BALANCING MARKET AND MISSION:
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

2009 SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

The Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing
Center for Access and Attainment
The Balancing Market and Mission symposium was made possible by a grant from the Vincentian Endowment Fund with additional funding from the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing at DePaul University.
SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

On Oct. 1-2, 2009, the Center for Access and Attainment at DePaul University hosted Catholic higher education institutions from across the nation for a symposium titled “Balancing Market and Mission: Enrollment Management Strategies in Catholic Higher Education.” The symposium brought together enrollment and mission leaders to discuss the balance between mission aspirations and market realities as they shape enrollment strategies and outcomes. Also explored were commitments to diversity in enrollment strategy as a manifestation of mission as well as Catholic values and identity as revealed in institutional marketing.

The following institutions were represented at the symposium: Catholic University of America, Dominican University, Fordham University, Marquette University, Niagara University, St. John’s University, St. Joseph’s University, St. Xavier University, Santa Clara University, University of Dayton, University of San Diego and Xavier University of Louisiana.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter ........................................................................................................................................ 2
   Brian Spittle, Ph.D.
Symposium Agenda ..................................................................................................................................... 4
Welcome Message ...................................................................................................................................... 6
   The Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., Ed.D.
Symposium Opening Address .................................................................................................................. 9
   David H. Kalsbeek, Ph.D.
The Catholic Higher Education Marketplace ............................................................................................ 18
   Jon Boeckenstedt
Tulips, Pyramids & Checkerboards: Shaping DePaul’s Enrollments Toward Mission-Based Outcomes ...... 20
   David H. Kalsbeek, Ph.D.
Keynote Address: Catholic Colleges and the National Agenda for Student Access .................................. 33
   Arnold L. Mitchem, Ph.D.
Beyond Accessibility .................................................................................................................................... 37
   Brian Spittle, Ph.D.
Speaker Biographies .................................................................................................................................... 46
Symposium Participants ............................................................................................................................ 51
List of Attending Universities ..................................................................................................................... 52
Catholic Colleges Work to Maintain Access as Their Profiles Rise ............................................................ 53
   Published in The Chronicle of Higher Education
I am delighted to introduce the proceedings for the first symposium on “Balancing Market and Mission: Enrollment Management Strategies in Catholic Higher Education,” held at DePaul University on Oct. 1 and 2, 2009.

The idea for this symposium grew out of conversations at DePaul during the fall of 2008 with David Kalsbeek, senior vice president for Enrollment Management and Marketing, and the Rev. Edward Udovic, C.M., senior executive for University Mission, as they planned for a meeting of the Mission Committee of DePaul’s Board of Trustees. I had just written a paper about the university’s mission-based commitment to student access that questioned whether this commitment needed to be reinterpreted in the light of changing market conditions. One purpose of the paper was to inform trustee dialogue about this question that has critical market and mission implications for the university. While there was no shortage of discussion about mission and student access at DePaul, the problem—at least from our perspective in Enrollment Management—was that it was not always grounded in a shared understanding of the extent to which the university’s market position had changed over the past couple of decades, or the ways in which the commitment to student access needed to be understood and measured in the context of other and sometimes conflicting institutional objectives. In other words, the discussion lacked a strategic framework.

The paper, titled “Beyond Accessibility,” was one of the first products of the newly created Center for Access and Attainment at DePaul. Kalsbeek and the leadership team in DePaul’s Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing created the center in part to provide a focal point for institutional dialogue on issues of student access, as well as to coordinate the university’s many access-related initiatives. Perhaps, we thought, this dialogue should be expanded to include other Catholic institutions. We knew that many institutions were facing similar challenges when it came to translating their mission-based aspirations into enrollment strategy. And while student access might not be as central to mission at all institutions, it would certainly be a timely focus for collective attention given its renewed importance on the national agenda. After all, Catholic colleges were once at the forefront of that agenda. Could the same be said today? More to the point, perhaps, should it be said?

Over the past 25 years or so, a variety of factors, including economic conditions, government policies and institutional self-interest, have contributed to widening disparities in educational attainment by income, class and race. At the same time, the language and assumptions surrounding higher education have shifted from an emphasis on public to private good with the return on investment seen primarily in individual rather than collective terms. These have become matters of comment and debate in higher education policy circles, but what do Catholic colleges have to say about them? Surely there is a point of connection between their institutional commitments to social justice and the public need for greater equity in college access and attainment. But where is that discussion occurring, if at all, among Catholic institutions?

The idea was to invite a select group of senior mission and enrollment administrators from a small number of Catholic institutions to join us in just such a discussion. In due course, that idea culminated in the symposium that began with an opening dinner on Thursday, Oct. 1, and continued with a full program on Friday, Oct. 2. We knew that we were squeezing a lot into a short span of time. And we were not sure what form the dialogue would take or even whether there would be much of a dialogue. However, it turned out to be a lively and engaging event—clearly a reflection of the great importance of this topic to the participants. There was a palpable consensus at the end of it all that the time was well spent.

The symposium kicked off with an opening dinner and welcome from DePaul’s president, the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M. The evening featured a paper by Kalsbeek that was both substantive and provocative, so much so that it prompted Arnold Mitchem to go back to his hotel and rewrite segments of his own address for the following day. On Friday, Jon Boeckenstedt’s mapping of the landscape of Catholic higher education introduced concepts and data that were illustrative of the potential for market-centered analysis to shape
mission-centered deliberations. Similarly rich in data was Kalsbeek’s presentation about how he has framed for DePaul’s trustees how DePaul shapes its undergraduate enrollment profile in ways that are consistent with mission-based goals and desired outcomes. Mitchem’s keynote, in turn, challenged us to think about access beyond an institutional perspective or interest and to interpret it in larger terms. With both eloquence and passion, he challenged Catholic colleges and universities to renew their commitment to student access and contribute to the national discourse about educational opportunity—a dialogue, he argued, from which Catholic colleges were largely absent. Additionally, participants from three of the institutions attending the symposium shared information and perspectives on how they balance mission and market, specifically in their recruitment communications. These discussions were motivated by the ongoing dialogue in Catholic higher education about how religious identity translates into institutional priorities and activities, including marketing strategy.

One final aspect deserves mention. We invited Beckie Supiano from The Chronicle of Higher Education to join us for the symposium. We knew that if there was to be any media coverage of the deliberations, it would be next to impossible to capture their flavor or complexity in a press release—far better to have someone sit in on the whole thing. Of course, it is not usual practice to invite journalists to a meeting of this sort, and it was only in retrospect that it dawned on us that doing so could perhaps introduce an unwanted element of caution into the discussion. However, this turned out to not be a problem, and we were delighted with the fluency and sensitivity which characterized Supiano’s subsequent piece in the Chronicle, which was among the most frequently e-mailed articles for a couple of days following its publication.

We hope that these proceedings will allow symposium participants to revisit our discussions and that they will be of interest to others who did not attend—although, of course, the intensity, commitment and amity that characterized the deliberations can’t be fully expressed in writing. We certainly welcome further dialogue and have provided contact information for the presenters.

We also have posted these proceedings, along with videos of Kalsbeek’s opening presentation and Mitchem’s keynote address, on the Center for Access and Attainment website at depaul.edu/emm/caa/symposium.

This symposium would not have been possible without the support of the Vincentian Endowment Fund that helped to underwrite much of the cost. And, we would like to thank Pat Sanaghan of the Sanaghan Group for his invaluable advice regarding the design of the agenda. Thank you, also, to Ashley Ford, communications specialist in the Center for Access and Attainment. Ashley not only saw to it that the symposium actually happened but also that it went as smoothly as it did.

Given the enthusiastic feedback from participants, the Center for Access and Attainment will host a follow-up symposium in 2011. We hope that this will provide an opportunity to further explore some of the issues raised in the first meeting as well as showcase what other institutions are doing. When it comes to providing opportunity in higher education, as Mitchem reminded us, Catholic colleges and universities have a story to tell. Perhaps this symposium will provide a continuing opportunity to tell it.

Sincerely,

Brian Spittle, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President, Center for Access and Attainment
DePaul University
AGENDA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2009

University Club of Chicago, 76 East Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois

6:30 – 6:45 p.m. Welcome and introductions
Brian Spittle, Assistant Vice President, Center for Access and Attainment, DePaul University

6:45 – 7:00 p.m. Welcome message
The Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., President, DePaul University

7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 – 8:45 p.m. Symposium kick-off
David Kalsbeek, Senior Vice President, Enrollment Management and Marketing, DePaul University

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2009

University Center, Lake Room, 525 South State Street, Chicago, Illinois

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Setting the Stage

9:30 – 10:15 a.m. The Catholic Higher Education Marketplace
Jon Boeckenstedt, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Policy and Planning, DePaul University

10:25 – 11:10 a.m. Tulips, Pyramids & Checkerboards: Shaping DePaul’s Enrollments Toward Mission-Based Outcomes
David Kalsbeek, Senior Vice President, Enrollment Management and Marketing, DePaul University

11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Round-table speaker sessions—Identifying the Tensions in Mission-Centered Marketing
Jeffrey Carlson, Dean, Arts and Sciences, Rosary College, Dominican University
Beth Evans, Vice President, Enrollment Management, St. John’s University
Sundar Kumarasamy, Vice President, Enrollment Management, University of Dayton

12:50 – 1:30 p.m. Keynote address—Catholic Colleges and the National Agenda for Student Access
Arnold Mitchem, President, Council for Opportunity in Education

2:00 – 4:30 p.m. Facilitated small-group discussion

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Concluding discussion and remarks
Brian Spittle, Assistant Vice President, Center for Access and Attainment, DePaul University
Sundar Kumarasamy, Vice President, Enrollment Management, University of Dayton; and Brian Spittle, Assistant Vice President, Center for Access and Attainment, DePaul University

Stephen Pultz, Director, Undergraduate Admissions, University of San Diego; Kathleen Carlson, Vice President, Student Recruitment and Enrollment, St. Xavier University; and Anne Brennan, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Planning, Admission, and Recruitment, St. Xavier University

The Rev. Patrick Griffin, C.M., Executive Vice President, Mission, St. John’s University; and Michael Konopski, Dean, Enrollment Management, Niagara University

The Rev. Paul Marshall, S.M., Rector, University of Dayton

Beth Evans, Vice President, Enrollment Management, St. John’s University

The Rev. Patrick Griffin, C.M., Executive Vice President, Mission, St. John’s University

Michael Sexton, Vice President, Enrollment Management, Santa Clara University

Fred Heuer, Assistant Vice President, Marketing, Niagara University; the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., President, DePaul University; the Rev. Patrick Griffin, C.M., Executive Vice President, Mission, St. John’s University; and Michael Konopski, Dean, Enrollment Management, Niagara University

E. Springs Steele, Vice President, Mission and Identity, St. Joseph’s University; and Dereck Rovaris, Special Assistant to Academic Affairs, Xavier University of Louisiana
Good evening, and welcome to the Balancing Market and Mission symposium hosted by DePaul University.

Let me offer a special welcome to our sister schools: St. John’s University and Niagara University. And, let me say how pleased I am to also welcome the Catholic University of America, our Jesuit institution colleagues from Marquette, Santa Clara and St. Joseph’s, the University of Dayton, Dominican University, St. Xavier University here in Chicago, the University of San Diego and Xavier University of Louisiana.

In many ways, this is a remarkable gathering. In this room, we have senior mission and enrollment officers from more than a dozen Catholic colleges and universities, all of whom have committed to spending a day together to explore issues and questions of common interest and concern—issues and questions that are central to the value, relevance and sustainability of our institutions. I’m sure that we have similar forums on our respective campuses from time to time, though probably not as often as we should. But how many opportunities are there for mission and enrollment people from multiple institutions to come together like this on this kind of topic? I actually wonder whether there has ever been a gathering quite like it.

I believe that my colleagues here put together an agenda that is quite substantial and intriguing, and knowing them, filled with data. But of course, that reflects the questions and issues we tend to wrestle with in our minds at DePaul all the time. You will no doubt bring your own issues from your campuses, your own take on those issues, your own approaches, and that’s the advantage of bringing many people together in one room. There is much that we hold in common, but there is a fair bit that we can learn from each other. So, while we deliberately kept the number of attendees relatively small for this first gathering, in truth I think there is a great deal that is going to be exchanged. Perhaps that will lead toward further dialogue. You will talk about that tomorrow, I understand.

Today, I thought I’d read you two quotes from the minutes of Harvard University, their overseers, from the early 1800s—two very short quotes. The first was from a committee that had proposed reinstating the scholarship program—it was gone by that point. They argued this: “The working class of our country and others of not large property can no longer send their sons to Harvard. The college was not founded to be an establishment for the rich alone.” Evidently, that was the wrong conclusion. Another committee was immediately established by the overseers, and they concluded this: “Why should the university exhaust its resources for the support of a large number of indigent persons? Such indigent persons, if not thus invited to the university, might be useful or respectable in some other course of life.” And thus, Harvard cancelled its scholarship program for several generations. I share that story with you to show you how every generation asks itself about its mission and its social purpose. And then it focuses its resources and its activities accordingly.
The questions that you will be talking about over the next 24 hours are critical to our Catholic colleges, both individually and collectively, on what we accomplish together in this nation. They bear in good part on what it means to be a Catholic university today. And that is something that concerns us all, though of course we will have different perspectives on what that means. Even in this room there is a wide diversity of institutional histories, structures and missions. We didn’t invite you here for a discussion about what your mission should be; rather we are hoping to explore some of the issues we all face when we try to translate our respective missions into practice given the wider landscape of higher education and the social, economic and policy context in which we all operate—the market, if you like.

