



# Nine Strategies to Engage Academic Leaders with APS Data

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APS Engaging Academic Leaders Toolkit

*Tools to Engage Deans, Department Chairs,  
Associate Provosts, and Other APS Users*

Academic Performance Solutions

# Academic Performance Solutions

Project Director

Katerina Chan

Contributing Consultant

Erin McDougal

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# Introduction

## Engaging Academic Leaders with Data Is a Necessary, Yet Difficult, Task

### Tackling a Top Partner Objective

Access to data itself will not immediately make your campus more data-informed; the key is to engage leaders with the data and provide them with tools to shape a strong foundation of data literacy. Academic leaders, such as deans, department chairs, and associate provosts, are at the center of many decisions influencing resource use across an institution but are often not equipped to effectively use data to inform those decisions. Engagement with data involves not only using the data, but also deriving insights from, acting on, and having conversations about the data. Fostering engagement is not an easy task, though. Institutional leadership teams often encounter obstacles when there is a lack of:

Data Governance	→	<i>Are there standards for data accessibility, management, and meaning?</i>
Data Literacy	→	<i>Are leaders able to consume data for knowledge and think critically about it?</i>
Accountability	→	<i>What mechanisms are in place to encourage leaders to use data and keep them on track towards impactful change?</i>
Buy-In	→	<i>Are leaders bought into the idea of using data to inform decisions and is there trust?</i>
Expectations	→	<i>In what ways are users expected to use the data and when?</i>
Support	→	<i>Do leaders have the resources and guidance they need to use the data?</i>

### Purpose of This Toolkit

This toolkit serves as a guide to ensure institutional leadership teams across the APS Collaborative effectively engage academic leaders and successfully embed data-informed decision-making in their campus culture. Not all strategies in this toolkit may be appropriate for every institution. If you are interested in adopting any of the recommended strategies, partner with your APS Strategic Leader to customize strategies for your unique institutional context and the users you are trying to engage.

### When to Use This Toolkit

Employ this toolkit when trying to broaden APS adoption and a culture of data-informed decision-making. Oftentimes, the dean, department chair, and associate provost roles experience turnover which requires continuous education on how to effectively use data to inform decisions. It is a continuous process, not a one-time occurrence.

### Have Other Strategies to Add?

Has your institution done something to positively impact academic leader engagement? Are you testing out a new tactic and anticipate promising results? Tell us about it!

With development of new partner strategies, this toolkit will evolve. We hope to collect more feedback and new strategies from partners as they implement initiatives at their institutions. If you have practices to share, talk to your APS Strategic Leader.

*Throughout this toolkit, you'll find nine strategies to support your institution in engaging academic leaders.*

- ✓ **Strategy 1:** Advocate from Top Down
- ✓ **Strategy 2:** Craft Your Data Transparency Message
- ✓ **Strategy 3:** Build a Holistic Support Infrastructure That Empowers Users
- ✓ **Strategy 4:** Embed APS Data in Existing or New Processes
- ✓ **Strategy 5:** Create a Data Literacy Training Plan
- ✓ **Strategy 6:** Facilitate Data-Informed Conversations
- ✓ **Strategy 7:** Maintain Momentum with Strategic Follow-Up
- ✓ **Strategy 8:** Evaluate Results and Impact
- ✓ **Strategy 9:** Build Enterprise-Level Data Governance

# Diagnostic: How Well Are You Engaging Academic Leaders with Data?

Use this diagnostic to rank how well your institution is performing on each of the following engagement strategies. Then, use your responses to prioritize the strategies in this toolkit that your institution will place its focus.

## Strategy 1: Advocate from Top Down

An effective and outcomes-driven leadership team is in place to create a vision for success and instill accountability.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 2: Craft Your Data Transparency Message

Academic leaders understand why we invested in reporting tools/technologies and how we will use it.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 3: Build a Holistic Support Infrastructure That Empowers Users

We have built and successfully socialized a three-tiered support infrastructure (Self-Service, Internal Expertise, and External Escalation).

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 4: Embed Data in Existing or New Processes

There is clear guidance on which data points are required in specific planning processes.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 5: Create a Data Literacy Training Plan

We have created and implemented a plan to improve data literacy skills among our user base.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 6: Facilitate Data-Informed Conversations

Our leadership team, trainers, and champions understand how to speak with different data persona types.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 7: Maintain Momentum with Follow-Up

We have a concrete follow-up plan in place to continuously provide leaders with opportunities to engage with data and build sustainable data use.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 8: Evaluate Results and Impact

We have employed the Plan, Act, Evaluate framework and always seek opportunities for iteration and scale.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

## Strategy 9: Build Enterprise-Level Data Governance

We have capabilities in place that support effective data management across our institution.

LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
1	2	3	4	5

### GRADING SCALE

**1** = We need a lot of additional support to improve performance

**2** = We are behind and need additional support to improve

**3** = Not sure

**4** = We feel good about our performance

**5** = There is no room for improvement

# Strategy 1: Advocate from Top Down

## Strategy Overview

Strong executive leadership is intrinsic to the overall success of APS data use on campus. Without executive involvement, building a data-informed culture is difficult to achieve.

## Build a Strong APS Leadership Team

A Leadership Team provides the foundation for successful implementation, adoption, and use of the APS platform. The most successful APS Leadership Teams convene key stakeholders across the Academic Affairs, Finance, and Institutional Research (IR) Offices. If your institution already has a team, consider revisiting to ensure you have the right roles in place to hold users accountable to usage.

## Project Roles and Responsibilities

An APS Leadership Team consists of three project roles and is segmented into two sub-teams. Having leaders from across the institution come together to set strategy, discuss progress, and track initiatives remains the most effective way for seeing ROI and changing culture. APS recommends institutions review roles and responsibilities before re-creating or establishing their own teams.

In addition to the responsibilities listed below, each project role is required to attend specific meetings and calls with their APS Strategic Leader and/or Business Analyst.



### Program Sponsor (2 Individuals)

*Recommended: Provost and CBO*

- Sets vision for APS implementation and rollout across the institution
- Provides resources for support and assigns accountability
- Serves as value-driven strategic thinker



### Program Owner (3 Individuals)

*Recommended: Senior IR, Associate Provost (or 2<sup>nd</sup> in command to Provost on academic side), and Associate Financial Officer*

- Supports strategic planning
- Holds institution to Program Sponsor's vision
- Drives broader campus buy-in
- Validates data
- Sets up and runs user trainings (with Value Team)



### Value Lead (2 Individuals)

*Recommended: Dean and Department Chair from different colleges*

- Holds an esteemed reputation and influence among peers
- Serves as local expert on APS during implementation and throughout partnership
- Facilitates the design and delivery of product configuration and/or analytics
- Collaborates with entire Executive Team to embed APS data into local decision-making processes
- Generates list of additional Deans and Department Chairs to involve in broader team (before UAT)
- Trains other APS users on campus after attending training led by APS Strategic Leader

### Executive Team

Program Sponsors and Program Owners

### Value Team

One Program Owner and All Value Leads

## Achieve Accountability as an Executive Team

An institution’s APS Executive Team holds the critical role of strategizing vision for use of the APS platform at a high level. An integral part of vision is keeping others accountable to it, which typically entails delegating others to take the lead on projects and tasks that involve APS data.

