

Enrollment Management Learning Collaborative

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

The Enrollment Management Learning Collaborative (EM-LC) undertakes two or three major Collaborative Research investigations each year to examine issues of importance to the entire membership. Collaborative Research investigations are foundational research studies developed and executed with input from the institutions that make up the EM-LC, with members playing a lead role in defining each investigation's goals. They focus on major issues of long-term strategic importance to enrollment management leaders using data sets or case studies drawn from across the membership and examine national trends impacting institutions of higher education nationwide.

Examples of Recently Completed and Upcoming Collaborative Research Initiatives

REPORT TITLE	METHODOLOGY	TARGET REPORT RELEASE DATE
<i>Authentic Messages in Recruiting</i>	National Prospective Student Survey and Student Focus Groups	Completed
<i>Effects of the Economy on Parents of Freshmen</i>	Parent Survey	Completed
<i>Meeting Student Mental Health Needs: A Stakeholder Survey</i>	Survey of Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Resident Assistants/Advisors	Completed
<i>Parents as Influencers: College Search From the Parental Perspective</i>	Parent Survey	Fall 2009
<i>Managing Affordability II: How Do Families Finance Education?</i>	Student Survey	Winter 2009/2010
<i>Who's Next? College Awareness and Preparedness for Middle School Students and Parents</i>	Parent Survey, Student Survey	Spring 2010

Authentic Messages in Recruiting

Previous EM-LC Collaborative Research has provided detailed analysis of the importance of enrollment drivers and usage of information sources in the process of college search. Drawing upon survey responses from almost 5,900 high school seniors as well as qualitative data gathered in focus groups with more than 78 high school students across the nation, this study elaborates student usage of online search tools, institutional Web sites and campus visits during three specific phases of college search: developing initial interest, determining to apply to certain colleges, and deciding which college to actually attend.

Effects of the Economy on Parents of Freshmen

Many parents are concerned about how the current economic situation may impact their ability to pay for their children's education. In this Collaborative Research study, more than 7,000 parents of newly enrolled freshmen respond to questions about the possible impact of the recession on their sources of funding, the impact on parent and student behavior, and expectations regarding potential institutional support. The findings and recommendations in this report provide colleges and universities with a practical guide for building a campus-wide strategy for preserving enrollment.

Meeting Student Mental Health Needs: A Stakeholder Survey

During their college years, it is common for students to struggle with personal or emotional problems that lead them to seek out a person they feel they can trust and ask for help. At these critical times, students often rely upon faculty, staff or student resident assistants to be knowledgeable about campus policies and provide guidance toward appropriate mental health services. This Collaborative Research study draws upon survey responses from almost 3,500 faculty, staff, administrators, and resident assistants/advisors to better understand perceptions and behaviors among the key stakeholders regarding student mental health issues and responses.

Parents as Influencers: College Search From the Parental Perspective

Past EM-LC research has identified parents as the most important influence on a student's college search process. This Collaborative Research investigation will explore the influence that parents have on their children's college search. A survey of a representative sample of parents will investigate parents' involvement in the college search process, including the onset of search activity from the parents' perspective, usage of information sources, types of information sought, frequency and nature of college-search discussion with children, interactions with admissions and financial aid personnel, and level of perceived influence on a child's college choice.

"I have been very pleased with how Eduventures has jumped in to help institutions deal with the economic downturn and budgets. We have involved someone in every offering you have from the roundtables to the research and have found all the activities very valuable."

Brenda Thompson

Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management
West Virginia University

Managing Affordability II: How Do Families Finance Education?

The steady rise of college tuition costs is believed to be putting greater pressure on many families' finances, yet there is relatively little known about the choices parents and families are making about financing college. This study will examine the financing of a college education through the eyes of parents. Drawing on a survey of a representative sample of parents of college-bound students, this Collaborative Research investigation will explore parent strategies for financing education, including savings set aside for college education, use of institutional financial aid as well as private and home equity loans, restrictions on college choice based on affordability, influence of college spending on family lifestyle choices, and education loan debt.

Who's Next? College Awareness and Preparedness for Middle School Students and Parents

Previous EM-LC research has shown that more than 20% of parents and students begin college search prior to the 9th grade. With increasing pressure on parents to make the right investment in college for their children and with college search inhabiting a widening virtual space, it is becoming extremely important to understand the formative moments of college awareness for families. This Collaborative Research study will sample parents of middle school students and the students themselves to explore college aspirations, level of awareness about college options, information sources for students, influencers in the conversation about college, and planning activities for college. Special attention will be given to low-SES and first-generation students so that institutions can develop plans for establishing programs that develop this pipeline.

