



Academic Vital Signs

Aligning Departmental Evaluation with Institutional Priorities

Academic Affairs
Forum





Who Should Read

Provosts
Academic Affairs Leaders
Deans
Associate Deans
Department Chairs

Academic Vital Signs

Aligning Departmental Evaluation with Institutional Priorities

Three Ways to Use This Resource

- Develop dashboards for monitoring departmental performance
- Redesign your academic program review process
- Engage academic departments in advancing strategic goals

Academic Affairs Forum

Project Director

David Bevevino

Contributing Consultants

Alexa Silverman

Amy Saul

Design Consultant

Phoenix Simone Walter

Practice Manager

Colin Koproske

Executive Director

Melanie Ho

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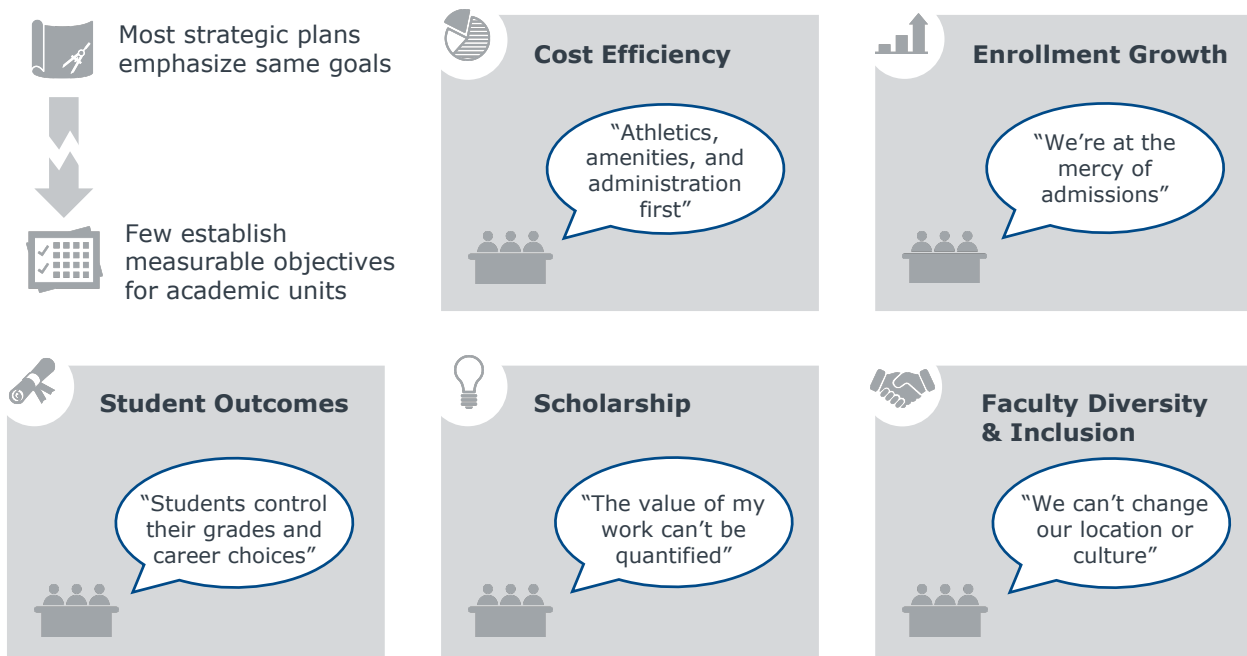
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Executive Summary

The 'Strategy Gap' Stymieing Institutional Aspirations

Advancing institutional priorities requires change at the academic department level, but the lack of appropriate department-level goals and metrics prevents these units from understanding their role and importance in their institution's long-term success.

From faculty hiring to course scheduling to promotion and tenure, academic departments make or influence myriad decisions that affect the strategic priorities of institutions of higher education. These priorities include cost efficiency, enrollment growth, student outcomes, scholarship, and faculty diversity and inclusion. Improving on these goals requires change at the department level, but faculty and departmental leaders rarely understand how their work and activities will translate into progress at the strategic level.



Typical methods of monitoring program performance—academic program review and formal program prioritization—fail to create meaningful change and can even create paralyzing opposition to data-informed decision-making.

Traditional academic program review in which external reviewers, often faculty from the discipline, analyze the program within the context of its discipline has too narrow a perspective and rarely leads to changes that advance institutional priorities. At the other end of the spectrum, ranking programs and reinvesting resources from underperformers to excelling units through the program prioritization process forces institutions to make "apples to oranges" comparisons that often mire campuses in long debates about data quality, fairness, and accuracy.

Most department chairs are appointed for short, rotational terms and receive little to no training either in their positions as managers or as leaders within a broader institutional context, contributing to the lack of sustained focus on campus-wide priorities.

Provosts and other senior leaders, despite their titles, have limited tools to compel changes at the department level. Though they may start a new strategic planning process or change the institutional budget model, those initiatives rarely reach down to academic departments or programs. At the same time, many department chairs receive no or inadequate training to even engage with the major challenges with which a provost wrestles each day. Progressive institutions have begun extending chair term length, moving to twelve-month contracts, and building more comprehensive training programs.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Broad institutional metrics must be translated into clear, actionable goals for academic departments in order to motivate improvement. Institution-level metrics on priorities such as cost efficiency, enrollment growth, student outcomes, scholarship, and diversity and inclusion provide useful summaries of collective effort. However, a student outcomes metric such as six-year graduation rate could punish an academic department for factors outside of their control, such as courses taken outside of the major or financial problems occurring before major declaration.

Translation Criteria



Aligned:

Do department-level changes in the metric inflect the relevant institutional goal(s)?



Actionable:

Does the department have direct influence over this metric?



Measurable:

Can the institution collect longitudinal information about the metric?



Time-bound:

Can the department significantly influence the metric in the given time frame?



Realistic/fair:

Does the metric control for variables outside departmental influence?



Difficult to game:

Does the metric eliminate "perverse incentives" to avoid true improvement?



Simplified:

Is the metric easy to understand and not an amalgamation of many calculations?

Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Recommended Departmental Performance Indicators: Cost Efficiency



Instructional Capacity Gap

Calculate the difference between the potential number of courses taught by a department and the actual number taught. To determine if a department is over or under capacity in its instructional assignments, deans and departmental leaders should regularly review the instructional capacity gap, a calculation of potential versus actual number of courses taught. The calculation should inform deans' faculty line allocation decisions as well as department chairs' instructional assignment decisions.



SCH per Faculty FTE

Focus on a department's student credit hours generated per full-time equivalent faculty (FTE) as a measure of workload to determine alignment with student demand. Standard measures of faculty workload, such as the official workload policy measured in number of courses, fail to align with an institution's need to meet student enrollment demand. As a first step, institutions should identify internal and external benchmark departments for each of their own departments. These units serve as useful comparisons to ensure each department is in a normal range of SCH per FTE for its discipline. In addition, institutions should align SCH per FTE targets with overall institutional enrollment goals such as a certain percentage of students earning 30 or more student credit hours per year.



Unfunded Course Releases

Set specific targets for the percentage of a department's teaching capacity that can be released without securing external grant funding. At many institutions, deans and provosts have little visibility into the number of course releases granted without grant funding to cover replacement of the faculty member. These releases may help faculty take on administrative or intensive service requirements, while others may have less clear rationales. A target percentage gives department chairs flexibility to reassign faculty as needed while ensuring that the department meets its enrollment obligations.

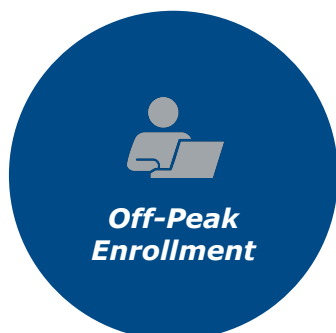
Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Recommended Departmental Performance Indicators: Enrollment Growth



Analyze the flow of students into, out of, and among majors to determine if certain common patterns cause student progress delays or if some departments are not doing enough to engage students. A major migration analysis can start conversations about how students navigate an institution's curriculum and reveal if major curricula need to be more aligned across disciplines to remedy problems such as major-switching students having to retake prerequisites or struggling in other critical required courses in their new major. The analysis can also be helpful for departments to learn that their students feel disengaged and decide to find a new program of study.



Find opportunities to add student credit hours in critical required courses or recapture commonly transferred courses by offering more courses in off-peak summer or winter sessions. Many institutions lose student credit hours to other (often less expensive) providers when students return home for the summer. By identifying the most commonly transferred summer courses, institutions can offer those subjects themselves and maintain engagement with their students. This practice is especially important for courses that are capacity constrained or that have high failure rates during the academic year.



Regularly require departments to analyze the external demand and competitiveness of their programs by analyzing targeted job market data and reviewing characteristics of similar programs. Departments should review national employment trends in the context of their own regions and common postgraduation student destinations. If the region brings in more than 6 percent of an industry's national growth, it may be a good candidate for a new program. Second, programs must determine where and why they lose students to other programs, either before matriculation or through transfer. This information can help departments make adjustments to curricula, modality, and outreach strategy.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Recommended Departmental Performance Indicators: Student Outcomes



Course-level DFW rates, especially in critical first-year or high-enrollment courses, give a more accurate understanding of a department's contribution to early student progress than first-year retention. Though many faculty may worry that focusing on grades can lead to reductions in rigor, research shows that course completion rates vary widely among sections of the same course, even when controlling for student preparedness. This finding reveals that pedagogy and course design among different instructors contributes significantly to student performance.



Calculate the four- or six-year graduation rate and time to degree for each major after students reach 60 student credit hours instead of evaluating majors based on overall graduation rate. Standard measures of graduation rate and time to degree unfairly hold departments accountable for activities and challenges that occurred before the student even declared a major. The aforementioned analysis focuses only on the time when a student may have dedicated faculty advising and takes a higher concentration of major courses.



Measure the percentage of students in a major who participate in experiential learning to determine which programs actively encourage career preparation through their curriculum. Job placement rates, the standard metric for how well a department prepares students for careers, ignores the difficulty of controlling student career choices or job markets. Instead, measuring participation in experiential learning draws faculty attention to ways they can adjust their curriculum, employer relationships, and other student programs to improve postgraduation outcomes.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Recommended Departmental Performance Indicators: Scholarship



Holistic Outputs

Ensure that departments collect holistic data on scholarly activity to gain a more accurate understanding of how each department, even those without significant grant funding or publications, contributes to research, innovation, and engagement goals. Most institutions rely on traditional measures of research activity such as external grant funding or number of publications. Although those metrics are important, they constitute only a fraction of faculty activity. Departments should create “Contribution to Mission” dashboards that display all of the activities faculty members do in a variety of areas, especially scholarly and research activity.



Effort Metrics

Track research effort metrics such as grant win rate, number of publications submitted, proportion of funding from different sources, and others that indicate where departments may need more support. Research outcome metrics alone will not help senior leaders identify departments that have the potential to increase their funding or other forms of productivity. In an era of more competitive research funding, understanding the leading indicators of research productivity is critical to evaluating departments and their faculty fairly.



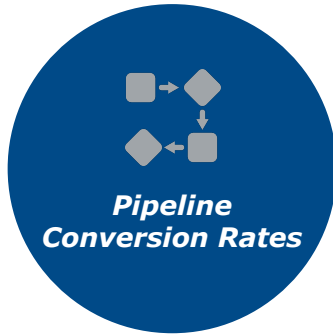
Post-Tenure Promotion

Create incentives to ensure that faculty members remain productive after receiving tenure. Many departmental leaders and deans struggle to engage a small, but not insignificant, subset of faculty whose engagement with the institution and scholarly activity declined after receiving tenure and never recovered. Though most institutions have post-tenure review processes, they rarely convert disengaged faculty into more productive researchers and instructors. Instead, departments should create clearer annual criteria and incentives that regularly motivate faculty to conduct activities that will lead to promotion in a timely fashion.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators

Cascading Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Goals



Scrutinize each stage in the faculty recruitment and hiring pipeline to determine where underrepresented candidates fall out. From the job ad to the offer letter, the faculty recruitment and hiring process can be riddled with implicit bias that maintains the status quo of largely white and male academic departments. More inclusive language in job ads and more objective criteria for evaluating candidates, two simple examples, can eliminate some bias and ensure that underrepresented candidates are not unfairly eliminated from consideration.



Identify disparities in faculty career advancement to target interventions and ensure equity in tenure and promotion. By looking at the time to tenure and promotion as well as the success rate at each of those stages by demographic group, department chairs, deans, and provosts can find inequities that indicate the presence of bias in career advancement procedures. Typical promotion processes lack concrete criteria. In the absence of clear guidance for faculty, in-group bias can leave underrepresented faculty out of informal communication of expectations and encouragement to seek promotion.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Ensuring Progress on Unit Goals

Sustaining Momentum Through Ongoing Evaluation

Hold an annual departmental review and planning meeting with representatives from the department's faculty, dean's office, and provost's office. This annual exercise should occur separately from budget request hearings or other previously scheduled meetings. This is an opportunity for academic leaders to openly and honestly discuss the department's efforts, challenges, and successes from the previous year while also giving an opportunity to set goals for the next year.

Minimize the self-reporting burden on departments by reducing ad hoc reporting requests in favor of a standard departmental data report. Administrators from deans to associate provosts to directors of institutional research ask department chairs for data and reports on their department's activity throughout the year, often causing duplicative effort for busy faculty leaders. A single, standard report or dashboard with the same data for all departments can streamline reporting for all stakeholders. A standard dashboard also creates a "single version of the truth" regarding departmental performance, reducing data quality debates that can derail goal-setting and action planning.

Prevent misconceptions about departmental performance by making evaluative data transparent across campus. Though some academic leaders may fear creating a competitive environment by sharing this data, the downsides of data opacity outweigh the risks of transparency. Transparent departmental data helps overcome false rumors about resource allocation decisions and can inspire faculty to improve on clear areas of underperformance compared to their peers.

Motivate improvement by tying departmental performance to discretionary resources. Because the provision of new faculty lines or new space occurs rarely for most departments, provosts can inspire progress on departmental goals aligned with strategic priorities by allocating all or a portion of travel funds, office supply funds, professional development resources, and other discretionary resources based on departmental performance. These small but consequential resources matter to faculty and keep their attention on mutually agreed-upon goals.

Create greater clarity around major resource decisions such as new faculty lines and space investments by explicitly using departmental performance metrics as part of the criteria. Annual requests for new faculty lines, space, or other major investments typically yield many requests, resulting in decisions that most department chairs and faculty do not fully understand. In many cases, they do not know the criteria for those decisions, leading to many questions and suspicion of favoritism. Using the data from departmental dashboards as important parts of the decision-making process can increase understanding and trust between faculty and academic leaders.

Focus departmental energy and effort on two to four specific goals each year. Departmental leaders and faculty must balance research, teaching, and service to their fields and institutions as they try to advance strategic priorities. They cannot try to improve on every metric on their dashboard with all of these responsibilities. Therefore, deans, provosts, and department chairs should select a small number of specific goals and corresponding actions that the department can realistically improve from one year to the next.



Introduction

The 'Strategy Gap' Stymieing Institutional Aspirations

CHAPTER

1

Defining Unit ‘Health’ in Higher Education

An Indispensable Concept Subject to Surprising Debate

The number of strategically and financially consequential activities that occur at the department level pushes provosts and other academic leaders to spend significant time trying to determine the health of those units. However, any effort to assess program health immediately confronts a definitional challenge. Though the dictionary may imply a binary between healthy and unhealthy, more nuanced views include too many factors for such a simple answer. The same challenge arises when evaluating institutions of higher education and their academic departments and programs.

Diagnosing Problems?



“Health is the state of being free from illness or injury”

Promoting Wellness?



World Health Organization

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and *not* merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

What Should We Measure?

In Public Health and Medicine...



100+ Community Health Indicators



100+ Physical Exam Elements



Four main “vital signs” used by medical professionals (body temperature, pulse, respiration rate, and blood pressure)

In Higher Education...

MOODY’S 65+ Financial Indicators



EAB 200+ Unit-Level Metrics



What are the core indicators of unit-level health?

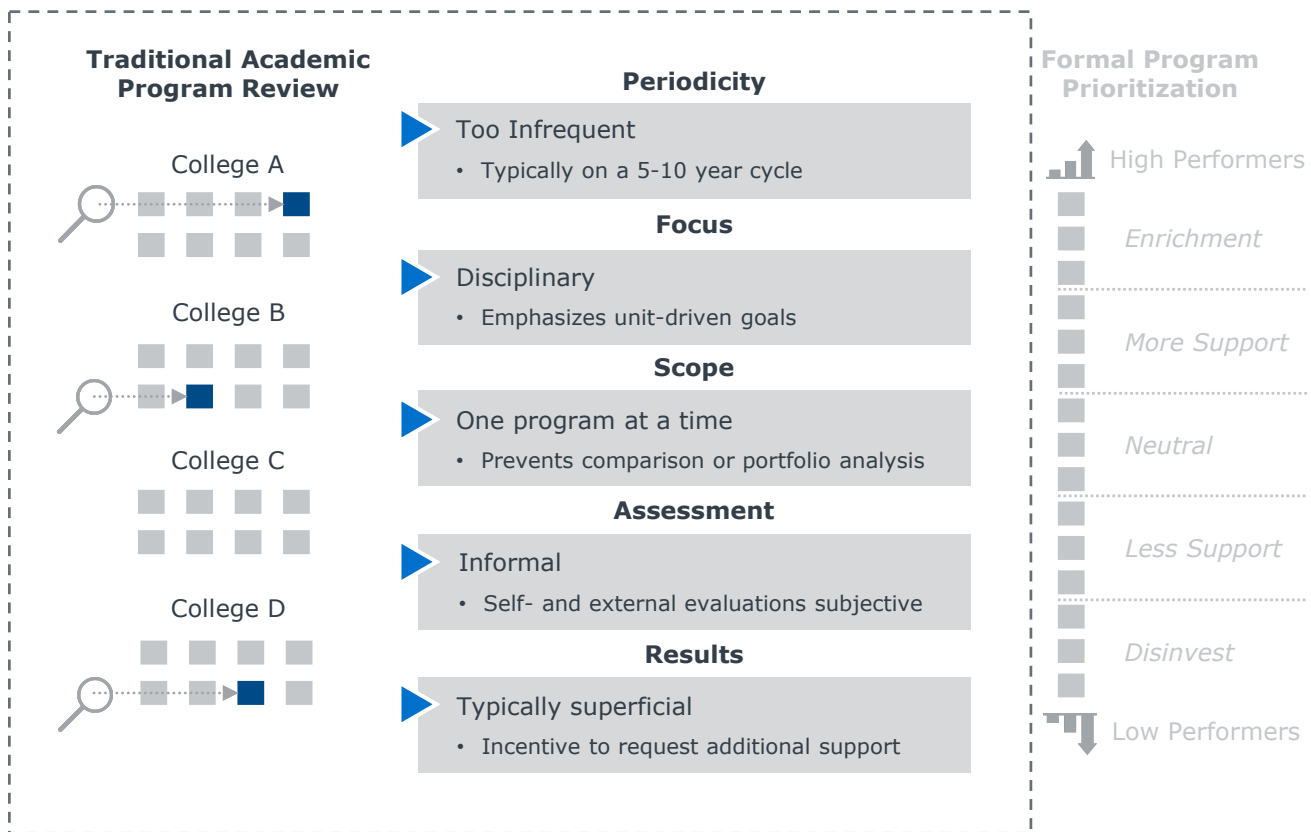
Institutions have no shortage of data, either from internal or external sources. Organizations such as Moody’s look at dozens of financial indicators alone. EAB’s own analysis of hundreds of institutions’ program reviews and prioritization processes reveals over two hundred possible unit-level metrics. The ubiquity of this data can lead to “paralysis by analysis,” and therefore more academic leaders have begun seeking a smaller, more manageable set of core health indicators for each of their academic programs.

Sources: Oxford English Dictionary; Constitution of the World Health Organization (1948); “Core Health Indicators,” World Health Organization; “A Practical Guide to Clinical Medicine,” University of California, San Diego.

Program Reviews Too Narrow in Scope

Discipline-Driven Process Doesn't Align Unit and Institutional Goals

Traditional efforts to measure departmental performance typically come in two forms. The first is periodic academic program review in which departments conduct self-assessments and invite external reviewers, typically other faculty in the discipline, to review the department. These exercises occur every five to ten years and focus on the health of a program as a part of its individual discipline. The assessments are agnostic to programs' contributions to institutional strategic goals.

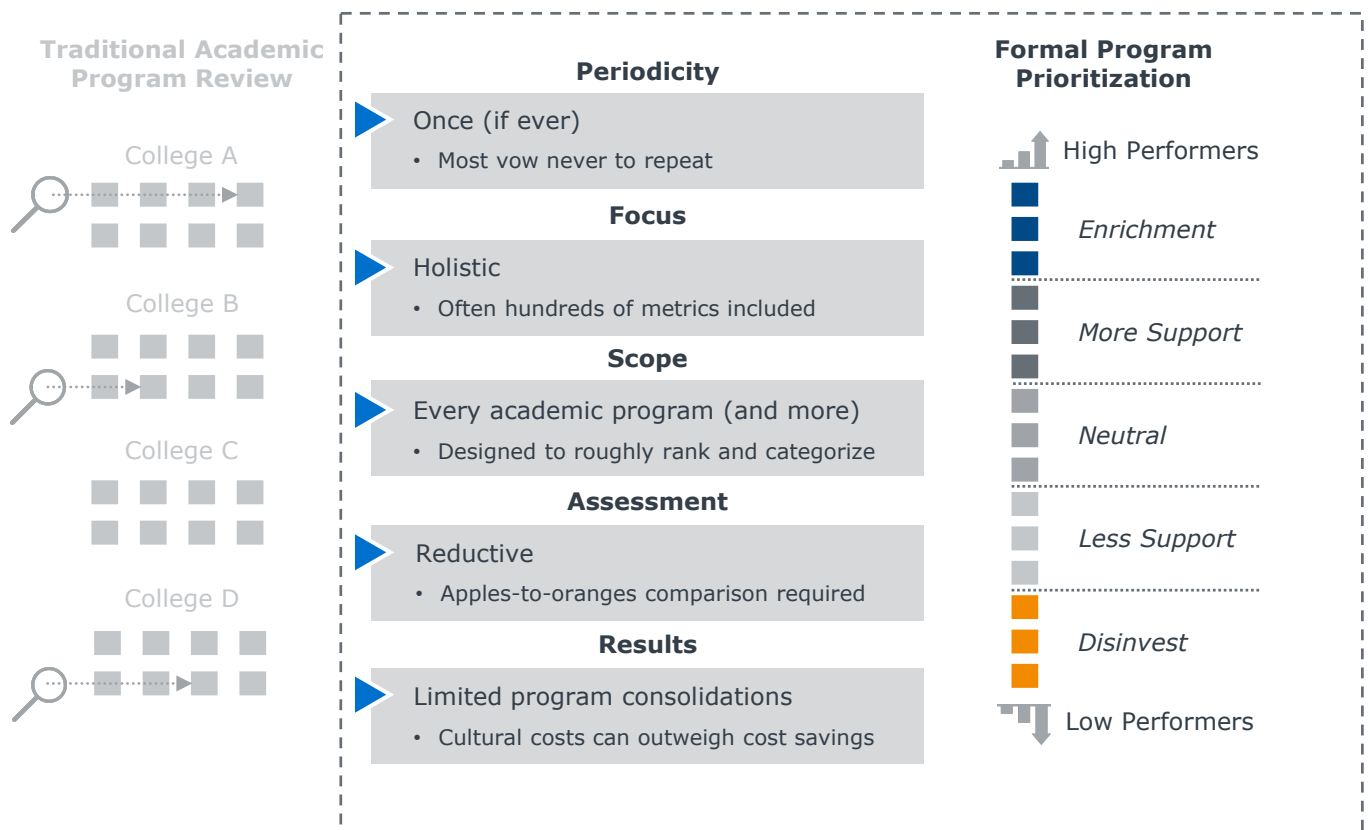


The scope of analysis remains at one program or perhaps small groups of programs at a time. Without a more holistic review of an institution's larger program portfolio, leaders miss opportunities for collaboration, shared services, and new interdisciplinary programs. Most institutions have templates for their program reviews, but self-assessment reports and external reviewers maintain significant flexibility and variability in their results, leading to challenges in evaluating the entire academic program portfolio. Finally, many provosts reveal that program reviews usually result in requests for more resources and minimal real change, especially in relation to institutional goals. As a result of these challenges, traditional academic program review does not create greater alignment between departmental and institutional priorities.

