



Annual Meeting
February 14-16, 2024



Helping Prospective Students Make Wise Choices-Recruiting Mission-Fit Students

KEVIN E. BISH

VP OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Who Am I?

- Over 30 years of experience working in Higher Education, NPOs, and Consulting
- Professional background in enrollment, advancement, strategic planning, board and staff development, and non-profit organizational management
- Entering my 15th year as the VP of Enrollment Management and Student Services at Asbury Theological Seminary
- Married for 28 years with 3 kids

Agenda

- Marketplace Realities
- Student Decision Making Process
- Your “ideal student”
- EMT as a Stewardship Process
- Shotgun vs. Rifle Approach to Recruitment
- Practical Strategies that Work
- Next Steps

**I DON'T KNOW
ALL THE
ANSWERS???**

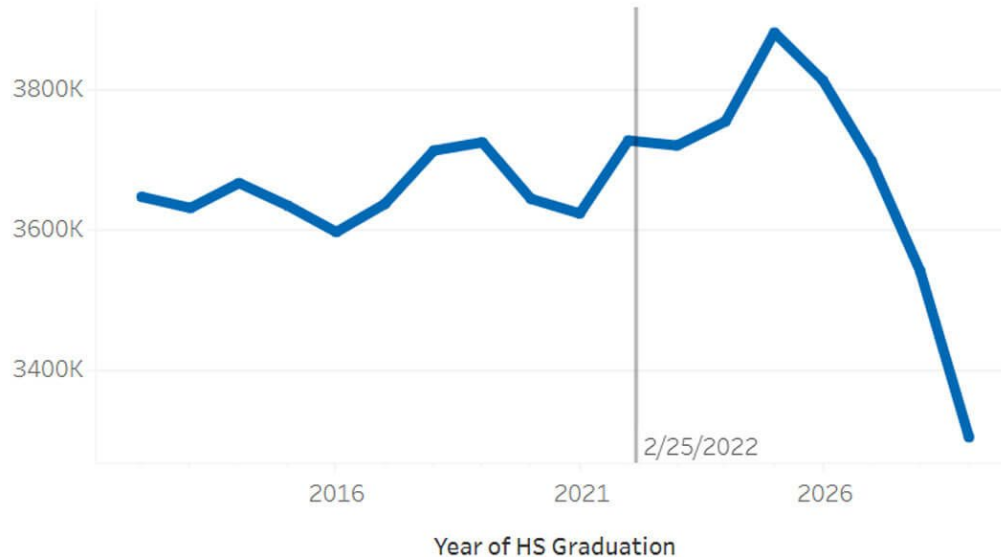


Current Market Trends

- Fewer students seeking higher education
- Increase in student indebtedness
- Economic downturns and inflation
- National de-emphasis of the necessity for higher education
- Instability in higher education institutions
- Hyper-Competition – More Institutions and Multiple Delivery Systems
- Enrollment Demographic Cliff
- Lack of man power and/or turnover of employees/volunteers
- Ever evolving marketplace with lots more to come...

2025 Enrollment Cliff

- Prior Enrollment Drop
2019-2021: 1 million fewer UG Students
- 2025 Potential 10% - 15% Drop incoming UG Students
- 2026-2029 additional 15% fewer UG Students

