EAB

Making the Academy
Market-Smart

Embedding Enrollment Priorities into Academic Decision Making

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Enrollment Management Forum

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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

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This publication is only one example of our work to assist Enrollment Management Forum members. We support our members by discussing research and implementation support mapped to individual needs, by helping educate campus stakeholders on enrollment priorities, and by providing online access to data and analytics tools.

For additional information about the services listed below—or for an electronic version of this publication—please visit our website (eab.com/emf), email your dedicated advisor, or email research@eab.com with "Enrollment Management Forum 'Making the Academy Market-Smart'" in the subject line.

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Our experts will come onsite to lead interactive sessions that highlight research findings and facilitate group discussions. The content is tailored for a range of audiences, from campus leadership to enrollment managers' direct reports—the heads of financial aid, admissions and the registrar.

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In addition to the Enrollment Management Forum, EAB offers the Student Success Collaborative, providing institutions with predictive modeling and best practice research to enhance student success, and the COE Forum, delivering best practice research and real-time market insights.

Student Success Collaborative

The Student Success Collaborative (SSC) combines technology, consulting, and best practice research to help colleges and universities use data to improve retention and graduation rates. SSC is a proprietary predictive model that identifies at-risk students and an analytics engine that isolates systemic barriers to degree completion. SSC also provides advisors and other student success specialists with communication and workflow tools to transform insight into action and to provide administrators with customized change-management advice.

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• Data analytics and predictive modeling

• A comprehensive, proven student success platform

• Dedicated consulting support

• Peer benchmarking and collaboration

COE Forum

Competition for share of the adult, working professional, and online student market has never been greater, as institutional pressure to achieve next-level enrollment and revenue growth intensifies. The COE Forum couples best practice research on ensuring the health of current operations with real-time market research to inform strategic growth.

COE research terrains:

• Best-in-class marketing and recruiting

• Employer-focused market research

• Leading campus innovation

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Top Lessons from the Study

Divided Academic Program and Enrollment Planning Leads to Missed Opportunities

To ensure academic programs advance their institutions' enrollment goals, institutions must consider market demand when assessing their performance—holding academic programs accountable for serving the academic and career needs of today's prospective students. Despite its importance, few institutions prioritize enrollment performance in academic program planning. Even for those that do, the enrollment manager's (EM) oversight, insight, and perspective are seldom included early or often enough. EMs can bring the voice of the market into academic program planning, review, and new program launch processes.

Common disconnects include:

Academic Leaders are Not Oriented to Emerging Enrollment Challenges and Opportunities

As students prioritize career concerns in choosing institutions and majors, universities struggle to balance sometimes dramatic shifts in enrollment across programs. Without actionable data on unused capacity and shifting student preferences, academic leaders struggle to allocate resources in ways that promote growth.

Program Investments are Not Aligned to Institutional Enrollment Goals

Traditional academic program planning prioritizes faculty concerns over student interests and is conducted without sufficient consideration for university-wide priorities. Resulting program targets can be arbitrary and unrealistic, leading to frustration for both EMs and academic leaders when program expectations are not fulfilled.

Program Names and Specializations Do Not Signal Career-Relevance

Without EM partnership to identify emerging student preferences, academics miss opportunities to attract students with updated majors, specializations, and interdisciplinary opportunities. These missed opportunities limit EMs from bringing new and competitively distinct products to market, engaging out-of-state and international prospects with targeted offerings, attracting transfers to upper divisions, and reducing outbound transfer from students unable to pursue the majors they aspire to.

New Program Proposal and Launch Do Not Favor Smartest Bets

New program approval processes fail to prioritize, and thus benefit from, emerging trends in student interests and employer preferences. An ad hoc approach to making new academic program investments prevents institutions from capitalizing on the most promising growth opportunities for long-term enrollment success.

Top Lessons from the Study (cont.)

Our Insights on Embedding Enrollment Priorities into Academic Decision Making

To repair these disconnects, universities should bring enrollment insight and academic program planning together on three major fronts:

1 **Grounding Program Targets in Market Realities**
Aligning Academic Program Planning and Enrollment

Institutions must consider market demand when assessing academic program performance—holding programs accountable for serving the academic and career needs of today's prospective students. Align academic program planning to enrollment priorities by providing academic leaders with actionable program-level enrollment and capacity data.

> **Practice 1:** Enrollment-Focused Program Reviews – *Assess program enrollment health annually*

> **Practice 2:** Market-Mission Growth Forecasts – *Guide deans and faculty in university-wide enrollment planning*

> **Resource:** Templates for Enrollment-Focused Program Reporting – *Deliver capacity-demand data to academic leaders*

2 **Revitalizing Stalled Program Performance**
Harnessing the Voice of the Market to Drive Enrollment Growth

Under- and over-enrolled programs tend to receive a disproportionate share of resources, diverting resources from mid-performing programs despite their having the largest growth potential. Meet enrollment goals by strategically managing growth across the academic program portfolio, engaging academic leaders in surfacing programs with the greatest market opportunity.

Identifying Growth Candidates

> **Practice 3:** Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring – *Evaluate program performance against institutional trends to flag immediate growth opportunities*

> **Practice 4:** Enrollment Share Variance Reports – *Diagnose barriers to program growth by benchmarking against regional enrollment trends*

Marketing Quality Control

> **Practice 5:** Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic – *Pinpoint problems in program websites with annual site-use reports*

> **Practice 6:** Central Program Web Templates – *Hardwire prospect-friendliness into program websites with easy-to-use customizable templates*

> **Practice 7:** Naming and Specialization Benchmarking – *Alert the academy to program refreshment opportunities with admitted student loss analyses*

Curriculum Refreshment Market Research

> **Practice 8:** Voice-of-the-Student Surveys – *Glean market research on new program opportunities from current and prospective students*

> **Practice 9:** Workforce Alignment Reviews – *Embed career relevance into programs by mandating enrollment-focused employer adviser groups*

Top Lessons from the Study (cont.)

Our Insights on Embedding Enrollment Priorities into Academic Decision Making

(3) **Embedding Demand Validation in Launch**

Driving New Programs to Achieve Enrollment Gains

Most new program design and approval processes fail to consider regional enrollment trends and student preferences, resulting in programs that are misaligned with institutional priorities. Harness faculty-led innovation for enrollment gains by integrating EMs' perspectives into new program launch— evaluating the revenue, enrollment, and marketing implications of proposed programs before they are stamped for approval.

New Program Demand Stage Gates

Practice 10: Faculty Innovation Stress Tests - *Make enrollment viability top-of-mind in faculty-led program development*

Practice 11: Independent Major Program Pilots - *Leverage "build your own majors" to litmus-test emerging student interests*

Practice 12: Professional Skill Demand Projections - *Forecast student interests with labor market and hiring intelligence*

Flexible Capacity Expansion

Practice 13: Launch Program Enhancement Triggers – *Set adaptable new program targets to maximize growth opportunity*

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The Case for Embedding Enrollment Priorities into Academic Decision Making

How Enrollment-Supported Program Planning Helps Make the Academy Market-Smart

- The increasing importance of return-on-investment in college choice
- Challenges for EMs in an ROI revolution
- Practices for making the academy market-smart

Philosophers Versus Welders, Round Two

Recurring Complaints About the Value of Higher Education

Complaints about the value of higher education have increased in recent years, centered on the idea that universities are not preparing students to succeed in the present economy. These concerns are by no means new—similar headlines hit the newsstands in the mid-1970s, also following a recession—but their resurgence has impacted how students and parents make enrollment decisions. "Value for money" has risen as a leading factor driving college choice.

Election Year Rhetoric

SLATE MAGAZINE[1]

November 2015

"Welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders and less [*sic*] philosophers."

Marco Rubio
Senator, R-Florida

Recession Rhetoric

NEWSWEEK
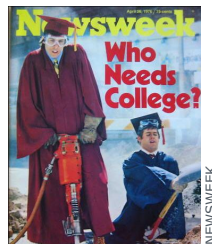
April 1976

"By all estimates, the rising costs of college have been paced by diminished economic returns on the college investment."

Fact Check: Earning Power of Philosophy Graduates Surpasses Welders

$40K Average annual salary advantage of philosophy graduates compared to welders 20 years post-graduation

While the intrinsic value a four-year degree cannot be measured by salary alone, graduates' near-term salaries have become a leading focus for both prospects and politicians. Unfortunately, these measurements have limited validity—while a welder may see a higher salary in their first year post-graduation, for example, philosophy students are more likely to proceed to graduate school and demonstrate significantly greater lifetime return on their educational investment.

The Lost Class

Long-Term Consequences of Graduating in a Recession

Questions about the return-on-investment (ROI) of a college degree come on the heels of a challenging period for college graduates. Un- and underemployment of graduates from four-year institutions during the recession rose over 100% compared to 2006, growing to affect 20% of all four-year graduates—or 1.4 million students.

Un- and Underemployment by Year of Graduation

The "Lost Class"

1.4M college graduates

Percent Unemployed — Percent Underemployed
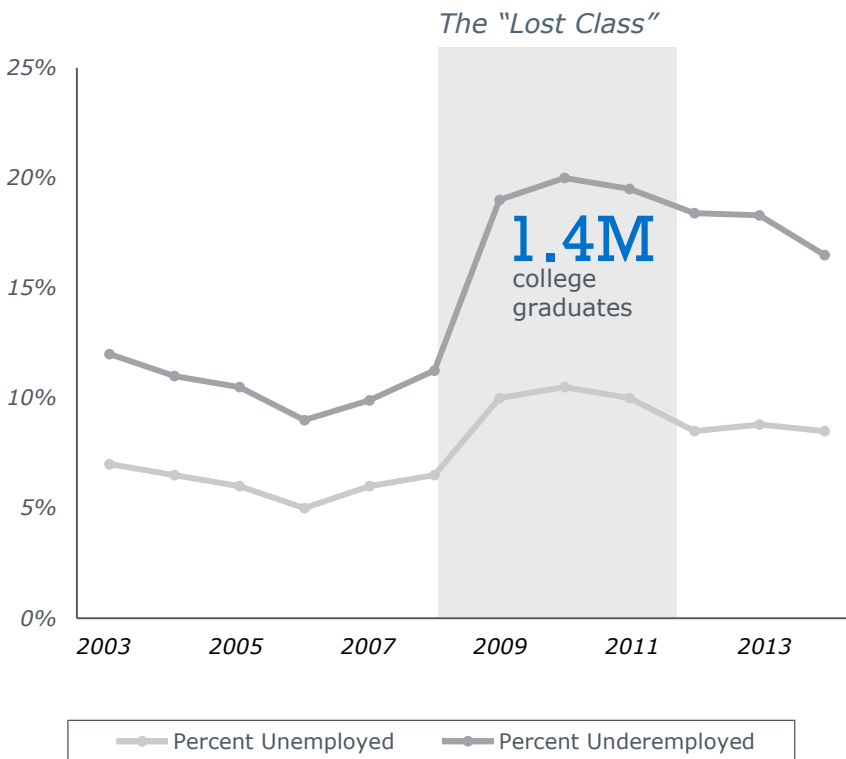
Lasting Consequences to a Late Start

⬇ **7-25%**

Decrease in the starting income of new graduates for every one-point increase in national unemployment

10%

Lower annual salary after 17 years for recession-period graduates compared to those graduating in a strong economy

$100,000

Present value of a single recession graduate's total lost income

Although employment has started to return to baseline levels, the graduates who completed during the recession will continue to feel the recession's impact for years to come. Dr. Lisa Kahn, Associate Professor of Economics at Yale University, estimates that even 17 years later these graduates will be earning approximately 10% less than graduates who completed when the economy was strong. The earnings deficit experienced by "the lost class" of recession-period graduates has spurred negative press coverage and skepticism among students and parents about the ROI of a college degree.

Sources: Heidi Shierholz, Alyssa Davis, and Will Kimball, "The Class of 2014: The Weak Economy Is Idling Too Many Young Graduates," Economic Policy Institute, May 2014; Elise Gould, "Job Seekers Ratio Holds Steady at 2-to-1," Economic Policy Institute, Nov. 2014; Nicholas Fino, Natalie Sabadish, and Heidi Shierholz, "The Class of 2013: Young Graduates Still Face Dim Job Prospects," Economic Policy Institute, Apr. 2013; Don Peck, "How a New Jobless Era Will Transform America," *The Atlantic*, Mar. 2010.

A New Kind of Ranking

Career Concerns Spur New Search Tools Based on Measurable Outcomes

Public focus on the value of higher education in terms of salaries and employment has prompted efforts to support students in shopping on the basis of expected return on their degree investments. Prior to 2010, prospective students lacked information on what graduates from different institutions would be likely to earn. Today, salary outcomes are freely and widely available through a wealth of new "value rankings."

New Resources to Measure University ROI Emerge Post-recession

2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
PayScale	**College Measures**	**Forbes**	**Linked in**	**BROOKINGS**
College salary and ROI reports	Institutions ranked by state-level salary data of recent graduates from schools in VA, AR; later expanded to CO, FL, TN, TX	Alumni giving as indicator of outcomes, ROI	Placement rate at top companies in hot industries	Value added by degree compared to average salary
BUSINESS INSIDER		**THE DAILY BEAST**	**Money**	**The Economist**
Survey asks which schools best prepare students for success after graduation		20% of ranking based on graduates' earnings	1/3 of ranking based on graduates' career outcomes	Ranking based on College Scorecard data
				College Scorecard
				Median earnings 10 years post-graduation; % students earning >$25K

Failed Measurement: Near-Term Salaries a Poor Proxy for ROI

Earnings-based rankings have proliferated despite industry criticism. Using near-term salaries alone to measure an institution's ROI obscures the diverse and long-term benefits of a four-year degree. Disadvantages include:

- **Limited sample sizes:** Many rankings use self-reported salaries or only consider students that received federal aid
- **Focus on early career salary:** Professional degrees confer immediate salary benefits but liberal arts graduates see greater lifetime salary growth
- **Skew from graduate school placement:** Lack of immediate earnings draws down averages
- **Bias toward STEM:** Lack of adjustment for program mix disadvantages institutions that emphasize lower-pay pursuits with high societal value, including social services, education, and volunteer work

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Money Matters

Changing Enrollment Decisions Spurred by Access to Salary Data

Methodological drawbacks to ROI rankings have not kept students and families from using them, resulting in measurable impact for some institutions. Following the College Scorecard's launch, for example, institutions with higher average salaries saw a surge of interest—resulting in thousands of additional inquiries for large institutions with high salary outcomes, especially from students with the highest test scores. Salary was the driving factor in this shift: no relationship was seen between increased interest and other data reported by the Scorecard, such as graduation rates or average cost of attendance.

