How to Prepare for *Fisher*

Therese Kattner

Now is the time to inventory and assess your institution's race-conscious policies and practices as we await the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, expected in June.

Preparation for the ruling, on a case challenging a race-conscious University of Texas-Austin admission practice, will help institutions be poised to make any changes that might be needed to their own race-conscious policies, depending on how the court rules.

Such preparation will help institutions with three activities that are important no matter what the court decides: assessing their policies' effectiveness, making sure those policies align with their educational missions, and communicating with stakeholders—particularly with the public—about why any race-conscious policies and practices exist.

Who should prepare?

The *Fisher* ruling will affect many but not all college and university admissions policies. National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) data show that a minority of institutions consider race and ethnicity in admissions. Five percent of respondents to a 2011 NACAC survey said that use of race and ethnicity as an admissions factor was of "considerable importance" at their institutions. More than half (about 53 percent) said it had no importance as an admission factor.

Fisher could affect many more

institutions if they consider race in any scholarship, retention, and outreach programs. Standards set out in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the 2003 case in which the Supreme Court last considered affirmative action in college admissions, are frequently used to guide what is and

> **"If you think that the legal court is your only court of concern, you're probably wrong. The court of public opinion is also very important."**

isn't acceptable in such programs, so it's not much of a leap to expect that what occurs with *Fisher* will have the same reach.

In the 2005 paper "Federal Law and Recruitment, Outreach, and Retention: A Framework for Evaluating Diversity-Related Programs," authors Arthur Coleman, Scott Palmer, and Femi Richards note that although the court has not provided "definitive guidance" regarding recruitment and retention programs directly, the key principles that the Supreme Court has provided for admissions "are likely transportable to the recruitment, outreach, and retention setting." As a result, the paper recommends that institutions evaluate recruitment and retention efforts

according to the court's most recent standards.

In addition, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recently ended its investigations of race-conscious financial aid programs at the University of Missouri at Columbia, a City University of New York Black Male Initiative, and a scholars' recognition program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro because OCR considered the programs in keeping with *Grutter* guidance.

Connecting means and ends

David Hawkins, NACAC's director of public policy and research, says that his advice to institutions preparing for the *Fisher* decision is much the same as it was when institutions were preparing for *Grutter:* make sure that race-conscious policies and practices clearly help advance

the institution's broader educational mission.

"One of the key takeaways from the very extensive and coordinated effort to figure out what we had to do as a result of the *[Grutter]* decision was that institutions have to align their recruiting missions with their institutional mission statements. ... It's very important to establish what your institution's mission is and the lengths to which you have to go to fulfill that mission," he says.

A recent College Board paper produced with EducationCounsel, an education law and policy group (that signed an amicus brief in support of the University of Texas), gives similar advice: "Goals associated with access and diversity should be fully integrated into broader institution aims and seen as part and parcel of core educational objectives."

The paper "Diversity in the Balance, Part II: Key Steps for Higher Education Institutions to Consider in Preparation for the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas*" also advises institutions to make sure that different race-conscious policies align with one another so that inconsistencies and inefficiencies can be addressed.

Gathering and using evidence

The first step in preparing for *Fisher*, according Katherine Lipper, a policy and legal advisor at EducationCounsel and coauthor of "Diversity in the Balance," is to form a multidisciplinary team to inventory all diversity-related programs and policies, not only in enrollment management but also in student and academic affairs, including curricula and pedagogical approaches.

The next task is to gather evidence showing that these policies' consideration of race and ethnicity is effective and justified. Evidence might come from student and faculty surveys or interviews, analyses that link campus diversity to positive educational outcomes, and assessments of off-campus benefits, including positive alumni experiences,

according to "Diversity in the Balance."

Once the evidence is collected, the paper advises, the team should review it to answer the following questions:

- What evidence suggests that race-conscious policies are meeting or advancing their institution's goals?
- Where does a lack of evidence prevent meaningful policy evaluation?
- What evidence indicates that policies are (or are not) aligned with one another and with the institution's educational mission?
- Does evidence indicate that the consideration of race in each policy is as limited as it can be without sacrificing meeting its goals?
- What indicates that a particular policy should be reconsidered?

An example of a situation in which a policy should be reconsidered is when the policy has "just sat on your shelves for years with no critical review and analysis of its impact," Lipper says. Another red flag would be if a race-conscious policy operates "without any real connection to your overall institutional mission. Then it becomes a question of diversity for diversity's sake."