Program Prioritization Too Reductive

Forced Rank Ordering Leads to Controversial Comparison of Dissimilar Units

The second approach to program review, the program prioritization process (PPP) made popular by Robert Dickeson's book *Revitalizing Academic Programs and Services* (2010), guides institutions to rank all of their academic programs, and other units, into quintiles. The ultimate goal of this approach is to disinvest from the lowest-performing programs and redirect those resources to the highest performers. The ranking occurs by evaluating each program or service using the same set of metrics aligned with Dickeson's comprehensive listing of institutional activities.

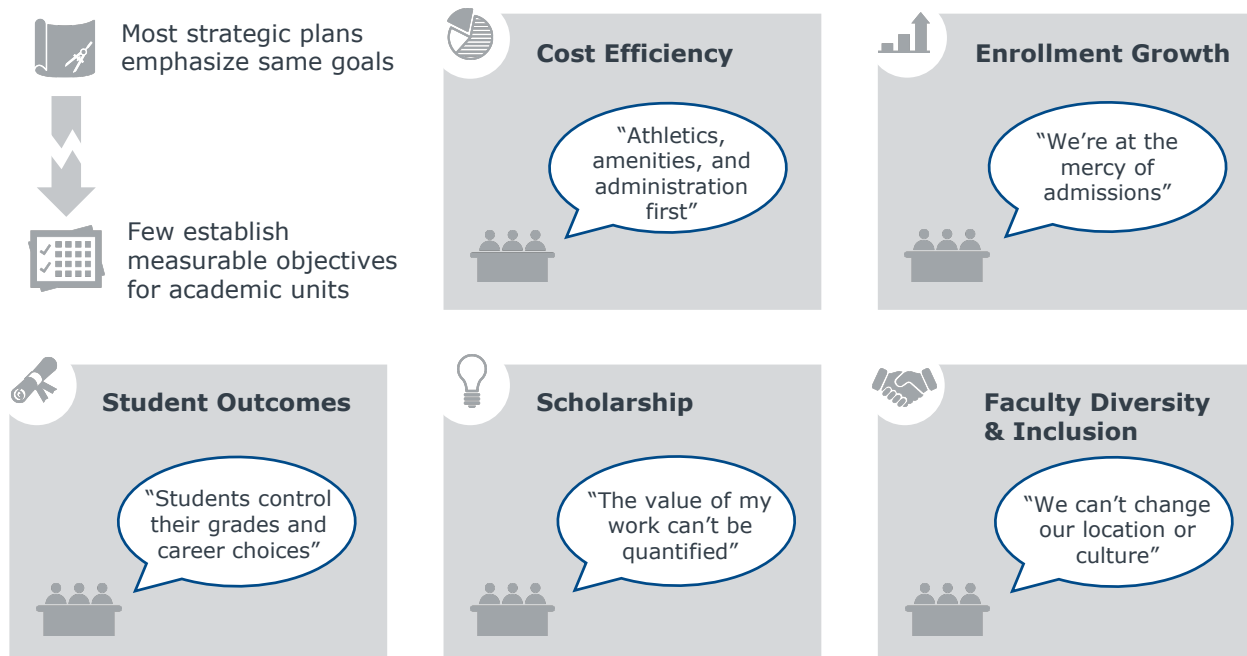


Many academic leaders who have used the PPP report that it has caused extensive conflict and suspicion among faculty and department leaders. PPP rarely results in significant cost savings or reallocation of resources according to EAB's analysis of several dozen institutions that have used the process. With the exception of institutions already in financial crises that have overcome resistance to cuts, program prioritization usually results in consolidation of some programs and shifting of faculty lines without elimination of costs or reinvestment in high-performing programs. It also fails to create the infrastructure to help department leaders and faculty review their performance, set goals for improvement, and plan actions aligned with those goals. Instead, departments and faculty perceive the use of data and evaluation as a means to cut programs or faculty lines.

Five Common Imperatives Driving Strategy

Core Financial and Mission-Oriented Priorities Should Inform Assessment

A more constructive and positive approach to assessing program health must emerge from an institution's mission and strategic priorities. Because of the important strategic and financial decisions that departments influence, academic leaders should align the evaluation of departmental health with the most common institutional priorities: cost efficiency, enrollment growth, student outcomes, scholarship, and faculty diversity and inclusion. Currently, most departments and their faculty have little insight into how their activities and decisions affect the long-term health of their institution.

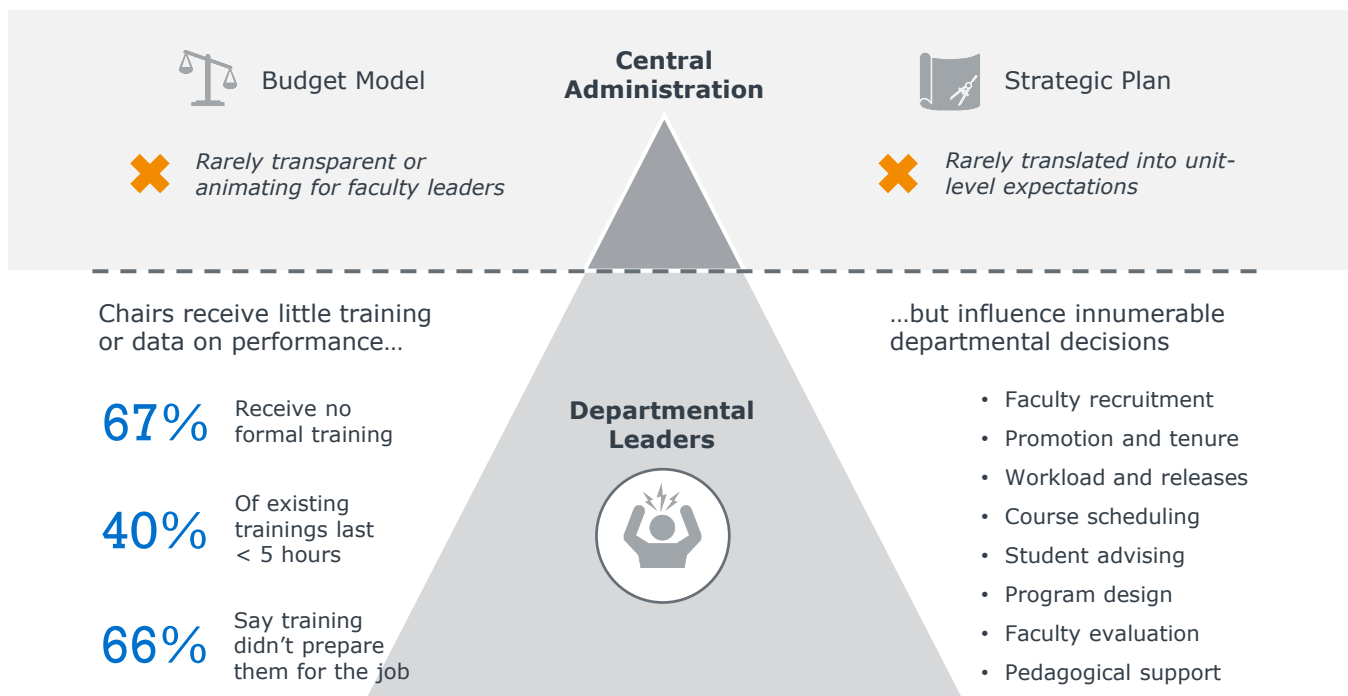


Many institutions attempt to evaluate their departments using broad institutional metrics directly applied to the department. This lack of translation leads to understandable objections and resistance among faculty and department leaders. They wonder why the academic enterprise should seek efficiencies when other, seemingly nonessential activities remain funded. Departments may feel that student enrollment is purely the responsibility of admissions or enrollment management. They may struggle to determine the balance between their responsibility and the student's responsibility for retention and completion. The myriad scholarly and creative activities make any effort to measure or evaluate them difficult and contentious. Faculty diversity and inclusion, a piece of larger institutional equity and inclusion goals, may engender broad support. However, high-level, vague goals related to the topic leave faculty wondering how they can contribute when their hiring pipelines seem narrow and their institution is in a less diverse location.

Lacking Local Leadership

Department Chairs Best-Positioned but Least Prepared to Lead Change

Because provosts and other central administrators have limited control over departmental decisions such as faculty hiring, promotion and tenure, and pedagogy, they rely on a small set of tools to inflect strategic goals. New activity-based budget models create incentives for enrollment growth and financial efficiency, but the incentives remain at the college level to give deans resource flexibility. Strategic planning exercises engage and excite the campus community. Unfortunately, both of these initiatives rarely touch academic program and departmental leaders responsible for so many financially and strategically consequential decisions.



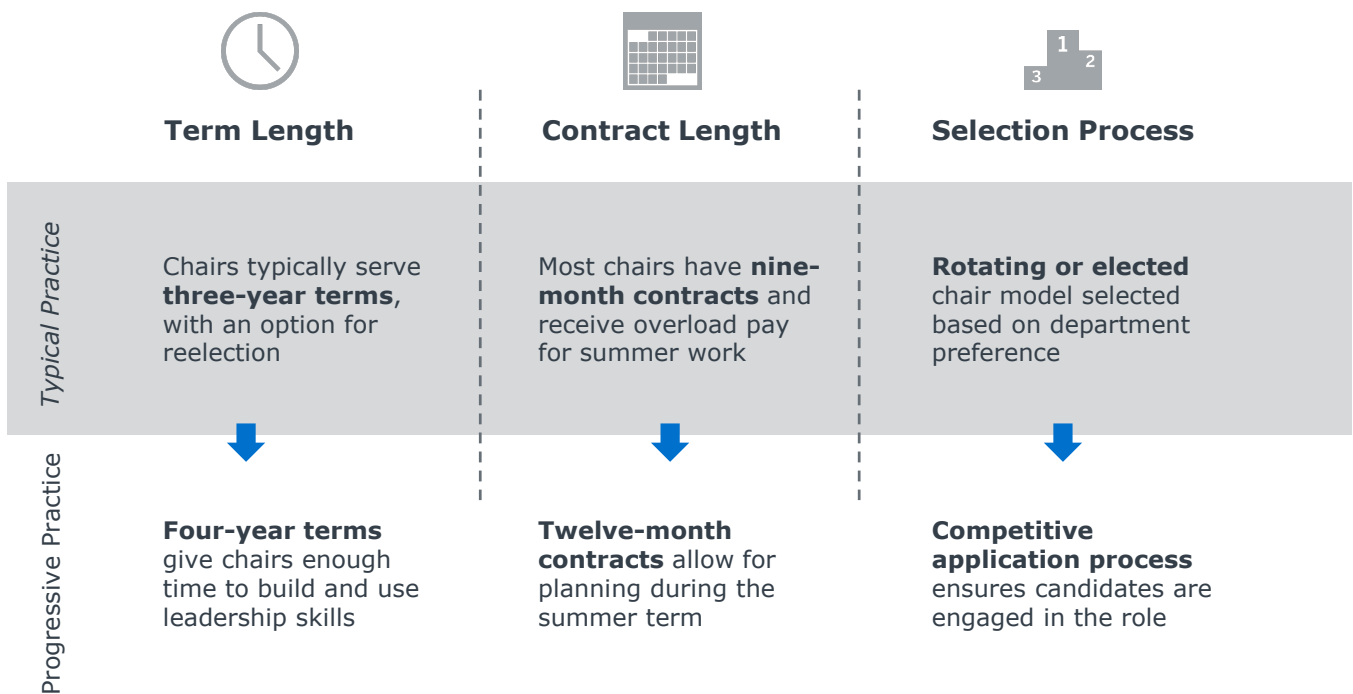
At the same time, department chairs receive minimal preparation for their roles, despite the importance of their responsibilities. These individuals influence decisions, such as faculty hiring and promotion, that can affect an institution's finances and strategy for decades. Without greater preparation for the role and information related to their contributions to institutional goals, the decisions chairs make on faculty recruitment, instructional assignments, and other resource allocation choices may remain narrowly focused on the academic discipline's needs.

Sources: Chair training data from survey of 336 department chairs by the University Council of Educational Administration's Center for the Study of Academic Leadership (2017); EAB interviews and analysis.

Elevating the Department Chair Role

Structural Changes Can Encourage Chairs to Deepen Leadership Skills

To remedy some of the challenges associated with departmental leadership, some institutions have considered altering the chair role in three ways. First, they have extended the standard term length from three years to four years (or more) to give the chair more time to develop leadership skills and enact changes. Second, some chairs now serve as twelve-month employees so that they can use the summer for administrative work and planning instead of compressing their efforts into the fall and spring semesters.



Finally, the selection process for chairs typically relies on departmental elections or a rotating assignment based on seniority. This system can lead to disengaged chairs, especially in broader institutional strategy and leadership. A competitive application process with faculty input on the ultimate selection instead helps identify candidates who have shown an active interest in the administrative and leadership requirements of the role.

Clock Builders vs. Time Tellers

Lasting Results Require Great Systems, Not Just Great Leaders

The increasingly frequent turnover of academic leaders compounds the challenge of connecting institutional and departmental priorities. Assuming that a president, provost, dean, and department chair all serve their average term lengths, the likelihood that these four will overlap for four years is 7 percent. This lack of long-term leadership alignment makes change management efforts even more difficult to sustain. As a result, many institutions rely on the occasional star department chair or other academic leader to spearhead change, only to lose that momentum when that individual departs.

7 Average tenure of college and university **presidents**, in years

4 Average tenure of college and university **provosts**, in years

6 Average tenure of college and university **deans**, in years

4 Average tenure of department **chairs**, in years

7% Likelihood that all four individuals will overlap in service for 4 years



A Lesson from High-Performing Organizations

“Having a great idea or being a charismatic visionary leader is ‘time telling’; building a company that can prosper far beyond the tenure of any single leader and through multiple product life cycles is ‘clock building.’ Those who build visionary companies tend to be clock builders.”

*Jim Collins
Built to Last: Successful Habits
of Visionary Companies*

In contrast, high-performing organizations build the infrastructure to ensure regular reviews of internal organizational health. Author Jim Collins calls these leaders and their organizations “clock builders” because their continuous improvement infrastructure sustains health even as leaders come and go. Clock builders stand in contrast to so-called “time tellers” who rely on a single charismatic leader or one transformative idea to carry the organization into the future regardless of infrastructure. Building mechanisms for regular and ongoing departmental evaluation and goal-setting will prepare institutions of higher education to meet challenges and opportunities over the long term.

Sources: ACE, The American College President, 2012; ACE, Chief Academic Officer Survey, 2013; AACSB, Deans Survey, 2014; University Council for Educational Administration, 2016; Jim Collins, *Built to Last*, 1994; EAB interviews and analysis.

A Two-Part Effort

From One-Time Initiatives to Continuous Improvement

Fostering continuous improvement requires a two-part strategy. First, academic leaders must ensure that academic departments have level-appropriate performance indicators cascaded from the institution's strategic priorities. These indicators should inform departmental action and goal setting.

1 Translate Institutional Goals into Departmental Performance Indicators



- Accurately measure departmental performance
- Motivate and direct departmental action
- Identify opportunities for improvement

2 Sustain Momentum Through Ongoing Evaluation



- Ensure ongoing improvement
- Inform short- and long-term resource decisions
- Create continuity through leadership transition

Second, having the right data at the right level is not enough to ensure sustainable improvement. Academic leaders must build the processes to regularly review departmental data and progress on identified goals. Regular data collection and review creates a more informed set of academic leaders who take a strategic approach to both short- and long-term resource decisions, from allocating travel funding to assigning new space or faculty lines. These two aspects of institutional infrastructure require significant change management efforts, but they can help secure the long-term health of an institution's academic enterprise.



How Does Unit Activity Impact Institutional Priorities?

Translating Institutional Goals into Departmental Key Performance Indicators

CHAPTER

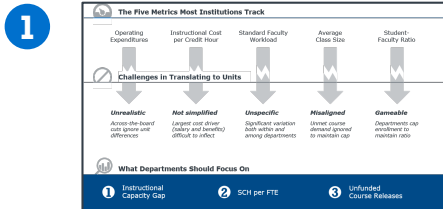
2

- Cost Efficiency
- Enrollment Growth
- Student Outcomes
- Scholarship
- Faculty Diversity and Inclusion

A Guide to This Section

Understanding How to Use This Resource

This section of *Academic Vital Signs* is divided into several subsections, organized by the major institutional priorities: cost efficiency, enrollment growth, student outcomes, scholarship, and faculty diversity and inclusion. The graphic below explains the organization of this section in more detail.



2

An Easy Checkup on Productivity
Measure the Difference Between Potential and Actual Course Offerings

One common theme among the earliest departmental analyses is that they truly are academic "total quality" or quality assurance departments can use to decide whether they are doing what they need to do in order to meet their goals. The University of Michigan Faculty of Social Sciences developed one such metrics to check up on faculty productivity, not a simple excel spreadsheet. Over the course of all full-time faculty and research (FTE) in the department above the number of courses it could theoretically teach given its contracted workload?

Category	Value
Potential Faculty Capacity (FTE) Calculation	25
Actual Faculty Capacity (FTE) Calculation	15
Capacity Gap	10

Capacity Gap: Inside Department and Dean Resource Allocation Decisions

- Degree number indicates capacity to add courses or reduce research or
- Lack of faculty number indicates need to cancel courses or increase adjunct teaching
- Dean requests FTE department in approving the course schedule

Institutional vs. Departmental Metrics:

What are the most common institution-level metrics? How can members translate them into more useful metrics for departments?

Analysis Case Profiles:

How can institutions generate and use department-level analyses to assess their contribution to institutional goals?

3

Analysis: Difference between standard workload and number of courses taught

- 1. Data Sources: Personnel systems and research (including tenure data)
- 2. Measurement: Review Past performance; goal of 2.00
- 3. Measurement Considerations: Risk
- 4. Time Horizon: Term by term

Diagnostic Questions

- 1. Are a significant portion of faculty teaching under standard load compared to benchmark? (Faculty load that department faculty teach vs. faculty under standard workload)
- 2. Review service expectations in department to determine if a significant portion of faculty are released for service.
- 3. Review faculty teaching to determine if a significant portion of faculty are released for service.
- 4. Review workload to determine if a significant portion of faculty are released for service.
- 5. Review workload to determine if a significant portion of faculty are released for service.

Category	Value
Standard Faculty Workload	2.00
Actual Faculty Workload	1.50
Gap	0.50

4

First Step - Is Your Degree Audit Up to Date?
Align Schedules with Students' Degree Needs Each Term

The defined teaching capacity calculation tells departments whether they are aligning schedules with student demand. The demand is ultimately based on the courses students need to fulfil their graduation requirements. The degree audit is one of the most important tools of the information office or academic advisors. Unfortunately, many degree audits become stale and outdated. It is important to regularly update and analyze to determine which courses departments urgently need to provide.

The Typical Degree Audit:

Category	Value
Requirements met	85%
Requirements not met	15%

Three Steps to Align Course Offerings with Student Need

1. Review degree audit to determine if a significant portion of students are not meeting requirements.
2. Review degree audit to determine if a significant portion of students are not meeting requirements.
3. Review degree audit to determine if a significant portion of students are not meeting requirements.

Category	Value
Requirements met	85%
Requirements not met	15%

Root Cause Diagnostics:

What analytical questions should department chairs and other academic leaders ask if departmental metrics reveal underlying concerns?

Resource and Practice Recommendations:

What EAB resources and/or best practices exist to help departmental leaders remedy root-cause problems?

The first item mentioned above provides EAB's analysis of the most common institutional metrics and the problems with using those metrics at the department level according to a set of criteria outlined on the following page. It also previews several more department-appropriate analyses. Second, case profiles illustrate examples of how institutions can run and use those analyses at the department level. The third item includes root cause diagnostic guides to help academic leaders pinpoint the reason(s) for underperformance on a given analysis. Finally, resource and practice recommendations follow the diagnostic to help guide institutional action after diagnosing the cause of underperformance.

Designing Appropriate Performance Indicators

Cascading Institutional Strategy to Level-Appropriate Goals and Metrics

For each institutional strategic goal, there is a common set of performance metrics familiar to most university leaders. They appear in strategic plans, on institutional research websites, and in annual reports. While these metrics help ensure presidents, boards, and major donors that the university is improving on mission priorities, institutions should avoid overreliance on them at the department level. When provosts, presidents, and boards evaluate departments on institutional metrics, some departments may act in self-defeating ways—or avoid any action at all.

Seven Criteria for Selecting Departmental Metrics



Aligned:

Do department-level changes in the metric inflect the relevant institutional goal(s)?



Measurable:

Can the institution collect longitudinal information about the metric?



Actionable:

Does the department have direct influence over this metric?



Realistic/fair:

Does the metric control for variables outside departmental influence?



Time-bound:

Can the department significantly influence the metric in the given time frame?



Simplified:

Is the metric easy to understand and not an amalgamation of many calculations?



Difficult to game:

Does the metric eliminate “perverse incentives” to avoid true improvement?

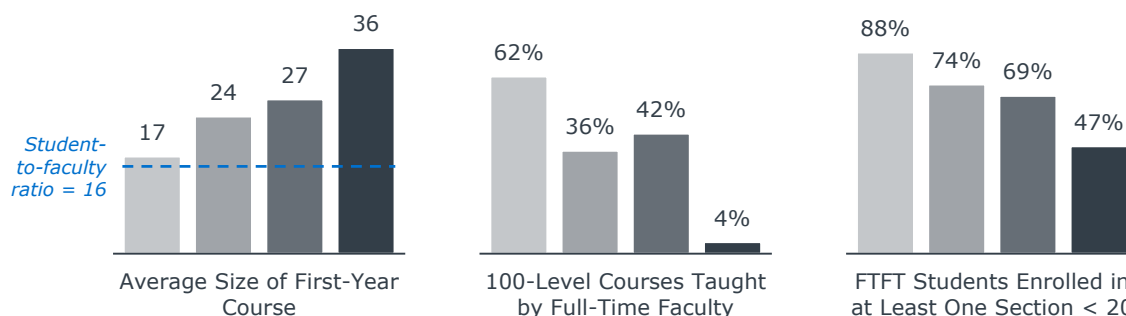
Above is a list of questions all university leaders should ask as they choose metrics for departments. Using those criteria, EAB research identified fourteen metrics and analyses departments should regularly review to align with institutional mission and strategy. The analyses are grouped into five strategic areas that are common to nearly every institution: **cost efficiency, enrollment growth, student outcomes, scholarship, and faculty diversity and inclusion.**

The Pitfalls of Misaligned Goal-Setting

Looking Beyond Untested Assumptions About Student-Faculty Ratio

Student-faculty ratio is one example of a goal that is not simplified or aligned at the department level. Institutions cite their ratios in university rankings, institutional reports, and countless admissions materials and presentations as a proxy for quality. To the prospective student or donor, a ratio of 16 students to every faculty member sounds like undergraduates will spend their time in highly interactive, seminar-style classrooms of only about 16 students. A closer look at the data, however, suggests otherwise.