Though we may sometimes think it, the issues we will be talking about are not new. Perhaps they were simpler during the latter part of the 19th century when so many Catholic colleges were established. At that time, the mission focus was fairly clear: to educate the burgeoning Catholic populations in our cities. But compromises—if that is the right word—were made even then. Catholic colleges were not by and large wealthy institutions; many had to scramble for every student they could get. You might say that their early reputation for accessibility was not just a reflection of their mission, but also a function of their relatively weak market position. Many didn’t have much of a choice. The term that came to be used was “streetcar colleges.” Certainly, that would have applied to DePaul. For many years it was known—if I may shift the metaphor above ground—as “the little school under the ‘L.’”

But college education in the mid to late 19th century was a very different matter from today. For a start, hardly anyone went to college; not even the wealthy who presumably had other options for professional advancement. As for Catholic colleges, their missions were of course an extension of the religious orders or dioceses that established them. Within such settings, Catholic colleges played a crucial role. They also had an enormous local impact. Many of them were established in cities where the opportunities for a college-level education (as it was understood at that time) were few and far between. They were vehicles not only of upward mobility, but of elite formation in the cities and communities in which they were located. Dr. Mitchem will pick up this point tomorrow, I believe, when he talks about educational opportunity and Catholic colleges today.

Higher education has become the central broker of opportunity and reward in our society—a matter of near universal aspiration, profound economic and civic relevance and great government interest. In fact, this is true in most societies. Despite the enormous diversity of American higher education, its essential functions and outcomes are increasingly shared by—and compared with—those of postsecondary institutions around the world. So what is the implication of this for Catholic colleges who have such a proud record as providers of educational opportunity? As you know, there has been a gathering chorus of concern in recent years about the ways in which our system of higher education not only provides opportunity, but denies it. Not long ago, for example, The Education Trust described our flagship public universities as “Engines of Inequality.” The public universities, it turns out, also have a challenge balancing mission and market. But how might The Education Trust have described Catholic colleges and universities had that been the focus of their report? We’ll have some numbers to share with you on that tomorrow.
Many of you are aware of Robert Zemsky’s and William Massy’s work on the higher education marketplace. It has certainly informed our perspective at DePaul. Several years ago, they wrote a piece on markets and mission that appeared in the The Chronicle of Higher Education. Their argument was that while much is lost when an institution is dominated by market interests—and by this they meant everything from the credentialism of students to the influence of government agencies or foundations on research agendas—those interests are not likely to go away. “Given that reality,” they concluded, “the key to making the academy more publicly relevant and mission centered lies in making it, ironically, even more market sensitive—or, to use the term that we have come to favor, more market smart.”

Mission centered and market smart. It’s an intriguing and persuasive way to reframe the issue. Clearly there are times when mission and market run up against each other, but as Zemsky and Massy argue, they need not always be at the expense of core values, particularly when an institution uses some of its market-based proceeds to invest in its mission.

So we have invited you here for a conversation. We’ll begin tomorrow morning by sharing a great deal of data that we believe will be of interest and value. The afternoon, however, has been reserved for discussion. If our idea for this meeting was right, and if our design for tomorrow makes sense, you will take back something of value to your own institution that will help inform the dialogue there. As I said at the outset of my remarks, there may well be interest in some form of continued dialogue or collaboration.

So with all of that teed up, and teased, perhaps, thank you for joining us. Thank you for coming to Chicago and spending time as colleagues around the table. I cannot think of a more important matter to discuss than the way that our cherished, honored missions are actually made real.

It is certainly my pleasure and my honor to welcome you to DePaul.
I want to set the stage for tomorrow’s dialogue by juxtaposing two quotations that illustrate the tensions that energize our conversations here at DePaul about balancing market and mission.

David Brooks, in an op-ed published in The New York Times on Sept. 25, 2005, opens his piece “The Education Gap” with this line: “Let’s say you work at a university or a college. You are a cog in one of the great inequality producing machines this country has known. What are you doing to change that?”

In the book “Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis,” Fr. John Piderit with Melanie Morey wrote about Catholic culture in crisis at our colleges and universities, describing the way Catholic colleges conceive of and practice their Catholic mission, identity and purpose. In an interesting statement about the relationship of Catholic mission, student enrollment and enrollment management, they say:

“...[our focus] is on the average or typical student (and his or her typical parents) at a type of Catholic institution. Consequently, although the distinction between the actual and sticker price is well understood, issues of discounting, merit, and need are set aside. As important as it is for all institutions to have a fair and well-constructed enrollment management strategy, as long as such strategies are deemed fair, they are unimportant for our analysis.” (p.52)

Tonight and tomorrow, I welcome you into a topic that animates the ongoing conversation at DePaul within my Enrollment Management (EM) group and in which we engage our colleagues campuswide and our Board of Trustees, a dialogue about balancing mission and markets. The general orientation of that conversation, the tension that energizes our debate, is in part illustrated by these two simple statements.

Our intent in this symposium, and in what we hope becomes an ongoing and ever-widening dialogue, is to engage colleagues across Catholic higher education who, like us, grapple with this challenge: How do we elucidate and elevate our understanding of our missions and how those missions are meaningfully manifested in a market context?

Here at DePaul, we often wonder about how our fellow Catholic colleges and universities conceive of themselves—their purposes and priorities, their current situations, their comparative and competitive positions and their preferred strategic futures. More specifically, we wonder how each of our fellow Catholic institutions view these things when perspectives are framed by both mission and market sensibilities simultaneously—or put another way, when they are attempting to be both mission centered and market smart.
Before we adjourn tonight, I want to describe how the tensions implied in these two quotes by Brooks and Piderit and Morey frame our hopes for this symposium—and by doing so give you something to think about tonight before we commence in the morning.

I’ll focus on an aspect of mission that many of us share and one that is particularly relevant today, that is, our commitment to student access and opportunity. Our commitment to this one critical ingredient in our collective, broader aspirations is about social justice. I hope to show that whether or not this is an explicit part of your institution’s mission, it nevertheless is at the core of the relationship between mission and market that applies to all of us.

**ACCESS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

Let’s return to the tensions.

David Brooks—in that one statement mentioned above—takes a position grounded upon a vast foundation of research, analysis and public discourse about access to education in America. We won’t even make an effort in this symposium to recount or review this literature and the increasing decibel level of the calls for reform.

Suffice it to say that 45 years ago, when the Higher Education Act of 1965 was passed, this nation set out to address the challenge of the gross inequities in educational opportunity between the haves and the have-nots. Yet today, 45 years later, the very gaps we set out to close have not lessened. While overall participation rates in higher education have improved, the gaps in those rates between high- and low-income students have not narrowed. When we look not just at access and participation but rather at attainment and degree completion, the chasm is even wider. It’s no surprise that the national reports on this topic have titles such as “Access Denied,” “Promise Abandoned” and “Empty Promises.”

The causal factors in this continuing national problem are many; the national reports point to changing federal policy in financial aid and changing state policies as well. But increasingly the finger of blame points to the strategic decisions deliberately made by America’s colleges and universities—public and private alike. Brooks concludes his op-ed by quoting Tom Mortenson’s assertion that “higher education is now causing most of the growing inequality and strengthening class structure of the United States.”

Brooks’ column is just one call to action—albeit a very compelling one—that is directed squarely at those of us within the academy to recognize our complicity in a national reneging on the promise of access. His commentary signals what we mean by the condition and crisis of access in America and the challenges this presents—not for federal policy, not for state-based budgets, but for institutions themselves—especially those with a passion about social justice. His challenge is one powerful and overarching catalyst for our creation of the Center for Access and Attainment at DePaul and for our gathering today and tomorrow.

Many of us in this room are particularly stung by this observation of how more and more of American colleges and universities seem intent on joining what Tom Mortensen calls “the gated communities of higher education.” We’re stung by this because we, as enrollment management leaders, are so frequently indicted as a big part of the problem, not the solution. Mortenson in his provocative and informative newsletter, Opportunity, is a particularly vehement and unrelenting critic of enrollment management.

But he is hardly a lone voice. In fact, much of what’s been published by The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Education Trust, The Atlantic Monthly, and many others, suggests that the practice of EM isn’t just part of the problem—it is the problem, the dominant villain in this unfolding drama.
Kati Haycock at The Education Trust asserts that EM leaders use their resources to compete with each other instead of providing opportunities for low-income students.

Matthew Quirk in his article in The Atlantic Monthly titled “The Best Class Money Can Buy”—subtitled “the rise of the enrollment manager and the cutthroat quest for competitive advantage”—says that “enrollment managers have a host of ugly tactics to deter low-income students.” He quotes Roger Winston’s line that EM is “a brilliantly analytical process of screwing the poor kids.” Quirk concludes that “enrollment management has transformed ... in some cases the entire mission of a college or university ... installing market-driven competition at the heart of the university.”

Don Hossler, in an essay in The Chronicle, quotes a leading scholar saying that “enrollment managers are ruining higher education” and “undoing our commitment to justice.”

These are just a few from a litany of indictments far too numerous to recount tonight. Critics look to EM as a key part of the failure of institutions to make progress on access and attainment, largely because EM seems focused exclusively on realizing market-oriented outcomes for institutions—outcomes that critics say are oblivious to the social mission of higher education.

Brooks’ critique is more highly generalized than just the practice of EM—and there are ample publications out there focusing more broadly on the insidious effect of market factors on higher education. But his indictment represents a growing chorus of voices singling out EM practice and its leaders in the reneging of our social-justice mission in service of market-dominated outcomes and aspirations. So we in EM are particularly sensitive to Brooks’ critique.

And between you and me, it only hurts because it’s true—at least in part.

**MARKETS AND THE CATHOLIC MISSION**

Brooks’ challenge about our market-obsessed obliviousness to our social mission is only one anchor in our discussion. The other anchor we find in the observations and concerns discerned from Piderit and Morey’s text, and we’ll use their quotes as a convenient, abbreviated point of reference to the second dynamic that prompted us to invite you all to join us for this symposium. While Brooks suggests we’ve lost sight of mission in pursuit of our institutions’ market-oriented outcomes, Piderit and Morey suggest we pursue mission outcomes independent of market contexts.

Now that’s not an entirely fair characterization. In their text, Piderit and Morey certainly acknowledge that Catholic institutions must assess their market situation and then choose within that context how they will live out their Catholic identity and mission. They affirm that there can be no mission without margin and in that sense offer an important acknowledgement that our institutions do in fact exist within a market context.

They acknowledge that it is only by being sufficiently market-responsive to be profitable that the broader outcomes and purposes of our Catholic missions can be realized. They also recognize that market forces create certain constraints and boundaries to our mission-centered purposes on the one hand but also, on the other hand, create options and opportunities that allow us to afford our dreams and aspirations.

Market realities, they suggest, force some institutions to brand themselves in ways that can dilute their Catholic distinctiveness. They also suggest that market realities force some institutions to sacrifice some elements of mission for margin. Piderit and Morey’s fourfold taxonomy of types of Catholic cultures in higher education is defined in part by the relative mix of students in the college’s enrollment profile—albeit their focus is only on the mix of Catholic
students. So there are certainly points where their text touches appropriately on the balance of market and mission.

But taken in its entirety, this text actually suggests a perspective that is not uncommon in most discussions about university missions: that market and mission largely operate on entirely different planes. The prevailing perspective is that market-oriented goals and mission-centered purposes exist independently, one admittedly a necessary condition for the other, but only in an instrumental way. There isn’t much sense of any strategic complementarity.

Many critics of contemporary higher education at times seem to suggest that market realities have encroached upon what was heretofore a more pristine pursuit of mission in the academy. But markets have, in fact, been part of the academic scene since the beginning. We are fond of the imagery that Bob Zemsky and Bill Massy painted in their Chronicle Review article where they recall Clark Kerr’s description of higher education as being grounded in both the acropolis and the agora of Greek society (and I’ve always loved this artistic rendering of the balancing of market and mission that was on the cover of that issue of The Chronicle Review). They said:

“Clark Kerr, the former president of the University of California, once described the tension between the acropolis, with its focus on values and mission, and the agora, the Greek word for marketplace. Arguing that colleges always have served the market, Kerr went on to observe: ‘The cherished academic view that higher education started out on the acropolis and was desecrated by descent into the agora led by ungodly commercial interests and scheming public officials and venal academic leaders is just not true. If anything, higher education started in the agora, the market, at the bottom of the hill and ascended to the acropolis at the top of the hill. … Mostly it has lived in tension, at one and the same time at the bottom of the hill, at the top of the hill, and on the many pathways in between.’”

We ground a good bit of our thinking here at DePaul in Zemsky’s work—not only this essay but the book from which it was abstracted and from which we borrow the phrase “market smart and mission centered.” But even Zemsky views market factors as both enabling and constraining institutions’ pursuit of mission in so far as market realities ensure the financial capacity of mission-centered enterprises to do their work, largely through broad cross-subsidizations by profitable parts of our enterprise underwriting mission-based and non-profitable activities.