Taking action

Once the team reviews the evidence, it should modify policies and practices as

Resources

Coleman, A. and K. Lipper. (2012). *Diversity in the Balance, Part II: Key Steps for Higher Education Institutions to Consider in Preparation for the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in* Fisher v. University of Texas. Available through http://bit.ly/Wirn4F.

Coleman, A., S. Palmer, and F. Richards. (2005). *Federal Law and Recruitment, Outreach, and Retention: A Framework for Evaluating Diversity-Related Programs.* Available through http://bit.ly/WKL5o8. ✓

needed to make sure that they advance the institution's stated educational goals through legal means (although those means might soon change).

But the work doesn't end there, Lipper says. The institution must move beyond its internal work—and beyond court-watching—to engage with on- and off-campus stakeholders about the hows and whys of its race-conscious policies.

Lipper notes that she and coauthor Arthur Coleman raise that point in "Diversity in the Balance" in part because of the experience of the University of Michigan, which put a great amount of time and energy into defending admissions practices that were eventually supported in *Grutter.*

"But only a few years later," Lipper notes, "Michigan voters went to the polls and rejected the use of race in their public institutions' admissions policies—the point being that if you think that the legal court is your only court of concern, you're probably wrong. The court of public opinion is also very important."

Additional benefits

Going through these steps not only makes legal sense, but also educational sense, Lipper says. The process gives institutions an "opportunity to make important refinements or modifications in practices so that they ultimately can yield better results.

It makes good educational sense for you to be assessing whether the strategy that you've put in place, including any race-conscious strategy or practice, actually is according you some benefit," she says.

And because creating the inventory and gathering evidence is a big project that requires input from many parts of campus, it offers "a real opportunity for schools to be proactive and deliberate about breaking down silos and creating greater synergy across the different activities in which the school is involved," she says. ✓

What If?

None of the people *Recruitment and Retention* spoke with recently about the *Fisher* case predict that the Supreme Court will simply reaffirm *Grutter.* If the court doesn't have anything to add, they note, why would it agree to hear the case?

Still, reaffirmation is a possibility, along with the possibility that the court will overturn *Grutter* and rule that there's no compelling government interest in considering race and ethnicity in college admissions.

Most sources predict that the court's actions will fall somewhere between these extremes, perhaps by tightening the guidelines institutions must follow to craft legal race- and ethnicity-conscious policies. But it's not necessarily a wasted effort to envision what admissions would be like if race-conscious policies were not legal.

According to David Hawkins, director of public policy and research for the National Association for College Admission Counseling, "Institutions would be well advised to try to imagine an admission and recruitment process ... in which they could not use race and ethnicity. And having envisioned that, they would want to work backwards with university attorneys close at hand to determine what activities, methods, and tools are the most effective in achieving institutional goals with regard to their mission statements."

What might some of those methods and tools look like?

Michael Reilly, executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, says that institutions might concentrate more of their efforts on ensuring that diverse student populations are in the college pipeline.

An overturning of *Grutter* "would certainly have a lot more folks focused on early outreach to students to make sure students are well prepared and have a strong college prep curriculum," he says.

Stella Flores, assistant professor of public policy and higher education at Vanderbilt University, says that no matter what type of admissions plan is allowable, "there [will] need to be scholarships." Flores, who has supported the University of Texas in its case, argues that, "That's the only time we saw the percent plan in Texas work—when it had really solid scholarship funding behind it. ... If your goal is to have racial and ethnic diversity at your school, we haven't found anything that works as well as race. If you do try something else, you're going to have to put big money behind it. Then the question becomes, Which institutions are [going to be] able to do that?"

An *Inside Higher Ed* survey of admissions directors at four-year institutions found that, if the court curtails the consideration of race in admissions,
- 10 percent of public and 13 percent of private institutions would drop standardized test requirements
- 16 percent of public and 8 percent of private institutions would admit some top percentage of students from every high school in the state
- 20 percent of public and 22 percent of private institutions would give more consideration to socioeconomic status
- 30 percent of both public and private institutions would give more consideration to first-generation status.