At Four Public Institutions Reporting the Same Student-Faculty Ratio to IPEDS...



Academic Performance Solutions in Brief



EAB's Academic Performance Solutions (APS) is a solution designed to empower academic and financial leaders with the department-specific performance and cost data—as well as reliable peer benchmarks—they need to make more effective decisions. Deans and department chairs at APS member institutions have web-based access to snapshot analyses of program performance and costs across colleges, departments, instructors, and courses, in addition to discipline-level benchmarks. The AAF members that currently participate in APS can access their platform data to drill into many of the metrics highlighted in this publication. For those interested in learning more, visit eab.com/aps.

Student-faculty ratio can overlook wide differences in the student experience, according to EAB's analysis of four institutions' course registration data through the Academic Performance Solutions (APS) benchmarking collaborative. Four institutions reporting the same ratio to the federal IPEDS database showed significant differences in the average size of a first-year course, whether or not that course was taught by a full-time faculty member and whether the average student will experience a small seminar at all in the first year. Looking at these three data points instead of the student-faculty ratio gives departments truly actionable information about the experiences that matter to the students they hope to recruit and retain.

Sources: EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) data; EAB interviews and analysis.



Cost Efficiency

Key Departmental Performance Indicators

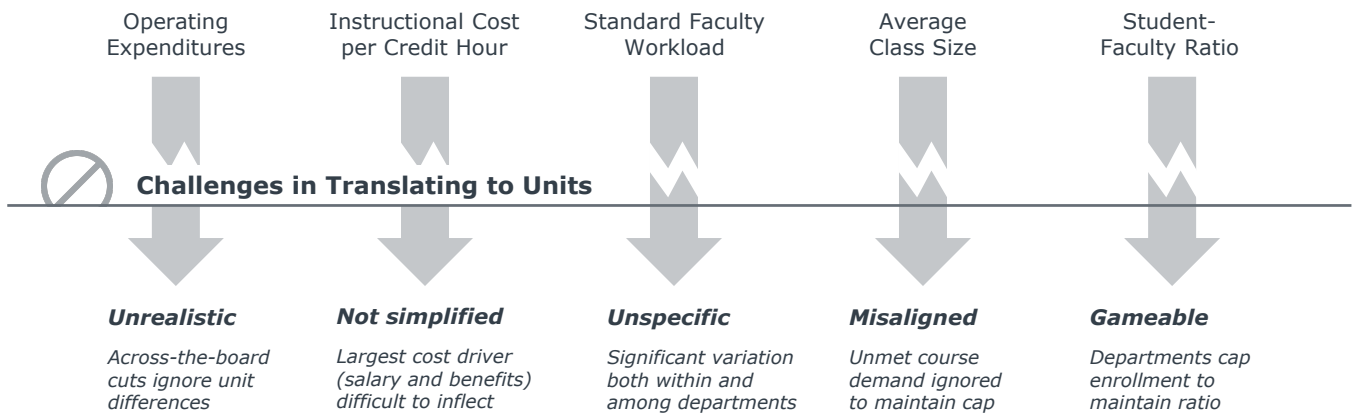
- Instructional Capacity Gap
- Student Credit Hours per Faculty FTE
- Unfunded Course Releases

Cascading Cost Efficiency

Most strategic plans do not explicitly state cost efficiency as a goal, but the desire to stay financially sound drives (or should drive) almost every decision on campus. Operating expenditures and instructional costs are monitored every day by provosts and CFO, but departments usually cannot (and should not) change their most important driver: faculty salary and benefits. Departments could monitor standard faculty workload or average class size instead, but these metrics obscure opportunities for improvement among outliers and more nuanced, granular considerations.



The Five Metrics Most Institutions Track



What Departments Should Focus On

- 1 Instructional Capacity Gap
- 2 SCH per FTE
- 3 Unfunded Course Releases

Finally, university rankings incentivize maintaining or decreasing the student-faculty ratio, but this ratio reveals very little about the quality of instruction or the student experience. Instead, departments should focus on three analyses: the **instructional capacity gap**, **student credit hours per faculty FTE**, and **unfunded course releases**. The following pages include more detail on each of these analyses.

An Easy Checkup on Productivity

Measure the Difference Between Potential and Actual Course Offerings

One common theme among the smartest departmental analyses is that they truly are academic “vital signs,” or quick checkups departments can use to decide whether they should invest their time and effort in extensive diagnostic analyses. The **University of Victoria**’s Faculty¹ of Social Sciences developed one such analysis to check up on faculty productivity using a simple Excel spreadsheet. Given the workload of all full-time faculty and sessionals (adjuncts), is the department above or below the number of courses it could theoretically teach, given its contracted workload?

Defined Teaching Capacity (DTC) Calculation	
Full-time faculty capacity (workload x FTE ²)	63
+ Part-time faculty/GTA ³ capacity	25
- Unfunded teaching releases	(8)
+ Courses funded by grants/other sources	1
Defined Teaching Capacity	81
Courses Offered Calculation	
Courses offered by full-time faculty	56
+ Courses offered by part-time faculty/GTAs	19
Total Courses Offered	75
Difference Between DTC and Offerings	6



Capacity Gap Guides Department and Dean Resource Allocation Decisions

- Positive number indicates capacity to add sections or reduce reliance on adjuncts
- Zero or negative number indicates need to cancel courses or increase adjunct funding
- Dean monitors DTC dashboard in approving the course schedule

The resulting “defined teaching capacity,” which also accounts for course releases and postgraduate student instructors, tells the department whether it should request more faculty lines or part-time faculty funding, especially if it is teaching well above its defined capacity. If the number of courses taught is far below capacity, the department may be able to reduce costs by hiring fewer adjuncts. The department may also be able to launch new courses or add sections of high-demand courses to increase enrollments. This analysis is also an example of how deans should monitor departmental data to increase rigor and transparency in decision-making. Deans at the University of Victoria use the analysis to approve the course schedule.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Instructional Capacity Gap

2

SCH per FTE

3

Unfunded Course Releases

1) The equivalent of a college or school in a U.S. institution.
 2) Full-time equivalent (number of full-time faculty in unit).
 3) Graduate teaching assistants.

Manage to SCH per Faculty FTE Targets

Balancing Productivity Expectations to Meet Institutional Enrollment Goals

Another measure of efficiency and productivity in teaching is the ratio of student credit hours taught to full-time faculty. Departments can set yearly goals for this ratio to help determine if they are meeting student need for courses. However, institutions that set a one-size-fits-all baseline (e.g., requiring all departments to teach 300 student credit hours per faculty member per year) rarely gain insight about capacity. Usually, large departments far exceed the baseline, while small departments (or those with pedagogical or accreditor requirements to teach small courses) cannot possibly meet it.

Typical Pitfalls in Student Credit Hour (SCH) Goal-Setting



Across-the-Board Baselines

Ignore departmental differences and give smaller units no clear pathway for year-to-year improvement



Standardized Individual Targets

Assume all faculty have the same skills and interests in research, service, and (graduate and undergraduate) teaching

Principles of Department-Aligned SCH per FTE Goals



Benchmark to Similar Departments

The **University of Tennessee-Chattanooga** sets course load targets based on SCH production per faculty at similar departments at peer institutions (e.g. in size, location, and mission) to ensure they are realistic for the discipline



Align with Institutional Enrollment Goals

The **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** cascades department targets from college-level SCH targets based on ensuring 80% of students will achieve 30 SCH per year

Instead, institutions such as the **University of Tennessee-Chattanooga** give each department its own baseline for credit hour production, based on Delaware Cost Study benchmarks. Critically, they do not set goals for individual faculty, who may be unable to balance high teaching loads with research and other obligations. Instead, most departments use a per-faculty average and investigate further into individual faculty course loads only if the average is well below benchmarks. Ideally, deans should set baselines that align with institutional goals. The **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** provost's office sets departmental credit-hour production goals based on making sure students can take 30 credit hours per year, which is a student success goal.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Instructional Capacity Gap

2

SCH per FTE

3

Unfunded Course Releases

Remedying Low SCH to FTE Ratios

Three Potential Opportunities for Credit-Hour Growth

Increasing the average credit hours per faculty FTE does not require increasing the standard workload, forcing all faculty to teach large classes, or adding degree requirements. Instead, institutions have found a few simple ways to meet their goals. For departments that frequently cancel low-enrolled courses, chairs can build out “shadow sections” of high-demand courses in the registration system which automatically open when another course fails to meet the enrollment minimum. Registrars can quickly open these prerecorded “shadow sections” for registration.

✘ *High cancellations due to low enrollment?*

✔ **Assign Faculty to “Shadow Sections”**

Departments propose a lower-division, high-enrollment section to fill faculty load if course with low predicted demand fails to meet minimum

Shadow sections are prerecorded in registration and personnel systems

✘ *Few general education courses or electives?*

✔ **Launch New Non-Major Courses**

Design electives or general education courses to meet the needs of students in popular majors

Alter existing lower-division courses to include distribution requirements codified by gen ed curriculum

✘ *Capacity-constrained, high-enrollment courses?*

✔ **Increase Course Cap in Large Sections**

Consider allowing smaller cap sizes in upper division as trade-off for higher section caps in historically large courses

Online and hybrid formats can help to accommodate excess demand without substantial workload increases

Departments that just teach a few, major-specific, courses can launch new general education courses or electives. To avoid creating redundant courses that add curricular complexity, these courses should target programs or courses that are currently overfilled and need the extra capacity. Some departments choose to modify existing courses so that they meet distribution requirements (e.g., to meet a writing-intensive or cultural competence requirement) rather than launching an entirely new course. Finally, departments that currently have unmet demand and long wait lists in large courses should consider increasing the maximum enrollment in these courses. Some departments choose to pair this with a reduced cap in small courses to limit the impact on faculty.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Instructional Capacity Gap

2

SCH per FTE

3

Unfunded Course Releases

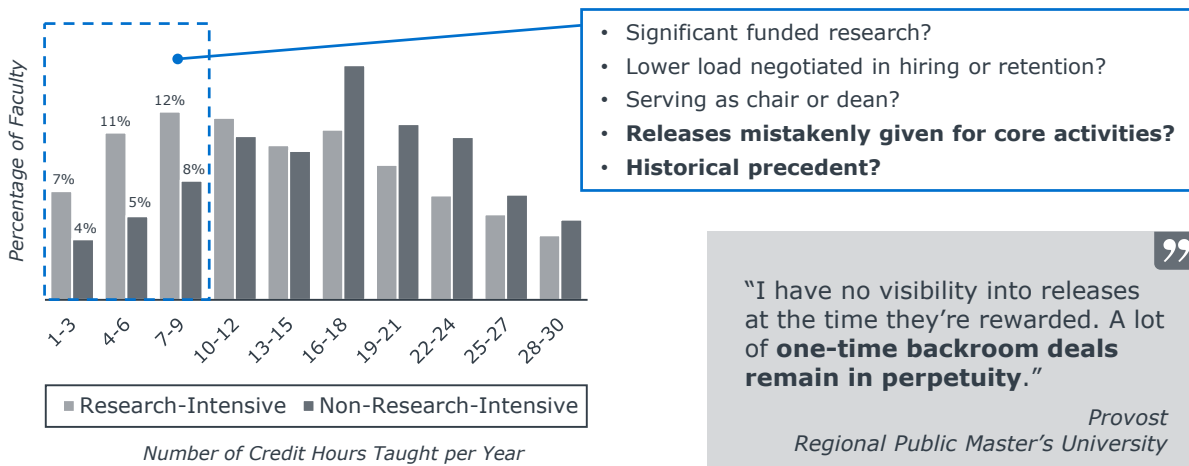
What's Behind Release Proliferation?

Without Tracking, Impossible to Determine if Course Releases Are Justified

A ratio of credit hours to full-time faculty helps the department benchmark its teaching productivity, but says little about the actual course loads of tenure-line faculty (since a high portion of part-time faculty can raise the average considerably). To gain more insight into teaching workloads, many now assess course release assignments. Departments rarely track or report on unfunded releases, and at some institutions, deans and provosts can also release faculty without chair involvement in the process. As a result, chairs are often unaware of how much release time is given or to which faculty.

26% of Tenure-Line Faculty¹ Teach 9 or Fewer FCH²/Year

Analysis of data from EAB's Academic Performance Solutions Benchmarking Collaborative (n=36 institutions)



The proliferation of releases itself is not necessarily concerning. About three-quarters of faculty teach a standard course load or higher, according to EAB’s APS benchmarking data. What is concerning is the lack of transparency into *why* the remaining 26% of faculty have lower loads. Some receive releases to manage a high burden of research or committee service work. But other faculty keep taking releases based on intended one-time “deals” with the provost or dean to take a lower load or for core responsibilities such as teaching and advising. Departments should regularly survey faculty or review teaching records to determine whether they could reduce course releases to use instructional resources more efficiently.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Instructional Capacity Gap

2

SCH per FTE

3

Unfunded Course Releases

1) 29% at research-intensive and 17% at non-research-intensive institutions.
 2) Faculty credit hours (typically, one semester-long course is 3 FCH).

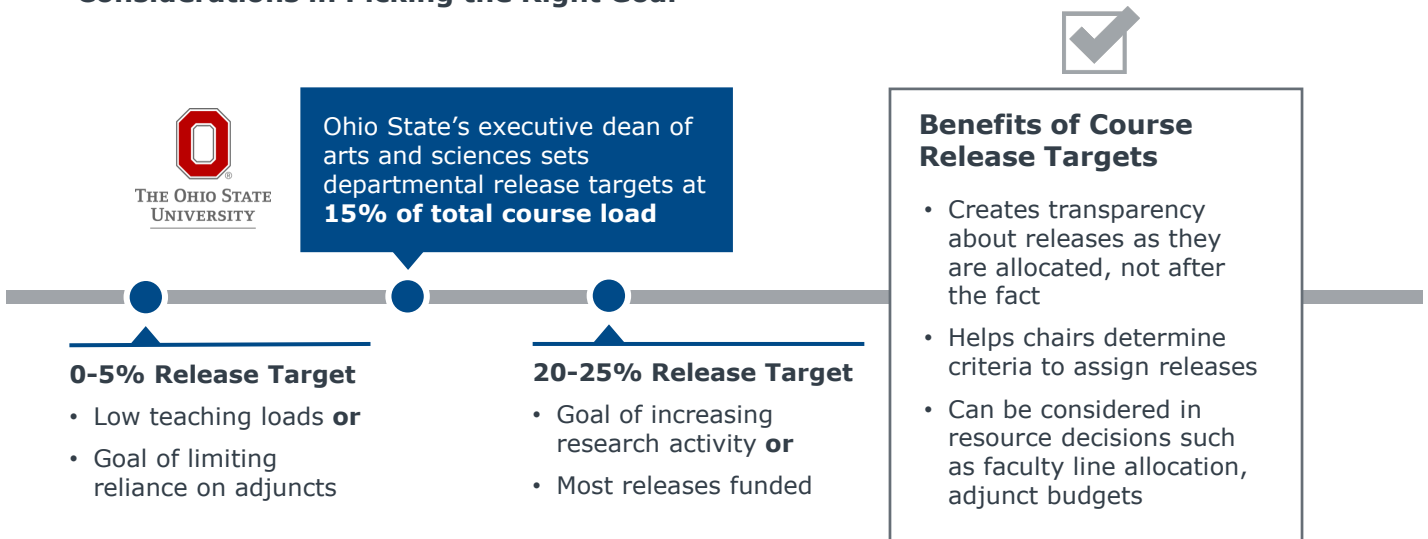
Source: EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) data; EAB interviews and analysis.

Target Course Release Percentages

Minimize Faculty Time Allocated to Unfunded Releases

To balance meeting student demand and research obligations, the College of Arts and Sciences at **The Ohio State University** sets yearly maximum targets for course releases as a percentage of total faculty course load. Most departments' goal is 15% of total course load allocated to release time, but the appropriate target varies as a function of departmental mission and staffing. A more lenient target makes sense in departments aiming to increase research productivity under a high teaching load. Chairs and deans should collaboratively determine the right release goal for each department.

Considerations in Picking the Right Goal



To track course releases and assess goal performance, the executive dean's office surveys departments on planned releases and compares the survey results to the record of completed courses and their instructors to identify discrepancies. The Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State found that course release targets encouraged chairs to approve fewer releases and to create clearer criteria and processes for release allocation.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Instructional Capacity Gap

2

SCH per FTE

3

Unfunded Course Releases

Instructional Capacity Gap

Analysis: Difference between standard workload and number of courses taught

- **Data Source:** personnel systems and research tracking systems (for funded release data)
- **Benchmarking Source:** past performance; goal of zero gap
- **Measurement Considerations:** N/A
- **Time Horizon:** term by term



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-High**

Institutions need to integrate disparate systems to correctly allocate faculty workload (standard and actual) and funded releases to departments.

Diagnostic Questions

Is a significant portion of faculty teaching under standard load compared to benchmarks?

Service burden may overwhelm faculty time or faculty lines may have outpaced enrollment

- Review service expectations in department to determine if a significant portion of faculty is released for service
- Identify short-term gaps in faculty teaching (e.g., several faculty nearing tenure decision) to determine need for temporary adjunct request
- Review enrollment trend to determine whether the department size has lagged behind declining enrollment and whether faculty in the department can participate in interdisciplinary or cross-department teaching to make up load

If the instructional capacity gap is positive: Does the department teach multiple small sections of the same courses or courses that fulfill the same degree requirement(s)?

Opportunities for course consolidation or curricular streamlining

- Identify courses for consolidation or redesign
- Review space utilization data to determine whether a course space request is needed

Have part-time faculty and graduate assistants consistently taught a significant portion of the department's courses over several terms?

Part-time faculty reductions may free up additional budget or be replaced by full-time faculty lines

- Review enrollment trend to determine whether a faculty line request is needed

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload
and Course
Assignments



Full-Time
Faculty Line
Allocation

Average SCH per Faculty FTE by Department

Analysis: Total number of SCH taught divided by total number of full-time faculty

- **Data Source:** personnel and registration systems
- **Benchmarking Source(s):** like departments at peer institutions; similar departments at the same institution; past performance
- **Measurement Considerations:** how to assign SCH in team-taught courses
- **Time Horizon:** one year (to allow for single-term releases and necessary leave)



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-Low**

Data is distributed across two systems but relatively straightforward to integrate.

Diagnostic Questions

Is the ratio of student credit hours to faculty lowered by a proliferation of small courses?

Small courses, if not pedagogically necessary, may represent opportunities to add capacity

- Use wait-list data to identify excess demand for filled courses
- Consider raising course cap in large courses in exchange for reducing minimum needed for small courses

Are courses regularly canceled due to low enrollment?

After cancellations, faculty often wait one term or more to "make up" workload

- For faculty assigned to small courses, assign faculty to an additional section of a larger course that can be triggered if the small course is canceled due to low enrollment

Do larger courses in the department consistently have more than 20% of their seats unfilled?

Class size may be misaligned with demand, or students do not know which courses to enroll in

- Revisit degree plans and curricula to ensure courses are aligned with demand
- Work with academic advisors to ensure students are pathed into the appropriate courses

Do part-time faculty teach a significant portion of the department's courses compared to peer benchmarks?

Low SCH to FTE ratio combined with high part-time faculty suggests overreliance on adjuncts

- Consider reducing adjunct budget, potentially in exchange for research equipment, conference stipends, and other resources

Is the ratio of SCH to full-time faculty consistently higher than peer benchmarks?

Departmental enrollment may have outpaced faculty staffing

- Consider requesting additional adjunct funding, with potential to convert into a full-time faculty line if need is consistent over several terms

Is a significant portion of faculty load released compared to other departments at the institution?

Department may be allocating too much time to noninstructional activities

- Review course release percentage to determine whether to reduce the number of releases allocated to departmental faculty

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload and Course Assignments



Full-Time Faculty Line Allocation



Part-Time Faculty Budget

Percentage of Teaching Load Released

Analysis: Percentage of full-time faculty load allocated to course releases

- **Data Source:** supplement research and personnel systems with faculty survey
- **Benchmarking Source:** set a target percentage based on standard workload
- **Measurement Considerations:** whether to count the dean or chair's release(s) as part of the departmental total
- **Time Horizon:** term by term



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **High**

Most institutions do not have a database for recording unfunded releases and will need to request information directly from faculty.

Diagnostic Questions

Are most course releases necessary/justified? (Funded releases, post-tenure leave, junior faculty, etc.)

On a term-by-term basis, departments occasionally need additional temporary coverage

- Request temporary funding for part-time faculty to cover the released workload until more faculty are working a full load
- Ensure reasons for course releases, and desired outcomes, are documented

Are releases typically offered as a reward for completing research products?

Departments that use releases as an incentive typically find this practice unsustainable over time unless policies are in place to ensure that only a few releases are given out as incentives per term

- Develop clear guidelines for release allocation based on quantity and quality of research outputs

Are many faculty released below load by contractual agreement during hiring or retention negotiations?

Without transparency around contractual load, release proliferation often goes unchecked

- Ensure that all releases are recorded and tracked centrally to clarify actual faculty workload (vs. standard); consider requesting new faculty lines or additional adjunct funding

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload
and Course
Assignments



Part-Time
Faculty Budget



Full-Time
Faculty Line
Allocation

Is Your Degree Audit Up to Date?



Align Schedules with Students' Degree Needs Each Term

The defined teaching capacity calculation tells departments whether they are aligning schedules with student demand. That “demand” is ultimately based on the courses students need to fulfill their graduation requirements. The degree audit is one of the most important sources of that information both for students and departments. Unfortunately, many degree audit systems are out of date, unclear about the order of courses, and rarely analyzed to determine which courses departments urgently need to provide.

The Typical Degree Audit:

- ✘ No process for regularly updating requirements in audit systems
- ✘ Requirements rarely listed in optimal order for student progress
- ✘ Unclear which courses are needed urgently for students near graduation



Three Steps to Align Course Offerings with Student Need

- ✓ Departments meet annually with registrar to update audit
- ✓ Degree audits reflect an optimal course order for timely graduation
- ✓ Students near graduation given priority registration in required courses

Updated Degree Audits Steer Capacity Planning

Degree Audit Analysis for Fall Term <i>(illustrative)</i>	Current Seats in Course	Students Needing Course	Unmet Seat Demand
Chemistry 400	15	10	0
Chemistry 350	25	35	10
Chemistry 101	100	150	50

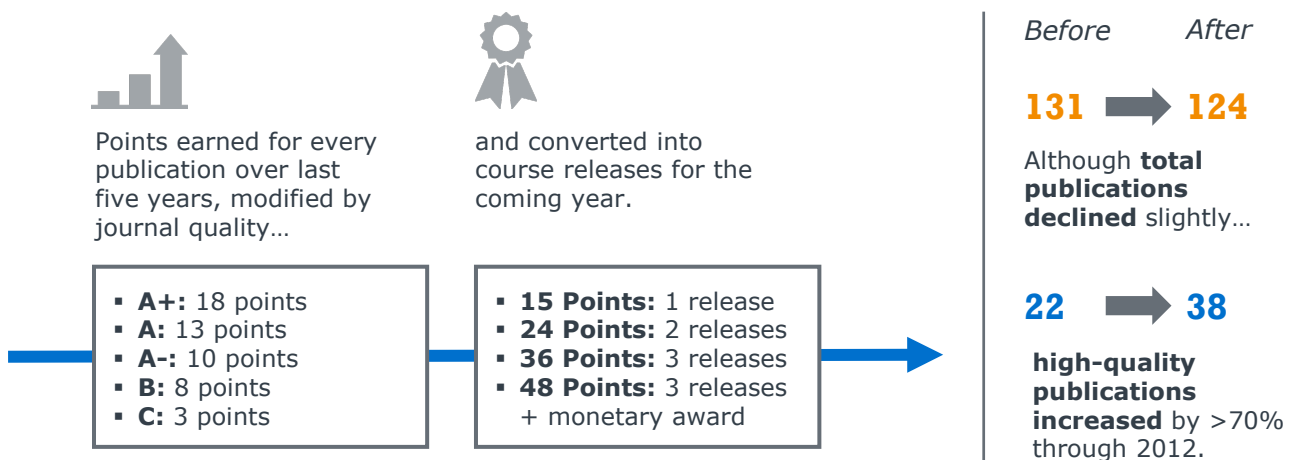
At the **College of the Holy Cross**, staff from the registrar’s office meet regularly with academic departments to determine whether the requirements in the audit system are still correct. They also discuss how to order the requirements by term so students can progress toward four-year graduation. (Seniors are given priority registration in courses they immediately need to be able to graduate.) Then, the registrar sends degree audit reports to departments showing the number of students with the course in their degree audit for the current term, along with those who missed it last term. Departments set section caps based on accommodating that number of students.

