

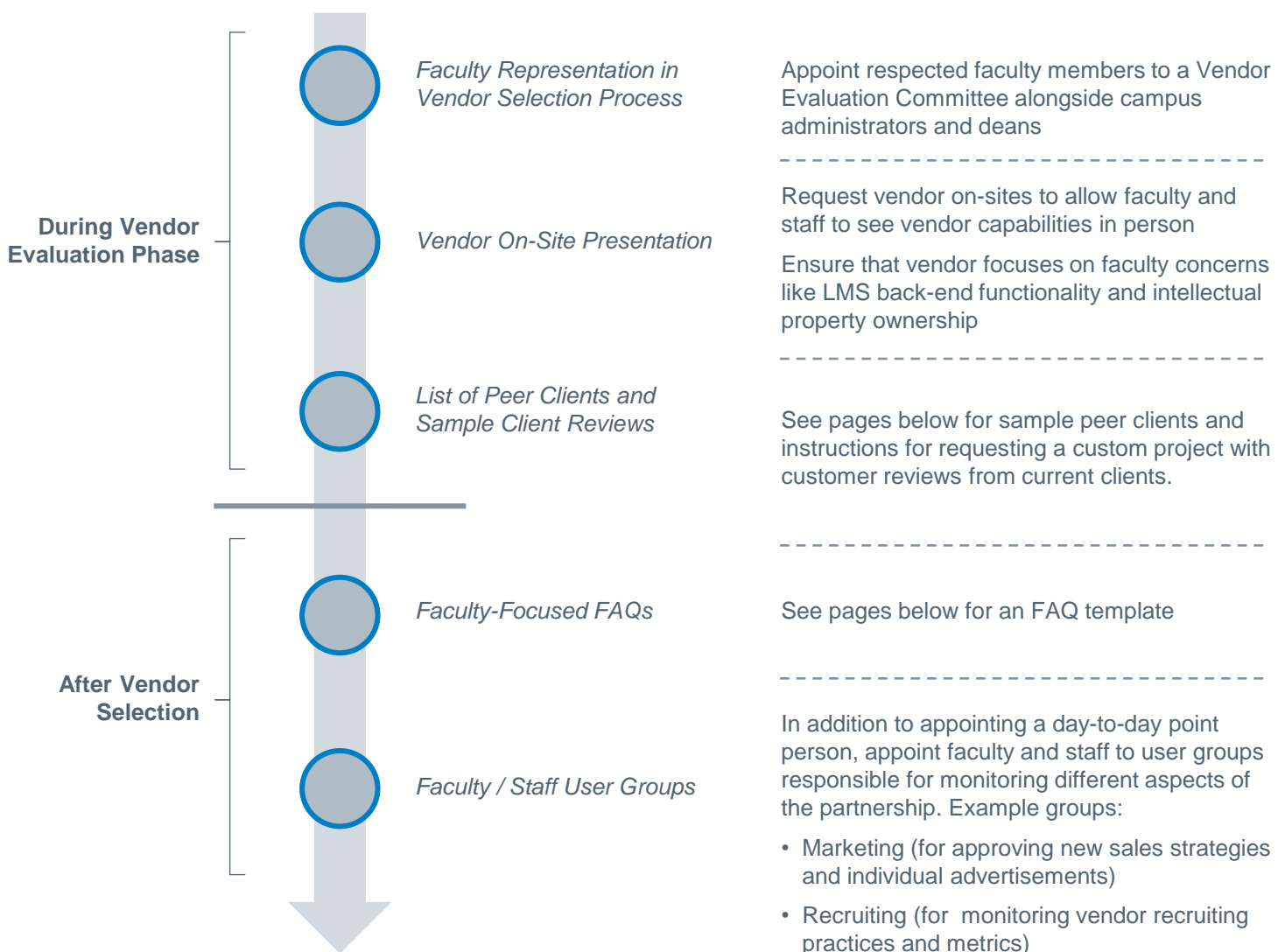
Campus Communications Plan

Engaging the Campus with Enablement Partnerships

Institutions that decide to move forward with an online enablement partnership have found that gaining faculty and staff approval is a critical step in ensuring successful program launch and long-term growth. In particular, having “buy-in” helps accelerate speed to launch, as faculty who are comfortable with the idea of using vendor-provided support services can focus completely on course development and teaching. However, faculty and staff typically have some reservations around the idea of outsourcing components of the university’s online support infrastructure.