"The Data Plan," Jeffrey Rosen's December 8, 2012, article in *The New Republic,* notes that "it is likely that universities will expand their use of data mining to get around the ruling," should the court find race-conscious admission plans illegal. The article summarizes the University of Michigan's experience with Descriptor Plus, a program that uses consumer and geodemographic information to group students and their families into "clusters," after state voters banned race-conscious admissions. ✓

Pilot Program Seeks to Offer More Flexible, Affordable Degree Completion

Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

The massive open online course (MOOC) phenomenon has gained national attention as increasing numbers of prestigious universities have offered them. MOOCs are typically offered free to the general public through the university providing the content and one of three companies (Coursera, Udacity, or edX) providing the platform. Students can study under renowned professors and interact with fellow students, but they cannot earn credits toward a degree. Nor does the university earn tuition money from these enrollments, although the universities sometimes state that their engagement in MOOCs helps raise and maintain the value of their brand.

Antioch University, however, is now engaged in a pilot program that could make it the first US institution to offer courses on the Coursera platform for college credit. The university anticipates that offering facilitated MOOC programs will help adult students who have put off completing their degrees due to the high cost of higher education or the demands of work and family. High school students could also get an early start on college.

The path to offering credit

More than 200 courses are available through Coursera, of which about half might fit into an existing Antioch degree program. Both Coursera and the university providing the content would need to approve Antioch offering the course for credit.

Currently, Antioch is piloting the program with two courses, Modern and Contemporary American Poetry and Greek and Roman Mythology, both developed by the University of Pennsylvania and offered through Antioch's Los Angeles campus. Although the Los Angeles campus is piloting the program, the university's intent is to have all five Antioch campuses participating, says Tex Boggs, president of Antioch University Los Angeles.

Boggs explains that there will ultimately be three models for Antioch students to earn degree credit through MOOCs:

The first model, which is being explored in the pilot program, uses the MOOC content as a "textbook" facilitated by an Antioch faculty member. Both students and the faculty facilitator enroll in the MOOC and attend the lectures. Coursera can create a section of the course specifically for Antioch students so they can set meeting times and hold online chats to discuss course content. Students will receive credit upon earning a certificate of completion from Coursera and upon Antioch's receipt of an evaluation of their participation from the faculty member.

The second model works somewhat like independent study. A student enrolls in a course at the same time he or she works with a faculty member to complete a portfolio of work that demonstrates what he or she has learned from the MOOC.

The third model would resemble prior learning assessment, which Antioch is known for across its programs. Students enroll in a MOOC and successfully compete it, earning the certificate of completion from Coursera. The student then develops an essay or other product that functions as the portfolio demonstrating prior learning.

In addition to the increased flexibility for degree completion, a major advantage of the program is the affordability. These MOOCs may allow students to earn as much as three credits for less than $100, compared with the standard cost of $527 per semester hour in Antioch's bachelor's degree completion program. "This allows us to look at how much students should have to pay for a course," says Boggs.

Innovative options such as the Antioch MOOCs may well be a way to help some students stem the rising tide of student loan debt. According to the Institute for College Access & Success Project on Student Debt, the average graduate in the class of 2011 owed nearly $27,000. Although it is unlikely that prices for an all-residential, traditional campus-based degree will fall anytime soon, the Antioch pilot project may prove that students can complete a degree for far less by combining prior learning assessment, MOOCs, and other institutional offerings.

Accreditation and authorization

As Antioch pilots this program, it is working with its accrediting commission to be sure that these additional courses will fit within the accreditation requirements. Boggs explains that Antioch has notified the Higher Learning Commission of its pilot project, and Antioch will not award credit for these courses if the commission does not approve. (This is a typical process for any institution that makes a substantial change to its course offerings or programs.) Boggs notes that the accreditation discussion is already under way.

A program such as Antioch's would also need to get authorization from the state in which it operates. The process of obtaining the authorization could raise some interesting questions—a student may be located in one state, taking a course for credit at an Antioch branch in another state, with course content coming from a university in a third state, and with Coursera or its servers located in a fourth.

Nonetheless, Boggs says Antioch is "looking at approval in all 50 states," so it ultimately will be able to offer courses to any student, regardless of the outcome of

Graduation Initiative Helps Students Make Timely Progress toward Their Degrees

Therese Kattner

When California State University, Northridge (CSUN) began its Graduation Initiative a few years ago, it began to crack down on two types of students who were not only failing to graduate on time but also unnecessarily tying up institutional resources: "super seniors" who remained enrolled despite having earned enough credits to graduate and students who were simply retaking too many courses.

But imposing stricter graduation and course repeat policies was only part of the plan, says Cynthia Rawitch, CSUN's vice provost. The university also has implemented retention practices to help students persist and get the classes and support they need to graduate on time.

The SuperSenior Project

CSUN's SuperSenior Project began in 2008 by looking at students who had earned more than 140 credits (20 more credits than is typically necessary to earn a bachelor's degree at CSUN) but had not filed for graduation, a process that is expected to occur one year before graduation.

