Managing Enrollment: Recruitment, Admissions and Funding

New Dean’s Workshop
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Session Overview

Introductions/Context

Funding Discussion

Admissions/Recruitment Discussion

Questions/Wrapup
University of Houston

- Founded in 1927
- Carnegie Tier 1 Public University (since 2011)
- ~47,000 students in Fall 2021 (~8300 graduate and professional students)
- Part of the University of Houston System
- Hispanic–serving institution
Graduate Enrollment Overview (F21)

Graduate & Professional Student
Total Enrollment: 8332

55% Female
67% Texas Resident
Funding: Doctoral Students

Doctoral students (majority FT) have a stipend and tuition/mandatory fees scholarship.

Colleges/programs manage RA/TA appointments from their college/research budgets.

Provost Office (Graduate School) allocates tuition scholarship funds to the colleges and colleges make award decisions. Graduate School works with Financial Aid to process.
Funding: Master’s Students

• Eligibility for in-state tuition
  • Employment waiver
  • Competitive scholarship waiver

• Need-based funding available to eligible TX students
  (must file FAFSA and meet eligibility requirements)
Funding Challenges

• Managing allocations/criteria for tuition scholarships and need based funding with limited new funds

• Stipend levels and increasing health insurance costs

• Created Graduate Student Employment Committee to bring together Provost Office, HR, Business Office, Student Affairs, faculty and graduate student representative. Committee meets at least once per semester.
University at Buffalo

- RI AAU public research university
- 30,000 students with approximately 4,400 master’s, 2,500 doctoral, and 2,300 professional students
- 22% of graduate and professional students are international; 15% URM
- Over 300 graduate and professional programs across 12 schools, including over 80 doctoral programs
- Graduate Enrollment Management services reports to the VP for Enrollment Management
- Academic units responsible for recruitment, admissions, and orientation
Funding

Complex funding landscape

• Academic deans manage tuition and stipend
• Graduate School manages central fellowships
• Campus establishes stipend minimum for full time, fully funded PhD students and centrally pays comprehensive fee for these students
• Graduate Student Employees Union negotiates minimum stipend for all teaching and graduate assistants across SUNY system

Challenges:

• Ensure transparency for current and prospective students
• Balance tuition and stipend cost escalation with PhD cohort size
Breakout activity on funding

Pick a partner and discuss one of the following scenarios:

1. Graduate students are unhappy with their graduate assistantship salaries in light of inflation and rising costs of health insurance. They have been requesting a raise for the past 2 years. The Faculty Graduate Council formally supported a raise for graduate students. You have heard rumors that the graduate students are discussing unionizing. How do you manage this situation? Who do you engage in the discussion? What actions do you take?

2. You hear from a number of graduate program directors that their stipends are no longer competitive which is negatively affecting their ability to recruit. Upon examining comparative data, you realize that stipends across your institution have not kept up with peer institutions. How do you respond? What actions do you take?
RECRUITMENT and ADMISSIONS
Fall 2021: Geographic

Top 3 Countries
- India
- China
- Iran

Top 3 states (outside TX)
- California
- Florida
- New York
• 2-3% annual increase in master’s level enrollment
• Strengthen academic profile of graduate students (eg. increase selectivity)
• Maintain strong doctoral enrollment
• Foster diversity across ethnic and geographic dimensions
Graduate Recruitment Activities

- Recruitment/career fairs/conferences (virtual/in person)
- Faculty visits to schools/bridge programs
- Virtual info sessions (students, alumni)
- Campus visits/open houses
- Websites, brochures, videos, digital signage
- Social media/email campaigns

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | GRADUATE SCHOOL
Graduate Recruitment: Landscape

Pandemic has upended traditional recruiting practices.

International students have faced challenges related to policy changes, travel restrictions, and delays in visa processing.

Increased student demand for technical fields (computer science, data science, engineering).
**Graduate Recruitment: Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on UH’s strong academics and research</th>
<th>Leverage location in Houston</th>
<th>Strengthen global engagement</th>
<th>Expand access to graduate programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Academic and research excellence (Tier 1)</td>
<td>• Diverse and global city</td>
<td>• Partnership with UG admissions and international agencies</td>
<td>• UH main campus and system undergrads</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research strengths in health, energy, security and sustainability</td>
<td>• Energy, health care excellence (Texas Medical Center)</td>
<td>• International academic and research collaborations</td>
<td>• UH Extend online programs</td>
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<td>• Industry sponsored degree/credential attainment</td>
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<td>• UG to Grad pathway/bridge programs</td>
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UB Enrollment Goals

• Ensure degree programs meet 21st century professional/research workforce needs
  • Appr. 30 new degree programs since 2017
  • Appr. 20 new combined degree programs since 2017
  • 52 graduate level micro-credentials in 2021
• Significantly increase enrollment in a small number of existing master’s programs
  • Data Science, Robotics, Computer Science, Public Health, Business Analytics, Social Work
• Focus on PhD excellence
  • Increase funding for PhD students
  • Increase diversity of graduate and professional students
Breakout group activity related to Admissions/Recruitment

- Link to padlet: https://padlet.com/sclarsen/ikfkz9hjp6tj2lz8
Scenario 1: Declining enrollment

Look at the data. Ex: is it declining new enrollment or problem with retention? Are apps declining or offers or acceptances?

