

# Develop the Next Generation of Enrollment Officers: Critical Task for Presidents Facing New Economy Spring 2009

Experienced and talented chief enrollment officers can be essential partners in helping institutions face the mounting challenges of staying mission-focused and financially viable in unprecedented economic times. Now more than ever, these leaders play a critical role on college and university presidential cabinets. Yet an aging cohort of enrollment officers with substantive experience in the field — combined with limited leadership development and succession planning in uncertain times — can lead to a fragile state for college and university presidents who depend on enrollment success for institutional success.

These are among the highlights of a national survey of chief enrollment and admission officers of colleges and universities conducted by Witt/Kieffer, a national higher education executive search firm. The survey was sent to 743 chief enrollment/admission officers, and received a 20 percent response rate. Preliminary findings were presented at the National Association for College Admission Counseling Chief Enrollment Officers' Forum in Seattle.

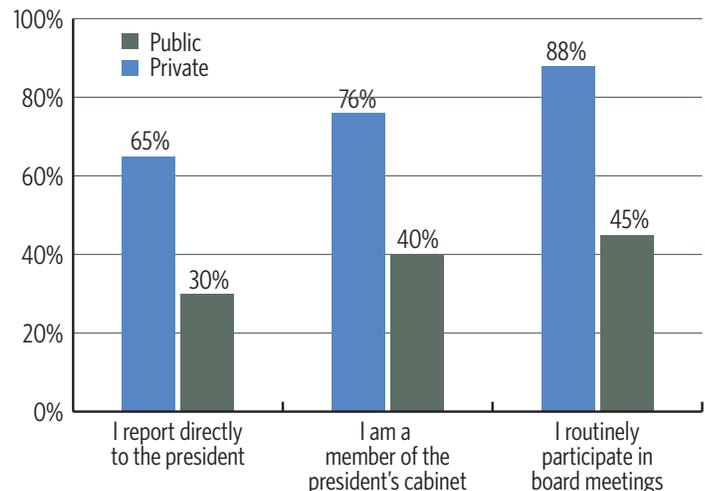
## **Enrollment officers at private institutions today have more opportunities than their public university counterparts to serve in direct advisory roles to the president and board.**

The need for enrollment officers in mapping an institution's strategic direction — more critical than ever during an economic crisis — should make their participation in leadership decision-making of vital interest to college and university presidents and trustees. Nevertheless, while more than three-quarters of responding enrollment officers at private institutions are members of the president's cabinet today, only 40 percent of those at public institutions serve in that capacity.

Furthermore, while 88 percent of enrollment respondents in private institutions report they routinely participate in board meetings, less than half or 45 percent from public institutions have similar governing board access. Additionally, 65 percent of private institution respondents report directly to the president, while this is true for only 30 percent of enrollment leaders of public institutions.

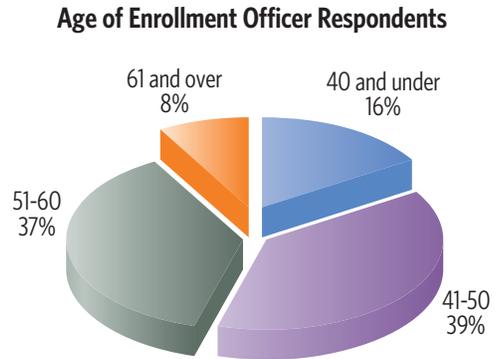
Presidents at public universities, particularly those eager to bring the more aggressive enrollment practices of private institutions to their campuses, would be well-served to educate trustees regarding the critical role enrollment management plays in achieving the institution's strategic goals and maintaining financial strength, especially in tough economic times. At the same time, enrollment leaders will appreciate regular exposure to the board as an important leadership development opportunity.

Respondents' Role in President's Cabinet/Board



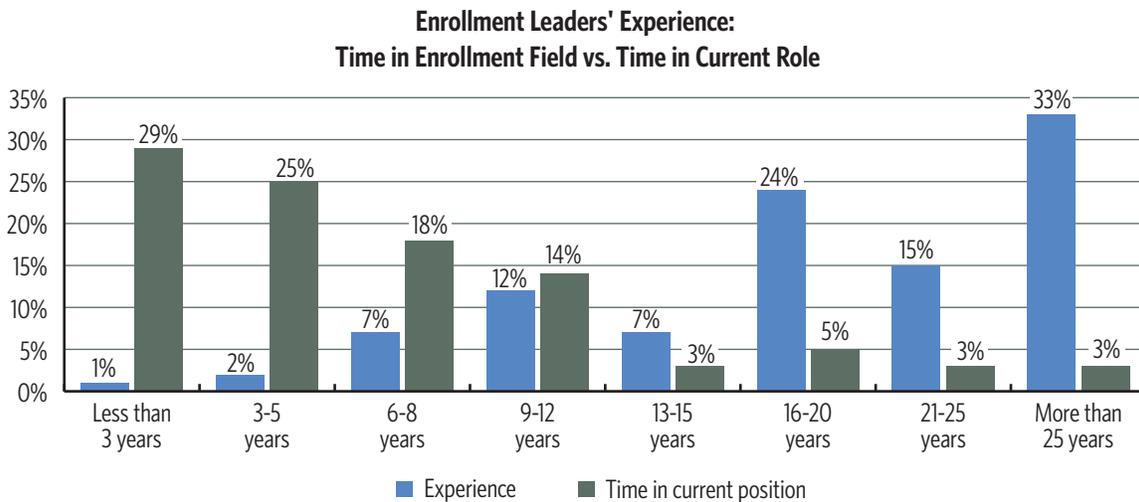
## Mentoring and leadership development of enrollment officers across higher education will take on greater urgency in the next 5-7 years as a generation begins to retire.