### Assign Tasks to Encourage Use of APS Data

Institutions that have assigned tasks as part of a larger initiative are most successful in socializing and encouraging APS data use on their campuses. The more frequently leaders are required to log into and explore the APS platform, the greater chance it will become part of their regular workstream and move the institution towards accomplishing the greater vision.

#### Sample Initiative

- 1 Executive Team Meets to Discuss Initiative**  
*Group agrees on initiative to promote use of APS platform and outlines goals of initiative*

  - ▶ EX: Annual department health check-up
- 2 Task(s) are Determined for Value Team to Complete**  
*Executive Team reviews all available APS metrics and decides on specific task(s) for Value Team*

  - ▶ EX: Annual department health check-up document to complete with APS metrics and qualitative comments
- 3 Value Team Shares Feedback**  
*Executive Team shares details and requirements of initiative, answers questions, and hears feedback during an in-person meeting with Value Team*

  - ▶ EX: New initiative announced during a standing meeting
- 4 Feedback is Incorporated into Initiative**  
*Executive Team takes Value Team feedback and integrates it into the initiative if necessary*

  - ▶ EX: Additional metrics and clarifying directions are added to document
- 5 Value Team Completes Assigned Task(s)**  
*Value Team fulfills task(s) using data from APS platform*

  - ▶ EX: Department chairs complete document using APS metrics
- 6 Completed Task(s) and Findings are Discussed**  
*Entire APS Leadership Team gathers to discuss task(s) and debrief on initiative*

  - ▶ EX: In-person meetings to discuss completed document, findings, and next steps

### Case In Brief: Public Masters University

The university’s Executive Team partnered with their Value Lead, the Director of Institutional Strategy and Effectiveness, to launch an “APS Super User” initiative with Associate Deans. Associate Deans were asked to follow how-to guides created by EAB’s APS Team, such as *Matching Section Offerings with Demand*, for their college. The goal of the initiative was for Associate Deans to gain recurrent hands-on experience with data in the APS platform.

**Completed Tasks Using APS Data:** Two Associate Deans from each college were assigned a how-to guide, a document that walked them through a common use for APS data. Using the guide, they located and recorded specific APS metrics for their college.

**Discussed Findings at Monthly Meetings:** All involved Associate Deans gathered as a group for monthly meetings led by the university’s Value Lead to share their findings, progress, and feedback on the experience.

**Accomplished Goals of Initiative:** As a result of the initiative, the Associate Deans are now “Super Users” who trust data to support decisions, can confidently navigate the APS platform, and regularly have data-informed conversations that are not limited to their respective colleges.



▶ [Download APS How-to Guides on the Help & Training dashboard](#)

## Tool 1: Selecting Individuals for Your APS Leadership Team

Complete the worksheet to plan, or re-consider, your institution's APS project roles.

### Executive Team



#### Program Sponsor (2 Individuals)

*Recommended: Provost and CBO*

- Sets vision for APS implementation and rollout across the institution
- Provides resources for support and assigns accountability
- Serves as value-driven strategic thinker



#### Program Owner (3 Individuals)

*Recommended: Senior IR, Associate Provost (or 2<sup>nd</sup> in command to Provost on academic side), and Associate Financial Officer*

- Supports strategic planning
- Holds institution to Program Sponsor's vision
- Drives broader campus buy-in
- Validates data
- Sets up and runs user trainings (with Value Team)

### Selected Individuals

1

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2

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1

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2

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3

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Also on Value Team

### Value Team



#### Value Lead (2 Individuals)

*Recommended: Dean and Department Chair (from different colleges)*

- Serves as local expert on APS during implementation and throughout partnership
- Facilitates the design and delivery of product configuration and/or analytics
- Collaborates with entire Executive Team to embed APS data into local decision-making processes
- Generates list of additional Deans and Department Chairs to involve in broader team (before UAT)
- Trains other APS users on campus after attending training led by APS Strategic Leader

1

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2

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## Strategy 2: Craft Your Data Transparency Message

### Strategy Overview

Setting the context for the move to data transparency can make or break how APS data will be perceived on your campus. Academic leaders who are hesitant to trust data may perceive it as being dangerous or punitive, so it is imperative to convey the purpose of data use.

### Clarify How Your Institution Speaks About APS

Establishing the vocabulary and language for discussing the APS platform and teaching others to use it is critical so that the platform is not misrepresented.

Phrase	Context
Transforms siloed data	→ APS platform aggregates your institution's student, HR, and finance data from various sources and brings them under one common methodology, making access and interpretation simpler.
Data-informed decision-making	→ APS platform provides academic leaders with easily accessible data in a single source to <i>inform</i> – not make – decisions; it does not, nor is intended to, definitively point users to what is the right or wrong answer.
Peer benchmarks	→ Partner Benchmarks dashboard provides apples-to-apples comparisons to your institution's cohorts, which may include peers or aspirational peers, that provide a point of comparison; additional context is always needed to understand why a department is above or below the benchmark.
Resource reallocation opportunities	→ APS data and analyses illuminate opportunities to reallocate resources from a low priority area to higher priority area, such as from low-fill sections to bottlenecks. Additional context is always needed to discern perceived and true opportunities.

### Why Use APS Data at a Campus-Wide Scope?

Academic leaders are responsible for making critical resource decisions, such as faculty hiring, and driving impactful change on campus. Yet, they often lack the right or sufficient information to support decisions, balance a breadth of responsibilities (administrative, teaching, research, community engagement, etc.), and are not incentivized to pursue hard choices due to potential political consequences.

#### Putting Data Directly Into the Hands of Leaders

- ✓ **Minimizes Burden and Improves Efficiency:** Ease of availability of data and consistent methodology reduce time for manual data collection and analysis
- ✓ **Makes Once-Difficult Conversations Easier:** Access to the same data puts all academic leaders on the same ground, which places all conversations at the same starting point
- ✓ **Opens the "Black Box":** Academic leaders often feel that decisions are made in a "black box," meaning they are made opaquely, arbitrarily, and subject to favoritism. Access to the same data allows them to understand what kind of information is used to inform decisions
- ✓ **Illuminates Current Resource Use and Opportunities:** Comprehensive data helps leaders understand the state of their department or college, with the ultimate goal of supporting priorities, students, and staff.

Source: EAB research and interviews.

## Know Your Elevator Pitch

Using the agreed upon vocabulary to speak about APS and your understanding of how APS helps leaders, craft a statement explaining why your institution chose to partner with APS and your vision for the partnership.