Course Release Incentives



Point-Based Allocation System Encourages High-Quality Publications

Many institutions typically award release time as an incentive for research outcomes. To add rigor to this often-subjective process, the dean of the **California State University, Fullerton's Mihaylo College of Business and Economics** developed a formula to award faculty based on journal publications. By publishing articles, faculty earn points towards course releases in the coming year depending on the quality of the journals they publish in. The more points a faculty member earns, the more release time he or she receives, and the highest point level also comes with a cash stipend.



Metrics for Ranking "A" Journals:

- Acceptance rate (e.g., A+ = <13%)
- Impact factor
- Peer-reviewed journal rankings
- Other university journal rankings
- "Reputation" of editorial board members

Faculty Establish Journal Rankings:
Faculty advisory committee assigns ranks based on self-selected principles (e.g., acceptance rate, impact factor)

To avoid incentivizing quantity over quality, the dean ensured that the point values assigned to articles in the highest-quality journals were significantly higher than those in lower tiers. A faculty committee determined the definition of an "A+" journal vs. an "A" journal. Even though the number of articles published per year declined slightly in the first two years after implementing the new system, the number of articles in top journals increased significantly.

Additional Resource on Instructional Capacity



The Instructional Capacity Playbook

To maximize cost efficiency, academic departments must meet student demand with sufficient instructional capacity through selecting appropriate instructor assignments, course offerings, and course schedules and by rightsizing section enrollment. However, as drivers of enrollment trends become more volatile and institutional budgets are increasingly constrained, many departments will find it challenging to reduce capacity-demand mismatches, when capacity lags behind enrollment changes in some courses and programs.

Introduction
Realigning Resources to Meet Changing Enrollment Patterns

New Metrics for Understanding Instructional Capacity

Old Metric	Unsettled Assumption	Traditional Response	New Analysis
Student/Faculty Ratio	A lower ratio suggests higher quality; the average number of students per faculty reflects the typical student experience	Add tenure lines if enrollment increases, or cap program enrollment to maintain ratio	Student credit hours per instructor (a rank) at department level
Standard Course Load	Number of courses is a better measure of workload than the size of courses; most faculty teach the standard load	When instructors exceed standard load, add more instructors or pay them overload	Percentage of full-time faculty teaching
Standard Workload (e.g. 40-40-20 distribution of teaching, research, service)	All faculty should strive for the same balance of teaching, research, and service; all faculty work should be counted equally for promotion and tenure	Translate all other activities into course equivalents; link merit increases to annual performance reviews	Total faculty contributions (including journal editing, precepting, student advising)
Average Class Size	Smaller classes have better learning outcomes; most students are in average-size classes	Add more sections to keep average class size small	Class size distribution
Maximum Section Size	Maximum section size is based on pedagogical necessity	Add more sections when enrollment hits maximum	Section fill rates
Minimum Credits Required for Degree	Most students will complete the degree with minimum credits	Reduce number of required credits to 120	Curricular complexity
Five-Year Term Course Enrollment	Enrollments do not change significantly from like term to like term	Roll over course schedule from previous like term	Registration trends analysis
Classroom Utilization (hours per week)	There aren't enough rooms for all courses	Require a percentage of courses to be scheduled outside of prime time	Room type better utilization
Major/Degree Production (by program or department)	The primary purpose of every department is to produce graduates of its major	Cut funding for departments with few/declining numbers of majors	SCH production of majors, non-majors (gen ed courses) and by the "middle tier" graduation rate

The Instructional Capacity Playbook
Realigning Resources to Meet Changing Enrollment Patterns

Academic Affairs Forum

Track and Predict Changing Student Demand

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Rolling over the schedule no longer produces an accurate picture of demand in an increasingly volatile enrollment environment. In previous years, enrollment was easier to predict from year to year, allowing academic units to base the schedule on the previous year's course offerings, with minor adjustments for overfilled sections. Today, demand patterns and the changing mix of credits students bring in mean enrollments are less constant across terms and years, and adjusting capacity becomes more difficult close to course start dates.

STRATEGY

Predict demand accurately and early to reduce mismatches between course offerings and enrollment. Rather than adjust teaching assignments or hire adjuncts in reaction to demand mismatches, a more effective approach is to develop an accurate picture of demand before building the schedule, and then offer multiple opportunities to track changes in demand once students register. To account for student movement between majors, use historical data on how students have migrated between majors. Gather registration and wait list data early and frequently, giving units more time to reassign capacity to areas of most need.

PROMISING PRACTICES

1: Curricular Interdependency (p. 12)

- Analyze the number of majors vs. service enrollments
- Allow departments to separate service demand from native demand

2: Predicted Course Demand (p. 13)

- Using interdependency data, admissions data, and projected and current enrollment by major, it is possible to predict future enrollments in each course

3: Multi-term Registration (p. 14)

- Allow students to register for courses a full year in advance
- Gather registration and demand data earlier, providing more time to account for mismatches

4: Central Course Wait Lists (p. 20)

- To account for demand changes during the registration period, allow an unlimited number of students to wait list themselves for each course
- Limit the number of wait lists each student may join

Visit www.eab.com to view the full resource.

EAB has created the **Instructional Capacity Playbook** with tools and best practices to address every step of the alignment process, beginning with identifying new and changing sources of student demand for instruction. From there, members will learn best practices to increase instructional capacity in high-demand rooms and programs, reallocate teaching capacity to meet urgent needs, structure curriculum to avoid impediments to student progress, and finally, balance faculty workloads in response to shifts in student enrollment patterns. This white paper can inform academic planning, provide insight into the philosophy behind capacity decisions, and support campuses in aligning processes across academic units and administrative support offices.



Enrollment Growth

Key Departmental Performance Indicators

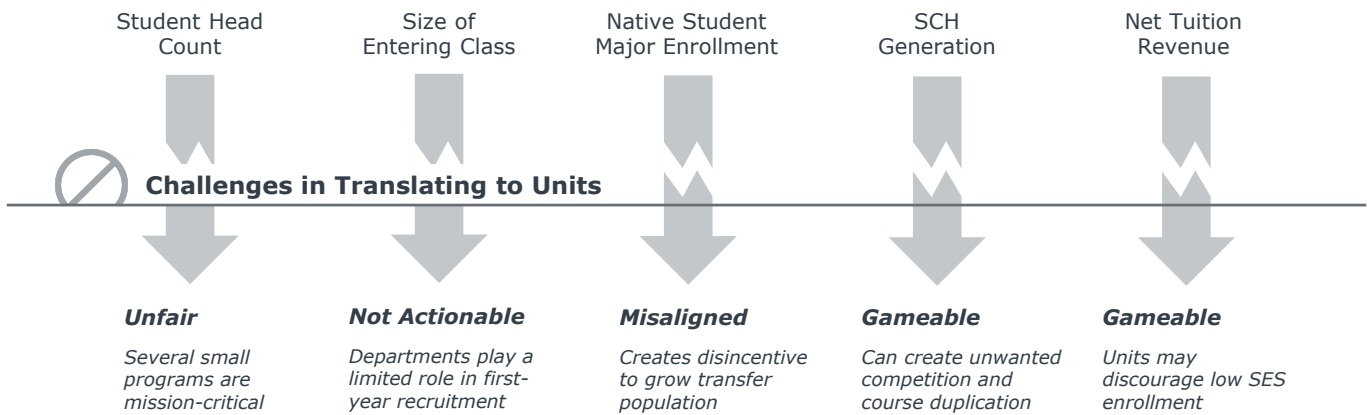
- Major Migration
- Off-Peak Enrollment
- External Demand

Cascading Enrollment Growth Goals

As state funds remain uncertain and reliance on tuition increases, enrollment growth is a priority for almost all institutions, whether institutions are focused on growing enrollment overall or on increasing access to specific student populations. Institutional indicators of enrollment growth, such as number of majors, size of the entering class, and credit-hour generation, are useful to monitor at the department level but do not always take departmental differences into account. Looking closely at these indicators suggests that departments need to identify their specific niche in the institution’s enrollment strategy, whether it is recruiting first-years or generating service credit hours.



The Five Metrics Most Institutions Track



What Departments Should Focus On

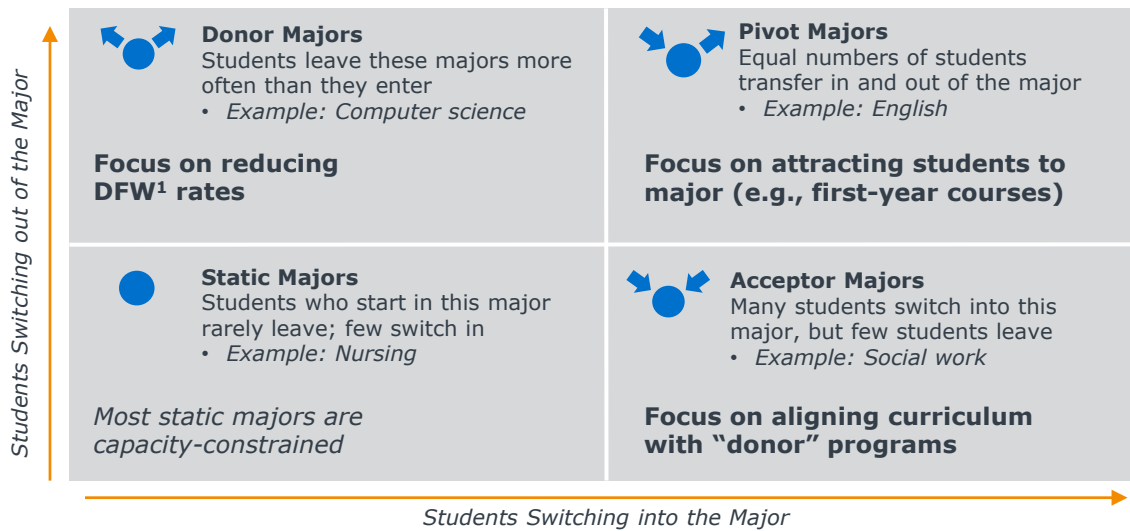
- 1 Major Migration
- 2 Off-Peak Enrollment
- 3 External Demand

Each type of department has opportunities to increase enrollment and to identify ways to increase its reach to students within and beyond the institution. The three analyses departments should conduct to better identify their enrollment opportunities are major migration patterns, off-peak enrollment opportunities, and untapped external demand. The only institutional metric that departments should not examine at all is net tuition revenue, or similarly, international and out-of-state enrollments. It is too critical for departments to focus on reaching underrepresented populations. Departments should not restrict the number of students who receive financial aid or pay in-state tuition, or they risk failing their mission imperative to serve the community.

Follow the Students

Unit's Place on the Major Migration Matrix Guides Enrollment Strategy

The first analysis departments should conduct is major migration. To focus their enrollment strategy, departments should understand how many students switch into and out of their major. The **University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)** analyzed student flows between majors and identified four basic types of programs. UTSA used this analysis to structure academic advising assignments, which is a worthwhile practice in its own right, but here, the major migration analysis is helpful for departments seeking to understand their role in supporting recruitment and retention.



Static majors have almost no movement in and out; these are typically capacity-constrained programs that cannot grow enrollment and often must limit admissions. Donor majors have more first-year students than graduates, often because students struggle with introductory course work. These programs should focus on redesigning first-year courses and improving student success. Pivot majors both gain and lose students due to major switching. These programs may want to consider building closer relationships with students who start in the major, such as by assigning their best instructors to teach sections of first-year courses. The final type, acceptor majors, often see graduation delays when their curricula misalign with programs that "donate" students to them. These programs should focus on identifying their main donors and making the major-switching experience seamless for students.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Major Migration

2

Off-Peak Enrollment

3

External Demand

1) D, F, or W (withdrawal) grades.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Finding Lost Student Credit Hours

Three Opportunities to Boost Critical Course Enrollment

Three additional analyses help departments balance major enrollment with student credit hour (SCH) production, to ensure they are using their full capacity. Often, the greatest opportunities to increase credit-hour production are during off-peak times—summer and winter session—and online. Too often, departments teach these courses based on historical precedent and faculty preference rather than aligning with student demand. As a result, only a small number of students enroll in these courses. Three analyses help departments determine if they are meeting demand for off-peak instruction.

Identifying Enrollment Opportunities



Courses Transferred in After Summer Term

- Online sections of **common courses out-of-state students take closer to home during summer** allow departments to “recapture” summer SCH

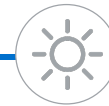


High-SCH Courses Offered Off-Peak and Online

- Off-peak and online sections allow students to **catch up after withdrawing from or failing critical courses** (common prerequisites, first-year courses, etc.)



Measuring Performance



% of SCH Offered in Summer, Intersession

- Summer term and winter intersession are commonly underused opportunities to generate SCH. Only **5% of students currently enroll in summer courses**¹



Stonehill College examined the courses students commonly transferred in after summer term. By offering sections of these courses over the summer, the institution allows students to take classes from their primary institution while not missing out on valuable tuition revenue. The second opportunity for summer enrollment is to create additional capacity in courses with high demand in the regular term (high-SCH, high-DFW, and common prerequisite courses). **Purdue University** provides departments with lists of these courses, which are vetted by academic advising staff. The provost’s office covers the cost of the course and allows departments to keep any revenue after the course breaks even. Finally, departments need a way to measure if they are successful in capturing off-peak demand. The **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** includes the percentage of each department’s student credit hours generated in off-peak times on its Strategic Accountability Matrix, the institution’s departmental dashboard, and allows departments to benchmark to each other.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Major Migration

2

Off-Peak Enrollment

3

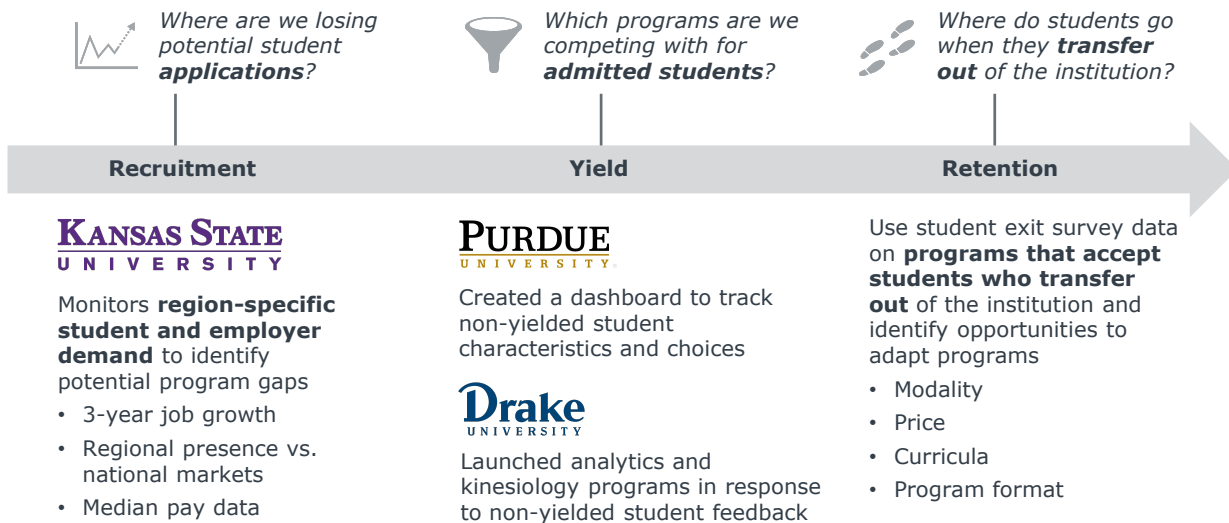
External Demand

1) Based on EAB analysis of National Center for Education Statistics student data.

Engaging Departments in Market Analysis

Three Ways to Identify Revenue-Generating Program Opportunities

The final role for departments in enrollment growth is to create programs that contribute to student enrollment and retention. While these roles lie primarily with enrollment management and student success staff, students still make choices based on program characteristics and the experiences they have with faculty and curricula. The first one of these choices is whether to apply to an institution at all, based on whether the institution has their desired program. **Kansas State University** works with EAB to monitor job markets that have high growth in the region relative to the rest of the country. If the market is growing, has a high share of national growth (i.e., 6% or above for Kansas State), is relatively high-paying, and requires at least a bachelor’s degree, it is likely a good candidate for a program launch. While central staff monitor much of this information, it is still the responsibility of departments to launch programs and oversee curriculum development.



A related departmental role is to monitor data on the programs that compete for admitted students. **Purdue University** uses a dashboard of National Student Clearinghouse data to track non-yielded students, while **Drake University** sends out a survey to students who decline to send an enrollment deposit. Departments should examine program names, curricula, and other characteristics to determine if there are programs to launch or curricular changes to make to better align with competitors. Finally, departments should monitor the characteristics of students who transfer to another institution, typically through exit surveys or focus groups. This information can help departments determine whether students are leaving in favor of more flexible programs (e.g., part-time, evening, or online) or whether they are leaving despite high academic performance for better enrichment opportunities.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Major Migration

2

Off-Peak Enrollment

3

External Demand

Major Migration

Analysis: Number of students who switch into or out of the major while at the institution

- **Data Source:** student information systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** past performance, peer programs within the institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** how to count double majors
- **Time Horizon:** three-year rolling average



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-Low**

While this analysis is new to most institutions, the data required is readily available within systems that are frequently linked.

Diagnostic Questions

Is the major a “net donor,” enrolling primarily students who graduate in a different major?

“Donor” majors indicate that students may struggle with gateway courses or curriculum or find the major misaligned with their intended academic and career goals

Review high-DFW courses that fulfill major requirements to determine opportunities for redesign
 Create or revise degree plans and major map tools to ensure students are given a clear picture of the requirements and content of the major

Is the major an “acceptor,” enrolling mostly students who had previously declared a different major at the institution?

“Acceptor” programs should focus on reducing time to degree for major-switchers and first-year recruitment

Review curriculum to ensure majority of credits transfer from “donor” majors
 Redesign first-year and general education courses to increase recruitment of new students (e.g., by assigning courses to highly skilled instructors and/or presenting more information about the major in general education courses)

Is the major a “static” program, with few major changes in or out?

“Static” programs are typically capacity-constrained, often relying on secondary admission requirements

Review major-specific admission requirements (if any) and benchmark to similar programs and accreditation standards to determine if requirements are too lenient or too strict
 Consider identifying or developing “acceptor” programs aligned with this major, if a significant number of students are unable to meet requirements

Is the major a “pivot” major, with approximately as many students switching in as out?

“Pivot” majors can best increase enrollment by recruiting and retaining more first-year students

Redesign first-year and general education courses to increase recruitment of new students and retention of first-year majors (e.g., by assigning courses to highly skilled instructors and/or presenting more information about the major in general education courses)

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload
and Course
Assignments



Curriculum
and Content

Off-Peak, Online, and Late-Start Course Enrollment

Analysis: Percentage of credit hours enrolled in summer, winter, online, and late-start courses

- **Data Source:** registration systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** past performance, peer departments at the same institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** whether to count non-credit courses
- **Time Horizon:** one year



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-Low**

Late-start and online courses may not always be tagged in systems, but summer and intersession SCH are typically easy to calculate.

Diagnostic Questions

Do registration wait lists and degree plan data indicate excess demand for courses in the regular term that are not offered off-peak?

Departmental schedule (and faculty incentives) misaligned with student demand

- Analyze registration wait lists and degree plans to determine high-demand courses
- Work with central administration to make sure that faculty are incentivized to teach higher-demand courses off-peak (e.g., through stipends or gainsharing)

Does the department teach few online courses compared to other departments at the institution?

Faculty may need additional resources for online instructional design and teaching

- Collaborate with central support resources such as teaching and learning, libraries, or digital learning centers to ensure appropriate trainings are available
- Create faculty learning communities and mentoring opportunities so that departmental faculty can collaborate to use instructional design resources
- Use one-time stipends to incentivize faculty to convert courses to online format

Does a D, F, or withdrawal in critical prerequisites typically set students back a year or more?

Accelerated, late-start courses with "wraparound" advising can help students stay on pace to a degree

- Analyze degree plans to determine best candidates for accelerated-format courses (e.g., high-DFW)
- Collaborate with teaching and learning centers and other instructional design resources on campus to develop accelerated courses
- Collaborate with student support services to add wraparound support such as tutoring and supplemental instruction to accelerated courses

Do off-peak courses frequently have significant numbers of empty seats, despite being high-demand during the typical academic year?

Indicates a gap in student awareness of off-peak course opportunities

- Work with academic advisors to ensure that students are contacted about off-peak learning opportunities

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload
and Course
Assignments



Space
Allocation



Part-Time
Faculty Budget

External Demand

Analyses: Jobs with high regional growth relative to national, programs where non-yielded students matriculated, and programs that accepted transfer-out students

- **Data Source:** national job market databases; student surveys; National Student Clearinghouse data
- **Benchmarking Source:** N/A
- **Measurement Considerations:** which jobs are relevant to the department
- **Time Horizon:** current year



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-High**

Most institutions will need to create or purchase additional data systems to complete this analysis.

Diagnostic Questions

Are program names significantly different from those where non-yielded students matriculated?

Program names may be outdated or fail to reflect careers with high student interest

- Work with curriculum committee and admissions staff to propose new program names aligned with in-demand careers (does not require significant change to curricula in most cases)

Are curricula and course content significantly different from programs where non-yielded students or transfer-out students matriculated?

Students may be choosing alternative programs based on content unavailable at the institution

- Work with curriculum committee to identify opportunities to modify curricular requirements in alignment with competitor programs—or create unique program features to attract students

Is the connection between the department and high-demand careers unclear from degree requirements?

Curriculum and content may be misaligned with desired career paths or employer needs

- Work with curriculum committee to identify opportunities to modify curricular requirements in alignment with job market

Do students frequently transfer out to more selective institutions?

High-achieving students may be transferring out due to lack of engagement

- Work with admissions and enrollment management staff to identify common factors in transfer-out, and contact students in need of mentoring and other enrichment (e.g., undergraduate research opportunities)

Do faculty in the program regularly meet with admissions and enrollment management staff to ensure alignment in how the program is being marketed to prospective students?