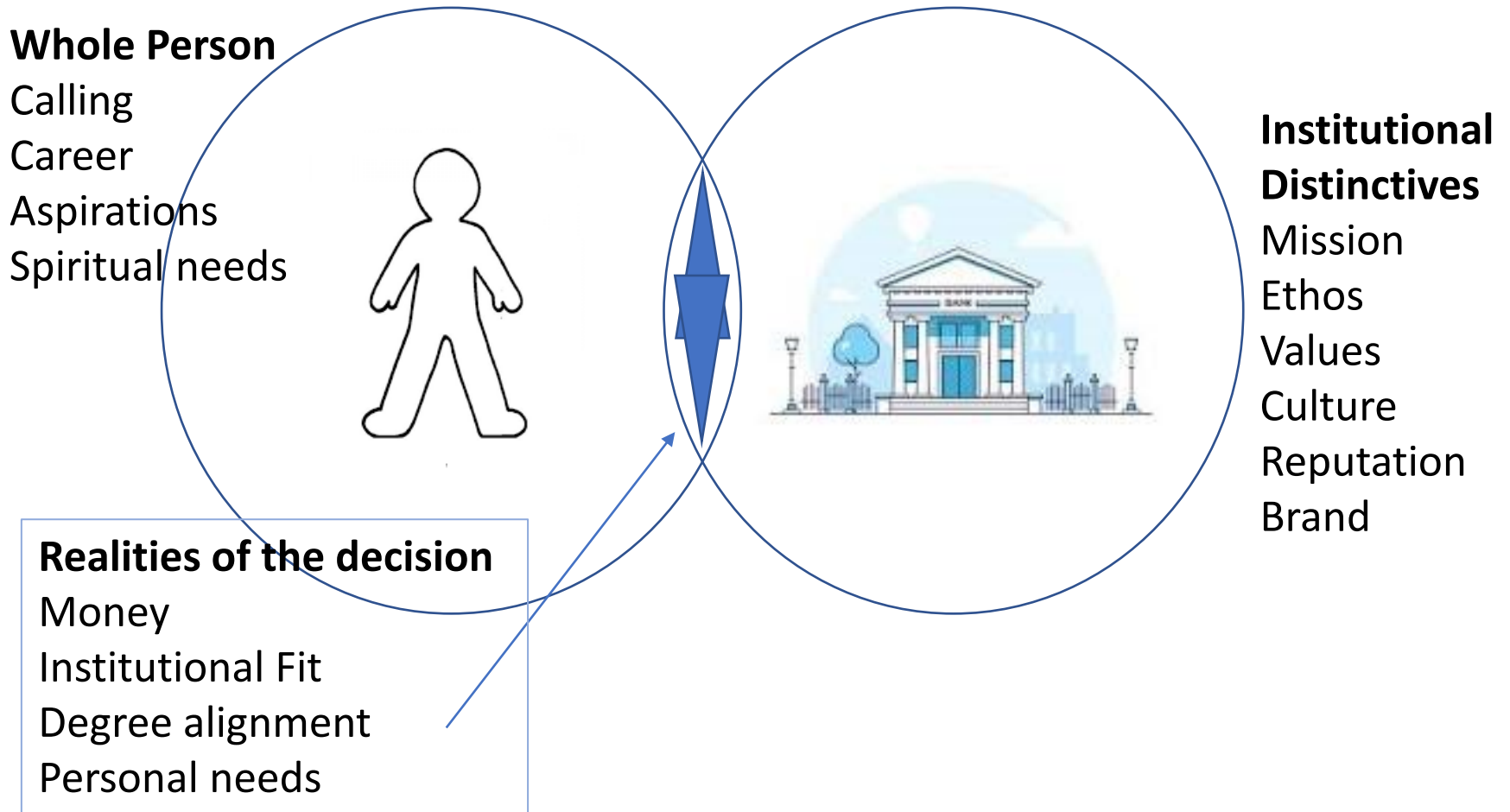


Why Can't Higher Ed Change?