Your elevator pitch can be shared in a variety ways, including but not limited to: e-mail introducing the new APS partnership, an announcement during a group meeting like a Deans Council meeting, and at the beginning of an in-person training session led by your APS Strategic Leader.

### Four Elements of a Good Pitch

- 1 Provide Some (Not All) Context:** Explain the challenges that spurred the investment in APS
- 2 Articulate Strengths of the Platform:** Clearly explain the value that APS brings to your institution, including supporting leaders with data to inform decisions, better support students, better balance instructional workload, etc.
- 3 Highlight Goals of the Initiative:** Clearly explain how the partnership with APS will help resolve or improve the central challenges you first articulated (i.e., by prioritizing new faculty lines for academic units with demonstrated need)
- 4 End with How Leaders Can Help:** End with an answer to the unspoken question, *What's in it for me?* Let leaders know what changes they can expect to happen in their day-to-day work

“Academic Performance Solutions (APS) is a data analytics tool that brings our institution’s student, HR, and finance data into a single platform that generates structured reports and peer benchmarks on KPIs. We partnered with APS because we lacked access to this type of data, which caused us to lose time, dollars, and other resources. Just think about how many hours you spent on that one report and imagine if you had had the data all in one place – that’s how APS will help.

We will use APS to inform resource allocation decisions and build a data-informed culture. The data will inform decisions but will never tell us what is the right or wrong answer. We will begin using APS data for faculty line requests, which will place everyone on equal footing to start conversations about additional resources, save you time in searching for and thinking about what kind of information to include, and help us identify needs across the institution.”

Your Elevator Pitch:

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**Tool 2a: Nailing Your Pitch Worksheet**

Decide on your elevator pitch by testing different options with a trusted colleague who also believes in your message. Use the pitch that is ranked most effective.

**Instructions for Listener:**

As you hear each of the four pitches, mark the scale under "Impact" for each. After hearing all options, rank the pitches from 1, most powerful to you, to 3, least powerful to you.

Impact		Rank
Pitch A		<input type="text"/>
Pitch B		<input type="text"/>
Pitch C		<input type="text"/>

## Tool 2b: Preparing for Data Use Objections Worksheet

Complete the worksheet to prepare for potential objections to APS data use on your campus.

**1** Data in the APS platform is not even our institution's data.

*Consider: Data in the APS platform is an aggregated view of our institution's student, HR, and finance data that has undergone data quality tests to ensure consistent methodology is used.*

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**2** The data is wrong, so I don't trust it.

*Consider: Standard APS methodology is applied to our institution's data in the APS platform, which may not align with your methodology. In addition, data in the APS platform may not be 100% spot on but is directionally accurate and can help inform decision making.*

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**3** The data will be used against our department or college.

*Consider: Data will be used to illuminate areas of high department or college performance, as well as areas for improvement. The data will not be used a punishing tool; rather, it will be used to inform decisions, in combination with other information like qualitative comments.*

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**4** The data is not current.

*Consider: Data in the APS platform is refreshed each term, so it is historical data. It is not intended to inform current course planning but can be used to analyze historical trends and data points.*

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**5** We are being asked to abandon all other data sources on our campus and only use the APS platform.

*Consider: The APS platform is only one source of data on our campus and is not intended to replace all other sources. In conjunction with APS data, we'll continue to leverage our Institutional Research Office and other resources.*

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**6** Consider other objections you may receive from users at your institution and specific individuals who may be primary naysayers. Prepare your potential response.

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# Strategy 3: Build a Holistic Support Infrastructure That Empowers Users

## Strategy Overview

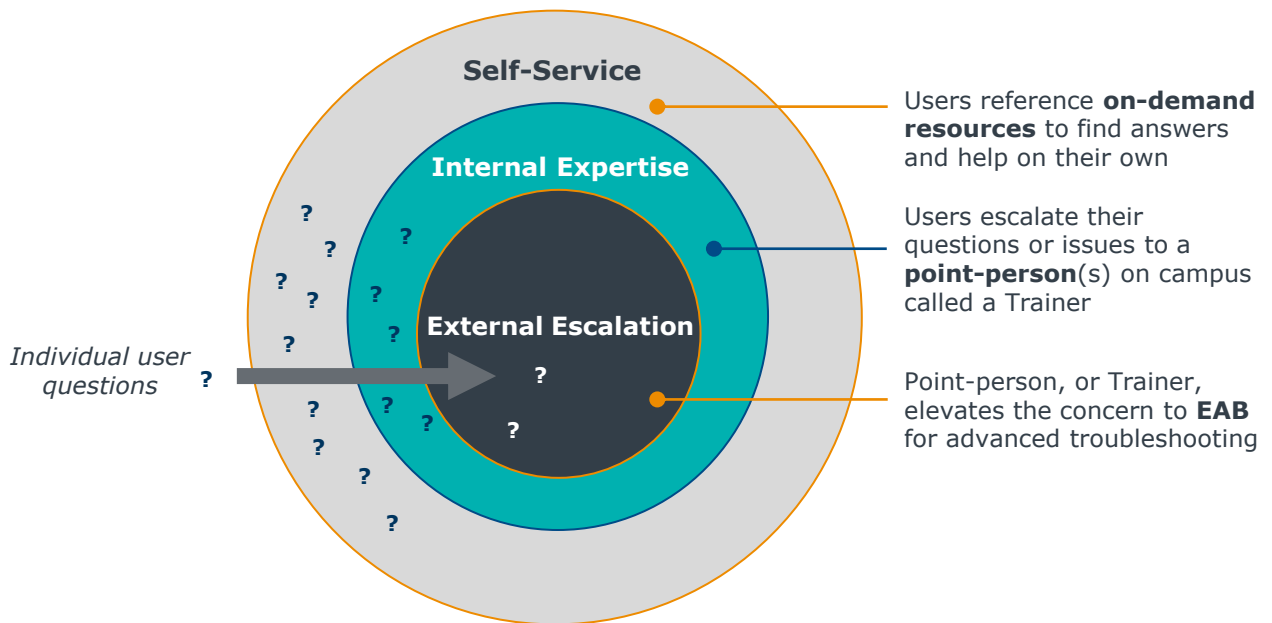
Access to data or technology alone does not instantaneously result in high-functioning data-informed cultures overnight. It takes time, engagement, and strategic planning to lay the foundation for such a culture. To put simply, it comes down to a formula:

$$\text{People} + \text{Process} + \text{Technology} = \text{Transformation}$$

Institutions can achieve transformation by **embedding data use in specific processes**, such as annual health check-ups, and **setting expectations for data use** among key stakeholders, like Deans and Department Chairs.

## Three-Tiered Support Infrastructure

Transformation via People + Process + Technology is achievable through a holistic support infrastructure for your users. The support infrastructure consists of three tiers: Self-service, internal expertise, and external escalation. This infrastructure not only creates scale, but it also empowers users to take ownership and seek answers on their own before escalating the issue either internally or externally.