Increased collaboration between departments and central administration can support enrollment growth

- Schedule regular meetings (at least once per term) with admissions and enrollment management staff to discuss this topic

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Curriculum and Content



Program and Degree Offerings

Focusing on the First Year

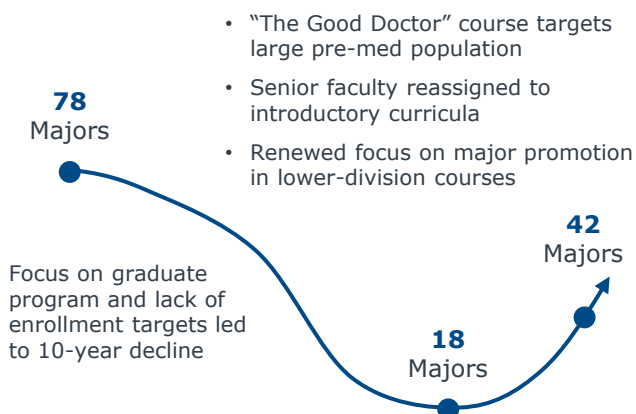


Leveraging Introductory Courses to Convert First-Years into Majors

At many institutions, core liberal arts programs such as philosophy see declining enrollments, both in terms of credit hours and degrees. At **Villanova University**, a 10-year decline from 78 majors to only 18 led the chair of the philosophy department to launch new introductory courses targeted toward students in high-enrollment programs such as pre-medicine.



Philosophy Department Chair Reverses Downward Trend Through Focus on Intro Courses



- “The Good Doctor” course targets large pre-med population
- Senior faculty reassigned to introductory curricula
- Renewed focus on major promotion in lower-division courses

Focusing on Major Growth

“When you offer interesting courses, it brings students to the major that would not otherwise come. And then they see that they’ve taken a few philosophy courses and they’re not far from a major or minor.... For a long time, philosophy rested on the fact that it was a foundation. It can no longer do that. We need to show people that our philosophical skills are useful.”

*Sally Scholz
Department Chair, Philosophy
Villanova University*

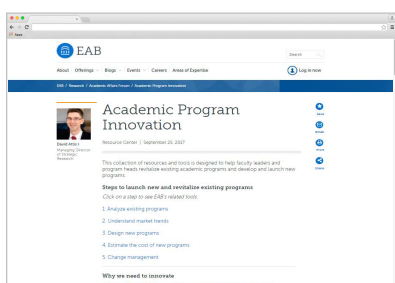
The department launched “The Good Doctor,” a medical ethics course taught by senior full-time faculty, which helped increase the number of majors to 42 over the course of three years, including more students who chose philosophy as a second major once they could see how it complemented their first major.

Academic Program Innovation Resources



Support to Launch New Programs and Revitalize Existing Offerings

Innovation to support enrollment growth is both challenging and risky. It requires collaboration, analysis, and a willingness to ask difficult questions about existing practices. Faculty who are overworked, anxious about resources, and concerned about incursions into their disciplinary autonomy are understandably hesitant to take on a new project with uncertain results. They also typically lack the data and tools necessarily to evaluate and implement new program delivery models or entirely new program offerings. While the specific changes necessary for any particular program will depend on disciplinary context and market dynamics, the resources available below will help to accelerate and inform decision-making on campus.



Visit the Academic Program Innovation resource portal on www.eab.com to find...

- 1 Analyze existing programs**
 - Guidance on Program Assessment
 - Revitalizing Stalled Program Performance Toolkit
- 2 Understand market trends**
 - Market Demand Sizing and Validation Toolkit
 - State-by-State Labor Market Demand Profiles
- 3 Design new programs**
 - Nontraditional Program Design Webinar
 - Embedding Demand Validation in Program Development Tools
- 4 Estimate the cost of new programs**
 - Sample Cost Calculators
- 5 Manage change on campus**
 - Program Strategy Intensive Webinar



Student Outcomes

Key Departmental Performance Indicators

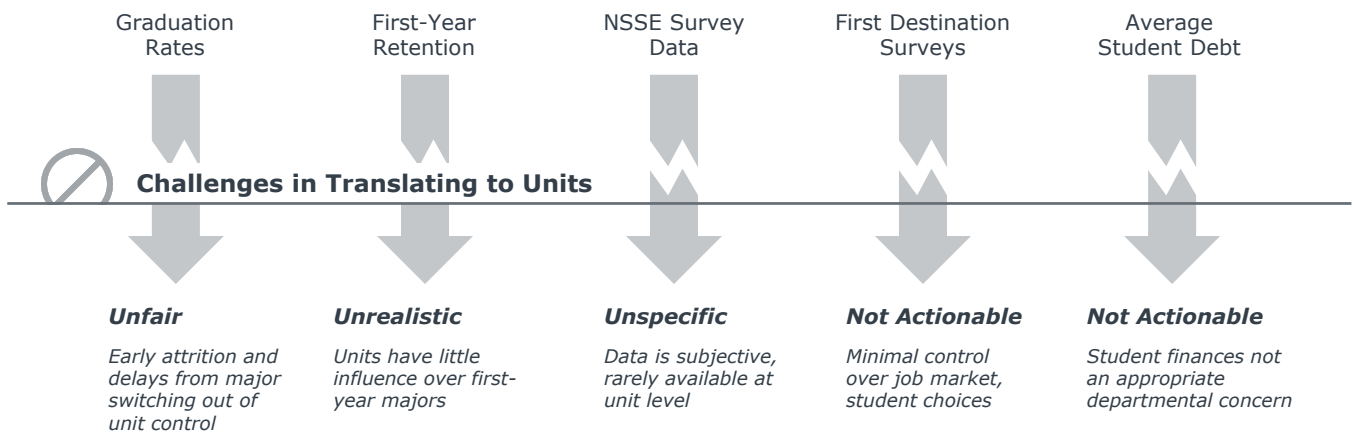
- D, F, Withdrawal Rates
- Junior Graduation Rate
- Experiential Learning

Cascading Student Outcomes Goals

In the face of demographic shifts, outcome-based funding, and political pressure to provide “return on education”, most institutions are investing heavily in student outcomes. At the institutional level, most measure the six-year graduation rate, the first-year retention rate, student engagement data, and postgraduation indicators such as students’ first destination and debt upon graduation. Many institutional leaders face resistance from departments when they disaggregate these metrics by major. Too many confounding variables impact student success, especially before major declaration.



The Five Metrics Most Institutions Track



What Departments Should Focus On

1 DFW Rates

2 Junior Graduation Rate

3 Experiential Learning

To more accurately align departmental action with institutional student success goals, academic leaders should focus on the departmental role in helping students succeed in individual courses, navigate the curriculum in a timely fashion, and prepare for careers after graduation. To do so, they can measure the completion rate of courses offered in the department, the graduation rate of students after reaching junior status (when they typically declare a final major), and the experiential learning opportunities they offer within the department.

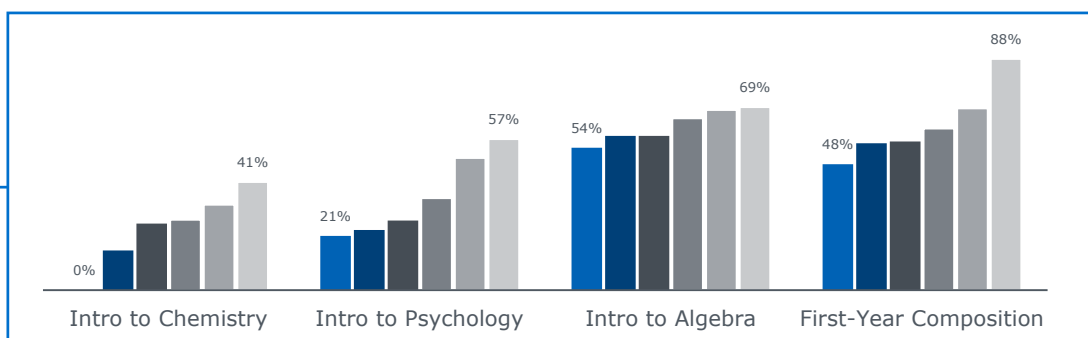
Focusing on Critical First-Year Courses

Instructors Are Often a Major Source of Variability

Whether or not a student completes a critical prerequisite or first-year course can determine whether he or she spends the next four years progressing toward a degree or repeating failed courses. For each failed three-credit course, a student will take two months longer to graduate.¹ To best support students, departments should monitor the DFW rates (D, F, and withdrawals; i.e., failure rates) of critical courses and identify the courses with the highest number of credit hours “lost” to DFWs.

Variable Outcomes Show Student Preparation Is Not Destiny

DFW Rates for Sections of Same Course, One Selective Public Research Institution



Three Types of Departmental Course Offerings to Focus On

- 1 Critical First-Year**
 - Improving course success reduces first-year attrition for academic reasons
- 2 Common Prerequisites**
 - DFWs can impact time to degree by setting students back one or more terms
- 3 High-SCH**
 - Limiting DFWs in high-enrollment courses impacts largest number of students

The most common objection to measuring DFW rates is that they are only truly a measure of student preparedness: if a student fails a course, he or she simply did not have the necessary competencies to pass. EAB’s Academic Performance Solutions data, as seen above, suggests a different reason for high DFW rates or credits lost to DFW. Instructor variability in section-level DFW rate reveals that similarly prepared students can have vastly different outcomes based on who teaches the course section. Many institutions have reversed the trend in high-DFW courses by redesigning courses to incorporate more frequent assessment, active learning pedagogy, and supplemental or corequisite instruction. (Refer to p. 58 for root cause diagnostics and resources to implement strategies to reduce DFWs.)



What Departments Should Focus On

1 DFW Rates

2 Junior Graduation Rate

3 Experiential Learning

¹ University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Predictors of Time-to-Degree for Recent UW-Madison Undergraduates,” December 2014, uwmadison.app.box.com/s/4r2eo4gh4rauru6g5wwqdsiw63e1f.

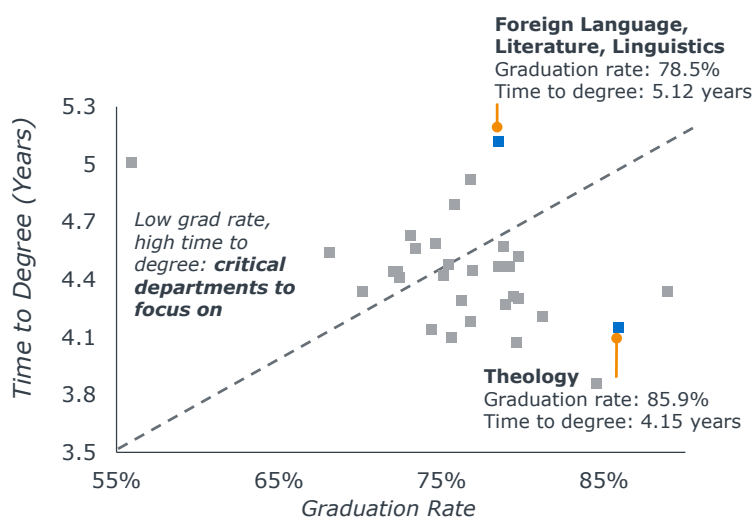
Sources: Analysis of EAB Academic Performance Solutions (APS) data; EAB interviews and analysis.

The Department's Piece of the Persistence Pie

Plenty of Variance, Even After Major Declaration

Departments truly start to have oversight over students' experiences once they reach junior status, or 60 completed credits, and are taking largely upper-division courses within the major. The chart below of EAB Student Success Collaborative data from 105 institutions demonstrates the influence of a student's major at this stage. The two highlighted programs have almost a 10% difference in six-year graduation rates, and a one-year difference in time to degree, for students who have accumulated 60 credits. These differences may be even more pronounced between programs at any one institution.

Average Time to Degree and Graduation Rate After 60 Credits, by Major Grouping¹



- Track **graduation rates once students reach junior status²** (typical timing of required major declaration)
- Ask programs in **bottom quartile of grad rate** to provide recommendations and next steps to improve:
 - Align curriculum with transfer needs
 - Increase section capacity of a critical course
 - Improve learning outcomes in upper-division courses

Departments at the **University of Maine** (UMaine) are evaluated on their graduation rate once students reach junior status, or the “junior graduation rate,” to ensure they are fairly measured on a metric they have responsibility for. A low junior graduation rate, or high junior time to degree, indicates that the department should analyze its curriculum, advising, and course availability to identify barriers to graduation. Departments with high numbers of transfer students (from feeder schools or internally across majors) should examine articulation policies and aim to reduce excess credits. At UMaine, the provost makes funding available to departments that can demonstrate they have already invested their own resources in improving their junior graduation rate.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

DFW Rates

2

Junior Graduation Rate

3

Experiential Learning

1) Analysis of EAB Student Success Collaborative data (n=105 institutions, 1,053,981 students).

2) UMaine uses 65 SCH, but 60 is typical for most institutions.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tracking Experiential and Active Learning

Ensuring Access to Best-Practice Pedagogy and High-Impact Experiences

Student success does not end at graduation. Students, families, and policy makers also expect institutions to support lifelong career success and well-being. Though they cannot ensure job placements after graduation, departments and their faculty lead the high-impact experiential and active learning opportunities that help students explore career options and prepare themselves for successful professional lives. The **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** evaluates departments on their majors' participation in experiential learning to ensure options are available to all students.



Measure Participation

Departmental dashboard (Strategic Accountability Matrix) measures percentage of students participating in experiential learning



Validate Rigor

Mostly-faculty committee determines definitions and quality criteria for course-based experiential learning, service learning, and internships



Expand Access

Focus on participation data and long-term outcomes by demographic group to determine gaps and ideas for program improvements

Reporting on Active Learning Pedagogy

- Dean of Arts & Sciences requires faculty to submit yearly annual reports on learning outcomes assessment (measures and results), active/collaborative learning strategies, actions taken, and next steps
- Reports are scored based on quality and thoroughness in merit reviews



The **State University of New York** system convened a faculty committee to establish rigorous and faculty-validated experiential learning standards for both curricular and cocurricular activities, including pre- and post-participation self-reflection and assessment. And to ensure that all students have access, the **Ohio Department of Higher Education** measures demographic gaps in participation and long-term outcomes.

One way to incentivize more thorough reporting on active learning in the classroom is to consider these reports as part of yearly merit raise decisions. The **University of Alabama's** College of Arts and Sciences scores reports based on quality, to encourage thorough and thoughtful individual reports.



What Departments Should Focus On

1 DFW Rates

2 Junior Graduation Rate

3 Experiential Learning

DFW Rates

Analysis: Course-by-course analysis of D, F, and W grades divided by total grades

- **Data Source:** student records
- **Benchmarking Source:** past performance
- **Measurement Considerations:** how to count “Incomplete” grades, if such grades are a large portion of course results
- **Time Horizon:** term by term, except in departments with only very small courses (where a multiyear rolling average is preferred)



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Low**

Most institutions already collect this data.

Diagnostic Questions

Do DFW rates in courses vary significantly from section to section?

Differences in instructor materials or pedagogy may impact student outcomes

- Create opportunities for alignment of course material and rubrics across multiple sections, such as faculty learning communities

Does the institution offer opportunities to add early alerts (of academic and/or behavioral risk) to courses? Could the department increase usage of alerts in critical courses?

Advisor intervention can reduce DFW rates if faculty flag students who may be at risk of failing a course

- Reach out to instructors in critical (first-year and prerequisite) courses to increase use of early alert function

Compared to other departments at the institution, do students underutilize tutoring, writing centers, supplemental instruction, and other central university resources?

Students may lack the knowledge or self-confidence to proactively seek resources

- Collaborate with student support centers to ensure resources are tailored to high-DFW courses
- Ensure that support resources are listed in course syllabi and promoted to students throughout the course

Do DFW rates vary significantly by student preparedness (measured based on high school GPA and admissions test scores)?

Department may need to add remedial options for underprepared students

- Review curricular requirements and consider creating cohort programs and/or corequisite remedial instruction for students with low high school GPAs and/or admissions test scores

Do withdrawals constitute a higher proportion of grades than in other departments at the institution?

Withdrawals may be unnecessary; i.e., with additional resources, students could complete the course

- Review policy for course withdrawal to ensure that students review consequences and related resources before confirming a course withdrawal

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Advising
Staffing and
Budget



Curriculum
and Content

Junior Graduation Rate

Analysis: Two-year graduation rate for majors with 60 student credit hours

- **Data Source:** student information system and transcripts
- **Benchmark Source:** similar departments at the same institution; department's own past performance
- **Measurement Considerations:** whether to count second majors; whether most junior-year students start with 60 credit hours
- **Time Horizon:** 3-year rolling average



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium**

While this analysis is new to most institutions, the data required is readily available within systems that are frequently linked.

Diagnostic Questions

Do students in the major have a high average number of degree exceptions upon graduation?

Potential problems with major-specific advising and degree planning

- Update advisor handbooks with information about commonly missed requirements
- Create/revise degree plans to clearly communicate requirements

Are multiple multicourse sequences required for the major?

Curriculum may be overly complex, causing delays to graduation

- Review curriculum (and benchmark to similar programs at peer institutions) to determine opportunities to streamline

Are there disparities in graduation rate or time to degree by student's first declared major?

Requirements may be misaligned with common donor majors

- Review curriculum of common donors majors to identify opportunities to accept more courses for major credit

Are there multiple upper-division courses in the major with 20% or higher DFW rates?

Course repeats and DFWs may be leading to graduation delays and/or attrition

- Redesign courses with highest DFW rate or highest number of credit hours lost to DFW and measure whether there has been a reduction in DFW rate

Do students transferring in from other institutions "lose" a significant number of major credits in transfer?

Transfer articulation policies may be misaligned with feeder schools

- Reach out to common feeder schools to determine opportunities to align curricula
- Create degree plans for students at two-year feeder schools to prepare to declare major upon transfer

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Advising
Staffing and
Budget



Curriculum
and Content

Experiential Learning

Analysis: Percentage of students participating in experiential learning opportunities

- **Data Source:** registration systems/course catalog, student records
- **Benchmarking Source:** peer departments at the same institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** developing (faculty-led) criteria to validate experiential learning
- **Time Horizon:** cohort basis (students should participate at least once by graduation)



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium**

Some institutions may first need to establish a registration system tag for experiential learning.

Diagnostic Questions

Are experiential opportunities and related career competencies unclear from course syllabi?

Students may struggle to articulate the career-applicable value of their course work

Clearly connect syllabus requirements to career skills and denote experiential learning activities
Provide course syllabi earlier in the term so students can select courses based on academic and career goals

Are most experiential opportunities cocurricular only, with few courses designated as experiential or service-learning courses?

Students may struggle to balance cocurricular experiences with course work and other responsibilities

Identify opportunities to embed experiential learning and service-learning into courses; consider setting a target number of courses to have embedded opportunities

Are most in-depth experiential opportunities (such as internships) held off campus?

Off-campus opportunities may be difficult for some students to access

Work with local employers, organizations, and cultural groups to determine opportunities to host activities and events on campus (e.g., class consulting projects, on-campus internships, etc.)

Do departmental degree plans primarily list courses, with few cocurricular recommendations?

Students may be unsure how to align experiential learning with their learning in the major

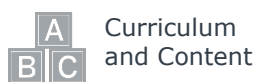
Develop cocurricular four-year maps to help students identify appropriately timed opportunities based on their progress through the curriculum

Are career services in PhD programs primarily or entirely focused on academic careers?

Graduate students are often unsure whether nonacademic experiential learning is right for them

Collaborate with campus career services to create learning opportunities for this population

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Additional Resources on Course Completion



The Course Completion Playbook

High failure rates in gateway courses represent one of the largest obstacles to student success at most colleges and universities. Large required courses with failure rates as high as 30-60% can create retention and time-to-degree issues for hundreds or even thousands of students at a single institution. As academic departments seek to improve DFW rates in critical introductory courses, EAB's **Course Completion Playbook** provides diagnostic tools and resources for institutions to redesign courses and provide the right student supports so that maximizing completions does not come at the expense of rigor.

Course Completion Diagnostic

Assessment

Early and Frequent Low-Stakes Assessment

Analysis to Run

How predictive of final gateway course grades are multiple absences and pre-mid term tests?

Assessing Current Practice

Are students assessed multiple times outside of the midterm and the final?

Do faculty provide feedback and information on relevant campus services based on those assessments?

Do on-going assessments make up a small percentage of a student's overall grade?

Do on-going assessments use various testing approaches (e.g. multiple choice, short essay, online or computer-based mini-tests, etc.)?

If you answered 'no' to any of the above, see Frequent Low-Stakes Assessments p. 21

Standardized Assessment

Analysis to Run

Are DFW rates generally consistent among instructors teaching the same course?

Assessing Current Practice


Do faculty teaching sections of the same course jointly determine the expected learning objectives for the course?

Do faculty teaching sections of the same course use a shared approach to assessments?

Do faculty teaching sections of the same course agree upon a common set of course materials like textbooks and readings?

Do faculty agree upon a uniform approach to grading homework, projects, and exams?

If you answered 'no' to any of the above, see Standardized Assessment p. 24



Course Completion Playbook

Analyses and Tools to Improve Student Outcomes in Critical Gateway Courses

Academic Affairs Forum

Early and Frequent Low-Stakes Assessment (cont.)

Do's and Don'ts of Low-Stakes, Incremental Assessment

- Align low-stakes assessments with teaching of foundational concepts
This helps prevent students from developing gaps in concepts they need to master to succeed as the course progresses and in future courses
- Provide low-stakes assessments prior to key institutional dates (add/drop dates, start dates for accelerated variation on a course, etc.)
Particularly for first-year exploratory students, this ensures students can see if a particular course (or pathway) may be the right choice while still giving them the opportunity to change courses if need be
- Use low-stakes assessments to teach students good studying habits
Students often use ineffective studying techniques like simply re-reading notes – instead set a group against a problem to demonstrate that they can collaborate outside of class to reinforce their learning
- Use assessments as an opportunity to put knowledge into larger contexts
Require students to draw on concepts previously mastered in new and relevant contexts to help them see the practical applications of what they are learning
- Use varied and active assessments
Changing up activities helps to keep students applying knowledge in new ways while active assessments support application of concepts rather than memorization
- Assessment Feedback
Assessments do not have to be graded/part of the students final grade, but feedback on progress should be communicated to students

Types of Assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions to break up lecture • Full class or small group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential learning activities (employer/student projects)
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Least Intensive
Most Intensive

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class electronic quiz questions • Mini-quizzes and activities tied to reading, homework assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning logs • Short essays • Portfolios 	
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Source: EAB, A. Karpovich, A. McMichael, M. Sosa
 EAB's 2018-2019 Survey of Student Outcomes
 www.eab.com/assessment-essentials

Visit www.eab.com to view the full resource.


Steps to Addressing Course Completion Rates



Size the Opportunity



Identify Root Causes



Prioritize Resources



Engage Faculty

Tactics for Improving Course Completion Rates



Assessment



Instruction



Course-Level Advising



Pre- and Post-Course Support

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Additional Resources on Degree Completion



Promoting Timely Degree Completion

One of the academic department's most important challenges is to support their majors in meeting their graduation goals—which for many students facing financial challenges in paying for college, means graduating in four years. Unfortunately, fewer than 40% of students seeking a bachelor's degree actually graduate in four years (NCES). While attrition is one of the main causes for this low number, progress delays also keep students from graduating on time. EAB's study, **Promoting Timely Degree Completion**, provides 16 best practices to address every step of the student pathway to graduation.

Beyond the Completion Binary
Student Success Encompasses More Than Graduation Success

Retention and completion are often viewed as synonymous with student success, with the emphasis on these metrics shaping much of our approach. For instance, many of our tools, like risk monitoring and intensive advising, target focus on managing attrition risk across the student lifecycle. Yet, despite the extensive body of work and resources dedicated to improving retention and completion, most institutions will agree that they do not wholly define student success. Rather, preventing attrition constitutes the foundation upon which holistic student development can be achieved.

