

INSIDE
HIGHER ED

Making the Tough Decisions: Critical Business and Enrollment Strategies

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Solving Challenges in Higher Education

The way students learn—and the way higher education is delivered—is changing by the day. No two student-defined paths are the same. Higher education has never been more challenging. Competition for the best students, researchers, and faculty is increasingly fierce. These constituents expect modern, personalized experiences, and higher education institutions must embrace the latest technology to deliver them. The pressure's on to balance the needs and desires of a new breed of students with increasingly demanding fiscal realities. With a competitive market, performance-based funding, and tighter budgets to contend with, institutions must seek increasingly efficient, cost-effective ways to deliver world-class education and empower groundbreaking research.

New technologies are helping colleges and universities open up new revenue streams and enhance student and staff experiences campus-wide. These technologies include:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)—AI enhances business processes, research, and in-class teaching. It can identify areas where support is needed.
- Machine learning—Virtual teaching assistants can provide data on student performance and suggest future actions.
- Chatbots—Chatbots can answer questions on enrollment and class choices, and enhance the student experience.
- Adaptive learning—Adaptive learning can deliver real-time, value-added experiences and analyze student responses to provide unique feedback and resources.
- Cloud—Reduces IT costs, delivers simple data storage, enables mobile learning, and harnesses the compute power for administration, research, and learning tools.
- Blockchain—Helps bring legacy paper systems together in a single database. Credentials can be checked and validated more effectively than in a paper filing system.

We hope you find the following resources useful in helping you innovate to solve your institution's challenges.

Keith Rajecki

Senior Director, Education and Research

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Introduction

Just about every college and university faces tough decisions these days. Colleges confront new competition, increased scrutiny from politicians and the public, and the erosion of traditional business models. At the same time, the demands of ensuring student success and (at some institutions) research remain.

The articles in this compilation examine tough decisions: giving up donor revenue for longterm gains, placing limits on tuition in the name of minimizing student debt, shifting admissions policy to attract more students, combining programs to limit costs amid demographic shifts. Notably, many of the difficult choices facing college leaders these days relate at least in part to enrollment strategies.

Inside Higher Ed offers these examples to show the range and complexity of hard questions facing colleges today. We welcome your suggestions for institutional strategies worthy of future coverage, and your comments on this compilation.

--The Editors

editor@insidehighered.com

News

A selection of articles by *Inside Higher Ed* reporters

A School Money Can't Buy

BY RICK SELTZER // JUNE 8, 2017

As deal to keep Wisconsin School of Business name intact approaches its halfway mark, donors consider what it means -- and the changing nature of honoring donors.

The price to buy nothing has gone up over the last 10 years, and an exclusive group of donors is very interested in finding out what the next 10 will bring.

In the fall of 2007, the University of Wisconsin at Madison announced an unusual naming partnership for its business school. A group of 13 donors made gifts totaling \$85 million. In exchange, the Wisconsin School of Business would not change its name for a period of at least 20 years.

Many universities try to name their business schools for a single major donor -- they don't leave them unnamed by a group. Wisconsin's announcement also stood out because it came at a time of significant business school naming, a few



University of Wisconsin School of Business

years after the University of Michigan's business school received \$100 million from alumnus Stephen M. Ross in 2004 and subsequently renamed itself the Ross School of Business, and the year before the University of Chicago received \$300

million from alumnus David Booth and decided to rechristen its school the Booth School of Business.

As a result, the Wisconsin arrangement grabbed attention across higher education, economics and fund-raising circles. Terry

Hartle, the American Council on Education senior vice president, [called it](#) the most interesting development in philanthropy he'd seen that year. The *Freakonomics* blog [posted](#) what was perhaps the pithiest analysis: "\$85 Million Will Buy You Nothing at the University of Wisconsin."

In that post, economist Steven D. Levitt wrote that "it probably would have been a lot cheaper for the boosters just to bribe the Wisconsin Legislature to pass a bill preventing the naming of the business school, although that strategy would not have gotten them many positive headlines."

The Wisconsin Naming Partnership has added a few donors since 2007. It's up to 17 partners and has raised \$110 million. But the term of the nonnaming agreement hasn't been extended -- so now \$110 million will still buy you nothing at the University of Wisconsin.

As the partnership is approaching its midway point, Wisconsin administrators and donors are thinking about how it came together,



Michael Knetter, president and CEO of the University of Wisconsin Foundation

how it has worked and what might lie in its future. Some early chatter is beginning about whether donations could be accepted to push back the partnership's ending date.

The discussion opens a window into the world of higher education fund-raising, valuation for naming rights and a university's identity. It will also be watched with interest by fund-raisers, who even a decade later view the deal as an innovative idea that regrettably hasn't been replicated elsewhere.

What's in a Naming Partner?

Michael Knetter is the president and CEO of the University of Wisconsin Foundation. Previously, he was the dean of the Wisconsin School of Business, and he spearheaded the development of the naming partnership.

In the early 2000s, the University of Wisconsin was one of only a few Big 10 institutions without a named business school, Knetter said. When he started as dean, he began to examine the possibility of naming the school if a major donor could be found.

Internal analyses determined that such a naming agreement should bring in a donation of about \$50 million, Knetter said. He started to have conversations with deep-pocketed donors, but those conversations take time. And during that time, Knetter started to question the idea of renaming the school.

"I felt a little bit uncomfortable thinking that one person's name would somehow define the school's brand forever," Knetter said. "These

school namings are usually in perpetuity."

At the same time, naming prices seemed to be going up rapidly. Rather than risk jumping into the fray at the wrong time, Knetter thought it might make more sense to wait -- or to not name the school. As he spoke with different donors, alumni and stakeholders, he became less and less sure renaming the school was the right way to go.

"It doesn't really often work out that the brand that a business school gets through naming has greater value than the parent brand," Knetter said. "Our parent brand was really extraordinary. And Wisconsin, I would say, has an ethos of egalitarianism about it that made me uncomfortable and I think made others uncomfortable.

"How would the business school be viewed on campus if we somehow tried to rebrand ourselves in a way that almost separated us, or distanced us, from the parent brand?"

Knetter came up with an alternative: preserve the name of the school for a finite period of time. Do it through a collective gift.

The idea aligns with three of the most important financial ideas taught in business school, according to Knetter. First, preserving future options can be valuable. Second, brand equity is valuable. Third, teamwork is important.

Knetter set about seeking donations totaling \$50 million for the idea. The first \$20 million to \$30 million happened relatively quickly.



Wade Fetzer III

Then he hit a long slow period. But after talks with some influential donors, donors bought in for well over \$50 million in total. The partnership was announced at the end of October 2007, about two years after the first donors signed on.

Those involved said the idea seemed to fit the University of Wisconsin and its business school. The university and its business school are large and have many alumni, but they don't necessarily have access to the same number of super-rich donors as do the country's most elite institutions. The minimum donation amount for Wisconsin Naming Partners was \$5 million in unrestricted money, and donors could put designations on money above that level.

That allowed more donors to give relatively small amounts of money for a naming deal, rather than one mega donor giving a larger chunk in the \$50 million range.

"No way I could have done that," said Wade Fetzer III, a retired Goldman Sachs partner who has chaired the University of Wisconsin

Foundation Board of Directors and co-chaired a university capital campaign. "And, in a sense, by subdividing or syndicating, that was the tool that allowed Mike to raise this amount of money."

The funding was also notable because it was largely unrestricted.

"Particularly at Wisconsin but probably in most capital campaigns, probably 90 percent of the dollars are designated," Fetzer said. "So, in a sense, this is consistent because it's designated to the business school. But it's still unrestricted."

'Hopefully the Money Is Gone'

The School of Business estimates that the naming partnership has funded about 10 percent to 15 percent of its annual budget, which totaled just under \$68 million last year. The partnership has funded an average of 12.5 full-time faculty members annually, plus scholarships for Ph.D. and M.B.A. students. It has allowed the school to invest in programs and grow undergraduate enrollment from 1,362 in the fall of 2007 to 2,540 in the fall of 2016.