### Tier 1: Self-Service

**Goal:** To empower your users with on-demand resources that allow them to self-serve their questions.

**Why:** To increase scale so that your institution's designated point-person is not inundated with question after question, such as how to log into the platform, and can focus on more strategic projects.

#### How to Achieve This:

- Create a digital resource hub, such as a microsite, to house your institution's on-demand resources that are relevant to your use of the APS platform
- Develop on-demand resources by partnering with the APS Strategic Leader and other campus stakeholders
- Communicate with users how to access the online space, its purpose, and how to use it; set an expectation that users should reference the online space before reaching out to the institution's point-person
- Update the online space regularly to reflect the institution's strategic priorities, projects, and other content as questions arise

### Benefits of a Digital Resource Hub

- ✓ Gives academic leaders a one-stop shop for resources and on-demand assistance after trainings
- ✓ Demonstrates the value that university leadership puts in use of the APS platform to help inform decision-making and arms leaders with resources to accomplish this task
- ✓ Helps newcomers to the institution become comfortable with the APS platform quickly

### Steps for Launching Your Institution's Digital APS Resource Hub

- 1** Collect resources both internally and from your APS Strategic Leader.  
*Note: If the APS team does not have a resource in existence that you feel would be valuable, please share recommendations with your APS Strategic Leader. The APS team is always looking to explore new resource creation to support the APS partnership.*
- 2** Identify an appropriate hosting location for your new digital resource hub. Options include an LMS course, google site, institutional web page, Box/Dropbox folder, or internal network drive.  
*Ideal Location:*
  - ▶ Somewhere academic leaders like deans and department chairs already go, so that they do not need to learn a new space or technology
  - ▶ Enough capacity to accommodate many resources, which are often saved in large files
  - ▶ Easy to organize, so leaders can find the resources they need
  - ▶ Accessible to all campus leaders using an institutional login
- 3** Implement the digital resource hub.
- 4** Publicize the resource hub to academic leaders, probably through an email, as well as links to the hub on frequently visited webpages or resources at your institution.
- 5** Designate an individual, such as your designated Trainer, to be responsible for the continued curation and maintenance of the digital resource hub.

### Self-Service Resources to Include

- **APS Quick Start Guide:** Document that details frequently asked questions with answers specific to the institution, ways in which the institution is using the data and why, and more
- **Configuration Quick Start Guide:** Document that details the types of configuration decisions that were made and how the decisions affect the data displayed in the platform
- **Tutorial Videos Related to Selected Planning Process:** Brief videos made by the institution that walk users through how to find and use the metrics selected for their planning process, such as annual unit health check-ups



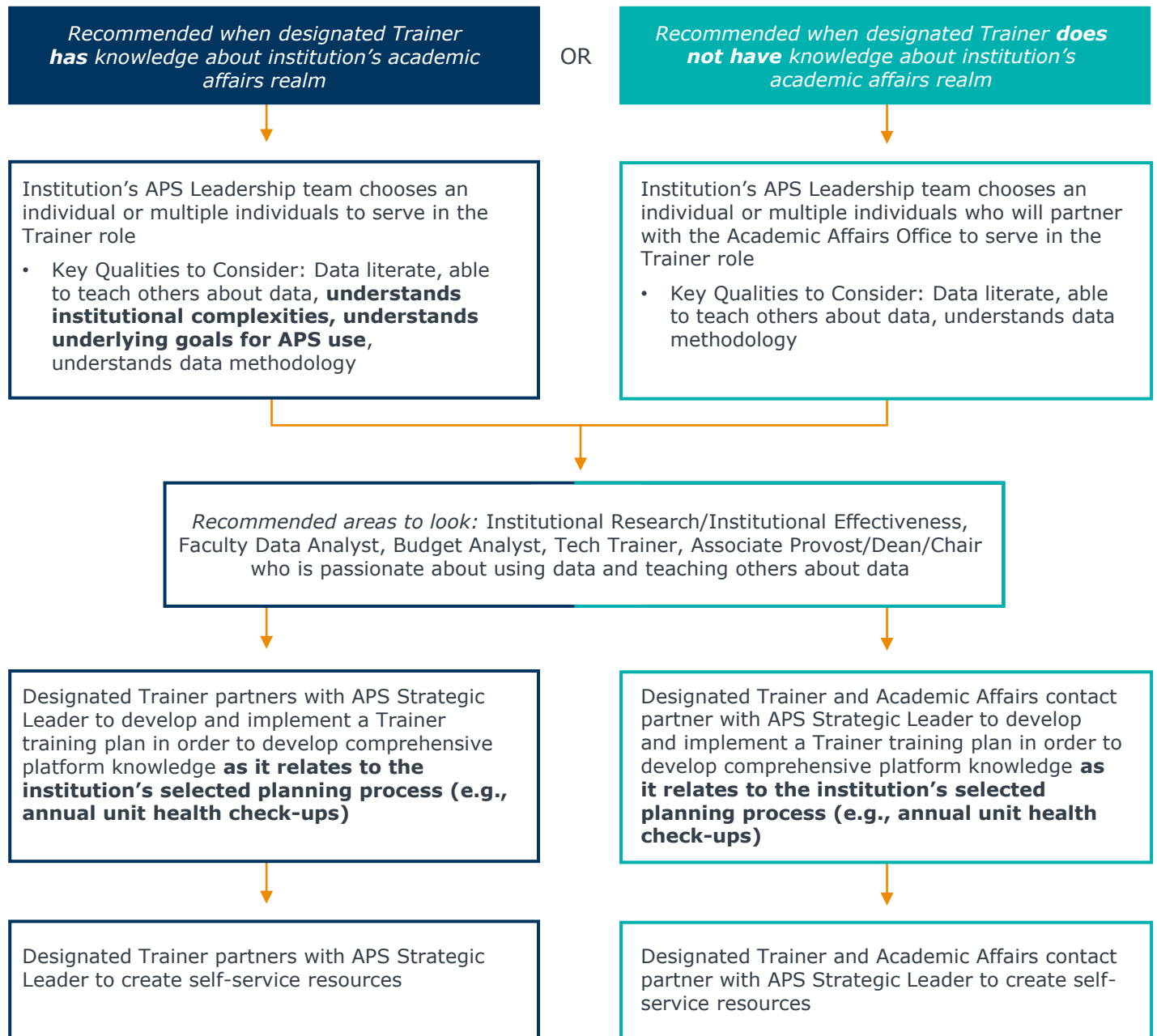
**Please ensure your digital resource hub is behind an institutional login.** EAB resources are proprietary for EAB partner use only.

## Tier 2: Internal Expertise

**Goal:** To designate an individual or multiple individuals at your institution to serve as an internal expert regarding the APS platform, allowing them to foster trust and buy-in among your users and be a thought partner to the APS Strategic Leader. Often, the selected individual(s) will serve as an internal champion for APS.

**Why:** Cultural buy-in is more achievable when a new process or technology is communicated from within the institution, as opposed to an external force. The Trainer plays a critical role in socializing the new process or technology.

