

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 2.0

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Northern Illinois University
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SEM Plan (2019-2023)

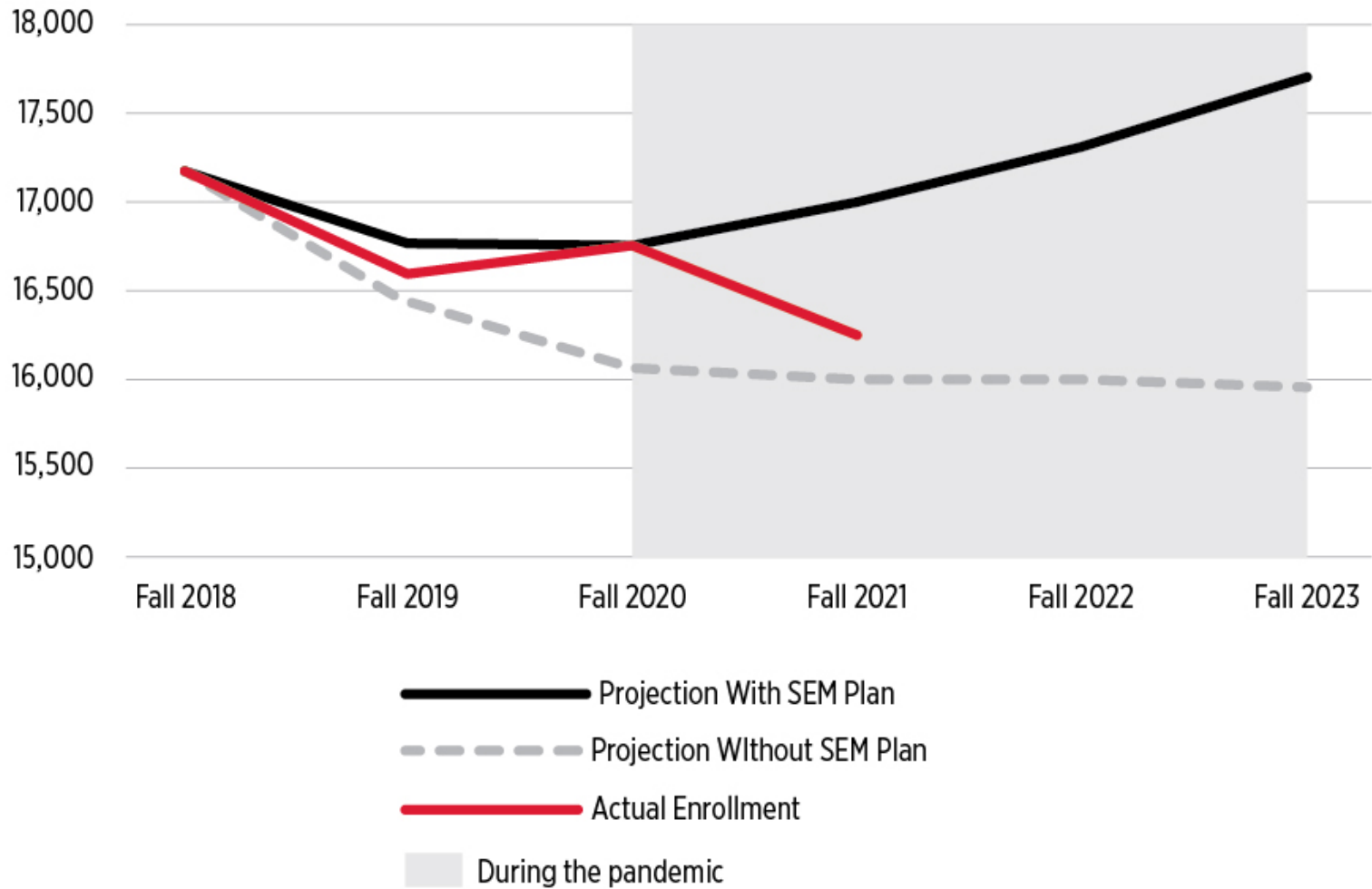
Key Accomplishments

- Stabilized – even increased – enrollment prior to COVID impact
 - Positive trends in new student enrollment, retention rates, equity gaps and graduation rates
- Introduced new programs and initiatives that made an NIU degree even more accessible, equitable and affordable
- Progress on retention and graduation (Navigate, developmental education reform, Center for Student Assistance, Huskie Academic Support Center, etc.)
- DEI initiatives
- Academic and financial advising capacity

