NORTHERN LABOR MARKET CLEARINGHOUSE

Student Recruitment - Best Practices

2009

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Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned by the partner colleges of the Northern Labor Market Clearinghouse. The primary purpose of this report is to provide a literature review of best practices for student recruitment. Secondary inclusions within this report are: 1) an analysis of the target markets for post-secondary education, and 2) target market profiles and recruitment potential statistics for the partner colleges in northern Alberta. This report contains five content sections. The key points of each of these five sections are noted below.

Section 1: Context of the Report

Section 1 orients the reader to the service area of the college partners of the Northern Labor Market Clearinghouse. The economic contribution of northern Alberta and the post-secondary needs of the region are discussed. There a five public colleges servicing the entire region of northern Alberta. There is no degree granting institution in northern Alberta. Accessibility to credentials beyond a diploma is facilitated through external partnerships that the northern colleges host throughout the region.

Section 2: Analyzing the Post-Secondary Market

Section 2 provides an analysis of the post-secondary market in Canada. The simplest dissection of a potential pool of students is by age. Colleges typically categorize students into three age groups. Group 1 - reflecting the largest group of college enrollments across Canada at 65% - is the recent high school graduate - age range 18 years to 24 years. As shown in the figure below the drop-off is dramatic from 25 years on-ward.
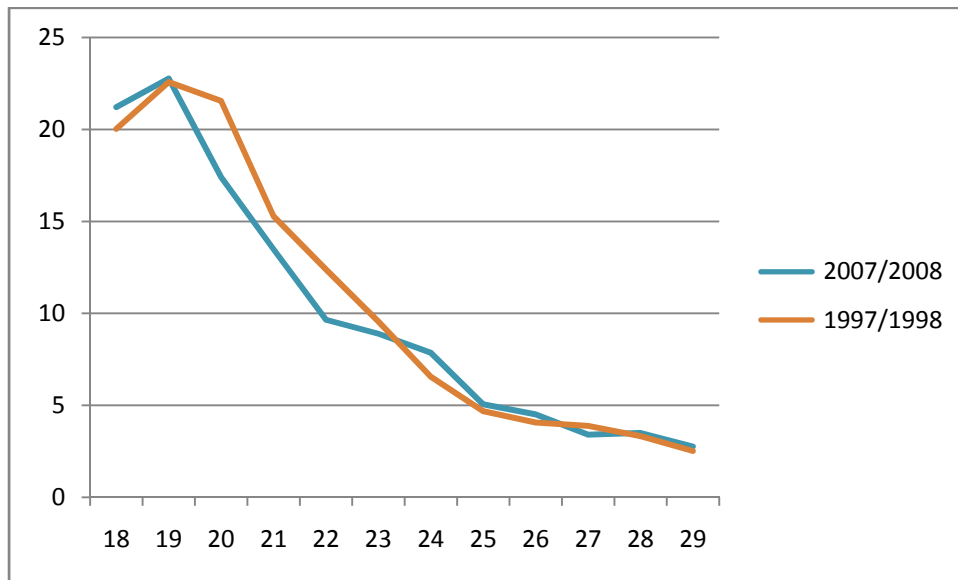
The mature student (25 – 44 years old), at 25% of enrollments, is the second largest sub-market for colleges across Canada. The older student sub-market reflects the remaining 10% of college enrollments in Canada. The enrollment age-profiles of the partner colleges of the Northern Labor Market Clearinghouse are not significantly different from the national ratios. Unfortunately, matching the national ratios is indicative of a lack of regional representation for the northern colleges enrollments. On the plus side, this also means that there is a substantial untapped recruitment pool in northern Alberta (see Section 4).

Section 2 also presents a psycho-economic analysis of the markets of the post-secondary industry. This analysis is provided to highlight the information recruitment designers should consider when targeting any sub-market. The key points of the psycho-economic analysis presented in this report are noted below.

To commit to a post-secondary program a potential recruit assesses numerous variables. First and foremost, the potential recruit commits with pre-defined expected outcomes (motivation). Strategic student recruitment begins with identifying the expected outcomes of a sub-market. Recent high-school graduates typically want employment and/or university transfer; mature students typically want career enhancement, and older students typically seek peer prestige and/or self improvement. Each of these sub-markets also brings its own distinct set of variables that can impede or facilitate committing to a post secondary program. The variables assessed in this report - finances, time, and mobility - collectively contribute to the "yes/no" decision making process of the potential recruit.

Section 3   Student Recruitment – 30 Best Practices

Section 3 presents 30 best practices for student recruitment. The primary goal of student recruitment is to determine student-institution fit - the degree to which a student's academic preparation, educational goals, career aspirations, and personal preferences are in line with what an institution has to offer. The process of recruiting (and retaining) students has traditionally been characterized as a funnel, with larger numbers of prospective students narrowing through successive stages to smaller numbers of enrolled, retained, and graduated students. While this makes quantitative sense, conceptually it creates the false impression that students flow automatically through the funnel as if drawn downward by gravity. In reality, recruiting and retaining students requires a commitment to careful planning, effective execution, and technical skill across all levels of the post-secondary institution.

To be successfully applied the examples presented should be reviewed in consideration of the previous section that highlighted a need for an understanding that the post-secondary market has three distinct sub-markets. Each sub-market has exclusively different motivations and variables that can impede or facilitate committing to a post-secondary program. What is considered a best

practice for one sub-market is not necessarily true of another sub-market. The best practices presented in the report reflect a combination of front-line delivery practices and institutional policy practices, reflecting the requirement that the claims of an institution that are marketed by student recruiters must be reinforced and validated at the operational level.

Section 4   Quantifying the Target Markets in Northern Alberta

For the partner northern colleges to assess the success of their current recruitment efforts, Section 4 offers benchmarks on which to compare performance of potential enrollments vs. actual enrollments. Based upon the calculation charts presented in this report, the following recruitment pools were identified for each sub market in northern Alberta.

1) The recent high school graduate (18-24 years old) recruitment pool for the public colleges across northern Alberta is calculated to a range of ~3200 - 3400 students per year.

2) The mature and older student recruitment pools for the public colleges across northern Alberta is calculated to a range of ~20,000 – 22,000 students. The vast majority of these potential recruits are under 45 years of age. Note this sub-market is 6.5 times greater than the recent high school graduate sub-market.

Representing 55% of the mature/older student recruitment pool identified, less than high school is the largest sub-group in this target market (11,731 indentified). This sub-group is prime for academic upgrading and college preparation programs. Representing 30% of the mature/older student recruitment potential high school completed is the 2nd largest sub-group in this target market (6,192 indentified). This sub-group is prime for certificates, diplomas, and workplace certifications.

Section 5:   Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Match Recruitment Investments to Regional Demographics

Overall the enrollment trends of the northern colleges do not match the demographics of the

recruitment potential within their catchment areas. The largest target market in northern Alberta

that matches the programs offered by the northern colleges is the mature/older student. Using

the quantification procedures presented in this report, the recruitment departments of each

northern college should create a customized regional demographic recruitment potential that

reflects their catchment areas. Sample calculation charts are presented in Section 5.

Recommendation 2: Provide Services/Program Schedules That Match the Target Markets

The recruitment potential of the mature student (25-44 years old) with high-school completion is

almost doubled that of the recent high school graduate (18 – 24 years old) market in northern

Alberta (3,264 prospects vs. 6192 prospects). The northern colleges should cross reference their

program/service offerings with regional demographics to ensure marketing and resource

allocations match the needs of the markets within their catchment area.

Recommendation 3:   Brokered and collaborative programs hosted at the northern colleges

should not compete with the credentials owned by the colleges (either directly or indirectly).

The northern colleges have shown that they are collectively more than willing to host programs

that many times result in internal performance deficits under Alberta Advanced Education's -

Learner Enrollment Reporting System (LERS); the Financial Institution Reporting System

(FIRS); and/or the Key Performance Indicator Reporting System (KPIRS). As these

performance measurements collectively represent the public funding available to the northern

colleges, relinquishing performance payments under any of these funding pools should be

assessed for impact across the whole institution before approval is considered.

Section 1 Context of the Report

Northern Alberta is a resource rich region that generates billions of dollars in export earnings and government revenues and supports a significant amount of value-added activity and investment outside the region. The northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) region encompasses 60% of Alberta's landmass and is home to approximately 295,000 people, 10% of Alberta's population. The mandate of NADC is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the Government of Alberta thereon."

Figure 1.1: Northern Alberta Development Council Region

The significant and growing economic contribution of northern Alberta is clearly demonstrated in the report; *Analysis of the Economic Contribution of the Northern Alberta Development Council Region to Alberta and Canada*. Northern Alberta has 100% of Alberta's mined oil sands development and produces 58% of the oil and 36% of the natural gas in Alberta. In 2005, the region's mining and energy sector contributed $27.4 billion to Alberta's international exports. Ninety percent (90%) of the province's potentially productive forests are in northern Alberta. In 2005, the NADC Region exported $2.5 billion of forest products, accounting for 85% of the province's total paper and pulp international exports and 78% of Alberta's wood products. Also, northern Alberta is the most northern grain producing region in the world and accounts for $372 million of Alberta's international agricultural exports, including $352 million, or 22% of provincial international crop exports, and $20 million or 5% of international livestock exports.

Thriving economic activity requires a continued investment in the training of the labor market. With more than 20% of Canada's economic prosperity dependent on 10% of Alberta's population that live in the resource region of northern Alberta, accessibility to quality, flexible, industry, and community focused higher education is critical not only to the NADC region's ability to meet the global demands for its resources but to also ensure the health and well-being of its residents and communities.

To meet the higher education needs of the NADC region, the Alberta Government currently oversees five (5) public post-secondary colleges that collectively offer a diversity of programs. These five colleges – Grande Prairie Regional, Keyano, Lakeland, Northern Lakes, and Portage service the entire NADC region. Though neither of these colleges are degree-granting

(maximum credential is diploma), through years of collaborations and partnerships, each college has hosted / continues to host higher level credentials from other post-secondary institutions.

The *Northern Labor Market Clearinghouse* is a research partnership created through a collaboration of the above northern colleges. In existence for more than 15 years, the partnership is coordinated through the *Northern Alberta Development Council*. The purpose of the collaboration is to identify and address barriers, opportunities, and resource sharing that impact the accessibility, affordability, and success of the post-secondary services available in northern Alberta.

Section 1.1 Purpose and Methodology

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to present information on best practices for recruiting students. The partner colleges of the *Northern Labor Market Clearinghouse* share characteristics that typically define rural and remote colleges across Canada. Listed below, these characteristics sometimes enhance a college's recruitment potential while other times these characteristics impede a college's recruitment potential. Collectively, all the characteristics emphasize the importance of ensuring the continuance of rural colleges across Canada.

Table 1.2 Characteristics of Colleges and Institutes in Rural and Remote Canada

1. Collectively serve over 90 percent of Canada's landmass.
2. Encompass virtually all of Canada's First Nations communities.
3. Usually serve agricultural and resource-based economies.

4. Multiple campuses and delivery sites are common.

5. Frequently required to serve large geographic areas with small, and often shrinking, population densities.

6. Strive to minimize the gap in educational opportunity between large urban centers and the communities they serve.

7. Small class sizes and low student teacher ratios create financial challenges.

8. Play a key role in the economic and social development of their regions.

9. Develop skilled labor to meet needs of local business and industry.

10. Provide upgrading and upskilling to individuals and the business community.

11. Mechanisms for brokering courses from other institutions enhance their ability to deliver quality and choice to students within their regions.

12. Related strengths:

    A. Flexibility in customizing course content to meet specific needs

    B. Adoption of distance- and distributed-learning course materials.

    C. Engagement of local Advisory Groups and processes to continually adjust program and course content to meet emerging skilled labor force needs.

    D. College staff live and work in their communities, and also serve as active members of local community organizations and associations.

Source: Association of Canadian Colleges - 2006.

Methodology: A combination of secondary research methods were used in the collection of the information presented in this report. A literature review was conducted on best practices in student recruitment across a variety of post-secondary institutions and research houses. Data on high school enrollments and post-secondary transitions was obtained from Alberta Education. Regional labor market profiles were collated from data available through Statistics Canada and Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Report layout: This report is organized into five sections. Section 1 presents the context of the report and the research approach. Because today's potential higher-learner pool is multi-generational, multi-experiential, and multi-technology capable, the most effective recruitment strategies are customized to meet the unique motivations and needs of any given sub-target market. Section 2 presents a concept model, referred to as psycho-economic, that identifies these unique considerations across the post-secondary markets. Section 3 of the report presents descriptives of student recruitment best practices across a variety of higher-education institutions. The best practices presented are a combination of front-line recruitment strategies and/or internal operations to maximize the resources invested toward recruitment efforts. Section 4 of the report presents a collection of quantification processes to determine the potential numbers for recruitment targets markets in northern Alberta. The information presented in this section can assist the northern colleges in determining their success to date with current target markets and to pinpoint where their future efforts should be directed to get maximum return on recruitment investments. The final section, Section 5, presents a list of recommendations based upon a combination of the information contained within the report and the research consultant's experience in the post-secondary industry.

Section 2   Psycho-Economic Student Recruitment

2.1 Profiling the Post-secondary Markets

The simplest dissection of a potential pool of students is by age. Colleges typically categorize students into three age groups. <u>Group 1</u> - reflecting the largest group of college enrollments across Canada at 65% - is the recent high school graduate - age range 18 years to 24 years. As shown in <u>Figure 2.1</u>, the drop-ff is dramatic from 25 years on-ward for the general population across Canada for college enrollments.
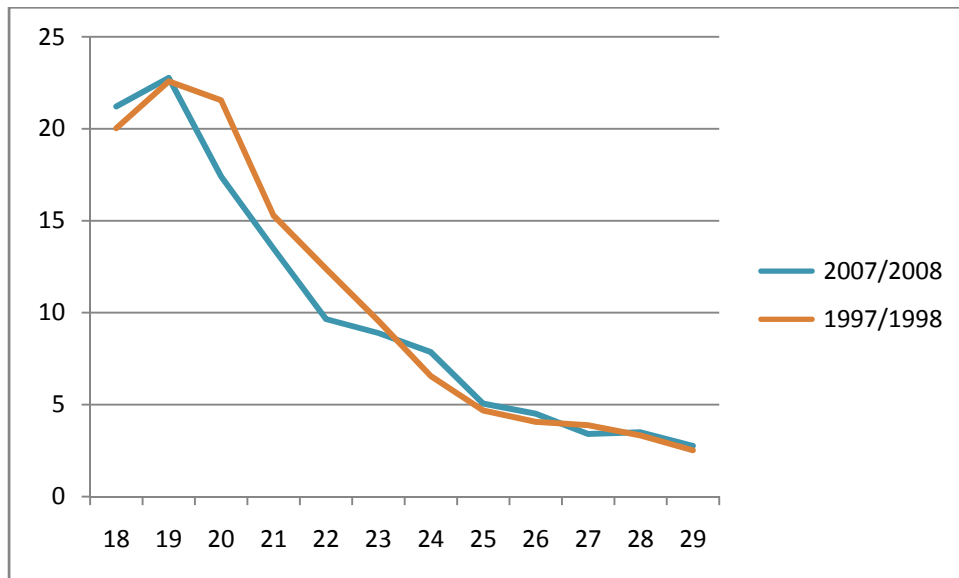

<u>Figure 2.1:</u> College Enrollments - Canada 1997/98 to 2007/2008.