The university discovered a variety of reasons why super seniors weren't graduating, ranging from not knowing they could graduate to wanting to earn another major or minor to having "no sense of urgency" to finish school, Rawitch says.

In response to these findings, the university now places holds on super seniors' ability to register for the next semester's classes until they complete and file graduation checks with CSUN's admissions and records office.

After the project's first year, the university lowered the cutoff for those it defines as super seniors from 140 credits to 130 credits in order to identify these

students earlier and give them more time to plan for graduation. In three years, the number of students with more than 130 units decreased by about 50 percent, and the number of students with more than 140 units decreased by about 57 percent.

In 2010 CSUN also began limiting the numbers of majors and minors a student can earn to two each, with all majors

> ### CSUN's policy changes are "making students be more intentional about what they're doing in class … because the opportunity of taking it again is going to be limited."

and minors completed within 140 units.

CSUN also created "administrative graduations," in which students who have completed all their graduation requirements, as calculated by their colleges' associate deans, are notified that they have been awarded their degrees. (These students don't receive their diplomas, however, until they pay their graduation fees.) CSUN has administratively graduated between 50 and 70 students over about four years, Rawitch says.

A major challenge in implementing these policies was the increased workload for admissions and records personnel, she says. However, the president at the time dedicated a significant amount of funding, including the money to hire additional personnel, to the Graduation Initiative.

"There was just no way we were

going to be able to pull this off with the number of people we had," Rawitch says.

The university also created electronic versions of various documents students can use on their own to see their progress toward their degrees and figure out what they need to do to meet graduation requirements, she says.

Reducing repeats

At the same time that CSUN worked on the SuperSenior Project, it tightened rules for repeating courses. For example, students now cannot enroll in a class for the purpose of repeating that class until the Thursday before classes begin.

This change has helped other students make headway toward timely graduations. Between fall 2008 and fall 2011, the number of repeats per semester fell from about 6,500 to about 3,500, opening about 3,000 seats a semester to students who might have otherwise been unable to enroll in those courses.

Students had been retaking classes for a variety of reasons, Rawitch says. Some of these students were "wrongly majored"—that is, their academic skills didn't match those needed in their disciplines—so they kept taking and failing gateway courses. For example, some students trying to enter engineering were spending a lot of time and energy repeating prerequisite math classes—time and energy that could have been spent earning degrees in fields that better matched their interests and strengths.

Another group of repeaters was composed of students who hoped to enter medical school or other competitive postbaccalaureate programs and wanted to boost their GPAs.

"We put an end to a lot of those kinds of practices," Rawitch says.

▼ **Graduation Initiative** *from page 5*

Meanwhile, the university implemented stricter rules under which a student could appeal its Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. (SAP is an annual review of student progress toward a degree required by federal, state, and institutional rules as a condition of financial aid eligibility.)

Before CSUN began limiting opportunities for appeal, "We were allowing anybody to make an argument [for an appeal] for just about anything," Rawitch says. But after implementation of the tighter rules, the number of appeals dropped from 1,500 in 2008 (when almost all appeals were granted) to 162 at the end of spring 2011 (when 60 percent of appeals were approved).

Together, the repeat and SAP policy changes are "making students be more intentional about what they're doing in class—doing the best they can the first time they take the class—because the opportunity of taking it again is going to be limited," Rawitch says.

At the same time, the university implemented what Rawitch calls an "extraordinarily successful" wait list policy for course registration. Students who want to get into a full section of a course no longer have to show up on the first day of class and hope they can get in.

They now sign up for a wait list when they register and can see online when seats open in a particular section, resulting in "much less anxiety" for the students, Rawitch says. In addition, department chairs can see where the highest demand is, open a section of a course to meet that demand, and email students on the wait list about the new section.

Help hitting milestones

Other Graduation Initiative policy changes were designed to make sure that students progressing toward graduation hit important milestones along the way.

In fall 2011 CSUN began requiring that students take its Writing Proficiency Exam, which is required for graduation, no later than the semester in which they complete 75 units. If students don't attempt the exam by that time, they are blocked from enrolling in the next semester's classes.

Previously, some students put off the exam until too late in their undergraduate careers. If they didn't pass, there often wasn't enough time to receive help and pass the exam before their anticipated graduation dates. Under the new requirement, however, the university can direct students to the right resources much earlier.

Students who don't pass the exam are often international or US students whose first language is not English or students who have significant test anxiety, Rawitch says.

