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Will Cantrell stepped into the position of Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School at Michigan Technological University on July 1, 2020, in the middle of one of the most challenging times for enrollment management in recent history. He is a Professor in Physics and the interdisciplinary Atmospheric Sciences Program. Prior to stepping into the position as dean he was an associate dean for two years and served as the director for the Earth Planetary and Space Sciences Institute for 10 years.

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Susan Gottheil, M.A., has worked at a variety of Canadian colleges and universities providing leadership in SEM planning and implementation and enhancing student and academic support services to improve student success. A former co-coordinator of AACRAO's Strategic Enrollment Management Conference, she and Clayton Smith established and organized the Canadian SEM Summit to help promote SEM in the Canadian context. Susan retired in 2019 from the University of Manitoba, where she served as vice-provost (students).

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Casey Hayes is the Associate Registrar for Technology at Elon University, where he and his team leverage technology and data-driven solutions to better serve the students, faculty, and staff. His recent work and publications on automating graduation and the degree audit have earned him recognition and awards for innovation. Casey joined the Office of the Registrar at Elon in 2013.

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Tyler Hayes is the Director of Admissions and Registrar at Central Oregon Community College (COCC). He has worked as a higher education professional for ten years, and enjoys using his skills to contribute to the mission of serving students and helping them achieve their dreams. He graduated from San Diego Christian College in 2006 with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics and from Kansas State University in 2010 with a Master's Degree in Higher Education Advising.

He began his tenure at COCC in 2010 and has had the privilege to work in Financial Aid, Student Life, Housing, and Admissions in his time at the College. Tyler enjoys all things outdoors; water skiing, golf, and hanging out with his family in beautiful Bend, OR.

### *Stanley E. Henderson*

Stanley E. Henderson retired from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where he served as vice chancellor for enrollment management and student life from 2005–2015. In that role, he provided leadership to campus enrollment efforts that resulted in record enrollment and championed a spirit of community to grow student engagement to new levels. He previously served in senior enrollment management positions at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, the University of Cincinnati, Western Michigan University, and Wichita State University. His roots in enrollment began as an admissions counselor at Michigan State University in 1970.

He also has been deeply involved at the national level of AACRAO, serving as the association's first vice president for enrollment management and as its president. He was a founder of the association's national SEM Conference, now in its 31st year. He is a frequent contributor to AACRAO publications, as well as a frequent presenter at state, regional, and national levels. He is also a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and the Founders Award for Leadership. In 2014, AACRAO presented Henderson a Lifetime Achievement Award for "Outstanding Leadership in the SEM Profession" and awarded him Honorary Membership in 2015. He continues to serve the association as a Senior Consultant for AACRAO Consulting.

Henderson earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Michigan State University in 1969 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a master's degree in government from Cornell University in 1971. He also completed course work in the doctoral program at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.

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Dennis Livesay, Ph.D., is an expert in graduate enrollment management and the evolving credentialing landscape. His career prominently features a number of successful new program development activities, including broad adoption of stackable certificates and other types of alternate credentials. He is currently the Dave House Dean of Computing at Michigan Technological University. Prior to this, he served in a number of academic and administrative roles, includ-

ing dean of the College of Engineering and dean of the Graduate School (both at Wichita State University) and interim associate dean of the College of Computing and Informatics and founding director of the Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Ph.D. program (both at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte). Dr. Livesay is the architect of the GEM framework upon which much of his chapter is based; he has presented on the topic at both regional and national meetings, including as a featured speaker at the 2019 AACRAO Annual Meeting.

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Alicia Moore, Ph.D., is the Vice President of Student Affairs at Central Oregon Community College, where her responsibilities include leadership for enrollment services, student affairs, diversity and inclusion, institutional effectiveness and strategic planning. She is also a Senior Consultant with AACRAO Consulting and actively presents, writes, and consults on topics including strategic enrollment management, student communications, recruiting and marketing and diversity and inclusion, among other areas. Alicia holds a doctor of philosophy in Adult Education from Oregon State University, a master's of science in Student Affairs from Colorado State University, and a bachelor of arts in communications and Spanish from Willamette University.

