Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ............................................... iii
About the Author ..................................................... v
Introduction ........................................................ vii

Chapter One:
What Is SEM? .......................................................... 1
What SEM Is Not ..................................................... 2

Chapter Two:
The Evolution of SEM .............................................. 5
1970s: In the Beginning—
“Grand Designs” and Marketing Roots ........... 6
1980s: Building EM Structure ......................... 6
1990s: Putting “Strategic” into EM ............... 6
2000s: Embedding SEM in Higher Education ....................................................... 7
Today: Integrating SEM’s Roots ................. 8
SEM Challenges .................................................. 9

Chapter Three:
Implementing SEM .................................................. 11
Establishing Clear Goals ......................................... 11
Improving Student Access, Transition, Persistence, and Graduation ................. 12
Strategic and Financial Planning ................. 15
Creating a Data-Rich Environment .......... 17
Key Success Indicators ......................... 17
Analytics ......................................................... 18
Improving Process and Outcomes ....... 18
Strengthening Communications and Collaboration Across Campus .......... 18
Applying SEM Research ....................... 19
Harnessing Technology ......................... 19

Chapter Four:
SEM and the Institutional Culture ................. 21
Four Orientations of SEM ......................... 21
Intended Outcomes of a SEM Strategy ................. 21
Organizing for SEM ........................................ 23
Models of Enrollment Management ............. 23
Variations on the Four Enrollment Models ....................................................... 24

Chapter Five:
Enrollment-Related Plans ......................... 27
Institutional Strategic Plan ......................... 27
Strategic Enrollment Management Plan .......... 28
Benefits of a SEM Plan ......................... 28
SEM Tactical Action Plans ......................... 31
Chapter Six:  
**Transforming an Institution into a SEM Organization** .......................... 33  
SEM Process Framework ........................................ 33  
SEM Organizational Framework ....................... 35  
SEM Planning Framework ................................. 37

Chapter Seven:  
**It’s About People and Service** ...................... 39  
Traits of a Successful SEM Leader ................. 39  
Survey Results: Responsibilities and Reporting Line of Chief Enrollment Management Officers .................. 40

Conclusion:  
**Taking Control of Your Enrollment Destiny** ................................. 45

Appendix A:  
Strategic Enrollment Management Resources ....................... 47

Appendix B:  
Internal Enrollment Management Assessment Template .......................... 49

Bibliography .......................................................... 57
Acknowledgments

*SEM Core Concepts* reflects the thinking and practices of many of the people who have, over the years, made strategic enrollment management (SEM) a major contributor to the ability of colleges and universities to successfully carry out their missions. This publication is written with the goal of letting these experts speak in their own unique voices.

Special acknowledgment goes to the late Bob Bontrager, former senior director of AACRAO Consulting and SEM Initiatives. Before assuming that position, he was the assistant provost for enrollment management at Oregon State University. Bob was a SEM practitioner and thought leader who made significant contributions to the development of SEM as a profession, some of which are included in this publication. He left us far too early, at age 58, after a valiant battle with cancer.

A hearty thank you goes to the all-star cast of SEM thought leaders, practitioners, and academics that generously gave their time and expertise to the production of this publication:

- Jay Goff, Vice President of Enrollment and Retention Management, St. Louis University
- Susan Gottheil, Vice Provost (Students), University of Manitoba (Canada)
- Don Hossler, Distinguished Provost Professor Emeritus, School of Education, Indiana University
- David Kalsbeek, Senior Vice President, Division of Enrollment Management and Marketing, DePaul University
- Donald Norris, Founder and President, Strategic Initiatives, Inc., Reston, Virginia
- Michele Sandlin, Managing Consultant, AACRAO Consulting

Special thanks also goes to the following colleagues for their significant assistance in the development of this publication through their expert advice and several rounds of editing:
• Tom Green, Associate Executive Director, AACRAO Consulting and SEM. Tom was a strong proponent of this project, provided very helpful advice throughout the project, and was a key resource for various portions of the document.

• Stanley Henderson, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Life, University of Michigan, Dearborn (retired). Stan has been a practitioner, thought leader, and major nurturer of SEM since its very early stages. He is the author of Chapter Two, “The Evolution of SEM.”

