

FOREWARD

Evergreen is faced with a serious enrollment problem. Full-time enrollment has declined since fall 1974, and although headcount enrollment increased steadily through 1976, fall 1977 brought a reduction in total student enrollment.¹ Enrollment projections for the near future fall far short of the figures in Evergreen's "enrollment contract" with the State.² Pressure is on the college from the State Legislature to change its unique educational format to make it more "sellable". Concern about future enrollment prospects has been voiced by virtually every college administrator, and by many other members of the college community: staff, faculty, students, and many individuals with a vested interest in Evergreen. Although institutions of higher education in Washington rely heavily upon high schools in their own, or neighboring counties, for a source of new students, Evergreen's rather dubious reputation in its surrounding community has handicapped its ability to attract high school graduates from Thurston County.³

Enrollment shortages are threatening the viability of Evergreen's alternative approach to education. Many potential changes the college could make in response to market pressure and consumer demand would undermine the intention to provide a unique educational product. Moves towards a more "traditional" programmatic structure or specialized instruction could result in an Evergreen much different than that envisioned by its founders, or many individuals presently at TESC.

Evergreen is not, however, alone in facing enrollment shortages. For a variety of reasons, colleges nationwide can expect a decline, or at least a decreased growth, in the number of high school students

interested in college attendance.⁴ To confront, and hopefully overcome these difficulties, an increasing number of colleges are adopting concepts used in commercial marketing.⁵

It is the purpose of this paper to describe how the "marketing concept" can be applied to higher education, and to argue for its usefulness in regards to Evergreen's enrollment situation. It will not, however, provide an operational marketing scheme or a cookbook solution to Evergreen's enrollment problems. Instead it will set forth a model, or way of approaching the planning and implementation of a college marketing program, and delineate the essential factors to be considered in the design of a marketing plan for Evergreen or any institution of higher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To approach the subject of marketing higher education and its potential application to TESC, a method of research akin to what is known as "illuminative analysis" was employed. This methodology is a relatively new evaluation tool, used primarily to investigate educational programs, teaching, and the educational milieu of a given institution.⁶ Illuminative analysis was used for basically two reasons: 1) it permits a "progressive focusing" on crucial issues, a factor especially advantageous when dealing with a project of undetermined scope, and 2) it relies more heavily upon qualitative rather than quantitative research skills, the latter of which the authors were unqualified to use and which can prove costly and time-consuming.⁷

The following discussion of the authors' application of illuminative analysis will provide insight both into the nature of this methodology and the evolution of this report.

Utilization of an illuminative analysis study design generally entails three stages which functionally overlap: observation, focused investigation and interpretation. At the outset of a study the researcher plays a role similar to that of a social anthropologist; the purpose is to become familiar with the activities, processes and communication networks occurring in a given educational setting. There is no attempt as in traditional research methodology to isolate or control variables. Instead, a basic understanding of a complex situation as it is encountered is sought.

The second phase of illuminative analysis entails the selection of a number of reoccurring phenomena and opinions which, as a result of

preliminary observations, seem worthy of more sustained and intensive inquiry. Analysis and interpretation of the vast amount of accumulated information comprises the final stage of illuminative analysis. Alternative interpretations and thesis are weighed and much data weeded out. There is an obvious need at this point in the study to define the parameters of the final report without deleting important ideas and information.⁸

The authors embarked upon this study with the self-devised mission of exploring the marketing concept as applied to higher education in general, and specifically in regards to Evergreen. The initial research or "observation" entailed reviewing literature pertaining to commercial marketing and marketing higher education; interviewing a variety of people involved in the Evergreen community with a focus upon college administrators; talking with people involved with higher education throughout the state, especially those concerned with enrollment and recruitment planning; and reading a variety of papers and documents available on Evergreen.

A lack of coordination and communication between individuals involved in enrollment planning and recruitment at Evergreen; the need for a systematic approach to marketing; and the need for a common data base to be utilized by all of those involved in the marketing effort were issues selected for focused investigation. Consistent with the methodology, the research became more systematic and direct. A brief questionnaire was designed to assess the degree of coordination between a sample of administrators, and other efforts were aimed towards developing a model for marketing higher education and establishing the need for a research office.