CUSTOM ANALYSIS

Custom Analysis is targeted, member-specific research studies with topics identified and prioritized by individual members. They focus on strategic or operational issues specific to that member involving analysis of their own data or best practices in use by other members and are used by members to address their immediate, campus-specific challenges. Custom Research Reports, Custom Inquiry, and Membership Q&A all fall under Custom Analysis.

CUSTOM RESEARCH REPORTS

Custom Research Reports utilize several possible methodologies such as surveys, benchmarking, analysis of members' in-house data and identification of best practices. All past Custom Research investigations are made available to the entire membership, allowing members to benefit from research conducted on behalf of other member institutions. The Learning Collaborative currently has more than **160 Custom Research Reports** available to members in its research library.

Sample Custom Research Reports by EM-LC Research Theme

Understanding Affordability and Financial Aid

- Effectiveness of a Merit Scholarship Program
- Student Debt and the Millennial Generation: Expectations; Reality; and the Prospect of Financial Literacy

Improving Branding and Strategic Marketing

- Perceptions of Catholic Education: Strengths and Challenges for Recruiting
- Attracting High-Achieving In-State Students

Benchmarking Organization, Budgets and Staffing

- Discussing Operations in Tight Economic Times
- Benchmarking Admissions Operations

Highlighting Professional Preparation and Outcomes

- Marketing Alumni Outcomes to Prospective Students
- Messaging Liberal Arts Outcomes

"The money we spent on Eduventures was exceptionally well spent as the quality of the insight was high and the price was very cost-effective. Eduventures is a great resource and partner."

Ramsey Fowler
Dean of New College
St. Edward's University

Maximizing Returns from Investment in Recruiting and Admissions

- Validity of Admissions Test Scores in Predicting Student Success
- Considerations for Print Materials in Recruiting in the Digital Age

Improving Student Retention, Satisfaction and Services

- Identifying At-Risk Students
- Evaluating Freshmen Orientation

Facilitating Student Transfers

- Blueprint for a Transfer Resource Center
- Understanding Enrollment Drivers of Prospective Transfer Students

Yielding Admitted Students

- Financial Aid Leveraging; With Particular Attention to Out-of-State Students
- Perceptions of Admitted Students

Assessing Student Outcomes

- Student Perceptions of Valuable Leadership Development Experiences
- Strengths and Weakness of the Student Learning Environment: A Review of 2007 and 2008 NSSE Reports

CUSTOM INQUIRY

Custom Inquiries include queries of existing data, high-level overviews of areas of existing knowledge, or secondary research investigations. Custom Inquiries are proprietary to the commissioning member, and are therefore not shared with other members.

Sample Topics of Past Custom Inquiries:

- Demographic trends in Miami, FL to inform regional marketing
- Effects of the economy on parents of freshmen at institution
- Custom data cut from *Managing Students to Graduation, Part I and II* Collaborative Research study
- Synthesis of past EM-LC research on recruiting out-of-state students

MEMBERSHIP Q&A

EM-LC members have the opportunity to pose short, fact-based questions to the membership at large through Membership Q&A, thereby leveraging the collective experience of member institutions to guide decision-making. Inquiries generally focus on operational issues with results summarized in short reports, with results subsequently archived and made available to the program membership at large.

Examples of Past Membership Q&A:

- Effects of Current Economic Climate on Student Affairs Programs
- Scholarship Management and Coordination
- Constituent Relationship Management Systems
- Handling Special Talent in the Admissions Process

MEMBER ROUNDTABLES

Member Roundtables are web teleconferences that convene the membership to discuss research findings, best practices, and implementation strategies. They allow members to speak directly with the EM-LC research team, relevant experts and other member institutions in order to leverage the collective wisdom of the membership on specific topics. All Member Roundtables are recorded so member institutions can access them afterwards if they are unable to attend in person.

Examples of Past Member Roundtable Topics

- Effective and Innovative Work-Life Balance Practices in Student Affairs: Follow Up Discussion on Research Findings
- The Economy and The Academy: Implications for Career Services Revisited
- Aligning Print and Digital Messages
- Designing Campus Visits and Tours to Achieve Goals
- Private Debt and Student Choices: Finding Focus in Financial Literacy
- Balancing Academic and Professional Preparation in Messaging