Launch of College Scorecard a Boon to High-Salary Institutions

Increase in SAT Score Sends for Every 10% Rise in Graduates' Average Salaries

Private High School Students — **4.2%**

Students with SAT Scores >1100 — **4.0%**

All Students — **2.4%**

Salary outcomes did not affect score sends among students with SAT scores below 1100 or for first-generation students
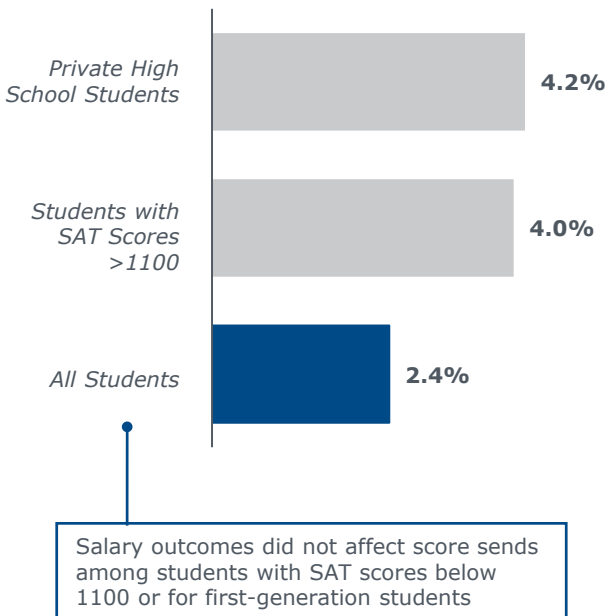
Access to Salary Data Sways Major Choice

Results from an Information Experiment

Sample of students asked to predict their earnings at age 30

Students shown data for the major's actual expected earnings

12% A small but significant proportion of students change majors in response to earnings data
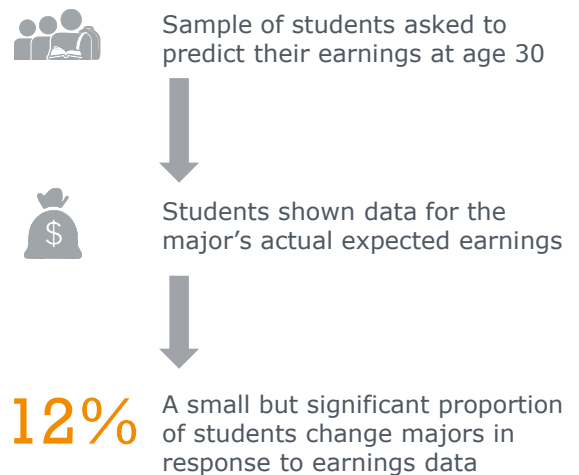
A "Major" Effect: Changing Preferences Boost Enrollment for High-Salary Programs

Salary data also play a role in how students select majors. As shown above right, 12% of students in an experiment at New York University decided to change majors in response to earnings data. Even changes among a small fraction of students can lead to the over-enrollment of career-focused programs and unused capacity elsewhere.

Sources: Michael Hurwitz and Jonahtan Smith, "Student Responsiveness to Earnings Data in the College Scorecard," Apr. 2016; Matthew Wiswall and Basit Zafar, "Determinants of College Major Choice: Identification using an Information Experiment," Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports, Aug. 2014.

Looking for Lucrative Majors

ROI Revolution Knocks Program Enrollment Out of Balance

Shifts in students' major preferences have created a surge of interest in health, business, and technical majors that clearly map to post-graduate employment. Four-year institutions have seen a 38% increase in the share of students enrolled in the Natural Sciences since 1995, for example—rising from 13.8% of all students to 19%, as shown below (left). At the same time, the proportion of students enrolled as humanities majors has markedly declined.

Surging STEM Enrollment Eclipses Humanities, Social Services

Change in Share of Completions by Discipline, 1995-2014

Discipline	1995	2007	2014
Natural Sciences	13.8%	13.8%	19%
Business & Management	20.8%	21.4%	18.5%
Humanities	12.3%	12.1%	9.9%
Education & Social Services	11.1%	9.5%	8.1%
Engineering	7.5%	7.0%	7.8%
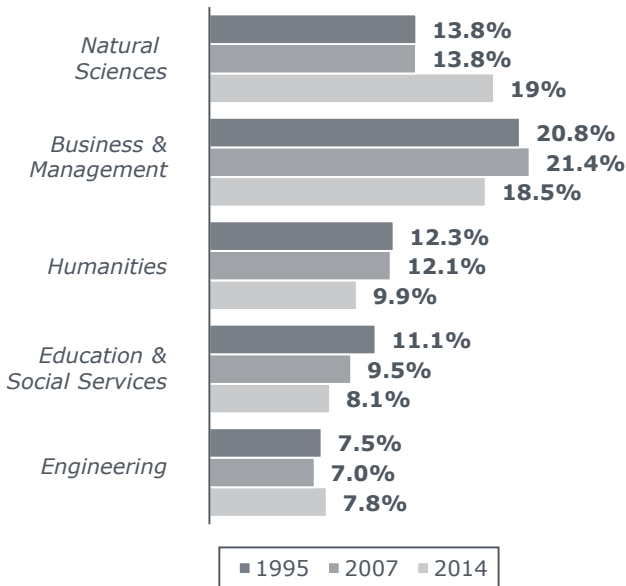
Shifting Disciplinary Preferences Upset Program Balance

Undergraduate Enrollment by College at Michigan State University, 2003-2015
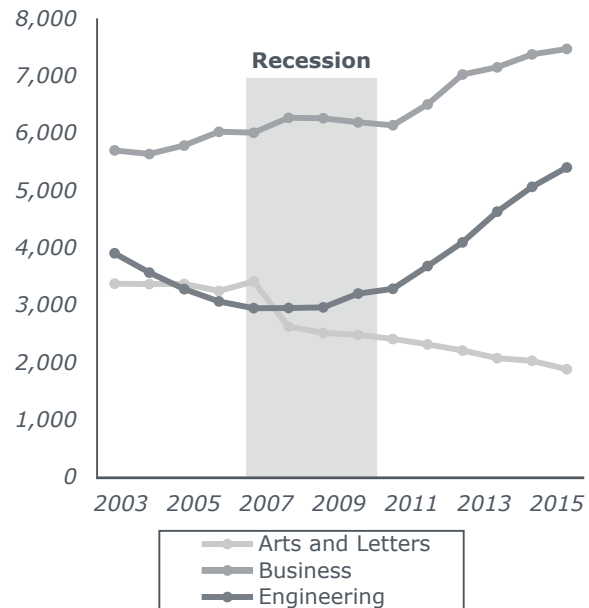
Cross-Disciplinary Tensions: Academic Program Capacity Out of Sync with Student Preferences

Changing major preferences create challenges for institutions, which struggle to accommodate surging demand for some programs while facing unused capacity in the arts and humanities. As illustrated by Michigan State University's enrollment above (right), changes in program mix can be extreme. This is especially the case for institutions that have grown the enrollment of out-of-state or international students, which disproportionately favor career-oriented degree tracks (e.g., engineering, computer science, and business).

Challenges for EMs in an ROI Revolution

Unintended Enrollment Consequences of Insulated Program Planning

The increasing importance of ROI in students' enrollment decisions has put academic programs front and center. Will the institution and its programs place students on a strong career trajectory and be able to communicate that return to the market? Despite the importance of these objectives, institutions have struggled to adapt traditionally faculty-oriented processes for program decision making to new market realities due to the challenges shown below.

Challenges to Making the Academy Market-Smart

Enrollment Information Deficits	Insular Program Planning	Ad Hoc Program Generation

Unrealistic Targets

- Academic leaders are often unaware of enrollment trends and the relative competitiveness of the institution and its programs

- Enrollment viability's consideration and evaluation is infrequent

- Even when enrollment factors are nominally included, they often rest on anecdotes and assumptions

Stale Programs

- Academic jargon clouds programs' value

- Programs are designed according to faculty, more than student, interests

- Growth opportunities remain unidentified or overlooked

Missed Opportunities

- The program innovation process does not follow enrollment trends

- Institutions have no mechanism for sensing emerging student demand

- Slow faculty approval prevents taking advantage of immediate opportunities

Practices for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Embedding Enrollment Priorities into Academic Decision Making

To better signal value and relevance to students, institutions must bring the voice of the market into academic program planning, design, and review. This study shares 13 practices to hard-wire the consideration of enrollment trends and institution-wide priorities into academic decision making.

Road Map for the Best Practices Research

1

Grounding Program Targets in Market Realities

2

Revitalizing Stalled Program Performance

3

Embedding Demand Validation in Launch

Aligning Academic Program Planning to Enrollment

1. Enrollment-Focused Program Reviews
2. Market-Mission Growth Forecasts

Templates for Enrollment-Focused Program Reporting

- Program Growth Share
- Demand-Capacity Opportunity Maps
- Course Proliferation Index

Identifying Growth Candidates

3. Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring
4. Enrollment Share Variance Reports

Marketing Quality Control

5. Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic
6. Central Program Web Templates
7. Naming and Specialization Benchmarking

Curriculum Refreshment Market Research

8. Voice-of-the-Student Surveys
9. Workforce Alignment Reviews

New Program Demand Stage Gates

10. Faculty Innovation Stress Tests
11. Independent Major Program Pilots
12. Professional Skill Demand Projections

Flexible Capacity Expansion

13. Launch Program Enhancement Triggers

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Grounding Program Targets in Market Realities

Aligning Academic Program Planning and Enrollment

1

The Challenge of Enrollment Information Deficits

Campus Unresponsive, Unaware of the Extent of Changing Program Preferences

Changing major preferences have led to challenges for institutions, which face limited seats for programs with surging demand but unfilled capacity in the arts and humanities. Unbalanced program enrollment creates tension among academic leaders and between those leaders and enrollment management. Negative impact is especially acute for institutions with decentralized budget models, where deans' budgets depend on the number of students enrolled in their programs.

Adaptation to Enrollment Preferences: Key to Mission Fulfillment

"Enrollment shifts in the academy aren't new—if you look back to the 1950's, you'll see a great number of Classics students. They have been decreasing steadily for over 60 years and the university has adapted. But recent shifts have come bigger and faster. The role of the university is to respond to changes in the structures of society and preferences… but to do that in this environment, EM has to guide academics."

Vice Provost of Enrollment Management
Public Research University

Calling on EMs: Partner with the Academy to Align Program Planning to Enrollment

In order to make effective resource allocation decisions, academic leaders need enrollment management insight and perspective on national enrollment trends and emerging student preferences. Enrollment perspective can do more than reset expectations for program-level enrollment through active enrollment-academic partnerships to refresh struggling programs and turn around declining enrollments.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Right Under Our Noses

Program Underperformance Goes Undetected Without EM Participation

Despite its importance, few institutions sufficiently consider enrollment performance in the academic program review process. Under system pressure to verify the enrollment productivity of its academic programs, Virginia Tech's enrollment management team conducted program viability reviews by assessing each program's full-time enrollment and degrees conferred. As shown below, their initial review identified an alarming proportion of program offerings at threat of closure.

EM Key to Programs' Market Relevance

" Just because you want to offer degrees and you have the faculty to produce them, it doesn't mean that we should. The EM role is, 'Is there a market for this?'… I know a lot of people say, 'Large institutions don't have to worry about enrollments,' but we do. We are always thinking about our enrollment, growth, and how we communicate relevance to students."

Wanda Dean
Vice Provost for Enrollment and Degree Planning

Virginia Tech's First Program Enrollment Review Uncovers Room to Improve

33%

Proportion of undergraduate programs flagged as at risk of closure by the state system due to lack of enrollment

Findings Spur Greater Enrollment Management Participation

The outcome of Virginia Tech's full portfolio review drove academic leaders at Virginia Tech to mandate annual enrollment viability reviews for all academic programs—elevating enrollment management as a key player in the academic program review process.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 1: Enrollment-Focused Program Reviews

Bringing Attention to Under-enrollment

To ensure the success of enrollment-focused program reviews, enrollment management and department chairs for each of Virginia Tech's 75 academic programs first agree to initial targets for total enrollment, student credit-hours taught, and numbers of degrees conferred. Enrollment management's role is to ensure that targets are realistic, reflecting both external market demand and the institution's overall enrollment goals. Program reviews are then conducted at the conclusion of each year's admissions cycle: enrollment management assesses programs' performance benchmarked to their goals. The enrollment review pinpoints struggling programs, which are then required by the Provost to collaborate with enrollment management to turn enrollment around or face gradual program closure.

VirginiaTech

Overview of the Enrollment-Focused Program Review Process

Review Programs for Enrollment Performance	Identify Under-performing Programs	Implement Solutions with Provost's Backing

- EM conducts annual program viability reviews
- Review compares enrollment and degree output to agreed-upon program targets

- EM flags programs not meeting goals for Provost

- Provost endorses EM turnaround initiative, requires departmental collaboration
- EM develops and monitors turnaround plans
- Programs still under target after three years are sunset

" We want to make sure all of our degrees are meeting institutional goals. However, we do have programs on life support and we intentionally provide a venue to discuss plans to restore health or teach out. **Having a collaborative plan with a clear timeline and target enables us to control our decision making** rather than dealing with state-mandated action."

Wanda Dean
Vice Provost for Enrollment and Degree Management
Virginia Tech

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Enrollment-Focused Program Reviews (cont.)