This model Communications Plan is designed to help administrators build support for an online enablement partnership by overcoming common misconceptions and involving the campus at key points in the procurement, negotiation, and implementation phases of a vendor partnership.

Strategies for Engaging Faculty and Staff in the Selection of and Partnership with Online Enablement Vendors



Sample Enablement Vendor Clients

In our interviews with enablement clients, the most common tip for winning over skeptical faculty was to show them that similar institutions had already worked with the vendor in question. To that end, EAB has assembled this list of sample vendor clients with links for faculty and staff to view the webpage of the specific programs enabled by the outside vendor.

Vendor	Sample Client Institutions	Sample Programs
2U	American University	Master of Arts in International Relations
	University of Southern California	Education: Master of Arts in Teaching , Master of Arts in Teaching (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) , and Master's of Education in Advanced Instruction Social Work: Master of Social Work
	Boston College	Semester Online (undergraduate)
	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
Academic Partnerships	Lamar University	Master's of Education in Education Administration , Master's of Education in Teacher Leadership , Masters of Education in School Counseling
	University of Texas at Arlington	RN to BSN
Apollidon	University of Florida	Master's in Forensic Science , Master's in Pharmaceutical Chemistry
Bisk Education	University of Vermont	Advanced Certificate in Sustainable Innovation
	Michigan State University	Master's Certificate in Supply Chain Management , Master's Certificate in Strategic Leadership and Management
	University of Saint Thomas – Minnesota	Master of Arts in Special Education (Autism Spectrum Disorders) , Master of Arts in Public Safety and Law Enforcement Leadership
Blackboard	Ottawa University (Kansas)	Various undergraduate and graduate programs
Colloquy	CSU Monterey Bay	Executive MBA
	George Mason University	Executive MBA
	The George Washington University	Master of Professional Studies in Security and Safety Leadership

Sample Enablement Vendor Clients (continued)

Vendor	Sample Client Institutions	Sample Programs
Deltak	Gonzaga University	Master's of Organizational Leadership
	Purdue University	Master of Science in Education in Learning Design and Technology
	University of Scranton	MBA
Educators Serving Educators	University of New Haven	Master's of Sports Management
	Western New England University	Master of Arts in Communication
Embanet	University of Cincinnati	Master of Science in Criminal Justice
	University of New England	Master of Science in Education
	Vanderbilt University	Master of Science in Nursing
Everspring	University of Kansas	Various degree and certificate programs in Education
Learning House	Friends University	MBA
	Marygrove College	Master of Arts in Education
	Notre Dame College	Master of Education, Master of Arts in Security Policy
Pearson	Arizona State University	Multiple degree programs
	University of Florida	Multiple undergraduate majors

Faculty-Focused FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about Online Enablement Vendors

This document provides a template to address the most common concerns raised by faculty and staff regarding vendor partnerships for online education.¹ After a decision to work with an enabler has been made, we recommend circulating the answers to these and any other campus-specific FAQs to directly address stakeholder concerns. The answers below assume that a partnership has already been made. They may require editing based on your campus's specific knowledge of the vendor(s) with which you plan to partner.

General Questions about Vendor Partnerships

What's the advantage of working with an outside partner? Can't we just do this ourselves?

Some institutions, particularly those with limited experience offering online courses or programs, have found the task of designing, advertising, recruiting for, and supporting new online programs to be financially and logistically daunting. Others have some experience, but are unable to boost enrollment to desired levels. [\[Insert any additional reason\(s\) here\]](#) Online enablement vendors can assist with the administrative, marketing, and instructional design aspects of online programs, allowing faculty and staff to focus on what they do best: developing and delivering high-quality academic content.