One important condition attached to the money is that it should not be treated like an endowment, said John J. Oros, a naming partner who is the managing director at the private equity firm J. C. Flowers & Co. LLC and a former chair of the University of Wisconsin Foundation. It is intended to be spent in its entirety over 20 years.

"Hopefully all this money is gone, both principal and interest," Oros said. "It maximizes the impact to

the school in this 20-year period in which we're taking the name off the market."

The naming partners like to meet about once a year, Oros said. They typically talk about other university projects and fund-raising needs. They also serve as a sounding board for administrators.

"We were asked things like if we want to be on some sort of board of overseers, and we said no, we'd like to meet and golf once a year or have a nice dinner, and we'd like you to update us and share our opinions on some things," Oros said. "The last thing we want to do is have bought control of the business school among 20 fat cats."

In a few cases, donors have joined the group. One of those cases came when Knetter moved from business school dean to lead the university's foundation. Donors raised \$5 million for him, making him an honorary naming partner.

But the new additions did not extend the time frame for the naming partnership. That option could



John J. Oros, donor



Anne P. Massey, dean

be on the table in the future. Most say that major decisions about the program are still a few years away, but it's clear the 10-year anniversary has spurred some thoughts about the future.

"I think we said around the end of the 10th year we would let people think about buying more time off the market," Oros said. "In the beginning, we worried a lot about how we were going to handle the transition from this 20 years to the next. Now, we think it's probably in the last five years when we're going to get organized."

The business school has a new incoming dean, Anne P. Massey, who could very well be at the helm as some of those decisions are made. Massey starts in August, taking over from François Ortalo-Magné, who is leaving to become dean of the London Business School.

Massey is still learning the intricacies of the naming partnership and reaching out to its different donors. She's focused on mapping out opportunities for the school of business at a time of massive change

in higher education and shifting student expectations.

Eventually, though, she knows talk will turn to the future of the naming partnership.

She's not willing to commit to a course of action yet, declining to rule out options from continuing the partnership as is, to reconfiguring it or moving the school to a new, permanent name.

"I think, from discussions, everyone is very happy with the naming gifts," she said. "It may well continue to expand, bring other people on board. At the same time, we're always stepping back and saying, 'Should we be doing something differently?' That's a good conversation."

Future Values

At the core of discussions about the partnership's future is the ever-changing question of the value of a name. When leaders and donors had such discussions in the past, they talked about how well-known a donor needed to be -- or how much he or she needed to give -- to make renaming the school worthwhile.

They're likely to have those conversations in the future. They're also likely to have discussions about the length of any naming deal.

Colleges and universities have been increasingly moving toward trying to limit the length of naming deals. They've had some success with buildings, but schools still tend

to be named in perpetuity.

For the last decade or so, universities have been working harder to leverage their opportunities when naming schools or buildings, said Tim Winkler, CEO of the Winkler Group, a fund-raising consulting group for nonprofit organizations, schools and institutions of higher education.

In many cases, that comes after institutions years ago permanently named buildings after donors -- and then watched, unable to negotiate new deals, as other colleges and universities brought in larger and larger naming donations as market conditions changed.

The Wisconsin School of Business has managed to put itself in position to take advantage of future inflation in naming gifts, Winkler said.

"You can't fault the university," he said. "They're trying to raise money and use any legitimate means possible."

Fund-raising professionals often wish the Wisconsin Naming Partnership could be replicated elsewhere. But so far, they have been unable to do so.

"I really think it's a creative and wonderful gift," said Martin Grenzebach, the chairman of Grenzebach Glier and Associates, a philanthropy consulting firm that serves nonprofit and higher education sectors. "It would be nice if we could replicate it at other places, but it hasn't happened yet."

Colleges and universities that are naming buildings and schools today

are likely to look at the deals in 10 years and believe they were a bargain for donors, Grenzebach said.

The naming partnership's donors offered several ideas that might explain why their naming deal hasn't been duplicated.

Announcing the decision to forgo a name can be riskier than it sounds, they said. Leaders have to evaluate whether the move will be viewed as a dedication to the school's current identity, which would theoretically boost its prestige, or whether it will be considered an admission that they were unable to raise a substantial sum of money, which could hurt the school's standing.

Also, there are relatively few business schools left that aren't named after donors and famous alumni, cutting the number of candidates. Some mentioned the Stanford University Graduate School of Business as one of the few schools that has not been named after an individual. But an associate dean of development there told the *Chicago Tribune* [in 2008](#) that the Stanford brand is

sacred.

Harvard University has also historically eschewed naming schools after donors, but it changed course with its public health school [last year](#) after a \$350 million gift -- leading to debate about whether its medical school should be next.

The idea of brand and identity was also cited by Wisconsin boosters. The University of Wisconsin and its business school have a special identity, they said. It doesn't mesh with the idea of being named after one person. Oros, one of the naming partners, pointed to a sense of camaraderie and jokingly suggested it is because plenty of beer is brewed in Wisconsin.

Of course, donors also acknowledged that every institution ascribes to a set of high moral principles and believes itself to be unique. And it should be noted that the Wisconsin School of Business is located in a building, Grainger Hall, that is named after businessman and donor David Grainger.

Oros said the school may have

been able to forgo a name in part because it was so particular about finding the right name.

"I think it was our lack of success at finding a naming partner that led us to this as a better way forward," Oros said. "We were so fussy about getting enough money if we ever did it, and doing it with the right name, that we never did it."

Knetter, the university foundation president and former business school dean who crafted the partnership, said he thinks there was some value to being the first school to announce a nonnaming agreement.

Knetter also believes the deal will be renewed in 10 years. Yet he admits such a move could require unique circumstances.

"Nobody else has done this since then, and that doesn't necessarily mean that nobody's tried," he said. "But it may not be as easy to do the second time. People have to trust and feel like it's the right thing. And that trust was something I'll never forget." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/08/university-wisconsin-naming-partnership-approaches-halfway-point>

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When Net Price Setting Pays Off

BY RICK SELTZER // JUNE 19, 2017

University of Dayton reports strong results for first class graduating under a financial aid plan keeping students' net tuition stable for four years, but considerable risks mean the idea might not always transfer well.

In 2013, the University of Dayton started a new fixed net-price tuition plan, promising most students that their financial aid packages would rise in lockstep with any increases in tuition sticker prices over four years -- keeping steady the effective price students pay.

This spring, when the first class to enroll under the tuition plan was preparing to walk across the stage, the private Roman Catholic university was happy [to broadcast](#) the results of the program.

The four-year graduation rate for the class of 2017 jumped eight percentage points, hitting a record 67 percent. Student borrowing plunged, dropping by more than 22 percent over all. The average four-year graduate borrowed less than \$18,000 in student loans -- \$5,000 less than previous graduates who hadn't been part of the fixed net-price plan.

Those numbers were unveiled at a time when college prices, student borrowing and retention rates are



University of Dayton

under intense scrutiny. They ask the question of why more colleges and universities are not crafting their own fixed-tuition plans.

Of course it's not so simple. A deeper look shows fixed-tuition plans require a delicate balance between up-front costs to freshmen, future costs to upperclassmen and the amount of uncertainty a college or university is willing to shoulder.

Several other institutions have tried fixed-tuition plans over the years, crafting programs with varying details and equally varying results. And while the University of Dayton has made real gains in both word of mouth and metrics under its program, its gains have come with equally real financial trade-offs.

The bottom line is that fixed-tuition plans tend to shift some finan-

cial risk from students to a college or university. As a result, they're easier to put in place -- and keep in place -- at wealthy private institutions. Smaller colleges with lower endowments and public universities with more reliance on unpredictable state funding can find it harder to create programs or make them effective.

Dayton falls somewhere in the middle. It's not among the wealthiest universities with billion-dollar endowments, but it is not on the poor end of the spectrum, either.

"It has worked well for some," said Jim Hundrieser, associate managing principal for AGB Institutional Strategies. "The privates are having an easier time to be able to do some five-year projected budgets and understand what are some of the implications of doing this."