COVID Impacts

- Mental health
- Belonging/Social engagement
- Financial
- K-12 learning and academic preparation
- Challenges present pre-COVID have been exacerbated – impacts will remain for years
- “Since the pandemic began in spring 2020, [total] enrollment has declined by 5.1 percent across the board, with 937,500 fewer students enrolled at American colleges and universities.”
– *InsideHigherEd.com (January 2022)*

NIU Enrollment Trends



NIU Enrollment Trends

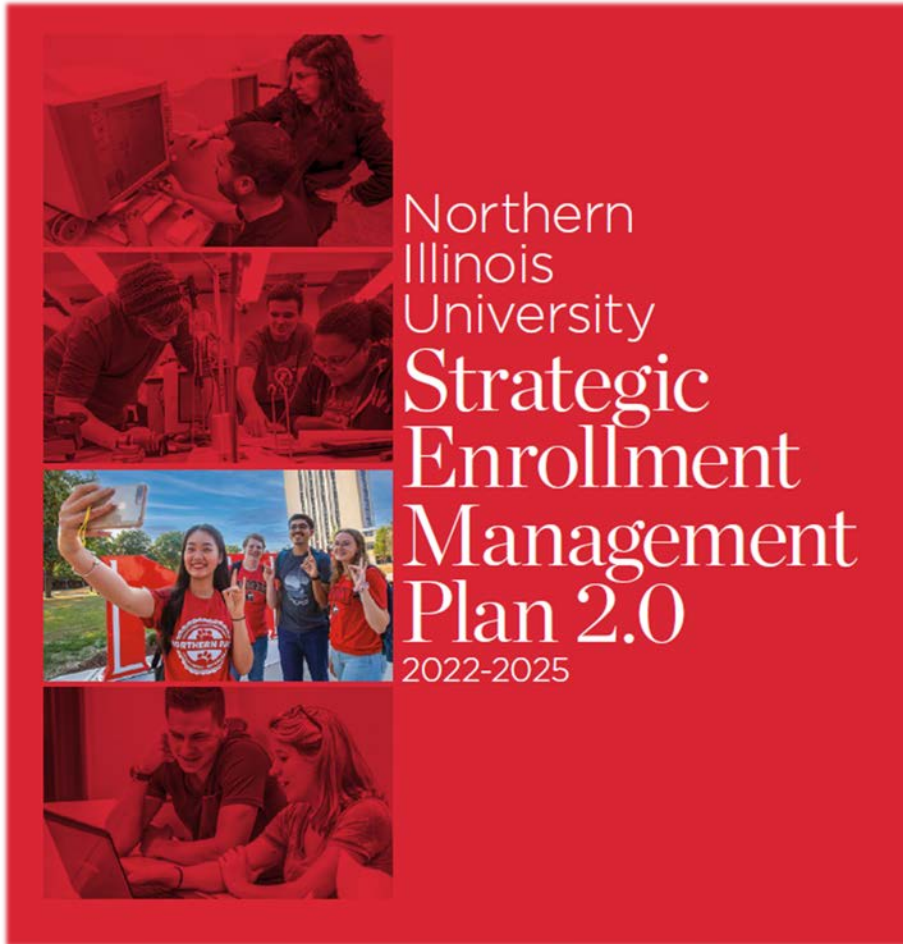


SEM Plan 2.0

“Resilient institutions will be those who transition out of pandemic responsiveness with clear plans to become stronger and more sustainable.”