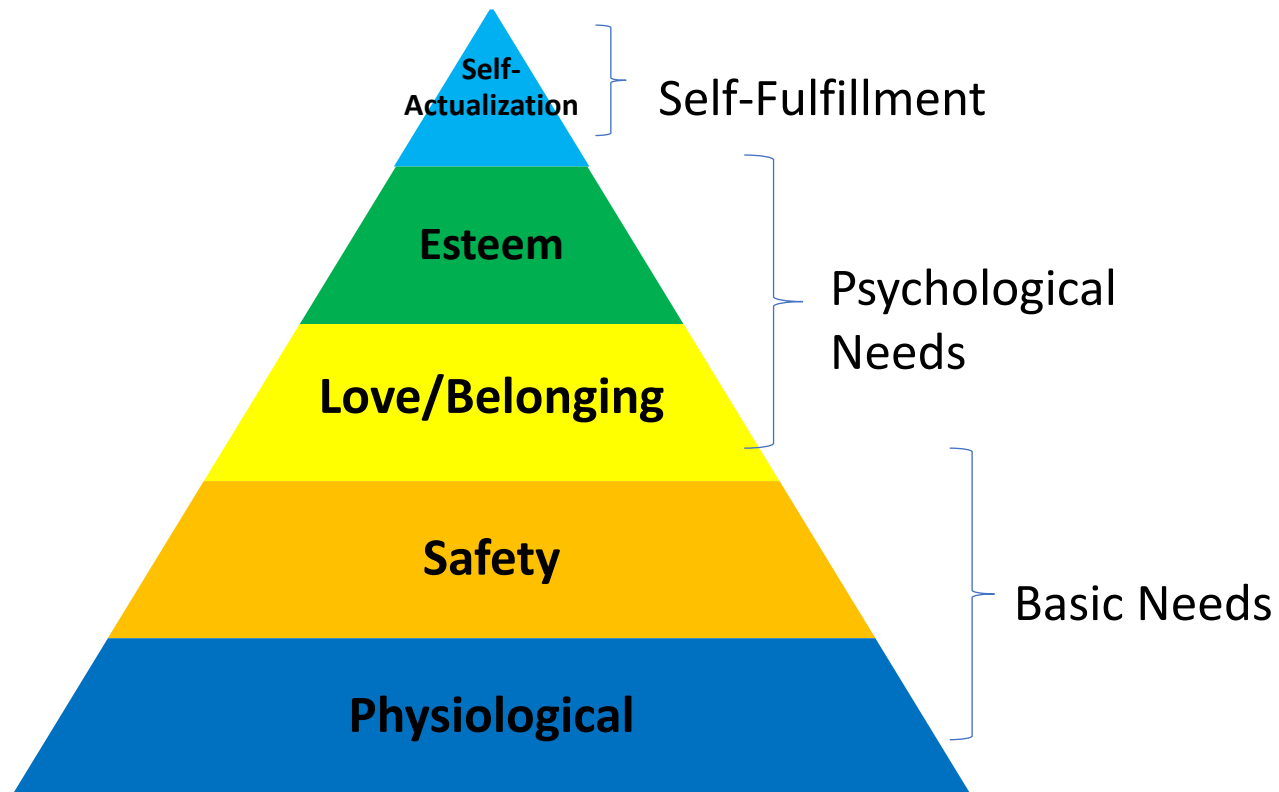
- Tenure (Leadership) – Lack of Urgency
- Shared Governance Process – Weaponized
- Community and Tradition (Buy-in) – Tradition over Data
- Financial Model – Lack of funds/resources
- Oversight (Accountability) – Process too complicated
- Risk Adverse
- Traditions