Those implications start with marketing and continue into financial projections, Hundrieser said. Universities need to be able to effectively communicate about the fixed-tuition plans and their nuances to students.

The Dayton plan uses the mechanism of financial aid to keep students from seeing increases in the price they pay for their education. The university promises full-time students that their financial aid will grow dollar for dollar with tuition for four years -- although it is technically guaranteed for eight semesters in order to cover students who take

semesters off or take part in co-ops. The idea is that their net price will be the same when they are seniors as it was when they were freshmen.

When Dayton started the program, it also eliminated all fees. Accepted students receive financial aid letters mapping out the full cost of tuition and their projected costs for expenses like housing and meals over four years. The idea is that students won't face any surprise bills and can plan out their spending over the course of their studies.

The mechanisms are very different than some other fixed-tuition plans. In contrast to buying down

or university will post a high freshman tuition discount rate -- the rate at which the tuition sticker price is discounted by institutional financial aid. The rate normally drops as students progress, because scholarships and other institutional aid don't rise in lockstep with tuition.

Under Dayton's model, the opposite is true. The discount rate will be lowest during a student's first year. The discount rate will rise over time as the sticker price of tuition rises but aid keeps pace to maintain a flat net price.

Figures from the university's Common Data Set make that clear.

Dayton is gapping full-time freshmen -- not meeting their fully assessed financial need -- at a higher rate under the fixed net-price plan than it was before the program was put in place. In 2012-13, the year before the plan started, 34 percent

of first-time, full-time freshmen who were judged to have financial need had that need fully met. The percentage dropped to 31 percent in 2013-14, and fell farther to just under 20 percent in 2016-17. The overall amount of freshman need met has varied but still shows a downward trend, falling from 80.2 percent the year before the program was put in place to 78 percent in 2016-17.

At the same time, the percentage of all full-time undergraduate students to have their judged financial need fully met has risen, from 34 percent the year before the plan was

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The privates are having an easier time to be able to do some five-year projected budgets and understand what are some of the implications of doing this.

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tuition increases, some institutions have put in place plans that charge students different tuition amounts based on the year they enroll. Other programs come with even greater differences -- public institutions in Texas offer first-time undergraduates fixed tuition over four years, but students opting into plans often must start by paying more in their first year than those paying variable tuition.

Dayton's model of buying down tuition to a steady level through financial aid has significant financial implications. Typically, a college

put in place to 38 percent in 2016-17. The percentage of overall student need met for all students has gone up, from 77.6 percent the year before the plan was implemented to 83.2 percent in 2016-17.

It is also worth noting that some students at the university do not receive financial aid and would not receive the benefits of the university's fixed net-price plan. About 3 or 4 percent of students fall within that range.

The fixed-tuition strategy means institutions have to think differently about rising costs. Any cost spikes would have to be absorbed by incoming freshmen before their tuition is locked in -- or by college and university resources.

It's easier to deal with in an environment of low inflation than in one of high inflation.

"One of my general assumptions

would be in this type of strategy, you are not having a 7, 8, 9 percent tuition increase," Hundrieser said.

Another piece of the puzzle is infrastructure. The University of Dayton plan is likely easier to administer and more flexible than other types of plans because it relies on financial aid to keep net price flat instead of locking in differential tuition for students who enrolled in different years, said Bill Hall, the founder and president of Applied Policy Research Inc., an enrollment and pricing advising firm.

"With many of the tuition guarantees, you end up with this very com-

plex cost-accounting mechanism," Hall said. "You end up with different cohorts with different tuition rates."

That back-end complexity was one problem faced by Northwestern College in Iowa after it put a guaranteed payment program in place before the 2007-8 academic year. But by the 2009-10 academic year, the 1,225-student college [had decided](#) not to fix tuition for four years after freshman enrollment dropped.

"We pretty much took our average price increase for the previous 10 years, built that into our model and said to families, 'Hey, here's what it's going to be for four years,'" said

in exchange for what would likely be a lower price in the future. But families were not making their calculations beyond the first or second year of college, Bloemendaal said. Many asked what would happen if their sons or daughters did not return after their first year. Then they would have paid a tuition premium without the payback from fixed tuition over time.

Another issue was that the college is a small institution with a small endowment -- \$47 million in 2015. It was trying a fixed-tuition plan at a time when higher education inflation was high.

"I think if we had done it for five healthy years and established it, I think the word would have spread," Bloemendaal said. "But then this recession started to hit, and people got really anxious about everything."

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With many of the tuition guarantees, you end up with this very complex cost-accounting mechanism. You end up with different cohorts with different tuition rates.

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Mark Bloemendaal, Northwestern College's dean of enrollment and marketing. "What it did was put us in a less competitive situation with our primary competition."

If many of the college's students came from families with salaried positions, the plan might have been easier to sell, Bloemendaal said. But the college is in a rural area and draws from many families with agricultural backgrounds, where income varies year to year.

The college could make the case that families should be willing to pay a higher price versus its competitors during students' first years

Some small institutions believe they can compete with fixed tuition. Kettering University in Michigan [started to guarantee](#) fixed undergraduate tuition in 2012-13. It also eliminated academically related fees.

Kettering is not your standard university. The institution is a co-op university focused on science, engineering and business. Its typical student will earn \$60,000 to \$70,000 over the course of co-op work.

The university's endowment, at about \$80 million, is not large, said its president, Robert McMahan. But Kettering is financially healthy. So

the question was how the university structured itself to improve access.

"Affordability is not just price," McMahan said. "It's consistency. It's a reasonable exercise for the institution, I think, to bear that risk."

McMahan said retention has improved since Kettering started fixing tuition, particularly among upper-classmen. He felt it was too early to talk about trends in detail but said there are no plans to end fixed tuition.

There is no doubt that fixing tuition shifts risk from student to university, said Jason Reinoehl, vice president for strategic enrollment management at the University of Dayton. He also acknowledged that it shifts risk from upper-classmen to freshmen.

For students that risk can be minimized by staying enrolled. For the institution, it can be minimized by retention, low inflation of costs and, to a degree, large scale.

The University of Dayton has several features that give it some protection from temporary fluctuations in tuition revenue. At \$473 million as of the end of the 2016 fiscal year, its endowment is considerable. It has a well-known research institute that generates revenue. And it has a high tuition sticker price of \$41,750 for the upcoming year.

"I do think there is only a certain segment of institutions who, realistically, from a financial perspective, could take this risk," Reinoehl said. "If we were smaller, I think we'd be more risk averse."

While the fixed net-price plan has

shifted the distribution of financial aid, it hasn't prevented the university from spending more on aid. Its aggregate institutional aid directed to undergraduates went from \$107 million in 2012-13, the year before the plan was put in place, to \$142 million in 2015-16. Full-time undergraduate enrollment rose by more than 800 during that time, to 8,226, but that wasn't enough to account for all of the increased aid. The first-year tuition discount rate also increased, from 43.8 percent in the year before the plan was put in place to 46.2 percent in 2014-15.

Reinoehl went on to argue that the university packages the fixed net-price tuition plan with some import-

for students to understand.

"In many cases, the flagship publics have frozen tuition because states are mandating it," Reinoehl said. "They're doing all kinds of things with fees. It's really not transparent at all."

Some experts advised caution against drawing a direct line from the university's fixed net-price tuition plan to its positive outcomes in retention and student debt levels. The university made several changes at once, making it hard to prove causation against the backdrop of a changing higher education market, said Sandy Baum, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. She also noted that annual student borrowing

has been dropping across the country recently. That could have contributed to University of Dayton students graduating with less debt this year than they had in previous years.

There are also worries that fixed-tuition plans appeal to upper-income students more than lower-income students. Families with more resources can afford to pay higher up-front costs in exchange for a return in the long run. Poor families often cannot.

"It's good that people are trying things," Baum said. "But I worry about things being gimmicky, as opposed to really making a difference for the right people."

Initial results indicate the University of Dayton may have been able to slightly increase enrollment of low-income students under the new

“ I think if we had done it for five healthy years and established it, I think the word would have spread. But then this recession started to hit, and people got really anxious about everything. ”

ant other aid and innovations that make it attractive to students. The university has some other scholarships designed to cover costs. One provides up to \$4,000 over four years for textbooks. Another provides \$3,000 to cover flights and travel expenses for students studying abroad.