### How to Achieve This:

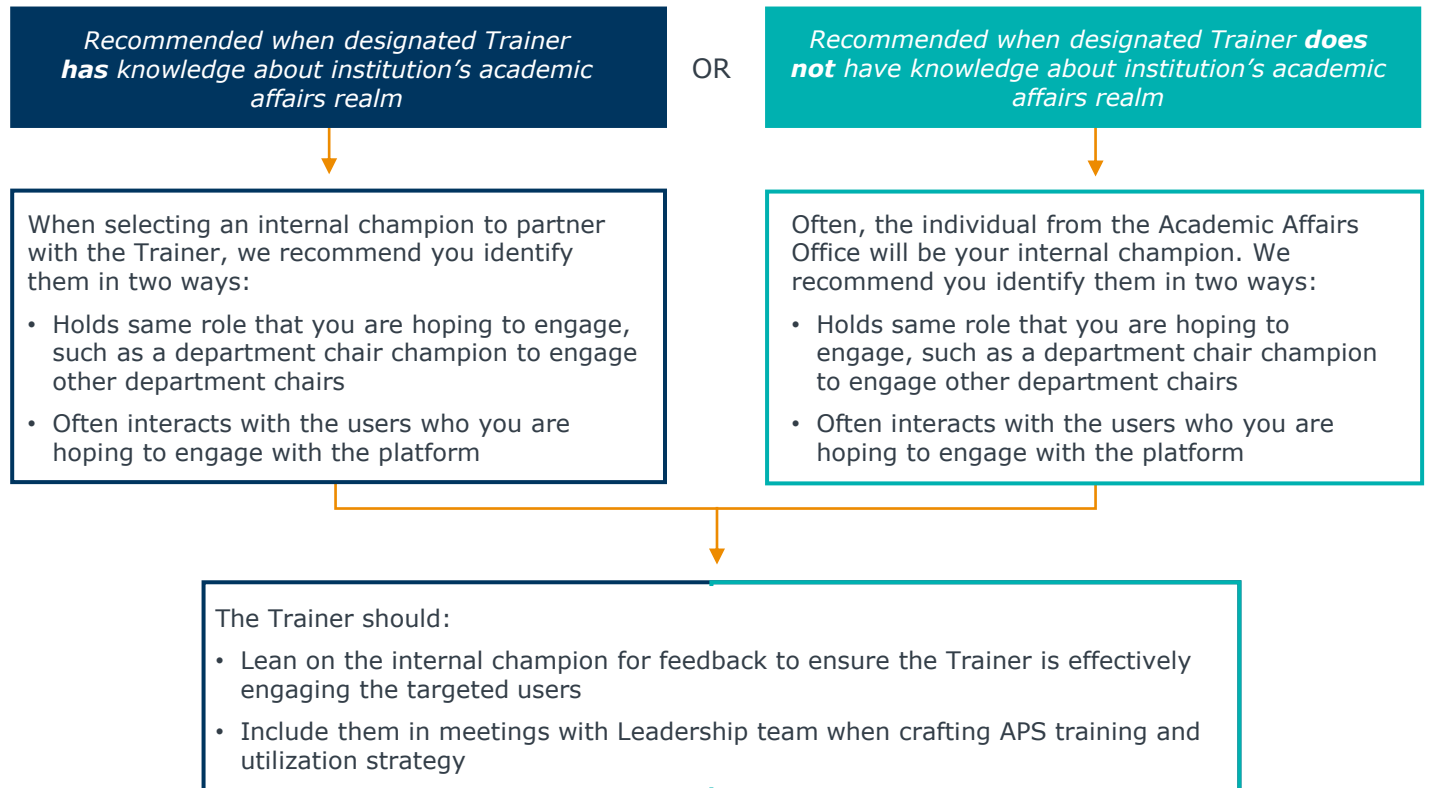




## Internal Champions

Often, the designated Trainer(s) will hold the internal champion role, as well. Like the Trainer role, internal champions are typically game changers when socializing a new process or technology.

### Interaction with the Trainer(s)



## Tier 3: External Escalation

**Goal:** To escalate complex questions to EAB when users cannot self-serve using available resources and the Trainer cannot answer the question(s).

**Why:** Learning is a journey that entails trial and error. If the Trainer, after troubleshooting on their own, cannot answer the question they should reach out to either [APSSupport@eab.com](mailto:APSSupport@eab.com) or their APS Strategic Leader for advanced troubleshooting. When EAB responds with an answer, the Trainer should identify opportunities to include that knowledge in self-service resources, training sessions, or their own knowledge reservoir to better support users.

### How to Achieve This:

- Clearly communicate expectations that a user should try to solve their question using available on-demand resources before reaching out to the Trainer
- Trainer should spend a few minutes troubleshooting on their own before reaching out to [APSSupport@eab.com](mailto:APSSupport@eab.com) or their APS Strategic Leader



**Tip:** To reduce email volume, set up an APS-specific email address like [APSHelp@Institution.edu](mailto:APSHelp@Institution.edu). The Trainer can easily review user questions.

## Tool 3a: Sample Online APS Resource Hub Page

Use the sample below as a starting point for your institution’s own online APS Resource Hub page.

**Magnolia University – Academic Performance Solutions (APS) Resource Hub**

Magnolia University has partnered with EAB’s Academic Performance Solutions (APS) since 2016 to help our academic and financial leaders make data-informed decisions about resource allocation and critical planning processes, such as annual departmental review and faculty line requests.

**APS Overview**

Academic Performance Solutions (APS) is a data analytics tool that brings an institution’s student, HR, and finance data into a single platform that generates structured reports and peer benchmarks on course offerings, faculty workload, course completion rates, department-level costs, and other key performance indicators.

**Access to the APS Platform**

For access to the APS platform, please reach out to Jordan Chang or Logan Garcia. Once you have been granted access, visit <https://reports.eabanalytics.com> to log in to the APS platform.

**Contacts**

Jordan Chang <i>Associate Provost</i> <a href="mailto:Jordan.Chang@magnolia.edu">Jordan.Chang@magnolia.edu</a>	Jamie Brown <i>APS Strategic Leader</i> <a href="mailto:JBrown@eab.com">JBrown@eab.com</a>
Logan Garcia <i>Director of Institutional Research</i> <a href="mailto:Logan.Garcia@magnolia.edu">Logan.Garcia@magnolia.edu</a>	

**Training and Support Materials**

APS offers a variety of resources to help Magnolia University’s leaders use the APS platform. Resources can be found online at <https://eab.com/aps> or on the Resources and Release Notes tab in the APS platform.

- APS Boot Camp for Deans Webinar Series
- APS Boot Camp for Department Chairs Webinar Series
- On-Demand Webinars
- APS User Guide
- APS Toolkits
- APS How-to Guides

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. How can I gain access to the APS platform?
2. How do I log into the APS platform?
3. Who should I reach out to if I have questions about the APS platform?
4. Are trainings available to help me better understand how to use the APS platform?
5. How can I access other EAB resources?

