

CASE STUDY

Leveraging Data to Enhance Budget Transparency

Old Dominion University, Public Doctoral University in Norfolk, VA

- **About:** Old Dominion University (ODU) is a public university with a total enrollment of 24,375.
- **Challenge:** ODU had been encouraging the use of data in decision-making, but campus-wide accessibility to robust data was limited. As a result, deans and department chairs felt removed from the budgeting process.
- **Solution:** Through a partnership with Academic Performance Solutions (APS), ODU provided training and access to unit-level data to over 100 academic leaders across campus.
- **Impact:** By embedding APS data into standard budgeting procedures, ODU was able to empower academic leaders across campus with the information they needed to enact immediate operational changes and craft long-term budget plans, in addition to promoting a culture of transparency.

Impact Highlights

114
Users trained on APS Platform

400+
User sessions in APS during budget planning (December 2017 and January 2018)

Putting Data into the Hands of Academic Leaders

Much of ODU’s success in building a more data-informed culture can be traced to the thoughtful and strategic rollout of APS analytics on campus. In partnership with their APS dedicated consultant, ODU’s senior leadership adopted the following principles that helped generate buy-in and support from their deans and department chairs.

Three Keys to a Successful Launch at ODU



Clear Alignment with Institutional Goals

Communicated how use of APS aligns with goals for improving operational efficiency and state-wide performance management expectations



Seeing the power of the data, deans recommended expanding access to 100+ associate deans and department chairs, furthering the alignment with goals



Embedded into Existing Processes

Required that all new budget requests be supported by data to demonstrate need



Academic leaders had clear and immediate expectations for use. Scenarios used in training sessions were explicitly designed to prepare users for budgeting process



Commitment to Transparency

Granted same level of access to all users and shared outcomes and decisions with stakeholders



Training sessions were multi-disciplinary and highly interactive such that department chairs gained visibility into the resource needs within other disciplines

Transforming the Budgeting Process

The launch of the APS Platform was timed to precede the annual budget process. Immediately following training, deans prepared their budget proposals by asking that all chairs submit data-informed requests, similar to the scenarios presented during training.

Early Outcomes from Inclusion of APS Data in Budget Development

Fostered Engagement



- Increased awareness among stakeholders about needs across the college
- Enhanced communication to deans throughout budgeting process, including which data were used to inform decisions

Generated New Insights



- Identified immediate opportunities for changes, such as correlation between high DFW rates and adjunct faculty in one department
- Scheduled follow-up meetings twice a semester to discuss new findings

Spurred Long-Term Planning



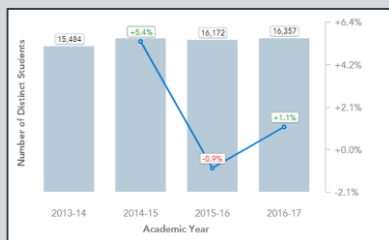
- Set expectation for using data to inform resource decisions on an ongoing basis
- Developed 5-year plans in two colleges

Three APS Analyses to Support Your Budget Process

1 Analyzing Demand Trends to Better Evaluate Faculty Line Requests

Is there enough growth to warrant additional resources?

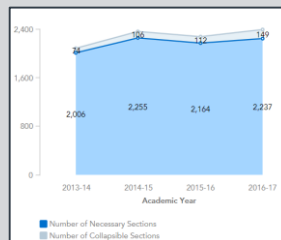
▶ Number of Distinct Students by Year and Annual Change



2 Identifying Resources That Can Be Reallocated from Underfilled Sections

Can we collapse sections and reallocate to bottleneck courses?

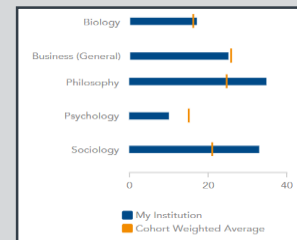
▶ Trends in Section Consolidation Opportunity



3 Using Department-Level Peer Benchmarks to Contextualize Current Instructional Capacity

Are our class sizes smaller than peers?

▶ Median Class Sizes Compared to Cohort



Source: Sample data from the APS Platform.