Most notable is the fact that the university eliminated fees when it started the fixed net-price plan, he said. That caused tuition [to spike](#) in 2013 in order to cover revenue that previously would have been raised by fees. But officials argue it made the university's price much easier

tuition plan's early years. The year before the plan was put in place, 12 percent of the university's full-time first-time undergraduates received federal Pell Grants, which are considered a proxy for low-income student enrollment. In 2014-15, the most recent year for which federal data is available, enrollment of full-time first-time Pell recipients was 14 percent.

The fact remains, however, that a stable tuition price is an extremely attractive feature for many students. And many colleges and universities are considering it.

"There is not a single client institution, particularly at the board level, that is not asking questions about

these kinds of experimental programs," said Kathy Dawley, principal at Hardwick Day, the financial aid consulting division of EAB. "Certainly the college-going population, their families and communities, from public policy, politics and all the way down, the cost of college and accessibility to college is an increasingly bigger concern."

EAB [late last year](#) published research showing that students are more likely to drop out of college if they lose even small amounts of financial aid. Students who see their financial aid increase were more likely to complete their degrees, though.

Additionally, private colleges are

under pressure to find new ways to compete as tuition-free public college spreads. Fixed-tuition plans are a logical strategy to explore.

"This is not going to go away," Dawley said.

Dayton's fixed net-price tuition plan was in place before its current president, Eric F. Spina, took over in July 2016. But he has voiced support for it.

"Investing in a college education is a substantial commitment for families and for students, often with long-term financial implications," he said in a statement in April. "Higher education has a responsibility to be up front and transparent about what those costs will be." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/19/university-daytons-fixed-net-tuition-price-pans-out>

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How a Regional Public University Reversed Enrollment Decline (and It's Not Free Tuition)

BY SCOTT JASCHIK // AUGUST 28, 2017

SUNY Fredonia had been suffering year after year of declines. And while the state's new scholarship may be helping, officials attribute major gains to new policies and new strategies.

For many regional public universities in regions with declining populations and economies that aren't booming, maintaining enrollment is a challenge. Failing to do so is dangerous. While people don't talk about public universities as being tuition dependent, most are – through a combination of their reliance on tuition revenue and state funding formulas that are based on enrollment.

The State University of New York at Fredonia is just such a public university. While SUNY's acclaimed research universities capture attention (and swarms of applicants), Fredonia has been shrinking for years.

It is located between Buffalo and Erie, Pa., near Lake Erie, in a part of the state that is about as far from Manhattan (geographically and economically) as is possible.

So that's what makes this year's freshman class at Fredonia notable. The class is nearly 25 percent larg-



Orientation at Fredonia

er than last year's, and the second largest in Fredonia's history. The immediate guess about the turnaround might be New York State's new scholarships that offer free tuition at public colleges for most residents.

But it turns out that only a small share of Fredonia's new class obtained those scholarships. The extra aid helped, officials said, and may help more in years ahead, but they credit other changes as more significant. At the same time, Fredo-

nia's success may be crucial to the longterm goals of New York State's new scholarship program, which doesn't guarantee admission anywhere.

Fredonia is among the SUNY campuses that don't have strong name recognition outside their regions, but which have something else: capacity. Fredonia was ready to enroll all of its new students, and would be happy to keep the freshman class at that level.

It will be enrollment trends at the

Fredonias of the state (along with online programs) that will determine whether New York State ends up with a larger share of its population as degree holders.

So how did Fredonia turn things around?

Virginia Horvath, the president, says the university worked with consultants from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, who came to the campus and met with more than 100 employees to help develop a plan, which was fully in place a year ago. She said it was important to grow enrollment without letting standards drop. The average high-school grade (on a 100 point scale that Fredonia uses) is 89.5, the same as recent years when far fewer enrolled.

The key, she said, was to focus on “what is the experience for an applicant?”

First, that meant reaching students -- both near and far.

“We weren’t paying enough attention to our primary market,” in Western New York, said Dan Trumata, associate vice president for enrollment services. So in Western New York, Fredonia made a determination to communicate with every high school, those with a graduating class of 30, not just those with hundreds of seniors.

At the same time, he said, Fredonia opted to use SUNY resources it hadn’t in the past. SUNY has a welcome center in New York City.

For the first time, Fredonia officials used the site to do outreach to New York City and Long Island students. While most of the gains this year are from Western New York, there are also more students coming from the New York City metro area.

Fredonia has also started a policy (likely to have an impact in the future, not this year) of doing outreach to potential students two or three years before they might enroll, instead of focusing just on high school seniors.

Beyond outreach, Fredonia also changed policies, again with the applicant in mind.

In the past, it took Fredonia an average of 28 days to respond to a completed application. This year, that number came down to five days.

Cedric Howard, vice president for enrollment and student services, said that when students finish an application, they want to know if they will get in. Fredonia still does the same review it did in prior years, but makes sure to do so promptly, he said.

In addition, the university committed to providing information on eligibility for aid at the same time applicants were admitted. All of this was designed for an applicant who had gotten excited about Fredonia to commit and enroll.

The result: 1,164 first-year students. That’s not only up nearly 25 percent from last year’s 934 but exceeds the university’s goal for this

year, of 1,000.

The Impact of Free Tuition?

So what about the [Excelsior Scholarship](#), the new program -- pushed by Governor Andrew Cuomo -- to provide free tuition to most who enroll full-time at SUNY and the City University of New York?

Horvath said the aid is welcome. This academic year, 337 undergraduates at Fredonia have the awards. Of that total, 146 are freshmen.

By the time the New York Legislature approved the program, admissions offers had been made and students were about to indicate where they would enroll. While Horvath said she assumes that the program may have been an extra incentive for some freshmen, she noted that most students and families had gone through the entire college planning process without expecting this aid to come through for next year.

In addition, Fredonia tracked a range of indicators throughout the year -- campus contacts by prospective students, applications and so forth. And everything ran 20 percent or more above last year’s total throughout the year. That’s why she doesn’t think Excelsior was a big factor this year.

But next year, with Excelsior’s opportunities as part of the equation throughout the admissions cycle, along with the new strategies in place at Fredonia, Horvath is hopeful of continuing to see a freshman class as large as the one this year. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/08/28/suny-fredonia-had-major-turnaround-freshman-enrollment-and-its-about>

Saying No to the Majors

By **ASHLEY A. SMITH** // **DECEMBER 7, 2017**

Faculty and student groups fought a proposal from the Oakland Athletics to build a new ballpark on college property. And their board listened.

It's not every day that a community college gets courted by a Major League Baseball team.

It's also not every day that a community college gets to turn away a professional baseball team, either.

But that's exactly what happened Tuesday evening when the Peralta Community College District's governing board directed its chancellor to "discontinue planning for a community engagement process on a possible baseball stadium."

The Oakland Athletics have spent about a year examining where to build a new ballpark in the city. In September, the A's announced that they wanted to build the new, 35,000-seat stadium on a district-owned 15-acre property near Oakland's Laney College, which is one of Peralta's four two-year institutions.

The Athletics' plan promised to address displacement of residents and small businesses and to create new affordable housing and well-paying jobs. The team also proposed opportunities for partner-



ships on mixed-use developments that would help generate revenue for the district.

But faculty groups, students and community organizations have been vehemently opposed to the proposal.

"We're all really excited" by the board's action, said Jennifer Shanoski, president of the Peralta Federation of Teachers and a chemistry instructor at Merritt College.

"Especially in these times when people feel so powerless with everything happening to us all the time.

Here's an instance where good old-fashioned organizing and grass-roots organization worked."

In a team statement released Wednesday, the A's said they were "shocked" by the board's decision not to move forward.

The news also caught Oakland leaders by surprise.

Jowel Laguerre, the district's chancellor, said the board didn't make its decision specifically because of opposition from the campus groups, but because they want to focus on assessing the needs of

Making the Tough Decisions: Critical Business and Enrollment Strategies

the college and seeing what other partnerships are available.