Your institution’s Leadership Team may reach out to [APSSupport@eab.com](mailto:APSSupport@eab.com) to create additional APS logins.

**Recommended Materials:**

- On-demand webinars: Training on key use cases and new releases, research
- APS User Guide: Updated with each new APS release
- APS Toolkits: Guides for metric selection and communication templates
- APS How-to Guides: Guides for selecting and finding metrics for key use cases

As an APS partner, your institution has access to a library of research and resources on EAB.com. The APS platform login is separate from the EAB.com login.

## Tool 3b: Creating an APS Quick Start Guide of FAQ Document

Compiling and distributing a customized document that details reasons why your institution partnered with APS, guidelines for APS data use, answers to frequently asked questions, and other content arms users with pertinent information before they start exploring the APS platform and demonstrates senior leadership’s commitment to building a data-informed culture. This document also promotes self-service, empowering users to learn on their own before seeking additional help.

### Example

**GETTING STARTED**

- Log in to the APS platform  
<https://reports.eabanalytics.com/>  
 Please note: Your institution may have single sign on (SSO) implemented with the APS platform, meaning you must use the institutional email address associated with your SSO system.
- Set or reset your password  
 If this is your first time logging into the platform or you've misplaced your password, enter your associated institutional email address and click "Forgot Password." You will receive an email to set a new password.  
 If you are having issues logging in, please contact [APSSupport@eab.com](mailto:APSSupport@eab.com)

**HOW THE PLATFORM IS ORGANIZED**

The APS platform aggregates your institution's HR, finance, and SIS data in one cohesive tool. The platform is organized by dashboards, which contain different tabs. Each tab houses various reports and analyzes to support your decision-making.

**Dashboard names** are listed in the dashboard drop-down menu. Your platform permissions, determined by your institution's Leadership team, will affect the dashboards you are able to see.

**Tab names**, such as Students and Courses, are listed across the top of each dashboard.

**Reports** are organized by sections indicated by large headers, such as Enrollment, and take various forms such as charts, key performance indicators, or tables.

### Understanding APS Data

#### Enrollment Data

Question	Answer
Why are program enrollment metrics higher than I would expect?	In the APS platform, enrollment metrics are based on the unduplicated headcount of students enrolled in coursework. For program specific enrollment data, please refer to the Program Analytics dashboard or the Programs tab in the APS Analytics dashboard.
In addition to student credit hour (SCH) trends on the Department Scorecard tab in the APS Analytics dashboard, can I also see the absolute values?	Yes, below the 3-Yr Growth in Attempted SCH by Department report, there is a View Attempted SCH Trends by Department link. Click on the link to view the number of SCH each year along with the percent change.
Can APS include a student's primary and secondary major?	Yes, APS includes the primary and secondary majors for students, where the information exists in our institution's data. A student is counted against each major in which they are enrolled. However, aggregate totals are always de-duplicated so that the total number of students is not overestimated and not a true representation.
How does the Intercurricular Dependencies by Department report on the Department Scorecard tab account for double majors?	Double majors will appear in their primary major for all colleges except for their secondary major. For example, a primary English major with a secondary Business major will appear as an English major when enrolled in coursework in all colleges except for the College of Business.
Regarding enrollment, is it end of term or census date?	Most metrics in APS use End of Term (EOT). For enrollment metrics, such as class size and fill rate, we use Census Date (CD). In the platform, the definition for enrollment metrics using CD notes that the data reflects a "point-in-time snapshot."
How does the Programs tab in the APS Analytics dashboard account for double majors?	Double majors will appear twice: once for each major in which they are currently enrolled (duplicated head count). They will only appear once in the summary rollup (unduplicated).

### Components to Include

Your APS Strategic Leader can provide you with a template to start with. When creating your document, customize it to fit your institution's needs – and most of all, your users. Consider the questions your users often have when viewing and using the data. This document can serve as a self-service resource, meaning users can go to this document before escalating their question to one of your institution's internal experts.

- ❑ Instructions for how to log into the platform: If your institution has enabled Single Sign On (SSO), provide the customized link and instructions
- ❑ Information about how the APS platform is organized (e.g., dashboard, tab, report, metric)
- ❑ Information about the academic resource planning process which your institution has prioritized to embed APS data use (e.g., annual health check-ups, faculty line requests, course capacity management)
- ❑ Frequently asked questions regarding data methodology, as well as enrollment, course, faculty, cost, and benchmark data in the APS platform

### Tool 3c: Creating a Process-Focused Trainer Training Plan

Depending on the path the institution takes, either the designated Trainer or both the designated Trainer and Academic Affairs contact should collaborate with the APS Strategic Leader to develop a Trainer training plan **regarding your selected planning process**. The goal of the plan is for the relevant individual(s) to build comprehensive platform knowledge and confidence training users and answering questions.

#### Training Plan Example

Event/Resource	Date	Desired Outcome
Introduction email/meeting with Trainer(s) and APS Strategic Leader		Introduce key messaging points for APS as it pertains to your institution
Deep 1:1 review of the metrics chosen for the selected planning process		Understand APS metrics selected for your planning process template
User training outline		Create training plan to engage and train your users
Teach-back/practice training session		Ensure Trainer is comfortable
Study time		Deepen APS knowledge and comfort in the platform
Live user training session(s) with APS Strategic Leader dialed in as support		Teach users how to use APS for your relevant planning process
Follow-up emails about process/deadlines		Ensure users understand requirements, deadlines, and expectations
Office hours and other ad hoc training opportunities		Answer user questions

### Tool 3d: APS Training Preparation and Milestone Checklist

Use the checklist to ensure your institution is prepared for APS trainings.

#### BEFORE TRAINING

##### **Make sure the following exist at your institution:**

- Clear institutional goals and expectations for APS platform use
- Clear institutional guidance on covering critical topics (budgeting, course offerings)
- Defined user training milestones: pre-training activities, training topics based on user role and planning process being used
- Defined training session outline for user role being trained
- Overall roll-out and training timeline
- Training effectiveness assessment mechanism to collect user feedback

##### **When planning training, consider the following:**

- Define training dates, locations, attendees
- Communicate with users about training times, coordinate attendance tracking
- Confirm users have access to the site
- Send confirmation of access and pre-learning activities to complete in the APS platform in advance of training activities, if applicable

#### DURING TRAINING

- Utilize training session outline to ensure that you thoughtfully cover all of the relevant analyses in the platform for each session
- Share university goals and expectations for APS platform use
- Share resources outlining where users can go with questions about the APS platform, data methodology, training support, and technical questions
- Share training assessment to ensure effectiveness

#### AFTER TRAINING

- Create opportunities for users to follow up to discuss questions, collect feedback, share updates with Training Team
- Review training assessment feedback and continue to review and improve training resources and approach based on feedback
- Communicate regularly with APS Strategic Leader and your institution's Executive Team about adoption, utilization, and ongoing user needs



**Make a Training Plan!**  
Work with your APS  
Strategic Leader.

## Tool 3e: APS Practice Exercises Worksheet

Use the worksheet as a starting point to coach academic leaders in gaining comfort in navigating the APS platform. Ask leaders to select a scenario and ask guiding questions about information they'll find using APS data.