Virginia Tech's Five-Minute Process Limits Review to Core Metrics

Because a lengthy and laborious process may not stick, Virginia Tech streamlines enrollment review by minimizing the number of enrollment targets and deploying a standardized template, shown below. Enrollment data aggregation is made easier by involving the Office of Institutional Research, which provides each year's program-level data to enrollment management. Each program's enrollment review takes less than five minutes annually—just six hours per year for the entire program portfolio.

The Enrollment Review: A Closer Look

Three Metrics for Annual Enrollment Reviews

1 Averages smooth unusual years, draw out trends

2 Degree output accounts for programs with high transfer-in rates

3 Credit hours account for service programs with low enrollment but high workload

Virginia Tech

Enrollment-Focused Program Review
Program: B.A. in Foreign Languages
College: Liberal Arts

Target FTE enrollment: 20
Actual FTE enrollment (5-year average): 14
Change from previous: 0

Target degrees conferred: 5
Actual degrees conferred (5-year average): 4
Change from previous: +1

Target student credit hours: 1000
Actual student credit hours (5-year average): 820
Change from previous: -135

Does the program require additional attention?

☑ Yes   ☐ No

Evaluation: Proceed with program website and communication plan audits

🔧 Download a Sample Report

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Enrollment-Focused Program Reviews (cont.)

Program Portfolio Benefits from EM Investment

Annual enrollment-focused program reviews at Virginia Tech ensure that every program is regularly and consistently evaluated according to its enrollment performance. Additionally, the mandate keeps faculty oriented to enrollment and revenue—underscoring the importance of these factors for institutional health and sustainability. Broad awareness that program enrollment is a top priority helps keep faculty engaged in recruitment and motivates them to make their programs more prospect-friendly.

> "Now that faculty are aware their programs are evaluated on enrollment thresholds, they all want to be involved in the admissions process. The focused attention does overwhelm our admissions staff at times—it's almost too much love!"
>
> *Wanda Dean*
> *Vice Provost for Enrollment and Degree Management*
> *Virginia Tech*

Outsized Enrollment ROI from EM Investment

Programs Flagged for Concern Following Annual Review

76%
Reduction in undergraduate programs flagged for under-performance after two years

25
6
2013
2015
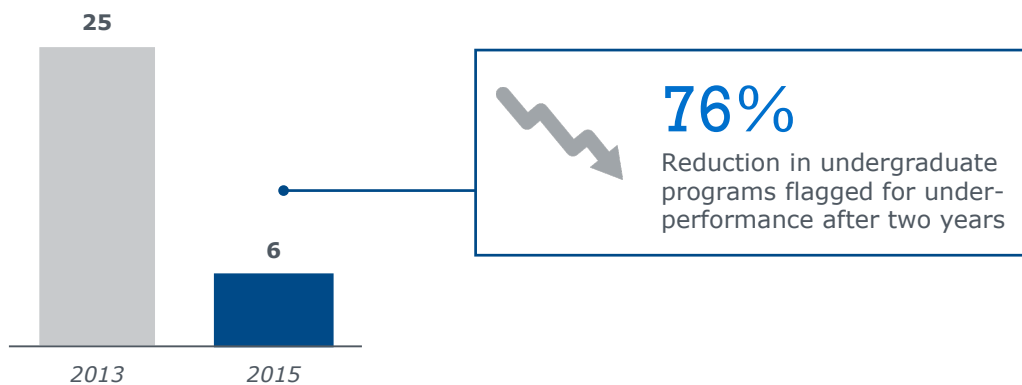
The result for Virginia Tech has been a revitalized academic program portfolio with greater market strength, with the large majority of programs now operating at full capacity. As shown above, the number of underperforming programs has decreased from 25 programs to just six. Additionally, program growth has helped enrollment management hit ambitious annual growth goals: the School of Arts and Letters alone saw a 25% increase in applications the year following enrollment management intervention.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 2: Market-Mission Growth Forecasts

Program Planning Out of Sync with Institutional Needs

Getting struggling programs back on track is the first step toward program-wide enrollment success but advance planning and market forecasting reduces the need to course-correct. Program enrollment targets are rarely set more than one year in advance, if they are set at all—and rarely are they verified by external enrollment demand. Instead, program targets are untethered from market realities, more often the sum of departmental aspirations that together surpass reasonable expectations for class size.

Sum of Program Enrollment Expectations Exceeds Institutional Capacity

Illustrative Graph Depicting Actual and Expected Undergraduate Enrollment by College

Natural Sciences

Unrealistic Expectations

Combined Dean expectations exceed university capacity

Business

Engineering

Agriculture

Social Sciences

Arts and Letters

Deans' Enrollment Goals

University's Overall Enrollment Target
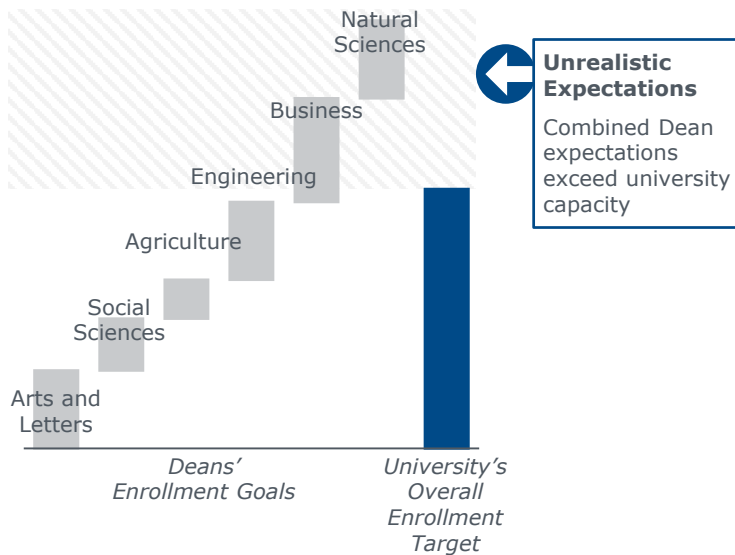
Working Together Required for Market-Smart Program Planning

Faculty Expertise
- Curricular advances
- Discipline evolution
- Inter-disciplinary opportunities

EM Knowledge
- Enrollment trends
- Student and family preferences
- Skill gaps

To conduct enrollment planning at the academic program level, EM knowledge of market preferences and instructional capacity must be combined with faculty expertise in the evolution of the discipline. Capturing the best of both worlds requires coordinating faculty and EM leadership to embed market trends into academic program planning—rightsizing enrollment targets and making each program's enrollment expectations crystal clear. With that foundation, EMs can refine their strategic enrollment plans to meet program-level targets and maximize growth opportunities across the program portfolio.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis

Market-Mission Growth Forecasts (cont.)

Two Key Requirements for Successful Program-Level Enrollment Planning

In pursuit of ambitious growth goals, California Polytechnic State University hired a Professor of City and Regional Planning, Dr. Linda Dalton, to lead the institution in a university-wide, program-specific strategic plan that covered a fifteen-year period. The first challenge: how can we increase the engagement of faculty leadership in the planning process? Dr. Dalton discovered two key barriers to faculty participation—competing academic priorities and lack of planning experience.

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

" If you add up the numbers everyone submits, it will be more than the university can handle as a whole… but administrators don't have the discipline knowledge. To do this right**, it takes a combined effort**."

Linda Dalton, Chief Planning Officer

Protect Faculty Time for Enrollment Engagement

Dedicated Faculty Member
One faculty member per department released from one or two courses for data aggregation, training, and analysis

Prioritized Time Allocation
Forecasting deadlines do not overlap with tenure and reappointment reviews

Provide the Skills for Planning Success

Forward-Thinking Training
Seminar and materials from the *World Future Society* provide structure on futuristic thinking

Demography Training
Population expert answers discipline-specific questions and introduces trends and resources

Every 15 years, Cal Poly's leaders re-envision the plan for the next fifteen years to come. Faculty participation barriers are overcome by releasing one faculty member per department from teaching one or two courses for one term devoted to training, data analysis, and writing their programs' plans. Usually, the faculty member is the department chair. Departmental delegates receive the training required for planning success, including a seminar series on demographic trends, data sources, and best practices in future planning.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Market-Mission Growth Forecasts (cont.)

Making Program Planning a Team Sport

To avoid unrealistic targets and an automatic growth mentality, Cal Poly holds each program's plan accountable to broader institutional priorities and market realities. The planning process embeds accountability into target-setting in two ways. First, it requires each faculty participant to start by describing their discipline's likely evolution, pushing them to think in realistic terms rather than in terms of maintaining numbers and share. Second, by cross-checking faculty projections to the EM's forecast, the planning committee gains access to an unbiased perspective on market demand and realistic enrollment promise.

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

Overview of the Market-Mission Growth Forecasting Process

Step One: 15-Year Program Projections

Inputs from Department   *Input from EM*

Qualitative Discipline Forecast	Quantitative Enrollment Forecast	External Market Demand

- What skills will no longer be needed?
- What new specializations will become necessary?
- How should curricula adapt to changing skill demands?

- How many graduates will be needed in this specialty?
- How many faculty will we need to hire, in what areas?
- How will we adapt or construct facilities to support change?

- How many students will want to enroll?
- How will the students enrolling be different from the students currently enrolled?

Step Two: Rightsizing Estimations

EM, Provost, Academic Planner, and Dean compare the inputs

Dean makes final call, insulating EM from negotiations with Department Chair

The end result is a three-part plan for each program, all of which are evaluated together by a senior committee including the EM. Any changes to numeric targets are communicated by the deans, eliminating back-and-forth for the EM and Provost.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Market-Mission Growth Forecasts (cont.)

Qualitative Discipline Forecast Key to Planning Success

The initial qualitative step of Cal Poly's planning process has been key to its success. Faculty are comfortable describing the evolution of their disciplines and many of their best ideas for improvement stem from this exercise. Additionally, the qualitative forecast provides a benchmark against which numeric targets can be judged. While many programs may aspire to growth, programs without notable developments can be rightsized to reflect reality and make room for growth elsewhere.

Cal Poly's Qualitative Discipline Forecast: Starting with the End in Mind
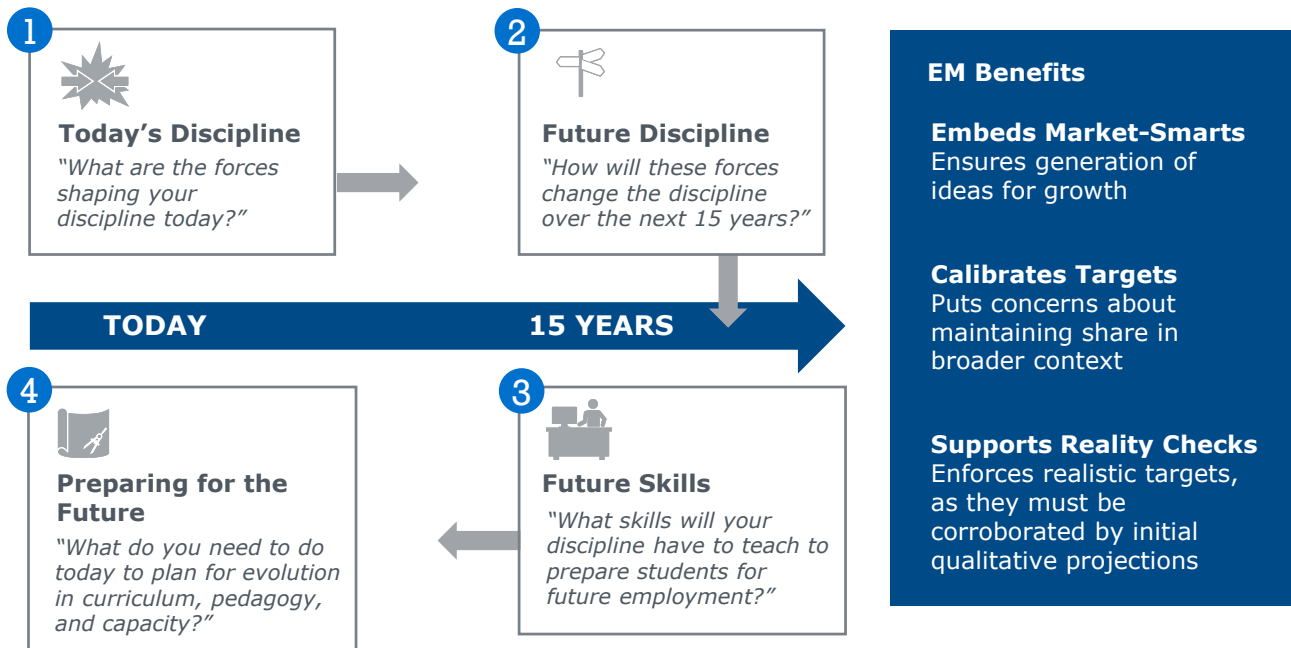
1

Today's Discipline

"What are the forces shaping your discipline today?"

2

Future Discipline

"How will these forces change the discipline over the next 15 years?"

TODAY   **15 YEARS**

4

Preparing for the Future

"What do you need to do today to plan for evolution in curriculum, pedagogy, and capacity?"

3

Future Skills

"What skills will your discipline have to teach to prepare students for future employment?"

EM Benefits

Embeds Market-Smarts
Ensures generation of ideas for growth

Calibrates Targets
Puts concerns about maintaining share in broader context

Supports Reality Checks
Enforces realistic targets, as they must be corroborated by initial qualitative projections

Market-Mission Growth Forecasts (cont.)

Collaborative Planning Sets the Stage for Enrollment Success

The widespread benefits of Cal Poly's market-mission growth forecasts have impacted faculty, administrators, and enrollment management. Faculty benefit from more competitive programs, a no-surprises approach to enrollment, and guaranteed timely access to the resources they need for their programs' success. Administrators report successful bids for system funding, made easier by the forecast that incorporates enrollment projections with the physical and academic resources required to meet them. From an enrollment management perspective, the benefits to individual departments add up to greater likelihood of hitting institution-wide enrollment goals.