Here’s the rub: I think it’s not enough to just say that markets and missions are interrelated in this way. When market realities and needs are so explicitly bracketed off from mission-centered purposes, when mission-centered purposes are never measured in market-centered outcomes and are articulated in ways seemingly oblivious to the most critical dynamics of the contemporary marketplace, then we may in fact be complicit in the systemic shortcomings Brooks describes—and we are, in fact, part of the problem rather than the solution. Our premise is this: it is only within a market environment that a mission gains traction, or that mission even has meaning.

Given its historic commitment to social justice, we believe that Catholic higher education in particular certainly has a role in responding to this systemic challenge of access as both a mission-based and market-based issue. The real question is if the role that Catholic colleges and universities collectively—and individually—play is by default or by design. Is it a reflection of our purposes or our market positions? Or both? Or neither?

If we approach our sense of Catholic mission and Catholic identity by bracketing our institutions’ market positions as something we can park aside as we explore how best to realize our missions, or if we only see the intersection of mission and market in terms of how
we communicate our mission to the market, then let’s accept here at the outset that Catholic higher education is part of the problem Brooks describes rather than an essential part of the solution to the national challenges of access and attainment.

At DePaul, we don’t think that’s the case. But what do others think? Unfortunately, it’s our observation that in the national dialogue about access and attainment, Catholic higher education is neither explicitly indicted nor explicitly credited with any kind of distinct or notable role. I think it is safe to say that collectively, ours is a benign presence in the national discourse.

It’s not because we are an insignificant presence on the American higher education landscape that Catholic colleges and universities are missing from the access debate. When we consider Catholic higher education in the context of all of American colleges and universities, here’s what we’re speaking of: almost 250 institutions that range from tiny College of St. Thomas More in Ft. Worth with fewer than 100 students to DePaul and St. John’s—two of only a dozen private universities with more than 20,000 students enrolled. The median enrollment is about 2,400 students—but the mean is 3,500—indicative of the presence of some large institutions at the end of the spectrum. All told, there are more than 900,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in America’s Catholic colleges and universities.

We represent every Carnegie class—including research universities, doctoral universities, master’s-level institutions and baccalaureate colleges. We occupy positions across the entire spectrum of academic selectivity and prestige and brand recognition, positions all across the spectrum of the so-called food chain of American higher education—from one end of the pecking order to the other—a landscape we’ll learn more about tomorrow.

Though we are indeed a varied group, the one thing that we have in common is a Catholic heritage, Catholic identity and Catholic mission. Of course, how our Catholic missions are played out on our campuses is not always the same—the way we articulate that mission, what we emphasize in our mission statements, how we organize our mission-based activities and how we measure mission accomplishments, is not monolithic. That’s what Piderit and Morey’s text attempts to delineate, and we are fortunate to have joining us at this meeting a number of mission officers at our universities who, during our time together, will help us come to a better understanding of these nuances.

As Catholic colleges and universities, however, it would seem from the national discourse that we are an undifferentiated cog in this system of class stratification that Brooks describes. Not long ago, for example, The Education Trust described flagship public universities as “engines of inequality.” The public universities, it turns out, also have a challenge balancing mission and market. But how might The Education Trust have described Catholic colleges and universities had that been the focus of their report? What would be their verdict? Could they even reach one if they so intended? Is the fact that we’re not mentioned the result of us bracketing off market dynamics and conditions from how we conceive of our mission, accepting market realities only as a means toward an end rather than embracing the tensions of the contemporary marketplace as the place where mission is most relevant and necessary?

Some think that’s the case. As a quick aside, let me share a comment from the recent book by Bowen, Chingos and McPherson, titled “Crossing the Finish Line,” about the graduation rates from America’s public universities.

“... public universities have to be the principal engines of progress in addressing these challenges. Important as it is, the private sector is not large enough, nor does its mission focus as strongly on social mobility as does that of the public sector. It is the public sector that has the historical commitment to
“As important as the private sector of higher education is in America, the struggle to improve educational attainment across the board and to reduce the marked disparities in outcomes that are so troubling will take place mainly within the public universities. In the vernacular, that is ‘where the action is’ (or at least most of it).” (p. 10)

The implications of these statements—and exploring all of the evidence to the contrary—is a speech all to itself. Perhaps next year.

I fear that the reason we are not already affirmed as part of the solution rather than part of the problem is because when we review the mission statements of some Catholic institutions, it seems that we often make broad and bold pronouncements about how we promote learning in the Catholic tradition in our curriculum, in our co-curriculum, in our student development efforts and in the learning outcomes we aspire to achieve. All of these are noble goals, but let me suggest this: the crux of the challenge is that how we typically regard the Catholic mission of our institutions has far more to do with what we teach and how we shape the student experience than it does with the enrollment profile and enrollment mix we seek and how we are deliberately and strategically staking out positions in the highly competitive and comparative marketplace of higher education and resolving the many competing tradeoffs and tensions that the market creates. In our missions, our focus on social justice is generally a persistent and prominent theme; but Brooks reminds us that the primary challenge to enhancing social justice isn’t what we teach our students to understand and care about or how we engage our students in curricular and co-curricular activities with a social justice focus. No, promoting social justice is about whom we enroll and whom we graduate. In short, it’s all about EM.

Through the Center for Access and Attainment I’ve established here at DePaul within our EM division, we affirm this simple premise: It is by elevating the primacy of whom we enroll that we become a far more prominent part of the national dialogue about access, opportunity and attainment and a proactive part of the solution rather than just a bystander in that debate.

It is by deliberately melding mission and market dynamics in Catholic higher education that we avoid being just another part of Brooks’ vast, systemic mechanisms perpetuating long-standing social inequities that erode the economic foundation and further tear apart the social fabric of America. It is precisely in addressing whom we enroll and whom we teach—and how we define and pursue our preferred enrollment profile in the market—that we find the need for dialogue between our EM and our mission leaders.

Now if the data show that America’s Catholic colleges and universities are collectively and demonstrably doing less than other institutions to provide opportunities and access for the least advantaged, then we deservedly sit in the crosshairs of the critics such as Brooks and his ilk.
If, on the other hand, America’s Catholic colleges and universities are collectively and demonstrably doing more than other institutions to respond to Brooks’ challenge, then we should celebrate that fact. But before we celebrate, we need to ask why that is the case. Is it because we have intentionally embraced mission-centered goals and aspirations that call us to ensure a more socioeconomically and racially diverse student body and thereby increase the ranks of college-educated Americans regardless of privilege and circumstance? Or is it because the market position in which most Catholic institutions find themselves essentially dictates such an enrollment profile? So I return to that question: to whatever degree Catholic institutions collectively and individually respond to the access imperative, is it by design or by default? Is it driven by mission or by market realities—or by both reciprocally?

As we commence our dialogue together, I want to bring our focus to bear on that part of our shared identity and mission, that aspect of our Catholicity that motivates us to want to respond to Brooks’ challenge in a common voice saying: “Yes, we confess that we in higher education are collectively responsible for and guilty of reneging on the promise of access, but we respectfully assert that Catholic higher education is doing more to address that challenge than others and we have the outcomes to prove it.”

I don’t yet know if that’s true. Finding out is what has motivated our gathering. At DePaul, we believe that Catholic colleges and universities can and should be far more explicit and active in addressing this by bringing together EM and mission officers to grapple with this issue. And that’s why we’re here—to explore with a small, select group of potentially like-minded colleagues whether there is merit in pursuing this as a collaborative agenda. We do this because where else or among whom would this dialogue occur if not us? Where does the locus of this dialogue sit at our respective institutions? In Student Affairs? Advancement? The faculty? Not likely.

**BALANCING MARKET AND MISSION**

I believe that it is the very definition of an EM perspective and process to balance market and mission. The functions and responsibilities of EM require us to have one eye on market-based realities and one eye on mission-based aspirations and manage the tensions between them in a way that moves our institutions forward. I believe that, unlike what we hear in these national indictments, EM is not the root of the problem but rather the only way that the tensions between market and mission can be effectively, strategically and intentionally balanced, choosing among the inevitable tradeoffs considered with purpose and with principle. That’s why inviting mission officers into that dialogue is critical.

We are going to spend tomorrow together considering this intersection of market and mission. That intersection is a fascinating, complex, tumultuous and maybe dangerous place to explore. I believe that it is at the intersection of mission and market where our institutions do three things:

1. At the intersection of mission and market, we forge the clearest possible sense of our institutions’ overarching and sustaining principles and priorities. It is only with the heat and the pressure of market realities that our missions are tempered and strengthened. Markets aren’t to be bracketed off just as necessary conditions or constraints on our mission—they constitute the crucible within which we grind out what’s really important in our missions, the reality which makes mission more than rhetoric, creating the choice points where we test the mettle of our mission and find empirical evidence of its impact. That’s one dynamic we discover at the intersection of mission and market.
2. It is at the intersection of mission and market that we make the strategic institutional choices about how we’ll position our institutions, where we’ll stake our market position relative to other institutions and make the decisions about how we’ll compete, whom we choose to enroll, and what tradeoffs we are willing to make in doing so in a highly competitive market environment. Our institutions are battling for market share, market visibility, market penetration and market position—does where we stake out our position in the landscape of the competitive marketplace have anything to do with mission? How is mission manifested in the market-based choices we make? That’s also a dynamic we will discover at the intersection of mission and market.

At the risk of being too philosophical about this intersection we are out to explore, I’d paraphrase Immanuel Kant and say that: Mission without market is empty; market without mission is blind.

What I mean is this: Mission statements and mission-centered aspirations that are not grounded in the realities of the market dynamics that directly shape our institutions’ academic vitality and financial viability risk being nothing but rhetorical statements of our hopes and dreams and beliefs. They are devoid of context and are empty.

Likewise, navigating today’s turbulent market dynamics and market contexts without some clear sense of guiding mission renders us rudderless, directionless, with no purpose to guide our decisions other than to ride those market dynamics wherever they may take us. Our market response is blind without mission.

Just exploring these two dimensions of markets and mission should be enough for a day of dialogue together.

But let’s dare not stop there. There is a third essential outcome of exploring the intersection of market and mission:

3. It is there that we find our response to the challenge put forth by David Brooks. It is only at the intersection of market and mission that our choices about how we respond to the challenge of access can be framed and affirmed. The degree to which our institutions are part of the problem or part of the solution, the degree to which our institutional posture on access and opportunity is one of design or default, and the degree to which our Catholicity leads us in one direction or another on this most pressing social justice issue all depends on the outcomes of the institutional dialogue that occurs when market meets mission.

I truly believe that these are not simply abstract or academic questions; rather, in pursuing answers to them, we can begin to identify how our institutions (individually and collectively) can be strengthened in ways that are both mission-centered and market-smart. I hope by the end of tomorrow we will have begun a journey together to chart a more deliberate course of action wherein we elevate the prominence of Catholic higher education in the national dialogue about access and attainment.
The following is a list of works that influenced or were directly quoted within this speech.


Through an interactive data presentation, Jon Boeckenstedt, associate vice president for Enrollment Policy and Planning at DePaul University, mapped the landscape of Catholic higher education, revealing ways in which the almost 250 Catholic institutions across the nation are similar to and distinct from the rest of the higher education marketplace and each other. His presentation demonstrated how four mission-based characteristics common to many Catholic universities’ commitment to institutional quality and student access—academic quality, graduation rates, and ethnic and socioeconomic diversity—determine and are determined by an institution’s position in the market. The presentation illustrated the potential of market-centered analysis to shape mission-centered deliberations.

For his analysis, Boeckenstedt used the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data set as well as an additional variable—an academic index. This academic index, derived from a proprietary formula developed by Human Capital Research Corporation, is a composite measure of an institution’s market position based on criteria such as admission characteristics, student body profile and graduation rates. An academic index score was assigned to nearly every private university, enabling Boeckenstedt to illustrate the wide range of market positions within the family of Catholic colleges and universities and how they compare to private universities at large. Catholic higher education is demonstrably not monolithic.

Boeckenstedt then demonstrated how institutional commitment to access might be measured by looking at characteristics such as the socioeconomic and ethnic diversity of the student body. A reality of the marketplace is that institutions with higher academic profiles and a greater ability to attract students tend to charge higher tuition. Moreover, the market data reveal that institutions of greater wealth have fewer students with family incomes under $60,000—a family income level often in the range of Pell Grant eligibility for students. However, many Catholic colleges and universities with higher academic profiles are distinct in that they are more likely to have tuition prices lower than the market norms given their comparable position. Catholic institutions also tend to have less institutional wealth than their public and private institutional counterparts at any academic index level; this is especially true for the smaller Catholic colleges.

With this in mind, enrollment managers must ask: What is the appropriate framework to discuss the role of mission as it relates to enrolling low-income students? Is there a price to pay in terms of revenue or prestige when an institution enrolls more students from modest family means?
Boeckenstedt then examined another measure of accessibility: the percentage of African-American or Hispanic/Latino students enrolled at an institution. His presentation of the market landscape showed how universities with greater institutional wealth have lower numbers of African-American or Hispanic/Latino students enrolled. In addition, institutions with the highest academic indices also have lower proportions of students of color. Yet, many Catholic colleges and universities with higher institutional wealth have a higher propensity to enroll students of color. Throughout his presentation and again with this particular metric, Boeckenstedt contrasted the performance of the Jesuit and the Vincentian universities with the other Catholic institutions.