### APS Platform Exercises

#### 1 Scenario 1 – Keeping a Faculty Line

Due to a recent retirement, your department has a vacant position. Before presenting your case to the Dean as to why the department needs to keep the position, you want to investigate how to use this position most effectively. What story does the data tell? *Use the Instructional Staff Capacity Planning dashboard in the APS platform.*

##### Course Demand Metrics

- How is course demand trending in the department?
- What percentages of growing and shrinking majors are prevalent in the department?
- What is the breakdown of attempted SCH by own and service majors?
- Which majors are growing?

##### Course Offerings Efficiency Metrics

- Which courses below recommended range are marked for higher priority review?
- Which courses above recommended range are marked for higher priority review?
- In which course division(s) are courses the furthest from the benchmark?

##### Instructional Capacity Metrics

- How many instructors teaching in the department are assigned to the department? To other departments?
- How is workload trending for each instructor type?
- What percentage of instructors is teaching below the institution's standard load?
- How does each instructor type's workload compare to the cohort?

#### 2 Scenario 2 – Matching Capacity to Student Demand

The Dean wants to know how well the department is matching course offerings to shifts in student demand. How would you evaluate your department's performance and recommend opportunities? Which metrics inform how efficiently and effectively your department is managing this? *Use the Department & College Analytics and the Partner Benchmarks dashboards in the APS platform.*

##### Student Progress Barrier Metrics

- Are there courses generating a significant number of unearned credits? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Course Completion tab)
- How do course completion rates at the Lower and Upper Division compare to benchmark for the same departments? (Partner Benchmarks dashboard, Course Completion tab)
- How many high-fill courses does the department have and in what divisions? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Class Capacity Utilization tab)
- Do any of these high-fill courses have low course completion rates? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Course Completion tab)

##### Course Metrics

- What is the median section class size for the department? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Departments Overview tab)
- How does the median section size compare to the benchmark for same departments? (Partner Benchmarks dashboard, Course Planning tab)
- How full are classes and what is the mix of section fill rates? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Class Capacity Utilization tab)
- How many single section courses could the department offer less frequently based on demand? How many may need expanded capacity? (Department & College Analytics dashboard, Class Capacity Utilization tab)

# Strategy 4: Embed APS Data in Existing or New Processes

## Strategy Overview

Having the right data is critical for effective decision-making, but without clear guidance on which data points to use – or accountability to do so – many academic leaders proceed with the status quo. By clarifying goals of use, leaders set utilization expectations at the very start, promote sustained data use, and demonstrate their commitment to evolving their campus culture.

## Driving Towards Our Shared Goal in Four Clear Approaches

The APS Collaborative consists of institutions that share the aspiration of **more effectively and sustainably supporting their institutional mission through transparent, data-informed decision-making**. This shared goal drives the way in which partners leverage the APS platform and its wraparound services, like supporting resources, to elevate decision-making.

Activity	Sample APS Metrics to Use	Questions Answered by APS Data
<p><b>Map Full-Time Instructional Staff Capacity to Student Demand</b></p> <p><i>Assess true need for additional faculty, submit data-informed requests, and assign faculty accordingly</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Attempted Student Credit Hour (SCH)</li> <li>• Sections Below, Within, or Above Recommended Fill Rate</li> <li>• Median SCH Workload per Instructor</li> <li>• Trends in Cost per SCH</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">APS Faculty Line Planning Overview Video</a></li> <li>• Make Data-Informed Faculty Line Decisions; Example Faculty Line Request Template (<a href="#">APS platform</a>, Help &amp; Training dashboard, How-to Guides tab)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is course demand trending towards needing more faculty?</li> <li>• How efficient are current course and section offerings?</li> <li>• Can instructional capacity meet course demand?</li> <li>• Is there a need to reallocate staff or add an additional faculty line?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Align Course Offerings with Student Demand</b></p> <p><i>Effectively serve students and balance instructional workload by strategically planning course and section offerings</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercurricular Dependencies</li> <li>• Course-Level Capacity Information</li> <li>• Median Class Size Benchmark</li> <li>• Unique Students Registered</li> <li>• Courses with Forecasted Changes</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">APS Course Planning Overview Video</a></li> <li>• Manage Your Program Portfolio for Efficiency; Diagnose Student Demand and Progress Barriers (<a href="#">APS platform</a>, Help &amp; Training dashboard, How-to Guides tab)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are course and section offerings aligned with student demand?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities to reallocate resources from low to high-demand courses?</li> <li>• What courses/sections are at risk of under- or overfilling during course registration?</li> </ul>



## Activity

## Sample APS Metrics to Use

## Questions Answered by APS Data

### Understand and Recognize Programs with Reform or Growth Opportunity

*Frequently monitor department or program health and performance to ensure progress towards goals and efficient use of resources*

- Intercurricular Dependencies by Department
- Fall-to-Fall Program Retention vs. 3-Year Trend in Program Enrollment
- Percent of Sections with Size < 10
- Courses with Highest Unearned Credit Hours

- Is student demand being met?
- Are there growing departments or programs that require additional resources?
- Are students enrolled in the same course having similar experiences?
- Is student progress supported?

### Resources

- Manage Your Program Portfolio for Efficiency; Inform Your Unit's Review Process; Diagnose Student Demand and Progress Barriers ([APS platform](#), Help & Training dashboard, How-to Guides tab)

### Improve Course Completion, Retention, and Equity

*Identify courses for course completion and retention improvement to promote student progress*

- Completion Rate vs. Attempted Credit Hour Production by Course
- Courses with the Highest Unearned Credit Hours
- Earned Credits and Final Grades by Course Code

- Is there high section variation in course completion rates?
- Are students receiving equitable, similar experiences across sections of the same course?
- In which courses are students struggling to earn credit?
- In which courses will course completion rate improvement efforts have an outsized effect?

### Resources

- Diagnose Student Demand and Progress Barriers; Identifying Opportunities for Course Completion Improvement ([APS platform](#), Help & Training dashboard, How-to Guides tab)

### Case In Brief: Eastern Washington University (EWU) – Aligning Instructional Staff Capacity with Student Demand

EWU lacked a formal faculty line process, so the provost would receive various requests in lengthy documents. Existing faculty lines tended to be maintained because department or program-level need could not be meaningfully assessed. Identifying an opportunity to improve this process, department leaders and College Business Officers (CBOs) now use metrics from the APS platform to complete a templated one-page document, which was made by the CBOs and an Executive Director in the Provost's Office.