Building a Foundation for Enrollment Performance

"California's rollercoaster trends make simple regression analyses useless to predict enrollment... Instead, we plan for enrollment long-term, down to the individual program level, and constantly scan the environment to adapt enrollment strategy to what our competitors are doing to meet that plan. **Making program enrollment part of the institution's long-term plan has been key to our success** in meeting the enrollment needs of all pockets of the institution."

Jim Maraviglia
Associate Vice Provost for Marketing and
Enrollment Development

Program Precision Key to Target Achievement

43%

of four-year institutions **miss overall enrollment targets**

25

Consecutive years Cal Poly's enrollment management team has **hit enrollment targets**

Templates for Enrollment-Focused Program Reporting

Hardwiring Enrollment Analysis into Academic Resource Allocation

To make effective resource allocation decisions that benefit both individual programs and their institutions, academic leaders require enrollment insight. To meet that need, EMs should proactively deliver easy-to-interpret enrollment data to provosts and academic deans. The templates described below provide a starting point for driving action and awareness.

(1) Program Growth Share
Adding Context to Departmental Enrollment Growth

(2) Demand-Capacity Opportunity Maps
Identifying Mismatches Between Supply and Demand

(3) Course Proliferation Index
Benchmarking Course Specialization to Enrollment Demand

🔧 Download the Templates

Customizable versions of the templates and guides for their implementation are available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Source: EAB Analysis.

Template 1: Program Growth Share

Adding Context to Departmental Enrollment Growth

Academic deans face competing requests from program heads and department chairs for a limited pool of available resources. This is especially the case for institutions with growing enrollment: when all programs are growing in absolute numbers, how do decision-makers prioritize programs for investment? By providing provosts and deans a window into program growth benchmarked to the institution's average, as shown below, EMs can provide a framework for making these types of determinations.

Five-Year SCH[1] Growth by Department Compared to the Institutional Average
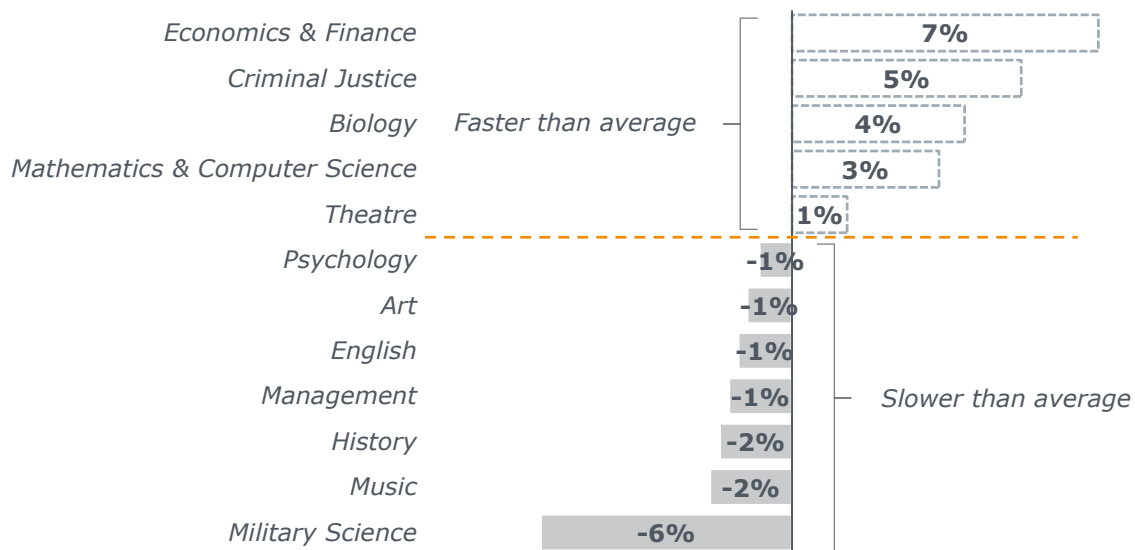
Department	Growth
Economics & Finance	7%
Criminal Justice	5%
Biology	4%
Mathematics & Computer Science	3%
Theatre	1%
Psychology	-1%
Art	-1%
English	-1%
Management	-1%
History	-2%
Music	-2%
Military Science	-6%

Faster than average — *Slower than average*

Download the Template

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Breaking It Down: Interpreting the Bar Chart

The graph above shows the percent change in student credit hours produced over a five-year period for each department compared to the average change across all academic departments at the institution. By deploying credit hours rather than numbers of majors, departments that provide a substantial share of service courses are considered fairly. In viewing the chart, decision-makers see, for example, that while the psychology department may have grown enrollment and student credit hours produced, it has not grown faster than average. Programs growing at below-average rates may have less need for additional resources relative to departments, like biology, that have experienced above-average growth.

1) Student credit hours.

Source: EAB Analysis.

Template 2: Demand-Capacity Opportunity Maps

Identifying Mismatches Between Supply and Demand

In addition to identifying departments in particular need of resources, provosts and deans also benefit from insight into where departmental capacity is out-of-sync with enrollment trends and where added instructional resources would generate enrollment growth. By visualizing the relationship between student demand and instructional capacity, as shown below, EMs can support academic leaders in making decisions about resource allocation and program planning.

Download the Template

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Breaking It Down: Interpreting the Matrix

The graph above shows the percent change in student credit hours produced over a five-year period for each academic department compared to the proportion of notional teaching capacity it utilized over the same period. Teaching capacity is measured by dividing the enrollment of each course section by its maximum possible enrollment, followed by calculating its median across all sections offered in the department. Departments are plotted as circles, with their diameters set according to their enrollment (i.e., numbers of majors enrolled). The comparison results in a four-cell matrix in which departments fall into one of four categories: capacity-constrained departments with the potential for immediate growth with added instructional resources (upper right, "expand"), departments with increasing enrollment but room to grow without added investment (upper left, "room to grow"), predictably full departments with unchanging demand (lower right, "in equilibrium"), and departments with both declining demand and significant unused resources (lower left, "restructure").

1) Student credit hours

Source: EAB Analysis.

Template 3: Course Proliferation Index

Benchmarking Course Specialization to Enrollment Demand

Because unchecked course proliferation can drive excess academic costs, academic leaders need insight into which academic departments have over-specialized course offerings beyond what is necessary for enrollment. By calling out excessive course proliferation in an easy-to-interpret and transparent way, EMs can provide provosts and deans with the data they need to align course offerings to enrollment.
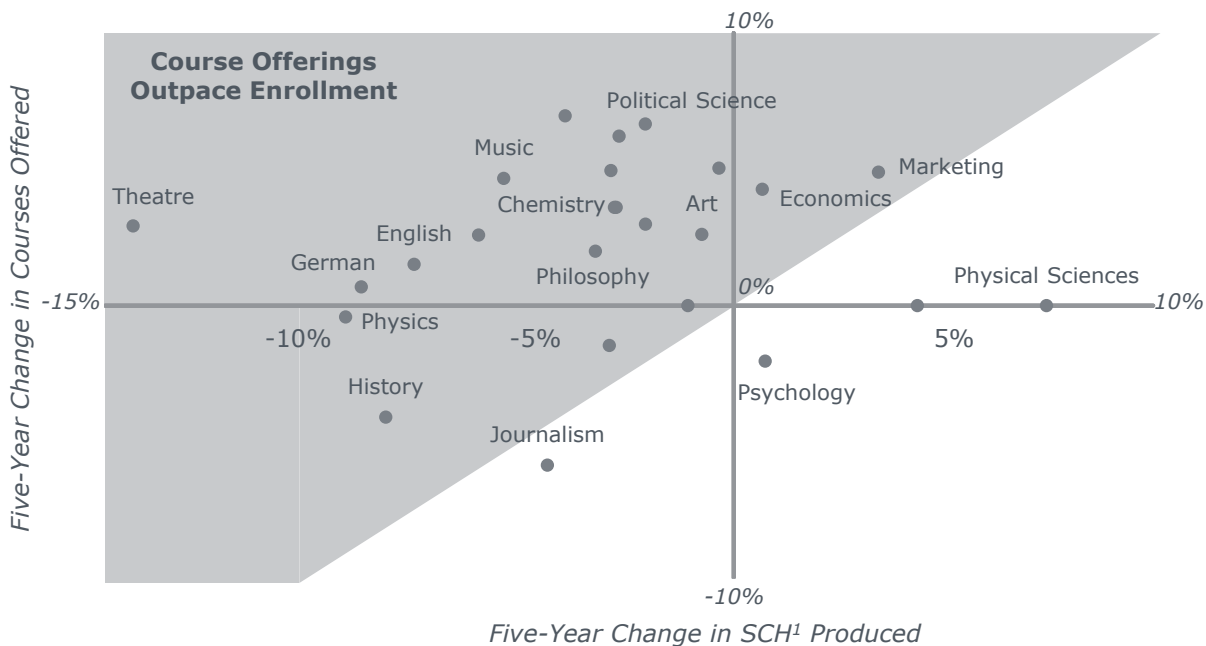
Course Offerings Outpace Enrollment

Five-Year Change in Courses Offered

Five-Year Change in SCH[1] Produced

Theatre · Political Science · Music · Chemistry · Art · Economics · Marketing · English · German · Philosophy · Physical Sciences · Physics · History · Psychology · Journalism

10% · 0% · -15% · -10% · -5% · 5% · 10% · -10%

🔧 **Download the Template**

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart
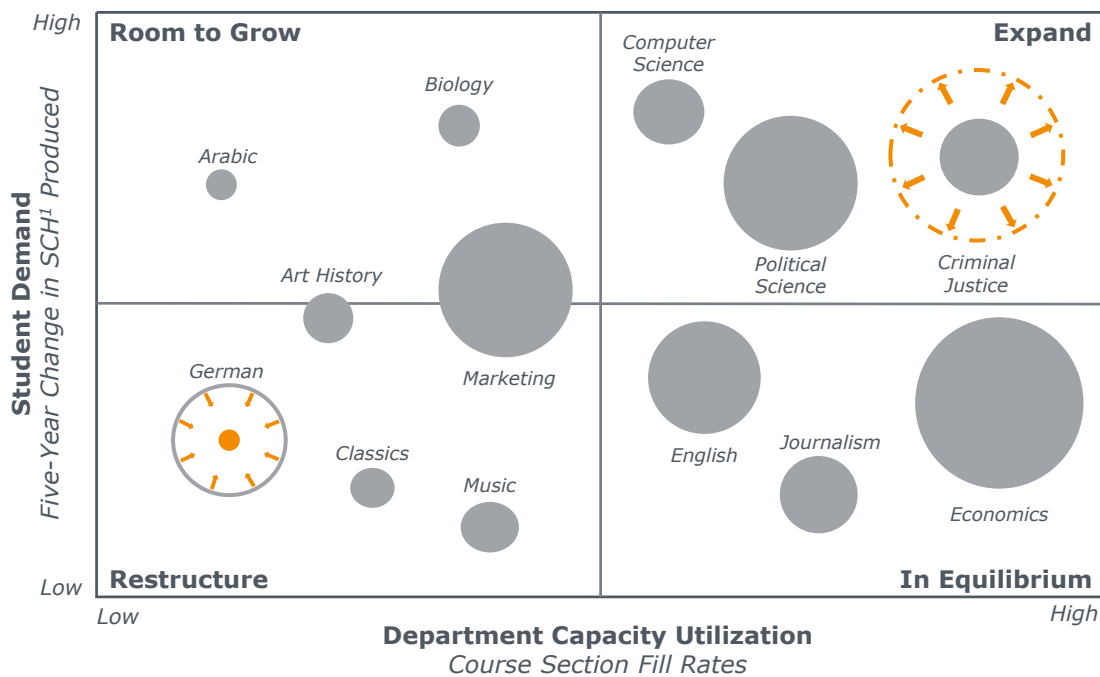
Breaking It Down: Interpreting the Chart

The graph above shows the five-year change in the number of individual courses offered by each department relative to the change in student credit hours produced over the same period. The shading denotes departments for which courses have been added at a faster rate than enrollments. Departments that fall above the trend line have added courses despite declining enrollments.

1) Student credit hours.

Source: EAB Analysis.

Key Takeaways from this Section

Grounding Program Targets in Market Realities

1   Integrating Enrollment Management and Academic Program Planning

- Recent shifts in students' major preferences challenge institutions to balance enrollment and capacity, resulting in under- and overenrolled programs that frustrate academic and enrollment leadership
- Bringing enrollment insight to bear in academic program planning allows institutions to better anticipate and accommodate changes in program demand

2   Conducting Annual Program Enrollment Reviews

- Embedding enrollment insights into academic program review ensures all programs maximize their enrollment potential
- Using minimal review criteria and pre-formatted review templates allow for an expedient process that can be replicated annually
- Mandating enrollment-management partnership for under-enrolled programs prompts immediate recovery or recalibration

3   Partnering with Faculty in Program Enrollment Planning

- Conducting program-level enrollment plans calibrates program targets and resource investments to institutional priorities and market realities
- Requiring department chairs to write descriptive program forecasts lays a foundation for realistic enrollment projections
- Incorporating the EM's analysis of market trends raises academics' awareness of external enrollment threats and opportunities

4   Supporting Data-Driven Academic Resource Allocation

- Benchmarking program growth to the institutional average allows deans to allocate resources toward the programs that need it most
- Indexing student demand to instructional capacity reveals programs' enrollment opportunities
- Comparing course specialization to enrollment trends identifies programs that are out-of-sync with student enrollment patterns

Revitalizing Stalled Program Performance

Harnessing the Voice of the Market to Drive Enrollment Growth

Design Done in a Vacuum

Enrollment Challenges from Faculty-Centric Program Positioning

Because the academic leaders that name and design programs are not close to external market trends, they often overlook opportunities to package their offerings in prospect-friendly formats. This is especially problematic for today's students, who are most likely to explore institutions by first viewing the websites of their academic programs of interest. Students searching this way form opinions based on the academic programs available and how they are packaged.

