

ABSTRACT

ENROLLMENT PLANNING AND POLICY DESIGN “UNDERSTANDING THE UNDERLYING DYNAMIC BEHAVIOR”

by

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In the university settings, enrollment planning means 1) a better understanding of the factors that influence enrollment patterns. 2) The establishment of structures and procedures to contact more potential students, influence their decisions concerning college attendance and college choice, and retain those students who enroll.

Contemporary universities face challenging management problems such as: growth of non-traditional students, student-teacher ratio, academic quality, quality of research, declining federal and state funds, and increased competition for funds and limited student demand. The use of linear statistical models and predictions by such means as regression analysis, while appropriate in a variety of research domain are inappropriate when dealing with the dynamics of non-linear systems.

Unfortunately many institutions do not meet their goals because the planning process uses tools that are particularly inadequate for present day environment of complexity and rapid change such as building models that will answer a “What causes?” type of question.

The purpose of this research effort is to investigate, to understand the underlying dynamic behavior, test, and design policies that address the enrollment issue by using system dynamics methodology as a tool. It also aims at demonstrating the applicability of system dynamics methodology to address higher education issues.

The proposed framework consists of four main sectors:

1. The Student-Population sector describes the student enrollment process.
2. The Faculty-Population sector describes the faculty hiring, promotion, and retiring process.
3. The Financial sector discusses a fund distribution policy linked to performance indicators.
4. The Environment sector addresses issues related to admission policy, collaboration with businesses, and applicants.