“Why Can't Higher Ed Change,” article by Kathy Bowles

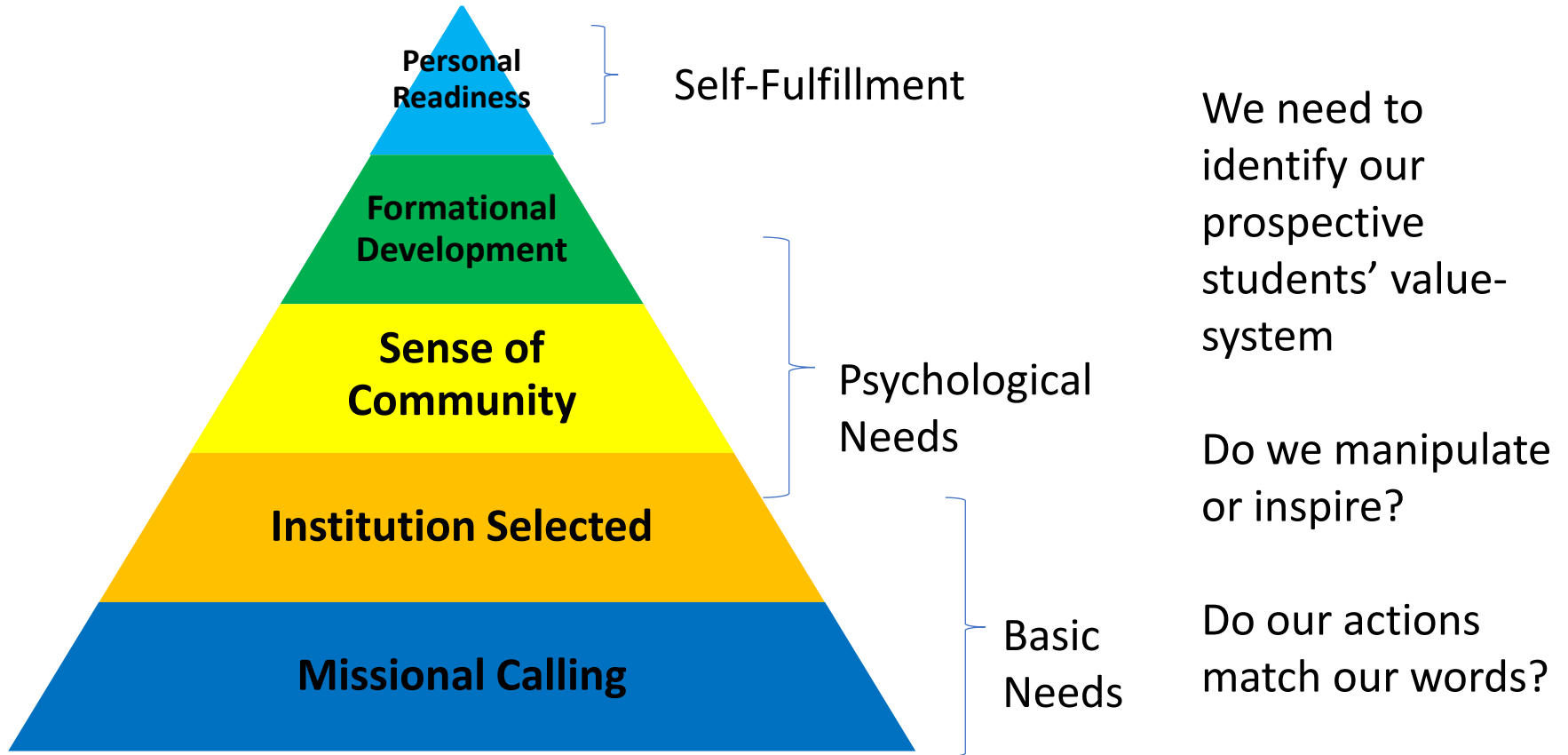
Student Decision Making Process



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Student's Hierarchy of Needs