“The district will build on its shared governance model to reimagine the district’s needs and the resources to meet them. We will develop a robust and inclusive internal engagement process to assess our needs and partnerships aligned with our mission.

The Board of Trustees will continue due diligence in determining the costs and benefits of potential development,” the board’s statement said.

In an interview with *Inside Higher Ed*, Laguerre pointed out that Peralta has challenges with its infrastructure and wants to focus on better addressing the housing and food-insecurity needs of its students.

“The board is really focused on the long-term future of the district and not necessarily the opposition that came up for something that was not well detailed,” Laguerre said.

A lack of details helped keep faculty and students from supporting a ballpark on college property.

The A’s “approached the district and administration well, but there was not a lot of transparency and openness with faculty, staff and students,” Shanoski said. “They tried to do these sort of listening tours, but there was never any information being provided.”

Laguerre said there wasn’t anything for people to be against because the proposal wasn’t a project yet, just a concept.

“It’s easy to say yes or easy to say no but more difficult to say,



Oakland Athletics
@Athletics



A's STATEMENT: We are shocked by Peralta's decision to not move forward. All we wanted to do was enter into a conversation about how to make this work for all of Oakland, Laney, & the Peralta Community College District. We are disappointed that we will not have that opportunity.

12:59 PM - Dec 6, 2017

184 303 643



Libby Schaaf
@LibbySchaaf



Oakland remains fiercely determined to keep the @Athletics in Oakland. It is unfortunate the discussion w/ Peralta ended so abruptly, yet we're committed, more than ever, to working with the A's and our community to find the right spot in OAK for a privately-financed ballpark.

1:37 PM - Dec 6, 2017

245 181 542



‘Let’s think about this and how can this happen,’” Laguerre said. “Even though we’re not using the Oakland A’s project to ask those questions, that’s what we’re asking. How can we use the resources we have and what kind of partnerships can we develop?”

For the different groups on campus, the A’s couldn’t sufficiently address concerns around the potential impacts of a new ballpark on the college and surrounding area.

Community and faculty groups raised concerns on issues ranging from the effect of construction and game noise on classes to displaced housing and gentrification in the

neighborhoods surrounding the college.

“We didn’t make a knee-jerk reaction,” said Donald Moore, president of the Laney Faculty Senate and an anthropology professor. “Part of it was listening to the Oakland A’s and getting a bunch of supportive comments and no meat behind it. No substance.”

Moore said whenever anyone raised concerns about traffic or displaced businesses, the team would make reassuring statements about mitigating any problems the ballpark would bring, but team officials did not provide details or research to explain how they would solve

Making the Tough Decisions: Critical Business and Enrollment Strategies

those problems.

Laguerre said some of the issues faculty members raised, like noise concerns, could have been addressed once the proposal was farther along in planning. But the experience of receiving an offer has helped the college learn how to deal with development and partnership proposals, he said.

Meanwhile, many people around Oakland are eager to keep the team

in the city, especially after the Oakland Raiders received approval from the National Football League to move to Las Vegas in 2019. Prior to selecting the college's land, the A's considered a waterfront site or a new stadium near their current home at the Oakland Coliseum.

Moore said with the Raiders leaving for Las Vegas and the Golden State Warriors abandoning nearby Oracle Arena for San Francisco,

the A's could have the Coliseum to themselves to redevelop and improve that neighborhood.

"We want to keep the A's in Oakland, as well," Laguerre said.

"I believe in and stated we need to do everything we can to keep the Oakland Athletics in Oakland, but it's not just Peralta's job to do that. It's the whole community that needs to come together around that particular issue." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/12/07/peralta-community-college-rejects-oakland-offer-new-ballpark>

So Much for a Honeymoon

BY RICK SELTZER // AUGUST 22, 2017

Duke's president decided to take down Robert E. Lee statue after less than two months on the job.

Vincent E. Price had been the president of Duke University for 49 days when a statue of Robert E. Lee was taken out of the entrance to the university chapel this weekend.

In those 49 days, he'd gone from being vaguely aware of the statue's existence to learning that it was vandalized as Confederate monuments across the country came under a wave of new scrutiny in the days following a violent white supremacist rally around a statue of Lee in Charlottesville, Va. He'd reached out to students, faculty members, alumni, Duke senior leaders and trustees. And he'd decided that Duke's Lee statue needed to be removed.

"It was clear that a lot of attention was being given to the statue and that the issues that had percolated for some number of years here on campus were rising with a new sense of urgency, and certainly with a heightened visibility," Price said in a telephone interview Monday, two days after the statue [was removed](#).

Not everyone agreed about what should be done with the statue, Price said. But opinions tended to



Robert E. Lee (center) in Duke Chapel, prior to removal, and President Vincent Price

lean in the way of taking it down in light of its history, the challenges of the moment, safety concerns and as a way to express Duke's institutional values.

Those values, as Price explained in [an email](#) that went out to students, faculty, staff and alumni Saturday, are a "commitment to justice, not discrimination; to civil protest, not violence; to authentic dialogue, not rhetoric; and to empathy, not hatred."

The events of the last week at Duke stand out as a stiff test for a new president at one of the premier

private universities not just in the South but in the country. They expose the college presidency's nature as an executive position that is often less about planned priorities than it is about making difficult decisions under less-than-ideal circumstances and at inopportune times. They also show that presidents seasoned and unseasoned are ultimately defined by the decisions they make.

"I think there are moments that define who we are as a leader," said Alvin Schexnider, a senior fellow with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Col-

leges and a former chancellor of Winston-Salem State University. “It matters less that you’re in a new position than what you bring to it -- not just in the way of skills and talents and that sort of thing, but what your core values are, what you believe in.”

A New President Faces an Old Statue

Duke [has traced](#) the history of the Lee statue back to the late 1920s and early '30s, when stone carver John Donnelly was trying to decide what figures to carve for the university's chapel. The building had been designed to echo Europe's Gothic cathedrals with their entrances flanked by stone carvings of biblical figures and saints. But James B. Duke was a Methodist, so carvings of saints were deemed inappropriate. Eventually, 10 figures from Protestant, Methodist and American Southern history were selected.

They included Lee, who was stationed in stone alongside the country's third president, Thomas Jefferson, and a Southern poet and musician who died in North Carolina, Sidney Lanier.

[A new level of controversy](#) swirled around the Lee statue after white nationalists rallied around a Confederate monument to Lee in Charlottesville earlier this month. On Aug. 14, [a crowd toppled](#) a Confederate statue in Durham, N.C., just a few miles from Duke's campus. Then between Aug. 16 and Aug. 17, [someone vandalized](#) the statue of Lee at Duke Chapel.

Price only learned that the statue had raised issues at Duke in the

Commented on [Duke University's public post](#)



Erik LaPresta What an astoundingly cowardly decision. As a Duke alum, I feel ashamed. Please don't send me any more requests for donations. The idea of writing a check to Duke at this point seems "anachronistic".

Like · 86 Replies · 226 · about 4 months ago

Commented on [Duke University's public post](#)



Christine Contreras-Slaughter You know what I am not shocked by? The number of Duke Grads exposing their true (wrong) feelings in this thread. You know why I am not shocked? Because as a stu... [See More](#)

Like · 131 Replies · 193 · about 4 months ago

Commented on [Duke University's public post](#)



Mallory Roman As a current graduate student, we applaud this move! Duke's campus has been rife with racial incidents for the past few years, from nooses hung on East campus to a black lives matter speaker's poster being defaced with racial epithets. This is a step in the right direction.

Like · 66 Replies · 108 · about 4 months ago

past after the events in Charlottesville, he said. He started a historical review of the circumstances under which it was placed at the chapel and began reaching out to university constituencies. Those activities had already started when the statue was vandalized.

The vandalism gave the issue more urgency. Price decided to take the statue down. It will be preserved so students can study Duke's past.

The events stoked mixed feelings about a number of issues, even among Duke leaders.

