**Basic Market Analysis Structure for New Academic Programs**

**The purpose of market research is to estimate the number of actual human beings who will be interested in enrolling in and paying for the proposed program. While this could take a great deal of money, it can also be done in a quick and inexpensive way by identifying the potential target market and using the contacts and resources available to the academics creating the program. Questions and contacts will vary based on the program and on the level (graduate vs undergraduate), but doing some work is better than making up numbers. Your resources will include colleagues at other schools, employers, alumni, current students, members of your industry advisory boards, i.e. people you can reach by phone or with a survey instrument.**

Basic Questions (as examples):

1. What is the market for the UMES degree?
2. Who are the employers who hire people who would want your degree?
   1. Would they value the degree you are offering?
   2. Do they have current employees they would like to send to this program?
   3. Will this degree lead to a new job with a higher salary?
   4. Can you use your Industry Advisory Board to help identify and contact potential employers and students?
3. Specific structural questions:
   1. For Face to face classes, students will need to be in driving distance to campus, so they live here already or will have to move here.
   2. If classes are held during normal business hours in fall and spring semesters, students need flexibility in their work schedules.
   3. Students may be planning to invest one year to completing a Master’s program, so can yours be done in that time frame?
4. What is the competition from similar degrees?
   1. Is online or distance learning possible with other comparable programs?
   2. Can students complete the program faster or cheaper elsewhere?
   3. Is there a cost difference with other programs?
5. Is there a positive distinction between the UMES degree and the competition?
   1. Reputation of faculty?
   2. Specifics of courses?
   3. Cost savings to students?
   4. Targeted to a particular industry or career path?

**Once you have identified your target market, your recruitment plan can unfold naturally.**

1. Where are the feeder schools (high schools or other undergrad programs)? Can you visit these schools? Can you get your colleagues in those places interested in promoting your program?
2. Where do your potential students get their information about the career you are supporting? Can you advertise there?
3. Are employers interested in promoting your program, particularly with local populations? Can you customize your program to suit local employers and their potential employees?
4. What kinds of materials can you produce to support recruitment for your program?