Nearly half or 45 percent of all survey respondents are older than 50; 25 percent are over the age of 55. Many will be making retirement plans shortly; college and university presidents need to be ready to make successful leadership transitions without losing institutional enrollment momentum. The need is particularly acute among public colleges and universities where more enrollment officers are nearing retirement age than those at private institutions. Forty-two (42) percent of survey respondents at public institutions are over the age of 55, compared to only 20 percent of enrollment leaders at private colleges and universities.



## About half of enrollment leaders have been in their current position for five years or less.

While nearly half — 48 percent — of enrollment officers have worked in the field for more than 20 years, 54 percent of enrollment officers have held their current position for less than five. This much turnover requires that college and university presidents give serious attention to recruitment, retention and succession planning related to this important role. Presidents should drive the process to attract talented enrollment leaders to their institutions. Equally important, presidents should mentor and develop those current and emerging enrollment leaders whose individual success has a direct, lasting impact on the institution.



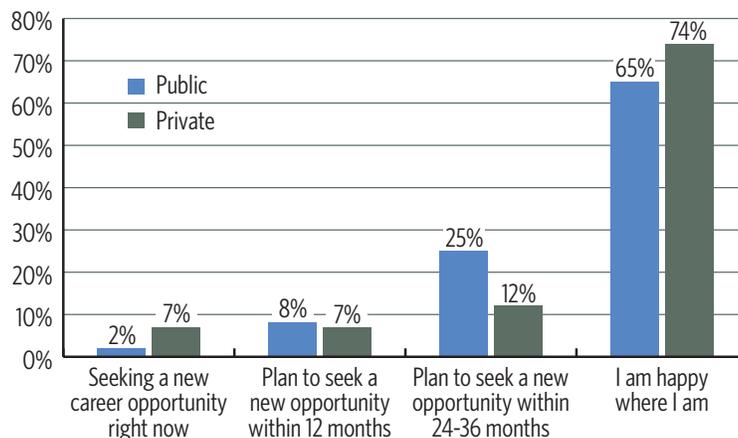
## More than one-third of respondents were new to the chief enrollment/chief admission roles prior to assuming their current position.

The majority (65 percent) of survey respondents held the chief enrollment or chief admission officer title before stepping into their current position; 21 percent came from more junior-level positions within enrollment, and the others (14 percent) came to the role from a variety of backgrounds including finance, human resources, marketing and strategic planning, to name a few. All the more reason for presidents and chancellors to make sure enrollment officers have opportunities for leadership development, training and regular exposure to the board.

**One-third of enrollment officers at public institutions plan to seek a new career opportunity within 12-36 months.**

One-third of enrollment officer respondents at public universities plan to seek a new career opportunity within one to three years. One-quarter of those from private institutions plan to do so. Presidents need to stay in touch with their enrollment leaders to keep a supportive eye on how the current economic climate in particular affects their job outlook, and do all they can to develop and retain top talent.

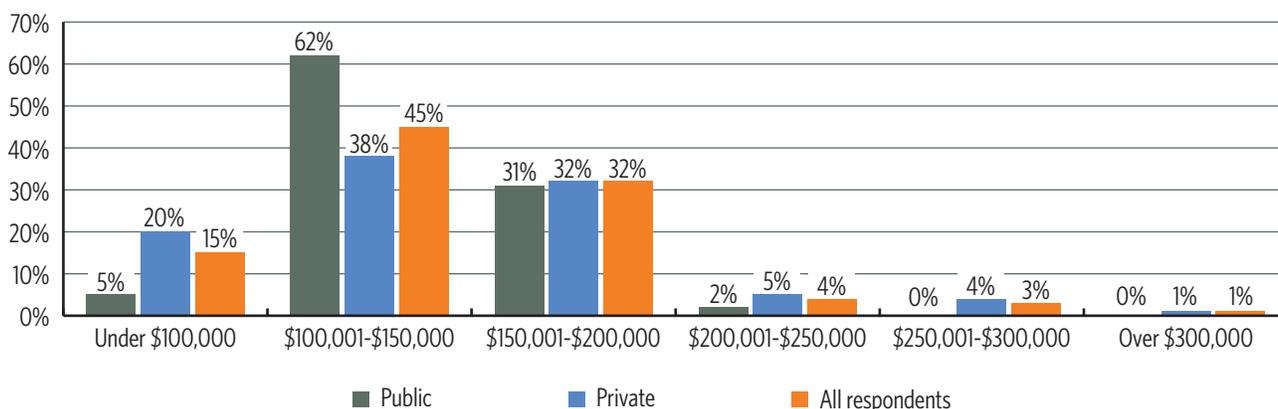
**Respondents' Career Plans by Institution Type**