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Kizzy Morris, Provost and Chief Academic Officer at Cheyney University, has over 24 years of progressive higher education leadership experience in academic programming, admissions, financial aid, student billing, registrar, placement testing, institutional research, and IT systems coordination. Kizzy's student-centered philosophy is the driver for her work

with different institutions on academic administration, enrollment services, student success pathways, and employee and faculty professional development.

Throughout her career, Kizzy has been a member and officer of several professional organizations, often presenting at conferences throughout the U.S. on topics such as student services, enrollment management, financial aid, student information systems, career development, trauma informed healing practices and cultural competencies. With AACRAO, she serves on the Black Caucus, the Professional & Staff Development Committee, the Research Advisory Board and has co-taught Registrar 101. Her current research emphasis is on mentorship towards the acquisition of cultural capital.

Kizzy holds a post-Master's certificate in Enrollment Management from Capella University, a Master's degree in Project Management from Keller Graduate School of Management and a Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems from Bellevue University, where she graduated with honors. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Leadership in Higher Education from Capella University.

### *Rodney Parks*

Rodney Parks is University Registrar, Assistant Vice President, and Assistant Professor of Wellness at Elon University, where he has served since 2013. Dr. Parks is a prolific author, publishing numerous studies focused on high impact practices, student development, retention, and global education. He is best known for his work in creating Comprehensive Learner Records with publications that support institutional effort to extend traditional academic transcripts to include more information. His work has garnered Elon University a number of innovation grants over the years.



### *Kevin A. Pollock*

Kevin Pollock, Ph.D., is President of Central Carolina Technical College, a position he began in January, 2021. Prior to this role, he served as the fifth president of Montgomery County Community College. Dr. Pollock has more than 40 years of education experience at four-year private and public colleges as well as community colleges. His diverse roles include college administration, strategic planning, leadership, and enrollment management. He is a national expert on student success models, a frequent national speaker who has spoken more than 130 times at conferences and colleges. He has authored more than two dozen book chapters and articles.

At Montgomery County Community College, Dr. Pollock oversaw the implementation of a new core curriculum, including math reform, and the creation of pathways for all College programs.

Before arriving at Montgomery, Dr. Pollock served as president of St. Clair County Community College in Port Huron, Michigan, from 2009-2016. During his tenure, the institution experienced record enrollment, embarked on new student success initiatives, created early and middle college programs, increased its grant funding, became a leader in green initiatives, and strengthened its connections with the community. Prior to assuming a presidential role, Dr. Pollock spent nine years as vice president of student services at West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. He taught middle and high school English early in his career. Dr. Pollock has also served as an AACRAO Senior Consultant.

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Alexander Taylor is Senior Assistant Registrar of Technology and Communications at Elon University, where he has served since 2017. He has published articles on numerous topics, including summer marketing and strategic enrollment management initiatives.

### *Anne A. Thurmer*

Anne A. Thurmer, Ed.D., is Dean of Liberal Arts and Humanities at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. As an undergraduate, her voice teacher connected physical movement with the mystery of singing, a humanities professors modeled finding connections between Schopenhauer and Aeschylus and questions of choice and fate, her friend Jeff added connections to *Animaniacs*, while Sara introduced her to Freire and embodied learning. Anne discovered the connection between bottomless cups at Atomic Coffee, conversations that continued in the parking lot, and sleeplessness all on her own.

As a master's student, Anne discovered that teaching opened opportunities to connect with students from around the world and was hooked. Her first scholarly presentation used a language learning theory from Australia to explain the experience of first-generation students in online learning environments, and



finding connections between theories in one area of learning with problems in another remains a passion.

While teaching online, Anne received basic training in professional advising, and the marked improvement in the learning outcomes of her class convinced her that finding ways to connect the insights of student affairs with academics was a worthy investment for a career and a life. After teaching composition at the college level for ten years in public and private for-profit, online and campus-based settings, Anne

accepted an appointment as a professional advisor and director of transition programming at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. Through a range of positions, including Director of Academic Initiatives and Interim Dean of Student Success, Anne discovered SEM literature and worked to refine her practice using insights from data.

She completed her doctorate in Student Affairs Administration and Leadership with the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse in 2020.