Source: Statistics Canada

Group 2 - Reflecting less than 25% of college enrollments across Canada, this target market is often referred to as the mature student ranging in age from 25 - 44. Group 3 – ranging in age from 45 + is referred to as the older student. This target market captures less than 10% of college enrollments across Canada. Within these age groups gender is typically identified and cultural background is noted if applicable to the catchment area. Collectively this information is presented as student profile data.

These three age groups reflect three very different motivations (referred to as psycho) for enrolling in college. Recent high school graduates typically need entry level skills and begin college with an outcome of employment and/or transition as their primary goal. Mature students, having been or currently in the labor market, tend to perceive post-secondary as an investment in climbing the promotion ladder or adding to their current repertoire to enhance their opportunities in another career field. Older students, having spent more than 25 years in the labor market, are the most diverse of the target markets. Potentially crossing over entry level to highly educated, successfully recruiting this target market requires an in-depth knowledge of the current economics and labor markets of the college's radius of influence.

Side Bar 1: Most Frequently Noted Barriers to Participation in High Education
Situational barriers – those arising from life - e.g. lack of time, because of work, family, etc.;   Institutional barriers – practices and procedures hindering participation, e.g. fees, lack of money, absence of evening courses, entrance requirements, limited courses offerings, etc.;   Dispositional barriers – motivation, attitudes and dispositions towards learning.   Source: Cross, Rubenson and Xu - Analysis of the International Adult Literacy Survey – 2004

Intertwined across a student's motivation are three economic variables that can enhance or impede the individual's ability to commit to post-secondary education – **time, mobility, and finances**. Each of these economic variables can be measured on a continuum of flexibility. Generally as flexibility decreases the likelihood of committing to a post-secondary program decreases. Also, the more flexible a prospect is on any given variable the greater the amount of competition from other institutions to service this need. Figure 2.2 shows the flexibility continuum. Figure 2.3 shows a merging the psycho and the economic factors across the three age groups typically profiled by colleges across Canada. The bolded variables for each age group listed in Figure 2.3 reflect the largest barrier(s) for that target group. The most cost effective recruitment strategies zone in on the barriers of a target market while simultaneously ensuring services to assist with these barriers are available through the college.

Note: The flexibility continuum and the psycho-economic recruitment model have been designed for the partner colleges by the Research Consultant. These concepts have been designed based upon the information collected for this report the Research Consultant's front-line experience in the post-secondary industry. References to these concepts outside the scope of this report should be credited to the Research Consultant.

Figure 2.2: Flexibility Scale on Economic Variables

Restricted
- No Options /Choices
- Competitor needs to remove barrier
- High expectation of college to address barriers OR become non-complacent

Semi-Restricted
- Options/Choices Limited
- Competitor needs to service barriers
- Responds to service. Will 50/50 with college.

Semi-Flexible
- Options/Choice
- Competitor Risk
- Responds to being acknowledged. If serviced college is elevated.

Flexible
- Options/Choice
- Competitor Risk
- Responds to non-barrier marketing

Figure 2.3: Three Post-Secondary Target Markets Profiled

Percent Enrollment

65%

Age = 18-24

Motivation = Employment and/or Transition

Time = Semi-Flexible

Mobility = Semi-Flexible

Finances = Restricted

25%

Age = 25- 44

Motivation = Career and/or Stability

Time = Restricted

Mobility = Restricted

Finances = Semi-Restricted

10%

Age = 45+

Motivation = Self, Peer, or Pressured

Time = Semi-Flexible

Mobility = Semi-Flexible

Finances = Semi-Flexible
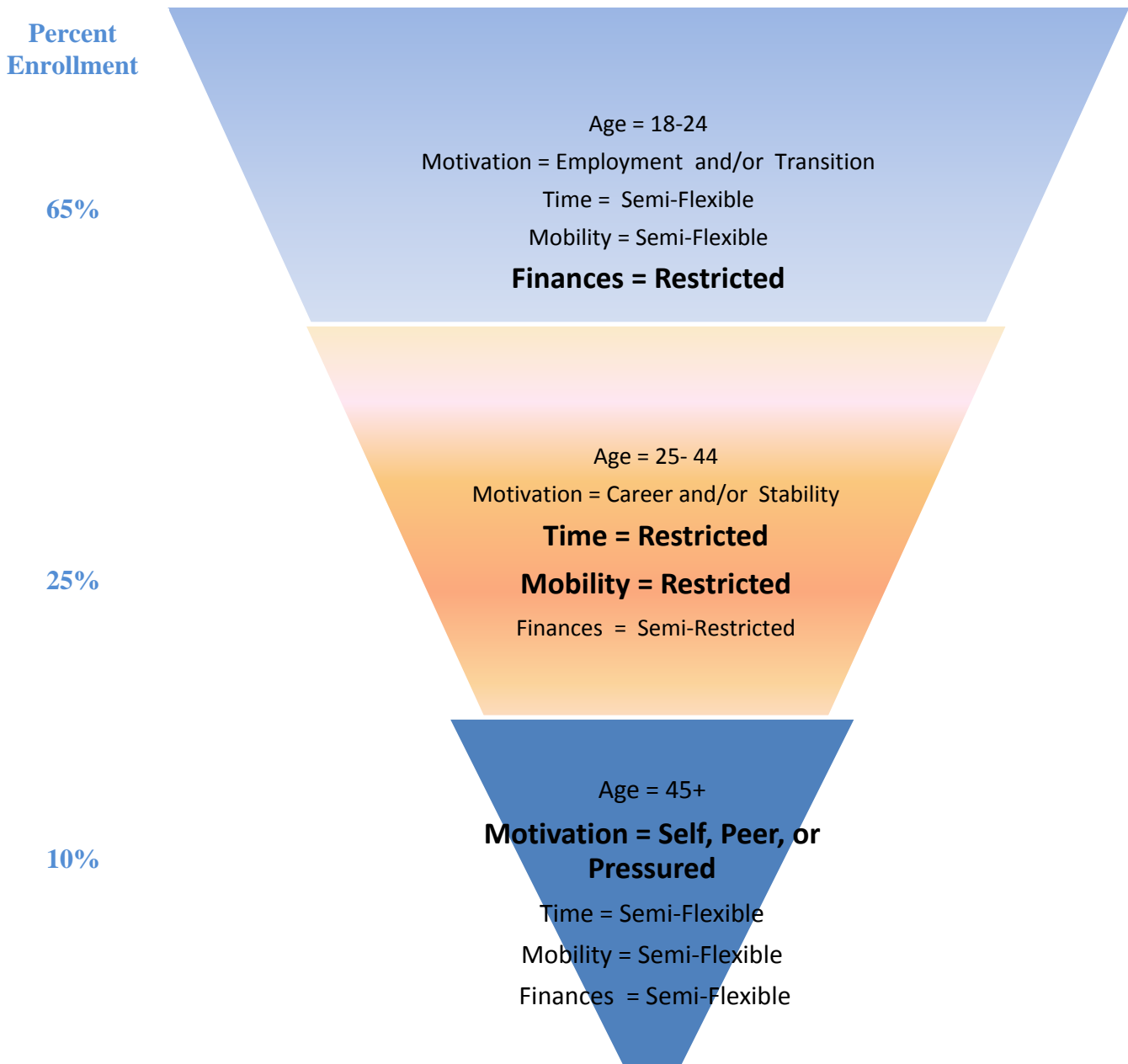
The three post-secondary age markets, with their associated motivations, economic factors, and barriers, can be generically described relative to the attractiveness of post-secondary programs and services offered by a college. Note that the enrollment patterns of the public colleges in northern Alberta are consistent with the national percentage trends of Figure 2.3.

Recent High School Graduates – 18 to 24 Years: Representing 65% of a typical community college's student body, ironically this is also the target market that most senior college administrators are the most out-of touch with. This cohort (nee 1986 – 1991), referred to as Generation Y, has had access to technology before their first birthday - computer games, global TV, VCRs, cell phones, You-tube, facebook, twitter. Raised on "instant star", reality TV, and global awareness through the technology available to them, being a computer mediated generation, it should not be surprising that this target market has a heightened sense of collective power. Quick to endorse and opinionate on complex issues around the globe – human rights, environmental, 3rd hand smoke, nuclear power, same sex marriages, animal protection - this target market also has the "reality" characteristic of having no life experience. Few have yet to leave the comfort of the mask of technology to actually be seen, heard, and participate directly.

Emerging from two decades of technology advancements and national social policies endorsing "child first", this cohort expects to have their importance acknowledged. This is the generation of Youth Councils across every non-profit service, boards of directors, local government, and national committees. Raised under the mantra of having a given right" to have a voice in all social, economic, and community matters; to question all authority figures; to self-direct

leadership; and they assume a right to access to information above their ability to understand. AND they are knowledgeable! Knowledgeable of national legislation, international affairs, and individual rights. Their social-connectivity is dependent upon technology. They expect high-tech alternative delivery models that match their interpretation of "attendance policy". Programs most attractive to Generation Y capitalize upon their short-term, self-imposed deadline to accomplish "something" immediately after graduating from high school. For certificate and diploma programs, this target market is becoming increasingly attracted to professional programs that ladder-up. Within the last decade, the plethora of new programs across Canada that are referred to as "Para-professional"; reflects this growing demand – e.g. Paralegal, LPN, Human Service, Speech Therapy Aide, Occupational Assistant. Two year university transfer programs that are packaged as pre-entry programs are extremely attractive to this target market (e.g. pre-law, pre-vet, pre-med, etc..). Trades programs, designed under an apprentice model, are also very attractive to this target market.

Because of their high flexibility in mobility and following years of boredom sitting in classrooms while vicariously living exciting virtual realities, Generation Y enters adulthood with a craving for experience. Programs that offer opportunities for a practicum, field trips, and/or travel are very attractive to Generation Y. The greatest barrier of this target market is finances. Offering scholarships, bursaries, grants, and/or on-campus discounted residence, laptops, meal programs, transportation services, etc .. are the most effective uses of resources to attract this target market.

Mature Students – 25 to 44 Years: Representing 25% of college enrollments across Canada, servicing this target market can be the most demanding of the post-secondary markets. Also referred to as Generation X, this target market has no collective identifiable cause, personality, or direction. That's because this target market is busy! Busy raising children, maintaining a home, and investing in quality of life activities. This target market hovers between the idealism of Generation Y, while watching the vulnerability of the boomers ahead of them. This target market views post-secondary education as an avenue to career promotions and increased pay-checks. Collectively they have high expectations of the impositions placed upon their time and money and have "others" to whom they must justify their sacrifices - lost wages and lost "quality time" – beyond their personal experience of being a student.

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Side Bar 2: Canadian Education Statistics – 2009

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By age 25, the majority of the Canadian population is no longer in the education

system. More than 75% of 25-year-olds are either working or looking for work.

Source: Transitions to the Labor Market (2009). Pan Canadian Indictors - Statistics Division. Ottawa, CA.

Industry endorsed academic laddering programs are extremely attractive to this target market. Non-credit options that are highly regarded by industry are also held in high esteem by this target market.   Also short term academic credential exit options that attach to their previous post-secondary credential investments is a magnet for this target group. For example - the potential recruit has a Diploma in Social Work. Offering a transfer into a collaborative Bachelor of Social Work is attractive to this target market.   Offering a post-diploma certificate of completion that specializes in a social work component is even more attractive to this target market (e.g. Child Protection, Income Support,) Why? Because each "package of courses" is credential recognized

and job title focused within the industry. Sometimes, a few courses under the moniker "specialty" is all this target market needs for a local promotion or pay increase. Generation X is most restricted in time and mobility. Offering small steps that evolve with them is a very strategic approach to the mature student market as they will most likely be in the "radius" for 5+ years (i.e. …children going to local schools, termed mortgages, building a resume, paying off debt, etc ..) .

However, community colleges should be cautious with this target market. Colleges should avoid full-time, on-campus delivery models for this target market. Representing less than 25% of enrollments, colleges need to extremely cautious they don't become the "department of family services" under the guise of systemic pressures to increase student numbers. To alleviate the student service demands on the college from this target group, distributed delivery options, advanced technology, night classes, lunch hour brown bag lectures, weekend webinars, and extended completion clauses, should the majority of the program delivery options offered to this target market.

Older Students - 45+ Years: Reflecting 10% of college enrollments across Canada, this target market can be the largest per student tuition generator if the college specializes in one thing - prestige! Also known as branding, prestige building is an expensive marketing strategy and pretty much impossible to achieve for a college. This target market, which is edging on being mortgage free, child free, and having new found freedom after 25 years of responsibility, wants one of two things from a college – self improvement or recognition from peers. As most colleges can not credential beyond the diploma level, the motivations of this target market are

typically beyond a community college. Other than a collection of non-credit gardening, art, leadership courses, photography courses there very little a college can offer to this target market.

Considering less than 10% of this target market enroll in college programs, it would be wise for a college to redirect recruitment investments to one of the previous target markets. UNLESS! There is a growing pool of 45+ year old potential recruits who have spent a large amount of time working in a single industry that is edging on economic uncertainty. As is the case in numerous communities in northern Alberta, this sub-group of the older student target market requires a complete set of offerings that differentiate it from the two previous (and younger) target markets.