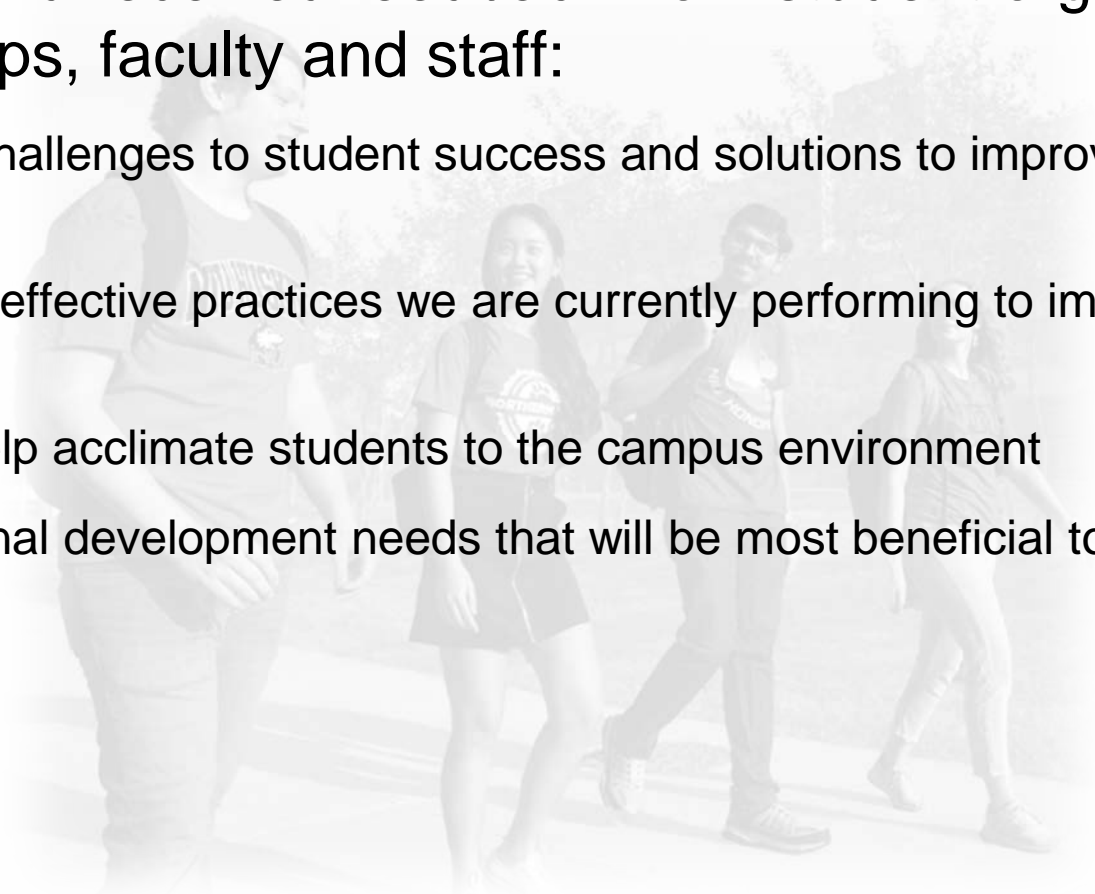
-Lewis Sanborne, Ph.D.

**Vice President
Student Success and Enrollment
Ruffalo Noel Levitz**



Shared Process

- Sought and received feedback from student organizations and groups, faculty and staff:
 - Barriers/challenges to student success and solutions to improve/remove these
 - The most effective practices we are currently performing to improve student success
 - How to help acclimate students to the campus environment
 - Professional development needs that will be most beneficial to faculty/staff



Shared Process – Faculty/Staff Feedback

- **“Understand who our students are and the realities of their lives.** Hear student voices so we can ensure we are providing instruction, advisement, and support in **ways that make sense to and are appealing to our students.** [We need] a **clear set of specific retention strategies** to implement so college faculty and staff are not left to guess what they should do to support student retention.” -NIU faculty member
- **“We have to consider their “pandemic life experience” and the impacts** of that experience. How have lock-downs, virtual learning, modified social experiences, disappointments, etc. impacted how they learn, study, seek help or interact with their environment? We need to find a way to **bridge the gap between the assistance they need and their hesitation or lack of awareness in seeking that help.** How can we **change the touchpoints** that might impact that gap, including orientation, first year experience programs, residence hall programming, support services, etc.? **Are we doing things differently** than we did two or three years ago? We certainly should be.”
-NIU staff member