# Foreword

Don Hossler

Distinguished Provost and Sonneborn Professor Emeritus,  
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Postsecondary educational institutions, and the senior enrollment officers who help to lead them, face more uncertainty about student enrollments than at any time in the modern era. The challenges they face are manifold, including:

- ◆ **Fewer High School Graduates:** There are projected declines in the number of high school graduates in many regions of the country.
- ◆ **Changing Composition of Graduating High School Students:** We will see more first-generation and low-income students.
- ◆ **Financial Uncertainty:** On the heels of the Great Recession, colleges and universities were already facing uncertainty regarding college costs, financial aid, and the ability of many families to be able to continue to fund college degree attainment.
- ◆ **Debt and Discount Rates:** Average discount rates at private four-year institutions, as well as some public schools, continue to rise. At the same time, there is growing pressure from the general public and from state and federal policy makers to reduce the amount of student debt. Against this backdrop, I share the following story: An enrollment manager, for whom I have a great respect, showed

me a pie chart that categorized the three major sources of tuition revenue at his private university. Roughly one-third of the revenue came from families and students who contributed toward tuition. Approximately one-third of tuition revenue came from debt-financing (*i.e.*, the money students and parents borrowed). And the remaining third came from *scholarships* awarded from institutional tuition revenue, discounted dollars, which of course were not really dollars helping to pay tuition. As is evident, two thirds of institutional income is at “risk.”

- ◆ **Changing Role of ACT and SAT:** For four-year colleges and universities, the test optional movement, which then became the test blind movement, has introduced a great deal of uncertainty as to how schools will make decisions as to whom to admit. In addition, current application patterns suggest that more students are applying to selective institutions now that admissions tests are no longer required. As a result, more elite institutions are concerned about being over enrolled while less selective institutions are concerned about enrolling too few students.
- ◆ **Expectations for a More Diverse Student Body:** The Black Lives Matter movement, the recent tragedies

of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, the murder of six Asian women in Atlanta, attacks on synagogues and mosques, as well as several other events that reflect a rise in both racial and religious intolerance. These events have translated into higher expectations that our colleges and universities will become more diverse and that enrollment management organizations will play a significant role in enhancing diversity and inclusion on our campuses.

◆ **The Yet to be Fully Revealed Impact of COVID-19:**

For some families, the pandemic has had a devastating effect on the ability of students and their families to afford the direct and indirect costs of pursuing postsecondary education. In addition, as the result of the pandemic, far more students have been introduced to online courses. It remains to be seen whether this will result in more students opting for online education going forward. The extent to which prospective students and families may opt for virtual campus tours and more virtual recruiting is unknown.

◆ **SEM Staff Burnout:** Enrollment leaders are voicing concerns about staff burnout. The combination of test optional, demographic trends, and the changes caused by COVID-19 have left enrollment professionals working 12–16 hours a day.

It is clear that schools can no longer rely on past enrollment patterns to predict their yield of admitted students. The combination of many of these developments have taken their toll. Between 2016 and 2020, a total of 92 non-profit colleges and universities have closed and/or announced future mergers or closures (Tobenkin 2020). Similarly, an analysis of eight years of college enrollments data for just over 2,300 institutions concluded that nearly 10 percent face market stresses severe enough to make them candidates for either

closing or merging (Zemsky, Shaman, and Baldrige 2020). Further evidence of the challenges postsecondary institutions can be found in the Pennsylvania decision to consolidate six of the 14 state-owned universities into two new institutions. Finally, enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse reveals community colleges have been hardest hit with respect to a declining number of enrolled students.

These trends and developments not only have an impact upon undergraduate enrollment management organizations, but they also ripple through graduate programs as well. Students enrolled in bricks-and-mortar graduate programs are declining. Declines in the number of undergraduate students will of course influence the number of students entering graduate programs. In addition, first-generation college students are less likely to pursue a graduate degree. The enrollment managers for M.B.A. programs acknowledge that at many institutions the only thing that is stopping an overall decline in enrollments are their online M.B.A. programs. Enrollments at law schools, while now stable, have not rebounded from the declines experienced during and immediately after the Great Recession. Enrollments in graduate programs in education also continue to decline.

