



Multi-Campus Program Planning Guidebook

- Tool 1: Model Selection Diagnostic
- Tool 2: Market Demand Validation Checklist
- Tool 3: New Program Cost-Minimization Checklist

Tool 1

Model Selection Diagnostic

Overview

This diagnostic helps system leaders determine which type(s) of multi-campus programs are right for their system.

Goal

The tool helps to explore common options for program-level collaboration in order to support system leaders interested in maintaining access while finding greater efficiency. The diagnostic prompts users to consider various factors, and enables system leaders to compare their responses to characteristics of each model to determine best fit.

Mistakes Avoided

Initiating a multi-campus program without properly considering which model would be a best fit. If systems attempt to initiate programs simply based on what sounds appealing or what they have heard from other systems, they might waste time and financial resources on programs that are not right for their specific needs.

Intended User

System leaders should use this to develop initial plans about which multi-campus programs to develop within their system.

Model Selection Diagnostic

A Resource for Selecting the Right-Fit Collaborative Model

Selecting the right-fit collaborative program model will vary according to internal factors and external market indicators. Please answer each question on the following two pages, marking either a yes or no. Once you have answered all the questions, tally the total number of questions for which you have marked an x for each model, then divide each by 17 (the total number of questions) to see which model(s) might be a good fit for you. For example, if many of your 'yes' answers are matched with an x for Joint Departments, a Joint Department might be a good fit for you.

Please note that each system might weight different factors more or less heavily, so senior leaders might further explore two or even three models that seem to align with internal and market factors.

Key	
JD =Joint Department	MCF =Multi-Campus Facility
MCAD =Multi-Campus Administered Degree	AWAP =Academic-Workforce Alignment Partnership

SAMPLE	Yes	No	JD	MCAD	MCF	AWAP
Do you have infrastructure to offer online classes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		x		

Question	Yes	No	JD	MCAD	MCF	AWAP
Are your faculty willing/able to travel to teach classes at other institutions within your state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x		x	x
Do you have infrastructure to offer online classes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		x		
Do you have under-enrolled programs that are critical to your mission?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x		
Are there underserved parts of your state in which you could realistically offer in-person programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x		x	x
Are there underserved parts of your state that you feel would be better suited for online programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x		
Are there rapidly growing parts of your state that could benefit from new programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x		x	x
Are there areas of your state with 2-year colleges but no 4-year institutions that could benefit from bachelor's degree completion programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			x	x
Do you have pressing workforce needs that can be addressed by gathering experts from multiple institutions in one location?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			x	x

Model Selection Diagnostic (cont.)

A Resource for Selecting the Right-Fit Collaborative Model

Key	
JD =Joint Department	MCF =Multi-Campus Facility
MCAD =Multi-Campus Administered Degree	AWAP =Academic-Workforce Alignment Partnership

Question	Yes	No	JD	MCAD	MCF	AWAP
Are you looking for ways to offer hands-on training and make your students more career-ready?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				x
Do you have faculty at different institutions who have different specialties within one subject area, but not enough faculty at one institution to offer a program in that subject area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		x		
Do you have space (i.e., a campus, a building, etc.) that is not currently operating at capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			x	x
Do you have duplicate programs at institutions in close proximity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x		
Do you have duplicate programs between HBCUs and PWIs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x			
Do you have understaffed programs that could benefit from added faculty capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x		
Are you looking for ways to increase faculty collaboration within your system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			x	x
Do you want your system to play a role in connecting regional employers with academic leaders to develop market-responsive programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				x
Do you want to start a new program in an emerging field, but don't have enough faculty at one institution to offer it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x		

Tool 2

Market Demand Validation Checklist

Overview

This checklist details three different types of market demand data: labor market, student market, and competitor data. It also provides guidance on sourcing and interpreting this data to evaluate demand potential, and prompts valuable questions about the sufficiency and applicability of data analyzed.

Goal

The checklist improves market demand projections by helping faculty champions better understand market data. Specifically, it helps faculty quickly identify the right sources of data to consider when evaluating market demand potential, where to obtain that data, and how to interpret it. Further, it prompts senior leaders to ask the right questions about demand projections to vet assumptions and analyses.

Mistakes Avoided

Using one-dimensional demand data to evaluate market potential. Without a comprehensive approach to market estimation, institutions risk using inappropriate or insufficient data to evaluate market viability. Alternatively, even with appropriate and sufficient data, data may not be interpreted accurately.

Launching a new program to meet market demand when re-aligning resources within the system might suffice.

Without taking stock of the full program landscape across all institutions, systems could miss opportunities to save resources and increase intra-system collaboration.

Intended User

Faculty should consult this checklist to help prepare initial demand projections for proposed programs. Senior leaders should later refer to the checklist when vetting initial projections.