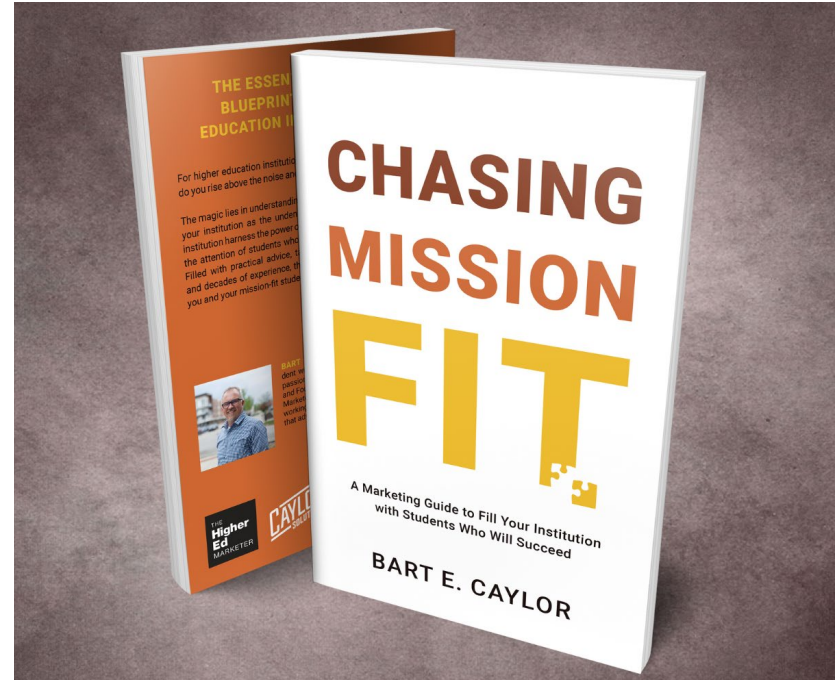


Ideal Student Matrix

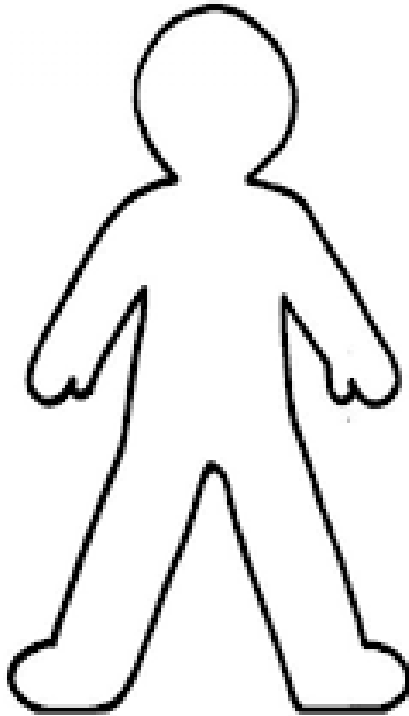
ACADEMIC STRENGTH • High School GPA • ACT/SAT • Transcripts	MISSIONAL CALLING • Heart for Ministry • Stewardship Plan • Personal Testimony • Professional Calling
APPLICATION PROCESS • Essay • Workability • Background Check • Ethos Statement • Mission Statement • Attended Campus Event	PERSONAL REFERENCES OF SUPPORT • Pastoral • Educational Reference • Other Reference • Interview (if needed)

Ideal Student & Mission Fit

- Whole Person Mindset
- Win/Win Strategy
- Student-Centric
- Decreases EMT Burnout



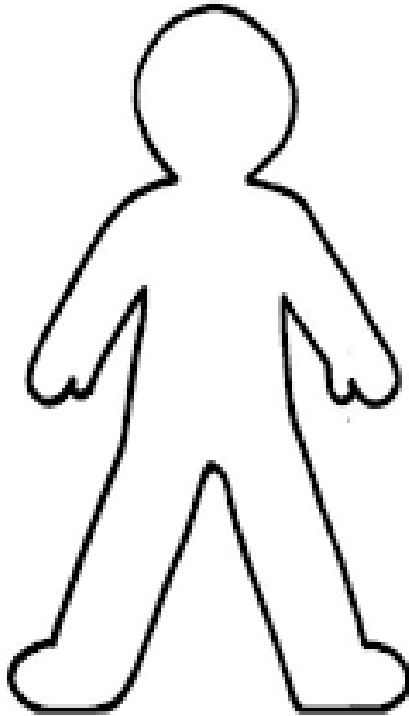
Ideal Student Exercise



What attributes
does the “ideal”
student portray?

“Everyone is a lot of people. Everyone is too diverse, too enormous, and too indifferent for you to have a chance at changing.” Seth Godin

Ideal Student Exercise



Our Simple Enrollment Promise:

Our institution is for students who believe...