Senior enrollment managers focusing on undergraduate students, and those concentrating on graduate students, are being tasked with developing organizational responses for the colleges and universities they serve. Some presidents and provosts are concerned about the number of students enrolled. At the same time, some campus leaders are expecting their enrollment management organizations to not only maintain enrollments, but also enable their institution to climb the ladder of undergraduate and/or graduate program rankings.

These are indeed difficult times for enrollment management organizations and the people who lead

them. Presentations at professional meetings and the literature on strategic enrollment management (SEM), focus too much attention on the *Big Three*. These include (1) the use of big data and AI as the solutions to informing all enrollment management activities, (2) the strategic use of campus-based financial aid, and (3) the use of social media. However, successful SEM requires more than the *Big Three*. Successful SEM also requires grand strategic visions for the colleges and universities for whom Strategic Enrollment Management leaders serve.

Successful enrollment management also requires leadership, as well as mid-range plans and their implementation to make plans come to life. These mid-range strategies and initiatives are too often ignored. They do not gather the same level of attention; they are often seen as too far down in the weeds, and yet *they make all the difference*. These mid-range strategies include the ways that senior enrollment officers relate to other campus leaders. It also consists of the development of a consistent institutional narrative that is then linked to a careful analysis of how all communications with prospective students are structured. This analysis should incorporate all of the messages that are part of institutional web pages. Although it can sound contradictory, successful SEM organizations recognize the value of an overarching narrative while at the same time understanding that with multiple audiences across prospective students and currently enrolled students' successful SEM communication efforts will recognize the differing need of students. In order to effectively reach prospective students who come from different backgrounds, and enrolled students that may experience a university in different ways, there is a need for customized communication. This is needed in order to create a sense of belonging—a sense of institutional fit. Fortunately for readers, this is a major theme that runs through this

volume. Several chapters speak to the importance of building connections and a sense of belonging on campus. There is an emphasis on the importance of communication channels and the need to consider the needs of not only students but also of staff, faculty, senior campus leadership, parents, and alumni.

Senior enrollment officers are seeking insights into new ways to conceptualize admissions recruitment and to enhance student success. In addition, they recognize the need to focus on mid-range strategies that include an internal focus on the links between academic programs, the faculty, academic leaders, and their impact upon students. And it is axiomatic that, in the midst of all of these enrollment challenges, senior enrollment officers, and their staffs, are looking for guidance. As Herman (2014) emphasizes, it is important to build an organizational culture where all staff are entrepreneurial and recognize the importance of information across all of the shared units. That communication has to move in all directions, not just from leaders downward, but from followers upward and horizontally. Collectively these efforts should engender trust within SEM units and amongst those working with SEM representatives of SEM organizations with whom they are working. Effective Strategic Enrollment Management mid-range strategies also encompass staff development. Even more important are the linkages and communication channels that are created and nurtured across all SEM organizational units, admissions, financial aid, orientation, student success, technology support, and SEM research.

With this context, there is much to recommend in this edited volume that has been put together by Stan Henderson (Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Life (retired), the University of Michigan–Dearborn) and Kevin Pollock (President, Central Carolina Technical College). It includes chapters that emphasize the importance of leadership, and

it draws upon campus-based educational experiences of students, but generally it does not address the *Big Three—and that is what makes this book so valuable*. The chapters cover a range of important SEM topics. Several chapters consider the importance of leadership in successful Strategic Enrollment Management. There are also references to the need for grand visions in SEM organizations. The chapter on the importance of the role of SEM in creating enrolled student bodies that are diverse and inclusive falls within the domain of grand enrollment management strategies.

Most of the chapters, however, focus on mid-range strategies and the implementation of these strategies. This volume includes a chapter that effectively addresses how to synchronize all communications with prospective students by providing a step-by-step guide to coordinating communication with prospective students. I was impressed by two chapters that offer insights into how to personalize and provide a consistent narrative for large institutions and for community colleges. This is no small task at these types of institutions. Both large universities and community colleges have such broad missions that too often enrollment professionals give up on finding an encompassing narrative. Equally important is a chapter that examines effective strategies for communicating with students in an online environment.