Market Demand Validation Checklist

Summary of Common Demand Data Sources and Limitations

Across the next several pages, please answer questions related to the three main categories of market demand data: labor market demand, student demand, and competitor. Note, the table below details where these three data types typically originate and their respective limitations. The limitations are not meant to discourage the use of these sources but to suggest where discounting or augmenting data will be useful.

All of these sources are valuable and worth considering when evaluating market demand. However, it is important to recognize their limitations and evaluate multiple sources to get a complete picture of demand.

Type of Data	Source	Limitations
Labor Market Demand	National and State or Provincial Government Databases (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Databases updated infrequently (i.e., every 3-5 years), so not all new and emerging fields (e.g., data science) are included. National and state/provincial labor trends do not always apply to local context.
	Industry Associations (e.g., American Nurses Association)	Industry-sourced growth projections often overly optimistic.
	Real-Time Employer Demand Analytics (e.g., EMSI)	Labor market demand does not always translate into student demand.
Student Demand	National and State or Provincial Government Databases (e.g., National Center for Education Statistics)	National and state/provincial student trends do not always apply to local context.
	Institutional Surveys	Indicated interest from representative students (i.e., individuals in target demographic not actively seeking credential) does not always translate into actual student enrollments.
Competitor	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	Multi-year lag time for some datasets (e.g., two-year lag between enrollment period and enrollment data update).

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 1: Labor Market Demand

Labor market data refers to information about employment trends in a given market (e.g., city, region, industry). It offers insight into the hiring needs of employers within that market. Labor market data typically takes two forms: structural and real-time.

- **Structural** labor market data sources rely on surveys and other instruments that collect data periodically. Organizations that provide structural data include the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Statistics Canada, state or provincial departments of labor, and industry associations.
- **Real-time** labor market data sources use web crawling technology to analyze job postings and other employer hiring data. They provide insights into current hiring needs in a given market, including total number of job openings, top hiring employers, skills required to fill open positions, and trends by geography. Sources that provide real-time data include Burning Glass Labor Insight and EMSI.

Valuable questions to ask about labor market demand data include the following:

Question	Guidance	Answer
<i>I. Data Preparation</i>		
List all labor market data sources considered when projecting program enrollment.	See previous page for a list of most common data sources to consider and their relative limitations. Consider multiple sources where possible to improve accuracy of projections.	
Were internal or external stakeholders consulted when evaluating labor demand? Which ones?	Alumni advisory boards, part-time working professional faculty, and local employers can provide valuable feedback on market trends and the accuracy of projections.	
<i>II. Data Sufficiency</i>		
If employer or industry association data was considered, was it independently verified by a neutral third party?	Industry-sourced growth projections can be biased and overly optimistic. Use verified data when possible, or evaluate industry forecasts alongside objective data sources (e.g., governmental).	
How recent is the labor market demand data analyzed?	Up-to-date labor market demand data enhances accuracy of projections. Refer to the table on page 6 for more information on data lags inherent in certain data sources.	

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 1: Labor Market Demand (cont.)

Question	Guidance	Answer
III. Labor Market Analysis		
What degree level is necessary to obtain in-demand jobs in prospective students' target industry?	Occupational credential preference data can be accessed from O*NET. ¹ Prospective students are more likely to pursue additional education if their target profession requires or prefers advanced credentials.	
Is employer demand apparent in target geographic market?	National, state, or provincial trends do not always apply to local context. Where possible, use data specific to the target market to assess demand.	
Which counties/metro areas display the most growth in jobs/degree completions?	This can help identify institutions in parts of the state where demand is growing; this can also help identify regions without easy access to programs in high-demand fields – opportunities for multi-campus programs or facilities.	
What is the expected growth rate of prospective students' target industry or occupation?	Growth rates can be accessed from the BLS, StatCan, state departments of labor, or industry associations. Where possible, use growth rates specific to the target market. Higher growth rates suggest greater future program demand.	
What salaries can program graduates expect to earn in our target market?	Salary information can be accessed from sources such as the BLS and O*NET. Higher salaries typically translate to greater student demand for credentials.	
For programs serving regional markets, how do salaries and career opportunities for program's target industry compare to other regional industries?	Data on relative attractiveness of other industries can be accessed from the BLS and state or provincial occupational data sources. Even if a program's target industry is growing, prospective students may favor opportunities in other industries that offer higher salaries and growth prospects.	

1) Occupational Information Network, free online database with access to career information, including educational and experience requirements needed to access jobs and professions.

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 2: Student Demand

Student demand data reflects qualitative or quantitative assessments of student interest and market size. Common examples include number of high school graduates (from the National Center for Education Statistics), number of degree completions in a particular field (from IPEDS¹), and institutional surveys of individuals in the target audience.