Defining Student Success by How It's Measured

Graduation Success

Student Success

Foundational

Holistic

Progressive Outcomes

Ideally, a successful student would enroll; establish a sense of engagement and belonging on campus; develop academically, socially, and emotionally; graduate without overwhelming financial burden; and find satisfaction in their post-graduate pursuits, whether those be an advanced degree or employment. Even with this broader definition, institutions should periodically reevaluate their student success objectives to better serve students, who might perceive their success differently. As institutions continue to advance student success strategic planning, and move to organize resources and infrastructure to improve graduation success, we should also consider how to mobilize and adapt our strategy to support a more comprehensive set of student outcomes beyond the simplistic view of student success as graduation success.

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Promoting Timely Degree Completion
Reconciling Student Choice and the Four-Year Graduation Imperative

Education Advisory Board

Balance
Balancing Competing Goods of Student Choice and Timely Completion

Evidence suggests that extended time-to-degree can be the byproduct of preventable—timely, uncollected student choices around major and course selection, as well as institutional impediments such as capacity constraints and unaccommodating course scheduling. In conventional wisdom of limiting choice, a balanced approach to promoting timely degree completion would strive to minimize these unintended delays to graduation and maximize positive ideas for exploration within four years. In pursuit of this fine balance, we seek to answer four questions:

Questions	Conventional Wisdom	EAB Research Insight
How do we minimize attrition for high-risk students while ensuring timely progress to graduation?	At-risk students will be overwhelmed by added course work.	With added support, at-risk students can succeed when expectations are raised.
How do we ensure that early start students do not start without costly delays?	Timely progression at scale requires prescriptive degree maps and restricted choice.	Early assistance increases opportunities for exploration by reducing time lost from unvetted student choice.
How do we ensure that flexible pathways are the most convenient for students?	Current schedule setting practices are the most convenient for faculty.	Use of easy-to-obtain data improves convenience of course scheduling for students and faculty.
How do we ensure that alternative and/or accelerated term options increase rigor while providing "catch-up" opportunities?	Adding time-to-degree is the price of exploration or underpreparedness.	Alternative and/or accelerated term options increase rigor while providing "catch-up" opportunities.

Among these questions, our research insights reveal a solution set that focuses on providing the supports they need to make effective choices that help them progress towards a timely manner, while maximizing their development through informed exploration. In so doing, we encourage students to engage in long term degree planning and complete full course load. In team, we must put measures in place to clear "supply-side" impediments and deliver on the promise of managing these two approaches—informing good choices, and making good choices—we can strike that fine balance and graduate students in four years.

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Visit www.eab.com to view the full resource.

Supporting On-Pace Student Performance

Organizing Course Offerings Around Four-Year Graduation

1

Encouraging Early Credit Momentum



1. Hardwiring 15 to Finish
2. Summer Early Start for Borderline Admits
3. Summer Early Start for Transfer Students
4. Summer Early Start for All Incoming Students
5. Multi-Section Calculus Redesign

2

Maximizing Degree-Applicable Credit



6. Major-Career Interest Matching
7. First-Year Meta-major Schedules
8. Degree Plan Express Registration
9. Major-Specific Delay Diagnostic

3

Aligning Course Capacity with Student Needs



10. Uncapped Wait Lists
11. Intent-to-Register Plans
12. Multi-Term Registration
13. Completion-Based Registration Priority

4

Creating Second Chances for Off-Pace Students



14. Summer Catch-Up Campaigns
15. Degree-Advancing Intercession Courses
16. Regular-Term Accelerated Courses

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Additional Resource on Experiential Learning



Integrating Academic and Career Development

Growing public concern about the return on investment (ROI) associated with higher education has created pressure for both public and private institutions to assume greater responsibility for students' postgraduation outcomes. Rather than attempting to radically reinvent curricula with immediate workforce demands in mind, a middle ground is needed between critics who assume traditional academic study is impractical and those who view college as an intellectual refuge from the job market. This false dichotomy between liberal education and career preparation is stymieing productive conversation on campus.

Visit www.eab.com to view the full resource

This study will help you incorporate meaningful career exploration and experiential learning into the academic curriculum and migrate from a “last stop” career service model to a continuous and reflective postgraduation planning approach. You will also learn how to reach at-risk and underserved student populations who often face barriers to accessing internships, co-ops, and other opportunities for professional development.



Scholarship

Key Departmental Performance Indicators

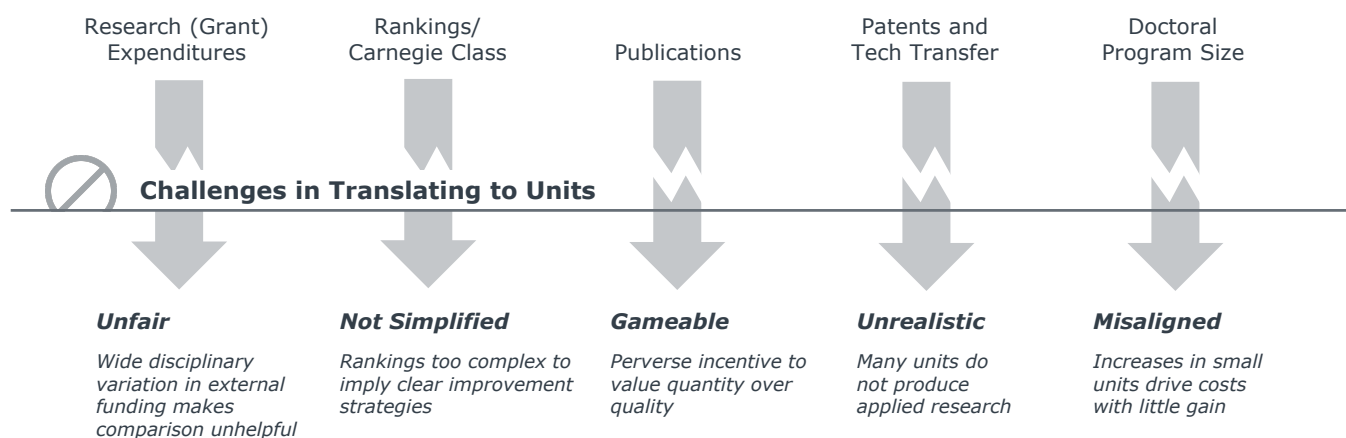
- Holistic Outputs
- Effort Metrics
- Post-Tenure Promotion

Cascading Scholarship Goals

Across different institutional segments, faculty have highly variable expectations for scholarship, research, and other creative activity. Most institutions focus exclusively on the tangible outcomes of those activities, such as research expenditures, patents, and publications. Though important, these metrics fail to capture the breadth of faculty activity. Instead, institutions should encourage departments to report all of their activities that contribute to institutional priorities around scholarship and creative activity.



The Five Metrics Most Institutions Track



What Departments Should Focus On

1 Holistic Outputs

2 Effort Metrics

3 Post-Tenure Activity

Traditional lagging indicators of research and scholarly activity fail to identify all of the efforts faculty make to win grants, submit publications, produce artistic works, and contribute to the knowledge of their field inside and outside of the scholarly community. By tracking effort metrics, provosts and other senior leaders can identify problems with research strategy and needs for additional investment. Similarly, outputs and lagging indicators mask widely varying productivity among faculty members. Tracking activity and providing ongoing support after tenure creates more concrete incentives for faculty to sustain their efforts across entire careers.

A More Holistic Picture of Faculty Activity

Detailed Faculty Activity Reports Count All Types of Research

The typical academic department counts only traditional research outputs, such as peer-reviewed publications, in faculty’s tenure, promotion, and merit conversations. Academic Analytics is gaining in popularity for its ability to provide discipline-adjusted “scores” of research output, but the “score” is generated by a proprietary algorithm, making it difficult for a faculty member to see at first glance how he or she can improve. Most individual faculty members collect information about more holistic contributions for their own curricula vitae, but few departments aggregate and report on these data.



Binghamton University (a member of the State University of New York system) collects traditional research metrics alongside what it calls “contributions to mission”—other products of research, from creative compositions and performances to contributions to peer review, such as editing books. Chairs and deans at Binghamton use this information, collected by the provost’s office, to review faculty workload disparities and support faculty review and tenure conversations. Moreover, many progressive institutions are starting to look at emerging models of research, allowing faculty’s important work in supporting the local community and the campus’s multidisciplinary and teaching efforts to count toward the research requirement, as long as it meets standards of academic rigor.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Holistic Outputs

2

Effort Metrics

3

Post-Tenure Activity

Expanding the Definition of Scholarly Output

Toward More Inclusive Criteria for Counting Research Activity

Exclusively measuring traditional research outputs fails to recognize trends toward multidisciplinary scholarship and community-engaged scholarship. As more funding agencies value multi-PI projects, institutions must overcome entrenched barriers to recognizing and rewarding multidisciplinary and engaged research. Institutions like the **University of Southern California** place the burden on tenure and promotion committees to understand cross-disciplinary projects and the methodology behind them. At **North Carolina State University**, faculty hired as part of research clusters have specially negotiated tenure and promotion committees and processes that align their committees and evaluation criteria with their multidisciplinary work.



● Traditional Research

Failure to expand beyond single-discipline research can disengage faculty and make institutions less competitive

- Fear among many faculty that expanding beyond these narrow criteria will weaken disciplines

● Multidisciplinary and Engaged Research



Requirement to understand and value other fields' research methodology and products



Promotion and tenure requirements tailored for interdisciplinary hires

● Adding Scholarship of Teaching and Learning



Explicit inclusion of Boyer's four definitions of scholarship in promotion and tenure criteria



Faculty advisor roles with scholarship of student success required for tenure

Some teaching-focused institutions that still want faculty engaged in scholarly activity have begun rewarding faculty who conduct scholarship related to pedagogy or student success. **Eastern Mennonite University** adopted Ernest Boyer's four definitions of scholarship in its promotion and tenure guidelines. **West Chester University** created hybrid instruction and student advising that required scholarship related to student success. Though rare, promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning can align faculty scholarly activity with a teaching-focused institution's mission and strategic goals.



What Departments Should Focus On

1 Holistic Outputs

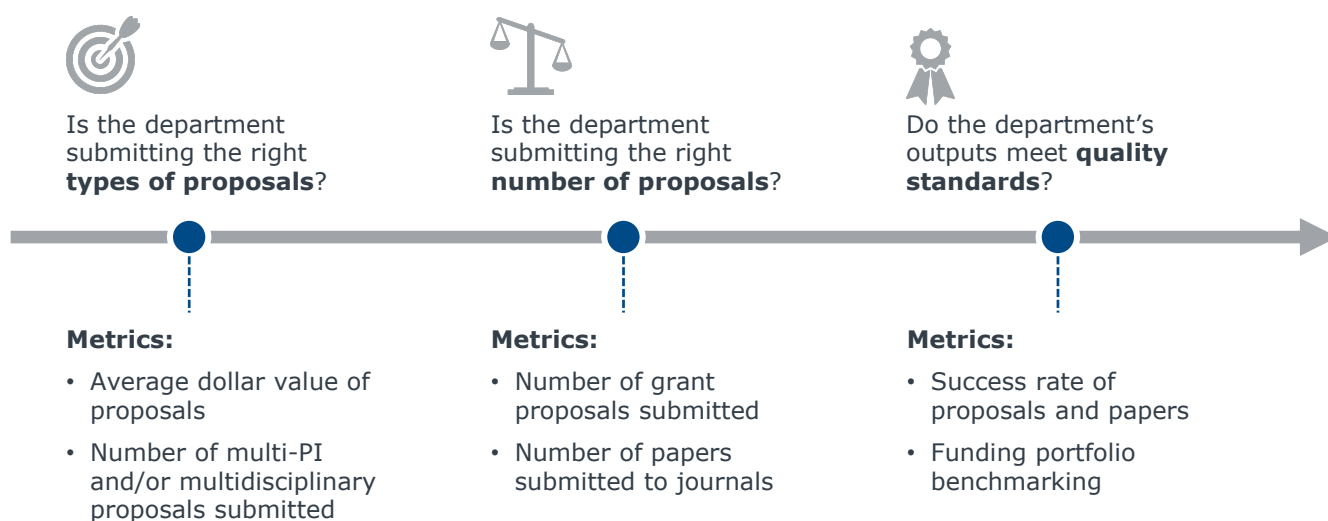
2 Effort Metrics

3 Post-Tenure Activity

Finding the Break in the Pipeline

Research Effort Metrics Help Identify Gaps, Target Scholarly Effort

Exclusive focus on research outputs can hide problems and opportunities earlier in the research pipeline. For example, an institution that wishes to increase its grant funding should evaluate its academic departments on the average dollar value of their proposals to determine if they need to find higher-value grants. If the department struggles to win grants or have papers accepted, it may need to apply for a higher number of grants or submit to a larger number of journals. These concerns emerge only if academic leaders review research effort metrics in addition to outputs.



After discovering challenges or potential opportunities for improvement, provosts and deans can determine if they have resources available to support departmental research efforts. These resources may take the form of grant writing support, research administration staff, faculty release time, or other funds that can encourage greater research output.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Holistic Outputs

2

Effort Metrics

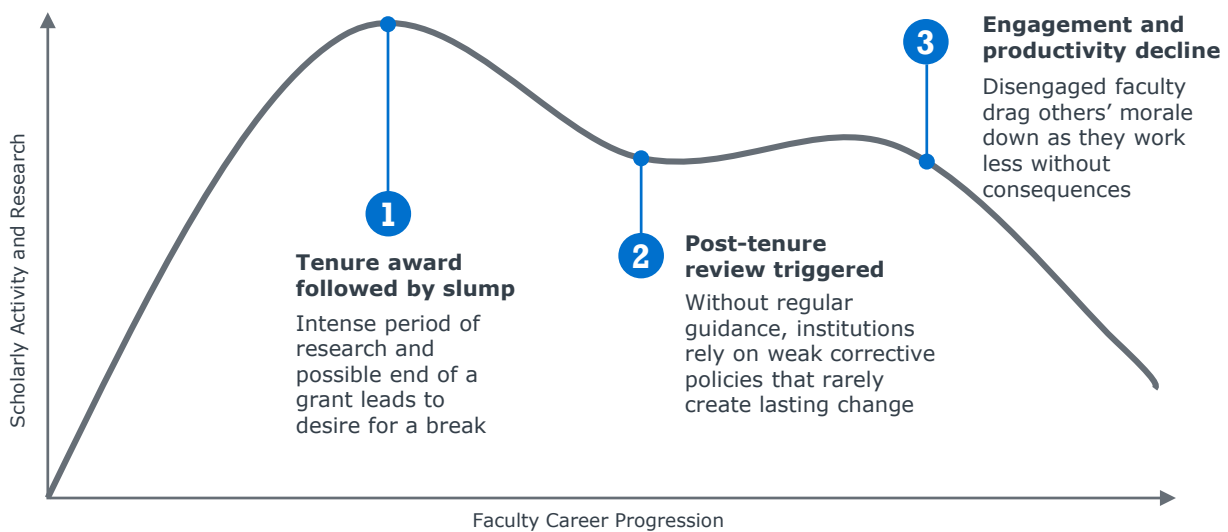
3

Post-Tenure Activity

Post-Tenure Promotion Planning

Avoiding the 'Stalled Associate' Problem

Even at research-intensive institutions, some faculty reduce their scholarly activity after receiving tenure. This slowdown may occur due to a change in preferences, the conclusion of a study or other project, or an understandable need for a break after the intense pre-tenure period. Some of these less active faculty members become so-called "stalled associates" whose careers stagnate for decades. They may become disengaged with the institution and even disruptive to the culture of the department.



The previous two analyses, holistic output records and effort metrics, can help identify individual faculty members in need of support or guidance. Unfortunately, when inactive faculty emerge, most institutions rely on weak post-tenure review processes that take years to take effect and often result only in temporary activity increases. Progressive institutions instead adopt a preventive approach, engaging individual faculty in annual research goal-setting conversations and providing clear criteria for annual evaluations that encourage long-term scholarly activity.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Holistic Outputs

2

Effort Metrics

3

Post-Tenure Activity

Holistic Research and Scholarly Activity Outputs

Analysis: Thorough listing of all research products by individual faculty member (*Academic Analytics scores; books, book chapters, reviews; journal articles; research expenditures; creative compositions; exhibitions; performances; conference/poster presentations; editing books or book chapters; independent lectures and keynotes; engaged scholarship; multidisciplinary research; scholarship of teaching and learning, etc.,...*)

- **Data Source:** research systems, personnel systems, tenure and promotion files, faculty survey
- **Benchmarking Source:** peer departments at the institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** N/A, but some departments may wish to engage faculty in developing a broader definition of research
- **Time Horizon:** one year



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-High**

Many institutions collect data on most of these research outputs but do not aggregate them or consider them to be typical research products.

Diagnostic Questions

Do faculty who were not tenured or promoted tend to conduct more nontraditional research?

Nontraditional research outputs are often undervalued in tenure and promotion conversations

- Ensure that tenure and promotion committees include at least one faculty member who can speak to the candidate's holistic work, such as a faculty member in a discipline the candidate collaborates with
- Revisit promotion and tenure standards in the department to ensure clarity

Do some faculty have a low SCH teaching load because they spend disproportionate time on nontraditional scholarly and creative activities?

Faculty deemed "unproductive" by traditional standards may be spending time on nontraditional activity

- Consider using merit pay as an incentive to rebalance traditional and nontraditional faculty activities as desired by chair and other college/institutional leadership

Does the department conduct less nontraditional research than peers?

Nontraditional research opportunities can increase departmental research productivity and diversity

- Convene a committee of faculty in the department to determine opportunities for nontraditional research such as engaged scholarship

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload and Course Assignments

Research Effort Metrics

Analysis: Number and dollar value of grant proposals; number of article submissions and win rate; number of multidisciplinary/multi-PI proposals

- **Data Source:** research systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** like departments at peer institutions
- **Measurement Considerations:** N/A
- **Time Horizon:** one year



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-Low**

Most of this data is carefully tracked in research systems for reporting purposes.

Diagnostic Questions

Is the average dollar value of proposals lower than peer departments'?

Faculty may be able to increase funding by aiming for larger grants (rather than increasing quantity)

- Work with grant writing staff to help faculty identify higher-dollar grants relevant to the field

Are few multidisciplinary or multi-PI proposals submitted compared to peers?

Most institutions have a mission imperative to increase multidisciplinary collaboration; it is also a good fit for departments that do not typically conduct funded research

- Review grant opportunities for multidisciplinary/multi-PI research and reach out to other departments to create research teams

Are fewer proposals/papers overall being submitted compared to peer departments?

Seeing the benchmark data can encourage faculty to increase submissions to be competitive with peers

- Consider offering release time, or reducing other non-teaching duties, for junior faculty to allow for increased proposal and paper submissions

Is the acceptance rate of paper submissions and/or grant proposals lower than peer departments'?

Indicates quality concerns with paper submissions in the department

- Collaborate with research support staff to create trainings and resources for departmental faculty
- Establish mentoring programs within the department to improve paper submissions

Does the portfolio of grant funding (government and private sources) disproportionately focus on one or two sources as compared to peers?

Some departments rely too much on certain agencies or funding sources, limiting their total funding and exposing them to risk if the agency undergoes budget cuts

- Review peer departments to identify new agencies that fund related work to diversify portfolio

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload
and Course
Assignments

Post-Tenure Activity

Analysis: Average years from associate to full professor for departmental faculty

- **Data Source:** personnel systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** like departments at peer institutions, peer departments at the institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** whether faculty are tenured at associate or full at the institution
- **Time Horizon:** past 10-15 years



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Low**

Most departments will be able to find this information in personnel systems.

Diagnostic Questions

Is post-tenure review conducted every 5-7 years or more?

Infrequent review often leads to faculty's emerging engagement challenges being ignored

- Conduct post-tenure check-ins every 1-2 years
- Monitor faculty research activity to identify and intervene if activity slows

Are merit and promotion conversations typically informed by unclear, subjective criteria?

Faculty may focus on the wrong activities if uncertain of the criteria being used for promotion and merit

- Convene a group of departmental faculty (to ensure all disciplines are represented) to develop merit and promotion criteria that are objective, numeric, and publicly available within the department

Do unproductive associate professors spend more of their time on teaching?

Traditional promotion standards do not reward high-quality teaching, leading faculty to become disengaged

- Consider developing alternative career tracks more focused on teaching
- Develop standards allowing faculty to publish scholarship of teaching and learning for promotion criteria

Do most concerns with "stalled" faculty occur after promotion to full?

Without incentives to continue research, faculty may become disengaged in their career post-promotion

- Create salary increase incentives (also with clear and public criteria) after reaching full professor, and conduct regular reviews (at least every 3-5 years) of full professors in the department using the criteria

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



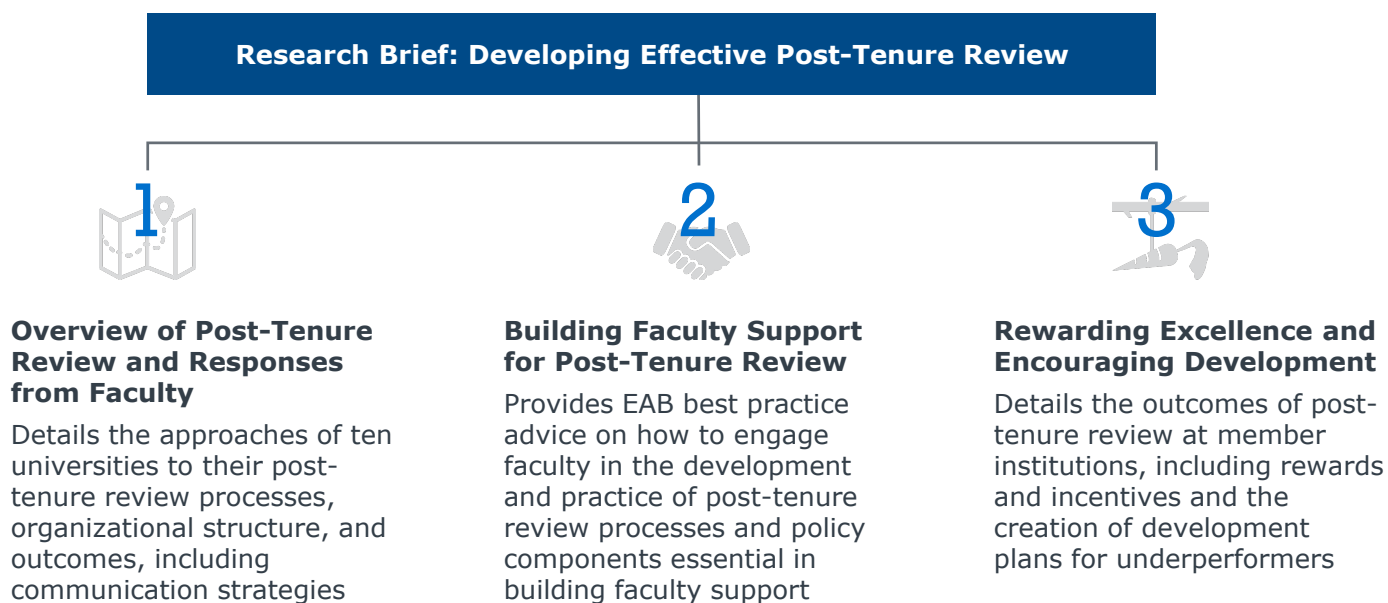
Approval of
Promotion Decisions

Developing Effective Post-Tenure Review

Benchmarks and Advice for Development, Delivery, and Incentives



Intervening with disengaged faculty can be challenging, if not impossible, without clear and frequent post-tenure reviews. At the typical academic department, which conducts post-tenure review every 5-7 years if at all, making post-tenure review a regular and rigorous part of the faculty role will require in-depth, faculty-led change. EAB's research brief on **Developing Effective Post-Tenure Review at Public Institutions** provides member benchmarks and guidance on how to involve faculty in creating and implementing post-tenure reviews. (Private institutions can also use the strategies in this brief.)



