

## **Work Team 6 Report**

### **1. Summary of the Process:**

Work team 5 was comprised of the following members:

- Maria Kohnke
- Gerhard Apfelthaler
- Herb Gooch
- Tom Hoener
- Angela Naginey
- George Petersen
- Gail Uellendahl

The team met on: March 2, 18, April 12, 18, 25 and May 18

The team was charged with investigating the following outcomes:

1. Determine parameters for growth. What capacity is necessary to support our enrollment/future enrollment?
2. Determine how we want to shape the student population over the next five years.
3. What initiatives would assist us in improving retention and graduation rates?

The team began by reviewing enrollment and retention. The primary source for the enrollment and retention data was the 2010-2011 Student Retention Report prepared by Angela Naginey and Cathy Alexander. The team decided that a complete environmental scan needed to be done for each program to determine what factors exist to support growth. Work team members completed a preliminary scan in order to tease out opportunities for growth. The separate preliminary scans were then combined into one overall environmental scan that was utilized by the team in its discussions. The members of the team utilized their own contact with their students and faculty in order to elicit input from those groups. In addition, a preliminary version of the work team's recommendations was presented to Graduate Council for that group's input.

### **2. Summary of the Observations and Findings**

Each graduate program has its own unique challenges and opportunities that have affected enrollment trends. The Graduate School of Education is faced with an extremely unsupportive environment for education in California. This environment has had a direct negative affect on enrollment trends and it appears that it will continue to do so for at least the near future. Many companies have eliminated or reduced their employer reimbursement programs. This change appears to have

adversely affected enrollments in those programs that have a larger percentage of employer reimbursement programs. Consequently, while students are persisting, more students appear to be taking fewer credits per term than in the past. If this trend persists, a significant increase in headcount will be required to meet similar or increasing enrollment targets.

The economic downturn has significantly increased the level of scrutiny given to tuition pricing by the general public, government and media. The commoditization of college education has increased skepticism over the value of a degree when compared to student loan debt. Without some fundamental changes being made in our pricing model and offerings, it seems that these changing attitudes and environmental conditions will not support continuous four to six percent annual tuition increases.

Regional universities live in a complex and dynamic context, competing in many different marketplaces, and performing an array of important educational and community services to diverse constituencies. A critical aspect of a university's ability to offer these services is the manner in which it is formally organized and managed. The team observed that the organizational structure of the University is more traditional undergraduate program/student focused and may unduly restrict its capacity to support the current student population and enrollment growth.

Students in graduate programs are discerning consumers. The 'purchase' decision over education for these students is complex and multi-factorial with potential students not only looking at the core educational product an institution provides, but also at the 'extended product' that includes a wide variety of services. A critical aspect of a university's ability to market its programs therefore is to provide meaningful value-added services. At CLU, these services currently include:

- Bookstore
- Career Services
- Clubs and Organizations
- Counseling
- Fitness Center / Wellness Programs
- Health Center
- International Students and Multicultural Programs
- Library and Technology
- Residence Life
- Writing Center

At CLU, we feel that the current service offering for graduate students clearly falls behind that which is accessible to undergraduate students – both in terms of quantity and quality.

Based on the last Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, approximately 40% of ADEP and graduate students have children. Some of those students are single parents. Especially in the current economy, childcare is a primary concern of those parents. Finding quality, reliable childcare can get in the way of continuing enrollment and graduation. Caring about the whole student and being “family

friendly” is an idea that appears to be consistent with the University’s mission and is something that would make the graduate programs unique in comparison with other similar programs.

There is a paucity of research on the retention and graduation rates of graduate students. This is particularly true for masters and post-baccalaureate credential students. At CLU, data on graduate retention/graduation was not formally collected prior to 2005. A university-wide graduate retention report was conducted this year, the results of which were reviewed by this Work Team. Yet, there are currently no regional or national databases that are available for comparison. The absence of baselines or models makes it difficult to analyze existing data in ways that can provide meaningful information for marketing and enrollment management.