Vendor Differentiators

- Longstanding and frequently updated **expertise** in online market research, instructional design, marketing, recruiting, student retention, etc.
- **Economies of scale** resulting from central management and shared knowledge and infrastructure
- **Plentiful capital** for required upfront investments



Benefits to Our Campus

- **Improved speed-to-launch** our desired program(s)
- Ability to achieve **significant enrollment growth**
- **Substantial upfront cost savings** (though potentially at the cost of long-term revenues)
- **Ability to rapidly staff up/down**, depending on program needs

How big of an upfront investment will our institution or department need to make?

While [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) will bear upfront costs relating to marketing, recruiting, retention, technical support, and other administrative functions, [\[Institution Name Here\]](#) still bears the cost of paying existing and hiring new faculty, and scaling internal services like course registration and admissions. The exact upfront costs vary across different institutions, but could range from near zero to several hundred thousand dollars. Depending on enrollments, it could take just one term, or several years, to break even on the initial investment. [\[Add internal projections here, if applicable.\]](#)

1) Some enablement vendors have a premade FAQ page already on their websites. Others can provide a copy for circulation on campus. While these can be useful, our experience is that a institution-written version is generally more trusted.

Faculty-Focused FAQs (continued)

Frequently Asked Questions about Online Enablement Vendors

Why is the contract period with vendors so long? What if we get trapped in a bad partnership for years to come?

Enablement vendors make the case that they need long-term contracts with their partners in order to justify their substantial investment in building a college program, and eventually break even. While typical contract periods have decreased in recent years (from the industry standard of 7 to 10 years to closer to 5 years), they still involve a substantial commitment, and concerns about the duration of the contract are legitimate. The way we have managed the risk of a long-term contract is not necessarily to try to reduce the length (which can either be impossible or costly to do), but to delineate specific service benchmarks and exit opportunities should service levels fall short of expectations.

How do we know that [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) will be responsive to our department's needs?

Our contract specifies that [\[Insert specifics of any service level agreements here\]](#). A campus point-person will be assigned to relay any concerns from faculty or staff members for speedy rectification by [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#).

Questions about Academic and Strategic Control

What level of academic control will the vendor have? Will the vendor be involved in faculty hiring and firing decisions?

[\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) leaves curriculum, textbook, syllabus, course sequencing, and other strictly academic matters in the hands of deans, professors, and relevant campus staff. Even if [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) provides instructional design help for your course, they leave academic and curricular decisions with you. In addition, [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) has no say or influence in any personnel decisions at the partner campus.

A tiny minority of vendors can help build programs “from the ground up” by hiring faculty and designing an entirely new program where no face-to-face or online equivalent existed before. In this case, the vendor is involved in hiring and firing of instructors, in consultation with the institution. These types of arrangements, however, are rare.

If we use [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#)'s instructional design supports, who will hold the intellectual property rights over the courses created?

Courses designed using instructional development support from [\[Vendor Name Here\]](#) are owned by [\[Institution Name Here\]](#) and the faculty member [\[Revise depending on your institution's intellectual property ownership rules\]](#). This will be explicitly stated in the vendor contract.

Faculty-Focused FAQs (continued)

Frequently Asked Questions about Online Enablement Vendors

Will the vendor be making admissions decisions?

[Vendor Name Here] is not involved in making individual admissions decisions, which are left to [Institution Name Here]'s admissions staff and relevant academic units. Decisions to increase admissions staff, change admissions standards, or revise the review process will continue to be made by [Institution Name Here].

Who determines the marketing strategy for our programs?

[Vendor Name Here] will create a marketing plan for vetting and approval by the relevant academic department. While [Vendor Name Here] has expertise in online marketing methodology, campus stakeholders should be prepared to provide institution- and field-specific input into all marketing campaigns.