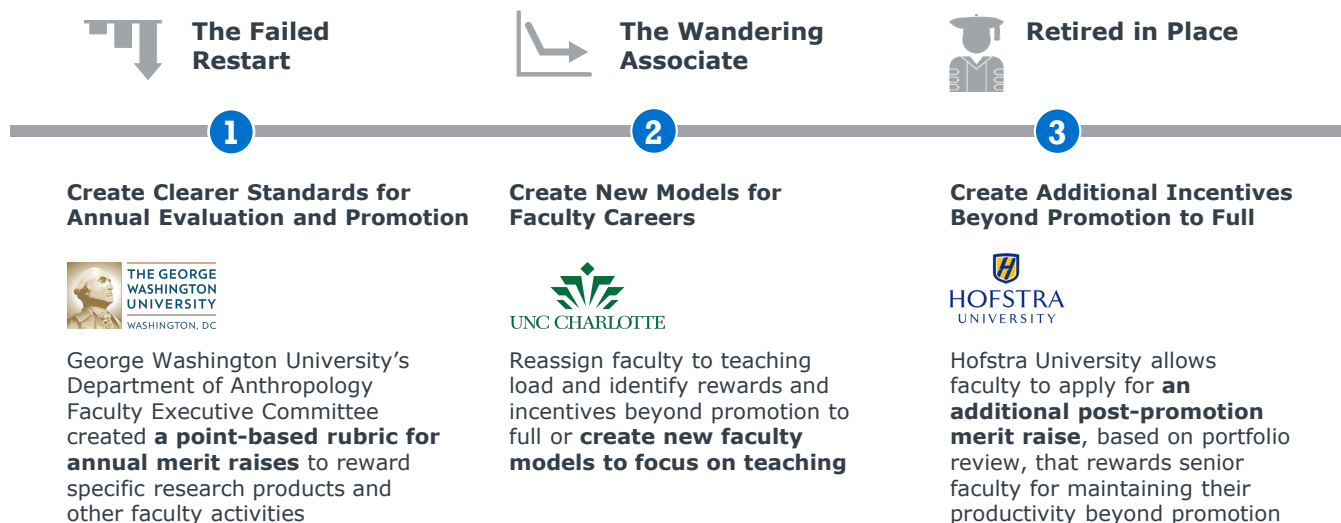
The research brief outlines three aspects of post-tenure reviews: first, an overview of how member institutions organize and deliver reviews; second, detailed guidance on how to create post-tenure reviews at institutions that do not currently have them (or where they are not rigorous or taken seriously); and finally, benchmarking and advice on the incentives and consequences associated with reviews. In general, the universities most content with their post-tenure review process made sure to involve faculty input in every step of the process, from the structure of the review to its delivery and assessment process. As content experts in their discipline, faculty are well poised to support this process and will help to design reviews that are sensitive to the distinct roles they play.

Avoiding the Stalled Associate Problem



Creating Clear Expectations for and Multiple Pathways to Advancement

Beyond creating rigorous and regular post-tenure reviews, departments and universities have identified three more ways to help faculty with career pathing at the associate level and beyond. For the archetypal “failed restart” faculty member who never returns to his or her pre-tenure level of activity, **George Washington University’s** Department of Anthropology found that simply creating a clear, quantitative rubric for annual reviews and merit raises motivates faculty to pursue the specific types of research and other activities that the department values.



Some associate-level faculty may wish to diverge from a traditional faculty career, which often leads them to leave academia altogether or become frustrated and disengaged. Institutions such as the **University of North Carolina at Charlotte** are creating new faculty models focused on teaching, which have different workloads, incentive structures, and promotion pathways from traditional research faculty. Often, these faculty focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning if their new role includes a research requirement. **Hofstra University** also redesigned the faculty pay structure to reward post-promotion engagement. Full professors may submit their portfolios for an additional review after six years to be eligible for a pay raise similar to the raise given at promotion.



Faculty Diversity and Inclusion

Key Departmental Performance Indicators

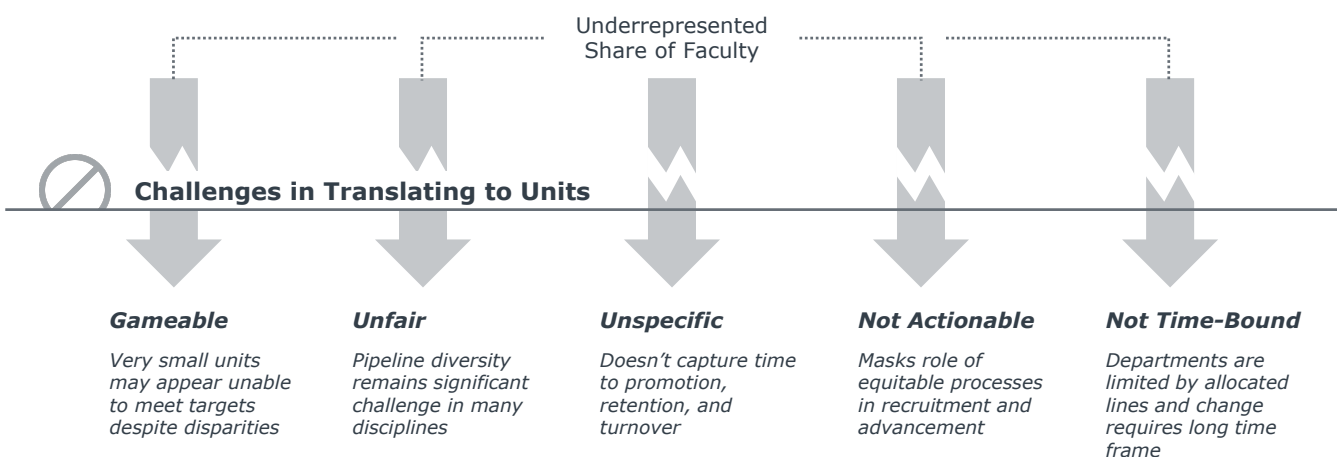
- Pipeline Conversion Rates
- Retention and Promotion Disparities

Cascading Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Goals

The final institutional goal to address is diversity and inclusion, specifically regarding faculty composition. Departments are responsible for two aspects of this goal: recruiting a more diverse pool of faculty and supporting these individuals throughout their careers. Simply measuring the share of underrepresented faculty will, unfortunately, not lead to desired change. For example, an institution could meet its goal of increasing women in STEM just by hiring more professors in typically female-dominated fields such as nursing, masking wide disparities in other fields such as engineering.



The One Metric Most Institutions Track



What Departments Should Focus On

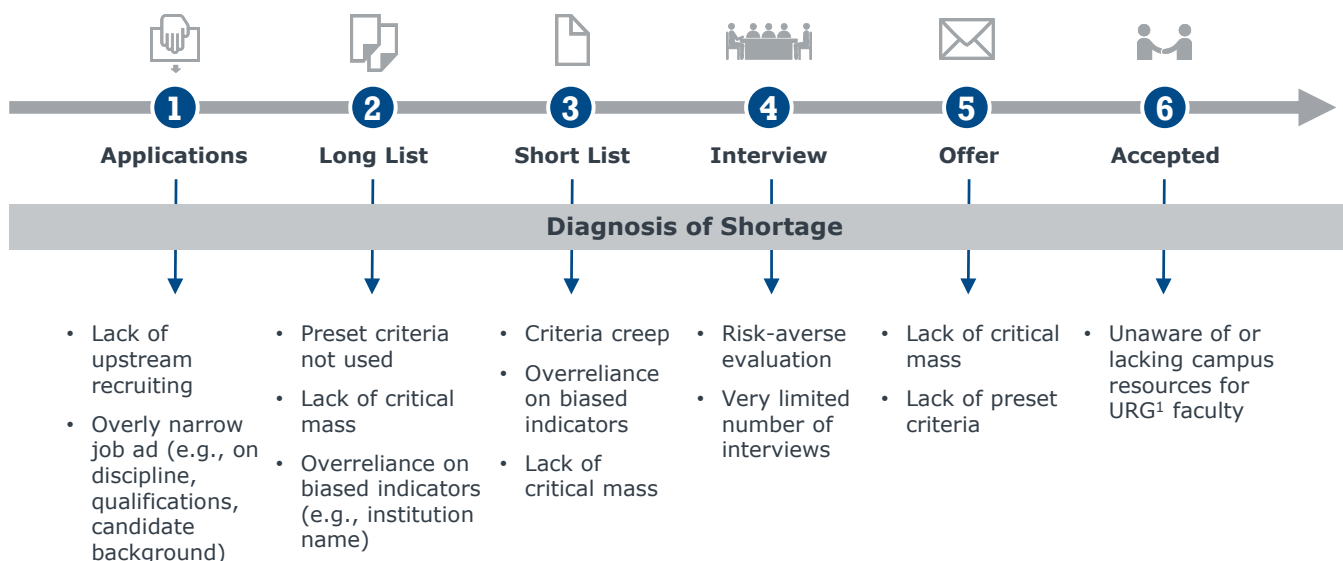
- 1 Pipeline Stage Conversion Rates
- 2 Retention and Advancement Disparities

Second, relying on this metric alone can be unfair for departments whose fields have a relatively homogenous PhD pipeline. The metric is also unspecific about whether departments should focus just on hiring and ignore retention and promotion disparities if they exist. It does not guide departments to identify how they can reduce or eliminate instances of bias (both conscious and unconscious) when they recruit faculty, assign them to activities, and review their portfolios for merit and promotion. Finally, it lacks a clear timeline, and diversifying is often a slow process of culture change and faculty line allocation.

Identify Leaks in the Hiring Pipeline

Tracking Each Stage of the Search to Ensure Equity

Despite years of effort and spending, many departments struggle to increase their diversity, especially as measured by the underrepresented share of faculty. Focusing too much on the demographic makeup of the department gives little clarity about best practices and next steps, especially in fields where there is less diversity in PhD programs. Instead, departments should focus on what they can control: whether or not unconscious, in-group bias keeps candidates out of the hiring pipeline altogether or contributes to attrition once they are in the pipeline.



Departments can use workflow systems to track how the demographics of the candidate pool change at each stage of the recruitment and hiring process. Review committees can introduce unconscious bias as they narrow the pool at each stage, especially if the department never sets clear hiring criteria. Some departments may fail to reach a diverse candidate pool due to a lack of upstream recruiting or overly narrow, exclusive position ads. In others, candidates from underrepresented groups may reach the “long list” but never be called for in-person interviews if the department holds only a few interviews each year. Even after candidates accept an offer, the quality of orientation they receive will affect whether they feel welcome on campus.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Pipeline Stage Conversion Rates

2

Retention and Advancement Disparities

1) Underrepresented groups.

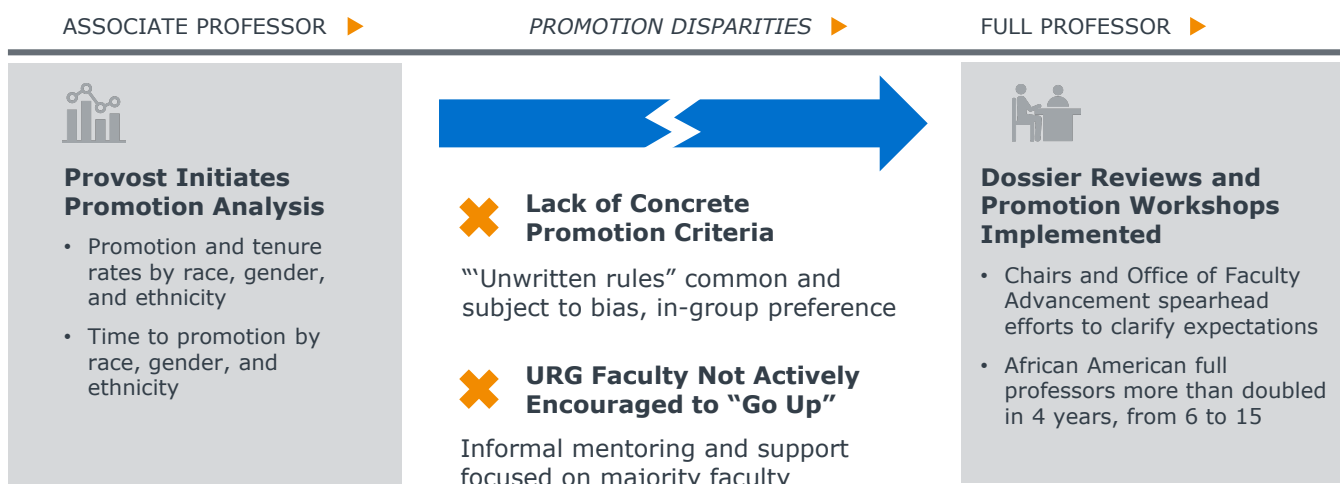
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Auditing Promotion Rates

How One University Uncovered a Disparity in Career Advancement

Beyond the hiring pipeline, departments should investigate disparities in faculty retention and career advancement. If faculty from underrepresented groups leave the institution at higher rates than their peers, it may point to an unwelcoming departmental culture. If they take longer to be tenured or promoted to full professor, it might be due to unconscious bias in faculty review or to the well-documented “invisible” service burden. These faculty often take on additional mentoring, advising, and committee service compared to peers in order to ensure diversity in these roles, restricting their time for research activity.

State Flagship University



As one example, leaders at a state flagship university analyzed their associate professor pipeline and their recent promotions to full professor. They discovered that African American associate professors were promoted at lower rates than their peers for two reasons. First, African American faculty were less likely to even enter the promotion process, even though they had met all of the criteria. Departments lacked concrete, objective criteria for promotion, creating an environment in which white faculty, as members of the majority group, were more likely to have unwritten rules and expectations communicated to them. Second, African American faculty lacked informal mentors who might encourage them to apply for promotion. Department chairs worked with the Office of Faculty Advancement to add development opportunities, and the number of African American professors more than doubled over the next four years.



What Departments Should Focus On

1

Pipeline Stage Conversion Rates

2

Retention and Advancement Disparities

Faculty Hiring Pipeline Stage Conversion Rates

Analysis: Demographics of candidate pool at each stage of the hiring pipeline

- **Data Source:** personnel and hiring systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** demographics of local area, past performance
- **Measurement Considerations:** which groups are underrepresented in the department compared to the institution at large
- **Time Horizon:** measure on a per-search basis



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium**

Departments may need to upgrade hiring systems and databases or purchase software to improve data collection.

Diagnostic Questions

Do search committees typically wait until after the committee is formed to consider diversity and inclusion?

Diversity and inclusion is often overlooked unless built into the committee selection process

- Ensure that search committees have at least one member specifically chosen to help ensure diversity and inclusion in the process (this individual can be from an underrepresented group, but does not need to be)

Are position descriptions typically drafted and posted without reviewing for inclusive language?

Job ads are often subject to unconscious bias at multiple stages of the hiring process

- Avoid overly specific language about the research experience or subdiscipline being sought
- Clearly state the department’s commitment to an inclusive culture

Does the department struggle to identify a diverse pool of candidates in the search process?

Building relationships with future candidates, such as PhD students and postdocs, increases future pool diversity

- Establish postdoctoral programs and fellowships targeted toward diversifying the faculty pipeline
- Reach out to institutions with diverse PhD programs in the field to develop relationships with PhD candidates

Is outreach to potential candidates typically conducted on a one-off basis, without a central place to share information?

Gathering robust data on the potential hiring pool eases the process of identifying diverse candidates

- Identify interested faculty to attend conferences and network with diverse junior faculty in the field
- Create a shared departmental database of contacts identified by departmental faculty

Does the department move from portfolio and CV review to a small number of on-campus interviews for each search?

Limiting the number of interviews conducted in the search process often reduces the diversity of the pool

- Conduct phone or video conference screening interviews for the top 10-15 candidates before holding on-campus interviews

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload and Course Assignments



Full-Time Faculty Line Allocation

Faculty Retention and Promotion Disparities

Analysis: Faculty attrition and promotion rates, disaggregated by demographic groups

- **Data Source:** personnel systems
- **Benchmarking Source:** demographics of local area, peer departments at the institution
- **Measurement Considerations:** which groups are underrepresented in the department
- **Time Horizon:** 3-5 years



Difficulty of Collecting Data: **Medium-Low**

Most information needed is contained within personnel systems.

Diagnostic Questions

Are mentors for new faculty typically restricted to senior faculty members within the department?

New faculty may feel uncomfortable discussing some concerns with the senior faculty who will make tenure and promotion decisions; external and peer mentors allow faculty to discuss sensitive questions more openly

- Establish mentoring programs that provide new faculty with senior mentors external to the department and in-department peer mentors, in addition to senior in-department mentors
- Ensure that mentoring programs have structured agendas and project plans

Is promotion to full professor based on qualitative, subjective criteria that are not revealed to candidates before the promotion conversation?

"Unwritten rules" are common and subject to bias toward one's own demographic group

- Work with departmental faculty to create clear, specific promotion criteria for full professor, and make criteria publicly available within the department

If the institution offers implicit bias training, are trainings run by human resources staff and open to all departments?

Implicit bias training rarely leads to behavioral change unless run by respected faculty peers and customized to the individual department

- Identify interested senior faculty and work with human resources staff to create customized, faculty-led implicit bias trainings for the department

Do faculty from underrepresented groups take on more service and advising roles than majority faculty in the department?

Underrepresented faculty often take on more service work, often in support of underrepresented students, which can prolong time to promotion if it detracts from core research and teaching activities

- Review balance of service work to determine whether majority faculty can contribute more to service
- Work with central student support and academic advising staff to ensure that underrepresented students have access to mentorship opportunities

Key Leadership Decisions Informed



Faculty Workload and Course Assignments



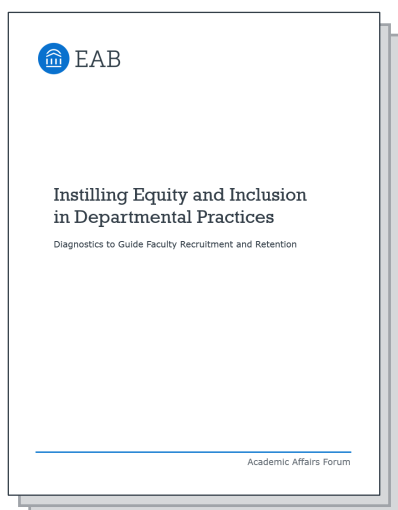
Full-Time Faculty Line Allocation

Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Diagnostic



Instilling Equity and Inclusion in Recruitment and Retention Practices

Pressure from students and shifting demographics are driving academic leaders to prioritize both greater numerical representation of underrepresented groups among faculty and building a more inclusive environment for faculty, students, and staff. The decisions, processes, and preferences that truly impact diversity and inclusion occur at the departmental level. Chairs, program heads, and faculty leaders must identify and remedy sources of bias within traditional recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and promotion practices.



EAB guidance for departmental leaders on...

- Accountability for and Tracking of Diversity Efforts
- Identifying Prospective Candidates
- Developing Referral Relationships
- Hiring Timelines and Standing Committees
- On-Campus Recruitment
- Search Committee Formation
- Implicit Bias Training
- Composing Inclusive Job Advertisements
- Diversity Statements
- Defining Evaluation Criteria
- Monitoring the Pool During Searches
- Junior Faculty Mentoring
- Faculty Onboarding
- Addressing Promotion Disparities
- Postdoctoral Recruitment Opportunities
- Target of Opportunity Hire Programs

For institutions beginning to explore these issues and incorporate rigor into departmental practices around diversifying the faculty, EAB has developed the diagnostic resources and toolkits included in **Instilling Equity and Inclusion in Departmental Practices**. This publication outlines the critical roles of search committees, departments, and deans in promoting equity and inclusion; the questions institutions should ask at each stage of the faculty hiring, onboarding, and career advancement process; and strategies from member institutions to implement best practices on campus.

To view the full diagnostic, visit www.eab.com.



How Can We Ensure Progress on Unit Goals?

Sustaining Momentum Through Ongoing Evaluation

CHAPTER

3

Designing an Effective Unit Evaluation Process

Six Principles to Guide Continuous Improvement

Solely having the right data and analyses in place does not guarantee that they inform and guide departmental action. Provosts and their teams, working with academic units, need to create an ongoing process to review data, set goals, and diagnose departmental challenges. The process must create real change and provide clarity as to what actions departments need to take and why they are important. It also needs to be informed by data that is from an agreed-upon source and placed in an institutional context.

1



Hold **formal evaluation conversation**, at least annually

2



Minimize reporting burden on chairs

3



Share data on internal and external benchmarks openly

4



Reward improvement with recognition and resources

5



Connect performance and data to major **resource decisions**

6



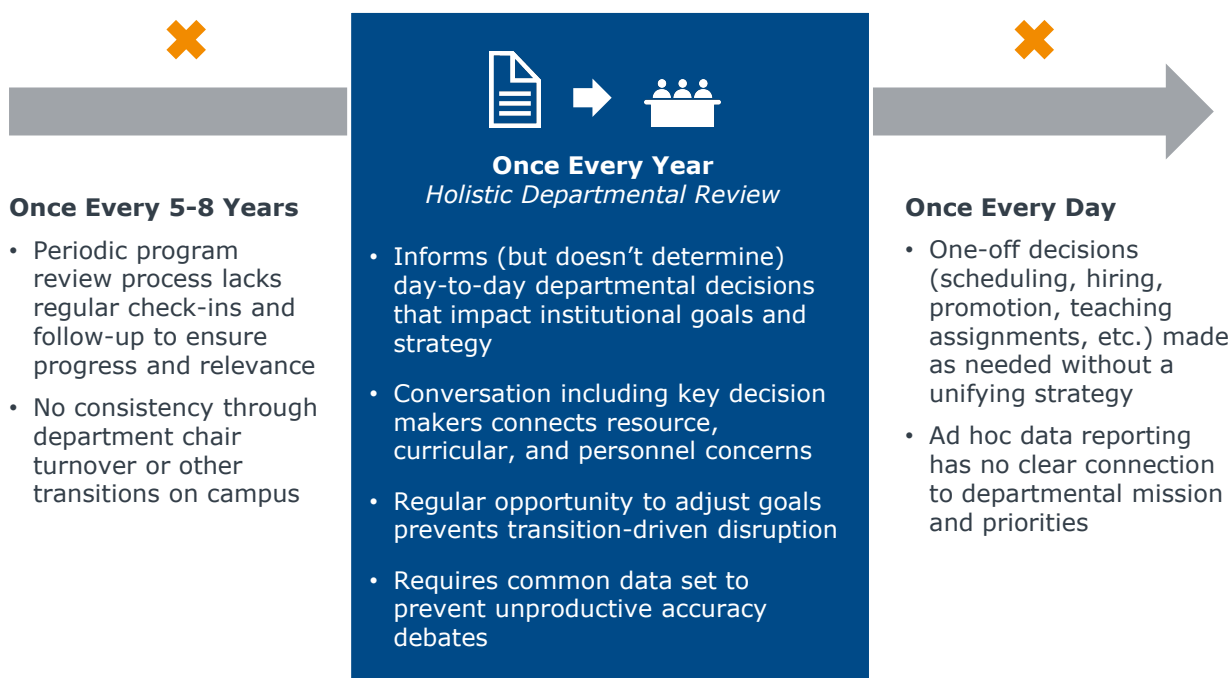
Prioritize a **small number of goals** to focus on each year

Across the public and private sectors, six principles stand out as common to the most effective evaluation processes. Those six principles are listed above and explained in detail over the next several pages.