Challenges to Enrollment from Faculty-Led Program-Positioning

Program Websites the Most Common Points of Entry for Web Prospects

Percentage of Students First Navigating to Page

Program	Financial Aid	Housing
48%	**31%**	**24%**
Does it have my major?	Can I afford it?	Is the campus nice?

Program Names the Clearest Signals of Enrollment ROI

Undiscoverable Names Prevent Search

⊘ "Information Systems"

☑ Computer Science

Undecipherable Names Obscure Value

⊘ "Apparel Housing and Resource Management"

☑ Fashion Merchandising
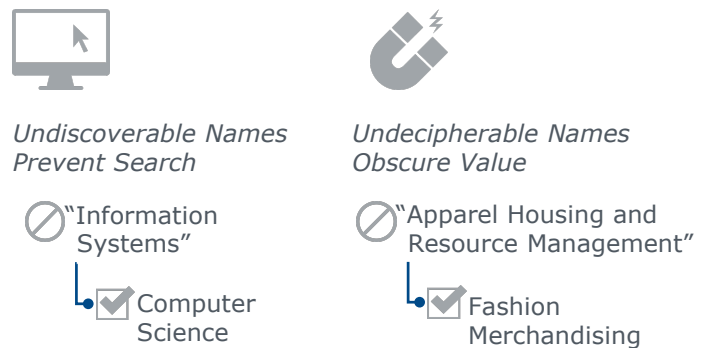
Revitalizing the Program Portfolio Key to Enrollment Success

To maximize enrollment, all academic programs must be packaged effectively. EMs can provide critical information and guidance to help poorly positioned programs clearly signal their value and attract applications and enrollments.

> "We need to change how we're thinking about our programs because they matter for enrollment. How are we going to craft messaging around programs that will get students' and parents' attention? … There's so much information thrown at them in the search process that our ability to cut through the clutter worries me."
>
> *Vice President of Enrollment Management*
> *Public Research University*

eab.com

Practice 3: Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring

Enrollment Alone an Inadequate Guide for Program Investments

While many academic programs could benefit from repositioning, EMs' efforts are best devoted to the strongest growth opportunities, many of which are overlooked today. Despite their lack of growth potential, low- and high-performing programs tend to receive a disproportionate share of resources in hopes of turning around underenrolled programs and to reward high performers. Consequently, the mid-performing, or "stalled," programs receive little attention—despite having the greatest growth potential.

Stalled Programs: Unexpected Opportunities for Enrollment Improvement

Low Performers	Stalled Programs	High Performers
• May have hit bottom due to secular enrollment decline • Investments in marketing may not be able to compensate—low returns likely	• Mediocre enrollments obscure high growth potential • Investment in these opportunities yield high returns	• May have already captured their "piece of the pie," lack institutional will for further expansion • Continued investment may yield diminishing returns

Distracted by Enrollment Extremes: Drawbacks of Directing Investments Toward the Lowest- and Highest-Performing Programs

While declining enrollments identify truly struggling programs, these programs are rarely the most viable candidates for growth. Dramatic enrollment decline most often reflects national trends in student preferences. Programs with the strongest enrollment, on the other hand, can also be a distraction. They may have already reached maximum enrollment potential given program capacity constraints, in which case additional investments generate diminishing returns. Distinguishing the programs with the greatest untapped enrollment potential requires a new approach—rethinking what enrollment numbers tell us, eliciting insight from academics, and tailoring findings to drive action.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring (cont.)

Annual Enrollment Diagnostic Sheds Light on Highest-ROI Opportunities

Most universities have over 100 academic programs, many of which could be classified as "stalled" given their mediocre enrollments. How can EMs identify the programs that are best situated for growth? At Northeastern University, an enrollment team identifies the highest-ROI programs for investment by conducting an annual admissions pipeline performance diagnostic, shown below.

Northeastern

Overview of Northeastern University's Pipeline Performance Diagnostic
Comparison of Enrollment Metrics to Academic College Averages

☐ Above threshold   ☐ At or slightly below threshold   ☐ Below threshold

Program	Inq	Conv Rate	Apps	App Growth	Yield Rate	Active Students	Ret Rate
Business	440	49%	215	54%	32%	424	88%
Biology	464	27%	120	34%	31%	271	90%
Design	264	17%	44	63%	22%	70	83%
History	145	14%	20	0%	29%	28	75%

The diagnostic comprises the following metrics.

- **Program-level performance data:** An Excel spreadsheet with rows for each academic program displays its enrollment, admissions pipeline, and retention data.

- **Program performance benchmarks:** Cells are pre-formatted with academic college averages, changing color based on whether the program is performing above, at, or below similar programs for each metric.

- **Rank by enrollment contribution:** Programs are sorted by "annual gross revenue," "active students," and "number of applications," from highest to lowest, to generate a portfolio ordered according to the program's enrollment contribution to the institution.

- **Growth opportunity diagnosis** Programs with variable performance across the individual metrics (i.e., less than five metrics performing at a single level—above, at, or below threshold) are identified as *growth opportunities*, demonstrating potential for stronger enrollment performance.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring (cont.)

From Data to Action: Target Programs for Enrollment Growth

Following the initial analysis, the EM team isolates four "Growth Opportunity" programs for targeted intervention. For these four programs, the EM team conducts interviews with academic leadership and research on external market demand to confirm potential for growth and gain insight into the reasons for mixed performance to date. Most years, two or three of the four programs are identified as viable growth opportunities and higher revenue targets are set for each to establish a trajectory toward improved performance.

Northeastern

Overview of Northeastern University's Pipeline Performance Diagnostic
Comparison of Enrollment Metrics to Academic College Averages

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History	145	14%	20	0%	29%	28	75%

Growth Opportunities

Programs for which less than 5 metrics are at a single level

🔧 **Download a Sample Diagnostic**

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Pipeline Vital Sign Monitoring (cont.)

Translating Enrollment Data into Insights for Program Leadership

In addition to targeting growth opportunities, the pipeline performance diagnostic provides enrollment management with an effective template for educating academic leaders on their programs' enrollment performance. Following diagnostic completion, the EM distributes a pipeline performance report for each program to key academic leaders, including the provost, deans, and the department chair for the program under review. As in the diagnostic, each enrollment performance metric is benchmarked to the academic college average, guiding interpretation.

Overview of Northeastern University's Pipeline Performance Report

Benchmark Program
Present academic college average to guide interpretation

Create Clarity
Define key findings in clear and concise terms

Instill Accountability
Specify action steps for all stakeholders

Pipeline Performance Report
Program: B.A. Liberal Studies

Northeastern

Program	Inq	Conv Rate	Apps	App Growth	Yield Rate	Active Student	Ret Rate
College Average	440	41%	215	24%	24%	424	88%
Liberal Studies	394	48%	189	-16%	9%	60	89%

Insights
Growing application rates but falling yield rates indicate students are applying but not enrolling

Recommendations

Admissions
• Survey admitted/unenrolled students to root-cause, report top student concerns to academic leadership

Financial Aid
• Award endowed scholarship funds earlier to improve yield

Faculty
• Engage faculty in yield events to increase enthusiasm among admitted students

Key Ways to Engage Faculty in Pipeline Data

As academic leaders have begun to review and understand key enrollment metrics, Northeastern has created a culture of data-informed decision making—a prerequisite for enrollment success. While many EMs distribute data on program enrollment performance, Northeastern stands out by:

• **Limiting distribution:** Program data are only delivered to leaders of that program, overcoming potential concerns about program prioritization.

• **Guiding interpretation:** Distilling enrollment metrics into jargon-free terms with explanations for the program's performance supports accurate understanding.

• **Prescribing action steps:** Recommendations for follow-up for each department involved in the program's success support improvement and instill shared accountability for the program's success.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 4: Enrollment Share Variance Reports

Root-Causing Barriers to Program Enrollment

A diagnostic for identifying stalled programs is the first step toward revitalizing program performance; the second is to diagnose and prescribe action steps for rebounding their enrollments. The two-step analysis shown below uses prospects' intended majors from College Board to benchmark each program's enrollment and applications to broader trends. The first step reveals whether a program should be performing better based on its external market demand. For underperforming programs, the second step reveals where immediate efforts should focus to turn it around.

Question One:
Does the program enroll a reasonable share of students?

Question Two:
If "no" to question one, where are we losing ground?

Enrollment Share

Proportion of Prospects Interested or Enrolled in Program

% Students

3.1% — Search Students[1]

2.8% — University Students

2.5%

2012   2014   2016

Application Share

Proportion of Prospects Interested in Program Compared to Proportion of Applicants to Program

3.0 % — Search Students[1]

2.8 % — University Applicants

Application Share Diagnostic Index = -0.2

"Share of University Applicants" minus "Share of Search Students"
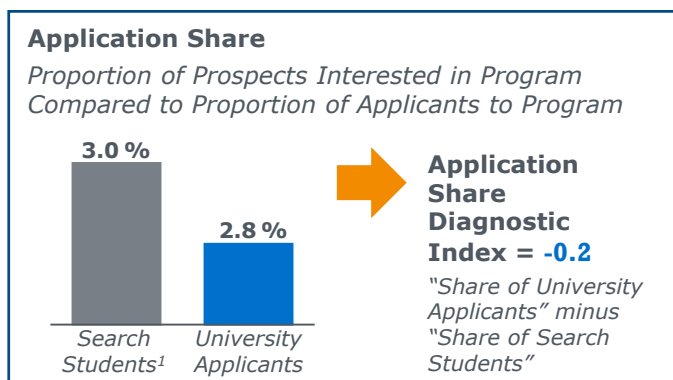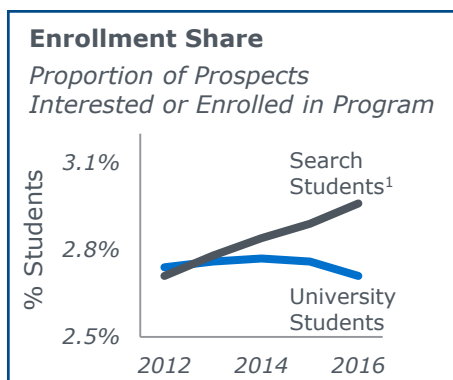
Red Flag Program

Three consecutive years of decline in the proportion of first-time freshmen enrolling in the program from the proportion of students in your primary market indicating it as their program of interest

Index <0

Positioning

Practice 5: Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic

Practice 6: Central Program Web Templates

Practice 7: Naming and Specialization Benchmarking

Index ≥0

Product

The Application Share Diagnostic Index: A Simple Subtraction Prescribes Program Positioning Versus Product Fixes

The Application Share Diagnostic Index, shown above (right), determines whether an underperforming program suffers positioning problems. In this case, the program fails to attract sufficient applications; turn-around efforts should first focus on marketing and name refreshment strategies to enhance its visibility and appeal. In cases where a program attracts expected numbers of applicants but struggles with yield, however, the index will be at or equal to zero. In this case, the program should focus on more substantive product changes.

Download a Sample Report

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

1) Derived from intended major reported by SAT/ACT test-takers in the institution's primary market, accessed through search name buys.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 5: Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic

Putting Students First in Program Website Design

Following Virginia Tech's first enrollment-focused program review (Practice 1), the EM quickly discovered that most underperforming programs only need superficial changes to rebound applications and enrollment. In fact, for most programs it was as simple as updating underperforming programs' websites—which were attractive to faculty but failed to address prospects' enrollment concerns.

Many Program Websites Reflect Academic but Not Prospect Priorities

Illustrative Example

EAB University

| HOME | ABOUT | FACULTY & RESEARCH | PROGRAMS | NEWS |

News

Professor Awarded Competitive Grant
Read More

New Building Named After Famous Scientist
Read More

Research

Faculty

2016
FACULTY
AWARDS CELEBRATION

Events

OCT 26 2016 **The Current State of US-UK Relations** *4-5 p.m. ET*

NOV 3 2016 **Faculty Awards Ceremony** *9-11 a.m. ET*

Website Pitfalls

⊘ Research focus

⊘ No student testimonials

⊘ No student photos

⊘ No link to application

Common Pitfalls of Program Websites

Programs websites often fail to address prospects' enrollment considerations and concerns. Common obstacles are shown below.

- **Research focus:** Prospects may be impressed by faculty members' research accomplishments but require insight into student opportunities and experiences.

- **Navigation barriers:** As the most common point of website-entry for prospective students, program websites should clearly link to the institution's admissions and financial aid websites to encourage the conversion from inquiry to applicant.

Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic (cont.)

Putting Students First in Website Design

For immediate program enrollment turn-around, Virginia Tech implemented program website audits for all underperforming programs. First, enrollment management provided each department with a summary of its website's performance benchmarked to the average across departments. Average visit length and click-through rate provided insight into website visitor engagement; below-average performance indicated need for website refresh. These data are effective for getting faculty on board with the need for changes and delivering them alongside a simple usability checklist pinpointed opportunities to improve prospect engagement.

Overview of Virginia Tech's Student-Centricity Website Diagnostic

Step One: Benchmark Site Performance

	Institution Average	Program
Monthly Page Views	800	=
Average Visit Length	15 sec	↓
Click Rate	4%	↓

Red flag: Average or above-average page view volume with below-average visitor engagement
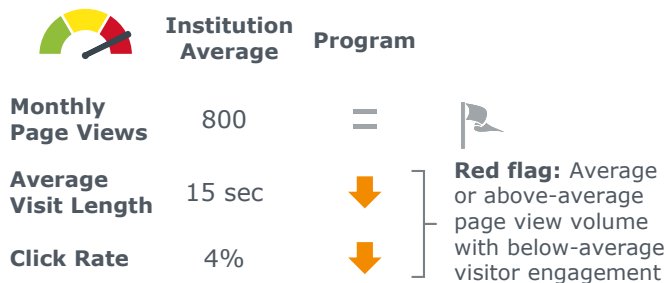
Step Two: Conduct Usability Audit
5 Key Questions

☑ **Search-Engine Optimized**
Do students find the website?

☑ **Readable**
Will a non-academic visitor find the content easy to grasp?