Perhaps the most striking part of Boeckenstedt’s presentation was the concluding demonstration of how all four mission-based characteristics can be shown to interact as a reflection of mission attainment. Often, quality and access are competing priorities on college campuses. This is because there is a direct correlation between income and standardized test scores—as family income increases, so do test scores, access to Advanced Placement courses, better schools and college preparatory classes. Additionally, as income increases, so does the family’s college-going culture. All of these factors work against diversity goals, as students of color tend to be drawn disproportionately from lower socioeconomic groups.

That stated, Boeckenstedt demonstrated a way to determine the number of institutions that have achieved certain thresholds in balancing mission aspirations with market realities. Of the 1,995 institutions included in Boeckenstedt’s analysis, 520 had an academic index score of 60 or above. More than 640 have a graduation rate of at least 60 percent. Nearly 200 institutions in the country have at least 15 percent African-American or Hispanic/Latino enrollment. About 1,600 institutions have at least 15 percent of the students in the freshman class receiving Pell Grants. Taken all together, only 37 institutions meet all four criteria simultaneously. A disproportionately high number of these institutions, almost half of the 37 colleges and universities, are Catholic. Of the 12 Catholic institutions, four were represented in attendance at the Balancing Market and Mission symposium.

These four measures are by no means the only indicators of an institution’s success in achieving its mission of student access, but they do give insight into the tensions in meeting mission aspirations as institutions strive to elevate academic quality. These indicators of access—ethnic diversity and the proportion of low-income students—are reflective of systemic structures and symmetries in the higher education marketplace in which Catholic institutions compete for position, reputation and resources. Boeckenstedt’s analysis demonstrated that effectively charting an enrollment strategy that couples access with quality goals requires both an understanding of an institution’s competitive market position and the interrelationships of the various elements of market position. Having this comprehensive picture of the structure of the market allows enrollment managers to take a stand at the center of these competing priorities and develop a strategic enrollment plan that truly balances market and mission.
SHAPING ENROLLMENTS TOWARD MISSION-BASED OUTCOMES

TULIPS, PYRAMIDS & CHECKERBOARDS: SHAPING DEPAUL’S ENROLLMENTS TOWARD MISSION-BASED OUTCOMES

By David H. Kalsbeek, Ph.D.,
Senior Vice President,
Enrollment Management and Marketing,
DePaul University

This report is an excerpt of a presentation given by David Kalsbeek to the Mission Committee of DePaul’s Board of Trustees on May 20, 2009, which discussed how the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing shapes DePaul’s undergraduate enrollment profile in ways that are consistent with mission-based goals and desired outcomes. A shortened version of this presentation was given on Oct. 2, 2009, at the Balancing Market and Mission: Enrollment Management Strategies in Catholic Higher Education symposium hosted by the Center for Access and Attainment at DePaul University.

INTRODUCTION

This presentation is to discuss how the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing shapes DePaul’s undergraduate enrollment profile in ways that are consistent with mission-based goals and desired outcomes.

As part of any response to this important issue, there seem to be three basic questions to be answered:

1. How do we define and measure our mission-based enrollment profile, goals and outcomes?
2. What is the enrollment management process by which we pursue and realize those goals and outcomes?
3. What specific approaches do we use to achieve these outcomes and balance our many competing priorities?

These questions are antecedent to the real question: How are we doing in achieving the enrollment goals and outcomes that are central to DePaul’s mission?

The mission statement of DePaul offers nothing in terms of specific enrollment goals or any precise metrics by which our enrollment profile would reflect a “mission accomplished”—nor should it. We certainly are extraordinarily conscious of DePaul’s mission-based aspirations as we set out to achieve enrollment goals, knowing that DePaul’s mission is crystallized and concretized in its enrollment profile more than in any other measure. The resulting student profile demonstrates our success in doing so. In fact, DePaul has earned a national reputation for its remarkably mission-centered enrollment strategy.
My intent here is to leave you with three images that can begin to frame this kind of discussion. Since we can’t fully answer these questions in the time we have available to us, I hope to introduce a way to structure and approach any future dialogue.

Let’s begin by exploring how to conceive of these mission-centered enrollment goals and start the discussion by distilling and delineating a few of the key enrollment attributes that reflect DePaul’s mission. Then we’ll describe a way to think about the integration of the various strategic processes that shape our enrollment outcomes. We’ll conclude by describing one particular strategy by which we manage the balancing act between and among our many enrollment goals and aspirations. The three images we’ll use to frame this discussion are tulips, pyramids and checkerboards.

**TULIPS**

What are the attributes of our enrollment profile that most directly reflect our mission-based intentions and aspirations?

First, our mission does specify that we try to make a DePaul education financially accessible to students who may not have the means to afford high-quality, private higher education. Therefore, one important criterion for a mission-centered enrollment profile is the prevalence of low-income students. (For the sake of simplicity, the population referenced in this presentation is the group of undergraduates receiving a Federal Pell grant, signifying the lowest-income group of students at DePaul.)

Our mission statement also calls attention to the particular challenges facing students who are the first in their family to attend college, recognizing that DePaul has a particular obligation and opportunity to change future generations by helping facilitate college attainment of today’s generation. So another important criterion for a mission-centered enrollment profile is the prevalence of first-generation students. Some first-generation students are also low income—but it is important to note that most first-generation students are not low income and most low-income students are not first generation.

Third, our mission calls attention to the particular challenges facing students who are of racial and ethnic backgrounds considered underrepresented in American higher education, particularly African-American and Hispanic/Latino students. These underrepresented students of color also have a prominent place in our mission-centered enrollment profile. Some minority students are low income, some are not; some are first generation and some are not.

Finally, our mission calls us to attend to the particular educational needs of our immediate community—so city of Chicago residents represent a fourth dimension to our mission-centered profile. Adding this fourth dimension completes the picture, showcasing the intersections and the interdependencies among these four criteria—but also showing their independencies. In other words, we have low-income students who are neither first generation, minority or from Chicago, and we have low-income Chicago students who are second generation and Caucasian, and so on.

This Venn-like diagram (next page) is what I call our “Mission Tulip”—and it represents the first image to keep in mind as we discuss mission-centered enrollment management at DePaul. It shows the relative proportions of our enrollment profile that are reflected in a typical entering freshman class; specifically, this version reflects a cumulative picture of the past five freshman classes.
This depiction of our enrollment generates many important insights:

We see that about 29 percent of freshmen are first generation, 27 percent are low income, 20 percent are minority students and 19 percent are from Chicago. Those are all significant proportions, reflecting an enrollment profile that is distinctly different than that of our peer institutions.

We also see that overall, more than half of our freshman class is represented somehow within this Mission Tulip, with 53 percent of our freshman class exhibiting at least one of these mission-centered attributes.

We also see great diversity in our diversity. For example, when we look just at minority students, about 30 percent of them are both low income and first generation; but we also see that 30 percent of them are neither low income nor first generation. Whenever we dive into these kinds of data, we begin to surface and challenge many assumptions and presumptions people have about our students; many erroneously assume that these four attributes overlap far more than they actually do.

Finally, some might believe that our mission is to serve students who have all of these attributes, those who are low income and first generation and minority students and from Chicago. We see here that while more than 50 percent of our students demonstrates at least one of these attributes, only 4 percent of our freshman class demonstrates all four mission-based dimensions.

So what’s the right measure of mission accomplished: 53 percent or 4 percent? Of course, there are no absolute measures and no fixed answers to that question, no specific thresholds or levels that could possibly be established based upon our mission. But these data, especially when compared over time and with peer institutions, are critical in beginning to frame this important dialogue.
It’s also important to point out that none of these groups are quite so sharply defined as these metrics or this image suggests. For example, what we include here as low income is the percentage of students eligible for a Pell Grant. Clearly that is one proxy measure of the poorest of our poor, but there are many families who don’t meet that particular threshold yet are low income by any practical definition.

Another thing we know for certain is that our traditional definitions of race-based minorities are rapidly losing clarity or any meaning at all. Among the fastest-growing segments of our population are young people of mixed-race parentage, and the changing nature of the federally mandated way of counting and reporting student diversity by using multiple categories reflects the fact that we can no longer just use African-American or Hispanic/Latino, Caucasian or non-Caucasian as meaningful measures, though in this analysis we in fact do just that.

Likewise, there is fuzziness in defining first-generation students—does it mean neither parent has any college education? Does some college matter? What about two-year degrees?

Finally, Chicago is far from a homogenous city, with pockets of great wealth and great poverty. Moreover, many of the traditional challenges of urban settings that we as urban educators are called to address are not confined to Chicago proper but extend to Chicago’s suburban and exurban locations.

So we can and must be guarded in our use of simple and often simplistic definitions of our mission. Nonetheless, it is critical to assign some metrics to our mission profile, as we’ve done in this Mission Tulip diagram. Without such metrics as a starting point, any real dialogue about institutional strategy and outcomes is both devoid of any grounding in current realities and also blind in its aspirations and visions for moving forward. In fact, what distinguishes and defines the enrollment management approach to DePaul’s mission-centered planning is this data-oriented perspective.

In another caveat as we begin this dialogue, it’s important that we not think less of that share of our enrollment that lies outside the definitions and boundaries drawn here. The other half of our freshman class is every bit as much a beneficiary of and reflection of our mission as that share that falls within this definition. But again, the Mission Tulip is a starting point in the dialogue about how our enrollment outcomes reflect mission-based goals and aspirations.

**PYRAMIDS**

The second image I want to give you relates to the processes by which we shape our enrollment outcomes.

Many people think of the admission and enrollment process as a funnel. That imagery suggests that we have a class to fill—and to fill it, we go out and attract a lot of interest, recruit students to apply, admit the admissible and keep doing so until the classrooms and the dorms are filled to capacity. This is a very traditional imagery used in the college admission profession.

I’d ask you to discard that imagery and think instead of the enrollment process as one of building a pyramid; building a cumulative set of enrollment strategies on a foundation of other strategies, all on a foundation of the institution’s market position and market presence.

Certainly one builds a freshman class by generating interest in the university among students we call prospects; a number of these prospective students are so interested in DePaul and engaged through our recruitment efforts that they apply for admission. A number of these are in fact admitted according to our academic admission criteria, and some share of these students accepts that offer of admission and actually enrolls each year.
That’s the typical admission process in a nutshell. However, an enrollment management perspective extends that process further. First, we recognize that prospective student inquiries are not the starting point. Our understanding of markets and marketing affirms that a university’s enrollment success is fundamentally grounded in a market for higher education, some broader population within which DePaul competes for visibility and reputation and market share. Our marketing strategies and our market position is what results in prospective students; our efforts do not begin with prospective student inquiries.

Likewise, we know that enrolling a first-year class of students is not the endgame. Some share of these students successfully progress through their programs of study and eventually graduate. That’s the endgame of the enrollment process at many institutions; at DePaul some share of those graduates come back around and become prospective students for our graduate programs, so much so that about 10 percent of our graduate programs at DePaul are made up of our own alumni.

That’s the way a more comprehensive enrollment process can be visualized and conceived.

Now let’s take a more careful look at this pyramid-like enrollment process, because the question posed was this: how do we shape our mission-centered enrollment outcomes? This “Enrollment Pyramid” describes the comprehensive and integrated perspective we bring to that question.

Here we see the actual enrollment metrics for one population—in this case, Hispanic/Latino undergraduates entering DePaul as traditional freshmen. In any given year recently, we would have about 5,600 Hispanic/Latino prospective students, 1,600 applicants, 850 admitted applicants, 300 enrolled freshmen and a pool of continuing students that results in about 180 graduates. That’s the Hispanic/Latino Enrollment Pyramid in actuality.

But how would one ever evaluate our strategy or our performance from just these numbers? What possible meaning do these figures have for measuring progress or for placing our enrollment outcomes in any kind of comparative or competitive context? These questions can’t be answered because these numbers are the outcomes of our strategic efforts. In order to evaluate how we’re doing, we must focus instead on a range of performance measures, or ratios, that result in these enrollment outcomes.

For example, an enrollment management perspective recognizes that this number of prospective students actually reflects a 30 percent market presence—that is, from the total number of possible students that we might consider our target market, 30 percent are interested enough in DePaul to approach us as prospective students. In this case, if we define the market as all Hispanic/Latino high school graduates in our basic geographic reach who have the academic profile we’d consider admissible and are interested in academic programs that DePaul offers, the size of our annual prospect pool is about 30 percent of that market.

Out of those inquiries, we typically realize a 28 percent conversion rate (i.e., one out of four Hispanic/Latino students who are inquiries eventually apply for admission). Of these applicants for admission, about 53 percent are academically admissible and in fact admitted. Of those, more than one-third choose to enroll, and that constitutes the 35 percent yield rate that results in a freshman class. About 83 percent of these freshmen continue into a second year of study, and on and on until about 60 percent of the original freshman class graduates.

So when we look at the enrollment process in this way, we see that the focus of our efforts are on these performance measures, achieving a certain market presence and penetration, a conversion rate, admit and yield rates, retention and graduation rates. We focus our time,
our attention, and our resources on achieving varying levels of performance across the entire enrollment pyramid that in their entirety result in the enrollment outcomes we desire.

This perspective allows us to clearly see the cumulative family of strategies that comprise and define enrollment management. We have university marketing strategies, recruitment strategies, admission strategies, yield strategies and retention strategies that all, ideally, work in a complementary fashion to produce our enrollment success. Each of these levels of strategic focus constitutes a “pressure point” where we can and do work to affect some particular enrollment outcome.