The report examined seems to indicate that graduation rates seem to be taking a downward trend. Additionally, it also appears that, even for those programs with relatively steady enrollments, students are taking fewer credits per semester. Graduate students also have more frequent “stop outs” than Traditional Undergraduates (TUG) students, which exacerbates our difficulty in accurately assessing retention rates in a uniform manner. Team 6 has recommendations for gaining a better understanding of our retention/graduation rates and for increasing these rates across programs.

### **3. Issues that arose that CLU needs to consider in the next strategic plan.**

The following issues arose as a result of the data reviewed and input received:

- The Value Proposition will vary across programs and the unique audiences they serve. However, clear outcomes associated to employment and cost relative to similar programs should be actively addressed. Evaluating “Value” requires looking beyond academic programs and professional goals. It should entail the overall “student experience.” This experience includes the support services offered by offices across campus to both the individual students and their families including alum networking opportunities and a campus structure that connects the graduate student to the greater CLU community.
- The concept of being “family friendly” needs to be considered. A more in depth definition will be required along with the cost/benefit of its implementation.
- CLU should consider how best to create a pricing strategy that clearly addresses the value proposition for prospective students, increases retention and graduation rates for current students and allows graduate programs to shape the profile of its student body. Retention and graduation rates as well as the number of credits completed per term, per student can be improved by introducing new pricing structures and scholarship programs. Using this approach would not only motivate students to remain in the program. But

could be used as a marketing strategy to heighten interest and differentiation in the market place.

- Increased enrollment will require graduate programs to be open to new programs, expanding current locations, increasing locations and/or flexibility in delivery options such as on-line or hybrid course delivery.
- The work team suggests that the following question be asked regarding graduate government structure: “What would be a reasonable governance and administrative structure in a university setting with full integration of graduate programs look like?”

#### **4. Areas that were not covered that still need to be addressed and why.**

The value and cost/benefit of “family friendly” services should be researched further. The scope of this research is longer and broader than the charge of this work team.

#### **5. Recommendations:**

- Enrollment:

As stated above, growth in graduate enrollment will require flexibility in current offerings and/or expansion in terms of types of programs, locations and delivery options. Areas recommended for further consideration include the following:

- Identify locations where growth is predicted (K-12) and design 60/40 cohorts for select programs (Special Education, School Counseling, Educational Leadership)
- Develop certificate programs to enhance professional development of alumni and other professionals (i.e. grant-writing, critical incident training, consulting, etc.)
- Seek grants that support collaboration with multiple school districts to support ongoing relationship and visibility.
- Explore creation of professional development school(s) that include all of our Graduate Education programs.
- Identify and develop relationships with international communities for graduate program recruitment.
- Explore a variety of program delivery models (blended 60/40, Hyflex, summer intensives, etc.).
- Offer continuing education courses for MFTs and licensed psychologists (face to face and on-line).
- Look at serving First generation communities; many are outside of the traditional catchment areas of CLU (this also embraces the mission and values articulated by CLU).
- Due to increased competition, examine current parallel programs/degrees offered at the CSU's and UC's, clearly identifying the gaps. Simultaneously identifying needs in the professional and academic fields.

- Better offerings, improved / increased marketing; better value proposition / better value for price; entry into new markets
  - Improved offering of options for mobility; creation of environment that supports global mobility
  - Continuous adaptation of academic offerings with a focus on quality.
- Connecting tuition, scholarships and value with enrollment strategies:

The university should consider creating a pricing strategy that clearly connects enrollment to value. Retention and Graduation rates can be improved by introducing new pricing structures and scholarship programs. Using this approach would not only motivate students to remain in the program, but could be used as a marketing strategy to heighten interest and differentiation in the market place.

Similar to the Public Universities, Pepperdine (MBA), and Antioch University, a sliding rate scale could be used to motivate students to take more courses. Students taking 1-6 units could pay one rate, while those taking 7 or more could receive a reduction. The reduction in revenue for the greater number of units may be recouped by having more students complete the program at a faster pace.