The chapel's defacing was a disappointment, Duke Chapel Dean Luke Powery [told](#) *The Herald-Sun* of Durham, N.C. Powery called it "unfortunate" that the defacing hap-

pened rather than a conversation that could still have led to the statue being removed. But it happened, and now he believes it makes sense to look at other carvings and statues on campus.

"I looked at the empty space, and a couple of things came to mind," Powery said, according to the newspaper. "I saw it as a hole, or a void. But it is a hole that in many ways represents a hole in the heart of the United States and the ongoing struggles of racism, hatred and bigotry -- all the things we're seeing in our streets. We haven't come as far as perhaps we thought we had come as a nation."

Price also decided to create a commission of faculty, students,

staff, alumni trustees and members of the Durham community to look at future steps related to the university's history. It's tasked with examining how Duke memorializes individuals and recommending principles to guide the university through future questions. In addition, the university plans an exhibition in its library, a campus conversation about injustice in Duke's history and a forum to explore freedom of speech and academic freedom.

"I have every hope that the statue, far from being the end of things, will be the beginning of things," Price said. "We have to have a clear and unvarnished understanding of where we've been to understand where we are today and, most importantly, where we want to go in the future."

Considering History, Constituents and the Future

The fact that Price is new to the Duke presidency made the decision harder in some ways and easier in others, he said. It made it more difficult to identify thoughtful advisers, because he didn't have a long history with anyone.

Yet it also gave him cause to find such advisers quickly. He also credited a transition process that had brought him up to speed on Duke even before he took over.

Duke is no stranger to controversies wrapped up in matters of race.

“ I know out there in the body politic there is a tendency to think of colleges and universities as being peopled by only one side of a particular academic debate, but believe me, they're not. There are people who are passionate on every side. ”

Perhaps most infamously, its previous president, Richard H. Brodhead, found himself in the middle of a storm of issues surrounding race, gender and athletics just two years into his tenure when a woman accused three members of the university's lacrosse team of raping her in 2006.

The woman, who was black, had been hired to perform as a dancer at an off-campus party and alleged she was raped by white lacrosse players. Brodhead canceled Duke's lacrosse season, and the university suspended two of the accused players who had not yet graduated. But prosecutors eventually dropped charges in the matter, and the university eventually [settled a lawsuit filed](#) by the former lacrosse players. Some campus groups pushed Brodhead hard to be tough on alleged wrongdoing by athletes, but many alumni accused him of acting too quickly, especially as the case against the athletes unraveled.

That case was, of course, very different from the one surrounding a statue of a Confederate general. Price did not mention it during his interview Monday. But the two situations show how college and university presidents face a wide, unpredictable range of highly charged

issues.

The search that led to Price's hiring was concerned about issues of race and identity, said Peter Feaver, a professor of political science

and public policy at Duke who was a member of the search committee that selected Price.

Before starting at Duke, Price had been the provost at the University of Pennsylvania since 2009. At Penn, he was also a professor of communication and political science.

"He had lived it as provost," Feaver said. "He was very much in the inner circle with the president of Penn. My sense was he was ready on day one."

In Feaver's opinion, Price's handling of the statue issue proves he was ready. Duke might have found itself in a crisis if it were still wrestling with whether to leave the Lee statue standing outside the chapel a month into the semester, Feaver said.

Feaver also pointed out that Price was willing to take advantage of work started by his predecessor. Duke had already begun some processes that were relevant to the statue under its former president, Brodhead. Those included a task force on hate and bias, of which Feaver is a member.

"It's something for President Price to build on," Feaver said. "That's something a less confident leader might have flailed about for a while, and maybe an overconfident leader

wouldn't have taken advantage of the work that's been done."

University presidents face an unbelievably complex landscape, according to Dennis Barden, senior partner at the executive search firm Witt/Kieffer. Universities' different constituencies are diverse, and in some cases, a president will leave someone unhappy no matter what they decide.

"I know out there in the body politic there is a tendency to think of colleges and universities as being peopled by only one side of a particular academic debate, but believe me, they're not," Barden said. "There are people who are passionate on every side."

Duke's Facebook page is a reflection of that. Reactions to the president's decision included angry posts from those who said they were alumni who would withhold donations and others who said they approved of the move.

Price acknowledged that alumni and donors were among those he reached out to about the issue of

the statue. He also said he knows he will not please every constituency with every decision he makes.

Many different campus constituencies will give a new president good and bad advice in a situation like the one Duke faced, said John Lombardi, former president of the University of Florida and the Louisiana State University System, in an email. Yet sometimes presidents face a very limited number of choices.

That's true even if new presidents have fresh stores of political capital to draw upon with the trustees whose support they need to do their jobs.

"Duke has had conversations about these issues before, so taking down a statue of Robert E. Lee in this moment of time at Duke in the South is clearly not something that provided a wide range of options," Lombardi said. "A new president will surely have lots of support because he won't have used up any of his credit in previous controversies, and the trustees and faculty, and at

least some significant proportion of vocal students, will also give him the benefit of doing the appropriate thing in this context and this time."

Duke is hardly alone in grappling with issues of race and monuments that harken to the country's troubled past. Just this weekend, the University of Texas at Austin removed statues of Lee and other Confederate leaders.

Bowdoin College relocated a plaque honoring Jefferson Davis and its alumni who had fought in the Civil War for the Confederacy from a wall in its Memorial Hall to a library display case.

To many, the removal of such public displays is an important step. Yet the issues underneath are unlikely to fall with the statues.

"I've been around a long time," said Schexnider, the former Winston-Salem State chancellor. "In my experience, racism, anti-Semitism, any kind of chauvinism, oftentimes are just beneath the surface. We can remove the monuments, but what else lies ahead?" ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/08/22/duke-president-tackled-weighty-issue-confederate-statue-after-just-weeks-job>

Clinging to the Core

BY RICK SELTZER // JUNE 1, 2017

University of Dallas steps back from proposed adult degree-completion expansion amid faculty worries it would be a poor curricular and identity fit, even as administrators say new sources of revenue are a must.

The University of Dallas has backed away from a controversial proposal to wade into adult degree completion – a proposal that roiled the liberal arts university over much of the last year.

The proposal isn't dead yet. But it has been moved behind a pair of other expansion ideas some see as a better fit for the private Roman Catholic university, which has long embraced an expansive core undergraduate curriculum rooted in the classics. Many faculty members worried an adult degree-completion program would not uphold the spirit or content of that core curriculum.

They also wondered whether the university's resources could be better spent elsewhere. The University of Dallas is in better financial shape than many other small private liberal arts colleges, several of which [have had to](#) slash budgets and lay off employees. Some have suggested that Dallas could try to boost fund-raising to position itself for a stronger future.

Administrators, however, say the university is highly dependent on tuition and faces growing financial pressures in coming years. In their view, the uni-

versity needs to find new sources of tuition revenue, and adult degree completion is a potentially promising path. They plan to continue to study the idea, and some hope it can lead to a way to expand the liberal arts in a new age with new sets of students.

In short, the debate is continuing to play out at the University of Dallas. And it has laid bare the fact that even strong and solvent liberal arts universities can struggle with an identity crisis in today's fast-changing higher education market.

A Year of Debate

Faculty members reported first learning of the controversial proposal at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year. Debate ebbed and flowed throughout the year, reaching high intensity this spring.

The university's president, Thomas W. Keefe, acknowledged the idea has been enveloped in drama. But he said that Dallas needs to explore new ideas.

The university has successfully



grown from 317 freshmen in the fall of 2009 to 430 expected in the upcoming fall, Keefe said.

It is expected to break even on a \$60 million budget next year.

Yet it is highly dependent on undergraduate tuition and will not be viable forever at its current size of 1,400 undergraduates and 1,000 graduate students. Health care costs are rising rapidly. The university's tuition discount rate is too high at 57 percent, according to Keefe. He projects a financial crunch unless the university can find new sources of revenue within five years.

Therefore, the university needs to explore a variety of options to set itself up for the future, Keefe said. One

of those options is a program for adult students who want to return to college to earn four-year degrees.