"We have abilities to serve [students in] any one of those populations and help them—provided we know they exist," she adds.

In fall 2012 CSUN also mandated that first-time freshmen enroll each semester in required math and English courses until they meet the university's general educational requirements in both subjects.

The university implemented the measure primarily to move students who pass developmental math right into first-year math while their skills are still fresh and in practice, Rawitch says.

Completing the picture

It's easy to focus on just one part of CSUN's Graduation Initiative, such as its restrictions on super seniors, and view the university's measures as punitive, Rawitch admits.

"It all sounds very mean, but it's only half the picture," she says. The other half of the picture involves a variety of programs that help students get to the point where they *can* graduate.

CSUN changed its approach to devel-

opmental English, for example. Today all first-year writing courses bear credit. Many students take just one semester of freshman composition for three credits. Students who need more time to develop their writing skills, however, take the same course stretched over two semesters and receive six credits. (The additional three credits count toward general education requirements.)

"So you are earning credits toward your degree, and you are not once again told you are 'developmental' or 'remedial'—that you don't measure up," Rawitch says.

CSUN piloted the program two years ago, intending to introduce it to the campus slowly. The pilot was so successful, however, that the university unveiled it for all students in fall 2011, she says.

The university also has implemented measures to help transfer students persist. Although students transferring from community colleges tend to do well at CSUN because they've already succeeded academically, Rawitch says, some find the transition overwhelming.

As a result, CSUN has introduced "mini freshman seminars" into six upper-division general education courses that transfer students tend to take. These sections have garnered "extraordinarily good feedback," Rawitch says. ✓

▼ **Pilot Program** *from page 4*

the state authorization debate and discussions about reciprocity.

Overall, these concerns are simply ones of execution for Boggs, who sees awarding credit for MOOCs to be an important way to allow students to pursue education and a degree in a flexible and affordable way.

Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti writes frequently for Recruitment and Retention. ✓

Enrollment Challenges to Vary Widely by State

One of the biggest takeaways from a recent forecast of US high school graduates is that the enrollment opportunities and challenges individual colleges and universities will face over the next two decades will depend largely on where they are located and from where they recruit.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has been issuing projections about the US college-going population for more than 30 years. WICHE's most recent projections, as reported in *Knocking at the College Door*, present data by state and by race and ethnicity through the high school class of 2028.

WICHE's newest national findings indicate that "the era of annually increasing graduating classes" is winding down, while graduating high school classes are quickly becoming more diverse racially and ethnically. But US maps available on WICHE's website (*www.wiche.edu/knocking-8th*) starkly illustrate how little the national findings might align with the realities that a particular state or institution faces.

For example, the map showing changes in the number of high school graduates between 2008 to 2009 and 2019 to 2020 projects that California will see its high school graduate population decrease by between 5 percent and 15 percent, while neighboring Nevada will see that population increase by between 5 percent and 15 percent.

As a result, the report states, while some states grapple with "a severe contraction in demand," others will "barely notice any changes in the pattern of growth that has already strained capacity in [their] schools and colleges for many years."

WICHE's projections of high school graduates' race and ethnicity in 2019-2020 tell a similar story. In Iowa, people of color are projected to account for 10 percent to 20 percent of high school graduates, while in neighboring Illinois, people of color are expected to account for 40 percent to 50 percent of high school graduates.

"Clearly," the report notes, "the wide variation in the educational demand facing individual states will require very different policies, to ensure both adequate capacity and high quality."

In addition to the maps, WICHE's website offers access to the full report, state-by-state profiles, and a tool for creating customizable graphs and tables. ✓

Update: Stealth Applicants and the Admissions Funnel

Last month's cover story examined how stealth applicants—applicants whose first contacts with an institution are their applications—are affecting admission practices at Southern Methodist University.

Since then, Noel-Levitz released its "2012 Recruitment Funnel Benchmarks Report for Four-Year Private and Public Institutions," in which the recruitment and retention firm reports that although the stealth applicant phenomenon is "still going strong" at four-year institutions, it appears to be leveling off among first-year applicants.

For example, at private, four-year institutions, the percentage of stealth applicants among first-year applicants rose to 31 percent in 2012 from 28 percent in 2011. The percentage has hovered around 30 percent since 2009. At four-year public institutions, the share of first-year applicants who were stealth applicants decreased to 33 percent in 2012 from 34 percent a year earlier.

