporting purposes.

8. Develop different ability or academic performance levels to monitor new student enrollment and retention behavior.
9. Retention in majors over the first two years appears to be haphazard and uncoordinated. It is not clear what responsibility schools/colleges have for their students during their first freshman and sophomore years.

10. While there are pockets of good work in outreach and recruiting in the schools/colleges (or in some cases departments), these efforts are largely unconnected to central recruitment work.

11. Schools/colleges need to be given the tools to manage incoming students to their majors, possibly through higher admissions standards, to align more closely with the enrollment goals at the upper-division level.

12. Attempt to align college and school-based scholarships with the appropriation of financial aid – so that the colleges and schools can maximize the use of these funds to retain students in their programs at higher rates. The current practice does not appear to have the colleges and schools checking on the scholarship recipients’ financial background. Thus, scholarship appropriation may be going to students who have sufficient need-based assistance, or the value of the scholarship can be modified so that need is met, or scholarship funds could be split to impact more than one student, etc.

13. While the UND webpages are fairly uniform in format, they are heavily transactional and rarely inspirational. College and school leadership spoke about the “UND central web controls” that regulate the look and content of each site, and the general frustration with not being able to do any creative content management in UND’s web environment. This process needs to be reviewed and needs to be more in line with the recruitment and retention objectives of the schools and colleges.

14. Costs of programs vary greatly and financial decisions (costs of online vs. on-ground programs; budget resources given directly back to units for online instruction; lack of differential tuition despite real differences in programs costs; etc.) in some cases drive when and how UND’s colleges and schools approach their enrollment objectives. Some colleges have extremely high fees (e.g., Aerospace Studies) which have strong effects on recruitment and retention of qualified students. Other programs noted the beneficial funding model for online students has led to ignoring the enrollment objectives for on ground programs. Many colleges asked why they even needed to address freshmen and transfer recruitment/retention goals since the funding model did not reward improvement in either area. A comprehensive review of program costs, expenditures, and funding needs to be defined in order to align UND’s enrollment goals with fiscal management objectives.
15. Determine how the university’s Honors Program should be better aligned to meet university enrollment objectives for increasing high-ability enrollment – overall, and within each college and school. There should be an Honors plan woven into a comprehensive new student enrollment plan that is integrated with the goals of the UND colleges and schools. The program needs to grow and leverage admission into the Honors Program as an important strategy for yielding bright admitted students. We understand there is an Honors Experience Working Group and encourage this group to examine this area.

16. Begin to merge the planning calendars of undergraduate admissions and recruitment activities and those with existing programs offered through the colleges and schools and the Division of Student Affairs. Determine what existing programs can be of benefit to promote to prospective students and their parents/family members. Include review of college/school/department activities to identify recruitment potential, i.e., summer camps, etc.

17. Create more intentional, targeted, and visible opportunities to target recruitment and enrollment of underrepresented groups, with a particular focus on students of color and American Indian populations as well as women (in particular programs; e.g., STEM fields), first-generation students, LGBTQA students, and international students.

18. Ensure that conversation on enrollment planning and management occurs with the university’s professional schools – the School of Law and School of Medicine and Health Sciences – to align school and university goals.
Colleges and Schools

Our time with the colleges and schools was intended to outline recommendations for new student enrollment and retention. In addition to outlining those recommendations, we provide our assessment of the opportunities and challenges that are associated with school- and college-based enrollment planning.

John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences

Opportunities
- Nationally recognized program in Aerospace Studies – strong brand recognition.
- Faculty leaders interested and studying issues surrounding student retention.
- History and involvement in face-to-face recruiting and e-marketing (along with direct mail, use of purchased lists, industry fairs, etc.).
- Stated higher freshman retention rate than the UND average (82% vs. 77%).
- "Technology-rich" facilities.
- School-based human and operating resource investment in recruitment and retention.

Challenges
- Difficult to ascertain which of their various recruitment and yield strategies are effective – as no reports or data available to understand current state.
- Any information gained through school-specific outreach or recruiting activities does not appear to be provided back to enrollment services/undergraduate admissions.
- High program fees make the need for scholarships or other aid particularly critical for increasing retention.
- No plan for growth in the non-Aviation majors; Aviation has probably reached its capacity given flight line constraints.
- Uncertain where students who leave Aviation enroll in other UND schools or colleges or whether they leave the university entirely.
- Need to strengthen connections with units offering basic science and math courses in the first two years.

Recommendations

1. Determine if school-based admissions standards for new students need to be established that reflect characteristics of successful juniors and seniors in the school.
2. Construct school-based new student enrollment planning goals for each major.
3. Identify targeted name purchases by academic ability and area of interest – especially in majors outside of Aviation.
4. Work with units offering basic science and math courses to improve retention in the school in the first two years.
5. Partner with other colleges to transition students out of the school to other UND majors when students encounter academic or other difficulties.
6. Establish recruitment messaging and plans for non-Aviation majors, specifically for Atmospheric Sciences and Computer Science.
7. Establish development goals for the creation of student scholarships.
8. Link school recruiting and outreach work to the university’s efforts, as information and support need to mutually enhance the other’s activities.