At any given point in time at DePaul, we are building many such Enrollment Pyramids simultaneously. Thinking back to the tulip, we also have strategies intended to result in a desired enrollment profile of first-generation, low-income, minority or Chicago students. We also have enrollment goals for each of dozens and dozens of academic programs. We are continuously evaluating performance for any and all populations of strategic interest in terms of market share, admission and yield rates, retention and completion rates.

So, when asked how we achieve mission-centered enrollment success, we need to approach that answer with an eye not only to the challenge of defining what constitutes the profile of our mission students but also with an eye to the comprehensive nature of the effort. In short, we need to think of tulips and pyramids.

CHECKERBOARDS

Let me finish by illustrating one powerful means by which we tackle the challenge of shaping mission-centered enrollment focusing on just one of these strategic metrics, namely, the freshman yield rate. I want to illustrate just one way by which we shape that yield rate—our financial aid packaging strategy. Between the academic admission of students and the eventual enrollment of a freshman class, perhaps the most critical strategy is the entirety of our financial aid process, which attempts to make DePaul affordable for those who may not be able to afford it and financially attractive for those who perhaps could pay but may not be willing to in light of other competitive options.

To illustrate this process, I will briefly introduce the third and final image: a checkerboard. This “Yield Checkerboard” describes one enrollment management technique that has evolved as an approach to mapping and measuring an enrollment strategy. More specifically, it is a tool for allocating or leveraging financial aid resources toward the realization of enrollment priorities.

Our basic approach is to use this Yield Checkerboard to array a student population, in this case a freshman class, across the following two dimensions:

- **Academic profile**—a six-point grading of academic profile (i.e., ACT, GPA, etc.) across the x axis, from low on the left to high on the right. Every student places somewhere on this continuum in terms of the profile of their academic preparedness for college.

- **Family financial resources**—a six-tiered scale from the least affluent at the bottom to more affluent toward the top, with the highest row being those not even filing for financial assistance.
What this analysis enables us to do is to segment our entire student population—or, again, in this case, a freshman class—across these two dimensions. Each cell on this checkerboard represents a segment of the student body—described simultaneously by the intersection of their academic profile and their financial resources.

In this matrix, we see the actual numbers of freshmen in our fall 2008 freshman class, with the size of the bubble in each cell representing the number of students in that segment.

At its simplest level, this checkerboard enables us to identify, segment, compare and contrast the enrollment dynamics characteristic of the highest income/highest academic profile students toward the top right; lowest income/lowest academic profile toward the bottom left; highest income/lowest academic profile toward the top left; low-income but very well-prepared students toward the bottom right.

As shown earlier in the Enrollment Pyramid, our actual enrollment is a subset of those admitted to DePaul. Our enrollment strategy is focused on achieving a competitive and sufficient “enrollment yield” from that admitted pool, and this next checkerboard shows the comparative yield rates, or the percent of those admitted who actually enrolled at the institution, within each cell of our checkerboard.

In every column, you see a higher enrollment yield as you move down the chart—a reflection of an institution committed to access and enabling students of limited means to be able to enroll, across all levels of academic ability. That’s also a reflection that students with greater resources have more options available to them, and therefore our likelihood of enrolling them is less, all things being equal.

You also see that as one moves from left to right, the yield rates tend to be lower. Again, this reflects the fact that students with stronger academic profiles have many more options available to them, are highly sought after and naturally have lower yield rates than others.
Enrollment management strategy is focused on achieving a competitive and sufficient enrollment yield across various segments—and to do so requires, among other things, widely varying levels of institutional financial aid to achieve those yield rates. That level of institutional aid can be described as a “tuition discount” (the amount of grant/scholarship aid offered by DePaul, calculated as a percent of tuition).

In this case (below), we see larger discounts as one moves down—reflective of greater financial commitments to respond to students’ financial need. We also see larger aid awards, or larger discounts, as one moves to the right, reflective of the greater discount resulting from our awarding of merit-based scholarships to the strongest applicants.
When one compares just two particular segments of one freshman class (those highlighted in each of the four following charts), one immediately sees the market and enrollment dynamics at play. The segment that exhibits high financial need and high academic profile has the same number of students as the segment with low financial need and low academic profile (46 and 45) and a fairly equal yield rate (43% and 41%). But to achieve that identical outcome requires dramatically different discount rates (59% and 3%). The average institutional aid award is less than $1,000 for one segment of low need/low academic profile students and more than $14,000 for the high need/high academic profile students. As a result, the average net tuition per student ranges from about $10,000 to about $24,000 for these two segments.
So here’s the big picture an enrollment manager must look at for an entire class. After all financial aid is allocated to shape that class, the resulting aggregate net revenue for the institution can be arrayed across this next Yield Checkerboard. And, we see that a disproportionate share of net revenue comes from certain segments of the class. So, the institution nets more than twice as much revenue from one of these two segments than the other, although they have the same number of students charged the same tuition rate before financial aid. In other words, it takes two of the academically well-prepared but financially needy students to generate the same net revenue as one of the less-academically prepared but more affluent students.
Of course, it’s not all about revenue. This next checkerboard illustrates other insights that come from this analytic approach—in this case the institution’s commitment to ensuring diversity. Here we’re simply looking at the percentage of each cell that is composed of African-American or Hispanic/Latino students. We see that these students cluster disproportionately in the lower left.
In this second checkerboard, we see the percent of each cell comprising first-generation students. While distributed across the entire grid, it’s clear when comparing the two particular cells discussed earlier that there are significantly fewer first-generation students in the higher income/lower academic profile segment than in the lower-income segment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Family Contribution</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aid Applicant</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest $&gt;33,900</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$18,101–$33,900</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle $9,001–$18,100</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,101–$9,000</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest $0–$4,100</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First-Generation Students as a % of all Enrolled**

Ultimately, the Yield Checkerboard illustrates the enrollment management challenge on our campus (indeed on any campus), which is managing the mix in pursuit of multiple, competing goals.

Managing the mix involves negotiating among competing vantage points on campus:

- Who pushes strategy toward the right—toward higher and higher academic profile or merit? Typically, it is the faculty, the deans and chief academic officers at most institutions. Also, the entire rankings industry in higher education and the student market that equates institutional quality with the academic profile of its students creates pressure to shift to the right.

- Who pushes strategy upward, particularly to the upper left—toward a higher and higher net revenue margin? It is the CFOs and often the board at many institutions. More generically, it’s the fundamental fact that institutions need to pay the bills, and that requires achieving necessary net revenue per student.

- Who pushes strategy downward, particularly toward the bottom right—toward meeting the needs of the financially disadvantaged but academically capable? It is the financial aid officers and, depending on the school, the mission of the institution that creates the pressure to focus here.
• What forces pull an enrollment strategy toward the bottom left—toward less affluent and less prepared students? It is the entire tsunami of demographic and market changes that the admission office faces in the coming decade that pulls us in this direction, since much of the projected population growth will be among less affluent, less academically capable students.

The challenges and tensions of enrollment management can be in large part defined by the strategic balancing of these competing forces. When asked how we pursue enrollment outcomes related to our mission, it’s always imperative to see how those goals are in a tug-of-war with other critical and strategic dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This presentation introduced three images—tulips, pyramids and checkerboards—as a way to structure and approach future dialogue regarding how the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing shapes DePaul’s undergraduate enrollment profile in ways that are consistent with mission-based goals and desired outcomes. These concepts and heuristics are helpful in framing the challenges and opportunities that we face in doing so.
I want to start with David Kalsbeek’s question to me: Where does Catholic higher education fit in the national dialogue on access and attainment? In simple terms, the answer is: Catholic colleges are not involved in this policy discussion. In my view, the lack of a Catholic perspective is sorely wanting, and I am going to touch upon four areas where I think the lack of a distinct Catholic voice leaves a profound void. First, today’s policy discussions rarely speak about the value and potential of each individual. Related to that absence is the fact that because the focus is on access—access to what is unclear—the costs to the individual of enrollment without degree attainment are seldom mentioned. And finally, today’s discussions seem unconcerned about the potential that current policy directions might sustain and reinforce a separate postsecondary system for low-income and minority students, and that current approaches place no emphasis on creating leadership for low-income communities. This afternoon, I’m going to argue that for higher education, and particularly for Catholic higher education, the current administration has ushered in both the best and the worst of times.

President Obama, in his address to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in March of this year, set out a most ambitious goal—having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by the year 2020. He backed up his efforts to achieve that goal with a substantial investment in student financial aid. In total, between the Stimulus Act and the money included in the FY 2010 budget, President Obama has poured $28.4 billion dollars into higher education. This is almost three times the amount of increased investment in higher education than what was proposed by the previous administration during its entire eight years in office.

So you might ask, what could be the possible downside of these policies for Catholic colleges? What is the possible downside for access? What is the possible downside for low-income and first-generation students? And what is the possible downside for students from minority backgrounds? I believe the most obvious downside is that while there has been a large investment in student financial aid, there has been absolutely no comprehensive or coherent approach to ensuring that low-income students have a realistic chance to graduate from college. The current record in graduating low-income students is far from good. But so far, neither colleges nor Washington policymakers have accepted adequate responsibility for these dismal numbers. The six-year baccalaureate attainment rate for Pell Grant recipients starting at two-year colleges is 7 percent, and 47 percent for Pell recipients at four-year institutions. Looked at another way, students from the bottom income quartile who start college have a 27 percent chance of completing a bachelor’s degree by age 24, compared with those from the top quartile who start college who have a 89 percent chance of earning a baccalaureate degree. Nor are the human costs of attrition considered—from the loss of self-esteem in the individual, to the distrust of higher education in low-income communities, to unconscionable levels of debt placed on individuals already at the economic margins.
Part of the reason for this lack of focus on baccalaureate attainment is the muddled language we use in discussing higher education in this country. Our egalitarian tendencies promoted the equation of “postsecondary education” with “higher education” in the Higher Education Amendments of 1972. This is an equation that is not made in other parts of the world. This coupling, combined with the continuing search for the “efficient”—which can often be replaced by the word “cheap”—means that American public policy is all too often willing to provide low-income students a different kind of postsecondary education than the one we are intent on providing for our own children. It’s a class issue.

I think it is also appropriate to ask what difference it might make if Catholic colleges questioned and voiced concerns on these issues in Washington. It is equally valid to question whether Catholic institutions getting involved in discussions on these issues would further or hinder the advancement of their more individual institutional interests. It would be foolish of me to play the prophet here this afternoon, but I would hazard that at present, Catholic colleges—and independent colleges, more generally—are playing defensive basketball in the Washington policy arena. What I mean by that is that groups representing Catholic colleges and independent colleges are appropriately fighting very critical fights regarding governance, independence and aid formulas. But whatever might be said about the vital importance of this representation, it has the downside of enabling opponents to paint the whole universe of independent colleges as out of step and parochial. I believe combining those necessary interests with a focus on genuine college access could well heighten the profile of our colleges in Washington.

At this juncture, let’s ask, how did the policy discussion in Washington get to this point? I think there are three explanations that are critical for us to keep in mind. I see these as the central dynamics of the present story. First, in 1965, when the Higher Education Act was first authorized, the president who had created this initiative and set the tone was himself a first-generation student who had benefited from the transformative impact of college. Moreover, many in the Congress at that time and later were beneficiaries of the GI Bill and had personally witnessed the role that college could play in changing an individual’s and a family’s life course. Today, the policy players are different. They tend to be good liberals who believe in education, but for whom a college degree, and in most instances an advanced degree from one of the nation’s most prestigious colleges, was a given. As they look at it, their achievements are just the logical extension of their families’ privileges and their own talent and hard work. A second major difference: from 1965 through the late 1970s, there was the need to expand opportunity. That need was fueled by the Civil Rights Movement, which had articulated very real moral demands on our society. And, greater college opportunity was seen as an instrument to provide greater equity, not only in education, but in many other aspects of American life.

The third reason I think the conversation is so dismal in Washington today is that neither Catholic colleges nor any other sector of higher education have forcefully voiced their access and attainment concerns. There is silence. I think things can be different, and I want to share an example of that difference from my own experience.

In 1969, Marquette University established a program whose purpose was to bring minority students to Marquette and to support them through graduation. From its inception, the program combined admission to the university, packaging of financial aid, and personal and academic support. When a student is admitted to the university, he or she is also admitted to EOP, or the Educational Opportunity Program. The student’s letter of admission is signed by both the director of admissions and the director of EOP. Similarly, when a student receives his or her financial aid package, it is awarded jointly by the Office of Student Financial Aid and EOP.
In 1969, 40 students were admitted to Marquette’s EOP when the university established EOP with its own resources. By 1970, the program was partially supported by TRiO Student Support Services funding—that’s federal money. The TRiO funding provided then and provides now partial support for a six-week summer bridge program, as well as academic counseling support for EOP’s undergraduate students until they graduate. Marquette also sought and received other TRiO funding to establish a pre-college division in 1973—Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math-Science. It also later received TRiO funding to provide low-income and minority undergraduates the opportunity to engage in research and to be prepared to enter doctoral programs through the TRiO McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program.