☑ **Student-Centered**
Does content speak to prospects? Are there student photos and testimonials?

☑ **Up-to-Date**
Is the website updated annually?

☑ **Features Call-to-Action**
Does it prominently link to the admissions application?

🔧 Download a Sample Diagnostic

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

A Closer Look: Website Refresh Drives Applications

Following the website audits, enrollment management partnered with academic departments to update the websites. These investments were worth the effort: Virginia Tech saw immediate enrollment benefit from its first round of website updates. The School of Liberal Arts, for example, attracted 25% more applications the year following website overhauls—achieved without substantive program changes.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 6: Central Program Web Templates

A Disciplined Approach to Program Websites Ensures Accessibility

Diagnosing admissions drawbacks in program websites reveals opportunity for refreshment but in many cases budget and time limitations prevent improvement. To drive website improvement across programs without undue burden to academic departments, one public research university launched a suite of website design shortcuts and cut-and-paste templates that offered content flexibility while adhering to the university's brand guidelines and navigation standards.

Award-Winning Admissions Website Undermined by Out-of-Touch Program Pages

Public Research U.
Apply Now!

Common Failures of Program Pages

- Designed for faculty, by faculty
- Violate brand guidelines
- Difficult to navigate
- Not focused on the student experience

Ready-Made Builds Support Improved User Experiences

Design Shortcuts

- Navigation guides
- Sample wording
- Best-practice link standards
- Concision mandate

Cut-and-Paste Templates

- Homepage and subpage templates
- Mobile-friendly adaptations

Easy Access Inspires Adoption

463 Users of website shortcuts and templates in first 8 months of launch

Making the Most of Vendor Investment

This university now offers dozens of design shortcuts and landing page templates that hard-wire effective website design. While developing them from scratch could have overloaded an already busy marketing team, they instead leveraged a recent vendor partnership that redesigned the institution's landing page and admissions websites. Rather than build shortcuts and templates from scratch, they worked with IT to create a landing page for templates already developed by the vendor—ready-made spin-offs of the original website overhaul. Their easy use prompted immediate adoption; as shown above, 463 unique users accessed the shortcuts and templates within the first eight months.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 7: Naming and Specialization Benchmarking

Applying Old Data to a New Use to Motivate Program Refreshment

Program websites are helpful to convert inquiries to applicants but their discovery depends on students first identifying the programs as enrollment contenders. Their identification most commonly occurs through online search: typically students type the name of the institution they are considering followed by their intended major. Out-of-date or uncommon names fail to attract students and signal a program that may not be keeping pace with industry trends. EMs should flag programs in need of naming and specialization refreshment by benchmarking their enrollment performance to peers using National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data.

Step One: Size Enrollment Opportunity Loss

National Student Clearinghouse Data Segmented by Program

Destination, 400 Admits	#	5YR Δ	SAT	$
University A	118	+5%	1310	$15k
My University	**102**	**-3%**	**1260**	**$9K**
University B	63	+2%	1350	$20K
University C	48	0%	1240	$8.5K
University D	30	+1%	1370	$8K

Key Components for Benchmarking Success

- Sum number of admits lost per peer institution
- Call out trends by calculating five-year change
- Drive urgency with average test score and revenue lost per student

Download a Sample Template

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

The Cost of Underperformance: National Student Clearinghouse Data Provide a Window into Program Quality and Revenue Loss

Most institutions already use NSC data to identify their top freshman overlap schools at the institutional level but these same data are key to assessing individual programs' performance. By breaking out NSC data by program—that is, pulling out only the students who indicated interest or applied to the program under review—EMs can identify each program's top peers. Because some programs attract distinct student segments, the program-level assessment often reveals different peers than those identified at an institutional level. By sizing the headcount, revenue, and academic quality lost from applicants enrolling at peer institutions, EMs alert academic leaders to the need for enrollment improvement.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Naming and Specialization Benchmarking (cont.)

A New Face for an Old Program Attracts Enrollment Growth

Additionally, by narrowing program competitors to a handful of peers, EMs assist academic leaders in identifying program refreshment opportunities—pinpointing top institutions for program comparisons.

Step Two: Benchmark Program Name and Specializations to Peers

My Program

Computational Science

Information Technology

Information Systems

University A

Computer Science

Information Technology

Information Systems

Gaming

Software Development

MARIST >10%

Incremental undergraduate enrollment in Computer Science over two years from new "Game Design and Programming" specialization
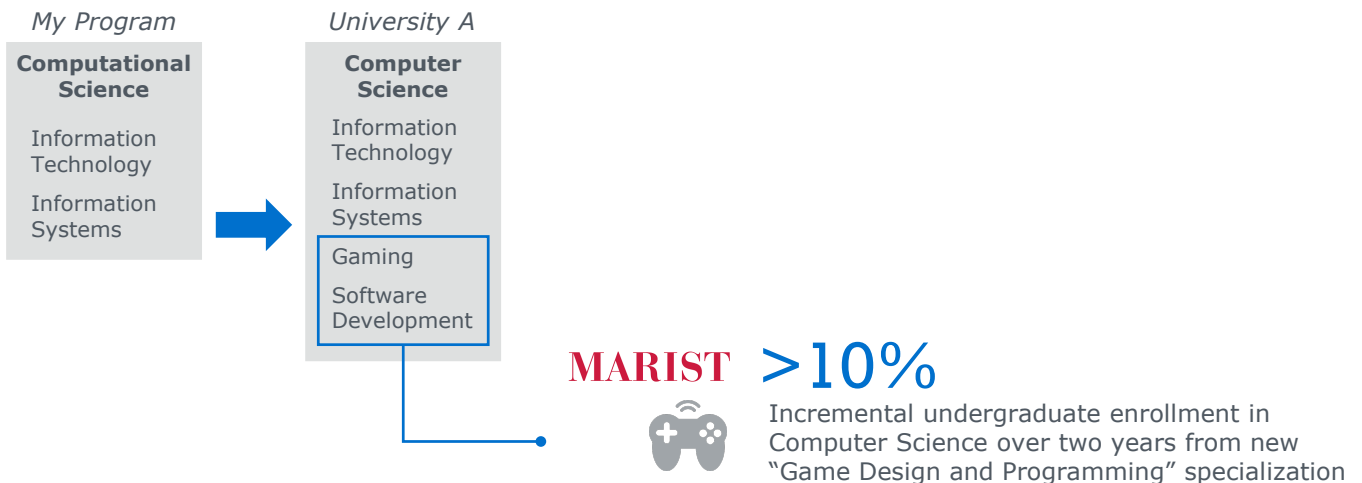
No-Hassle Program Makeover Reaps Big Enrollment Benefits

Marist College noted that its otherwise strong computer science program was losing admitted students to an institution with a less robust program, despite Marist's strong intern placement and employment outcomes derived from its relationship with IBM. The EM's market research identified that the program had failed to signal its value by keeping specializations up-to-date. While Marist offered a generic computer science degree, its peer had added specializations in gaming and software development. Additional specializations, which did not require added faculty, led to a 10% boost in computer science enrollment after just two years from an additional 25 students.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Naming and Specialization Benchmarking (cont.)

Easy Access to Loss Analysis Data Drives Utilization and Engagement

Purdue University's enrollment management team drives faculty engagement in their programs' enrollment performance by centralizing access to NSC data. They make these data available not only by program but also by student segment—allowing users to visualize, for example, the top enrollment destinations of admitted students by their geography, academic ability, race/ethnicity, and international student status, among others.

Minimal Investment, Sizable Impact from Purdue University's Benchmarking Portal

National Student Clearinghouse Data by Program and Student Segment

Maximum EM Payoff for Minimal Staff Investment
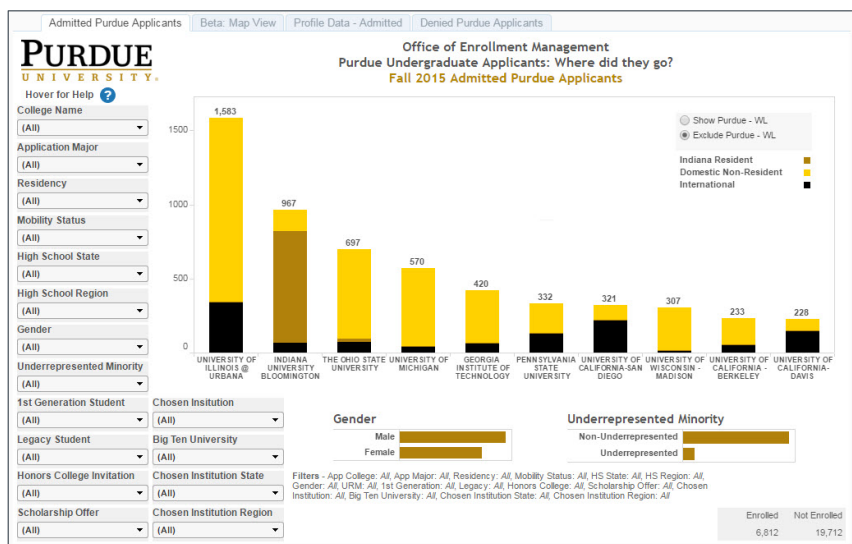
120 hours to create

4 hours to update annually

200 EM hours saved from reduced academic staff and faculty questions

Benchmarked Data Satisfy Campus Curiosity, Motivate Collaboration

Easy access to programs' enrollment performance relative to peer institutions has reduced requests for information on enrollment trends, saving the EM hundreds of hours in staff time. Additionally, program enrollment data benchmarked to peer institutions can spur academic leaders and faculty toward strategic improvements, driving enrollment benefits without direct encouragement from enrollment management.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Enrollment Share Variance Reports (cont.)

Root-Causing Barriers to Program Enrollment

The first step in the Enrollment Share Variance Report introduced on page 44 reveals whether a program should be performing better based on its external market demand. The second step determines where underperforming programs are falling short.

Question One:

Does the program enroll a reasonable share of students?
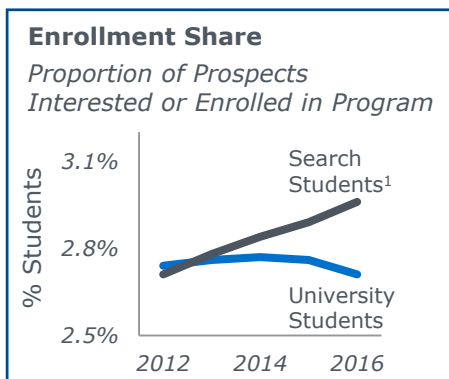
Question Two:

If "no" to question one, where are we losing ground?

Enrollment Share

Proportion of Prospects Interested or Enrolled in Program

% Students

3.1% — Search Students[1]

2.8% — University Students

2.5%

2012   2014   2016

Application Share

Proportion of Prospects Interested in Program Compared to Proportion of Applicants into Program

3.0%   **3.0%**

Search Students[1]   *University Applicants*

Application Share Diagnostic Index = 0

"Share of University Applicants" minus "Share of Search Students"
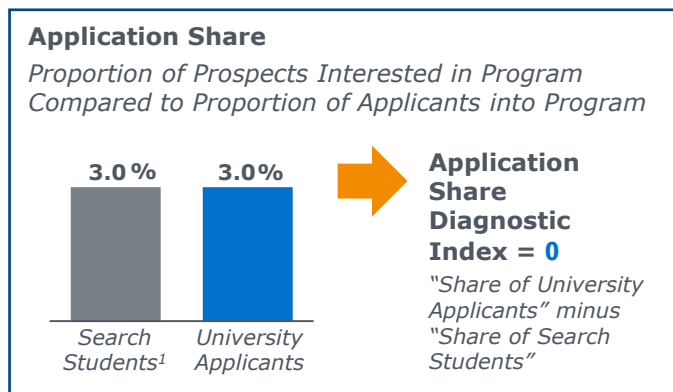
Red Flag Program

Three consecutive years of decline in the proportion of first-time, full time freshmen enrolling in the program from the proportion of students in your primary market indicating it as their program of interest

Index <0

Positioning

Index ≥0

Product

Curriculum Refreshment Market Research

Practice 8: Voice-of-the Student Surveys

Practice 9: Workforce Alignment Reviews

The Application Share Diagnostic Index: A Simple Subtraction Prescribes Program Positioning Versus Product Fixes

As introduced on page 44, the Application Share Diagnostic Index, shown above (right), determines whether an underperforming program suffers positioning or product problems. In this case, the program attracts sufficient applications but fails to yield a competitive share of students as enrollments. Turn-around efforts should focus on substantive academic program improvements to enhance its appeal.

Download a Sample Report

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

1) Derived from intended major reported by SAT/ACT test-takers in the institution's primary market, accessed through search name buys.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 8: Voice-of-the-Student Surveys

Discovering Market Insight from Admissions and Career Questionnaires

Academic program improvements should begin with market research to identify the expectations and priorities of customers. Rarely, however, do institutions solicit feedback from students on whether and how the institution's academic program preferences affect their enrollment decisions. Enrollment management and career services provide two sources of insight into where student preferences are out-of-sync with the institution's academic offerings. Admitted student questionnaires and current student career surveys can be leveraged to support the modification or addition of academic programs to better support prospects' enrollment decisions and current students' career aspirations.

Admitted/Unenrolled Student Surveys

Online process to decline admissions triggers survey pop-up

- What was the leading factor in your decision to enroll elsewhere?
- Was your desired major offered at our institution?
- Would you have enrolled had it been offered?

Current Student Career Surveys

Career search software administers questionnaire on interests to all students

- Will you pursue grad school?
- What professions appeal to you?
- What work environments appeal to you?
- Which careers best align with your interests and professional goals?