**College of Arts & Sciences**

**Opportunities**

- Pockets of very extensive outreach efforts (for example, School of Music audition process).
- Strong college enrollment partnership with the Honors Program.

**Challenges**

- Diffuse and undifferentiated new student enrollment and retention goals.
- College has no real dedicated enrollment management staff and no senior administrator(s) focused on college-based new and continuing student enrollment planning.
- Current approach appears to focus on advising and not enrollment planning.
- There are some very small majors within the 18 academic units (Musical Theatre, Indian Studies) that are seeking enrollment growth opportunities.
- No planned way for students to migrate into the college from majors in other schools and colleges.
- No university enrollment mechanisms (i.e. use of UND’s recruitment information system) to support recruitment in those departments that do have strong outreach/recruitment presence – for example, School of Music.
- Not clear whether targeted recruitment processes such as the School of Music’s audition process improves the yield of students to UND – beyond entry into School of Music degree programs.
• There are perceived quality issues with some of the programs – a sense that programs either have to just take what they can get or that they can’t compete with other institutions with better reputations and perhaps longer histories in some fields.

Recommendations
1. Need for more college based-planning enrollment planning (goals for each major) and targeted name purchases by academic ability and area of interest.
2. Specific marketing of programs need to be developed to guide or advise students to majors with capacity.
3. Need to leverage where interest in small or new majors might be especially strong, such as Musical Theatre, among Grand Forks and East Grand Forks high schools.
4. The basic science and math departments need to work with other schools and colleges to improve retention in the first two years (creating math or chemistry courses or sections, for example, specifically for engineering, nursing, or aerospace studies majors).
5. Partner with other colleges to transition students into the college and to other majors when students encounter academic difficulties.

College of Business and Public Administration

Opportunities
• College leadership recognizes the value of recruiting as “relationship building” – they understand the need to do recruiting well and appear eager to improve the college’s lot through enhanced outreach and yield activities.
• Strong willingness to invest in recruiting and outreach staff and to connect with UND’s central efforts.
• There is discussion of a new building – and how that development could assist in strengthening marketing messaging about the college’s programs and reputation.
Challenges

- Strong sense that the current outreach and recruiting efforts are not well connected to the faculty and fail to leverage obvious expertise in marketing and yield that might be offered by the college’s academic leadership.
- Goals and action plans for outreach and recruitment do not seem to be directed from the college’s central administration.
- Uneven growth between the online and on-ground programs – this is particularly true in the graduate MBA programs and maybe due to the incentives from current on-line funding model.

Recommendations

1. The college needs to develop a marketing and communication plan to improve its perceived reputation and to market those aspects of the college that provide a “value added” (career development, experiential learning, outcomes, etc.).
2. Any new building project should be linked directly to the desire to expand the undergraduate population.
3. A staffing plan and budget for undergraduate recruitment needs to be developed and implemented.
4. The college needs to develop a graduate management and marketing plan to address the imbalance in enrollments between the online and on-ground graduate programs.
5. Senior leadership needs to find ways for the faculty expertise in marketing and messaging to drive the enrollment management and recruiting processes for the college.
College of Education and Human Development

Opportunities

- The college is focused on growth and is looking to online programs as a way to increase student numbers.
- There are a wide range of programs housed in the college, some (like the Rehabilitation major) are unique and could offer the opportunity for targeted marketing and growth.

Challenges

- College leadership indicated that there is no college-based planning in place for recruitment and retention.
- There is no coordination as to how enrollments and resources are connected.
- The online revenue model has not improved planning efforts in the college – the budget as it is currently managed is a historically derived plan that neither reflects current resource needs or plans as to where the college might move in the future.

Recommendations

1. The college needs to spend significant time discussing goals for specific majors and plans for allocating resources to support those goals – the college is really starting from the very beginning in this work.
2. Devise college- or department-specific recruitment and outreach programs that are aligned with influencing the type of student the college is seeking in these programs. Conducting special programs like, “So, You Want to Be a Teacher” or Parks and Recreation Camp Outreach to identify potential interest in careers were just two examples we discussed.
3. Use education alumni to provide referrals on students who would make great teachers.
4. Programming and alumni outreach examples above help the college with the need to increase enrollment of North Dakota residents in teaching. If that becomes a more clearly defined goal of the college, then appropriate strategies must be deployed to achieve that objective.
5. The university should assist the college with the marketing and program launch for Public Health Education. In turn, the college should establish enrollment targets and relevant college-based strategies to ensure enrollment success of this new program.
School of Engineering and Mines

Opportunities

- UND offers one of a very few fully online engineering degrees in the country (strong, quality reputation).
- New/timely degree offerings (for example, Petroleum Engineering).
- Strong growth in first-time freshmen and transfer numbers over the last five years.