In interpreting the information collected, the focus of the study was narrowed to concentrate primarily on those aspects of the "marketing model" which were deemed crucial to Evergreen's marketing effort. A decision further was made to exclude a discussion of commercial marketing theory, as it was not essential to a presentation of the central thesis. Finally, a major portion of the authors burden was relieved by a somewhat self-gratifying coincidence: the need for an argument supporting establishment of a research office was eliminated by the move on the part of Evergreen's budget planners to include a provision for an Office of Institutional Research in the 1978-79 budget.

MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

Application of certain basic principles of commercial marketing to enrollment and recruitment planning is gaining credence among college administrators. Although educational institutions have long utilized business theories and practices related to finance, accounting, corporate strategy, and more recently organizational behavior and management science, marketing has been neglected.⁹ This rejection of the "marketing concept" is attributable to basically two factors: 1) Postsecondary education has traditionally enjoyed an assured supply of "educational consumers", thus negating the need for sales tactics; and 2) marketing, regarded as a "hard sell" tactic has been held in disdain by most educators.¹⁰

During the 1970's, however, a variety of factors have contributed to the increased popularity, or at least acceptance of marketing techniques among college administrators. Concern for institutional viability

in the face of a shrinking pool of high school graduates has forced consideration of strategies for battling declining enrollment. Especially for private schools and those lacking an established reputation, operating in a competitive market has raised the question of "selling" the institution to potential students.

While the high school graduate population is expected to decline, many new types of educational consumers are emerging. Adults, community college transfers, minorities, women, individuals in the lower income brackets, and those traditionally underqualified academically for a college education are gaining increasing recognition as potential students.¹¹ Successful attraction of these segments of the population has, and will to a greater extent in the future, force schools to assume a greater consumer orientation and develop programs responsive to the needs and desires of these individuals.

A better understanding of, and appreciation for, the principles underlying the marketing concept has facilitated its acceptance among educators. Negative connotations attached to marketing due to a perceived emphasis upon "creating needs" or the "hard sell" are gradually fading as approaches stressing the development of educational products and services which meet the needs of the consumer are developed.¹² While the term "marketing" still meets with some resistance, many of the concepts it embodies are widely accepted, if not practiced.¹³

Of the many commercial marketing principles adopted by educators, the following will be discussed in the belief that they form a fundamental basis for enrollment planning and the development of recruitment strategies. While many of these concepts may appear simplistic, each is crucial to a sound approach to marketing, and as will be argued in regards

to Evergreen, are often neglected in college marketing strategies.

Consumer Orientation and the Exchange Process

Central to the marketing concept is a focus upon consumer needs and the process of exchange. A consumer orientation implies, in the case of higher education, that an institution is sensitive to what students need and desire. This set of expectancies held by students about an "educational package" must be responded to, or an institution's inability to do so acknowledged. To effectively communicate such a response, the college must discover the best means of relaying information regarding its educational milieu to potential students. This in turn requires an understanding of the factors influencing a student's college choice decision-making process.¹⁴ Vital questions include: What do students desire in an educational experience? Is the school able to fill those needs? How does the school best communicate its true image?

In addition to a consumer orientation, a marketing approach further recognizes an "exchange process" undertaken by the student and college to satisfy mutual needs.¹⁵ Hence, the needs, limits and resources of the institution must be as clearly understood as those of the potential students. On one hand, the college offers an educational program, services, faculty, location, reputation, student body, entertainment style - all of those factors comprising the educational milieu. On the other, the potential student presents a curriculum vitae and other attributes communicated during preliminary contacts with the school. The purpose of marketing is to attract those students most suitable to the educational program and ambient character of the campus.

Dr. Roger Campbell, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Northwestern

University, attributes much of the antagonism towards marketing to a misunderstanding of this process of "give and take". He maintains marketing is regarded as "one dimensional", emphasizing, "bringing students to the institution, playing down ... the legitimate question of whether those you bring there should be there in the first place." Consideration of an exchange process, however, challenges these assumptions.¹⁶

To ensure optimal "mutual satisfaction" from the exchange process, the marketing approach thus makes two demands upon a college. First, those involved in the marketing effort must have a clear understanding not only of the educational programs offered, but the nature of the total college milieu. Next, the marketing activities must be of an informative nature, facilitating a student's understanding of the assets and limitations of the school.

Marketing as a Total Organizational Effort

Just as the marketing department of a commercial enterprise cannot function efficiently in a vacuum neither can the admissions office of a college plan and execute marketing activities without coordination with other departments or "subsystems" in the college community.