Last week, I was privileged to attend the 40th anniversary celebration of EOP at Marquette. For the occasion, the current director had assembled some pretty impressive statistics: since 1970, EOP has graduated 1,665 students from Marquette, including the congresswoman who represents the district in which the university is located. Among those graduates, 14 have been awarded Ph.D.’s. Almost all students entering EOP were low-income, minority students from Milwaukee. A few weeks ago, I had a great time having dinner with one of those graduates. He reminded me that when he came to Marquette, very few people could recognize his intelligence because of the limitations in his writing and speaking skills. But EOP recognized his potential. Darryl graduated from Marquette and earned his Ph.D. from Stanford. He has since served as faculty at Howard, the University of Florida, and Columbia. That individual who could not write has gone on to earn the James A. Raleigh Prize from the Organization of American Historians for the best book on race relations history in the United States.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that Marquette University has received more than $30 million dollars in TRiO funds since 1970 to help and support students like Darryl. Now, I’m sure that each of you have excellent access policies and programs, but where I think Marquette has distinguished itself is that its president and its governmental relations team give a very high priority to articulating Marquette’s access and attainment efforts and concerns to Washington policymakers.

In closing, let me leave you with these thoughts and observations. First, please don’t leave Chicago without recognizing that Bowen, Chingos and McPherson, in my mind, have thrown down the gauntlet. They don’t see Catholic colleges as where the action is. They have concluded that Catholic colleges are not linked, at least in any meaningful way, to transforming our society or to advancing social mobility. We have to ask ourselves how and why these leaders have arrived at such an unfortunate and erroneous judgment. I believe their thinking is shaped in part by what they would describe as our “market share”—“it ain’t big enough,” put simply. And in part by the fact that in public policy discussions in higher education, the market perspective has almost entirely displaced the moral perspective.

Now there was, as I have pointed out, a moral imperative in the 1960s. That moral imperative drove the debate, shaped the policy, brought the sense of urgency and emphasized individual achievement, but at the same time promoted and embraced the collective good. All of these ideals and principles were embedded in the original Higher Education Act of 1965. That imperative was there in San Marcos, Texas, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Higher Education Act, when he shouted, “Go tell your children and grandchildren that the gates to opportunity are now open.” If my friend and colleague Tom Mortenson were with us this afternoon, he would say, “The gates are not open today.” I believe your involvement and Marquette’s example offer an approach to opening those gates again. Remember, Marquette did not sacrifice market for mission. Marquette simply expanded the scope and definition of market to include the political and policy arena. So as we think about access and attainment—
B.A.’s, not associate’s degrees, B.A.’s, not certificates—I believe that for all of us in this room, Catholic colleges as a sector are the only ones in higher education who are strong enough, large enough, and care enough to push our national policymakers to deliver on the higher education promises of the 1960s.

Well, some of you might be thinking, what about the rest of the independent colleges? Why can’t they help salvage the 1960s agenda? Clearly they can help, and I believe they will help, especially if there is leadership from us. But we must lead. And we are most likely to lead because we have a unifying faith and tradition. The real tension and the dissonance that Catholic colleges often feel with respect to reconciling mission and market can hardly ever be as nagging outside the religious college arena. So, if we are to meet President Obama’s attainment challenge of March 2009, it could well be that Catholic colleges hold the key, because you really know how to, and in many instances are already, balancing mission and market.

Thank you very much.
This paper, originally written in December 2008 and updated in August 2009, offers an enrollment management perspective on DePaul University’s long-standing commitment to student access and lays out some of the key issues and questions surrounding DePaul’s commitment to access in the light of its changed market position.

That DePaul is committed to student access should go without saying. Not that it does go without saying for very long, as it is clearly one of the most frequently and widely expressed tenets of institutional mission, strategy and activity. It is a core belief that shapes much of what we do and who we are. Put another way, if we were to try to imagine DePaul without a significant commitment to student access, we would surely be imagining a very different kind of university. It would still be a good university but possibly no longer one of clear distinction or great public purpose.

Yet what do we mean when we talk about access? And what should we mean as we think about the future direction of DePaul? This paper is an attempt to raise and explore these questions because the fact is that our commitment to student access is more frequently invoked than defined. And while it provides arguably the most important connecting thread between DePaul’s past, present and future, its meaning has changed over time. This, of course, is part of its enduring value and appeal, but there are at least three reasons why continued ambiguity may no longer serve us well.

First and most self-evidently, DePaul is changing. By any measure this is a very different university from a decade or so ago; certainly from two or three decades ago. DePaul’s commitment to access is rooted in its mission, history and culture; but it is also a function of the fact that for most of its history, it was in a relatively weak market position and almost entirely dependent on tuition revenue. The latter remains the case, of course, but less so the former. This has important implications for student access that have yet to be clearly expressed, fully appreciated, or explicitly addressed in institutional strategic plans.

Second, the challenge of college opportunity and attainment remains very great. It is common to hear that the real issue today has moved beyond college access to outcome, but this is only true to the extent that the two need to be viewed together. Even today, only 52 percent of Chicago public high school graduates go to college within a year of leaving high school, and this includes both two-year institutions and essentially open-access baccalaureate institutions. The odds are worse if the student happens to be Hispanic/Latino or African-American or for that matter male. Clearly, we have not solved the issue of access.

Third, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) are changing. CPS school reform has by no means run its course, and the Catholic schools have seen significant enrollment declines over the past few decades. As both systems enroll large numbers of low-income students, such changes
present both a challenge and an opportunity for DePaul; how well the university negotiates the first and seizes the second will say a lot about the way it continues to live out its mission in vastly altered circumstances.

ACCESS AT DEPaul: AN EVOLVING COMMITMENT

In describing DePaul’s commitment to access today, we tend to invoke the goals and principles on which the university was founded and draw a straight line from them to the present. DePaul was always committed to student access, we tend to say, and has continued that commitment through to the present day. But this is to use a single word to describe something that has evolved over time in response to varying interpretations of religious and institutional mission as well as changing external circumstances. There is no question that DePaul’s founding included a commitment to educational opportunity, but this was understood within the framework of its religious mission and the needs of the burgeoning Catholic population in Chicago.1 When we talk about student access today, we are talking about a very different public challenge and a very different institutional landscape.

What is that mission and landscape today? DePaul’s strategic plan commits it to becoming “one of the finest urban, Catholic universities” in the country. But it also remains “resolute in its Vincentian mission to make an extraordinary education accessible.” In other words, DePaul will continue to improve in quality without sacrificing its historic commitment to student access. This is an exciting goal and one that would certainly meet Burton Clark’s standard of a truly “distinctive” college.2 Half a century ago, Clark noted that very few colleges were so “strongly purposive” that they were able to “sustain their mission over time to the point of success and acclaim.” However, those that do are able to transform their mission into an “embracing saga.” Such institutions become “legendary, even heroic” on the social stage.

This is very difficult to do, however. In today’s marketplace, higher education is seen as a positional good by students and their families as well as by institutions. In other words, its value lies less in its essential quality than in the comparative advantage that it bestows. Two things are going on here. While access to knowledge is presumably not diluted by its more equal distribution, access to credentials is another matter entirely. As Collins has argued over the past few decades, expanded access to credentials has led to a process of credential inflation and differentiation.3 By the same token, institutional “quality” is increasingly defined as a function of market perception and position.

This has very real consequences in enrollment terms. Simply put, student demand is a function of market position. A strengthened market position drives application volume, selectivity and, by extension, further enhancements in reputation and prestige.4 Indeed, this has happened at DePaul. While the size of the freshman class has doubled over the past two decades, the volume of applications has tripled. To date, the university has done a remarkable job not only of meeting its enrollment and revenue targets, but also balancing greater selectivity with a continued commitment to access. DePaul has a higher percentage of low-income students than its peer institutions; indeed, the number of Pell Grant recipients enrolling as freshmen actually increased between 2004 and 2008. But as DePaul continues to gain visibility, and as the applicant pool continues to grow, the pressure on student access will continue to intensify.

If DePaul continues on this trajectory—and of course, this is by no means certain given recent economic events—it will have to look beyond its long-established capacity-building approach to student access. It will need a more precise understanding of access rather than a broad commitment to accessibility that has served us well in the past. It will also need to adopt a more rigorously outcome-based approach to student access. For many years, DePaul could

4 Some colleges have sought to further manipulate this process by employing strategies to increase the volume of applications as a way to depress the admit rate, thus giving the appearance of greater selectivity.
reasonably be proud of the opportunities it extended to students, but this went hand in hand with graduation rates below what we would like to see. Those graduation rates have improved in recent years, but there is broad consensus on campus that they need to improve further. We understand that access without attainment is essentially a promise denied, not to mention a talent wasted. On the other hand, we have no interest in getting locked into a model of admission selectivity that effectively excludes students from low-income or first-generation college families who are capable of succeeding at DePaul. So what should we do? First, let’s take a closer look at the sorts of students we are talking about.

ACCESS POPULATIONS

When we refer to “mission students” at DePaul, we often imply or assume that they form an essentially homogeneous population. Today, DePaul’s freshmen are still drawn primarily from the greater Chicago area, but more than twice as many are drawn from the suburbs as from the city and over a third from out of state. Equally, if we look at the intersections of race, income and first-generation status, we find many permutations. DePaul attracts a significant number of non-first-generation African-American freshmen, for example, while a notable number of white freshmen are from low-income families.

Indeed, when we look closely at the permutations of mission-related profile (defined as Chicago residence, underrepresented minority, first generation and low income) in our freshman population, we find that nearly 60 percent meet at least one of those criteria, but only 4 percent meet all four. What are we to make of this? DePaul’s commitment to enrollment research and analysis brings with it not only new insights but new responsibilities. It introduces a new and necessary element of empirical reality and discipline into our institutional dialogue about how mission is reflected in our enrollment profile, and it reframes the opportunities and the obligations we face in this regard.

Equally, there is a tendency to equate the challenge of student access with strategies and activities focused on “at-risk” student populations. This makes sense to the extent that underrepresented populations tend to reflect the unequal distribution of economic resources and educational opportunity in society and so are less likely to have the academic, social and financial resources to progress to college or to succeed if and when they get there. “At-risk” students do tend to be less academically prepared, lack strong networks of social support and have fewer financial resources than students coming from more affluent backgrounds. But focusing exclusively on “at-risk” student populations is an orientation to student retention strategy that typically fails to elevate institutional outcomes. Evidence suggests, as David Kalsbeek pointed out in 2003, “that the real challenge has less to do with high-risk students than with high-risk experiences. To the extent that this is true, retention will be improved not so much by focusing on segments of student populations at risk—though there may be instances where this makes sense, of course—but on core educational processes.”

There is also a tendency to characterize “at-risk” students in undifferentiated terms having broadly similar needs requiring broadly similar institutional interventions. But again, this is far from the case. In fact, it may be helpful to distinguish at least four admittedly overlapping and yet essentially distinct types of students:

• Underperforming students, especially those from low-income or first-generation families or other underrepresented populations. This is perhaps closest to what we usually mean by an access population, and the one targeted by federal intervention programs such as TRiO and GEAR UP, along with institutional remediation programs. Such students are capable of

performing well but are likely to require significant levels of institutional investment in terms of academic assistance programming, mentoring and financial aid.

- **Underprepared** students from a low-income and/or first-generation background. Such students are highly sought after by all institutions and the focus of full-tuition scholarship initiatives and early identification programs such as POSSE. There are, by definition, very few of them—less than 2 percent of CPS graduates have ACT scores higher than 30, for example, and many of them are not necessarily from low-income households. By the same token, attracting such students is likely to require significant institutional investment—most are likely to be “cherry-picked” by highly selective colleges. On the face of it, such students are perhaps not “at risk” in the usual sense of the term, and yet they may face special issues in terms of campus climate and integration.

- **Striving and achieving** students from a low-income and/or first-generation background who are engaged in pre-college programs, such as CPS College Bridge, or high-intensity curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program in CPS neighborhood schools. Such students are sometimes a bit “below the radar” in that they are typically in non-selective schools, yet they are likely to have strong family support and have elected to take the most difficult curriculum options available to them and/or have been engaged with their community. Their admission profile—at least in terms of standardized test scores and grade point averages—tends to underestimate their true potential as it undervalues the educational distance many of them have traveled, or the commitment many of them are making as they juggle education, work and family in a school and/or community culture that may not attach much value to college preparation.

If we look at the size of these groups in the local high school population, and view them in the context of the sorts of interventions and investments we would need to make to properly serve them, we can start to array them in terms of institutional mission, opportunity and strategic potential as illustrated below.

This schema is fairly crude and the student “types” it seeks to distinguish are highly idealized. But it starts to identify some of the choices we need to be making—and indeed are making—as we balance mission, resources and opportunities in a truly strategic way. **The challenge, surely, is to more clearly articulate DePaul’s pathway, admission and aid programs for those able and highly motivated mission-centered students in Chicago who are most likely to take full advantage of a DePaul education, and to ensure that this education is truly transformative.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRATEGIC POTENTIAL</th>
<th>SIZE OF POPULATION</th>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT</th>
<th>RELATION TO MISSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underperformer</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underprepared</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achiever</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striver/achiever</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This would be a strategic approach to access at DePaul. It speaks directly to the needs of the local educational environment and to ongoing public policy concerns about institutional accountability and effectiveness. It also, consistent with VISION twenty12, elevates DePaul’s commitment to access by tying it to enrichment and attainment. But what would it look like?

NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS NOW UNDERWAY

For most of its history, DePaul’s accessibility has been as much a function of necessity as mission. Market responsiveness and entrepreneurial spirit have deep Vincentian roots, of course, but at DePaul they have also developed into strategies of institutional survival. Indeed, this blending of market and mission has long distinguished the university; it is perhaps the essence of its institutional genius. But the dynamic has changed. DePaul’s historic weakness—its position in the marketplace—is now a strength. Perhaps it will not continue to be so; the foreseeable future is likely to be a turbulent one in higher education. However, at the very least it is a strategic planning assumption, and so its implications have to be thought through. At the very least, we need to be clearer about what we mean when we say we are committed to access and more focused in what we do about it. Four broad directions for thinking and action are already starting to shape DePaul’s enrollment planning and practice.

1. A CHICAGO-BASED STRATEGY FOR ACCESS AND ATTAINMENT

While DePaul’s overall enrollment strategy encompasses regional, national and international dimensions, we are focusing our access agenda locally. This is both a reflection of the high level of educational need in Chicago and a recognition that a more focused and intentional approach will yield better results. It is also a statement about the conservation and effective use of resources. For example, we might interpret the value of accessibility to mean that we should treat a low-income financial aid applicant from out-of-state the same way we would as if he or she were from Chicago. And yet what sort of equity is this? With limited aid resources, the attempt to achieve some sort of parity in our financial aid packaging for in-state and out-of-state low-income students only means that we are less likely to meet need in either case very satisfactorily. This raises difficult questions, of course, but they are the sorts of questions we need to address if we want to use our resources to maximum effectiveness.

It is possible that we will eventually see a reduction in the number of low-income students enrolling at DePaul. This might be defensible on equity grounds as long as (and only as long as) we make real gains in terms of their experience and attainment at DePaul. But if such a reduction were to take place, then it must be carefully managed; it cannot happen by default if we are to remain true to core purposes and mission-based principles.

Equally, we ought to establish greater institutional clarity about what number and proportion of students we are talking about. Two tests might be employed. First, the economic and racial profile of our entering students should be in advance of peer institutions. We should define this aggressively; given our mission, it will be no achievement to fall short of our peers, or exceed them in minimal terms. Second, if there is a reduction in low-income students, it has to be accompanied by added or re-allocated investment to minimize the financial and other barriers to an enriched student experience, and to ensure greater levels of attainment and outcome.

7 For example, as early as 2002-03 and long before planning for VISION twenty12 began, Enrollment Management and Marketing outlined for the Board of Trustees three contrasting enrollment models in a report focused on “2012 and beyond”: a full-access model, a selectivity model and a mission-balanced model. Enrollment outcomes since that time have tended to reflect the “selectivity” model but DePaul has nevertheless managed to hold its ground in terms of access and diversity.
2. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND PATHWAYS TO DePaul

One way to do this would be to more closely align our aid policies and practices with our partnership and pathway programs in Chicago. DePaul has long partnered with local schools and community organizations on a variety of levels. Ten years ago, this became an explicit component of DePaul’s enrollment strategy with the establishment of the Office of Community Outreach organizationally aligned with the Office of Undergraduate Admission. In the recent establishment of the Center for Access and Attainment within the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing, the university has taken a further step toward a more strategic approach. The Center coordinates a variety of partnership and pathway programs with CPS and Big Shoulders Catholic schools, and it is also charged with promoting campus dialogue around issues of student access and enhancing the university’s wider reputation as an institutional model for both access and attainment.

Given DePaul’s strengthened market position and continued changes in Chicago schools, the timing is right to strengthen and expand enrollment pathways with targeted student populations. Such programs do far more than offer potential pathways to DePaul for those who might not otherwise have thought it possible, though this would be justification enough. What they also do is provide us with an early opportunity to connect with students who have the motivation, ability and preparation to succeed at DePaul.

For example, DePaul is the largest university partner with CPS in its College Bridge program, which offers dual enrollment opportunities for high school students to take college courses for credit at no financial cost. The majority of CPS College Bridge participants are students of color from first-generation college families; most, too, are from Chicago’s non-selective high schools. Yet, for those who enroll at DePaul as freshmen, their retention and graduation rates exceed those of students with similar academic and socioeconomic profiles. CPS recently stopped funding for the program due to budget cuts, but DePaul will continue to explore ways to provide academic enrichment programming to targeted CPS students as well as those in area Catholic schools serving low-income and first-generation college students.

DePaul also has developed a close partnership with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs that have been established in 14 non-selective high schools in the city over the past 10 years. The IB Program is a highly rigorous writing-intensive pre-college curriculum that is designed to prepare students for admission to selective universities worldwide. Again, most of the participants are from low-income and first-generation families. And yet, as our own tracking at DePaul has shown, they outperform all expectations. In fact, the hundred or so who have enrolled as DePaul freshmen over the past few years are starting to post graduation rates substantially above university averages.

3. ADDING NEW INDICATORS OF STUDENT POTENTIAL IN THE ADMISSION PROCESS

Increased student demand at DePaul is leading to increased selectivity in admission. But improvements in student “quality” often have some cost in terms of access and diversity. We tend to define student “quality” simply by the indicators we use to measure it, and while these measures are not without meaning or utility, they nonetheless have significant limitations.

While DePaul has long held to a holistic approach in its application review process, the fact is that for very practical reasons it has relied heavily on two indicators in particular: standardized test scores and grade point averages. While the research shows that strength of curriculum and grades are better predictors of college success, particularly for low-income and first-generation students, standardized test scores still factor heavily. To the extent that these scores are as much an indicator of socioeconomic status as ability or potential, they are likely to increasingly constrain our attempts to balance increased selectivity with access.
As a consequence, we are exploring new indicators of student potential to supplement and strengthen the information we already have in the admission process. Freshman applicants for fall 2009 were asked to complete new short-essay questions designed to give us a more robust sense of their motivation, goals, network of personal support and ability to adjust to new settings and overcome challenges and obstacles. As demonstrated over a lifetime of research by Dr. William Sedlacek at the University of Maryland, such “non-cognitive” indicators, taken together, are powerful predictors of long-term student success, especially when they supplement traditional admission measures such as grades and test scores. While such an approach has been successfully adopted by the Gates Millennium Scholarship program, DePaul has joined Oregon State University as one of the first universities to use it systematically in the admission process. This initiative, christened the DIAMOND program (Developing Insight for Admissions through Mining Of Non-Traditional Data), represents an innovative institutional response to managing access and attainment in the context of increasing selectivity and improved market position.

4. EMPHASIZING GREATER EQUITY OF EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOME

While we have by no means solved the challenge of college access in America, the question is increasingly being asked: access to what? There is ample evidence to suggest that low-income students experience college in more constrained ways than other students. Partly, this is a function of social or cultural capital resources, partly of financial resources. Either way, fewer low-income students live on campus, take part in internships or undergraduate research opportunities or participate in study-abroad programs than their more affluent counterparts. The result is that though they may graduate with the same degree (if they do indeed graduate), they do not necessarily graduate with the same experience. However, these are precisely the sorts of experiences that are most likely to be most transformative for a low-income, first-generation student.

Study abroad, as we have learned from the McNair Scholars program at DePaul, is one of those experiences. When McNair students first enter the program, their choices of potential graduate schools tend to be highly constrained. But most McNair scholars study abroad, an experience that seems to strengthen personal confidence, social integration and academic aspiration. By the time they are ready to apply for graduate school, they are looking at some of the best institutions in the country, and being accepted to them. True, this is also a function of other components of the McNair program, such as faculty mentoring and summer research projects at leading graduate schools. But study abroad seems to stand alone in its impact. Consequently, the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing has supplied additional funding to the program to underwrite further participation and monitor its impact.

Improving access to international learning and experience has other implications. One of the things we are noticing about the CPS IB students, for example, is how many of them are fluent or partially fluent in other languages. This is partly because the IB curriculum places heavy emphasis on language skills and international perspectives. It is also a function of the fact that IB programs in Chicago draw quite heavily from immigrant communities. We are rightly concerned, for example, that too few American students are fluent in another language. But when we look at some of the low-income IB students in Chicago of Mexican, Chinese, Vietnamese or Romanian descent—the list is much longer of course—who are already fluent or almost fluent in two or more languages, what does the educational challenge become then? More to the point, is it less of a challenge than an opportunity?
There is, in other words, a connection to be made between such students in neighborhood IB schools (and others like them) and programs like McNair Scholars. But making that connection will require all the access strategy dimensions outlined here: partnerships and pathways into neighborhood schools and communities, more divergent definitions and measures of student “quality” in the admission process, and investments to promote greater equity of experience for students once they get to DePaul.

FROM MISSION TO SAGA?

Burton Clark draws a distinction between mission and what he calls saga. Initially, he says, a mission is simply a statement of purpose, intent or direction. But for a college to be truly distinctive, it needs something more. As an aspect of organizational culture, it needs a “saga” that connects what it was in history, what it is today, and what it will be in the future. “Its definitions are deeply internalized by many members, thereby becoming a part, even an unconscious part, of individual motive. A saga, then, is a mission made total across a system in space and time. It embraces the participants of a given day and links together successive waves of participants over major periods of time.”8 In its long story of accessibility—Clark would call it an “organizational legend”—DePaul may well have the makings of just such a saga. Whether it can truly make such a claim may depend on the way it balances its commitments to quality and access in the years ahead.

For Clark, the distinctive college is an exemplar of some educational ideal, the institutional embodiment of a powerful idea in action. But such colleges are, by definition, few and far between. While their contribution to American higher education far outweighs their number, this sometimes borders on idiosyncrasy. Both conceptually and financially, the distinctive college is often close to the margin. DePaul’s distinctiveness is of a different sort. It is still highly tuition dependent and thereby operating on the margin in many respects. But as the largest Catholic university in the country with a continued mission to “make an extraordinary education accessible,” it is clearly operating at the center rather than at the margin of American higher education. Its contribution, perhaps, comes less from the distinctive nature of the educational experience it provides, than from the fact that it is still delivered to large numbers of low-income and first-generation students.

But can DePaul maintain its distinctiveness in enrollment terms as its market position continues to strengthen? The argument here is that this will not happen without clear commitment and management; the forces pulling in the other direction are too strong for it to happen by default. Increased selectivity, without more robust and divergent measures of student quality and potential, will push the university toward greater homogeneity and away from the pressing educational needs and aspirations in our community. What we have to ask is whether marginal improvements in market position (for institutions tend not to move very far or fast) make up for any diminution or diffusion in mission; an unintended consequence of improved market position could be that we simply start to look more like lots of other institutions.9

On the other hand, what is the option? Presumably, it is not to turn back the clock. DePaul has benefited greatly from the quality-driven investments (in enrollment strategy and campus investment) of the past two to three decades. We are a much better institution than we were, and the benefits to our students—both in terms of day-to-day educational experience and the enhanced value of a DePaul degree in the marketplace—are very real. To repeat an earlier point, part of DePaul’s access strategy historically stemmed from the comparative weakness of its market position. As Zemsky et al. point out, institutions in weak market positions are more

---

8 Burton Clark, page 235.
9 Here it might be well to consider the distinction drawn by Brewer et al. between strategies of reputation and strategies of prestige. Simply put, strategies of reputation would focus our attention on serving student and constituency needs while strategies of prestige would seek to position the university with higher status institutions and would place more emphasis on proxy measures of quality such as rankings. See Dominic Brewer, Susan Gates and Charles Goldman, *In Pursuit of Prestige*, 2002.
likely to operate as businesses because they are less likely to have the financial wherewithal to support broader educational or mission-based programs.\textsuperscript{10}

The reality is that DePaul will be a tuition-driven university for the foreseeable future. This fact, as much as any other, will continue to define the possibilities and limits of its commitment to student access. The university has done a remarkable job of maintaining its commitment to access through a period of profound transformation; indeed, its capacity-building agenda in recent decades was grounded in a twin commitment to increased quality and continued access. But we are now in changed circumstances and need to embrace the inevitable trade-offs as they take new form and assume new intensity. While an argument of this paper is that increased market power is likely to put pressure on DePaul’s long-standing commitment to access, it is equally the case, as Zemsky et al. argue, that increased market power is also necessary to deliver on mission. The question is: What are we to do with our enhanced position in the marketplace?

This paper has outlined some of the strategic assumptions and programmatic directions that will help ensure the continuation of DePaul’s commitment to educational opportunity as both the university and its environment continue to change. It further makes the case that DePaul should continue to live out its mission through its enrollment, which would be by no means guaranteed if we were to continue along a selectivity path. There are many ways for Catholic institutions to fulfill their missions, of course, but for DePaul great importance is attached not only to what we teach but whom we teach. But we need to think of student access differently than we have in the past. We will need to be more focused and intentional. We will also need to deliver on the promise of access not just at the point of entry to the institution, but in terms of educational experience and outcome. Getting to this point in DePaul’s history has been a story in itself. And while it will forever continue to be a strategic balancing act, moving forward could well transform this story into a saga.

The Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., Ed.D., became DePaul University’s 11th president on July 1, 2004. His leadership and expertise stem from a broad range of higher education experiences. He was an administrator with St. John’s University in Queens, N.Y., from 1996 to 1999, first as assistant dean of Notre Dame College and later as associate dean of the university’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Concurrently, he served as an assistant professor of higher education in St. John’s Graduate School of Education.

Fr. Holtschneider gained a university-wide perspective as executive vice president and chief operating officer at Niagara University in Niagara Falls, N.Y., from 2000 to 2004, where he directed the university’s strategic planning efforts and daily operations of the campus.