“What I want us to do is be agile enough to recognize we need to look for opportunities,” Keefe said. “If you have a good academic enterprise – a great academic enterprise like we have – then there have to be more opportunities for us to share this.”

Keefe does not want to put any program in place that would affect the academic integrity of the university, he said. Nor would he start one before feeling sure it would be financially viable.

Currently, the adult completion idea is under additional study. An ad hoc committee is examining it in depth. Enrollment administrators are reaching out to local corporations to see if they have employees who would enroll in a degree-completion program. The university is also studying the Dallas-Fort Worth area to gauge how many adults have some college credits but no degrees, and they are trying to determine how many such adults would be interested in earning degrees.

The ad hoc committee is being led by the dean of the university's School of Ministry, Ted Whapham. Its first question is whether an adult degree-completion program fits with the University of Dallas mission, Whapham said.

“I am hoping we will be able to calm the water a little bit, look at the issue from all sides,” he said. “It can't simply be a question of an adult completion program. It would have to be precisely a University of Dallas degree-completion program.”

Other key questions are whether the

program could actually generate new revenue and whether it could operate without significantly affecting other university operations, Whapham said. He doesn't yet know what level of revenue or enrollment a new program would need to be viable.

Whapham sees his committee as having the chance to ask what a liberal arts education means today and will mean in 15 years.

“I think that the often-cited gap between professional education and a liberal arts education – I think it's kind of overblown,” he said. “This ongoing process of reflecting on what does it mean to undertake a liberal arts education in general, and more specifically what does it mean to undertake a liberal arts education in 2017 or for 2020 or 2030 in the United States – these are the questions I find exciting. I find them important.”

Alternative Views

Many don't see it that way, and they have gone public with their objections. For example, Christopher Malloy, an associate professor of theology, wrote [an opinion piece](#) in April in the university's student newspaper saying that the proposal is well intended but fiscally imprudent and counterproductive.

“The insinuation that UD should begin serving in a radically new way represents mistaken judgment, and to goad a reluctant staff towards such change would constitute bad leadership,” he wrote. “The metroplex has many needs, to be sure. But does that mean we as an institution should neglect our proven post to undertake something completely different?”

Malloy wrote at a time when the

adult degree-completion program was being discussed as its own college. University leaders have backed away from that idea, leaving open the possibility that it could be a program within an existing college if it is created.

Some faculty members could be more open to plans that do not call for the creation of a new college. Still, that wouldn't necessarily address their most basic concerns.

“It's the question of identity,” said William Frank, a professor of philosophy who chaired the university's Faculty Senate for the past three years. “I need to explain something that is particular to the University of Dallas. It has a very distinctive approach to education at every level.”

That approach includes a strong commitment to Roman Catholic intellectual and spiritual heritage, Frank said. It also includes a strong liberal arts education.

Everyone who receives an undergraduate degree at the university goes through [the curriculum](#) referred to as “the Core.” The curriculum includes courses in English, history, philosophy, theology, economics, politics, science, mathematics, language and fine arts taken in sequence. In total, it is listed at 19 courses.

“There are very few options in there,” Frank said. “When they take philosophy, they take three named courses. And the first philosophy course becomes the foundation for the second. You have no idea how wonderful it is to teach somebody that third philosophy class.”

Some faculty members fear a new adult degree-completion program

wouldn't adhere to the same high standards. If, for instance, the program focuses on bringing in students who already have two-year degrees, it would be impossible for those students to complete the existing core curriculum while studying any other subjects over two years.

An early idea was to offer adult students completing their degrees some sort of 60-credit-hour program. It would try to deliver the spirit of the core curriculum over five courses.

"The university would be introducing a paradigm which is wholly different," Frank said. "Some say it would cheapen the more common degree, because they'll both have bachelor's degrees from the University of Dallas."

Faculty members also worry that other universities in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex already operate better-established programs for adults.

However, it might be possible for the University of Dallas to create a new program in liberal studies that would stand out, Frank said. The idea is to essentially turn the current core curriculum into a major for adult returning students.

Other faculty members believe that there could be a place for an adult degree-completion program but that it cannot be the university's only path to continued financial stability. Blake Frank is an associate professor in the university's College of Business. Blake Frank – who is not related to William Frank – is also a member of the university's Faculty Senate and recently

“There are all kinds of graduate programs that could become part of our portfolio. You don't have all your eggs in one basket. These days, you need a lot of eggs and a lot of baskets.”

finished a term as its vice chair.

"I don't think we can hang our cap on one thing that would be the white knight in terms of being the savior program," he said. "There are all kinds of graduate programs that could become part of our portfolio. You don't have all your eggs in one basket. These days, you need a lot of eggs and a lot of baskets."

Faculty members have worried that they were not involved enough in forming the adult degree-completion idea. They also wonder whether chasing tuition revenue is the best strategy for the future or whether the university would be better served dedicating more resources to fund-raising.

"If right now being tuition driven isn't working, how is simply increasing the size of the tuition drive going to work?" said Matthew Walz, a professor who chairs the university's philosophy department. "We know a lot of distinct places get large donations."

Of course, many institutions try to increase the amount of money they raise. The University of Dallas [posts](#) a number of giving options, including naming opportunities. But many colleges and universities struggle with the limits of their donor bases.

The ad hoc committee examining a new adult program is expected to report back this fall. In the meantime,

the university's Board of Trustees has prompted it to move to expand a doctor of business administration program and a graduate program in classical education.

The business program is expected to go from a cohort of about 15 students every other year to adding a cohort every year.

The classical education expansion will be geared toward educating more teachers of classical education. It could take the form of reaching out to K-12 charter schools focused on classical education to find interested teachers.

Walz said those ideas seem to fit better with the university's identity.

"That looks like it's got the genetic makeup of UD," he said. "It's trying to meet the contemporary prudently, without the sacrifice of that commitment to the Western intellectual tradition."

The two ideas have become top priorities in part because of the potential pitfalls that have been pointed out regarding an adult degree-completion program, said Keefe, the university's president.

But at the end of the day, the university's operating margin is too thin to discard good ideas without exploring them, he said.

"Maybe this is just getting us to think outside the box," Keefe said. "Maybe I'm too disruptive in doing this and it causes consternation for too many people. But at the end of the day, I have a responsibility to make sure that when I retire, this university thrives." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/01/university-dallas-struggles-find-expansion-direction-amid-questions-identity-and>

Whittling Down Wisconsin's Colleges

BY RICK SELTZER // OCTOBER 13, 2017

Professors fear an ambitious systemwide merger plan is rushed, but system president argues it is necessary amid tight budgets and declining enrollment at Wisconsin's two-year colleges.

Plans to restructure the University of Wisconsin System and merge many of its institutions are generating controversy, with the system's president saying they are necessary, faculty members worrying they are being rushed and one expert likening the proposal to rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

But in a state university system constantly buffeted by budget pressures and political battles in recent years, some also hope that the latest in a long line of changes has the potential to help students, even if it is far from perfect – or even fully formed.

The UW System officially unveiled the planned changes Wednesday, shortly after they [leaked to the press](#). The state's two-year UW Colleges would be merged into four-year institutions in the same general geographic areas. Programs in the UW Extension would be moved to UW Madison and the system administration, and UW Colleges Online would move to the system administration.

That would mean 13 two-year col-



Students at the University of Wisconsin Sheboygan

leges being slotted under the umbrella of seven four-year institutions. No physical campuses would be closed, with the two-year campuses instead functioning as branch campuses after the mergers' completion. Two-year campuses would maintain their current tuition levels, and officials say they would be able to offer more upper-level and general education courses.

The separate Wisconsin Technical College System would not be affected by the UW System proposal. Nonethe-

less, the plans stand out as among the most ambitious public system merger attempts seen in recent years.

While several states, like [Pennsylvania](#), [Vermont](#) and [Connecticut](#), have flirted with or pursued the idea of merging state institutions in recent years, systematic changes are virtually nonexistent. The best known example of mergers taking place is [Georgia](#), where leaders pursued aggressive timelines but have launched consolidations in waves, only announcing a

handful at any one time. That's a stark contrast to the all-at-once approach being pursued in Wisconsin.