This "truism" holds two major implications: 1) responsiveness to the student market requires the institution to orient planning and development from the Board of Trustees "on down" around student needs, and 2) all of those activities undertaken by members of the college community which impact the decisions of students to attend the school must be coordinated. Implementation of a marketing scheme with benign neglect of coordination will result in inefficient utilization of a school's resources, and perhaps have a negative or "demarketing" effect upon

college recruitment.

As noted by Philip Kotler, "the marketing concept calls for integrated marketing. This means that the separate marketing tactics must be balanced and orchestrated for maximum and consistent impact on the target audience. There is nothing worse than contradictory messages and signals coming from a given college. The various components of the marketing effort must present a harmonious picture to the marketplace."¹⁷

Systematic Organizational Planning

Marketing requires a systematic organizational planning effort, including the statement of broad missions and goals and their policy implications.¹⁸ If marketing is to encompass virtually the entire scope of an organization's relations with its markets, then activities of the various departments, offices and individuals involved must be guided by common goals and coordinated policies. While the contributions made by various subsystems to the total institutional marketing effort are necessarily quite diverse (for example at Evergreen, policy establishment by the Board of Trustees, academic program planning by the Deans and faculty, high school visitations by the Admissions staff), to realize any synergistic common goal their activities must be directed towards that goal and guided by a common plan.

Institutional goals and strategies for achieving them must further make sense in light of the nature of the student market.¹⁹ If the pool of potential students from which a college has traditionally drawn is changing, then its missions and plans may have to be suitably adjusted. Hence, planning recruitment strategies around high school visitations when high school graduates are scarce and adults are expressing interest in life-long learning experiences may impede the effectiveness of the

college in servicing market needs and attracting new students. Offering a strict liberal arts curriculum when a majority of applicants express interest in more career-oriented academic programs (what is often termed the "new vocationalism") can have a similar effect.

Finally, even rationally developed goals and plans designed to tie a common thread through the entire institution's marketing efforts can be ineffective if not adequately communicated and understood. Strategies intended to be followed through and acted upon must be placed in operational terms. In the case of Evergreen's Admissions Office goals, "Continue to offer the best services we can before and after the students enroll", while admirable, is too ambiguous. Vague generalities carry different implications for individuals involved in devising policies and implementing strategies, and hence can hamper coordination.

Marketing: Two Approaches

Two approaches to marketing are commonly recognized. One is to seek out markets for an existing product; the other to design products in response to the demands of a recognized market.²⁰

In higher education, as in commercial enterprise, a balanced approach is optimal. A college stubbornly clinging to a rigid curriculum and educational format will likely have difficulties attracting students. Conversely, major changes in response to every "popular" educational trend may be detrimental to the institution's reputation.

A MODEL FOR MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

As evidenced by the foregoing discussion of marketing higher education, the marketing effort is an endeavor embracing the planning and

functional activities of the entire institution. The scope is much broader than those activities falling directly under the responsibility of the Admissions Office. Marketing requires a total systems approach to enrollment and recruitment planning, and involves the coordinated efforts of all involved.

Although such an integrated approach to marketing is vital to a program's effectiveness, few models for developing a marketing strategy which embrace a systematic approach are available to college administrators.²¹ Much of the treatment given to marketing in publications pertaining to higher education deal only with specific aspects of the marketing problem.²² Hence, there is much material available on designing student questionnaires or "tried and true" recruitment strategies. There are, however, a few notable exceptions to this rule (See, for example, Kotler, 1976) which provide a framework for a marketing approach applicable to any institution.

Utilizing components of a number of models and supplementary material on marketing higher education, a model for developing a college marketing plan was constructed by the authors. The model presented here is comprised of seven basic "steps": Market research, institutional positioning, applicant development and portfolio planning, applicant evaluation and notification, recruitment effort evaluation, college improvement planning and alumni loyalty development, and comprehensive marketing effort evaluation.

The following discussion of the model will include first a basic description of the purpose and significance of each step. Next there will be a more detailed explanation of market research and institutional positioning. These first two steps will be given a more comprehensive treatment

because, 1) they form the essential foundation upon which a systematic marketing plan can be constructed, and 2) in the case of Evergreen, as is true with many colleges, they are being inadequately addressed. Finally, a number of important considerations presented in these two steps will be discussed in relation to Evergreen. Other considerations, due to the format of the model, will be left as suggestions for future action.

