Creating a Graduate Enrollment Management Plan that Positions Your Programs for Growth

With Georgia State University
Meet Your Presenters

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A public research university based in Atlanta, Georgia, with a total enrollment of about 50,000 students.

**GSU Graduate School**

- 150+ distinctive graduate degree programs across nine colleges, schools, and institutes
- Over 7,000 diverse graduate and professional students
- Created a GEM plan in summer 2023
- Graduate School was chartered in 2019
Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY
Prepare Your Institution for the Future
Executive guidance rooted in research to support your strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT
Achieve Your Enrollment and Growth Goals
Tailored partnerships powered by a recruitment ecosystem with unrivaled reach to enroll your future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS
Build a Student-Centric Campus
Technology trusted by 850 schools to retain, graduate, and empower more students

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
Advance DEI on Campus and in Your Community
Technology, research, and bold initiatives to strengthen your DEI strategy and eliminate equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS
Embrace Digital Transformation
Data and analytics solutions built for higher education to guide decisions and accelerate innovation

We partner with 2,500+ institutions to accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.
EAB Adult Learner Recruitment
Helping to Secure Your Future in a Changing Graduate, Online, and Adult Learner Market

200+ Partner Institutions
Always Rooted in Research and Data
1. Understanding the Strategic Enrollment Management Imperative

2. Six Core Elements of an Effective Graduate Enrollment Management Plan

3. Key Takeaways
Understanding the Strategic Enrollment Management Imperative
Graduate Enrollment Is in Flux

Pandemic-Fueled Growth Weak Compared Previous Recession Growth

Year on Year Growth of Total Graduate Enrollments – All 4-Year Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recession</th>
<th>COVID-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>+2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>+3.6%</td>
<td>+2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>+4.0%</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) National Student Clearinghouse

Grad and Adult Enrollment Is a High or Moderate Priority For...

100% of surveyed presidents
100% of surveyed provosts
91% of surveyed VPEMS

Source: EAB survey research and analysis.
### Expectations for Graduate and Adult Ed Enrollment Are Growing

#### Enrollment Goals Are Increasing at Most Respondents’ Institutions

Q: How have overall enrollment (headcount) goals for your graduate and adult-serving programs tracked since the start of the pandemic?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Change</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased slightly (0 to 3%)</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased significantly (greater than 3%)</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed the same</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased significantly (greater than -3%)</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased slightly (0 to -3%)</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **51.4%** said enrollment goals for their graduate and adult-serving programs have **increased**.

1. EAB researchers used historical enrollment growth data from 2014 to 2019 to determine realistic ranges for enrollment growth in the coming years.

Source: EAB survey research and analysis.
University Leaders Are Betting on New Programs

More Than Half of Respondents Are Increasing Program Offerings

Q: How has the number of grad/adult ed programs in your portfolio changed since the start of the pandemic?

- 55.9% Increased program offerings in the last three years
- 26.5% Stayed the same
- 17.6% Decreased

Source: EAB survey research and analysis.
Q: What are the greatest challenges facing your graduate and adult-serving programs when it comes to increasing headcount? Select all that apply.

- Competition from other universities: 54.5%
- Limited budget to grow graduate and adult programs: 51.5%
- Limited staff dedicated to graduate and adult programs: 37.9%
- Coordinating efforts across the institution: 34.8%
- Lack of centralized infrastructure to support graduate and adult programs: 33.3%
- Limited faculty dedicated to graduate and adult programs: 28.8%
- Lack of expertise in recruiting for graduate and adult programs: 27.3%
- Lack of clear leadership for graduate and adult-serving programs: 21.2%
- Lack of expertise in delivering online programs: 13.6%
- Competition from non-university providers: 10.6%
- Lack of support from institutional leadership: 4.5%
- Lack of program design expertise: 4.5%
- Other: 9.1%
Students’ Complex Journeys Require a New Approach to Enrollment

How Do You Engage Graduate Students at Scale When Their Path Is Rarely Linear?
Creating the Foundations for a GEM Plan

Key Pieces of the GEM Plan

- Tuition and Financial Aid
- Program Development
- Student Success and Retention
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Environmental Scan
- Faculty and Resources
Campus Perspective
From Georgia State University

Barriers and Setbacks

- Had to restructure growth goals to match market realities
- Insufficient infrastructure in place to support rapid growth amid university-wide budget cuts
- Faculty hesitant to adopt big changes

GEM Planning at GSU

Support From Leadership

- Additional resources and support granted to graduate school
- New university-wide strategic growth plans already underway, allowing graduate school to easily make the case
Georgia State’s Modified GEM Plan

- Program Market Alignment
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Admissions Operations
- GEM
- Strategic Partnerships
- Faculty Resources and Support
- Tuition and Financial Support
- Student Success
Six Core Elements of an Effective Graduate Enrollment Management Plan
Internal and External Environmental Scan