Meanwhile, the share of transfer students who applied under the radar to four-year public institutions hit 62 percent, the highest share since Noel-Levitz began tracking the practice in 2005. The percentage of stealth transfer students applying to four-year private schools rose to 48 percent in 2012 from 44 percent in 2011. The high, at 51 percent, was in 2010.

In the report, Noel-Levitz recommends that institutions do the following to respond effectively to the stealth applicant phenomenon:

- treat stealth applicants much like they treat inquiries
- place more emphasis on identifying prospective students through purchasing names
- use a separate admissions funnel and set of metrics for stealth applicants. (In contrast to SMU's experience, many of the institutions responding to the survey on which Noel-Levitz's report is based found that traditional and stealth applicants are converting and yielding at different rates.)

To download a copy of the report, visit *https://www.noellevitz.com/papers-research-higher-education/2012/2012-recruitment-funnel-benchmarks-report* (registration required). ✓

The Innovative Enrollment and Retention Manager

Marguerite Dennis

In their book *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back*, Thomas Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum cite the many reasons for America's economic problems. Leading the list is the decline in our educational system's competitiveness, including the fact that only 25 percent of high school graduates who enroll in college are prepared to do college-level work.

Approximately 40 percent of first-year students are required to take remedial courses. Only 60 percent graduate in six years, and only 20 percent of community college students graduate in three years. Employers collectively spend over $3 billion annually on remedial training. The authors make a strong case for the need to reform our educational system to help restore America's economic engine and help American workers compete globally.

The authors argue that what the United States needs is collective action on a large scale to fix large problems, such as adjusting to the information technology revolution, soaring budget deficits, and globalization. What we need are innovative thinkers and risk takers—people who can create, innovate, and adapt in a collaborative environment.

There is much debate on the need for higher education reform and the need to replace higher education's current business model with one that is more reflective of the changing and challenging environment. College costs cannot continue to increase at the rate they have over the past decades. The federal government and its state counterparts are slashing budgets, including funding for colleges and universities. Most parents cannot afford high-priced schools, and students are increasingly unwilling to leave college with massive debt.

Enrollment and retention managers, charged with enrolling new students and keeping current ones, are at the forefront of maintaining their institutions' financial stability. Many would argue that changing demographics and stiff competition from other states and countries have made their job difficult, if not impossible. The pie keeps getting smaller each year, and the tools that were effective in the past simply do not work.

I offer the following four suggestions to give enrollment and retention managers different ways to consider expanding their enrollment and in the process position themselves as leaders in campus innovation.

1. Change marketing strategies

The average high school student learns about any college or university by first clicking on its website, and social media outlets have become the best avenues through which to communicate with prospective applicants. Despite this, massive amounts of money are still spent on viewbooks, brochures, and other print media.

Making the smartest use of your website and its links is the best way to reach future students—not mailing unsolicited information to addresses within certain ZIP codes. There is no time for further debate. Social media has replaced the marketing tools of the past and should be the dominant method for reaching prospective students and their parents.

How much of your marketing budget addresses the parent as a potential "client"? Do you market to families, not just to students?

And do you market the outcomes, not just the features, of your school? Can you answer questions about why someone should enroll at your school and what is likely to be the educational and employment outcome?

2. Work with career counseling

I have always believed that the career counseling office should be a "dotted line report" to both enrollment management and alumni affairs. There needs to be some connection between what students learn in school and what employee skills the workplace seeks. The career counseling staff can provide that link. They have information on employment after graduation and alumni networks across the country and abroad. This information needs to be looped back to admission counselors and recruiters to share with prospects and families.

3. Make the most of online learning opportunities

Many schools have recognized the need to augment their traditional instructional methods with some form of online learning. Most schools will not be able to participate in the massive open online course phenomenon. For now, that appears to be relegated to the universities that have both a national and international brand reputation. But most, if not all, schools can and should offer some courses online or combine online instruction with in-classroom instruction under a hybrid paradigm. Technology allows the enrollment manager to reach potential customers at the high school level and students from across the country and the world by offering courses literally around the clock.

4. Offer three registration periods

Imagine how the enrollment pool could grow if classes were held year round and students could enroll in the fall, spring, or summer term. What potential impact could that have on retention and college graduation rates, as well as the financial bottom line?

Most enrollment and retention managers have been affected by hard economic times and the uncertainty of the future. Careful examination of innovative ways of managing enrollment has never been more important.

Marguerite Dennis is a contributing editor of Recruitment and Retention *and has more than 30 years of experience in enrollment management. Her column appears on this page every month.* ✓