Scholarship strategies could be implemented to nudge students to remain in their programs and complete their degrees. Furthermore, price discounting could occur for those who are near the end of their program. If a student has met certain criteria, e.g., good academic standing and making progress within a designated time period, he or she would be eligible for a scholarship during the last two courses.

Scholarships, tuition pricing, campus services, and marketing initiatives can shape the student profile of a particular academic program. In concert or singularly, these influencers can be used in a schema that will sway student quality and diversity. Depending on the program's goals and plans, enrollments can be impacted by these strategies in a positive or negative manner. To determine and evaluate which goals and plans are most appropriate, the University needs to consider which programs support our mission and enhance the overall reputation of the school. For example, a boutique graduate program may have a relatively small number of students, but the entire university and the community benefit from its existence. Therefore, one approach could be to develop scholarships to support such a program with highly qualified students that will make it a "flagship" program that in turn will bring national notoriety to the University. As a result, this increased attention will allow the University to "be known" for this special program, which will enhance its reputation and should indirectly impact enrollments in some of the other Undergraduate and Graduate programs. Although this boutique program may not directly produce significant net revenue, its success serves the mission and indirectly supports the budget.

- Student support services:

The work team proposes the following:

1. To align the times at which student services are accessible: currently, the majority of CLU's services are offered at times (daytime) and days (weekdays during the traditional academic year) that fit the needs of undergraduate students. In order to remain attractive to graduate students, services need to be offered:
  - On weeknights.
  - On weekends.
  - During and between all of the 11 week graduate terms and the 8 week online terms.
  - Special consideration needs to be given to services for students in online or hybrid offshore programs who may be located in other time zones.
2. To adapt existing services to meet the specific needs of graduate students who are often older, more mature, with current or past employment, families, etc.. CLU's portfolio of services is designed to meet the needs of traditional undergraduate students. Some possible adaptations include:
  - Career Services: mid-career planning, career change planning, focus on full-time positions, networking, etc.
  - Counseling: managing work-life balance, job-related stress, etc.
  - Residence Life: professional enhancements to graduate programs, business mixers, etc.
  - Writing Center: dissertation readers, research focused writing, etc.
3. To adapt existing services to meet the specific needs of subsets of graduate students, e.g. international students, full-time domestic students, or online students:
  - Career Services: OPT (international students),
  - Counseling: managing culture shock (international students), study techniques in distance learning (online students) etc.
  - Writing Center: plagiarism workshops (international students), blogging (online students), etc.
4. To offer new services that address the specific needs of graduate students: CLU's portfolio of services is designed to meet the needs of traditional undergraduate students. Graduate students have a different set of needs that includes (but is not necessarily limited to) the following:
  - A large number of graduate students are parents or single parents to children of different ages. Offering childcare services to graduate students at times when they attend courses at CLU may assist retention and student learning and constitute a competitive advantage for CLU.

- It is widely known that the possibility to review video (or audio) recordings of classes helps in the retention of students. Many universities nowadays have implemented technology that simplifies and sometimes even automates this process for instructors and students. We feel that CLU's graduate students in particular would benefit from such technology.
5. To offer existing services at CLU's 'other' campuses: Services at CLU are currently almost exclusively offered on the main, Thousand Oaks campus. We therefore recommend that:
- The university should develop a comprehensive plan for the roll-out of services to the Woodland Hills and Oxnard campuses.

- Family Friendly and providing child care:

If research into "family friendly" services suggest that an after hours childcare program is warranted, a plan should be developed with the appropriate departments.