I. Market Research. Purpose: To develop an understanding of the competitive marketplace in which the college operates. Consideration of demand factors entails assessing the potential student market and understanding the student college choice decision-making process. Consideration of supply factors involves familiarization with the status of competing institutions and studies of exemplary marketing programs. A realistic perception of the educational marketplace serves as the foundation for a systematic marketing plan.

II. Institutional Positioning. Purpose: Make an institutional commitment to provide optimal service to some viable segment(s) of the student market, and establish an attractive and unique niche for the college. Positioning is based largely upon market research, an understanding of the college's current position in the market, and its position as perceived by potential students. Institutional positioning facilitates not only the recruitment process, but gives synergistic directions to all developmental and planning efforts undertaken by the college.

III. Portfolio Planning and Applicant Development. Purpose: Devise programs attractive to segments of the potential student market or seek a sufficient pool of applicants desiring the college's existing educational programs or undertake some combination of both. These activities must be based upon market research and the institutional position, and be aimed

towards realizing the optimal "exchange process". Underlying the alternative strategies presented in this step is a recognition of the two approaches to marketing.

IV. Applicant Evaluation and Notification. Purpose: Select those individuals from the pool of applicants best suited for the institution in light of its present offerings and established position. Admissions criteria must be developed and reviewed often to ensure they are producing the desired student class size and mix. Further, as many students will be admitted to more than one college, a notification procedure must be developed which will increase the student's preference for the college.

V. Recruitment Effort Evaluation. Purpose: To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the annual recruitment effort and pinpoint manners in which it could be improved. This should entail not only a macro evaluation of the enrollment results, but also a micro analysis of individual activities contributing to the total marketing effort.

VI. College Improvement Planning and Alumni Loyalty Development. Purpose: Identify key dimensions of student satisfaction (for example, quality of academic programs, social activities, residential facilities, etc.), evaluate student satisfaction along these dimensions, and based upon this evaluation, develop plans for improvement. In addition, devise programs which will enable alumni to participate in the marketing effort. This step is based on the premise that students, past and present, are a college's most effective advertisers.

VII. Comprehensive Marketing Effort Evaluation. Purpose: Evaluate the effectiveness of the entire marketing effort, comprehensively and on an on-going basis, along lines similar to the annual evaluation of the recruitment effort.

Market Research - A Closer Look

Every college has different information needs, so a laundry list of data to be collected would be fruitless. The model presented above does suggest, however, general aspects of the competitive marketplace to be explored.

I. Demographic information and population trends can help a college assess present and future demand for its educational product. Of interest are birth rates, numbers of high school graduates, college participation rates of high school graduates and other segments of the student market, general college enrollment rates, the economic climate, and characteristics of high school graduates: aptitude, economic background, geographic location, ethnic origin and educational aspirations.

Balanced consideration of all of these variables is necessary to develop an accurate portrait of the student market. In Washington, as well as nationwide, postsecondary education is facing a substantial decline in its traditional student market: the 18 - 24 year old high school graduate. The end of the impact of the post World War II baby boom, and the rise of birth control, female participation in the work force, and new attitudes towards child bearing are producing substantial shifts in the age distribution among the nation's population. These factors, coupled with increased life expectancies will lead to a population of an older average age than in the past.²³ Translation of these developments into enrollment projections, however, necessitates consideration of college participation rates among various age groups, socio-economic conditions, migration, attrition rates, etc.²⁴ Will increased adult interest in education counter balance an under-supply of high school graduates? Will a contraction in the market for educated labor further reduce the demand for

a college education?

II. If the aim of marketing is to attract students to college, then requisite to an effective marketing effort is an understanding of how students decide to attend college, and what factors influence their decision to attend a given institution. While sophisticated models of the student decision-making process have been developed (Kotler, 1976), they are highly theoretical, and hence may be difficult to apply to an operational enrollment and recruitment plan. These models can perhaps be more useful in raising questions or suggesting factors to be considered in the process of market planning.

One of the most important processes that a college should understand is how students acquire information about colleges. Important sources of information include: Peers, relatives, teachers, school counselors, mass media, published college guides, college catalogues and brochures, college alumni, direct mailings, etc.²⁵ While the college may utilize all of these in a marketing effort, each has different costs and different impacts upon future students. Research into the relative influence of these various sources enables a college to efficiently allocate resources among the various marketing activities.