A Detroit native, Fr. Holtschneider earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Niagara in 1985. He studied for the priesthood at Mary Immaculate Seminary in Northampton, Pa., and was ordained in 1989. He studied at Harvard University and received his doctorate in administration, planning and social policy in 1997 after writing a dissertation on the early history of financial aid in the United States. He has been a case researcher and writer for Harvard’s schools of Education, Medicine and Public Health.

After ordination, Fr. Holtschneider served as director and then rector of the Vincentian Community’s college seminary program at Ozone Park in New York City. While in New York, he served as a clinical associate professor of higher education at the State University of New York at Buffalo, teaching one doctoral seminar each fall.

Currently, Fr. Holtschneider is a faculty member and board member of the Boston College Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education. He continues to teach at Boston College’s summer Institute for Administrators in Catholic Higher Education.
DAVID H. KALSBEEK, PH.D.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING, DePAUL UNIVERSITY

David H. Kalsbeek, Ph.D., serves as senior vice president for the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing at DePaul University. His responsibilities encompass undergraduate admission, graduate enrollment and marketing services, financial aid, student records and registration, career center and employer relations, TRiO programs, enrollment and market research and marketing communications.

Since he joined DePaul in 1997, the university has become the nation’s largest and fastest-growing Catholic university, enrolling 25,000 students in nine colleges and six campuses throughout the greater Chicago region. Dr. Kalsbeek and his leadership team have contributed to this success through their role as architects for the marketing and enrollment components of two ambitious university-wide strategic plans, Vision 2006 and the current VISION twenty12.

Dr. Kalsbeek is a frequent speaker on issues related to strategic enrollment management and marketing, net revenue planning, financial accessibility, student retention strategy, assessment and research. He has authored chapters in seven books on higher education administration, marketing and enrollment management. He currently serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of College Student Retention and the College and University Journal. He has been a consultant to dozens of colleges, universities and associations on issues related to strategic enrollment management.

Prior to joining DePaul, Dr. Kalsbeek served as the senior enrollment management administrator at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and before that at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Mo. He holds a Ph.D. in public policy analysis from Saint Louis University, a master’s degree in higher education administration from The Ohio State University and a bachelor of arts from Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, where he graduated summa cum laude with a major in philosophy.
Arnold L. Mitchem, Ph.D., president of the Council for Opportunity in Education, has been a voice for low-income, first-generation students and individuals with disabilities his entire career.

Thanks to his work, the federally funded TRIO Programs (the largest discretionary program in the U.S. Department of Education) have expanded by nearly 400 percent and now serve more than 872,000 students at 1,200 colleges and universities.

Dr. Mitchem graduated from the University of Southern Colorado in 1965. Before receiving his Ph.D. in foundations of education at Marquette University in 1981, he studied European history as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at the University of Wisconsin.

He began his career on the history faculty at Marquette University in Milwaukee. In 1969, he was named director of the Educational Opportunity Program at Marquette, serving in that role until 1986, when he relocated to Washington, D.C., to represent low-income and disabled students nationally. Dr. Mitchem is the first and only president of the Council for Opportunity in Education.

Dr. Mitchem is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Access Network as well as a former trustee of the College Board, and past president of the Committee for Education Funding, a Washington-based coalition of national education associations. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Marquette University.
BRIAN SPITTLE, PH.D.

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR ACCESS AND ATTAINMENT,
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Brian Spittle, Ph.D., is in his 22nd year of administration at DePaul University. In his current role as assistant vice president, he oversees the Center for Access and Attainment within the Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing, which encompasses the university’s TRiO programs, Catholic School Initiatives and the division’s community outreach activities and partnerships with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). A few of the areas of concentration for Dr. Spittle over the past 22 years include adult admission, student and career development and university placement testing, and he also served as an adjunct professor in the department of educational policy studies and research.

Dr. Spittle is actively involved with several access initiatives both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. In Chicago, he has been a member of the Steering Committee for the Consortium on Chicago School Research since August 2007. The Steering Committee brings together researchers at the University of Chicago, CPS and other organizations to inform policy and practice in CPS and to study the long-term effects of school reform.

Dr. Spittle’s academic achievements include a bachelor of arts in politics from Nottingham University in England and a master’s degree in political science from McMaster University in Canada. He was awarded a Ph.D. in social and philosophical foundations of education from the University at Buffalo in New York.
JON BOECKENSTEDT

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, ENROLLMENT POLICY AND PLANNING,
DePAUL UNIVERSITY

Jon Boeckenstedt, associate vice president for Enrollment Policy and Planning, has been with DePaul since 2002. In his role, he provides leadership and strategic direction for DePaul University’s enrollment planning, specifically for undergraduate admission, based on the university’s position and prominence in the higher education market.

Mr. Boeckenstedt has more than 20 years of enrollment experience, specifically in the strategic side of enrollment management, including predictive modeling, geodemography, market segmentation and the application of corporate strategy techniques to higher education institutions and other not-for-profits. He was among the first in the nation to present on the concept of branding higher education institutions and considers it a special interest.

Mr. Boeckenstedt has worked at Mount Mercy and Grinnell colleges in Iowa, the University of Dallas in Texas, Communicorp (a marketing consulting firm working with not-for-profits) in Atlanta, and St. Bonaventure University in New York, where he spent seven years as dean and then vice president of Enrollment Management. He earned his bachelor of arts in English literature from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, and his master’s degree in management and marketing from the University of Maryland University College.
Seated, from left: Michael Sexton, Vice President, Enrollment Management, Santa Clara University; Anne Brennan, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Planning, Admission, and Recruitment, St. Xavier University; Fred Heuer, Assistant Vice President, Marketing, Niagara University; Michael Konopski, Dean, Enrollment Management, Niagara University; the Rev. Paul Marshall, S.M., Rector, University of Dayton

Standing middle row, from left: Peter Stace, Vice President, Enrollment Management, Fordham University; Stephen Pultz, Director, Undergraduate Admissions, University of San Diego; the Rev. Patrick Griffin, C.M., Executive Vice President, Mission, St. John’s University; Beth Evans, Vice President, Enrollment Management, St. John’s University; Jon Boeckenstedt, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Policy and Planning, DePaul University; E. Springs Steele, Vice President, Mission and Identity, St. Joseph’s University; Sundar Kumarasamy, Vice President, Enrollment Management, University of Dayton; David Kalsbeek, Senior Vice President, Enrollment Management and Marketing, DePaul University

Standing back row, from left: Helmut Epp, Provost, DePaul University; Robert Blust, Dean, Undergraduate Admissions, Marquette University; Brian Spittle, Assistant Vice President, Center for Access and Attainment, DePaul University; the Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., President, DePaul University; Michael Hendricks, Vice President, Enrollment Services, Catholic University of America; Dereck Rovaris, Special Assistant to Academic Affairs, Xavier University of Louisiana; Jeffrey Carlson, Dean, Rosary College, Arts and Sciences, Dominican University; Robert Karpinski, Director, Catholic School Initiatives, DePaul University; Patrick Sanaghan, President, The Sanaghan Group; Lawrence Potter, ACE Fellow, DePaul University

Not pictured: Kathleen Carlson, Vice President, Student Recruitment and Enrollment Processes, St. Xavier University
Catholic University of America, located in Washington, D.C., has a total enrollment of 6,710 students. Website: cua.edu

DePaul University, located in Chicago, Ill., has a total enrollment of 25,070 students. Website: depaul.edu

Dominican University, located in River Forest, Ill., has a total enrollment of 3,910 students. Website: dom.edu

Fordham University, located in New York, N.Y., has a total enrollment of 14,700 students. Website: fordham.edu

Marquette University, located in Milwaukee, Wis., has a total enrollment of 11,690 students. Website: marquette.edu

Niagara University, located in Niagara, N.Y., has a total enrollment of 3,650 students. Website: niagara.edu

Santa Clara University, located in Santa Clara, Calif., has a total enrollment of 8,760 students. Website: scu.edu

St. John’s University, located in Queens, N.Y., has a total enrollment of 20,070 students. Website: stjohns.edu

St. Joseph’s University, located in Philadelphia, Pa., has a total enrollment of 8,050 students. Website: sju.edu

St. Xavier University, located in Chicago, Ill., has a total enrollment of 5,060 students. Website: sxu.edu

University of Dayton, located in Dayton, Ohio, has a total enrollment of 10,400 students. Website: udayton.edu

University of San Diego, located in San Diego, Calif., has a total enrollment of 7,200 students. Website: sandiego.edu

Xavier University of Louisiana, located in New Orleans, La., has a total enrollment of 3,340 students. Website: xula.edu
Catholic higher education has a long history of providing access and opportunity to disadvantaged and underserved students. But that commitment becomes harder to maintain when a college sees its profile begin to rise. How do Catholic colleges stay true to their mission of access in the face of market realities?

That question provided the framework for a symposium of Catholic college leaders here last week. The meeting, “Balancing Market and Mission: Enrollment Management Strategies in Catholic Higher Education,” was sponsored by DePaul University’s Center for Access and Attainment. It brought together enrollment management, marketing, and mission officers from about a dozen Catholic colleges for what the organizers believe was the first meeting of its kind.

Enrollment management is sometimes criticized for its focus on the market, said David H. Kalsbeek, senior vice president for enrollment management and marketing at DePaul and one of the meeting’s organizers. Yet, he said, enrollment management is one of the only areas on a campus where the tension between market and mission is directly confronted.

The intersection between the two is important, Mr. Kalsbeek said. It is where colleges determine their priorities, decide how to position themselves strategically, and figure out how to meet the challenge of maintaining access. Mission without market “is empty,” Mr. Kalsbeek said, and market without mission “is blind.” In other words, mission statements are hollow rhetoric if not grounded in a college’s realities, while market concerns devoid of mission are rudderless.

MARGINALIZED IN THE DEBATE

The issue of access has been on the national stage recently with the release of the book *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America’s Public Universities* (Princeton University Press), by William G. Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos, and Michael S. McPherson. The authors focus on public institutions because “it is essential to recognize that public universities have to be the principal engines of progress in addressing these challenges. Important as it is, the private sector is not large enough, nor does its mission focus as strongly on social mobility as does that of the public sector. It is the public sector that has the historical commitment to educational attainment for all, as well as the scale, the cost-pricing structure, and the greatest extant opportunities to do better (given present graduation rates).”

Mr. Kalsbeek read that passage to highlight that however Catholic colleges might define their missions, they are not seen as major players in the area of access.
Catholic colleges aren’t even mentioned in national debates about the topic, a fact that troubled some people at the meeting, and was the main point in the keynote address given by Arnold L. Mitchem, president of the Council for Opportunity in Education. “At present, Catholic colleges and independent colleges in general are playing defensive basketball in the Washington policy arena,” he said. It is time, he said, for Catholic colleges to show some leadership.

Generally, colleges want to improve their academic index, graduation rates, percentage of minority students, and percentage of Pell Grant recipients, said Jon Boeckenstedt, associate vice president for enrollment policy and planning at DePaul, who also helped organize the meeting, yet those goals are in tension with one another.

DePaul has described in its mission statement the kinds of students it wants to be sure to educate: first-generation, low-income, minority, and Chicago residents. Among students enrolled between 2004 and 2008, 53 percent met one of those criteria, but only 4 percent met all four.

Looking at “mission students” in that way can be distasteful to some on a campus, DePaul’s enrollment team says. Administrators in mission and ministry or student affairs sometimes think that kind of measurement dehumanizes individual students, Mr. Boeckenstedt said. Yet, the enrollment officials argue, it’s just about the only way to see if a college is fulfilling its mission.

DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE

Some Catholic colleges measure their catholicity by the number of Catholic students they enroll; others emphasize social justice in the campus experience. There is a debate in Catholic higher education over whether social justice is best expressed through who is in the classroom or through what is taught there. DePaul’s enrollment team has come down clearly on the first side. If social justice is a big part of Catholic higher education, Mr. Kalsbeek said, shouldn’t it be about educating the less well-off, rather than just teaching the well-off to care about them?

But as the university has become more selective, providing access has become a project that requires deliberation, rather than resulting naturally from the college’s weak market position. And, like anything in enrollment management, maintaining that access requires trade-offs.

St. John’s University, in New York, has run into a similar situation. As the university has moved from being a commuter college to more of a residential one, it has grown more selective, making it more difficult for lower-income students who are less prepared to get in, even if they have great potential, said Beth M. Evans, vice president for enrollment management. St. John’s wants to move up in the rankings, Ms. Evans said, but not at the expense of lower-income, lower-achieving students.

Xavier University of Louisiana, a historically black institution, also has a history of providing access. One of its slogans is “beating the odds,” said Dereck J. Rovaris, Sr., special assistant to academic affairs. But even at a college like his, some faculty members want to raise the profile of the student body, he said.
But mission isn’t only about who comes to a college, cautioned Jeffrey Carlson, dean of the Rosary College of Arts and Sciences at Dominican University, in Illinois. It is also about the kind of education students receive, and factors like small class sizes and more full-time faculty members matter, too. While the meeting looked at mission from the perspective of enrollment management, he said, it would be beneficial to look at the topic from other vantage points at future meetings.

The meeting’s organizers hope that the conversation on marketing and mission can continue in the future, and perhaps include more institutions. In the meantime, several participants said it was refreshing to discuss those issues as colleagues, rather than competitors. “We’re not alone,” said Fred Heuer, assistant vice president for marketing at Niagara University, in New York. “We’re all going through the same kinds of questions and challenges.”

Copyright 2009 The Chronicle of Higher Education. Reprinted with permission.