

# Strategic Enrollment Management

The last decade has been a transformative period in Baylor University's history. The vision of a Christian university that values the highest level of research and scholarship while continuing to uphold its uncompromising faith is compelling to students and families across the country. In January 2022, Baylor reached a milestone when it received the R1 designation — a doctoral institution with "very high research activity" — from The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Baylor is one of only 39 private institutions nationally to hold this distinction. This achievement provides external validation that Baylor is achieving the goals articulated in Illuminate.

Baylor's competitive position in higher education has never been stronger. Over the decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of prospective undergraduate students completing applications to Baylor University. The number of admissions and enrollment has also grown at a lesser rate. The overall picture is one of increasing selectivity. Baylor has also become better known nationally. In 2017, 35% of Baylor's applications came from outside Texas. The Fall 2022 cohort of new students was recruited from a pool of applications, of which 50% came from outside Texas.



## THE NEED

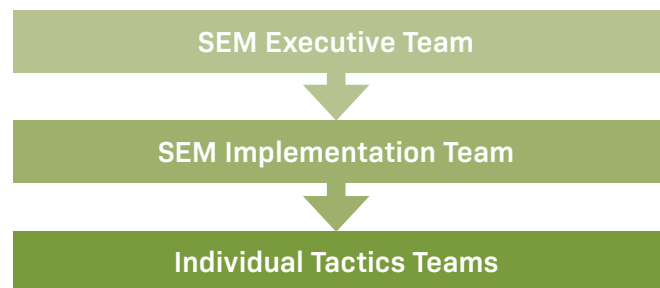
1. We need earlier and better information on each fall cohort, so we can better prepare for serving them. First, the university needs to forecast what each new cohort will look like and know what they need to accommodate the newest class of students. Building a strategic enrollment management plan allows Baylor to plan ahead and be ready to accommodate students each fall. Department chairs need to know how many faculty to hire, and living and learning communities need to know how many residence halls to have available for students.
2. We need to create better and more frequent communication across offices that play important roles in the enrollment process. Responsibility for enrollment resides in multiple divisions at Baylor: Finance and Facilities, Academic Affairs, and Student Life. The development of an SEM plan allows these divisions to develop goals, strategies, and tactics that are collectively generated and implemented.
3. We need to raise our retention and graduation rates. We need a thoughtful plan for how we will improve retention and graduation rates. With increasing costs at Baylor and across all of higher education, timely degree completion is imperative. Provost Brickhouse and VP Dalton created a SEM Steering Committee, which began meeting bi-monthly in the Fall of 2021. The SEM Steering Committee created three subcommittees: a Retention committee, a Recruitment committee, and a Data team. Each committee was tasked with creating goals, strategies, and tactics to make up the bulk of the SEM Plan.

## KEY ISSUES

1. Academic Distribution
2. Diversity
3. Financial Stewardship
4. Recruitment Pipelines
5. Retention and Graduation Rates
6. Support of Pell-Eligible Students

## GOALS

1. Baylor will increase the academic quality of completed applications by rising from 39% high-ability applicants in 2022 to 42% high-ability applicants by 2027. Highability students are test-optional applicants with an academic index of 166 or above and test-required applicants with an ACT 29 or above or an SAT 1340 or above. The key enrollment indicator will be completed application numbers for this group on census day annually.
2. Baylor will attempt to increase the number of firstyear URM students who enroll at Baylor by improving the application conversion rate of first-year URM students from submitting an admissions application to completing the entire application from 75% in 2022 to 80% in 2027. The key enrollment indicator will be the completed application rate for URM students each year on census day.
3. Baylor will achieve the financial goals of the Illuminate strategic plan by stabilizing the discount rate at an average of 40% by 2027. The key enrollment indicator is the discount rate defined by the Office of Institutional Research.
4. Baylor will investigate and develop new pipelines for potential students.
5. Baylor will increase our first to second-year retention rate from 88% with the Fall 2020 cohort to 92% with the Fall 2027 cohort. The key enrollment indicator here is the first to second-year retention rate. In this case, first-year students are defined as first-time freshmen, not transfer students. Second-year students are those who come back for their second year, regardless of how many hours they have completed.
6. Baylor will increase the six-year graduation rate from 82% with the Fall 2015 cohort to 84% for the incoming fall class of 2027. The key retention indicator here will be the six-year graduation rate for the cohort of students who matriculate in August of 2027 and earn a Baylor degree by the census date in September 2033.
7. Baylor will increase the first to second-year retention rate of URM students from 87% in the Fall 2020 cohort to 90% in the Fall of 2027 cohort.
8. Baylor will increase the first to second-year retention rate of high Student Need Score (SNS) students from 86% in the Fall 2020 cohort to 89% for the Fall 2027 cohort. High SNS students are defined based on Institutional Research data and include students whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the CSS Profile is less than \$12,500.



## Conclusion

Baylor’s SEM plan lays the groundwork for enrollment management changes for the next five years. By the time this plan is fully implemented in 2027, we will begin to see the fruits of our labor. If successful, this plan will diversify the composition of Baylor’s student enrollment and enhance retention and graduation while staying true to a distinctively Christian mission. Among other things, we will see a more diverse and academically successful group of students who will truly fulfill the mission of “educating men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community.” These students will then be a wonderful group of alumni that will truly fulfill the vision of showing why the world needs a Baylor.