I was both encouraged and impressed by chapters that address how to work more effectively with the faculty and the importance of the curriculum. One chapter focuses on how rich student information systems can provide an array of background information about students that can be used by faculty to person-

alize the instructional environments faculty create. It was a perfect fit for a small private institution that emphasizes a small, caring environment. The other focus on curriculum can be found in the chapter on SEM in graduate programs. It appropriately emphasizes the importance of course offerings in attracting graduate students. The chapter also does a nice job discussing how graduate SEM organizations can differ depending upon the mission of the graduate programs SEM leaders serve.

There is a useful chapter on how SEM leaders in Canada conceptualize and enact their roles. The importance of leadership, trust, and working with academic units permeates the chapter. Their insights are equally valuable to SEM leaders in both Canada and the U.S. Indeed, most of the insights that can be gleaned from this volume are relevant to enrollment management organizations in both countries.

The introductory chapter authored by Henderson and Pollock provides a robust foundation for this volume and their closing chapter effectively brings together the key elements from across the chapters. They emphasize the utility and the importance of topics included in this volume. In total, this is a valuable and informative contribution to our understanding of Strategic Enrollment Management in an era of great challenges. This is a strong addition to books written by SEM leaders for the staffs of enrollment management organizations. There are insights that will be valuable to senior enrollment officers as well as for new professionals. This book should become an important and a well-used volume in the resource library of all enrollment management organizations.

# Introduction

**Stanley E. Henderson**

Retired, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, University of Michigan-Dearborn

**Kevin Pollock**

President, Central Carolina Technical College

This is a practitioners' book—of, by, and for practitioners.

We wrote what is now the first chapter as an article for *SEM Quarterly* (SEMQ).<sup>1</sup> We wanted to pose an issue: How does SEM support our making connections and building relationships to foster student success? We wanted to define possibilities and share stories that would highlight SEM's unique ability to influence student engagement. We were in the midst of a global pandemic, and there were concerns all around about how student connections with their campus communities were degrading in the virtual environments we were forced to inhabit. What role should SEM play in maintaining student engagement over Zoom? At that time everyone was lamenting what would be lost. Would the concept of SEM as a connector to build relationships—or even those per-

son-to-person engagements we were writing about—be able to survive?

Even as we wrote, we were under no illusion that every enrollment professional would see making connections as foundational to SEM. “Well, sure, connections happen, but they are the collateral benefits that result from the programs, practices, and policies that grow out of SEM, not a core part of SEM.” There are many excellent SEM folks who are in administrative positions, who live and breathe data, who marshal resources and deploy them across their campuses. But they may not have direct, regular contact with students in the curriculum or the co-curriculum. There is an old saw that the further you climb in the hierarchy of enrollment and student services, the less contact you have with students. How do you, as a senior enrollment officer, directly help students make connections and build relationships? Or should you?

In pulling together the SEMQ article, our shared experiences, and the stories we told, reinforced our belief that SEM did and would play a critical—and

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<sup>1</sup> “SEM As a Connector: Building Relationships in a New Normal” was published in January 2021, Vol. 8(4) in *Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly* (SEMQ), AACRAO's journal which seeks to provide knowledge and insight into the ongoing evolution of strategic enrollment management.



direct—role in making connections. However, we were not sure that our article hadn't posed more questions than it answered. Moving forward, we wanted to be assured that making connections and building relationships would not be just a collateral benefit of SEM but a key component of SEM *practice* into the future beyond the pandemic.

Then AACRAO's 2020 SEM Virtual Conference showcased a wealth of practitioners with innovative research and approaches that inspired us to think about whether we might expand our article to a fuller consideration of connections. We had concentrated on connections in two- and four-year institutions, but enrollment management is far more nuanced than

just institutional types. What if we could look at how creative and experienced colleagues applied their own brand of SEM connective practice at their disparate institutions? Would patterns, or even principles, emerge to guide best practice for making connections as a more clearly defined core function of SEM?

We have gathered 13 SEM professionals to share experience, research, passion, strategic thinking, and, above all, practice, in making connections and building relationships. Our task in the last chapter will be to suggest how what our colleagues will tell us in these chapters can inform practice for all of us in a coherent way.

When you listen ... this is what you hear.