

38 Approaches to Maximizing Instructional Productivity

In today's increasingly challenging economic climate, many institutions cannot stay sustainable without reducing their operating costs. However, across-the-board cost reduction risks compromising both student access and educational quality. Instead, academic leaders should focus on maximizing instructional capacity, allowing them to "grow into" their existing cost structures by growing revenues while holding costs flat. EAB's research has identified 38 different approaches institutions have taken to better align instructional costs with student enrollments. Provosts, deans, department chairs, and registrars should review the following 38 approaches in order to compare faculty resistance, impact, and cost and effort required for each approach and determine a best-fit strategy for their own institution.

Build Optimal Classroom Schedules

Remove classroom scheduling bottlenecks, reduce underutilized capacity, and increase seat fill rates with the following potential approaches:

	Faculty Resistance	Impact	Cost/Effort
1. Bring all rooms up to minimum technology standard.....			
2. Enforce standard meeting patterns (block schedules)			
3. Remove unnecessary sections from prime time/bottleneck rooms.....			
4. Fix room codes to maximize schedulable rooms.....			
5. Set limits on prime time scheduling by department.....			
6. Centralize scheduling for all classrooms.....			
7. Change room assignments after add/drop period.....			
8. Turn summer into a full term.....			
9. Mandate a percentage of off-peak courses.....			

Help Students Progress More Rapidly to Completion

Reduce nonessential credits, increase access to courses, encourage timely degree completion with the following potential approaches:

	Faculty Resistance	Impact	Cost/Effort
1. Limit number of times students can retake a course.....			
2. Automatically register students for required course.....			
3. Penalize students for dropping courses.....			
4. Offer required courses during summer term.....			
5. Move required courses to online/hybrid delivery.....			
6. Reduce number of credits to degree.....			
7. Simplify elective offerings.....			
8. Simplify general education offerings.....			
9. Give credit for courses from other institutions through articulation agreements.....			
10. Establish joint degree programs and shared online courses.....			

Match Section Offerings to Student Demand

Identify sections to consolidate or eliminate, free up classroom space and teaching capacity, and reduce instructional costs with the following potential approaches:

	Faculty Resistance	Impact	Cost/Effort
1. Predict demand based on program requirements.....			
2. Consolidate excess sections.....			
3. Predict demand based on historical trends.....			
4. Reduce exceptions to section enrollment caps.....			
5. Redesign courses to be effective with larger sections.....			
6. Add over-capacity sections.....			
7. Eliminate courses with low demand.....			
8. Reallocate faculty lines to programs with greatest demand.....			
9. Increase teaching loads.....			
10. Increase number of instruction-only staff on long-term contracts.....			

Adopt Instructional Models That Supply Quality at Scale

Redesign courses around learning outcomes, increase usage of innovative pedagogical methods, and scale up instruction with the following potential approaches:

	Faculty Resistance	Impact	Cost/Effort
1. Offer access to lectures online.....			
2. Move some percentage of class sections to online meeting.....			
3. Redesign large introductory courses according to NCAT principles.....			
4. Create modules that can be shared across courses.....			
5. Create self-paced online tutorials.....			
6. Implement learning analytics.....			
7. Separate course design from course delivery.....			
8. Integrate peer tutors and undergraduate teaching assistants.....			
9. Award credit for passing competency exams.....			