• Christine Kerlin, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Director of the University Center, Everett Community College (Washington) (retired). Christine is a highly respected SEM practitioner and thought leader with an emphasis on community colleges.

• Clayton Smith, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor (Canada). Clayton is an experienced and respected SEM practitioner in both Canadian and U.S. colleges and universities and co-author of SEM in Canada. He is also Director of AACRAO’s Strategic Enrollment Management Conference.

Special appreciation goes to the following colleagues for the privilege of co-leading with them the “Core Concepts of SEM” workshops at several AACRAO national SEM conferences. These individuals significantly contributed to my thinking about the various aspects of SEM.

• Brent Gage, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, University of Iowa
• Jody Gordon, Vice President, Students and Enrollment Management, University of the Fraser Valley (Canada)
• Alicia Moore, Dean of Student and Enrollment Services, Central Oregon Community College
• Michael Reilly, AACRAO Executive Director, for his support of this project, Martha Henebry, AACRAO Director of Operations, Membership and Publications, for initiating this project and for her expert, tireless, and patient shepherding of it from start to finish, and to Jessica Montgomery for her terrific expertise in editing and coaching the author to fine tune this publication.

Wayne Sigler, Ed.D.
About the Author

Dr. Wayne Sigler is a nationally-respected enrollment management practitioner, consultant, author and speaker. He served as vice president for enrollment management and chief enrollment officer at George Mason University from July 2012 until July 2014, where he was asked to lead the development and implementation of a new university-wide comprehensive and coordinated strategic enrollment management program.

Prior to joining Mason, Dr. Sigler served as director of admissions at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities for 20 years, building an undergraduate admissions program that is regarded as one of the elite programs in both the Big Ten and the United States. Under his leadership, the University realized a 63-percent increase in new freshman enrollment, including strong increases in the academic preparation and diversity of the freshman class.

Before joining the University of Minnesota, Dr. Sigler served as dean of admissions and assistant vice president for enrollment services at the University of Houston, dean of student and academic services at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University, San Marcos), director of undergraduate admissions at the University of Maryland, College Park and associate director of admissions at Towson State College (now Towson University).

Dr. Sigler has had a significant influence on the national enrollment management movement. He developed the nationally recognized Tri-O leadership/management system that is stakeholder-focused and outcomes-oriented. He is the author of the book, *Managing for Change: Shifting from Process-Centric to Results-Oriented Operations* (AACRAO 2007), and he chaired AACRAO’s Enrollment Management Committee several times and participated
in the development of AACRAO’s Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Conference. In 2008, Dr. Sigler received the AACRAO APEX Award that recognizes excellence in education administration and outstanding achievement and influence in the profession. He also served a two-year term as president of the Association of Chief Admissions Officers of Public Universities (ACAOPU), a professional organization for the chief admissions officers of the nation’s flagship public universities.

Sigler earned a B.S. in Political Science from Towson State College and both an M.A. in Education and a Ed.D. in Higher Education from The George Washington University.
Strategic enrollment management (SEM) has evolved over the 40 years since its inception to become a powerful system for enabling colleges and universities to take better control of their enrollment destiny. The myriad of challenges that higher education currently faces make it imperative that the leadership at all levels of an institution fully understand how SEM can help to proactively address these challenges. Reduced funding in many states, declining numbers of high school graduates, expectations from students and their families for demonstrated outcomes and return on their investment, and the importance of serving an increasing diversification of students present a challenge for higher education leaders.

*SEM Core Concepts* is designed to provide busy professionals with a macro overview of SEM. Whether or not an institution is already using SEM practices, this guide will be a helpful resource for establishing or building on an existing SEM program.

The guide is organized around the following topics:

- Definitions of SEM and examples of what it is not
- The evolution of SEM, including its developmental stages that provided the building blocks for the current best practices of the profession
- An overview of the essential SEM concepts
- A planning model and road map for transforming an institution into a SEM organization

This publication is not intended to be a how-to guide or a definitive exploration of SEM. While there is not a definitive defini-
tion of SEM best practices, based on my 40 years in the enrollment profession as a practitioner, consultant, and author, I have designated as “core concepts” those ideas that seem to be lasting and often-referenced, and as “best practice” those practices that currently seem to be viewed with general agreement in the profession. Additional resources are listed at the end of the publication.