Shared Process – Student Feedback

- “[My friends and I] did a paper on student retention rates on first year students and the issues found are **financial insecurity, inability to fit in, homesickness, and depression** as they **do not know who to ask or where to begin their search**. Institutions should have **welcoming initiatives** for first-year college students and an office that would **offer students resources, a sense of belonging, support with adjusting to college**, and help those at risk of dropping out.” -NIU student
- “When I speak to students, especially students outside of COB, they have talked about **not having the resources in the classroom** to build their resume or create a LinkedIn profile. I wonder if we can start making it a requirement for students to **attend Career Services' workshops**. It’s important for students to have knowledge about their area of study but it’s also important to **support students in their job search**.” -NIU student
- “Those who start college are **overwhelmed by all the information**. Students would benefit from some **unified, single stream of communication**. COVID made students not leave their dorms and without access to a social safety net to **learn the ways of NIU or how to be a college student**.” -NIU student

Key Elements of SEM Plan 2.0

- Stable total enrollment – will be updated annually
- Focus on improving retention, graduation, student success and reducing achievement gaps
- Continued focus on DEI and belonging
- Consistent, intentional and responsive
- Alignment with president's university goals, ILEA 2020-2025 Plan, HLC Quality Initiative and multi-year budget planning



Three Goals = SEM Strategic Themes

	Goal	SEM Strategic Theme
1	Strengthen our distinctive identity as a diverse, engaged public research university that transforms lives by combining educational opportunity and personalized support with meaningful student engagement experiences	Brand Identity
2	Achieve student enrollment that reflects our mission, our values and our region while positioning NIU for fiscal sustainability	Enrollment, Access and Affordability
3	Support access, opportunity and success for all students – employing an equity lens and striving to sustain a diverse student body – where diversity is defined broadly	Student Success, Persistence and Graduation

What We Will Do To Achieve Success

1. Brand Identity

- Further **hone our brand identity** through a perception study to better understand NIU's reputation with specific audiences and implement recommendations to improve the overall brand perception and enrollment opportunities.
- **Amplify Huskie pride** to support NIU and the NIU Foundation in our efforts to demonstrate and celebrate the benefits of an NIU education and the successes and contributions of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Improve the **tracking of NIU graduates' career outcomes** and **leverage outcomes data** to better represent the value of an NIU education to key audiences.

What We Will Do To Achieve Success

2. Enrollment, Access and Affordability

- **Enroll a new student population that mirrors the demographics of our region** through an improved yield experience for admitted students, tailored communication plans, and revised transfer credit procedures.
- **Launch a campaign to re-enroll NIU stop-out students**, including a case management approach, new student support services and promotion of existing and expanded options of online degree-completion programs.
- Provide **enhanced financial advising initiatives to students**, such as multi-year financial planning, along with robust training and education to campus partners on Student Financial Advising Services
- **Optimize the efficacy of all institutional aid funding** (including identifying and piloting innovative aid programs) to attract students and ensure their success.

What We Will Do To Achieve Success

3. Student Success, Persistence and Graduation

- Provide equitable programs, processes and support networks that **ensure students transition successfully** into the Huskie experience.
- Deliver on our value proposition to students as an institution that **emphasizes social mobility, academic success and leadership development** in an environment that celebrates diverse perspectives and lived experiences, ensuring that all students have the support they need to be successful and engaged.
- Support, develop and assess programs that are responsive to the evolving **mental and emotional health needs, wellness and physical health needs, and the safety** of our students.

Enrollment Projection

- To forecast total enrollment, we must anticipate enrollment by the following groups:
 - New first-year students
 - New undergraduate students with prior credit (transfer students)
 - Continuing undergraduate students
 - Graduate students (new and continuing)
 - Law students (new and continuing)
- Based on these forecasts, we project the total enrollment in fall 2022 to be between 15,600-16,100.

Keys to Successful Implementation

- Investment in strategic priorities
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Culture of shared leadership and accountability
- Communication plan for campus community



Questions