Valuable questions to ask about student demand data include the following:

Question	Guidance	Answer
<i>I. Data Preparation</i>		
List all student demand data sources considered when projecting program enrollment.	See page 6 for a list of most common data sources to consider and their relative limitations. Consider multiple sources where possible to improve accuracy of projections.	
Did you consult other internal or external stakeholders when evaluating student demand? Which ones?	Enrollment management and current students can provide valuable feedback on student preferences and accuracy of demand projections.	
<i>II. Data Analysis</i>		
How recent is the student demand data used?	Up-to-date student demand data enhances accuracy of projections. Refer to the table on page 6 for more information on data lags inherent in certain data sources.	
<i>III. Student Market Analysis</i>		
Is student demand apparent in target geographic market?	National, state, or provincial trends do not always apply to local context. Where possible, use data specific to the target market to assess demand.	

1) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 2: Student Demand (cont.)

Question	Guidance	Answer
III. Student Market Analysis (cont.)		
Does data support student interest in proposed modality?	Prospective student surveys can reveal whether target audiences are interested in one program modality more than another (e.g., online over face-to-face).	
<i>(If student surveys were used to assess demand)</i> How accurate have institutional surveys been in the past?	Indicated interest from representative prospective students (i.e., individuals in target demographic not actively seeking credential) does not always translate into actual student enrollments. Consider student survey data alongside other labor and student data sources to gain a more reliable understanding of demand.	
To what extent could economic or public policy changes impact student demand for the program?	Economic or public policy shifts (e.g., local employer stops reimbursing employees for graduate tuition; legislation ends financial incentives for advanced degrees) can dramatically affect program enrollment. Employer advisory boards can provide feedback on events causing potential demand shifts.	

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 3: Competitor

Competitor data refers to qualitative or quantitative assessments of similar or identical programs in an institution's market. Competitors include both traditional peer institutions and non-peer competitors in prospective students' consideration set. External competitors may also include nontraditional alternatives such as bootcamps. Internally, existing programs in similar fields might also compete for enrollments with proposed programs. Common competitor data sources include IPEDS¹ and institutional websites.

Valuable questions to ask about competitor data include the following:

Question	Guidance	Answer
I. Market Evaluation		
What is the ratio of relevant degree completions in target market to available jobs?	Relevant degree completions can be sourced from IPEDS, ¹ and open jobs data can be obtained from labor market demand data sources (listed in table on page 6). A ratio lower than two job postings to one relevant degree completion suggests the market might be oversaturated.	
II. External Competitor Analysis		
Please list the top four competitor programs. How does the proposed program compare in price, size, modality, and other factors?	Programs targeting adult and working professionals may have a different competitor set than traditional undergraduate or research competitors. Non-peer competitors can include national institutions with strong online presence (e.g., Southern New Hampshire University, Arizona State University), community colleges, for-profit institutions (e.g., University of Phoenix), and for-profit bootcamp providers.	1. 2. 3. 4.
What are the primary reasons a prospective student would choose this program over competitors?	Particularly in saturated markets, new programs should have distinctive features (e.g., lower price, more convenient delivery, specialized curriculum, experiential learning features) to attract prospective students.	
Which institutions within the system have the greatest capacity/expertise in this subject area? How many degree completions are there in the field from each institution in the system?	Identify opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration within systems, as institutions complement each other's existing expertise in the field.	

1) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Market Demand Validation Checklist (cont.)

Section 3: Competitor (cont.)

Question	Guidance	Answer
II. External Competitor Analysis (cont.)		
<p>Are competitor institutions seeing high demand from prospective students? How has demand changed over time?</p>	<p>Trends in competitor program enrollments can be accessed from IPEDS¹. Growing demand for competitor programs can indicate potential unmet market demand, while declining or stagnant demand might signal that new programs need to provide unique value propositions to attract students.</p>	
<p>Is expected class size larger than competitors'? If yes, please justify why program will achieve higher enrollments.</p>	<p>Competitor class sizes are often limited by accreditation or a competitive market for students. New programs may struggle to exceed existing program class sizes without evidence otherwise.</p>	
III. Internal Competitor Analysis		
<p>What existing institutional offerings might attract similar student audiences?</p>	<p>New programs should be sufficiently differentiated from existing campus programs to attract net-new students.</p>	
<p>What new market need does the proposed program address that is not already met by related existing offerings?</p>		

1) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

UNC System’s Request to Establish Form

The University of North Carolina System requires faculty members to get pre-approval from department chairs and college deans for new academic programs before seeking final approval from the UNC System Office.