The changes are necessary because of a combination of budget pressures on higher education, demographic changes in Wisconsin and declining enrollment at UW's two-year institutions, according to University of Wisconsin System leadership.

"We explored a lot of options, including just closing a few of them," Ray Cross, UW System president, said in an interview. "The problem there is that these communities are so dependent on these campuses. So one of our premises was we must be able to find ways to maintain and preserve the university presence in these communities. It may not be as exhaustive as it was, but we need to find a way to do it."

Merging the institutions is intended as a way to improve students' access to college, Cross said. Some two-year campuses could add third and fourth years under programs at their new four-year affiliates. Students should find it easier to transfer to four-year programs.

The plan will go before the state Board of Regents in November for approval. Cross is proposing making the mergers effective July 1 of next year. But changes would stretch beyond that date.

"It will be a couple of years at least before we know where the fallout will be," Cross said. "It will take a while to get there."

The amount of money saved, changes in faculty numbers and changes to staff levels resulting from the restructuring have yet to be determined. But

there will be budget savings, Cross said.

UW System leaders said that by 2040, population growth in the 18- to 64-year-old demographic – a range of ages covering most students and workers – is only expected to be 0.4 percent. At the same time, enrollment has been declining at the 13 different two-year UW colleges.

None of the colleges grew enrollment between 2010 and 2017. UW Rock County posted the smallest percentage decline, 28 percent, to 661.3 full-time-equivalent students. UW Manitowoc had the largest decline, 52 percent, to 250.7. Only one of the colleges, UW Waukesha, enrolled more than 1,000 full-time-equivalent students in 2017.

Faculty members at both two-year and four-year UW institutions worried that the process will be rushed. Some felt blindsided by a proposal they learned about mere weeks before it is set to go before the Board of Regents. They wondered about a tight timeline for implementing that plan.

"My primary concern is that the UW System administration is proposing such a sweeping overhaul without any stakeholder input, with very few details known and with very little time before the regents are supposed to vote on it," said Nicholas Fleisher, an associate professor in the department of linguistics at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, via email. "This is the kind of major reorganization that is supposed to take years of careful planning, with appropriate feedback and approval from governance groups, in a transparent manner. What we're seeing

right now is the opposite on all counts."

Fleisher believes cost cutting is the administration's only reason for pursuing the restructuring.

The new restructuring would come just a few years after a leadership consolidation at the two-year colleges driven by state budget cuts [in 2015](#). The previous round of changes combined leadership positions for the 13 campuses into four regional leaders in an attempt to save money and cope with state budget cuts.

Meanwhile, some say that the talk of changing demographics misses a larger point about the population in Wisconsin. While projections show the number of traditional-age white college students declining, the number of nonwhite high school graduates is expected to grow in coming years.

"When you look at it, really, what's the issue with enrollment?" said Noel Thomas Radomski, managing director of the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education at UW Madison. "My hypothesis is that the colleges in particular that are close to the villages, towns and cities, they are not reaching out in different ways to first-generation white students, low-income whites, first-generation Hispanics, largely because they haven't had to do that before."

When the leadership centralization took place at the two-year colleges several years ago, many functions that used to be local were pushed up to regional or central offices, Radomski argues. That could hurt campuses' ability to recruit local low-income and first-generation students.

Radomski believes the changes

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made in 2015 were poorly planned and implemented too quickly. Those mistakes are being repeated with the new plan, he said.

"We have a lot of youth who are graduating who, historically, they and their family haven't gone to college," Radomski said. "That is the real issue. We're focusing on how we're going to have branch campuses, and wham-bam, we're going to have enrollment increases. My argument is we're just moving chairs on the deck."

Not only is the university system not recruiting appropriately for new types of students, but it is also not distributing enough state money to the colleges that need it most, Radomski argues. Still, he thinks the proposal has some potential.

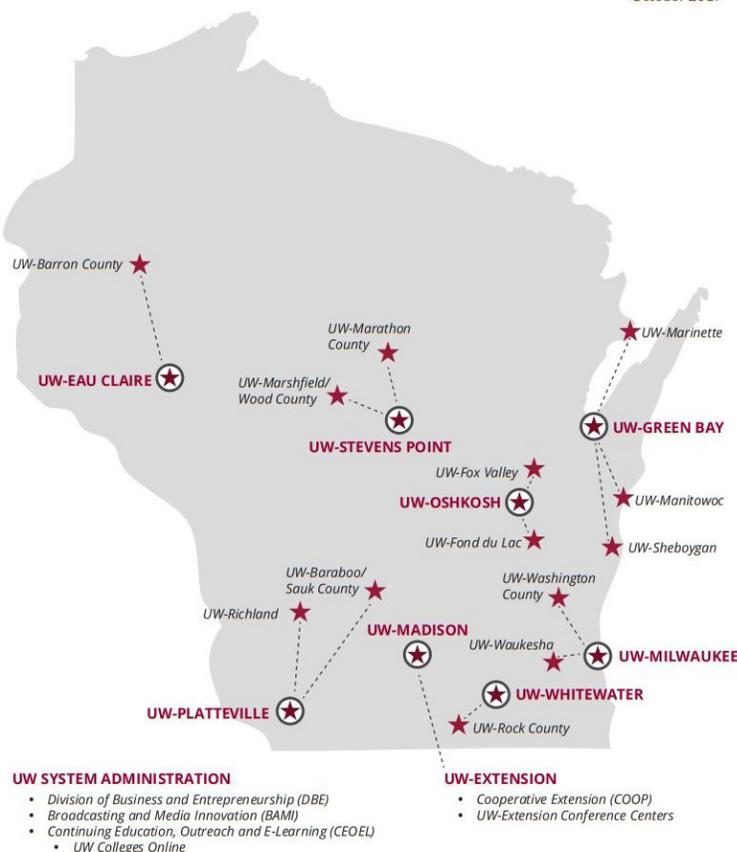
Faculty leaders at institutions being merged took a nuanced view. Faculty at UW Green Bay were surprised, said Patricia Terry, a professor of engineering technology at the institution and chair of its University Committee, which functions as the executive committee for its Faculty Senate.

"None of us really knew this was coming down the pipeline until we heard about it yesterday," Terry said. "There are some concerns about how the faculty at the now-satellite campuses are going to merge with the faculty at UW Green Bay."

Professors at UW Green Bay have

Proposed UW Colleges and UW-Extension Restructuring

October 2017



different responsibilities from their peers at the three campuses that will be merging into the institution, UW Manitowoc, UW Marinette and UW Sheboygan, Terry said. There are also different requirements for being hired as a faculty member at the various institutions.

Yet Terry believes the mergers could present opportunities once the kinks are worked out. They could allow UW Green Bay to grow its enrollment without stressing supporting resources, for example. If the curricula can be standardized between UW Green Bay and the two-year colleges being merged with it, students could be able to start at the two-year colleges, save money,

and more easily transfer to UW Green Bay for their final two years with specialized courses.

Holly Hassel is a professor of English at UW Marathon County, a two-year college to be merged into UW Stevens Point. She is also the chair of the senate for faculty, academic staff and university staff at all UW Colleges, including UW Colleges Online.

"There's a lot of confusion, a lot of concern," Hassel said. "We've been in this structure of a single unified institution, the UW Colleges, for 40 years almost."

Faculty members wonder whether the tenure they have earned will be honored in the merger, according to Hassel. The concern

resonates in a state system where faculty members in recent years [lost a bitter battle](#) against changes they saw as weakening tenure protections.

But Hassel also mentioned optimism that the changes could benefit students. At some level, faculty may be exhausted from other fights and changes, like the battle over tenure and the UW Colleges administrative changes.

"I am actually surprised by the lack of faculty outrage," Hassel said.

"We're kind of shell-shocked about it, but we're going to try to keep it together because we have students who need us to. We're trying to make it happen." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/13/wisconsin-merger-plan-stokes-controversy-some-see-upside>

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1015 18th St NW Suite 1100
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