_____.

Our focus will be on students who want...

_____.

Our promise to students selecting our institution is that we will help them achieve...

_____.

Modified from "This is Marketing": Seth Godin

Philosophy of Enrollment Management

Enrollment Management can be defined as a way:

- To understand student motivations and needs
- To educate students about institutional distinctives
- To provide opportunities for involvement and connection
- To build lifelong relationships
- To create a system that continually builds off the past

Biblical Approach to Enrollment Management

Enrollment management is **spiritually formative**.

- It is a process of identifying, cultivating, educating, and thanking.
- It takes time and hard work.
- It is not “big numbers fast and easy.”
- We are not trying to recruit a student; **we are trying to make authentic long-term relationships, minister to those we come in contact with and provide them with an education that will produce maximum results for the Kingdom of God.**

Transactional vs. Stewardship

Transactional

Prospect

Cultivate

Soften Them Up

Wear Them Down

Demographic Number

Close the Deal

Transaction Complete

Stewardship

Individual

Involve

Treat Them Well

Challenge Them

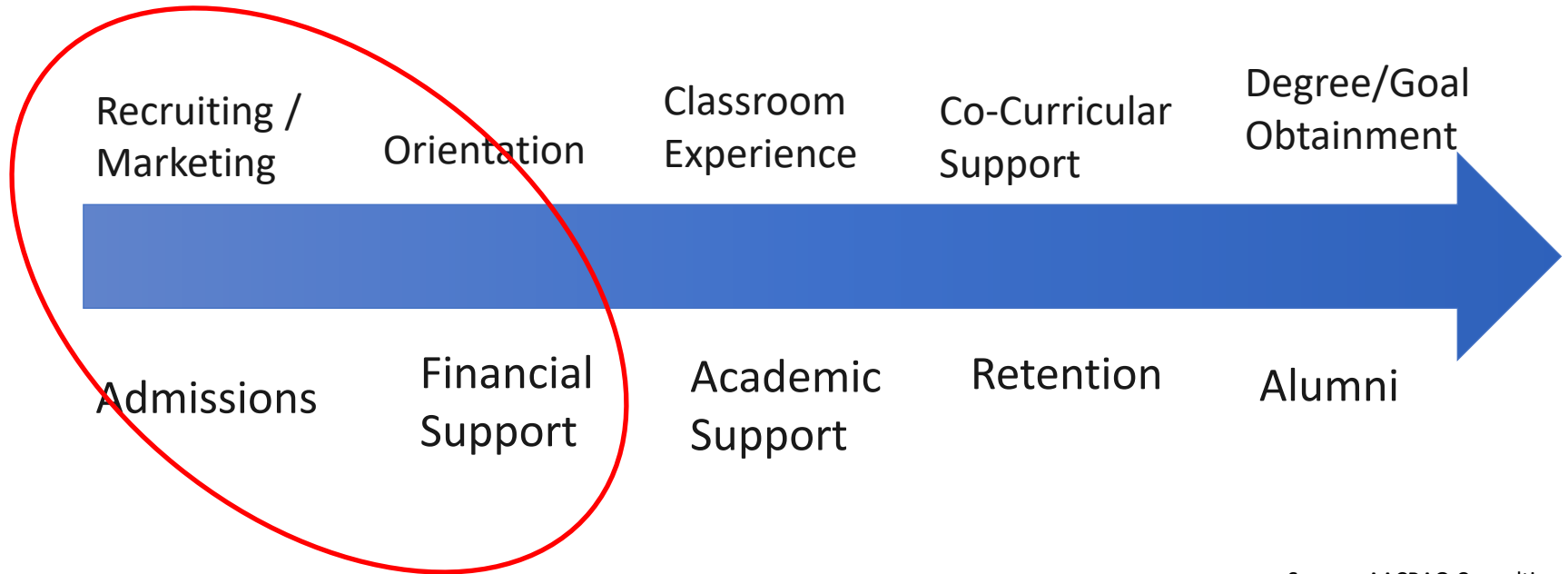
Chosen by God

Make A Commitment

Ongoing Relationship

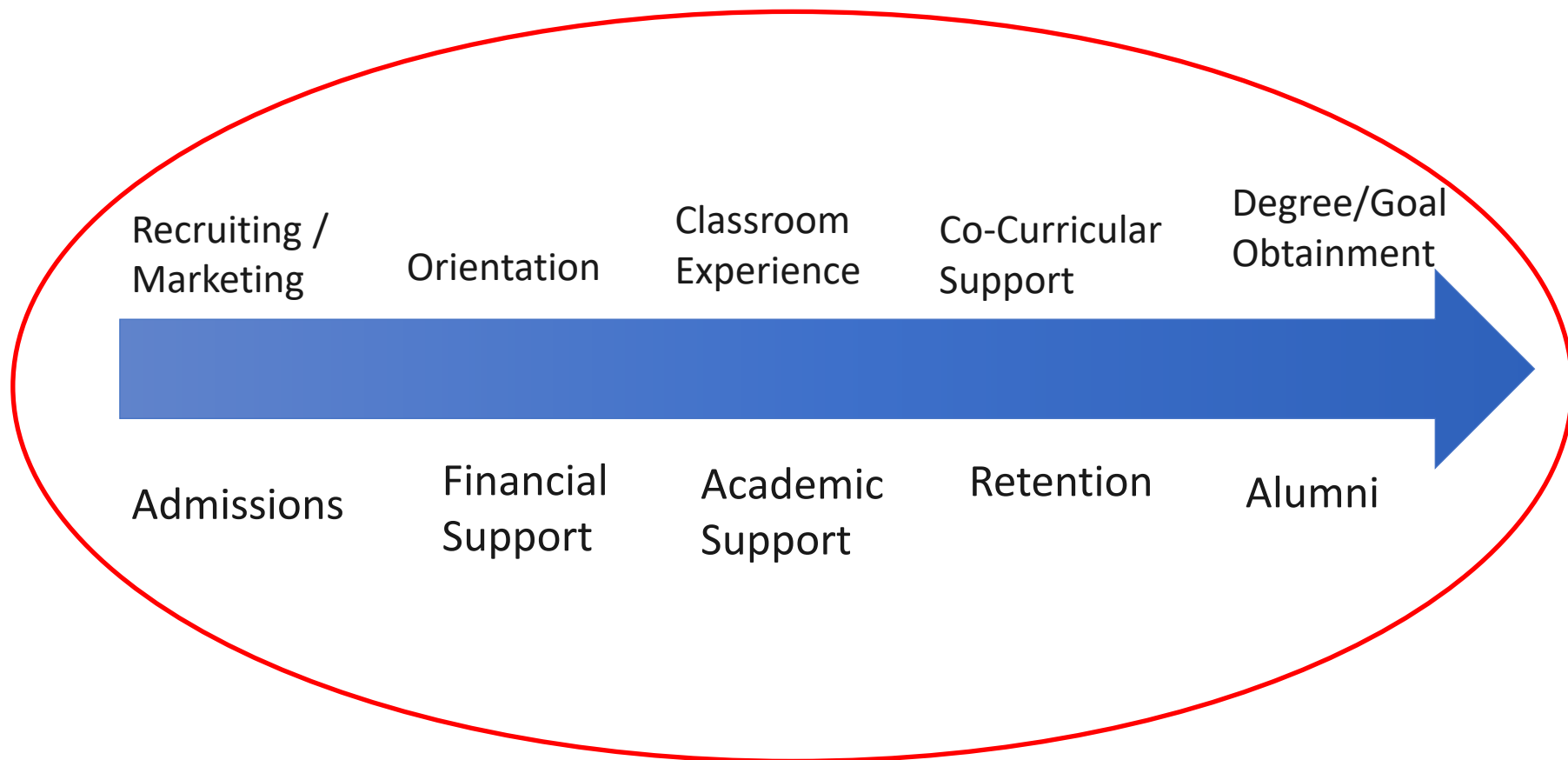
Christian-value based enrollment is about making the connection between the individual and the institution!