Without campus and system office leadership knowledge of the full academic landscape within the system, senior leaders cannot accurately anticipate duplication of offerings. However, there is also an upside to multiple institutions within a system offering a similar program: many students are place-bound and are unlikely to travel to attend programs, and therefore, need programs within close proximity. Campus and system leaders must take this into account as they balance broad access with a desire to avoid unnecessary duplication.



I. Program Planning and Unnecessary Duplication:

- a. List all other public and private four-year institutions of higher education in North Carolina currently operating programs similar to the proposed new degree program, including their mode of delivery. Show a four-year history of enrollments and degrees awarded in similar programs offered at other UNC institutions (using the format below for each institution with a similar program). Programs at UNC institutions may be found on the UNC System [website](#).

Institution				
Program Title				
	Year	Year	Year	Year
Enrollment				
Degrees Awarded				

- b. Describe what was learned in consultation with other programs regarding their experience with student demand and job placement. Indicate how their experiences influenced your enrollment projections.
- c. Identify opportunities for collaboration with institutions offering related degrees and discuss what steps have been or will be taken to actively pursue those opportunities where appropriate and advantageous.
- d. Present documentation that the establishment of this program would not create unnecessary program duplication. In cases where other UNC institutions provided similar online, site-based distance education, or off-campus programs, directly address how the proposed program meets unmet need.

Source: University of North Carolina System; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3

New Program Cost-Minimization Checklist

Overview

This tool outlines ten tactics to limit upfront investment in new academic programs. The strategies are grouped by type of expense and span major types of program cost drivers, including instruction, administration, and facilities. While all cost-minimizing strategies will not be appropriate for every program, faculty champions should review the guide for applicable tactics during program planning.

Goal

The reference guide helps leaders minimize upfront fixed costs of new programs by leveraging existing or temporary resources without affecting quality. Once programs demonstrate market demand, leaders can consider replacing some of the outlined resources with new fixed investments to support growth.

Mistake Avoided

Committing inflexible, fixed resources before programs demonstrate demand.

Without critically evaluating new program cost bases, institutions may make unnecessary investments in fixed resources when launching new programs. These resources are often difficult to repurpose if programs do not generate expected enrollments. By limiting the amount of fixed resources invested in new programs upfront, leaders can more flexibly respond to market performance after launch.

Intended User

Faculty champions should review this tool with senior leaders during new program planning to identify opportunities to reduce upfront costs.

New Program Cost-Minimization Checklist

Taking a Wait-and-See Approach to Resource Investment

The table below outlines ten proven tactics to minimize upfront investments in new academic programs. Institutions that delay investment in permanent resources (e.g., faculty, facilities, equipment) can quickly respond to market performance by restructuring or sunsetting programs that do not generate target enrollments. Conversely, if programs do meet or exceed expectations, leaders can later invest in more permanent resources to support long-term growth. Of course, not all tactics will be applicable for every new program.

In the table below, a check means that a given tactic is relevant for either Joint departments/Multi-campus administered degrees or Multi-campus facilities/Academic-workforce alignment partnerships, while an x means a tactic is not relevant for those models.

Key	
JD =Joint Department	MCF =Multi-Campus Facility
MCAD =Multi-Campus Administered Degree	AWAP =Academic-Workforce Alignment Partnership

Type of Expense	Cost-Minimizing Tactics	JD/MCAD	MCF/AWAP
<i>Instruction</i>	Identify under-enrolled existing courses to include in new program curriculum to minimize new instructional costs.	✓	✗
	Limit the number of new courses (i.e., not cross-listed with other programs), particularly for online programs with higher upfront course development costs.	✓	✗
	Hire adjunct faculty when appropriate to reduce fixed labor costs. Students in select market-driven professional programs benefit from expertise of practitioner instructors.	✓	✓
	Avoid tenure-track faculty hiring until new program proves market demand.	✓	✓
	Leverage existing tenure-track faculty where appropriate to minimize new costs. Legacy faculty's reputations may bolster early enrollments in research-oriented programs.	✓	✓
<i>Administration</i>	Source program directors from existing faculty where possible. Compensating existing faculty through course releases is more cost-effective than hiring new.	✓	✓
	Add program administrative responsibilities to existing staff workloads where possible to achieve economies of scale. Some staff are motivated by diversified tasks and contributions.	✓	✓
<i>Facilities</i>	Review space utilization data to identify existing space to leverage before building new classrooms, laboratories, or office space.	✓	✗
	Lease new facilities space where possible until new programs prove demand and permanent facilities investment is warranted.	✓	✓
<i>Licenses</i>	Review existing library subscriptions and software licenses to identify resources to use rather than entering new contracts.	✓	✗

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Washington DC | Richmond | Birmingham | Minneapolis

202-747-1000 | eab.com