First, this sub-group wants to be in the classroom. Yet, because of their age and experience, they do not respond well to sitting through full-time classes with first year students who are largely recent high school graduates.   A more attractive offering for this sub-group is restricted access programs, preferably sponsored by an industry partner. Second, the large majority of the potential students in this sub-group are male. Being older and male, student recruitment strategies that work best are focused on employment and delivered by older males! Third, this sub-group is very attracted to short-term programs that graduate them at an elevated status (e.g. Power Engineering, Instrument Technician, Law Enforcement, Para-Medic, and Financial Planner).   Interest in generic arts and sciences degrees barely hits the radar. However, committing to a degree in Engineering, Natural Resources, Computer Science, and/or Accounting has possibilities.

Though the largest barrier for this sub-group is financial, they are very unlikely to apply for student loans and bursaries. Industry and/or government sponsored financial programs are much more attractive to this sub-group. Having an on-campus service that specializes in financial programs servicing this sub-group would be a very strategic investment for a community college that has a pool of potential recruits from this sub-group (e.g. Employment Insurance Training Benefits, Alberta Works, AISH, etc…).

Section 3 Student Recruitment – 30 Best Practices

Section 3: Student Recruitment – 30 Best Practices

In a survey conducted in 2008 by *Enrollment Resources Inc*. the most frustrating problem

identified by 91% of college senior administrators in Canada was "recruiting more students".

Side Bar 3: What is Student Recruitment?

"The primary goal of student recruitment is to determine student-institution fit, that is, the degree
to which a student's academic preparation, educational goals, career aspirations, and personal
preferences are in line with what an institution has to offer.

Effective enrollment programs view the recruitment process as the initial phase of building
meaningful, lifelong relationships with students for whom the degree of student-institution fit is
high. A student's decision to remain engaged with the institution will depend on the institution's
ability to nurture and build upon its relationships with students, by providing meaningful
communications and experiences throughout the student's educational career and beyond.

The process of recruiting and retaining students has traditionally been characterized as a funnel,
with larger numbers of prospective students narrowing through successive stages to smaller
numbers of enrolled, retained, and graduated students. While this makes quantitative sense,
conceptually it creates the false impression that students flow automatically through the funnel as
if drawn downward by gravity. In reality, recruiting and retaining students requires a
commitment of careful planning, effective execution, and technical skill across all levels of the
post-secondary institution.

Source: Bontrager, B. 2004. "*Strategic Enrollment Management: Core Strategies and Best Practices.*" College and
University. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

The two root causes of most recruitment problems for colleges are ineffective advertisements and admissions staff not following a system. Advertisements are often double the cost per lead that they should be, and admissions staff on average lose about 42% of their prospects at first point of contact. The wide spectrum of recruitment strategies available today, along with the potential interaction of external factors, make determination of the effectiveness of a particular recruitment strategy very difficult for college administrators. Information on undergraduate college recruitment practices is abundant. According to numerous research studies archived by the journal *Chronicle of Higher Education (*2000-2009 scan), hiring a Dean of Admissions and sending out catalogues and brochures are no longer considered sufficient recruitment strategies. It appears as if the whole process of student recruitment has evolved into predictive modeling, logistic analysis, enrollment management, and financial aid leveraging. Designing publications, counseling perspective students and parents, understanding how to attract special populations, realizing the impact of financial aid, mastering record keeping techniques, and incorporating retention strategies are all essential components of a successful recruitment program.

For example, the use of faculty to recruit students has been highly debated over the years in undergraduate institutions. Litten (2003) reported that successful recruitment efforts must have direct involvement of faculty. Huneycutt (2000) outlined several obstacles as well as benefits to using faculty in the recruitment process. Obstacles included the already busy classroom commitments of many faculty members, along with the elitist attitude of some faculty who view student recruitment as an administrator's function. Benefits pertained to the fact that faculty members who are commonly involved in recruitment efforts are usually those who have been with the university for an extended period of time and have a good history and understanding of the traditions and mission of the university. Milo (2006) reported that faculty at private

institutions were substantially more involved in student recruitment than those at public institutions. When considering the use of faculty for recruitment, it is essential to carefully consider the qualities of those faculty members involved in this often "first contact" with potential students. It is imperative that the faculty members be familiarized with and integrated into the admissions process.

Another recruitment strategy commonly employed by high education institutions, especially private, involves the use of enrollment consultants. This practice involves hiring external consultants to address recruitment and retention problems. Most of these consulting companies provide a broad range of services, such as analyzing the college's market position, offering advice on the mechanical aspects of recruiting and enrolling students, and probing financial offers to examine the amount of money required to persuade certain types of students to enroll in that institution. With complex predictions such as these, it is no wonder that the consulting fees for these services are very high. Typical consulting projects with Noel-Levitz, a respected enrollment consulting firm, last for two years with a beginning price tag of $100,000. Noel-Levitz reports that public higher education institutions spend an average of $587 per student for recruitment as compared to $2,114 by their private counterparts. It is no surprise that private colleges are emerging as the largest competitor for public colleges across Canada and internationally.

A frequently used internal recruitment strategy for colleges is enrollment management. As early as 1992, Krotseng defined enrollment management as "a comprehensive process designed to achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation of students within the context of the institution's mission. The process of enrollment management demands the establishment of objectives, strategies, specific tactics, and budgets to meet institutional

enrollment goals. Results of a study of 261 enrollment managers conducted by Smith (2005) at different types of undergraduate institutions revealed that enrollment management appears to be more developed at private institutions than at public. Considering that private institutions first developed the concept of enrollment management, this finding is not surprising.

Historically speaking, few technological advances have experienced as rapid an evolution as the internet. No institution, no matter how great its reputation, will be able to compete effectively without the skilled use of technology. The popularity of the use of the internet in higher education is supported by the findings of Noel & Levitz's *National Enrollment Management Survey* of 452 North American colleges and universities. The results of this survey showed that 99.4% of public institutions and 97.8% of private institutions maintain a website. The key to successful recruitment tactics via the computer hinges on the ability to personalize contacts. Establishing early long-term relationships with potential students could aid tremendously in student recruitment for the future.

While establishing a personal rapport with each applicant is an important element of webpage design, Poock & Lefond (2006) identified other factors as well. According to their survey of high school students, webpage content and organization were the most important factors related to design. Students were clearly of the opinion that a student friendly website should have a well-identified link to the application on the **home page**. Accessing the application should not be the hardest part of the application process. Applications buried several levels into the home page were often sources of frustration that caused students to terminate their search.

In essence, all colleges are affected by changing applicant pools, increased competition for students, and budget constraints. It is very difficult to predict which will thrive, merely survive,

or fall. The real danger is not to any particular class of institution, but rather to those who do not have a strategy or focus and are not willing to change or improve.

This section presents 30 best practices for student recruitment. Examples given reflect a combination of front-line delivery practices and institutional policy practices, reflecting the requirement that the claims of an institution that are marketed by student recruiters must be reinforced and validated at the operational level.

Best Practices #1: E-Recruitment and E Admissions

Source: Maraviglia, J. 2003. Emerging Technologies in Recruitment and Enrollment Management – Conference Proceedings, Boston, MA.

<u>Polytechnic State University – California, USA</u>

Few institutions utilize technology as effectively or strategically as California Polytechnic State University. Cal Poly has taken an innovative approach that uses technology to drive everything from prospect communications to admissions processing to building campus relationships. Prospective students receive a series of carefully designed flash e-mail messages that are both eye-catching and timely in meeting students' needs. Web portals have been created which allow for students to customize the information they receive, as well as self-service registration for campus events and services. Admission processing has been rendered virtually paperless, with admissions decisions automated in customized fashion for each academic program. Cal Poly's system also includes content and communications for high school counselors and parents. The high quality, seamless nature of the system has allowed Cal Poly to achieve unprecedented increases in its enrollment numbers and student profile over the past ten years.

Integrated database systems that support many recruitment, enrollment and institutional functions continue to be important. However, these systems are increasingly evaluated on their ability to deliver services via the internet. Customer relationship management (CRM) on the internet is quickly becoming a required component of the strategic enrollment management toolbox. CRM consists of a suite of software and services that allows stakeholders to establish portals into institutional web sites, enabling them to customize the information they receive. Institutions can make information available to the student on an on-demand basis, replacing what had been done previously via postal mail, telephone calls, and in-person contacts. Advanced systems allow for automatic e-mail communications at specified times, automated management of incoming e-mail, event management, and chat rooms for prospective students. Continuing students can access personal records and conduct institutional transactions at their convenience. Such systems require substantial up-front investments and usually require a shift of staff resources to technical support and content management. However, when managed well the efficiencies to be gained by using such systems can far outweigh the costs.

Technology solutions for document management are also gaining in functionality and usage. While prior document imaging solutions often were more labor intensive and less cost-effective than desired, newer document management systems are proving to be of great benefit in revising business practices and improving service delivery. This is especially true for larger institutions. Like other technologies, document management systems are increasingly internet based.

Best Practices # 2: Predictive Modeling - Zoning in on the Target Market

Specific marketing and communication strategies are employed at each successive level of the recruitment and enrollment process. At the beginning stages of building awareness, recruitment and marketing efforts are built on three main components: image management, market segmentation, and relevant communications. Image management and market segmentation emanate directly from institutional mission. It is the mission that provides direction to the way the institution portrays itself in the higher education marketplace. Consistency of the content and visual representation of institutional image is critical in these times of intense competition and massive amounts of stimuli in the marketplace.

Institutional mission also provides guidance as to which segments of the prospective student market the institution should pursue. In some cases, appropriate target groups will be obvious, as in the case of a church-related college pursuing students affiliated with a particular faith tradition, or a land grant university placing a premium on reaching students who reside in the state it serves. However, given the diverse interests of an institution's many stakeholders, it is easy to be led astray into unproductive niche markets.

Institutions can avoid the pursuit of dead-end markets though the use of two tools. Market research allows the institution to address the critical issue of student-institution fit by identifying those places where institution mission, institutional expertise, student interest, and societal needs converge. The most readily productive market will include those areas in which these variables converge naturally. Institutions certainly can make adjustments to bring themselves into

alignment with new markets. However, the resource requirements for doing so are typically underestimated and results often fall short of expectations.

Pairing market research with predictive modeling can be especially effective. This tool uses the characteristics of students who have chosen an institution in the past to predict which prospective students will enroll in the future. One way of understanding predictive modeling is as a combination of prospect qualifying and market segmentation, two classic recruiting strategies. Prospects are qualified based on their likelihood of enrolling. Markets are segmented to allow for the tailoring of communications to specific groups of students. Ultimately, predictive modeling allows a recruiting operation to function much more efficiently by targeting efforts to those students who are most likely to enroll and succeed academically.

Best Practices #3: – Customized Communications

Source: Enrollment Resources Inc. (2009). Recruitment Strategies White Papers – www.EnrollmentResources.net

Once appropriate target markets have been identified, communications must be provided to students that are relevant in terms of content and timeliness. These two variables operate differently at various stages of the enrollment process, as the institution seeks to establish stronger relationships with students as they move from prospect to enrolled student to graduate. During the prospect building phase, larger scale communications aimed at establishing institutional image are important. At this stage, many institutions rely on flashy graphics and glossy brochures to capture students' attention. While design issues are certainly important to conveying a school's message, it is most vital that the institution be clear about its unique mission and the niche it fills in the higher education marketplace. No amount of clever design

will overcome lack of clarity about what it is that differentiates your institution from the hundreds of others vying for students' attention.

Image-building communications must be based on careful market research regarding the effectiveness of various messages and the response to specific graphic presentations. Institutions waste countless dollars each year on communication strategies that are not tested with the target audience. Often these decisions are made by campus decision makers who mistake personal preferences for effective communications. Institutions typically feel they cannot afford to spend the funds required to conduct market research, only to waste money on promotional activities and materials that have limited effectiveness in achieving the desired outcome.

While broader communication strategies are important in generating initial interest, the relationship-building focus of enrollment management quickly turns toward personalized communications as students enroll, continue with the institution, graduate, and, hopefully, maintain an active relationship with the institution after graduation. With rapidly advancing technology, this increasingly means providing information tailored to the interests of individual stakeholders, available to them in a timely manner. At earlier stages of relationship building, technology is supplanting in-person contacts. This is not to say that personal interactions are no longer important. To the contrary, the high touch nature of personal contact is as important as ever as the level of relationship increases. One of the key advantages of technology is its ability to make earlier stages of the process more efficient, thereby allowing more engaging personalized contacts later in the process where they will have maximum benefit.

Seton Hall University College, New Jersey, USA

Seton Hall College offers an excellent model for a comprehensive student transition program in the form of its COMPASS program (Collaborative Opportunities to Mature - Personally, Academically, Spiritually, and Socially). COMPASS includes a number of targeted activities and programs that begin prior to students' initial matriculation from high-school and extend into their first year at the College. Specific components of COMPASS include:

> 1) A summer reading program in which both students and parents read a selected book the summer prior to the student's first year. The same book is used in a variety of first year courses, including English, Sociology, and Philosophy. In addition, the book's author is brought to campus as a keynote speaker at a student event / convocation ceremonies.
>
> 2) Freshman Interest Groups, which includes co-locating group members in residence.
>
> 3) Academic Teaming Assistants, a program providing retention outreach and academic tutoring in the residence halls.

After implementing the COMPASS program, Seton Hall reversed a downward trend in retention rates, achieving a 3 percent increase in its freshman-to-sophomore retention in two years. In addition, the college has seen lower rates of judicial incidents while achieving increases in residence hall retention and involvement in student organizations

In general, when a student has chosen to attend an institution, the enrollment management task becomes one of facilitating the transition to the campus and enhancing the student/ institution relationship. Institutions commonly offer early registration and orientation programs, bringing new students to campus during the summer prior to entry into the college. The primary purpose

of these programs is twofold: to register students for first-term courses and to provide preliminary orientation to campus life. These programs may include small group experiences designed to create stronger early relationships among students, thereby strengthening affiliation with the institution and promoting persistence through the students' first few weeks on campus. Some institutions extend their pre-college programming to include bridge programs, which add academic preparation to the mix. Such programs typically include remedial study for students with academic deficiencies, an introduction to college-level coursework, and training in study skills. Such programs have a powerful effect in relieving pre-college anxieties for both students and parents, especially for families encountering the college-going process for the first time.