EMT Traditional Model



Source: AACRAO Consulting

Student-Centric EMT Model



Source: AACRAO Consulting

Enrollment as Stewardship

Enrollment as stewardship directly and positively impacts student satisfaction and institutional strength. To quote Peter F. Drucker, “To satisfy the customer is the mission and purpose of every business.”

- **Enrollment stewardship** brings the customer (student) into the institution as an asset beyond simply a means of revenue ...
- **Enrollment stewardship** leads the institution from transaction-based to relationship-based experience; it puts the student’s needs first as an act of stewardship, resulting in long-term positive returns.

Questions, Questions, Questions

Question 1: Who are we to those we serve?

- A blurred identity leads to confusion around priorities, direction, and strategy

Question 2: How do we serve them?

- An institutional misalignment is easily identifiable and effects trust between the student and institution.

Question 3: What outcomes do we desire to achieve?

- Congruence between outcomes/objectives of the academic enterprise and enrollment efforts will ensure nimbleness and market responsiveness without sacrificing institutional mission.

Shotgun vs. Rifle Recruitment Approach



OLD PARADIGM



NEW PARADIGM

Shotgun Approach to Recruitment



OLD PARADIGM

- Go after everyone approach
- Hard to be authentic
- Lots of social media and web capturing
- Less emphasis on travel
- Low return on investment (R.O.I.)
- Low conversion rate
- Significant amount of work on EMT Team
- One and done strategy

Rules of Engagement

Effectiveness of Activity

In Person: 70% will engage

By Phone: 25% will respond

By Mail: 2% will respond

7 Keys for Effective Recruitment

- Personal is the most powerful (Get them on campus)
- Identify who is the “ideal” student for your institution
- Maintain a healthy communication strategy (Distinctives matter)
- Challenge them, but don’t pressure them
- Help them problem solve
- Everyone is a recruiter (Be Completely Transparent)
- Trust the Lord to move in students’ hearts (Missional alignment)

Rifle Approach to Enrollment

- Identify the “Ideal” student
- Recruit with purpose
- Focus on people and relationships
- High authenticity
- Expect higher conversion rates
- Less taxing on EMT Team
- Long-term sustainable
- Very fulfilling and Kingdom minded



NEW PARADIGM

Practical/Tactical Strategies

- Evaluate last three-years recruitment strategy
- Evaluate campus visitation program
- Update your communication strategy
- Identify and market institutional distinctives
- Review your website
- Define your “Ideal” student and communicate it
- Create a strategic enrollment plan
- Manage enrollment expectations

Action Plan

- Know your Institution's Differentiators
- Constant Assessing and Evaluation of Information
- Understand your Market
- Competition Analysis and Comparisons
- Understand your resources and unique opportunities
- Set clear goals and manage internal expectations
- Create a collaborative institutional culture (All-in)
- Develop an Strategic Enrollment Plan for your institution

Incremental Magic

The Process

- Make small improvements
- Improvements become the new normal and everyone gets used to it
- You make additional small improvements
- Those improvements become the new normal
- Repeat the process.

Incremental change is that we barely notice the changes and then all of sudden we are there!



Final Thoughts

Recruiting the “Ideal” student

- It is a TEAM sport (All-in mentality)
- Know the “why” behind your “Ideal” Student Strategy
- Be committed to adaptation and innovation
- Manage expectations and celebrate wins

“Most people overestimate what they can do in one year and underestimate what they can do in ten years.” — [Bill Gates](#)

Contact Information

Kevin Bish
VP of Enrollment Management

Email: Kevin.bish@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: 859-858-2272