Also important is an understanding of what attributes of the college are important in influencing the student's final decision to attend the college.²⁶ For example, to what factors do students attribute their decision to attend Evergreen: geographic location, the inter-disciplinary studies approach, cost or social life? What features of Evergreen have impacted the decision of applicants not to enroll? A general awareness of the relative importance of these factors would help Evergreen decide what to emphasize in its recruitment efforts, and further its design of

program offerings.

III. Market research should entail assessing not only the buyers market for higher education, but the nature of the competition a college faces as a supplier as well. With which schools is the college competing for students? What range of educational services are offered among the competition? Which schools are having difficulties attracting students? What exemplary marketing techniques are available?

The size and diversity of the educational marketplace necessarily places limits on the scope of the research, but a general understanding of the supply conditions in higher education is vital. Evergreen, for example, operates in a state-wide marketplace of 5 public universities, 12 accredited private colleges and universities, 27 public community colleges, 5 public vocational-technical institutes and approximately 300 private vocational schools.²⁷ A study of each institution would obviously be unwieldy, but acquaintance with its major competitors and some familiarity with the market as a whole would be beneficial to Evergreen.

Also useful is a conception of the status of other schools in regards to supply and demand. Even in a state such as Washington which is moving towards a highly competitive buyers market in higher education, some schools will have relatively more difficulty attracting students than others. The University of Washington, currently enjoying an abundance of applicants, is in a position to be highly selective in its admissions policy, while Central Washington State University has been forced to actively seek out new markets.

Finally, a survey of marketing efforts undertaken by other schools can generate useful information. Nationwide, marketing efforts have included such "gimmicky" promotional schemes as offering tuition

rebates for student recruitment efforts resulting in actual enrollment or releasing balloons filled with scholarship offers.²⁸ Other schools such as Pennsylvania State and Northwestern University have taken more systematic approaches, similar to the model in this paper.²⁹ In response to a tight educational market, Central Washington has made its educational programs more attractive to certain segments of the student market by establishing satellite campuses in closer proximity to their residences.

Institutional Positioning - A Closer Look

A college's top policy makers must articulate a mission and purpose for the school which makes sense in light of its history, resources, opportunities, public image and competition. The administration's statement should avoid vague generalities and set forth specific educational objectives and philosophies. Further, it should define a distinctive posture for the school in relation to its competitors.

The purpose of a mission statement is to serve as a foundation and locus for all marketing activities. Policies and strategies for implementing the marketing effort should be derived from these paramount goals. By establishing and communicating an institutional posture and mission, a college can facilitate coordination of marketing activities and avoid relaying conflicting messages to its public.

The following is an outline of factors to be considered in establishing an institutional position:

- I. What is the current position of the institution in the market? This entails consideration of the history and development of the college; how it compares programatically with other schools; and the relative impact

of enrollment trends upon the school and its competitors.

II. How does the public generally, and potential students specifically view the current position of the institution? This could be assessed through questionnaires given to present students, graduates or applicants who decline to enroll; contacts with high school and community college counselors; contacts with individuals involved in higher education in general; and the press.

III. Finally, based upon an understanding of these factors and the results of market research, the college develops an institutional position. First it identifies positioning alternatives available. Next it considers strategies necessary to achieve the most desirable positions. Finally the implications of implementing these strategies must be assessed. What would the effect of a specific change in tactics have upon the rest of the college milieu? For Example, if an Evergreen strategy to attract Thurston County high school graduates included establishment of a number of traditional course offerings, how would this effect future curriculum planning?

RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted previously, the first two steps of the model presented above, market research and institutional positioning were given comprehensive treatment for two reasons: 1) They provide the essential foundation upon which a systematic approach can be constructed, and 2) they are being neglected or inadequately addressed at Evergreen. Although Evergreen is engaged in a variety of marketing efforts, President Evans speeches

to community groups, Judy Annis' public relations activities, and Arnaldo Rodriquez' high school visitations, they are not derived from a school-wide understanding of an institutional mission or rooted in a sound analysis of the competitive educational marketplace. Based upon our familiarity with systematic approaches to marketing and our investigation of Evergreen's marketing activities we have developed the following recommendations.

Primary Recommendation:

Evergreen should use a systematic approach to enrollment planning such as the one presented by the model in this paper.