Use Comprehensive Environmental Scans as the Basis for Your GEM Plan

Data to Consider in an Internal Academic Program Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Data Points</th>
<th>Qualitative Data Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Enrollment numbers</td>
<td>✓ Questionnaires from key stakeholders, such as community and advisory board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Student-to-faculty ratios</td>
<td>✓ Faculty reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Retention rates</td>
<td>✓ Student satisfaction surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Graduation rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Job placement trends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When available, take advantage of external scans to save institutional resources and time, while still assessing the favorable and unfavorable effects of events, trends, or scenarios on the institution and its programs.
Program Development

Consider Student-Centric Criteria When Developing Academic Programs

Three Questions to Consider During Program Development

- What is the program’s market viability?
- What is the program’s modality?
- What are the program’s competitive advantages?
Implications and Campus Perspective
From Georgia State University

Making Smart Portfolio Decisions Based on Market Trends

- Renewed focus on high-demand, high-capacity programs in the region, as identified by EAB’s market opportunity reports
- Aligning program options with market demand, considering faculty led ideas, and sunsetting programs
- Investing in innovative academic offerings, like stackable credentials

Portfolio Health Check

Market Alignment of Master's Program Portfolio

- Through master's program growth has slowed considerably: on the national level, the master's market is still attractive for many institutions, especially as the trend is towards potentially downsizing and virtual offerings.
- To avoid hurting your programs and the institution's reputation, it is important to align programs with market demand and faculty ideas.
- Sunsetting programs that do not align with market demand can help reallocate resources to more promising areas.

Investing in innovative academic offerings, like stackable credentials, can help keep programs relevant and competitive.
Key Elements of Graduate Marketing

1. Ensure your marketing is **responsive** to student behavior

2. Take advantage of a multitude of **campaign channels**

3. Develop data-driven and **personalized content**

4. Use consistent and **frequent messaging**
Implications and Campus Perspective
From Georgia State University

Investing in Graduate Specific Marketing and Recruitment Tactics

- Enhanced and expanded lead generation sources, like high-affinity audiences
- Strategic, multi-year communication with prospects throughout the enrollment funnel
- Direct admissions opportunities for qualified undergraduates
- Strategic initiatives to accelerate time to decision
Regardless of the curriculum model for enrollment, institutions should remove unnecessary financial burdens to increase new tuition revenue.
Prioritize Support Services to Shore Up Graduate Student Success

**Cumulative Completion Rates of STEM Master’s Students**

- **41%**  
  Graduated within two years

- **60%**  
  Graduated within three years

- **66%**  
  Graduated within four years

**First-Year Graduate Students’ Concerns**

- **18%**  
  Balancing family and school

- **16%**  
  Balancing work and school and other work issues

- **13%**  
  Feeling stressed, overloaded, or not having enough time to fulfill all their commitments

Source: Council of Graduate Schools, “Completion and Attrition in STEM Master’s Programs”
Improving Graduate Retention with Intentional Campaigns

Reengaging Stop-Outs
- Email and micro-survey campaign to understand reasons for stop-outs
- Intentional engagement with stop-outs to address concerns

Making a Graduate Education Worth It
- New internal and external efforts to secure investment in stipends to lower costs
- Additional opportunities for professional development to improve potential ROI
## Sample Revenue Calculation with Tuition and Expense Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Scenario 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic/Fiscal Year</strong></td>
<td>AY 2023</td>
<td>AY 2023</td>
<td>AY 2023</td>
<td>AY 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated Inputs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment Projections</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition per Credit Hour</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. Credit Hour Production</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>5,250</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuition and Fees</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Tuition</td>
<td>$1,170,000</td>
<td>$2,925,000</td>
<td>$3,412,500</td>
<td>$5,850,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>$292,500</td>
<td>$731,250</td>
<td>$853,125</td>
<td>$1,462,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,462,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,656,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,265,625</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,312,500</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Salaries</td>
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<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>$1,750,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Salaries</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<td>Market Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Design</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,900,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,150,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,400,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,300,000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>($1,437,500)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$506,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>$865,625</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,012,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications and Campus Perspective
From Georgia State University

Creating Professional Development Opportunities to Retain Faculty

Inclusive mentorship training

Measuring and incentivizing academic innovation
Key Takeaways
Final Takeaways

1. Graduate enrollment **growth is not guaranteed**—but it is a top priority for university presidents, provosts, and VPEMs.

2. Challenges such as staff and budget limitations, heightened competition, and graduate students’ changing needs and preferences mean that a **GEM plan is necessary to achieve enrollment growth**.

3. Effective graduate enrollment management requires a comprehensive approach. In addition to the six core elements of a GEM plan, the most effective GEM plans **take the holistic vision, mission, and strategic initiatives of the institution into account**.

4. Ensure your GEM plan is **data-informed, monitored and modified over time**. Effective plans must have support across the institution.