Challenges

- No plan for growth in either the on-ground or on-line markets.
- Uneven enrollments across the school (Mechanical Engineering is bursting at the seams; Geology and Geological Engineering have capacity for growth; new programs have essentially no enrollment plan).
- Women and students of color are under-represented and are an enrollment priority, yet plans are not developed to influence growth.
- One-third of all incoming engineering and mines students are lost by the end of the sophomore year to other majors or to attrition from UND – though no data was available to learn where these students enroll.
- There are weak connections with units offering basic science and math courses in the first two years.
- Current college-level admissions and marketing efforts are not well connected to the academic units in the school or to the UND enrollment services/undergraduate admissions.

Recommendations

1. There are opportunities to influence new student enrollment for the fall 2012 cycle. Devise a Priority Admit Yield Strategy for the School; invite targeted, high ability admitted students to campus to influence yield; use the School’s Design Expo, in May, as a yield event.
2. Admissions standards for new freshmen and transfer student need to be considered that reflect characteristics of successful juniors and seniors in school.
3. Admissions standards for online students, above and beyond university admissions standards, must be considered as current online students are struggling academically in calculus courses.
4. Need for more school based-planning enrollment planning, goals for each program, and targeted name purchases by academic ability and area of interest.
5. Develop specific marketing programs to guide/advise students with the school and to majors with capacity.
6. Work with units offering basic science and math courses to improve retention in the school in the first two years (create math courses, for example, specifically for engineering majors).

7. Partner with other colleges to transition students out of the school to other majors at UND when students encounter academic difficulties.

**College of Nursing**

**Opportunities**

- The college wants more data and direct access to the university’s recruitment information system to help manage its recruiting and outreach strategies.
- The dean is developing a strong shared vision as to where she plans to take her college, and she appears more than willing to make the structural/curricular/personnel changes to achieve her objectives.
- The college has put into place a new organizational chart that includes a Director of Student Services who will oversee the college’s recruitment and retention efforts.
- Nursing has taken into its college a number of programs (Nutrition/Dietetics, Social Work) which may provide opportunities for growth beyond increases to the Nursing degree options.

**Challenges**

- The college loses a significant number of pre-nursing majors yet spends college human and operational resources with these students. Again, no data was provided as to where those students enroll – either in other UND programs or whether they leave the institution entirely. Institution needs to provide more support and assistance to these students (as well as in other professional programs).
- College is seeking opportunities to revise its curriculum and align its programs to national best practices.
- Some current clinical placement practices limit possibilities for growth.
- Need to review the teaching contributions across the college to maximize the effectiveness of the unit’s faculty.
Recommendations

1. The college wants and needs to work with units offering basic science and math courses to improve retention in the school in the first two years (create chemistry courses, for example, specifically for nursing majors).
2. The college needs to bring its curriculum in line with current best practices nationally.
3. Admissions standards for new students need to be considered that reflect characteristics of successful juniors and seniors in school.
4. The college has no resources currently set aside for recruiting or outreach; and for the limited marketing/recruitment strategies in place, there appears to be no gauge for their effectiveness.
5. The college should consider how paths to other current majors in the college (Social Work, Nutrition/Dietetics) or possibly new majors (Health Studies) can be established as alternative for students unable to meet entry standards or who are unsuccessful in the Nursing Program.

Moving Forward

The assessment team is heartened to see the focus that UND’s administration and school college leadership are making to enhance and strengthen new student enrollment and student retention initiatives. It is clear that the university is committed to making strategic investments to improve the data access and analyses capabilities and to augment central services and infrastructure in support of the university’s enrollment objectives.

To achieve UND’s enrollment objectives, however, it is imperative for the colleges and schools to drive this process. It is also important that the Division of Student Affairs collaborate with the academic areas and provide appropriate recruitment and retention support. Each academic unit must work with the Provost to:

- set clear, realizable enrollment objectives that are aligned with revenue objectives;
- develop school- and college-specific outreach and recruitment strategies to enroll the new freshmen and transfer students that they hope to welcome to UND
- address the vexing student retention problems by developing intervention programs to support students that cut across unit boundaries, and
- measure and document this work in new student enrollment and retention.
We realize you are at the foundation stages of a university-wide enrollment management initiative. It is not, however, too late for the schools and colleges to shape its fall 2012 class and to improve the persistence rates of currently enrolled UND students. Each of the schools and colleges identified strategies and plans that they hoped to see enacted – we strongly suggest that the work begin now and that central administration work collaboratively with the deans and their staff to support these efforts.

The time investment you place into university enrollment management over the next six to eighteen months will provide long-term dividends at the University of North Dakota.

We wish you the best of success with your next steps.