Drake UNIVERSITY

Data analytics and kinesiology were identified, approved by faculty for launch

SIMMONS

Business student interest in accounting inspired specialization add-on

Putting a Common Survey to a New Use

To determine the role academic programs played in prospects' enrollment decisions, Drake University added an interactive question to their interactive admitted student questionnaire. For students declining an offer of admission, the questionnaire asked what programs, had they been offered, may have attracted their enrollment. While most students did not decline admission for program-related reasons, those that did noted data analytics and kinesiology as attractive offerings elsewhere—triggering the launch of Drake's two newest, and highest yielding, majors.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 9: Workforce Alignment Reviews

Valuable Labor-Market Intelligence Overlooked, Under-Leveraged

Despite the importance of student preferences, institutions struggle to capture them in program changes because they can take years to pass faculty and finance approval. As a result, institutions often "chase student demand after the fact"—launching program improvements only to discover they are already out-of-date. Institutions seek to predict student preferences *before* they emerge to allow enough time to put academic resources in place. In today's outcomes-focused market, institutions can anticipate student demand by monitoring workforce and labor-market trends, which precede student enrollment preferences and are easier to track and forecast.

Students increasingly focused on outcomes	Faculty insulated from workforce trends	Labor-market trends predict student interests

Workforce Advisor Groups: Underleveraged Sources of Labor-Market Intelligence

Drawbacks of Typical Workforce Advisor Groups

Limited Application

Only required for professional programs

Accreditation Focus

Focused on accreditation rather than opportunities for enrollment growth

Inconsistent Follow-Through

No accountability for programs to implement advisor feedback

Area Employers an Easy-Access Source of Labor Market Trends
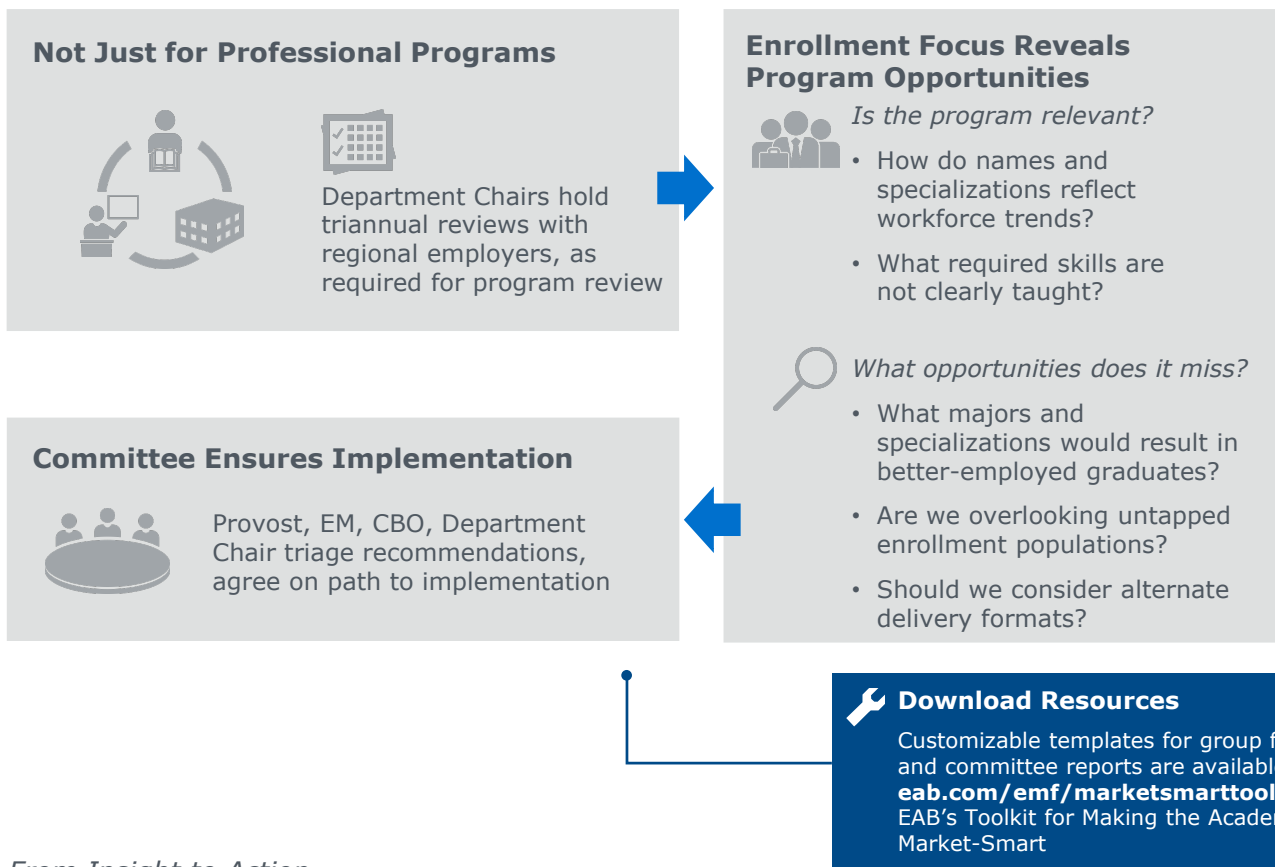
A thorough analysis of labor-market data requires time and know-how. Most universities, however, already have a powerful source of workforce trends in action on campus: workforce advisor groups. When deployed with enrollment in mind, workforce advisors provide valuable market intelligence and program improvement opportunities.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Workforce Alignment Reviews (cont.)

Connecting Curriculum to Employer Insights

To meet its growth agenda, Concordia University, St. Paul sought to signal workforce relevance throughout its academic program portfolio—especially liberal arts offerings. To achieve this, the provost required all academic programs to convene employer advisor groups to solicit external feedback and recommendations. Guidelines for conducting the groups specified a required focus on each program's opportunity to signal career relevance and attract enrollment growth.

Concordia UNIVERSITY·SAINT PAUL

Not Just for Professional Programs

Department Chairs hold triannual reviews with regional employers, as required for program review

Enrollment Focus Reveals Program Opportunities

Is the program relevant?

- How do names and specializations reflect workforce trends?

- What required skills are not clearly taught?

What opportunities does it miss?

- What majors and specializations would result in better-employed graduates?

- Are we overlooking untapped enrollment populations?

- Should we consider alternate delivery formats?

Committee Ensures Implementation

Provost, EM, CBO, Department Chair triage recommendations, agree on path to implementation

🔧 Download Resources

Customizable templates for group feedback and committee reports are available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

From Insight to Action

Concordia, St. Paul ensured the implementation of advisors' feedback by involving senior leaders in their final review. The leadership committee's oversight provided the following benefits.

- **Prioritization guidance:** Senior leaders assisted department chairs in prioritizing the many recommendations made while also ensuring that the improvements adopted aligned with broader institutional and cross-program priorities.

- **Implementation follow-through:** All departments were held accountable for implementing advisor recommendations endorsed by the committee. Lack of follow-through threatened ongoing program funding.

- **Resource assurance:** Participation by the provost and chief business officer ensured the provision of any additional resources required for the recommendations' implementation.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Workforce Alignment Reviews (cont.)

Workforce Advisor Recommendations Sow Seeds for Meeting Mission and Margin

Concordia, St. Paul's first workforce alignment review resulted in cross-program enrollment growth from widespread updates to their names, specializations, and curricula. The most substantial benefits were observed for liberal arts programs, which maintained their traditional identities while more clearly mapping to post-graduate career opportunities. By adding a graphic design major, for example, the art department's enrollment grew three-fold, from 16 to 45 undergraduate students.

Immediate and Long-Term Gains from Workforce Advisor Recommendations

"Graphic Design" Major Triples Art Enrollments

45

16

Growth incremental, no reduction in other majors

2012   2015
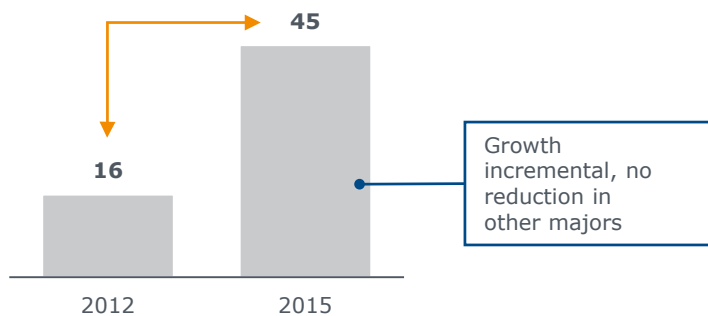
Success Seeds Future Enrollment Growth

Plans for Program Expansion Following Initial Success

Online Bachelor's

Added specializations

Master's program

> "Our mission is to establish ROI for students through an embedded liberal arts concept… It is our responsibility to be responsive and relevant to the public and to show that in our university's structure."

Eric LaMott
Provost and Chief Operating Officer

Embedding Quality Assurance: Workforce Alignment a Prerequisite for Academic Program Review

The success of Concordia, St. Paul's first workforce alignment reviews spurred the institution to continue them on an ongoing basis by adding them to their triannual program review process. Every year, the leadership committee reviews the performance of one third of all academic programs and workforce alignment reviews are mandatory for program approval. The institution's commitment to career relevance has enabled them to not only achieve enrollment growth but also to advance their mission of establishing career ROI for students without limiting the quality of a liberal education.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Key Takeaways from this Section

Revitalizing Stalled Program Performance

1 Identifying Growth Candidates

- Program investments prioritize enrollment extremes—biased toward the highest and lowest performing programs despite their limited growth potential

- Comparing admissions metrics across programs against college averages reveals programs with mixed performance that are best positioned for growth

- Analyzing program applications and enrollments against College Board data on student major preferences reveals specific areas for enrollment improvement

2 Marketing Quality Control

- Because academic leaders are not close to external market trends, program names, specializations, and websites often fail to meet prospects' needs

- Auditing program websites and providing shortcuts for their improvement increase their effectiveness in converting inquiries to applicants

- Delivering access to program-specific National Student Clearinghouse data drives program improvements by alerting academic leaders to enrollment losses and opportunities

3 Conducting Curriculum Refreshment Market Research

- Despite its importance, programs rarely draw from market research on the expectations and career interests of students; as a result, they miss opportunities to serve their educational needs

- Using admitted student questionnaires and current student career surveys to identify students' program needs reveals enrollment opportunities

- Focusing workforce advisor groups on enrollment growth provides insight into how programs can better accommodate external market and employment trends

Embedding Demand Validation in Launch

Driving New Programs to Achieve Enrollment Gains

3

New Program Demand Stage Gates

Practice 10: Faculty Innovation Stress Tests

Practice 11: Independent Major Program Pilots

Practice 12: Professional Skill Demand Projections

Flexible Capacity Expansion

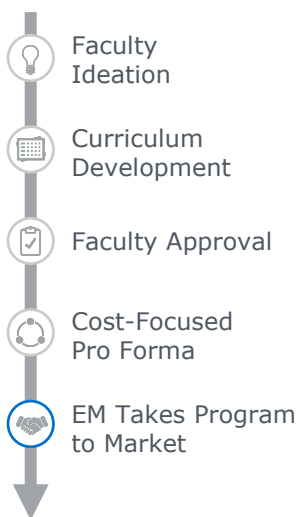Practice 13: Launch Program Enhancement Triggers

Too Little, Too Late

Consequences of Delayed Demand Validation in New Program Development

Faculty are inherently innovative when it comes to designing new academic programs. Because they are distanced from the day-to-day realities of new student recruitment, however, new programs often reflect faculty priorities more than student interests. As a result, new programs often fail to drive enrollment growth.

Enrollment Disadvantages of a Faculty-Centric Program Launch Process

Demand Validation the Final Step…

- Faculty Ideation
- Curriculum Development
- Faculty Approval
- Cost-Focused Pro Forma
- EM Takes Program to Market

…Leading to Lost Enrollment Benefit

Missed Opportunities
Long approval process and delayed recruitment prevent immediate market capture

Wasted Effort
Failure to first confirm demand wastes faculty time in misguided program development

Unviable Products
Programs passed to EM for student recruitment irrespective of market strength

Bringing Demand to the Fore in New Program Launch

Progressive institutions are embedding enrollment demand-validation into existing procedures for new program proposals and development. This ensures that new programs are aligned with institutional and market realities from the start.

> "I told the deans, if you want to launch new programs we should first test them in the market. A good program designed by two faculty sitting in their offices sharing hobbies, without ever asking what 18 year-olds think, doesn't stand much chance of enrollment success."
>
> *Vice President for Enrollment Management*
> *Public Research University*

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Working Together on New Program Development

Setting New Investments up for Success

By involving key administrators upfront, institutions ensure that the development of new programs satisfies broader institutional goals and merits the investment. These key administrators are shown below. The following practices provide tools and strategies for ensuring their collective success.

Key Players for Making Market-Smart New Program Decisions

Provost

- Aware of faculty skills and interests
- Effective communicator back to faculty

Enrollment Manager

- Closest to student interests
- Expert in forecasting

Chief Business Officer

- Projects costs and revenues
- Able to free up resources for investment

Laying a Foundation for Committee Success:
Best Practices for Embedding Demand Validation in Launch

Practice 10:	**Practice 11:**	**Practice 12:**	**Practice 13:**
Faculty Innovation Stress Tests	Independent Major Program Pilots	Professional Skill Demand Projections	Launch Program Enhancement Triggers

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 10: Faculty Innovation Stress Tests

Pre-proposal Form Checks Misguided Faculty Innovation at the Gate

To ensure new programs advance institutional objectives, Creighton University implemented the "Pipeline Enrollment Group"—comprising the dean of the graduate school and college of professional studies, the associate dean for adult and e-learning, the academic financial officer, the enrollment manager, and other university personnel. The group's first action was to insert a pre-proposal step into Creighton's program approval process, requesting faculty to answer basic questions on the program's enrollment viability and unique contributions to the institution's mission upfront.

Overview of Creighton University's Pre-proposal Process

Faculty Ideation
Curriculum Development
Faculty Approval
Cost-Focused Pro Forma
EM Takes Program to Market

Creighton
UNIVERSITY

Enrollment-Focused Pre-proposal

Validate Market Demand
What types of students will the program enroll?
How many students would be interested?

Demonstrate Value Proposition
Where else is the program offered and how has it fared?
What is the unique value proposition of the program?

Specify Required Investments
How much will it cost to get the program off the ground?
What existing resources can be leveraged?