Orientation programs typically are offered just prior to the term in which the student enters college. Lasting from a few days to a few weeks, these programs offer a wide range of activities designed to acculturate students to the campus. Such efforts are critical to student retention during the first few weeks of the student's first term, when the highest rate of withdrawals occur.

Many institutions extend new student orientation throughout the first year by means of orientation courses, cohort programs, faculty mentoring programs and other activities. During this time, campus collaborations become even more critical in promoting student retention. Retention research points to student-faculty relationships, particularly in the context of academic advising, as vital to student persistence.

Best Practices #5: Recruit Beyond Graduation

Source: Bontrager, B. 2004. "Strategic Enrollment Management: Core Strategies and Best Practices." College and University. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Graduation is generally thought of as an ending, when in reality an institution's potential relationship with its students extends far longer after they graduate. Attention to post-graduation aspirations of students is important to recruitment in many respects. Career aspirations are an important aspect of determining student-institution fit in the recruiting process. Because many students are uncertain of their career goals, assisting in the career identification process is important to retention. Retained students more closely identify with the institution and are more likely to become active alumni and donors after graduation. The promotional and financial support of satisfied graduates recycles institutional resources and helps to sustain the recruitment efforts into the future.

Best Practices #6: Conduct Exit Interviews

Source: Tinto, V. 1987. *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Data is critical, including inputs (high school courses and grades, SAT/ACT scores, educational aspirations), comparative data on students who persist and those who do not (class, major, GPA, gender, ethnicity, age), and exit interviews with those who choose to leave. Data such as these also allow institutions to extend the concept of predictive modeling from recruitment to retention. In this case, student characteristics are evaluated not only in terms of likelihood to enroll, but also likelihood to persist. Use of this strategy informs not only the admission of students, but also enables the institution to engage in preemptive interventions with students who bring particular characteristics and aspirations to the campus.

These interventions revolve around the academic and social experiences of the student, which can either strengthen or weaken students' relationship and integration with the institution. Issues such as degree aspiration, social adjustment, and understanding or the college-attending process, and attachment to a particular institution are all-important to college persistence and can provide counselors and academic advisors with the tools they need to implement effective early warning programs and other retention-enhancing activities.

.Best Practices #7: Projected vs. Actual Enrollment Gap Analysis
Source: "*An Investigation of Strategic Gaps between Projected and Target Student Recruitment in a Regional College of Technology: A Managerial Perspective*." Saunders, Max, & Yusuf, (2004) . International Journal of Management.

<u>Hawkes Bay College – New Zealand</u>

Established in 1975, Hawkes Bay College (now referred to as the Eastern Institute of Technology), is one of the over forty tertiary institutions owned by the government of New Zealand. It is located in the northern Island part of the country. By 1991 the institution had gone multi-disciplinary - offering courses that include nursing, business studies, agriculture, office systems, trades, education, arts, and a wide range of community non-credit short courses. A number of challenges emerged in 1992. The challenges included a reduction in the number of government-sponsored students, and universities were increasing their market targeting of the Hawke's Bay area.

These pressures led to a change in strategic direction.   In 1993 a new plan outlined a growth strategy, with one of the key strategic initiatives limiting the number of subject areas offered in degree programs. Community education programs, funded at a lower rate than academic programs, were reduced, and vocational polytechnic programs with little economic value were

discontinued. The result was a strong growth in student numbers in 1993 and 1994. In general, the strategic direction since 1992 had been successful in achieving growth as measured by a number of performance indicators. A new challenge emerged in 1999 in the form of a revamped government funding formula, which subsidized all enrolled students, and would now include government funding for students enrolled in private post-secondary institutions, thus greater competition for students was expected.

To prepare for the increased competition in the coming years, Hawkes Bay College conducted a gap analysis of its recruitment projections vs. actual for each program across a four year span. As concluded by Nolan, et.al. (1995), if a gap analysis shows a considerable discrepancy between the overall projected vs. actual recruitments, then major changes in the organization may be required. However, if a college is reaching its overall recruitment target with significant discrepancies among programs then changes in individual departments would be required.   To begin the inquiry, Hawkes Bay College first delineated its student recruitment data from a variety of reports and internal databases. The data covered all academic programs for the period of January 1994 to October 1998. Next, to assess consistency of actions and decisions with the recruitment goals of the college, Business Plans covering the years 1993 to 1997 were reviewed.

The Findings: The strategic gap analysis for recruitment of students at Hawks Bay College showed a minimal gap between projected and actual enrollments. Business Plan directives were consistently implemented and used as guides for senior administration decisions. Hence indicating that a major organizational change was not required at Hawkes Bay College. However there was significant gap in recruitment performance within the Department of Science and Technology. This discrepancy indicated recruitment strategy changes were needed at the program/faculty level within this department.

Hawkes Bay College had three options to address this discrepancy. First, the capability of the faculty in the Science and Technology Department to meet future expectations of incoming students and industry changes could be increased. This would require a study of the factors that impact on the performance of the faculty / program content. These factors included 1) market research to investigate the size/profile of the target markets, 2) a reassessment of program mixes to ensure internal competition was at a minimum, 3) a comparative analysis of similar programs offered by competitors, 4) an outline of program performance measurements (e.g.…graduation, employment, transfer, satisfaction, market relevance, etc ..), 5) a calculation of cost of resource allocation vs. contribution to recruitments, 6) a reassessment of the qualifications and instructional capabilities of faculty, and 7) an assessment of the perceptions of faculty toward recruitment efforts of the college.

The second option for the college would be to lower the recruitment expectations of the Science and Technology Department in order to close the gap between the strategic plan and the capacity to achieve the targets set for this Department. This would require simultaneously increasing the target recruitments for other faculty departments to make up the shortfall in the Science and Technology Department. The third option for Hawkes Bay College would be to discontinue programs within the Science and Technology Department and redirect potential students to internal options and/or external competitors.

Best Practices #8: Non-Cognitive Admissions Assessments

<u>State University – Oregon, USA</u>

Oregon State University sought to bring its recruitment and retention programs into greater alignment through a revamping of its admission policies and practices. This new approach is based on the research of William Sedlacek, professor of education at the University of Maryland. Dr. Sedlacek has identified seven "non-cognitive variables" that, when measured and considered along with other admission criteria, can provide more accurate predictions of student success in college. In summary form, these variables include positive self-concept, understanding and ability to deal with racism, realistic self-appraisal, and ability to set and meet long-range goals, availability of a strong support person, successful leadership experience, and demonstrated community service.

Dr. Sedlacek's methodology has demonstrated that these variables can be effectively assessed through written responses of 100 words or less to a set of targeted prompts. When carefully trained in the Sedlacek methodology, reviewers can quickly assess students' non-cognitive attributes. Oregon State's approach provides the type of information gathered by many institutions through interviews. However, it provides an alternative for those institutions whose size or funding precludes their ability to interview all applicants face to face. This approach also improves upon the traditional essay requirement by focusing on the experiences of individual students rather than their responses to hypothetical situations or theoretical concepts. As such, students are less able to plagiarize or receive inappropriate assistance in composing responses. Furthermore, any lack of truthfulness in their responses is often apparent as written responses are

compared to other aspects of students' admissions information. Students' non-cognitive attribute scores become part of a holistic admission review that provides more accurate predictions of student success in college. Though still in a testing phase, Oregon State intends to develop a new form of transcript based on non-cognitive variables that will be provided to academic advisors and allow for enhanced student advising throughout their college careers.

Best Practices #9: Pricing Strategies

Source: Hossler &   Hoezee. 2001. Conceptual and theoretical thinking about enrollment management. In The SEM Revolution, edited by Jim Black. Washington

Pricing strategies in enrollment management revolve around three concepts that interact closely with one another: price elasticity, net revenue and financial aid leveraging. Price elasticity refers to the notion of "what the market will bear." That is, institutions can increase revenue by raising tuition. But at some point, the cost of tuition will become so high that fewer students will be willing to pay the higher price, thus resulting in lower enrollment and decreased revenue. Price elasticity refers to this interplay of the cost of tuition and willingness of students to pay.

At many private institutions, the notion of price elasticity is primarily a matter of historical precedent and comparison to a few local competitors. Institutions that operate on this basis run the risk of miscalculating their pricing options. Evaluation of elasticity should be part of a comprehensive market research effort. Public institutions often do not have latitude to set their tuition levels. Even then, pricing strategies can be implemented through net revenue and leveraging strategies.

The concept of net revenue is critical to making sound decisions regarding recruitment investments. Funding proposals should he based on a business plan that calculates realistic net revenue results over time, with subsequent accountability to those projected outcomes. Financial

aid leveraging is a strategy that combines the concepts of price elasticity and net revenue to determine the appropriate amount of institutionally funded financial aid needed to entice specific students to enroll. Often referred to as tuition discounting, financial aid leveraging serves two broad purposes: to provide an incentive to target groups of students (e.g., high ability students, students from a targeted geographic area) or to address price elasticity issues for individual students.   While financial aid leveraging can be extremely effective, it must be used with caution. Studies have shown that after initial encouraging results, institutions are prone to applying the strategy too broadly, with negative net revenue results over time. Like all other strategies, financial aid leveraging must be subject to regular evaluation and adjusted in response to ever-changing market forces.

Best Practices #10: Merge Institutional Research and Enrollment Management

Source: Green, T. 2003. Integrating Academic and Student Affairs initiatives to Increase Recruitment and Retention. Journal of High Education, Vol 2, pp.34-41.

Whether the recruitment issue is market research, customizing student communications, understanding student attrition, or calculating net revenue, enrollment management requires quick easy access to huge amounts of data. This data must be able to be manipulated into forms that offer meaningful projections and directives to campus decision makers. The strong links among recruitment and enrollment and institutional research (IR) has significant implications for a college's organizational structure. The importance of accurate, relevant, and current data to strategic recruitment presents a strong argument for incorporating IR into the enrollment / admissions department. Indeed, a number of enrollment managers have institutional research as part of their portfolio. An alternative is to create strong links between enrollment management and institutional research, usually by assigning one or more members of the IR staff to work exclusively on enrollment data. A third option is to hire information specialists as members of

the enrollment management staff. Many institutions have redefined roles to fill this need, for example replacing an admission counselor with an information specialist, reflecting the importance of the data gathering and analysis role. Finally, some enrollment managers opt in the short term to outsource their need for information services to one of the growing number of firms offering such assistance.

Best Practices #11: Recruitment is an Institutional Responsibility

Successful recruitment places a high premium on the analysis and continuous improvement of business practices, seeking to provide the highest level of service in the shortest time possible. But this commitment should not just be noticeable in the recruitment efforts of the college. Staff at all levels, must be carefully developed and educated to understand their role in marketing and branding the image of the college. A commitment to continuous improvement and quality service has two primary qualities.

First, the commitment must be systemic. Many quality initiatives fail to take hold because they are treated as just that: short-term initiatives. While such efforts can be useful in initiating a short-term hype among staff, of themselves they are unlikely to change foundational institutional behaviors. A true commitment to providing top quality service is nurtured among staff members by: 1) establishing expectations and rewards, 2) position descriptions and performance evaluations for all staff should clearly address the expectation of providing top-level quality service, 3) staff should be evaluated for service provision during their annual performance review and should be recognized and rewarded frequently for providing outstanding service through an "Employee of the Month" program, or other similar program; 4) communicating with

staff at all levels the institution's enrollment goals so they understand their role in achieving those goals. In many cases the most important contributor to employee satisfaction is not salary and benefits, but "knowing what's going on"; 5) providing regular staff training in customer service. Such training should occur as new staff are hired and at least once a year for all staff.

Second, the service commitment must extend to all stakeholders. Efforts to improve services typically focus on students. The reality is that successful colleges seek to provide quality services to all stakeholders, including inter-departmental services, high schools, other post-secondary institutions, coordinating agencies, and many others. In each case, timely response provided in a professional manner is important to the recruitment potential / image of the college.

Best Practices #12: Community / Stakeholder Focus Groups

Source: Source: Focus Groups Support Student Recruitment Efforts. (2007). United States Federal News Service, HT Media Ltd.

<u>State University – Ohio, USA</u>

In an initiative to obtain insights from the consumer's perspective, Ohio University has initiated a strategic approach to student recruitment and outreach that involves the use of focus groups representing key constituencies. Three focus groups have been formed to forward ideas that are intended to support the campus' outreach, partnerships and recruitment efforts, while strengthening retention and increasing interest in the campus from the surrounding community.

"The use of focus groups reflects the use of best-practice standards in the industry," Dean Richard Bebee said. "To provide the best college environment for our students and to remain competitive in the increasingly competitive higher education market in Ohio, it is crucial to be both proactive and smart in our approach to outreach and recruitment efforts." It is important that

prospective students who would thrive in the Ohio University learning environment are aware of what we have to offer, and this initiative represents a step in that direction," Bebee said.

Gary Pack is serving as facilitator of the steering committee, a group of 14 individuals from the community and area school districts. The committee is tasked with gaining a meaningful community perspective of Ohio University and providing direction for the activities of the two focus groups. To ensure open discourse and sharing of ideas, there are no Ohio University staff members on the steering committee. The high school panel focus group consists of high school seniors from each of the13 regional high schools that annually send the highest number of students to Ohio University. This panel provides the perspectives of current high school students of diverse backgrounds. The Ohio University student panel, consisting of a representative sample of current students, provides the voice of currently enrolled students. The steering committee has met and, after having dialogue with members of the two focus groups will reassemble and condense the information into a final report, due this spring.

"Among the issues we are exploring is how to make Ohio University more attractive to graduating seniors and others in the local communities," steering committee member Larry Gates said. "We want to talk with current students and ask them why they decided to attend the campus and with prospective students to learn what they are looking for in a college education. Further, by speaking with guidance counselors, we can identify the type of students who are most likely to succeed at OU and also learn from the effective strategies of other colleges and universities."

"It cannot be underestimated how useful it is to obtain this type of outside perspective," Bebee said. "Among the benefits is the opportunity to see ourselves from a different viewpoint. We will have a better understanding of the qualities that people most value about Ohio University, what

are their expectations of the campus' role in the region and what steps we can take to build upon our foundational principles and further improve ourselves."

Best Practices # 13: Recruitment and Admissions Advisory Board

Source: United States Federal News Service, HT Media Ltd. 2008.

