

**Question:** How many of you are experiencing a drop in enrollments?

*The majority of 40 attendees in the room raised their hands.*

What do you think may be causing this drop?

- Enrollments seem to follow the housing boom (rise AND fall)
- Concerns from students and parents – “how much money is this type of job going to pay? And, will I even be able to get a job?”
- Architecture is experiencing the same thing
- Area community colleges are enrolling more students (where it’s less expensive and possibly closer to home), and students are expecting to transfer to a four-year and finish last two (or three) years
  - o It was noted that sometimes students do not understand the reality of doing this when curriculum such as interior design cover a four-year sequence and that it can actually be more expensive to the student in the long run.

It was noted that past track-records (of high enrollment) are driving administrative decisions in directions that are worrisome.

**Question:** How many of the programs (represented in the room) control enrollment?

*Fewer people raised their hands.*

- Incoming freshman numbers are down AND young designers are not getting jobs.
- We should be asking: What is the pool? Are high school numbers down? And, who is the pool of students? Is it high school students, transfer students, or second career students?
- Some schools have set the standards higher (for admissions) and enrollments went up.
- The timeframe in which a student decides to select a major is changing. Some are delaying the decision until they have some college behind them to go into a design program.
- “Exploratory Studies” (undecided) is a growing program.
- There are more master’s level programs available now.
- Rise in tuition costs is forcing some students into the career colleges.

**Question:** Have any programs seen an increase in graduate school applications?

*A few hands come up.*

- Some students are returning from practice (possibly due to loss of job).
- More students seem to be continuing after their bachelor’s degree for a variety of reasons: interested in teaching, interested in research related to a particular area of practice, and waiting to enter a sluggish job market.
- Some schools are seeing increases in their international student enrollments.
  - o This is also off-set by some restrictions on getting into the US

**Question:** Are your programs being threatened?

- Some programs are worried about implications of low enrollment on their futures. There were a couple of individuals that mentioned “losing lines” or not filling positions that may come open due to retirements. More programs are using adjuncts to cover classes.
- Is there any correlation between low enrollments and states that do have legislation?
  - o Mississippi just passed a title act. No real consensus here.
- Perceptions by parents of job security seem to be a reoccurring comment. Parents are more involved in decision making with their children, and they are shopping for schools more. Feedback from parents and students indicates that there is an attitude shift.
- Cost is a factor. There are fewer scholarship dollars to spread around as well.
- Duplication of programs and combining programs were discussed. A program’s reputation can also influence students’ interest.
  - o Some discussion on a school rating system, reference to DI’s ratings
- Budget cuts across universities are common concern. Some programs have been moved to a management system model [dollars in (or student enrollment numbers) = dollars to spend]. Therefore, student retention rates are seen as critical.

**Question:** Are teaching loads going up?

- Some emerging faculty report that they are being overloaded; additional courses are being added to their load, which changes what should go into their contracts.

**Question:** What are solutions to work against negative aspects of these issues?

- When 60% of classes are taught by adjuncts, you don’t have the same quality controls SO – make the control argument – better teaching, better advising.
- Message of mission? Do you play a role in the university’s priorities? Is there public awareness of what you do, and contribute?
- Value-engineer. Redesign your program/ curriculum. We can’t continue to teach in the “old” ways. Convince your university of the value of what you do and teach in new ways.
- Go after those “undeclared/ undecided” majors.
- Get your advisory board to go to the Provost with a clear message of relevancy.
- Interaction with administrators is important. Communicate and sell what you do. Must have a good advocate.
- What makes a program a target (either good or bad)? Does a hot or cold desk system matter? What do parents hear?
- Working with admissions one-on-one. Go find the data that you need to really know what’s going on. Educate yourself on the admissions process. Tailor your arguments.
- Educate those people who recruit and admit.

- Talk to the high school art teachers. Get connected with AAFCS, high school ID educators.
- Market your program. Feature and highlight student and faculty accomplishments. Attend job fairs.
- Focus on the quality of the program and the faculty.
- How do parents know what quality ID education is? We need to educate the public in relationship to licensing.
- What about balance? More to do, no more time to do it?

#### Ranking programs discussion

- We are good at solving our own problems rather than taking a stand, but we also don't always communicate in language people listen to.
- Balance of work that's able to be tracked. (Sometimes our perception of balance is out of perspective.)
- We need to study the demographics. We have to get out there and mingle.
- Do we tap other networks in various cities (e.g., alumni networks)?

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#### **Common Themes:**

- Parents are a part of this in a more significant way than ever before. Our message must reach them.
- Costs are a factor
- Demographics need to be understood.
- Communication and Marketing will be critical. This involves both internal and external stakeholders.
- Concern for how faculty will be able to meet these additional tasks given their already overburdened workloads