Link to Mission
How does the program advance the institution's strategic plan?

Win-Win for EM and Academics: Pre-proposal Makes the Most of Faculty Effort

In addition to confirming enrollment viability, Creighton's pre-proposal form provides guardrails to guide faculty ideation. The questions posed by the pre-proposal form alert the academy to the institutional objectives they should consider in bringing proposals forward, potentially saving them wasted time and effort.

🔧 Download a Sample Form

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Faculty Innovation Stress Tests (cont.)

Pre-proposal Benefits Advance University Toward Growth Goal

Despite its many improvements to Creighton University's program launch process, the Pipeline Enrollment Group recognizes that the pre-proposal step has been key to their success. Of the 11 proposals reviewed in the two years since its implementation, only two have been rejected. As a result, all of the programs launched have either contributed incremental enrollments or have fulfilled a specific mission objective. Having an agreed-upon set of standards and a forum for growth discussions has been key to advancing Creighton toward its enrollment growth goal.

Creighton
UNIVERSITY

Pre-proposal Harnesses Only the Best Faculty Ideas

11	**2**	**0**
Proposals over two years	Programs flagged as unviable	Launches without enrollment benefits

Institution on track to meet 1,200-student growth target

> "A major benefit of the pre-proposal process is that faculty have some guidance in areas to consider before bringing their ideas to the table—they can look at the form and quickly understand the criteria being used when evaluating new program development priorities. The process has helped to funnel energies and leverage opportunities that align with Creighton's mission and desire for growth in new programs."

Mary E. Chase
Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
Creighton University

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 11: Independent Major Program Pilots

Student Requests Reveal Untapped Enrollment Opportunities

As with faculty innovation, institutions also overlook opportunities to harness student innovation for enrollment growth. What new programs might students be interested in if only the institution were to launch them? Independent majors provide a window into emerging student preferences that, when monitored, lead to easy-to-launch, fast-growth, and unique academic program offerings. To capitalize on these benefits, enrollment management at a private research university in the northeast monitors the frequency with which the same independent major is requested. After three repeat requests, programs are flagged as launch opportunities.

"Build Your Own" Majors Drawn from Existing Offerings
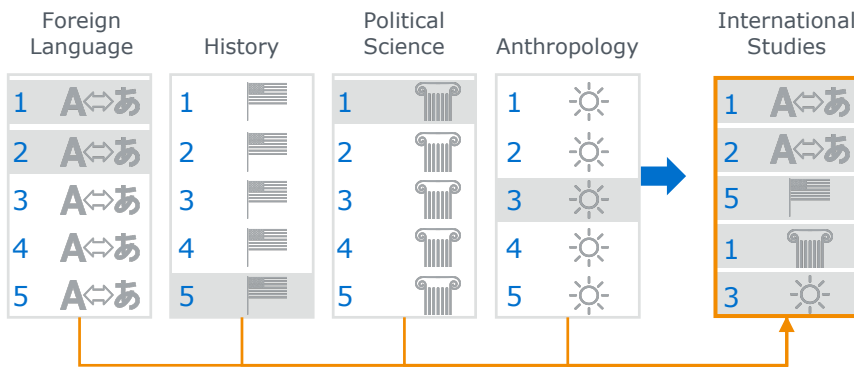
Advantages of Launching Independent Majors as New Programs

Resource Efficient

Required resources are already in place

Fast Launch

Independent majors have already been approved by the faculty senate, avoid lengthy approval process

High Yield

Interdisciplinary construction makes programs stand out

Because independent majors must first be approved by the faculty senate and deploy academic resources that are already in place, launching them as formal programs requires little-to-no time and investment. Enrollment benefits from these minimal investments have been substantial at this institution, leading to two of their highest yielding programs, "Communications, Legal Institutions, Economics, and Government" and "Terrorism and Security Studies."

🔧 Download a Sample Form

A customizable template is available at **eab.com/emf/marketsmarttoolkit** in EAB's Toolkit for Making the Academy Market-Smart
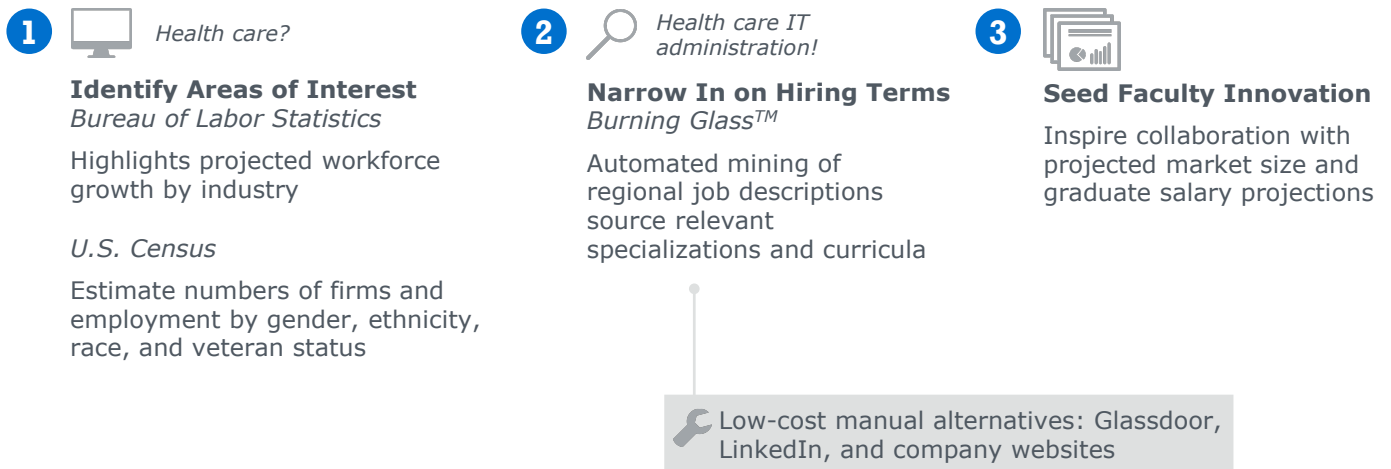
Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 12: Professional Skill Demand Projections

Labor Demand and Hiring Trends: Proxies for Emerging Student Preferences

Independent majors identify new program opportunities for which students and resources are already in place. To predict where student demand is headed, however, institutions must look to labor-market and hiring trends. At Northeastern University, a seven-person team monitors hiring trends using the three-step process below to reveal opportunities for new programs.

Northeastern

Persistent Mining of Hiring Trends Ensures New Programs Are a Step Ahead

1 *Health care?*

Identify Areas of Interest
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Highlights projected workforce growth by industry

U.S. Census

Estimate numbers of firms and employment by gender, ethnicity, race, and veteran status

2 *Health care IT administration!*

Narrow In on Hiring Terms
Burning Glass™

Automated mining of regional job descriptions source relevant specializations and curricula

3

Seed Faculty Innovation

Inspire collaboration with projected market size and graduate salary projections

Low-cost manual alternatives: Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and company websites

Low-Cost Approach for Small Shops or Tight Budgets

While few institutions have the personnel and financial resources to dedicate to Northeastern's team approach, Philadelphia University accomplishes a modified protocol by allocating just 20% of one full-time employee to manually mining workforce data. This amount of effort results in 10-15 new program proposals derived from labor demand and hiring trends every year.

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Practice 13: Launch Program Enhancement Triggers

Flexible Launch Targets Maximize New Program Potential
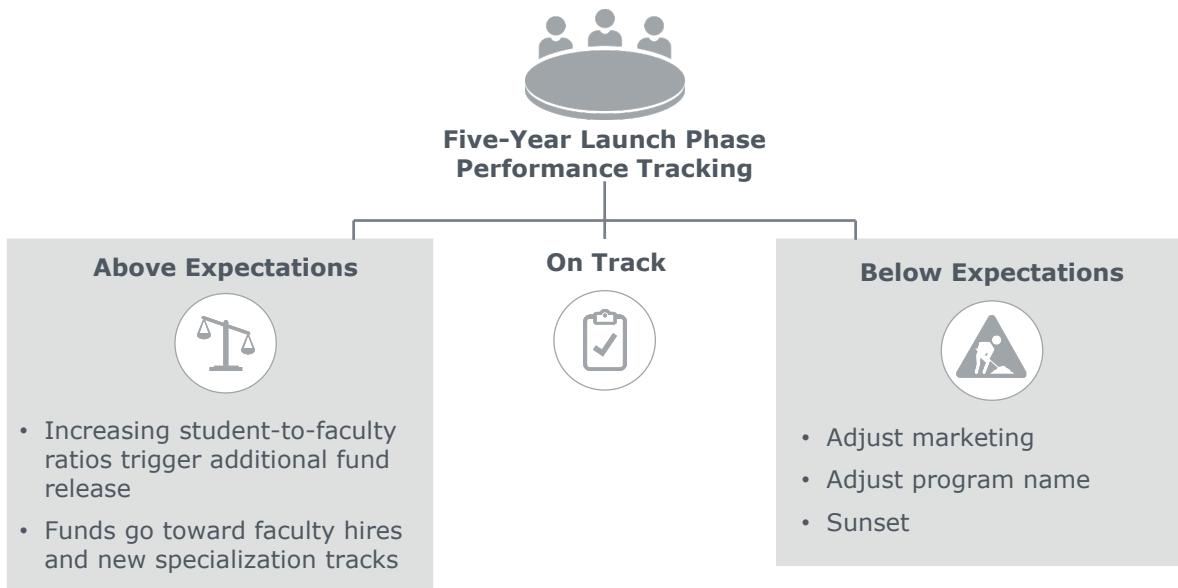
As with existing programs, new programs are rarely monitored for enrollment performance once they are off the ground. As a result, new programs miss opportunities to fine-tune, expand, or contract to maximize their enrollment and revenue benefits. To ensure all new program investments achieve the strongest possible outcomes, Marist College's Program Development Committee institutes flexible targets for the performance of all new programs, as shown below.

MARIST

Overview of Marist College's Flexible Targets for New Programs

Committee Agrees to Standard Student-to-Faculty Ratio

- Set by Provost, Dean, CBO, EM, Department Chair
- Target: 15:1 land-based, 20:1 online

Five-Year Launch Phase Performance Tracking

Above Expectations

- Increasing student-to-faculty ratios trigger additional fund release
- Funds go toward faculty hires and new specialization tracks

On Track

Below Expectations

- Adjust marketing
- Adjust program name
- Sunset

For their first five years, new programs' enrollment targets and academic resources are closely monitored to ensure top performance. The student-to-faculty ratio plays an integral role: increasing ratios beyond 15:1 for land-based programs and 20:1 for online programs trigger the commitment of additional resources to go toward added courses and faculty. Underperforming programs are flagged for modification or, in extreme cases, gradual sunset.
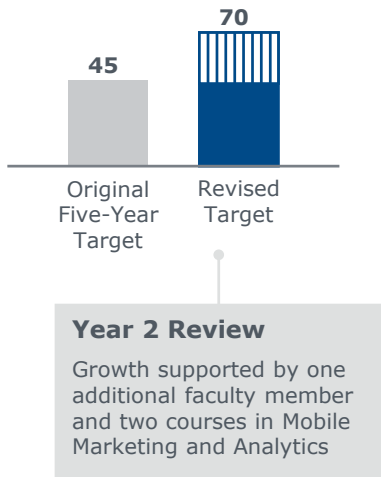
Launch Program Enhancement Triggers (cont.)

Dynamic Launch Monitoring Maximizes Growth from New Programs

Marist's hands-on approach to new programs' performance reaps enrollment benefits for the institution while ensuring program investments are responsibly deployed. In the two years since flexible targets were introduced, Marist has not only met but exceeded all new programs' enrollment goals. A new program in Integrated Marketing and Communication, for example, has exceeded enrollment targets by 25 students—made possible by the infusion of additional courses and faculty, as shown below (left).

Built-In Expansion Budget Maximizes Enrollment Potential

Integrated Marketing and Communication Enrollment

Year 2 Review

Growth supported by one additional faculty member and two courses in Mobile Marketing and Analytics

Five-Year Monitoring a Back-Door to Sunset

" Many programs that were launched before we formed the committee don't have serious demand and they're barely breaking even. They say 'we'll bring in 20 people next year,' and I'm thinking we haven't brought in more than 12 in the last 6 years! These targets **reduce the struggle between the academic side of the house and the enrollment management team** because we've agreed on what's realistic from the outset."

Sean Kaylor
Vice President of Admission and Enrollment Planning

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.

Key Takeaways from this Section

Embedding Demand Validation in Launch

1 Harnessing Faculty Innovation for Enrollment Growth

- New academic programs tend to reflect faculty priorities more than student interests; as a result, they often fail to result in enrollment and revenue growth

- Instituting agreed-upon standards for new program approval and a committee for their review aligns launch commitments to broader institutional goals and facilitates enrollment growth

- Requiring a pre-proposal step in new program launch alerts academics to the institutional priorities they should consider in bringing ideas forward, saving wasted time and effort

2 Identifying Top Contenders for Launch

- New program development more commonly stems from faculty interest than from the systematic identification of market opportunities

- Monitoring student-proposed independent majors for new program opportunities reveals easy-to-launch, fast-growth opportunities for which students and resources are already in place

- Mining labor-market and hiring data validates external market demand and predicts emerging student interests a few years out

3 Maximizing Enrollment Benefit from New Program Investments

- Post-launch, new programs are rarely monitored for ongoing enrollment performance; as a result, institutions miss opportunities to maximize the enrollment and revenue impact of their investments

- Setting flexible enrollment and budget targets for the first five years enables new programs to expand and contract to achieve maximum return-on-investment

- Triggering additional resources based on student-to-faculty ratios provides new programs with the best opportunities for maximum enrollment success

Advisors to Our Work

The Enrollment Management Forum is grateful to the individuals and organizations that shared their insights, analysis, and time with us. We would especially like to recognize the following individuals for being particularly generous with their time and expertise.

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The best
practices are
the ones that
work for **you.**ᔆᴹ