State College – California, USA

California State College introduced a new advisory board to its Admissions and Student Recruitment Office during the university's annual Counselor's Day Thursday, May 1, 2008. More than 250 guidance counselors, government funders, industry supporters, and employment agencies attended the event. The advisory board, chaired by the college's Vice President of Academics with 12 non-college community representatives will meet twice during the academic year to discuss the best practices and approaches to promote college to elementary, middle school, high school and college students. The board's goal is to ensure that the pathway to college is open to all students in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Best Practice #14: Centralized, Responsive Recruitment Information Services

Source: Source: Responsive Information Centers Optimize Student Recruitment and Retention While Reducing Administrative Costs. (2003). PR Newswire Association LLC.

RightNow Technologies, the world's leading provider of hosted customer service and support solutions, today announced more than 50 leading universities and colleges across the world are adopting RightNow's award-winning solutions to optimize student recruitment and retention, while reducing administrative costs. By implementing RightNow solutions, these universities built centralized and responsive information centers that answer current and prospective students' questions quickly, accurately and cost-effectively via the web, email and phone. "With

RightNow, we are able to get quality information to people where and when they need it," Betty Roberts, associate vice-chancellor and associate vice president of technology support services at University of Houston, said. "And we are doing it at less cost to the university than ever before."

A variety of factors have historically prevented universities from delivering responsive service. Foremost have been their decentralized structures. With the information they need dispersed among multiple, independent departments - including admissions, financial aid, registrar, athletics, housing and various academic departments - students typically have to look in several places before finding answers to their questions. In the absence of formal call centers and a shared knowledge base, the information students receive can often vary, depending on the individual university staff member giving the answer. Limited budgets have also hampered universities' efforts to improve their responsiveness to students' queries.

RightNow specifically addresses these issues by consolidating all information from all university and college offices and making it readily available to students and university staff alike via the web, email, and phone. This ensures questions can be answered quickly and accurately across all communication channels. By optimizing the usefulness of the web as a self- service information resource, RightNow also drives down service costs.

Best Practices #15: Aboriginal Recruitment

Source: Under-represented Populations *in Higher Education: Many Enroll, Too Few Graduate (2002).* Washington, D.C.: Hispanic Center, 2002).

Source: Factors Affecting the Use of Student Assistance Financial Programs By Aboriginal Youth. (2008). Canadian Council of Minister's of Education.

It is not new information to the partner colleges of northern Alberta that they have a large untapped pool of aboriginal students. It is also not new information that the high-school completion rate for this potential recruitment pool is significantly lower than the national average, hence providing very few youth who meet the admission requirements for college programs. Recruiting to aboriginals (or any under-represented higher education group) requires an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural factors that impede or enhance the likelihood of a student committing to post-secondary education.

> *Much of what accounts for the gap between graduation and enrollment in higher education is a lack of support systems that are available to mainstream students. This, coupled with "underfunded, understaffed, and underperforming high schools," sets up select ethnic groups for failure rather than success.*

A review of strategies that are currently used across Canada in recruiting under-represented students (i.e.. Aboriginal, Hispanic, African-American, Asian) are unfortunately (but not surprising) deficit focused. In other words, the strategies emphasize "fixing the student" and/or "changing the culture" rather than changing or strengthening the post-secondary institution to better serve aboriginal students. Examples of deficit focused recruitment strategies include the following:

1) Expanding efforts to increase student "motivation" to attend college when, in fact, the vast majority of today's under-represented ethnic groups want to go college.

2) Counseling parents and elders on the "importance' of college and the long-term financial benefits of a college education when parents and elders already value "knowledge" and are more than capable of understanding how a college education can improve the future quality of life for the children in their community.

3) An exclusive focus on "fixing" K-12" based functions without looking at any cross-institutional barriers such as lack of curriculum alignment, communications, or coordination that impacts the student's post-secondary options.

Given the fact that the documented higher-education enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of Aboriginal, Hispanic, African American, and Asian students is still dramatically lower than their mainstream counterparts in Canada, it should be clear that a deficit approach has not worked. What is needed is a radical shift from "business as usual" to a profound systemic, cross-institutional change that serves students' needs and capitalizes on their strengths. The literature clearly shows that college recruitment is most successful when it is part of a process that begins with a child's first entry into formal schooling. Inherent in this mindset is a universal assumption that all students will graduate from high-school and be prepared to enroll in a college or university. More and more studies are re-affirming this approach. The following list of suggestions offers simple yet effective strategies colleges could implement to enhance the potential recruitment of under-represented populations.

1) Use cultural communication networks to recruit under-represented populations such as dedicated television stations, newspapers, websites, councils, schools.

2) Employ current peer students as recruiters and mentors.

3) Adapt recruitment events and strategies in recognition of language and cultural attributes of the culture of the prospective students.

4) Facilitate group registrations for cohorts in the first year of college.

5) Incorporate a faculty or staff person to serve as an advocate within the college and the community.

6) Use unconventional recruitment locations that include direct communication with youth groups rather than conventional public school settings.

7) Educate all front-line recruiters on the variety of financial and personal support services available to under-represented students (i.e. .. do not leave this information on the sole shoulders of the Aboriginal Liaison!). Many under-represented cultures have myths and misconceptions about their eligibility for financial aid and are unaware of the financial aid that may be available, much less how to navigate the system.

8) Be aware of the aversion of most under-represented cultures to owing debt outside their own circles.

10) Model the expectation that all students will succeed. If institutions begin with the expectation that all students are college bound and that their families value education and achievement, then the college can more fully focus on access and reducing barriers.

Stanford University

The Stanford University's Bridge Project, a six-year national study, analyzed high school exit-level policies and college entrance policies to learn if the standards were different. This research showed there were many gaps in knowledge and many misunderstandings between kindergarten through 12th grade (k-12) schools and colleges. Given these gaps and misunderstandings and their serious implications for students and their parents, the study recommended a series of actions. Two of these actions were immediate:

1) Provide all students, their parents, and educators with accurate, high quality information about, and access to, courses that will help prepare students for college level standards, and do this early in their middle school or junior high school enrollment.

2) Create awareness that getting into college is not the hardest part. This translates to expanding the focus of local, provincial, federal programs from access to college to success in college. High school content, academic counseling, college outreach, and other programs need to reflect this so that students are clear about what it takes to succeed not just "get-in" college.

Long-term recommendations include the following:

1) Examine the relationship and alignment between the content of post-secondary education placement exams and K-12 exit-level standards and assessments to determine if more compatibility is necessary and possible.

2) Review the post-secondary education placement exams for reliability, validity, efficacy, and the extent to which they promote teaching for understanding and ability to learn as opposed to "memorized facts".

3) Allow students to take college placement exams in high school so that they can prepare academically for college and understand college-level expectations. This practice may also open the door for some students to choose to leave high-school to enter a college program that offers less than high-school graduation as the admissions standard.

4) Sequence undergraduate general education requirements so that appropriate junior/high-school courses are linked to post-secondary general education courses. For example, high-school students who have completed "Business and Finance" under Career Exploration, should receive partial credits in the college's Business Department.

5) Expand successful dual or concurrent enrollment programs between high schools and colleges so that they include all students. For example, Alberta's Registered Apprentice Program (RAP), a very successful program that merges journeymen trades training between high-school and college, should be conceptually applied to all Career Exploration options – Nursing, Social Work, Law, Veterinary, Community Development, etc …

6) Collect and connect data from all education sectors, including high school graduation and dropout data and college attendance and persistence information.

7) Create a College Preparation credential in partnership with the K-12 system.

Best Practice # 17: Don't Stop Printing – Know Your Niche Market Medium Preference

Jones, Paul. (2003). "Enrolment management: A new leadership paradigm in higher education." College and University. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Colleges that continue to print academic calendars, mail mass community post-cards, or deliver application packages through the mail are not necessarily out of date if they do this because they understand their target markets. Unfortunately most colleges continue with these tactics because they are out of touch with their prospects. There is, and perhaps always will be, a small group of potential prospects that prefer hard copies and time to reflect before committing to post-secondary education. Reserving a small potion of recruitment resources is wise if a college targets such recruits. However, to be strategic, a college needs to why, where, and how these resources add to their recruitment efforts.

Best Practices #18: Higher Education Bursaries and Grants

Source: Northern Student Bursary Program (2009). Northern Alberta Development Council. www.nadc.gov.ab.ca.

Colleges that partner with government agencies and/or industry groups to increase local campus access while reducing student costs in its recruitment efforts can open offerings to students that non-local competitors can not match. An example of this competitive advantage is the *Northern Alberta Development Council's* (NADC) Northern Student Bursary program. The NADC Bursary is a return service bursary of $6,000 per year for a maximum of two years, and is offered to students in their final two years of post-secondary studies. It is meant to encourage students to train for jobs that are in demand in northern Alberta. Bursary recipients agree to return one year of northern employment in return for each year of sponsorship. Some careers that are in high demand in northern Alberta are also set-up to be matched by a sponsoring employer. Examples are careers in medicine and pharmacy. The bursary program was created through a partnership of the NADC and Alberta Advanced Education. Any resident of northern Alberta attending a post-secondary program is eligible to apply. Staff of the NADC promote the bursary through direct communications with high-school counselors and college/university recruitment and admissions officers.

Best Practice # 19: Sponsor Local Target Market Celebrations

Whether it is paying for the DJ at the Junior High Valentine's Dance, the printing costs for the High School Year Book, or the Family Supper at the Adult Literacy Completion Program, colleges that sponsor celebrative local events of a potential target market are not just noticed; they become emotionally connected to the student. With repeated presence the potential target market can become an advocate of and loyal to the college before they even register for a program.

Best Practices #20: Student Transportation Services Department

In larger urban centers student transportation services is a kiosk displaying bus schedules, subway routes, car pool openings, and taxi discounts. Colleges in rural and remote areas across Canada that serve large geographic areas do not have the luxury of deferring these services to city transit buses and/or subways. Given the reality of northern Alberta's seven months of winter, walking to a campus every day becomes increasingly unlikely after a five KM threshold in -20 weather. To address transportation needs the partner northern colleges can increase their recruitment attractiveness by either one or a combination of:

1) Providing college funded transportation – i.e. Keyano College Bus
   This service can be cost recovery as an added expense under student service fees with students being issued a ride pass.

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2) Negotiating with business service providers - e.g. Cardinal Coach, taxi-vouchers
This service can be cross-supported by social service agencies and/or fee for service discounted to disadvantaged students.

3) Posting and promoting car pooling boards - This service can be overseen by the student union's social/ transportation committee.

4) Strategically align to negotiate service inclusion MOU's with community resources that already provide transportation services (e.g. school boards, social services, senior outreach).

Best Practices #21: Discounted Technology – Laptops, i-Pods, and/or High Speed Internet

Source: International School of Correspondence (2009) – Marketing and Advertising Print & Electronic Campaigns

For remote and rural colleges that have invested in on-line courses/programs, the increasing external competition that matches course /program/credential draws away from the college's investments in on-line accessibility. The most effective way to counter-attack this competition is to offer 1) a discounted laptop, iPod, MP3 player and/or 2) free high speed internet for technology dependent programs.   To top up the competitive advantage, colleges could also include discounted packages that include student research access memberships, music downloads, movie e-subscriptions, printers, software, and "school supplies" such as paper, cartridges, and data sticks. Keeping the purpose of the college's relationship with the recruit, the old version of mailing hard copies of the complete course package and textbooks, surprisingly, is still demanded by technology dependent students.

Best Practices #22: Regional Recruitment Coordination

Recruitment is becoming increasingly competitive. Higher education institutions that serve a similar region with each requesting individual access to feeder high-schools, adult literacy centers, employment centers can be daunting for the recipients of these requests. Recruiters for each college, though competitors, can ease the demands on the feeder groups by collaborating among themselves to cross-reference their collective schedules on these recruitment targets.   To the advantage of all the regional higher education institutions, the coordination can be even more formally managed to require that external competitors requesting marketing time with local feeder markets actually have to go through the regional recruiting committee. Colleges may be pleasantly surprised how open school principles would be to redirecting unsolicited recruiting access requests to a regional recruiting committee.

This model has been created among a group of post-secondary institutions in Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic Association of Recruitment and Admission Officers (AARAO) recruitment activities are designed to provide students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and others with accurate, concise information relating to post-secondary opportunities in Atlantic Canada.

"Although we understand that a level of competition is inherent in our jobs, we believe

that through our cooperation we provide the best service to our clients".

Best Practices #23: A Day in the Life of College – Reality TV

Source: College Recruiting Meets MTV on UW-Whitewater Web Site That Offers Slice of Campus Life for Prospective Students." (2008). Ascribe Higher Education News Service.

<u>State University – Wisconsin, USA</u>

College recruiting meets the MTV generation in a new University of Wisconsin- site called "A Day in the Life," a video glimpse into the lives of four undergraduate students. The web site (http://www.visit.uww.edu), a project of the Office of Admissions, hopes to capture the attention of prospective college students, who increasingly are turning to the internet as their first source of college information. The site contains more than 50 video vignettes of the students, who comment on everything from Spanish lab to attending a "midnight madness" basketball practice.

"We think the biggest appeal of this site is providing college information entirely from the students' perspective," says Tori McGuire, University of Wisconsin Director of Admissions. "This was designed by students, for students, in their own words." Organized like a day planner, viewers can scroll through an entire day parceled out in one-hour installments. A streaming video segment is supplied for each link on the student's schedule. The viewer gets commentary on all aspects of campus life, including academics, dorm living, on-campus dining, student organizations, sports and entertainment. McGuire says that by necessity, college campuses are using technology to stay competitive and cast a wide net to prospective students. A 2001 study by University of Wisconsin System's market research office indicated that 80% of high school students are garnering their first impression of a college campus through the internet. Rather than use high-tech bells and whistles to deliver standard facts and figures, McGuire says the project instead tapped the "underutilized resource" of currently enrolled students.

Best Practices #24: First Generation Higher Education Achievers

Source: Pre-college *UPWARD BOUND* Now Recruiting Students. (2006) "United States Federal News service. HT Media Ltd.

Highland – Illinois, USA

The pre-college *Upward Bound* program is recruiting junior high students for membership who have a strong desire to be the first in their family to complete a college education. Membership begins with a six-week summer academic program with regular workshops and events throughout the student's junior/high- school years. Students who complete the program are guaranteed an automatic admission in Highland College with access to scholarships and tuition vouchers exclusively created for the Upward Bound recruits.