- Graduate Governance Structure:

The work team recommends the following ideas and concepts be considered as part of the strategic planning process:

1. The university administrative level:
  - The development or reinstatement of an executive administrator who is focused on graduate education and works closely with the deans, faculty and provost in matters that affect graduate education.
  - A financial model and budgetary process that is reflective of a unified graduate and undergraduate university. This process would be based on the complex markets, pedagogical and institutional factors of both undergraduate and graduate programs and the revenue sources and cost decisions would be equitable.
  - University services and amenities for graduate students/faculty that are aligned to the unique needs and demands of adult populations (e.g., campus services, scholarships, marketing, child care, etc.,)
2. The university faculty level
  - The development of a university governance structure that reflects the unique work of graduate and undergraduate faculty, programs and students. One suggested structure would be to develop a senatorial governance system. This proportional representative body, would allow full participation of faculty in all governance decisions, through elected representatives.
  - The development of committees (e.g., curricular, promotion and tenure, research, etc.,) that reflect the unique work, expectations

and outcomes of both graduate and undergraduate programs. In some instances these committees might parallel one another, yet operate separately (e.g., ART expectations for undergraduate vs. graduate faculty)

- The development of program structures where faculty could teach in both undergraduate and graduate programs

Although these ideas are, by no means, exhaustive, they do represent the discussions and ideas generated from members of work team six in an effort to respond to thinking creatively about fully integrated graduate programs and structures in an effort to enhance student experiences at CLU.

- Retention and Graduation Rates:

Team 6 has recommendations for gaining a better understanding of our retention/graduation rates and for increasing these rates across programs.

1. Recommendations to provide a better understanding of retention/graduation of grad students:

- Conduct analyses that include grad student characteristics, program delivery types, and admission data
- Conduct research to determine why candidates stop out or drop out
- Create predictive analytics for candidates
- Explore the best ways to determine acceptable attrition rates
- Determine expected completion time by program
- Partner with other universities interested in establishing a graduate student retention/graduation data base

2. Recommendations related to institutional factors that might impact student retention (based on student exit data, focus group data, and the literature):

- Offer flexible delivery programs
- Increase access to graduate scholarships and possible financial incentives for staying “on track”
- Increase graduate student services (including services at Oxnard and Woodland Hills and future off-site campuses)
- Create a niche by being more family friendly (i.e. offer child care with tutoring/education component since more than 40% of our graduate students have children)
- Offer graduate tutoring and writing support
- Explore most effective advising/mentoring model by program and the possibility of more support for advising
- Attend to specific needs of various groups (i.e. International students)
- Consider 4 plus 1 programs

## **6. Appendices:**

A. 2010-2011 Student Retention Report: located at

<http://www.callutheran.edu/assessment/dw/StudentRetentionReport.php>

## B. Environmental Scan:

		Environmental Condition			Necessary (re)actions to achieve growth (or stability)
		Opportunity	Neutral	Threat	
<b>National Environment</b>					
1	Declining demand (affordability)			X	better offering, improved / increased marketing; better value proposition / better value for price; entry into new markets
2	New approaches to learning (online, modular, ...)		X		constant redefinition of offering; focus on quality and continuous improvement; build resources (faculty and support infrastructure)
3	Difficulties in public higher education	X			marketing offensive
4	Need to justify (value added by degree)			X	focus on quality of education; cultivate industry relationships; cultivate alumni relationships; building of brand equity
5	Younger student population		X		improve services for younger students; adapt offering to needs of younger students; new ways to market programs; more internal marketing to UG students
6	New entrants			X	better positioning of university and programs (programs, infrastructure, faculty); brand equity
7	Increasing differentiation		X		continuous adaptation of academic offering; focus on quality
8	Surge in global mobility		X		improved offering of options for mobility; creation of environment that supports global mobility
<b>International Environment</b>					
1	Increased competition			X	improved and intensified marketing; building of brand equity
2	Increased importance of rankings			X	focus on rankings; achievement of accreditation; focus on quality of educational experience; building of brand equity
3	Increased demand for higher education	X			improved and intensified marketing;
4	Declining value of US education			X	focus on rankings; accreditation; focus on quality of educational experience
5	New entrants			X	improved and intensified marketing; building of brand
6	Surge in global mobility		X		improved offering of options for mobility; creation of environment that supports global mobility
7	University alliances		X		Formation of stable alliances with universities or other partners in growth markets