Secondary Recommendations:

1. Evergreen must establish a clear institutional position upon which decisions about enrollment efforts can be based.
2. Greater coordination is required in Evergreen's enrollment efforts.
3. Communication between those involved in the enrollment effort must be improved in order for Evergreen to reach its enrollment goals.
4. There must be a clear, operational enrollment plan established.
5. Every subsystem involved in Evergreen's enrollment effort must follow this common plan.
6. Evergreen must have a common data base for use throughout the institution.
7. Evergreen must increase its consideration of the "user point of view" in enrollment planning.
8. Evergreen must undertake considerably more research, both formal and informal, but systematic.

Primary Recommendation: Evergreen should use a systematic approach to enrollment planning such as the one presented by the model in this paper.

The task of attracting students to a college is difficult and complex. The efforts of nearly every "subsystem" of the college must be involved, from administrators through alumni. The management of this task requires a high degree of coordination and careful comprehensive planning, without which an institution cannot expect to achieve its goals. It is essential that Evergreen undertake careful planning and coordination of its recruitment effort in order to strengthen the desired outcome of enrollment activities.

In viewing organizations (such as Evergreen) as systems there are some important factors to consider. An understanding of the interdependencies of subsystems (such as the Office of the Registrar or the College Relations Office) is useful in analyzing complex task accomplishment. The activities of individual subsystems or components working together ideally create synergistic effects enabling greater results than individual efforts can provide. Most organizational activities are carried out through the interrelationships of subsystems. No component of Evergreen operates in a vacuum. Consideration of these factors is useful in the coordination of a complex effort.

The very nature of the recruitment problem alone indicates the need for extensive planning and coordination. Such a multi-faceted issue cannot be approached in a haphazard manner.

Secondary Recommendations:

Evergreen must establish a clear institutional position upon which decisions about enrollment efforts can be based.

The clear statement of an institutional mission provides the essential

foundation for a college's enrollment effort. Without this reference point the contributions of various subsystems to the total recruitment effort will not be aimed towards a common goal. Further, to be implemented as a guiding philosophy, the mission must be stated in operational terms and communicated systematically throughout the college.

There has been a need expressed by the interview sample for a clear institutional mission and philosophy. President Evans said, "Unless we know what we are internally, we can't sell ourselves to the external world."

One exceptional respondent claimed Evergreen could never agree on any institutional statement, other than a consensus that interdisciplinary studies are central to the essence of Evergreen.

While the need for an institutional mission has been discussed repeatedly, Evergreen appears generally unresponsive. In answer to one external evaluation containing the primary recommendation that institutional goals be clearly stated, Evergreen responded with an ambiguous reiteration of status quo interspersed with pledges to "try" and "endeavor" to follow the study suggestions.

Understanding that this step of the enrollment process may be the most difficult and painful stage to complete, we cannot overstate the importance of this recommendation. In its statements of institutional goals or missions, Evergreen cannot afford to be ambiguous.

Greater coordination is required in Evergreen's enrollment efforts.

There is presently a great need for coordination in Evergreen's enrollment efforts. Greater coordination will be needed in the future.

Four separate enrollment plans were discussed by different administrators, while others claimed Evergreen has no plan. Contradictions in

enrollment efforts were cited. High school seniors, community college transfers and older students were each singled out as the primary recruitment priority by different administrators. Students have been given tours of the Communications Building and then told there aren't faculty to support it. Students have been recruited for programs that were full and programs that didn't exist.

An enrollment effort is a system-wide activity. The roles of every component of Evergreen must be planned, communicated and carried out to result in the achievement of enrollment goals. The left hand must know what the right hand is doing and how each of their activities relate to the purpose of the body as a whole, as a system.

Communication between those involved in the enrollment effort must be improved in order for Evergreen to reach its enrollment goals.

Improved communication is essential for Evergreen to carry out an enrollment effort. The quality of communication taking place at present can be easily questioned. One person responsible for vital support to the Admissions Office has no written or formal plan and has mistaken the priorities of the Admissions Office in a personal interpretation of the admissions plan. The Director of Admissions had spoken with the President only twice. One administrator complained about the quality of the support provided by another office while a short walk down the hall could have provided resolution of their problem. It had never been discussed. The number of different enrollment plans in circulation alone is an indication of poor communication.

Awareness of both formal and informal communication channels at Evergreen can aid the improvement of communication. Consideration of feedback channels would also be useful.

Clear communication is requisite for coordination of any institutional

task, and especially important with the complexity of enrollment planning.

There must be a clear, operational enrollment plan established.