**More than one-third of enrollment leaders believe internal politics and equity issues limit their compensation.**

Enrollment salaries have risen significantly in recent years as awareness of the critical role this function plays in overall institutional health has grown. While the majority of survey respondents in both private and public institutions do not think internal politics or equity issues play a role in limiting their compensation, an unsettling percentage — 38 percent of respondents in public institutions and 37 percent in private institutions — believe those issues constrain what they can earn. At the same time, when compared to the overall market, 66 percent of public and 74 percent of private institution respondents believe they are paid equitably and fairly. Meanwhile, more than half would need a compensation boost of 10 to 30 percent to accept a new position.

**Enrollment Leaders' Salary by Institution Type**



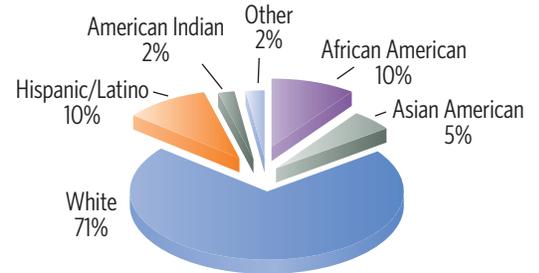
## Racial diversity among chief enrollment officers remains rare, and is found most often at public institutions.

Only 15 percent of chief enrollment officers are people of color. Numbers are highest at public institutions (29 percent); liberal arts colleges seeking experienced enrollment leaders of color with small, residential college experience will find themselves most frustrated, as only ten percent of enrollment leaders at four-year liberal arts colleges are people of color. Presidents seeking to make diversity hires in this role will find greatest success by looking to the public ranks or by going deeper within the enrollment operation to promote diversity candidates new to the senior-most role.

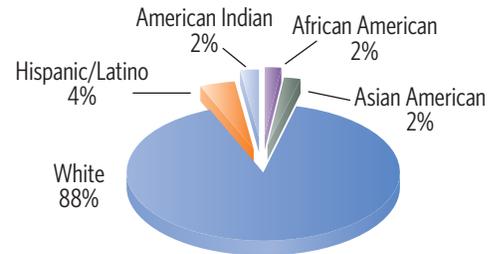
### If you anticipate conducting an enrollment search:

1. *Start early.* The "front time," or planning for a search, always takes longer than one thinks, and enrollment professionals work in a highly structured annual cycle that constrains their flexibility and attention at certain times of the year.
2. *If not already the case, consider adding this seat to your leadership table.* The most talented enrollment leaders expect to be a contributing member of your senior team and believe that is what is required to be most successful at their jobs.
3. *Consider using a search firm.* Executive search consultants who specialize in enrollment search can do a number of things that simply can't be done any other way:
  - We actively recruit on your behalf, and our network of enrollment professionals is fresh.
  - We know the field and bring content expertise to our screening of candidates on your behalf.
  - We keep searches moving and help guide you to a successful and timely conclusion.

**Racial Distribution of Enrollment Leaders at Public Institutions**



**Racial Distribution of Enrollment Leaders at Liberal Arts Colleges\***



\*Two (2) percent of respondents declined to provide this information

## About Witt/Kieffer

At Witt/Kieffer, our clients commend us for our comprehensive knowledge of the education/not-for-profit sector, our access to a nationwide pool of executive talent, our sensitivity to regional and local differences and our record of successful placements. As the eighth largest search firm, we perform more leadership searches in higher education than any other national firm.

Witt/Kieffer has an in-depth understanding of what it takes for public and private colleges and universities to achieve their goals. Our nationwide team of consultants offer the coverage of a large, robust national search firm, the personalized service of a smaller firm and a distinctively collaborative approach to finding leaders. Our reputation for excellence since 1969 ensures our clients receive personalized service, a tailored approach to each assignment and superior outcomes.

For more information, contact Robin Mamlet, enrollment practice leader, at [rmamlet@wittkieffer.com](mailto:rmamlet@wittkieffer.com), by phone at 610/544.3474 or visit [www.wittkieffer.com](http://www.wittkieffer.com).

**WITT / KIEFFER**  
*Leaders Connecting Leaders*

### Offices Nationwide:

|                |                 |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Oak Brook, IL  | Burlington, MA  | Toledo, OH       |
| Emeryville, CA | Bethesda, MD    | Philadelphia, PA |
| Irvine, CA     | Minneapolis, MN | Pittsburgh, PA   |
| Denver, CO     | St. Louis, MO   | Houston, TX      |
| Atlanta, GA    | New York, NY    | Seattle, WA      |