Find the Right Frequency

Principle 1: Review Departmental Performance and Set Goals Annually

To capitalize on the work of cascading goals to academic departments, institutions must conduct annual review and planning conversations focused on departmental performance on their goals and needs to make additional progress. An annual meeting helps departments balance the long waits in the program review cycle with the more immediate decisions about scheduling, hiring and promotion, and more. Without revisiting departmental strategy more regularly, faculty leaders often make one-off decisions without understanding how they impact institutional goals, and senior administrators may miss opportunities or concerns within academic units.



The word "review" may bring to mind a process of rewards and punishments. However, progressive institutions make these meetings data-informed discussions rather than departmental grading exercises or budget hearings. The meetings are a time for checking in with faculty leaders to review data, interpret the department's performance on its goals, and determine next steps for improvement or continued success. They should bring together the whole department (or at least a faculty leadership committee) to meet with the dean and provost or vice provost. Involving department faculty helps them to understand the rationale behind resource decisions and to see their role in advancing institutional mission and strategy.

Avoid Administrivia

Principle 2: Minimize Self-Reporting Burden on Departments

For productive, data-informed conversations, departments and provosts must have access to a shared, agreed-upon data set. At many institutions, departments must collect and analyze their own data, stalling many review and planning efforts from the start. Department chairs often have neither the analytic skills nor free time to regularly produce reports. The quotes below from department chairs demonstrate the frustration many chairs feel about excessive reporting burdens. Moreover, without agreement on data definitions, departments may produce wildly different results.

Stop the Paperwork

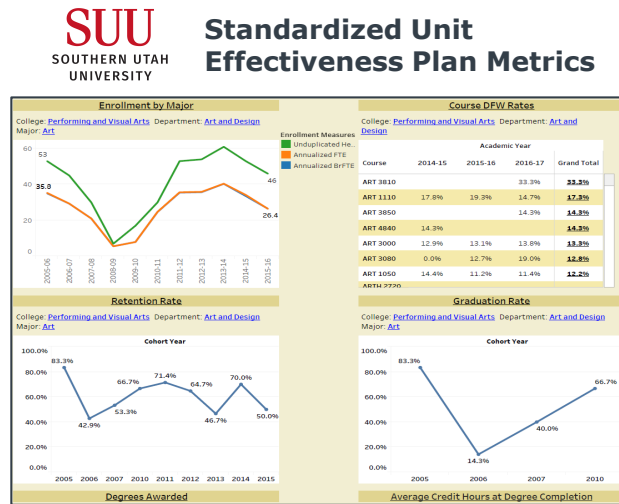
“There are more pages in our departmental assessment report than students in my major.”

*Department Chair, Communication
Liberal Arts College*

Answering to Many Masters

“All the chairs know what’s going on. The administrators are each asking for individual reports from the chairs, and they don’t know that the other administrators are also asking for reports.”

*Department Chair, Philosophy
Private Master’s University*



- Performance shown over time
- Shared before annual planning process
- Departmental self-analysis must map to performance on provided indicators
- Used to prevent excessive and uncoordinated requests from institutional research offices and administration

The need for a single, standardized data set should compel chief academic officers and their teams to produce these reports centrally, typically through institutional research (IR) offices. At **Southern Utah University**, departments base self-analysis reports on a standard set of performance trends. Institutional research staff produce reports in time to make them available for departments’ annual planning process each spring. Another benefit of standard reporting is that it redirects IR staff time and effort away from the one-off, uncoordinated requests departments commonly make without guidance from the administration on which metrics are most critical areas of focus. To make it possible to have a standard data set, institutions may need to audit one-off requests and reports to reduce their frequency and free up time for staff to focus on institutional priorities.

Know Where You Stand

Principle 3: Make Unit Performance Data Accessible Campus-Wide

When designing evaluation processes, provosts and deans need to decide whether departments should be able to view each other's goals and performance data. Without the right design and communication, dashboards can seem more like "rankings" that pit highly distinct disciplines against each other. But as long as the distinctions between departmental mission and goals are clear, a public dashboard of performance metrics creates trust, cooperation, and perhaps some healthy competition.

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

Strategic Accountability Matrix

Department <i>(Names and data are anonymized)</i>	Student Success Metric					
	Student Credit Hours lost to DFW			Interession Undergraduate SCH		
	Goal	Actual	Score	Goal	Actual	Score
Physics	471	1,086	2.31	122	198	1.62
Art History	401	134	0.33	113	400	3.54
Biology	193	724	3.76	78	87	1.11
Theater	205	715	3.49	80	219	2.72
Mathematics	1,879	1,384	0.74	244	103	0.42

Transparency around actual values **encourages healthy competition** between departments

Transparency around data definitions and expected values clarifies **how departments and deans collaborate to set goals**

Transparent scores help departments understand **resource allocation decisions**

The provost's office at the **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** regularly updates and disseminates a dashboard of strategic performance indicators. The dashboard lists performance goals for each department on each indicator, along with their actual performance and a weighted score. (See the following page for more information on weightings.) The dashboard lets departments easily review their own performance and the goals and performance of other departments. The scores give clarity to the provost and deans' resource decisions. The transparent data around goal performance can encourage departments to improve and keep pace with peers but does not force them to see other departments as antagonistic competitors.

Make It Matter

Principle 4: Tie Unit Planning and Improvement to Discretionary Resources

Any system of evaluation must include incentives that direct departmental effort toward the right priorities. The **University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** sets departmental goals based on improving on their past performance on a set of strategic metrics. With dean oversight, departments assign a weighting of 0, 1, or 2 to each goal. The weightings are intended both to acknowledge the diversity of departmental missions (e.g., a graduate-only department should not be evaluated on undergraduate success) and to push departments to improve on strategically important metrics.



= Departmental Discretionary Budget

Departments may use funds for conference expenses, travel, support staff, supplies, minor facilities renovations, etc.

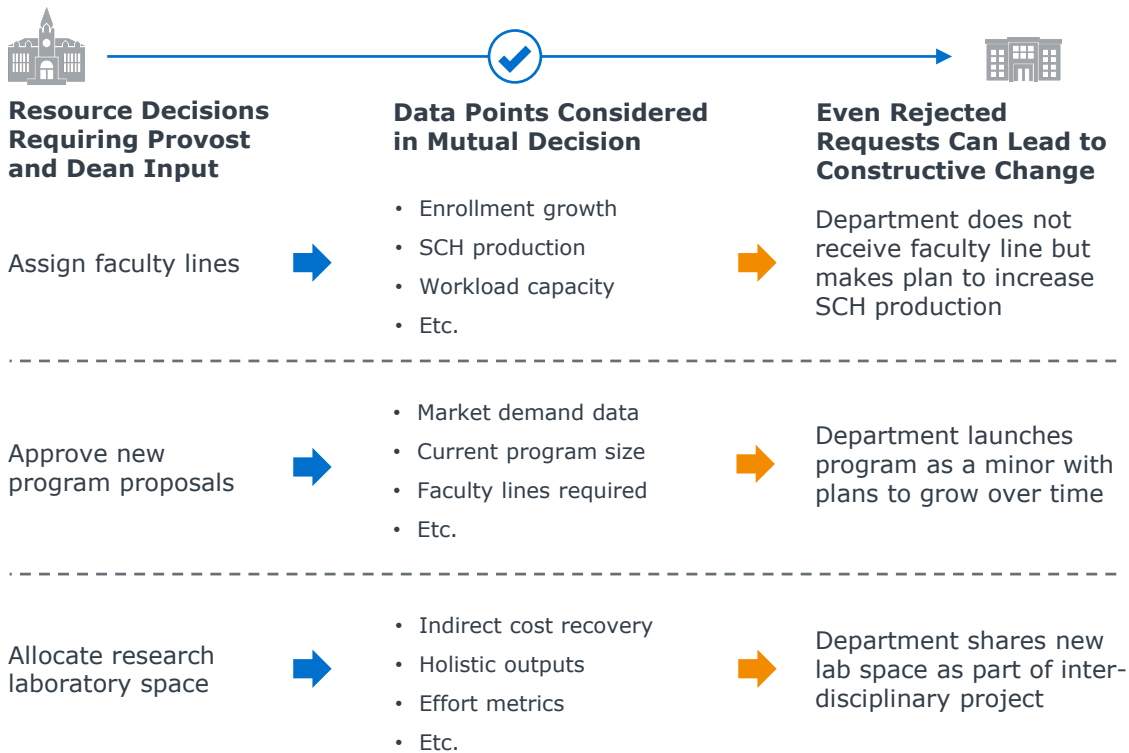
University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

If departments improve on their past performance, they receive a discretionary funding incentive. These dollars constitute up to 20% of departmental budgets and are used for any one-time discretionary expense from travel funding to new office furniture. The provost's team advises departments not to use the funds for recurring expenses such as salaries, since the department may not receive the same incentive in the next year. Departments rarely, if ever, receive absolutely no incentive at all, since they can track and adjust their goal progress using regularly updated dashboards. UW-Eau Claire adjusts the discretionary incentive based on department size to avoid making too large a portion of budget dependent on the incentive in smaller departments.

Open the Black Box

Principle 5: Explicitly Connect Metrics to Resource Decisions

Discretionary funding provides a motivating short-term incentive, but the data generated for this process should also inform long-term, highly valuable resource decisions: faculty lines, program launches, and space. Most department leaders feel that these decisions are made in a “black box”: opaquely, even arbitrarily, and subject to favoritism. Provosts and deans should not use the data to create strict resource allocation formulas, but departments are eager to understand the ways that data informs resource decisions, even if it does not dictate them.



For example, if the provost routinely rejects a department’s requests for faculty lines without any communication about the reasons, faculty might assume that he or she does not value their discipline. But if departmental leaders know that the provost assigned new lines to departments whose student demand outpaced their ability to teach, they can consider how they might spark student interest and increase SCH production in the next year. The annual review meeting is an ideal occasion for open and honest conversation about the logic behind resource decisions and constructive measures departments can take to help them make a stronger case for resource requests in the future.

If Everything's Important, Nothing Is

Principle 6: Focus Improvement Plan on 2–4 Strategic Goals

Goal-setting processes are less likely to inspire action if they are overly broad and undirected. Instead, departments and deans should leave annual review conversations with a small number of specific goals to work toward and a list of action steps to realize those goals. Having only two to four goals ensures that departments focus their strategy and their actions throughout the year on a few mission-critical items where they need to improve or where they have an opportunity to contribute more to institutional goals.

Targeted Action Plan (Example)

Major Enrollment—Education ¹	
<i>Summary</i>	Current enrollment: 25 students Desired enrollment: 30-35 students
<i>Near-Term Goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage with local high schools to improve major recruitment and create more employment opportunities for graduatesReduce credit-hour requirements
<i>Analysis of Current Efforts</i>	Previous faculty member charged with recruitment recently retired
<i>Action Steps</i>	Conduct prospective student visits to feeder high schools
<i>Responsible Parties and Timeline</i>	Joan Smith 1 year

SUU
SOUTHERN UTAH
UNIVERSITY

Use goal-setting and analysis of current efforts to focus departmental action on priorities where they most need improvement

Departments responsible for determining action steps based on unit and discipline context

Identify 1-3 metrics to evaluate progress on action steps in the next year's review

The provost's office at **Southern Utah University** asks departments and programs to complete an annual self-review report around a small set of strategic performance metrics. As part of this report, departments select action steps based on whether their performance is meeting goals. Departments can choose which metrics to prioritize and plan actions around or use the data to argue that they do not need to make changes to their current practices. Departments also set a timeline to complete their action steps (typically by the next year's review) and use the review to reflect on whether they were successful or there were any unforeseen barriers to completing them.

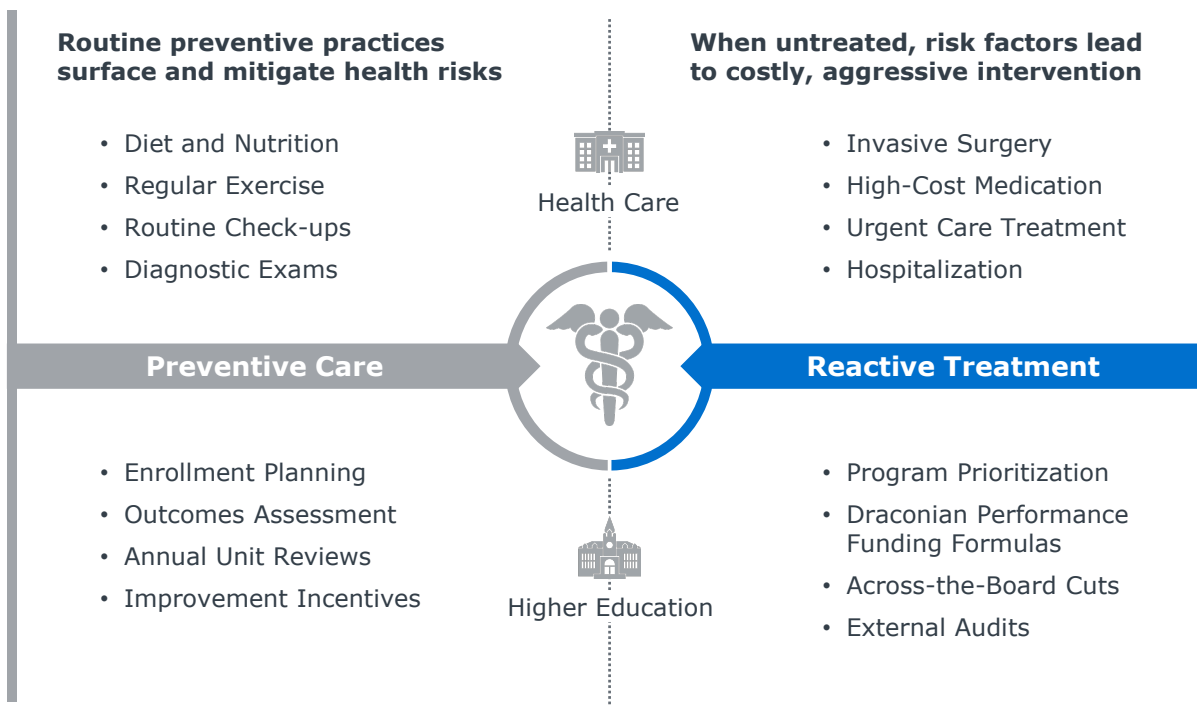
1) Department name and data are pseudonymous.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

An Ounce of Prevention

Preempting the Need for Severe, Top-Down Corrective Measures

Though adding an annual review and planning conversation to each department’s schedule will take significant time and effort, this investment in institutional and program health serves as a form of preventive medicine for higher education. The regular practice of reviewing performance and setting goals ensures departments are prepared to manage a one-time budget downturn or policy change that might otherwise create a crisis.



Provosts and deans will be all too familiar with the story of a new president or board member pushing for across-the-board cuts, rigid performance funding formulas, or punitive prioritization processes. Institutions with a regular review process already in place can resist these painful interventions by arguing that they have already built a rigorous institutional infrastructure. In short, annual reviews can prevent reactive treatments that create negative political consequences and conflict on campus.



Advisors to Our Work

APPENDIX

Advisors to Our Work

The Academic Affairs 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.

Auburn University

Charles Israel
Associate Dean for Academic
Affairs, College of Liberal Arts

Binghamton University

Nasrin Fatima
Assistant Provost for Institutional
Research and Effectiveness

Michael McGoff
Senior Vice Provost and Chief
Financial Officer

Bryn Athyn College

Allen Bedford
Dean of Academics (Emeritus)

**California State University,
Dominguez Hills**

Thomas Norman
Associate Professor

**California State University,
Northridge**

Dan Hosken
Dean, College of Arts, Media,
and Communication

Catholic University of America

Andrew Abela
Provost

The College of New Jersey

Jeffrey Osborn
Dean, School of Science

College of the Holy Cross

Margaret Freije
Provost and Dean of the College

Patricia Ring
Registrar

Cornell College

Joe Dieker
Vice President for Academic
Affairs

Eastern Mennonite University

Fred Kniss
Provost

Deirdre Smeltzer
Vice President and
Undergraduate Dean

**Eastern Washington
University**

Mark Baldwin
Associate Vice Provost for
Academic Planning and Policy

Fairleigh Dickinson University

Michael Avaltroni
Dean, Pharmacy and Health
Sciences

Gillian Small
University Provost and Senior
Vice President for Academic
Affairs

Fisk University

Rodney Hanley
Provost and Vice President for
Academic Affairs

Fitchburg State University

Alberto Cardelle
Provost and Vice President for
Academic Affairs

George Mason University

Robert Matz
Senior Associate Dean for
Curriculum and Technology

George Washington University

Chet Sherwood
Chair, Department of
Anthropology

Grand View University

Carl Moses
Provost

Harper College

Jennifer Berne
Dean, Liberal Arts

Hofstra University

Terri Shapiro
Senior Vice Provost for
Academic Affairs

Iowa State University

Michael Bugeja
Director, School of Journalism
and Communication

James Madison University

Heather Coltman
Provost and Senior Vice
President for Academic Affairs

Marymount University

Barry Erdeljon
Co-Chair, Department of
Communication and Media Design

Memorial University

Alex Marland
Associate Dean, Faculty of
Humanities and Social Sciences

**MGH Institute of Health
Professions**

Paulette Di Angi
Director of Institutional
Effectiveness

Alex Johnson
Provost and Vice President for
Academic Affairs

Michigan State University

Luke Schultheis
Assistant Dean for Student
Success Initiatives

**Middle Georgia State
University**

Melanie Hatch
Provost

Advisors to Our Work (cont.)

New York University

Ora Fish
Assistant Vice President,
University Data Warehouse and
Business Intelligence

The Ohio State University

Peter Hahn
Divisional Dean, Arts and
Humanities

David Manderscheid
Executive Dean, College of Arts
and Sciences

Oklahoma State University

Pamela Fry
Vice Provost and Associate Vice
President for Undergraduate
Education

Thomas Wikle
Associate Dean for Academic
Programs, College of Arts and
Sciences

Pepperdine University

Michael Ditmore
Divisional Dean of Humanities
and Teacher Education

Point Loma Nazarene University

Daniel Bothe
Dean, School of Business

Kerry Fulcher
Provost and Chief Academic
Officer

Jeff Sullivan
Chair, Department of Kinesiology

Maria Zack
Chair, Department of
Mathematical, Information and
Computer Sciences and Chair,
Department of Physics and
Engineering

Portland State University

Karen Marrongelle
Dean, College of Liberal Arts
and Sciences

Scott Marshall
Vice Provost, Academic and
Fiscal Planning

Purdue University

Monal Patel
Director of Institutional Research

Rutgers University

Susan Lawrence
Vice Dean for Undergraduate
Education, School of Arts and
Sciences

Brent Ruben
Executive Director, Center for
Organizational Development
and Leadership

Ryerson University

Chris Evans
Vice Provost Academic

Marcus Santos
Associate Dean, Undergraduate
Science Programs and Student
Affairs, Faculty of Science

Samford University

Nancy Biggio
Associate Provost for
Administration

Saskatchewan Polytechnic

Jamie Hilts
Dean, School of Mining, Energy,
and Manufacturing

Anne Neufeld
Provost and Vice-President,
Academic

Seattle University

Robert Dullea
Interim Provost

South Dakota State University

Lewis Brown
Dean, College of Engineering

Southern New Hampshire University

Michelle Alvarez
Associate Dean, Social Sciences

Jan Wyatt
Senior Executive Director,
Nursing, Health Professions,
Social Sciences and Education

Southern Utah University

James Sage
Associate Provost

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Michael Wick
Provost and Dean of Faculty

Stonehill College

Steve Beauregard
Assistant Vice President for
Planning and Budgeting

SUNY Oswego

Walter Roettger
Acting Provost and Vice
President for Academic Affairs

Texas Tech University

W. Brent Lindquist
Dean, College of Arts and
Sciences

University at Albany

Havidán Rodríguez
President

University of Central Florida

Paige Borden
Associate Provost for Academic
Program Quality and Associate
Vice President, Institutional
Knowledge Management

Elizabeth Dooley
Vice Provost, Teaching and
Learning and Dean, College of
Undergraduate Studies

Maribeth Ehasz
Vice President, Student
Development and Enrollment
Services

Lynn Hepner
Associate Dean of Academic
Programs, College of Arts and
Humanities

Jeff Moore
Dean, College of Arts and
Humanities

Advisors to Our Work (cont.)

University of Colorado Boulder

Andrew Cowell
Chair, Department of Linguistics

William Kaempfer
Senior Vice Provost and Associate
Vice Chancellor for Budget and
Planning

Cora Randall
Chair, Department of Atmospheric
and Oceanic Sciences

University of Connecticut

Lloyd Blanchard
Associate Vice Provost for
Institutional Research and
Effectiveness

University of Denver

Seth Masket
Professor of Political Science

University of Findlay

Darin Fields
Vice President for Academic
Affairs

Sara Hingson
Director of External Academic
Affairs

John Osae-Kwapong
Associate Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Institutional
Effectiveness

University of Hartford

Katherine Black
Dean, College of Arts and
Sciences

University of Kansas

Paul Atchley
Associate Dean for Academic
Innovation and Student Success,
College of Liberal Arts and
Sciences

Deb Teeter
University Director, Office of
Institutional Research and
Planning

University of Kentucky

Jesse Hedge
Assistant Dean for Enrollment
Management and Decision
Support, College of Arts and
Sciences

Mark Kornbluh
Dean, College of Arts and
Sciences

University of Manitoba

Janice Ristock
Provost and Vice-President
Academic

University of Missouri

Julie Brandt
Associate Director of Quality
Improvement

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Christina Drum
Manager, IR Analytics and
Metadata

Chris Heavey
Dean, College of Liberal Arts

University of New England

Ellen Beaulieu
Vice President for Strategic
Initiatives

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Regina Carelli
Associate Chair, Department of
Psychology and Neuroscience

Abigail Panter
Senior Associate Dean for
Undergraduate Education

Andrew Perrin
Associate Chair, Department
of Sociology

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Richard Buttimer
Senior Associate Dean, College
of Business

University of Pittsburgh

Laura Putnam
Chair, Department of History

University of San Diego

Nicholas Ladany
Dean, School of Leadership
and Education Sciences

University of Saskatchewan

Brett Fairbairn
Professor of Public Policy

Troy Harkot
Director of Institutional
Effectiveness

University of South Alabama

G. David Johnson
Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Lauren Friedman
Director of Institutional Research

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

Jerald Ainsworth
Provost and Senior Vice
Chancellor for Academic Affairs

University of Texas at Arlington

Peter Crouch
Dean, College of Engineering

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Kristin Croyle
Vice President for Student
Success

Michael Lehker
Dean, College of Health Affairs

Patricia Alvarez McHatton
Dean, College of Education

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Patricia Kleine
Provost and Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs

Advisors to Our Work (cont.)

University of Wisconsin-Superior

Jackie Weissenburger
Interim Provost and Vice
Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Dean Yohnk
Dean of Academic Affairs and
Graduate Studies

Emily Zobel
Director, Institutional
Effectiveness

Villanova University

Sally Scholz
Chair, Department of Philosophy

Virginia Tech

Amy Hogan
Assistant Provost for Leadership
Initiatives

Peggy Layne
Assistant Provost for Faculty
Development

Washburn University

JuliAnn Mazachek
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Wheaton College

Dorothy Chappell
Dean, College of Natural and
Social Sciences

Wilfrid Laurier University

Deborah MacLatchy
President and Vice-Chancellor

Winthrop University

M. Greg Oakes
Assistant Dean for Assessment
and Graduate Programs, College
of Arts and Sciences

Wright State University

Herbert Dregalla
Associate Dean for Students and
Curriculum, College of Liberal Arts

York University

Alice Pitt
Vice-Provost Academic



Washington DC | Richmond | Birmingham | Minneapolis

P 202.747.1000 | F 202.747.1010 | eab.com