Best Practices #25: Blogging, Facebook, and Twitter – Access on a College's Homepage

Source: Welsh, Higgins A. (2007). "Colleges using student blogs as recruiting tool: Writings of campus life used by colleges as an enrolment device." Charleston Daily Mail. Charleston Newspapers.

Ball State College – Indiana, USA

Michael Chandler is a college student who's had it with parking tickets at Ball State College. "I swear that's where most of BSC's money comes from," Chandler groused recently on his blog. "They hand'em out left and right, without a care in the world."

Far from getting irritated, Ball State College welcomes the blog. The school promotes the interactive online diary and several other unfiltered student blogs directly on its home page as a recruiting tool. Colleges seeking a competitive edge are increasingly enlisting and sometimes paying student bloggers to chronicle their lives online. The results run the gamut from insightful to boring, but the goal is the same: to find a new way to win the attention of the MySpace generation.

"We found it a much freer, less constricting, far more believable way of letting prospective students glimpse what was going on campus," said Seth Allen, Dean of Admissions at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. Colleges balance giving the bloggers the freedom to speak their mind while maintaining some control over content. Some, such as Dickinson, read postings before allowing them on the web site to guard against offensive language. Others, like Ball State, say that defeats the purpose.

Prospective students can easily compare students' thoughts with comments on online networking sites like MySpace or Facebook.com, said Nancy Prater, Ball State's web site coordinator. "If that doesn't match what they're saying on our blogs, there's a disconnect," Prater said.

Colleges from Colgate University in upstate New York, a small liberal arts campus, to the University of Texas, one of the country's largest universities, now include links to student bloggers on their home pages. The emergence of the blogs is the next step in the evolution of admissions recruiting, said Barmak Nassirian, Associate Executive Director for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Best Practices # 26: College Fairs

Source: New York Times – November 15, Special Section

College fairs remain an important aspect of college recruitment efforts. Even though many students utilize the internet to gather information about colleges they might want to attend, they still use college fairs as a way to narrow down the field. College fairs allow students and parents to meet administrators face-to-face, which offers a level of personalization not available via websites.

Best Practices #27: The 1% Approach to Improving Performance.

Whether it is enrollments or costs, a 1% approach can translate into a 10% improvement in revenue and/or profitability at year end. This statement is founded upon the cumulative impact across departments within a college.

Usually "think big" is good advice and works well. But often "thinking small" pays bigger dividends. So does taking a "One-Percent Approach" - a fairly simplistic approach but something that gives you a big bang of a result. Most colleges strive for 10, 20 or 30 percent improvements in their enrollments, operations and financial numbers. To them, going for larger improvements seems to be the only plausible way to move forward. However, in these turbulent economic times when colleges are facing financial challenges and increased competition, such thinking may not work.

Maintaining and improving profitability in an increasingly price-driven market that is becoming less and less dependent on location, puts location dependent colleges in a very challenging position. The bigger-is-better is not the only one to deal with these challenges. Struggling to even maintain the status quo, while throwing in illogical percentage increases often becomes a "justification for existing" project that most front-line staff know is unreachable, and hence they do not truly embrace the efforts of the senior administrators. Repeated failure can be demoralizing to the college as failure seems inevitable. On the other hand, if modest targets are set – for example a 1% gain - then it would feel achievable and the college team would be energized to achieve it. In the current business environment, a 1% improvement from the previous year seems much more reasonable and achievable than 10%.

To see the impact of this approach, the following assumptions set-up a flow analysis example:
The college has 1000 fulltime students.   The tuition is $5000.00 per year for a full time course
load (10 courses). Cost of goods sold is 40% of sales. Marketing and Recruitment efforts are
20% of the college budget.   Overhead and administration is 35% of the college budget.
Calculating a 1% gain across each of these departments shows a dramatic year-end improvement
in the overall performance of the college. Simultaneously staff pride is boosted and commitment
to the leadership of the college is strengthened. The following table below shows this dramatic
increase in "assessment of success" using the above sample figures.

Previous Year Actual		Goal	Current Year Projected	
Enrollment	1000	1% Increase	1100	
Tuition Revenues	$5000.00	1% Increase	$5050.00	
Outcome – Tuition Revenue	$5,000,000.00	Outcome	$5,555,000.00	11% Increase!
Cost of Goods	$1,000,000.00	1% Decrease	$990,000.00	
Marketing & Recruitments	$500,000.00	1% Decrease	$495,000.00	
Operations	$875,000.00	1% Decrease	$866,250.00	
Earnings Year End	$2,625,000.00		$3,203,750.00	22% Increase!

Best Practices #28: Top Internet Technologies for Student Recruitment

Internet marketing is nothing like direct mail, traditional media, or other forms of advertising. What worked last year won't necessarily work this year, and just because a campaign is successful right now, is no guarantee of future success. Astute marketers know they must constantly study the latest trends in the online marketplace and leverage them in their recruitment strategies if they want to secure more leads and convert them more effectively into enrollments. While fierce competition from other institutions and short attention spans of prospective students can make it challenging to generate high-quality leads, there are many new opportunities in online advertising that enable distance learning providers to break through the clutter and market their programs successfully. Below is a brief description of the top seven internet technologies affecting today's recruitment strategies. By leveraging some or all of these tools, an institution can generate higher-quality leads, improve lead-to-start conversion rates, and boost overall enrollment.

RSS Feeds: Depending on whom you ask, "RSS" stands for either "Rich Site Summary" or "Really Simple Syndication," but in both cases RSS feeds are one of the hottest new internet technologies for getting a message out. An RSS feed allows a web site to publish its content in a format that other sites, blogs, or intranets can easily pick up and redistribute. The best content to distribute through RSS feeds includes press releases, event listings, news stories, project updates, or corporate information-essentially, the type of information that adds value to external web sites. By allowing these sites to pick up your institution's updates and announcements, you'll extend your public relations reach and drive qualified traffic to the website.

Webinars: Webinars are internet based seminars or workshops offering another excellent way to get a message out and differentiate from competitors. Ultimately, presentation technology, this e-technology allows a more complete picture of an institution's offerings than a traditional banner ad or web page ever could, thereby adding dimension and value for the audience.   Presentations can also explore topics such as financial aid and career path.

Podcasts: Podcasts are audio files that web site visitors can download to a portable mp3 player and listen to whenever they want. With the widespread adoption of iPods and other mp3 players, podcasting is set to explode as much as, or more than, blogs and webinars. In fact, researchers at the *Diffusion Group* have estimated that the podcast audience will grow to 56 million listeners by 2012. Many prospective students would prefer to listen to certain content rather than read it on their computers. Because the prospect can download the information, accessing and using the information happens on their schedule and time availability. Podcasts are also an excellent medium for advertising full campaigns or supplementing a multi-media package. Also, numerous high-profile podcasts offer advertising opportunities such as product placement, show sponsorships that offer a 15-second acknowledgement similar to a commercial aired on a radio or television broadcast.

Instant Messaging: A recent study by Noel-Levitz found that 81% of college-bound students use instant messaging (IM) when they go online, and when asked what activities they would like to participate in on a college web site, 70% said they'd like to use IM to communicate with a counselor. Not only is IM a popular communication vehicle, but it can be highly effective in streamlining the enrollment process because it eliminates the lag time between a prospect completing a contact form and receiving a telephone call from an enrollment advisor.

"From blogs to MySpace pages to podcasts, today's college-bound students are using technology to engage in a host of social networking activities that build communities," says Kevin W. Crockett, the president and CEO of Noel-Levitz. "Having this data provides a clearer indication of students' preferences for electronic communication and e-recruitment."

Search Marketing: After more than 10 years of "keyword" linking on the internet, search marketing is still viable way to generate qualified leads for recruitment. Two new trends in search marketing are local search and vertical search, both of which are quickly emerging as less costly, more targeted methods of reaching a core audience. Local search is especially valuable for any college wanting to target prospects within a particular geographic area. Most of the major search engines now offer their visitors some way to search locally, while a number of new search engines have recently appeared on the scene in an effort to lure local advertisers to their sites. Meanwhile, vertical search has come about as a result of the major search engines simply including too many results, often making it difficult for the users to find exactly what they're looking for. But with a vertical search engine, users can narrow their results down to include only web sites from the particular industry that interests them.

Rich Media: Typical web-site banner advertisements simply do not cut it any longer. Consumers have conditioned themselves to barely notice banners, a trend that is evidenced by the miniscule click-through rates most banners experience. The online advertisements that capture attention and engage the consumer more than any other are those that make use of rich media. The term "rich media" is generally used to describe any type of interactive media that exhibits dynamic motion and takes advantage of enhanced sensory features such as video, audio, or animation. In the past, many advertisers shied away from ads that incorporate these elements because they tend to take longer to download than most ads, thereby frustrating the consumer. But with broadband

connections and high-speed internet now prevalent in most homes and nearly all businesses, rich media ads are quickly gaining popularity.

Best Practices #29: Turn on the Washroom Lights on For Mature Students

Source: Schee, Brian A Vander. (2007). "Gen Xers Return to College: Enrollment Strategies for a Maturing Population." College and University. American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Mature students, once considered exceptions or demographic blips in colleges, have become the norm in higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that 34% percent of undergraduates today are over the age of 25. At rural colleges, mature students often represent the majority. Many work full time, have dependents of their own, and attend classes while juggling multiple responsibilities. Despite their increasing numbers, these students are typically under-served at colleges. Not only are they bypassed in recruitment and retention efforts, they often face institutional barriers that can make them feel isolated and alienated on campus. For example, the majority of mature students prefer to take courses after 5:00 p.m. or on Saturdays; a time when campus life is practically nonexistent.

"Adult students may show up for evening and weekend classes and find a darkened building where the only lighted area is the classroom for the course," said Janice Hadfield, Dean of Undergraduate Studies for Doane College, a private liberal arts institution near Lincoln, Nebraska. "Financial aid, academic advising, the bookstore, and other offices are closed. Our behavior communicates the message that the mature student is not "important".   Attracting and retaining mature students requires a realignment and reassessment of the purpose of student services. The bookstore, the coffee shop, the library, academic advising, the daycare center, etc…should all be open and ready to serve the mature student when "the student is on campus!". At bare minimum at least turn on the washroom lights!

Best Practices #30: Branding is Being Excellent in Something!

Branding is an expensive marketing investment that requires one thing – differentiation among the competitors. When school leaders are asked what sets them apart in the marketplace, they typically respond with answers like - smaller class size (when in actuality they can't fill quotas); friendly instructors/staff, and we really like our students. While these are fine characteristics that affect the quality of programs, they are not effective for communicating a tangible point of difference to brand a college. Every college loves their students; they pay the bills. Most non-university schools offer reasonable size classes. Everyone feels they have great instructors; it's natural to value the people who deliver the product of your existence. The truth is, it's a brutally competitive marketplace. Unless a college can offer something that is truly unique, it is not possible to brand the institution. There are three ways to brand an educational institution: 1) Innovation – the college has something consistently unique that no competitor can offer, such as special equipment, location, facilities, a program, specialty with a demographic, and/or an industry guru; or 2) positioning with employer groups as a preferred source for employees; or 3) the institution is the cheapest on the market.

When an institution is branded the leaders, staff, and students can readily answer "Why should a prospective student choose this college?   The first step when marketing a college is to evaluate how unique in the market place the service truly is: Unique meaning coming in first in a relevant recruiting competition. Prospective students review several schools before writing a cheque. So, why your college? If the answer is "we do not know"; get to work on defining your college's competitive advantage. If you don't have one, move over!

Section 4 - Quantifying Postsecondary Target Markets in Northern Alberta

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If a college has a good grasp on how many potential enrollments exit within a target market the internal directives for recruitment resources can be much more cost efficient and successful. For the partner northern colleges to assess the success of their current recruitment efforts, this section offers benchmarks on which to compare performance of potential enrollments vs. actual enrollments. Presenting baseline numbers for each target market across northern Alberta, the partner colleges can compare the baselines with their actual enrollments to determine if their current efforts are successful.

4.1 High School Graduates

Quantifying a baseline to benchmark performance of a recruitment strategy that targets recent high school graduates (18-24 years old) consisted of cross referencing four input sources: 1) high school registrations, 2) transition to post-secondary trends, 3) population statistics, and 4) the southern bound attraction (see Sidebar 4.2). The number of students registered in high-schools across northern Alberta as of January 2009 is presented in Table 4.1. For each school district in northern Alberta benchmark performance recruitment potential has been calculated. This benchmark recruitment potential was calculated using high school registrations and post-secondary transitions trends for each school district.

Transition to post-secondary is tracked by Alberta Education using the student's universal student number. Benchmarks are recorded four years and six years upon a student's entry into Grade 10. The forth year transition rate (used in Table 4.1) typically concludes at 20 years old. Note that transition to post-secondary subsumes graduation rates and diploma exam results (i.e... these are requirements to transition to post-secondary).