Administrative response to the establishment of an enrollment plan was positive. Nearly every person interviewed expressed a need for clear institutional plans for enrollment. One administrator said of Evergreen's plan, "It's out of focus." Another said, "We don't have a plan. We don't have a plan to plan." Defining Washington State as a recruitment target, an administrator felt Evergreen was doing well nationally. A subordinate of that person was describing a scatter-gun approach saying, "We have tried to cover all the bases." One significant exception was a highly placed administrator who was extremely pessimistic about any institution's ability to affect its enrollment, including Evergreen.

It is crucial to any organizational task that system-wide activities be clearly planned and stated through concise objectives and roles for all participants. This type of plan must be formal. A complex and and diverse organization such as Evergreen should not expect to achieve success in reaching enrollment goals through the use of informal or casual directions.

Every element of Evergreen's enrollment effort must follow a common plan.

Evergreen must follow its clearly established enrollment plan. This requires high quality communication. At present many different enrollment plans are circulating throughout Evergreen's administration. The use of a common plan is most obviously necessary for coordination and to prevent contradictions and cross purposes, but beyond this, it is important to

have a common goal and direction that participants can utilize to unify their efforts. It can also serve as a focus for esprit de corps.

The use of a common plan is especially important at Evergreen. In private firms the function and purpose of participants is more directly channeled in one direction: the company objectives. By the nature of institutions such as Evergreen, the direction and purposes of individuals follow an opposite pattern; one of diffusion. At Evergreen there is no profit to turn. (Although admittedly, enrollment levels affect funding).

To function effectively in one direction an institution has to know precisely what that direction is. The use of a common plan provides such a focus.

Evergreen must have a common data base for use throughout the college.

In order to operate in a consistent and coordinated manner, Evergreen must have a common data base.

At present there is a large quantity of data being produced by different offices throughout Evergreen, some of which is contradictory. It was said that, "Each administrator has only a fragment of the picture." It appears that very little data is utilized outside of the office in which it is developed, and it is often in the wrong format for use by others.

Evergreen's recently funded Office of Research could be effective in increasing the commonality and coordination of research efforts at the college. Whether this office would take over all institutional research or merely oversee these activities, much could be done to increase the effectiveness of research at Evergreen.

Decisions about enrollment must be based on common assumptions to produce a unified effort. Administrative assumptions would ideally stem from the use of a common data base.

It is difficult if not impossible for Evergreen to carry out a highly coordinated and complex task without the use of common data.

Evergreen must increase its consideration of the "user point of view".

Evergreen must place greater concern on the "user point of view" at all levels of planning for recruitment activities. The utilization of feedback is crucial to this idea.

The entire discussion of marketing is based on the idea of exchange between buyer and seller. The seller, Evergreen, must consider the buyer's, the student's, needs and to some degree modify the product, curriculum and programs, to meet those needs. While an extreme result of the principle would be an organization that changes with the tides, the other extreme would be an institution too rigid and unresponsive to survive.

Present trends towards an increase in older students and a declining high school graduate pool predicates the need for Evergreen to respond to increased changes in student needs. In addition, Evergreen is moving rapidly towards a "buyers market". With the marketplace that Evergreen operates in becoming tighter, it is imperative that Evergreen consider the needs of both present and potential students.

Time and resource limitations prevented the authors from discerning the degree to which members of the Evergreen community take this users view into consideration. The importance of institutional responsiveness, however, merits repetition regardless of present efforts.

Evergreen must undertake considerably more research, formal and informal, but systematic.

Evergreen must undertake a great deal more research in order to make more effective marketing decisions.

There is a nearly unanimous call among administrators for greater and better information throughout Evergreen. It was said, "You can't do planning if you don't know what students are doing," and, "we need more information whose format is in a proper form."

It is not essential that all research carried out at Evergreen be of a highly rigorous or empirical nature. There are valid methodologies for both qualitative and mathematically based formats. It is important, though, that the research at Evergreen be done in a systematic manner, with the results available for utilization for all involved in the marketing effort. This work should be coordinated, without duplicity, and have a clearly established use and need before it is undertaken. The research office could carry out some of these duties.

SUMMARY

A solution to Evergreen's enrollment problem will require a comprehensive and systematic approach to marketing. Basic to the marketing concept as illustrated by the model presented in this paper is a clear understanding of what the college is and who it is selling to. This paper focuses on these fundamental issues because they provide the foundation for the entire marketing effort. Evergreen must answer these initial questions in order to develop an effective marketing plan.