Conduct a market analysis to see where growth is expected (current and anticipated employment demands)

Knowing the average rate within the institution and others is some information that we would need ahead of time. Looking at where the programs can grow?

We need to talk to deans, grad program directors, faculty, program staff/recruiters and current students to find out where the problems might be. Is this a problem with recruitment strategy, admissions processes, low stipends, culture in graduate school, or the nature of programs being offered. Need to understand where the problem might be before developing a strategy to address it

Explore what programs can expand (or expand into) online offerings

When is it appropriate to sunset the programs?

Are the declines due to the pandemic?

Scenario 2: Increasing cohort diversity

Need to direct programs and/or develop resources to help with marketing plans.

Make sure people know about the McNair directory and the National Name Exchange.

Commercial products- i.e.Liaison- non traditional working adults. Provides names for marketing.

centralized funding for recruitment that is distributed to each program-- gauge efficacy and redirect funds if needed.

Outreach on campuses to see what resources could be called upon

marketing students-- project based work--??stipends??

URM students- consider removing barriers for application and required materials.

Other supplemental funding-- bridge funding until paychecks begin, moving expenses, etc.

GEM; SREB+ fellowship increase for URM/minoritized communities

Paid graduate student ambassadors to do presentations and write blog posts. Ambassadors come from a lot of diverse groups. Make $18-20 per hour.
Affinity groups - build up to help with recruiting. And with retention.

Students with disabilities - need attention because may not want to identify.

Partnership with programs: discussions of steps they can take (eg drop GRE)
Assess impact on applications/acceptances/enrollments of all recruiting events attended before returning a second time
Partnerships with area institutions to create pipelines

Grad Admissions providing resources across campus about EDI and recruitment/retention

Professional development for grad students AND faculty related to EDI

What are they already doing and the current population?
Faculty representation? Strategic planning for diversity.
Putting money behind the plan.

Grad Hub
Building a Grad Hub: space for grads to socialize, get support, as a recruitment tool.

Addressing (toxic?) cultures of academic departments and campus culture to support retention

Mentorship training
Find ways to offer support to faculty to become better mentors, create more supportive environments

Need to spark, support, incentivize initiatives at department, unit, program and college levels.

Creating Inclusive Cohorts
Provide multiple recruiting fellowships to individual programs to help them recruit a diverse cohort in a single year. The presence of a diverse cohort will help the program recruit diverse students in subsequent years.

Scenario 3: Revenue Generating Master's programs
Perhaps the ethical dimensions to such revenue generating programs should be critically explored.

Make these revenue SHARING masters programs

Stakeholders: before going to faculty, develop a workable and approachable financial model for new programs with VP of finance/Provost/etc. This can then be model for rolling out future programs relatively quickly.

Hire consultant to do market analysis

Starting with programs and faculty for buy in and need assessment

Ensuring the approach is rooted in learning, service (depending on institution), etc rather than simply revenue generating (what does the state/region need)

Do the stakeholders have an interest: faculty, community partners, employers, prospective students, support systems on campus- capacity
Market analysis - is there a need?
Career transparency -- return on investment
Clear expectation of revenue distribution

Being clear about what “revenue generating” is

Should graduate schools be responsible for leading the convo/push/creation on rev gen?

How does the goal further the educational mission of the institution?

Cohort program
Companies funding partial tuition, business partners
Market analysis

Who are the current students who would come, what are the needs of our community?
Budget for marketing, faculty lines, administration time
Cost benefit analysis

Considering ahead of time - What incentives and to whom?

**Scenario 4: Managing staffing issues**

Agree that this is big problem, with skyrocketing numbers of students from India and other countries. Message to the provost is that this increase is impacting our staff and their ability to do good work. (We didn't generate an answer for this one but have a lot of empathy for the situation)

Same!! — ANONYMOUS

Use an external partner; require (don't waive) application fee

Be proactive and communicate the steps that you are taking. (ie trying to recruit a second SEVIS coordinator)

Questions?

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