Table 4:1 Feeder High School Recruitment Potential – Northern Alberta	
Public Schools	**Grade 12**
2125 - Aspen View Regional Division	**4th Year Transition Rate = 46%**
2604 - Boyle School	20
2601 - Edwin Parr Composite Community School	178
2605 - Grassland Community School	2
2722 - H. A. Kostash School	22
2624 - Thorhild Central School	38
2724 - Vilna School	18
Total Registered	**278**
Recruitment Potential	**128**
3260 - Fort McMurray Public School District	**4th Year Transition Rate = 46%**
1845 - Fort McMurray Composite High School	190
1858 - Frank Spragins High School	11
1857 - Westwood Community High School	268
Total Registered	**469**
Recruitment Potential	**216**

1250 - Fort Vermilion School Division	**4th Year Transition Rate = 23%**	

1250 - Fort Vermilion School Division	**4th Year Transition Rate = 23%**	
	1134 - Fort Vermilion Outreach Program	10
	1702 - Fort Vermilion Public School	10
	1715 - High Level Learning Store	31
	1703 - High Level Public School	61
	1136 - La Crete Outreach Program	17
	1704 - La Crete Public School	55
	1317 - Rainbow Lake Learning Store	3
	1705 - Rainbow Lake School	10
	1706 - Rocky Lane School	7
	Total Registered	**204**
	Recruitment Potential	**47**
3240 - Grande Prairie School District	**4th Year Transition Rate = 32%**	
	1148 - Bear Creek School	6
	1153 - Bridge Network	77
	1150 - Crystal Park School	1
	1141 - Grande Prairie Composite High	511
	Total Registered	**595**
	Recruitment Potential	**190**
1220 - High Prairie School Division	**4th Year Transition Rate = 41%**	
	1606 - E W Pratt High School	93
	1602 - Georges P Vanier School	66
	1611 - Kinuso School	28
	0375 - Lakeside Outreach School	35
	0435 - Prairie View Outreach School	7
	1616 - Roland Michener Secondary	101
	Total Registered	**330**
	Recruitment Potential	**135**

2275- Northern Gateway Regional Division	4th Year Transition Rate = 35%	
	1202 - Fox Creek School	29
	1389 - Fox Creek Talent Developmental Centre	3
	1206 - Hillside Junior Senior High School	51
	2108 - Hilltop High School	190
	2104 - Mayerthorpe Junior Senior High School	42
	1157 - Northern Gateway Division Outreach	12
	2105 - Onoway Junior Senior High School	119
	2107 - Sangudo Junior Senior High School	17
	1210 - Valleyview Ranches Colony School	0
	Total Registered	**463**
	Recruitment Potential	**162**
1245 - Northern Lights School Division	**4th Year Transition Rate = 45%**	
	2950 - Bonnyville Centralized High School	100
	2720 - Bonnyville Off-Campus School	36
	2726 - Cold Lake Off-Campus School	23
	1242 - Crossroads Outreach School	4
	2706 - Ecole Plamondon School	30
	2905 - Glendon School	17
	2906 - Grand Centre High School	178
	2702 - J A Williams High School	148
	2719 - Lac La Biche Off Campus	1
	2716 - Youth Assessment Centre	0
	Total Registered	**537**
	Recruitment Potential	**242**

1280 - Northland School Division   **4th Year Transition Rate = 17%**

1810 - Athabasca Delta Community School	11
1804 - Calling Lake School	11
1806 - Conklin Community School	0
1822 - Dr Mary Jackson School	4
1832 - Kateri School	7
1823 - Little Buffalo School	8
1807 - Mistassiny School	20
1827 - Paddle Prairie School	6
1828 - Peerless Lake School	7
0339 - Red Earth Creek School	5
Total Registered	**79**
Recruitment Potential	**13**

Peace River School District   **4th Year Transition Rate = 35%**

1051 - Breaking Point Colony School	0
1402 - Fairview High School	51
1505 - Grimshaw Junior Senior High School	40
1405 - Hines Creek Composite School	9
1507 - Paul Rowe Junior Senior High School	44
1376 - Peace Regional Outreach Campus	41
1511 - Peace River High School	85
1407 - Worsley Central School	12
Total Registered	**282**
Recruitment Potential	**99**

Peace Wapiti School District	**4th Year Transition Rate = 39%**	
	1 - Beaverlodge Regional High School	157
	1311 - Birch Hills Hutterite School	1
	0591 - Codesa Hutterite Colony School	1
	1209 - Crooked Creek Colony School	4
	1303 - Eaglesham School	20
	1116 - Grandview Colony School	0
	0319 - Peace Academy of Virtual Education	19
	0590 - Peace Wapiti Academy	135
	1137 - Peace Wapiti Outreach Program	2
	1135 - Penson School	0
	1203 - Ridgevalley School	15
	1305 - Savanna School	14
	1108 - Sexsmith Secondary School	102
	1245 - Shady Lane Colony School	1
	1306 - Spirit River Regional Academy	69
	Total Registered	**540**
	Recruitment Potential	**211**
Pembina Hills	**4th Year Transition Rate = 37%**	
	2301 - Barrhead Composite High School	167
	2306 - Fort Assiniboine School	11
	2411 - Richard F Staples Secondary School	115
	2335 - Swan Hills School	15
	2316 - Vista-Outreach	45
	0019 - Westlock Outreach	36
	Total Registered	**389**
	Recruitment Potential	**144**

2185 - St. Paul Education Regional Division	4th year Transition Rate = 47%	
	2801 - Ashmont Secondary School	11
	2806 - Ecole Mallaig Community School	23
	2820 - Ecole Regionale St. Paul Regional High	82
	1381 - Elk Point Outreach	9
	2802 - F G Miller Junior Senior High School	36
	2809 - Hairy Hill Colony School	0
	2804 - Heinsburg Community School	0
	3703 - New Myrnam School	2
	2808 - St. Paul Alternate Education Centre	95
	1244 - St. Paul Store Front Campus	2
	0532 - Two Hills Mennonite School	2
	3707 - Two Hills School	14
	Total Registered	**276**
	Recruitment Potential	**130**

Separate Schools

4160 - Fort McMurray Catholic District	4th year Transition Rate = 50%	
	1871 - Father J A Turcotte OMI School	0
	1899 - Father Patrick Mercredi Community School	316
	Total Registered	**316**
	Recruitment Potential	**158**
4130 - Grande Prairie Catholic District	4th Year **Transition Rate = 48%**	
	1138 - St. John Bosco Catholic School	10
	1178 - St. Joseph Catholic High School	246
	1470 - St. Thomas More Catholic School	24
	Total Registered	280
	Recruitment Potential	**134**

Holy Family Catholic Separate Schools	**4th Year Transition Rate = 39%**	
	1573 - Glenmary School	61
	0311 - Holy Family Cyberhigh Virtual School	17
	1670 - St. Andrew's School	27
	1619 - St. Francis Holistic Learning Centre	0
	Total Registered	**105**
	Recruitment Potential	**41**
4105 - Lakeland Roman Catholic - District	**4th Year Transition Rate = 42%**	62
	2971 - Assumption Junior Senior High School	
	2973 - Ecole Notre Dame High	40
	Total Registered	**102**
	Recruitment Potential	**43**
0047 - Living Waters Catholic Regional	**4th Year Transition Rate = 26%**	50
	1132 - Holy Redeemer Catholic Junior/Senior High	
	2170 - St. Joseph School	32
	1675 - St. Mary of the Lake	23
	Total Registered	**105**
	Recruitment Potential	**27**

Francophone Schools

8060 - East Central Francophone Education	**4th YearTransition Rate = 46%**	
	2718 - Ecole Beausejour	8
	2876 - Ecole des Beaux-Lacs	0
	2892 - Ecole du Sommet	6
	2985 - Ecole Voyageur	10
	Total Registered	**24**
	Recruitment Potential	**11**

8040 - Greater North Central Francophone	**4th Year Transition Rate = 40%**	
	1870 - Ecole Boreal	5
	1050 - Ecole Desrochers	2
	2538 - Ecole La Prairie	0
	8098 - Ecole Maurice-Lavallee	99
	0026 - Ecole Publique Gabrielle-Roy	13
	0438 - Ecole Saint-Christophe	0
	Total Registered	**119**
	Recruitment Potential	**48**
Northwest Francophone	**4th Year Transition Rate = 19%**	
	1550 - Ecole Heritage	22
	Recruitment Potential	**4**

Federal Schools

4th Year Transition Rate = Unknown

0043 - Chipewyan Prairie First Nation	0324 - Chipewyan Prairie Dene High School	5
Community Service Center	3399 - Manning Adult Learning Centre	48
9246 - Frog Lake Band	2891 - Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School	24
9245 - Kehewin Band	2989 - Kehewin Community Education Centre	2
9244 - Saddle Lake Education Authority	2797 - Kihew Asiniy Education Centre	8
9306 - Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Band #154	1294 - Sturgeon Lake School	9
9275 - Swan River First Nation	2278 - Swan River School	2
9413 - Woodland Cree First Nation	1803 - Cadotte Lake School	0
	Total Registered	**98**
	Recruitment Potential	**NA**

Provincial – Adult High Schools		
4th Year Transition Rate = Unknown		
9240 - Northern Lakes College		
	1903 - Distance Learning High School	157
	0529 - Northern Lakes College (Eastern Region)	36
	1901 - Northern Lakes College (Northern Region)	37
	1897 - Northern Lakes College (Western Region)	34
9239 - Portage College		
	0380 - Portage College - St. Paul Campus	168
	1898 - Portage College Lac La Biche	85
	Total Registered	**517**
	Recruitment Potential	**NA**
Northern Alberta	**Total 2009 High School Registrations**	**6130**
	Transition to Postsecondary – 4th Year Trend Projection	**2183**
Input 1 – Current High School Students Benchmark Recruitment Potential		
		2183

Gap Analysis : Between Recent High School Graduate and Mature Student Status :   The transition rate used in Table 4.1 reflects a four year tracking from the point of entry into Grade 10, typically concluding at 20 years of age thus leaving the 20 - 24 year old age group unaccounted for in the recent high-school graduate target market. To ensure this sub-group was included in the benchmark recruitment potential for this target market (18 to 24 years old), population statistics from Statistics Canada were utilized for the 20 to 24 year old sub-group. Table 4.2 presents this sub-group with the educational attainment of high-school completed.

Table 4.2 – Recruitment Potential – Recent High School Graduates Ages 20 – 24 Years Old		
NADC Region	**Population**	**Educational Attainment High School**
Division 12	3850	1525
Division 13	3675	1685
Division 16	4990	2115
Division 17	4110	1320
Division 18	820	285
Division 19	8,775	3980
Totals	26,220	10,910
Minus 50% Direct Employment upon Graduation		-5455
Minus 40% Not Transitioned into Post-Secondary by 6th Year		-2182
Northern Alberta **Plus Input 2 - Benchmark Recruitment Potential** **Recent High School Graduates 20 –24 Years Old**		**3,273**

Source: Selected Demographic, Cultural, Educational, Labor Force and Income Characteristics – Division 12, Division 13, Division 16, Division 17, Division 18, Division 19. Statistics Canada. Cansim Tables – Topic Requested Calculations.

Northern Alberta – Identified Recruitment Potential		
Recent High School Graduate Market – 18 to 24 Years Old		
Input 1	**2,183**	**Current High School Students**
Plus Input 2	**3,273**	**Graduated High School 20 - 24 Year Olds**
Minus Input 3	**2,182**	**40% Southern Bound* (Side Bar 4.)**
Northern Alberta Recruitment Potential – Recent High School Graduates **3,274**		

Southern bound refers to recent northern high school graduates registering in post-secondary institutions outside of northern Alberta. With technology advancements and aggressive marketing, the northern colleges are increasingly at a disadvantage with this target market if they remain location dependent with the majority of their offerings requiring on-site attendance. The vast majority of southern bound students make the decision based upon peer migration, parental preferences, and experience seeking. The situational factors impacting southern bound students are extremely difficult to compete with and generally unrealistic to counter-market with a recruitment investment unless the college has a national or international brand of excellence.

Side Bar 5 – The High School Market

The high school market is the majority market for community colleges across Canada.

Representing 65% of total enrollments, this market infiltrates the focus of the recruitment,

retention, and student services offered at most of these Canadian colleges.   The partner colleges

in northern Alberta are challenged with the task of keeping this market within the region when

competition from southern institutions banks upon the desire for this market to "leave the nest";

when location dependency is becoming a liability on the attractiveness of the programs offered,

and when industry is recruiting for entry-level positions at high-school graduations.   The

baseline total recruitment potential calculated in Table 4.1 equates to approximately 655 new

intakes per year across the five public colleges in northern Alberta (depending on program fit

and Census Division populations).

Though each college will vary in the actual number recruited, the key point being that there are

approximately 3,300 recent high school graduates in any given year that will consider enrolling

in a college in northern Alberta.   Interestingly, enrollment trends for the northern colleges

indicate that more than 40% are enrolled in university transfer programs. Figure 4.3, extracted

from Grande Prairie Regional College's (GPRC) 2008 Annual Report, shows a breakdown

sample of the program enrolments their student body. As GPRC is not degree granting, the

enrollment numbers show that almost half of the efforts (i.e. operational costs, faculty pay scales,

student services, etc…) go toward preparing students for competitors outside of northern Alberta.

Program Enrollments
Grande Prairie Regional College
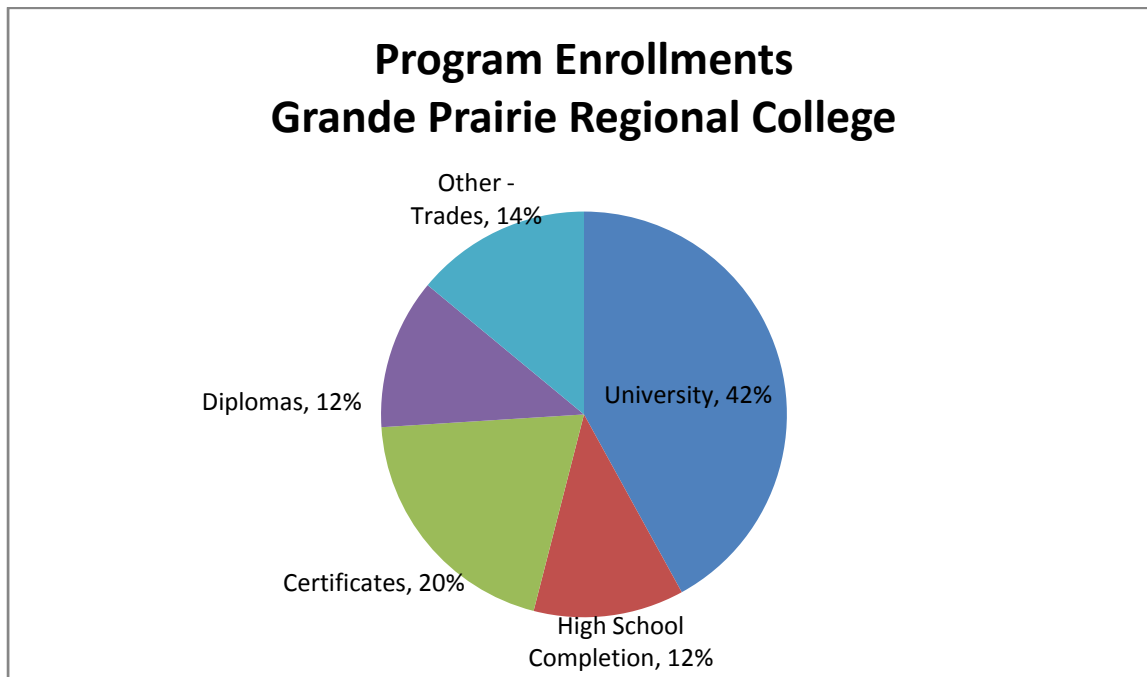
Figure 4.3 – 2008 Distribution of Student Enrollments at GPRC by Program Type.

Section 4.2   Mature Students and Older Students:

Side Bar 6: Higher Education Participation of 25 – 64 Years Old.

Source: International Survey of Adult Literacy (2004). Statistics Canada.

In 1994, the world's first large-scale collection of comparative data on literacy and participation in adult education for 25-65 year olds was initiated. Over 75,000 adults were interviewed. Participating counties included Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and Slovenia.   **The annual average rate of higher education participation for 25-64 year olds across the 20 countries was 34%.** The vast majority of these active participants are under 45 years old.

The baseline for the recruitment potential of mature and older students in northern Alberta was calculated from the regional profiles of each of the six Census Divisions in northern Alberta. Shown in Tables 4.4a (Females) and 4.4b, (Males) the total population of 25 - 64 year olds across each of these Census Divisions is categorized according to the highest level of educational attainment. Also note in Tables 4.4a and 4.4b, three "minus factors" were used in the calculation of the baseline recruitment potential for mature / older students.

These three minus factors – 1) percent participating in higher education, 2) percent of loss due to competition from other post-secondary institutions, and 3) industry training; dramatically decreases the number of potential recruits in these target markets for the northern colleges. Reviewing profiles of potential recruits across each Census Division should give each northern college a realistic benchmark for a performance target for recruitment campaigns. Also, cross referencing the highest level of educational attainment with gender across the Census Divisions should be considered when determining if there is an academic fit between the offerings of the college and the target group.

For example, in Census Division 17, over 80% of the potential male recruits have less than high-school, identifying a very focused recruitment campaign targeting high-school completion for males within this region. Alternatively, 7% of the total female recruitment potential in northern Alberta already has a college education (i.e. they are beyond the credential ownership of the northern colleges). Targeting this sub-group would not only require an expensive campaign relative to cost per lead, the likelihood of having to broker/host a program that meets their needs is very likely.

Table 4.4a 25-64 Years - Females Highest Level of Education - Northern Alberta

Source: 2006 Canadian Census

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	Total
Canada	8,870,605	1,290,175	2,215,620	796,215	2,503,910	2,064,690	
Alberta	900,280	130,355	232,705	65,260	269,000	202,965	
Division No. 12	**14,935**	**2,975**	**4,335**	**1,505**	**4,170**	**1,950**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**1,012**	**1,474**	**512**	**1,418**	**663**	
PSE %		10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		101	442	256	1,063	630	
Active Remaining		**910**	**1,032**	**256**	**354**	**33**	
Industry %		5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
Minus Industry #		46	206	128	213	12	
Division 12 - Recruitment Potential		**865**	**825**	**128**	**142**	**22**	**1,981**

Competitors labels appear at left for the Active # / PSE / Minus PSE block and the Active Remaining / Industry / Minus Industry block.

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Females 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 13	**17,450**	**3,955**	**5,555**	**1,735**	**4,530**	**1,675**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**1,345**	**1,889**	**590**	**1,540**	**570**	
Competitors PSE %		10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		134	567	295	1,155	541	
Active Remaining		**1,210**	**1,322**	**295**	**385**	**28**	
Competitors Industry %		5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
Minus Industry #		61	264	147	231	10	
Division 13 - Recruitment Potential		**1,150**	**1,058**	**147**	**154**	**19**	**2,527**

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Females 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 16	**14,610**	**2,440**	**3,960**	**1,330**	**4,410**	**2,465**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**830**	**1,346**	**452**	**1,499**	**838**	
Competitors PSE %		10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		83	404	226	1,125	796	
Active Remaining		**747**	**942**	**226**	**375**	**42**	
Competitors Industry %		5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
Minus Industry #		37	188	113	225	15	
Division 16 - Recruitment Potential		**709**	**754**	**113**	**150**	**27**	**1,754**

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Females 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 17	**13,610**	**5,005**	**3,345**	**990**	**3,000**	**1,270**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**1,702**	**1,137**	**337**	**1,020**	**432**	
Competitors PSE %		10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		170	341	168	765	410	
Active Remaining		**1,532**	**796**	**168**	**255**	**22**	
Competitors Industry %		5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
Minus Industry #		77	159	84	153	8	
Division 17 - Recruitment Potential		**1,455**	**637**	**84**	**102**	**14**	**2,292**

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Females 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 18	**3,730**	**1,010**	**1,100**	**360**	**910**	**355**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**343**	**374**	**122**	**309**	**121**	
Competitors — PSE %		10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		34	112	61	232	115	
Active Remaining		**309**	**262**	**61**	**77**	**6**	
Competitors — Industry %		5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
Minus Industry #		15	52	31	46	2	
Division 18 - Recruitment Potential		**294**	**209**	**31**	**31**	**4**	**569**

Census Division	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Females 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 19	**25,240**	**4,575**	**7,190**	**2,205**	**7,905**	**3,370**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**1,556**	**2,445**	**750**	**2,688**	**1,146**	
Competitors	PSE %	10%	30%	50%	75%	95%	
	Minus PSE #	156	733	375	2,016	1,089	
	Active Remaining	**1,400**	**1,711**	**375**	**672**	**57**	
Competitors	Industry %	5%	20%	50%	60%	35%	
	Minus Industry #	70	342	187	403	20	
Division 19 - Recruitment Potential		**1,330**	**1,369**	**187**	**269**	**37**	**3,192**
Northern Alberta – Females **25 – 64 Years Old**							
Total Recruitment Potential		**5,802**	**4,852**	**691**	**847**	**122**	**12,315**

Table 4.4b 25 to 64 Years –Males - Highest Level of Education - Northern Alberta						
	Total Pop	> HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree
Canada	8,870,605	1,290,175	2,215,620	796,215	2,503,910	2,064,690
Alberta	900,280	130,355	232,705	65,260	269,000	202,965
Division No. 12	15625	3805	3360	3,890	3,135	1,430
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%
Active #		1,294	1,142	1,323	1,066	486
Competitors PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%
Minus PSE #		65	286	661	799	462
Active Remaining		1,229	857	661	266	24
Competitors Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Minus Industry #		307	643	496	200	18
Division 12 - Recruitment Potential		922	214	165	67	6

1,374

	Total Pop	>HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Males 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 13	**18050**	**4845**	**4320**	**4,390**	**3,075**	**1,425**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**1,647**	**1,469**	**1,493**	**1,046**	**485**	
Competitors PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		82	367	746	784	460	
Active Remaining		**1,565**	**1,102**	**746**	**261**	**24**	
Competitors Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%	
Minus Industry #		391	826	560	196	18	
Division 13 - Recruitment Potential		**1,174**	**275**	**187**	**65**	**6**	**1,707**

	Total Pop	>HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Males 25-64 Years							
Division No. 16	**17600**	**2345**	**3035**	**5260**	**4520**	**2430**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**797**	**1,032**	**1,788**	**1,537**	**826**	
Competitors PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		40	258	894	1,153	785	
Active Remaining		**757**	**774**	**894**	**384**	**41**	
Competitors Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%	
Minus Industry #		189	580	671	288	31	
Division 16 - Recruitment Potential		**568**	**193**	**224**	**96**	**10**	**1,091**

	Total Pop	>HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Males 25-64 Yrs							
Division No. 17	**14645**	**6260**	**2810**	**2780**	**1975**	**815**	
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
Active #		**2,128**	**955**	**945**	**672**	**277**	
Competitors — PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%	
Minus PSE #		106	239	473	504	263	
Active Remaining		**2,022**	**717**	**473**	**168**	**14**	
Competitors — Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%	
Minus Industry #		505	537	354	126	10	
Division 17 - Recruitment Potential		**1,516**	**179**	**118**	**42**	**3**	**1,859**

	Total Pop	>HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree
Males 25-64 Yrs						
Division No. 18	3955	1205	855	930	720	240
Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%
Active #		**410**	**291**	**316**	**245**	**82**
Competitors · PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%
Minus PSE #		20	73	158	184	78
Active Remaining		**389**	**218**	**158**	**61**	**4**
Competitors · Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%
Minus Industry #		97	164	119	46	3
Division 18 - Recruitment Potential		**292**	**55**	**40**	**15**	**1**	**402**

		Total Pop	>HS	HS	Trade	College	Degree	
Males 25-64 Yrs								
Division No. 19		27065	6015	6640	6230	5545	2630	
	Active %		34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	
	Active #		2,045	2,258	2,118	1,885	894	
Competitors	PSE %		5%	25%	50%	75%	95%	
	Minus PSE #		102	564	1,059	1,414	849	
	Active Remaining		1,943	1,693	1,059	471	45	
Competitors	Industry %		25%	75%	75%	75%	75%	
	Minus Industry #		486	1,270	794	353	34	
Division 19 - Recruitment Potential			1,457	423	265	118	11	2,274

Northern Alberta – Males

25-64 Years Old

Total Recruitment Potential	**5,929**	**1,340**	**998**	**403**	**38**	**8,708**

Northern Alberta Recruitment Potential – Mature / Older Students
21,023

Participation research conducted both in Canada (Rubenson and Xu, 1997; HRDC and Statistics Canada, 2001) and in the United States (Cross, 1981; Comings et al., 2000) indicates that popular demand for adult education and training co-varies with a number of demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Examples of factors that usually show statistically significant relationships with participation in adult education are motivation, earnings from work, and occupational status. But the one factor that is most strongly and consistently related to adult education participation for 25-64 year olds is the level of initial educational attainment.

The higher the educational achievement of a potential student the greater the competition for that student. Institutions that have terminal credentials below the achievement of the potential recruit are generally unattractive to this target market.

Notes: Tables 4.4:

1) The minus factors used for the calculation of the benchmark recruitment potential for mature/older students reflect the ability/inability of the northern colleges to meet increasing demands as the credential need rises; the increasing availability of on-line higher education degrees / masters; and the proliferation of industry certifications that are offered through professional associations.

2) Mobility, finances, and time (economic variables) have been considered in the percentages across gender relative to the minus factors calculated in Table 4.4.

3) The final potential recruitment numbers calculated in <u>Tables 4.4a / 4.4b</u> reflect a pool of potential prospects that are open to committing to a post-secondary program (ie.. participation rates and competition factors have been extracted).   The most effective recruitment strategies to this overall market is to sub-group and small location market with messages that - 1) address the barriers of the sub-group; 2) highlight a unique competitive advantage of the college, and/or 3) provide a regional collaborative program that meets the needs of a very small but lucrative niche market.

4) <u>Table 4.5</u> presents an overall summary of the mature/older student target market by educational attainment for each of the Census Divisions across northern Alberta. Note that the less than high school and high school completed sub-groups represent 85% of the mature/older student target market in northern Alberta.

Table 4.5 – Northern Alberta – Postsecondary Recruitment Potential by Census Division and Educational Attainment 25 to 64 Year Olds – Both Genders					
Census Division	Total Recruitment Potential	>HS	HS	Trades	College / Degree
12	3355	53.3%	31.0%	8.7%	7.1%
13	4234	53.7%	31.5%	7.9%	5.8%
16	2845	44.9%	33.3%	11.8%	9.9%
17	4151	71.6%	19.7%	4.9%	3.9%
18	971	60.4%	27.2%	7.3%	5.3%
19	5466	51.0%	32.8%	8.3%	8.0%
NADC Region	**21,023**	**55.8%**	**29.5%**	**8.0%**	**6.8%**
		Target Market Zone = 85%			

Section 5: Recommendations

Section 5: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Match Recruitment Investments to Regional Demographics

Overall the enrollment trends of the northern colleges do not match the demographics of the recruitment potential within their catchment areas. The largest target market in northern Alberta that matches the programs offered by the northern colleges is the mature/older student. Using the quantification procedures presented in this report, the recruitment departments of each northern college should create a customized regional demographic recruitment potential that reflects their catchment areas. The following examples outline using demographic recruitment potential as a directive for recruitment investments for the less than high-school mature student market.

Table 5.1a: Division 16 – Applying Regional Demographics to Recruitment Campaigns			
Community & Upgrading Education – Less than High School –Serviced by Keyano College			
Market Served	Market Potential	**Discrepancy**	**Recruitment Strategy**
~356	1,277	28% market serviced 72% market unserviced	> 50% of market is female. Recruitment Strategy - Focus on high-school completion courses needed to enter female dominated careers (e.g. Nursing, Social Work, Education, Early Childhood

Table 5.1b: Division 17 – Applying Regional Demographics to Recruitment Campaigns			
Academic Preparation– Serviced by Northern Lakes College			
Market Served	**Market Potential**	**Discrepancy**	**Recruitment Strategy**
~520	2,971	17% market serviced 83% market unserviced	> 50% of market is male. Recruitment Strategy - Focus on high-school completion courses needed to enter male dominated careers (e.g. trades, engineering, business, natural resources).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Table 5.1c** – Division 19 - Applying Regional Demographics to Recruitment Campaigns

Academic Upgrading - Serviced by Grande Prairie Regional College</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Market Potential**</td><td>**Discrepancy**</td><td>**Recruitment Strategy**</td></tr>
<tr><td>3,373</td><td>5% market serviced
95% market unserviced</td><td>Potential market is equal across gender.

Recruitment Strategy - Focus on high-school completion courses needed to enter the labor force with highlights of career programs that match college credential ownership</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 2: Offer Services / Program Schedules That Match the Target Market

The recruitment potential of the mature student (25-44 years old) with high-school completion is almost doubled that of the recent high school graduate (18 – 24 years old) market in northern Alberta (3,264 prospects vs. 6192 prospects). The northern colleges should cross reference their program/service offerings with regional demographics to ensure marketing and resource allocations match the needs of the markets within their catchment area.

Recommendation 3:   Brokered and collaborative programs hosted at the northern colleges should not compete with the credentials owned by the colleges (either directly or indirectly). The northern colleges have shown that they are collectively more than willing to host programs that many times result in internal performance deficits under Alberta Advanced Education's - Learner Enrollment Reporting System (LERS); the Financial Institution Reporting System (FIRS); and/or the Key Performance Indicator Reporting System (KPIRS). As these performance measurements collectively represent the public funding available to the northern colleges, relinquishing performance payments under any of these funding pools should be assessed for impact across the whole institution before approval is considered.

Section 6 – Literature Review - Additional Resources

Section 6: Literature Review - Additional Resources

Section 1 - Introduction

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Section 4 – Quantifying Recruitment Targets in Northern Alberta

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