#### Sample APS Metrics Chosen for Three Categories

- 1 Department Characteristics:** Total Attempted SCH, % Attempted SCH Taught to Own Majors
- 2 Faculty:** Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) of Tenure Faculty, SCH per Full-Time Faculty
- 3 Courses:** Number of Bottleneck Courses New Faculty Will Teach, Number of Collapsible Sections

Deans and CBOs submitted requests using APS data to complete the document. Requests were then reviewed by the Academic Affairs Council, who could identify pressure points across units using the data before submitting requests to the Provost's Office for final approval.



## Tool 4: Establishing Utilization Expectations Worksheet

Complete the worksheet to assess and prepare for your institution's use of APS data in key planning activities.



*How have you, or have you not, set expectations for APS data use for annual health check-ups, budgeting, or course planning activities?*

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*What specific challenges have you encountered when integrating data into planning processes at your institution?*

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*How can you proactively prepare for those challenges moving forward?*

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Strategy 4



*How have, or will, you engage academic leaders in the four planning activities and how can you grow their involvement?*

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*Outside of the four activities, what other opportunities for embedding APS data in processes or activities will your institution pursue?*

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*How can your APS Strategic Leader support you and what specific questions can they answer?*

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# Strategy 5: Create a Data Literacy Training Plan

## Strategy Overview

Data literacy is the cornerstone for successfully building data-informed cultures. According to the Harvard Business Review, “The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) assessed the data-interpretation and problem-solving skills of adults in 23 countries and found that the United States ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of 23 countries participating. A vast percentage of the workforce needs to enhance their data literacy.” Without strong data literacy, users are not adequately equipped with the necessary tools to use, interpret, and act on data. Thus, it is essential for Leadership teams to create and enact a plan focused on enhancing and maintaining data literacy across all user groups.



The ability to read, write, and communicate data in context, including an understanding of data sources and constructs, analytical methods and techniques applied—and the ability to describe the use case, application, and resulting value.

*Definition of data literacy from Gartner*



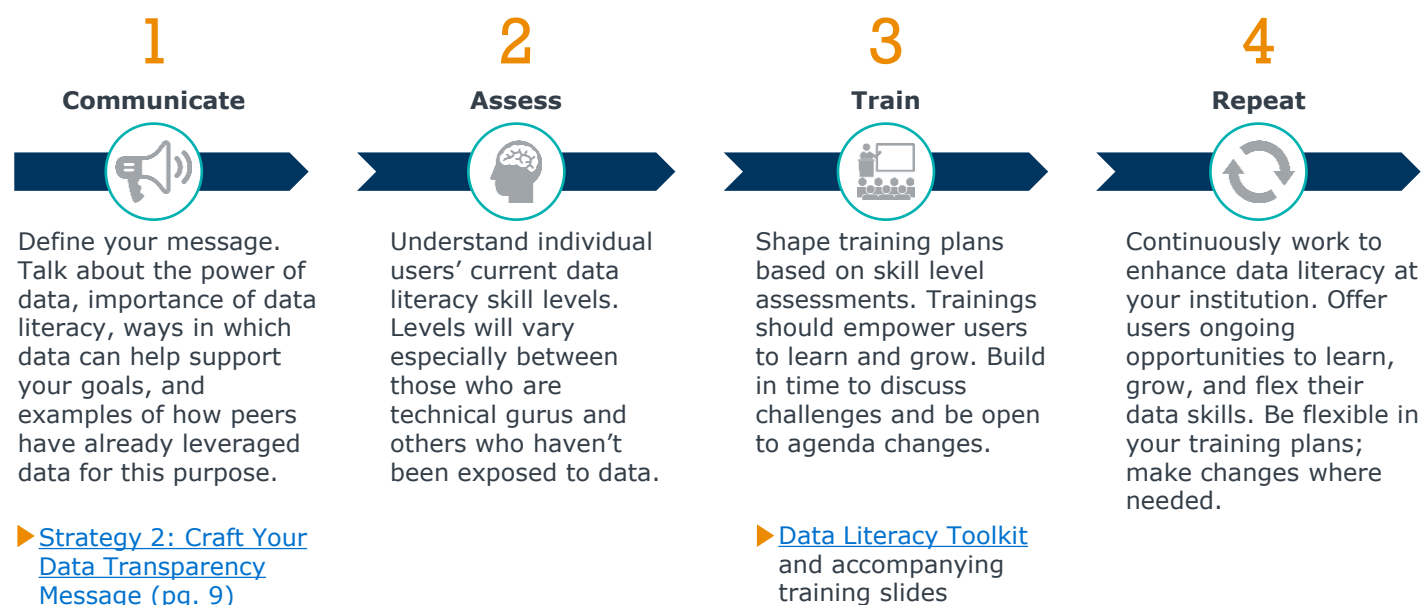
## Make a Training Plan with Intention

Let your purpose guide the creation of your training plan to ensure you’re keeping goals front and center.

- What are the specific goals you wish to accomplish with this plan?
- Who are the specific users you wish to engage?
- How will success be measured?
- Is there an infrastructure in place, or is there a need to create one, that will support continuous progress?

## Four Critical Elements of an Effective Data Literacy Plan

Use these four elements to shape your institution’s data literacy plan. Keeping in mind the changing higher education landscape and employee turnover, consider your data literacy initiative an iterative journey.



Source: Bersin, J., & Zao-Sanders, M. (2020, February 12). Boost Your Team's Data Literacy. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2020/02/boost-your-teams-data-literacy>. Panetta, Kasey. (2019, February 6). *A Data and Analytic Leader's Guide to Data Literacy*. Retrieved from <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/a-data-and-analytics-leaders-guide-to-data-literacy/>; Qlik. (October 2018). *Lead with Data*. The Data Literacy Project. Retrieved from [https://thedataliteracyproject.org/files/downloads/Qlik%20-%20How%20to%20drive%20Data%20Literacy%20within%20the%20Enterprise\\_October%202018.pdf](https://thedataliteracyproject.org/files/downloads/Qlik%20-%20How%20to%20drive%20Data%20Literacy%20within%20the%20Enterprise_October%202018.pdf).

## Tool 5a: Putting Your Data Literacy Training Plan on "Paper"

Once you have defined your message and goals, complete this worksheet to map out your data literacy training plan.



### Communicate

Use [Strategy 2: Craft Your Data Transparency Message \(pg. 9\)](#)

What is the message you will communicate to leaders across your campus?

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### Assess

What is the data literacy skill distribution across your user base? Are an overwhelming majority lacking data literacy skills; are there others who are more skilled and help coach others?

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### Train

Provide users with the [Data Literacy Toolkit](#) to read as pre-work before all training sessions.

What training opportunities will you schedule? Who will lead them and what resources do they need?

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### Repeat

Be flexible with our initiative to accommodate feedback, results, and ongoing changes.

What mechanisms will you put in place to ensure all involved parties can provide feedback and there are dedicated times to assess progress/results?

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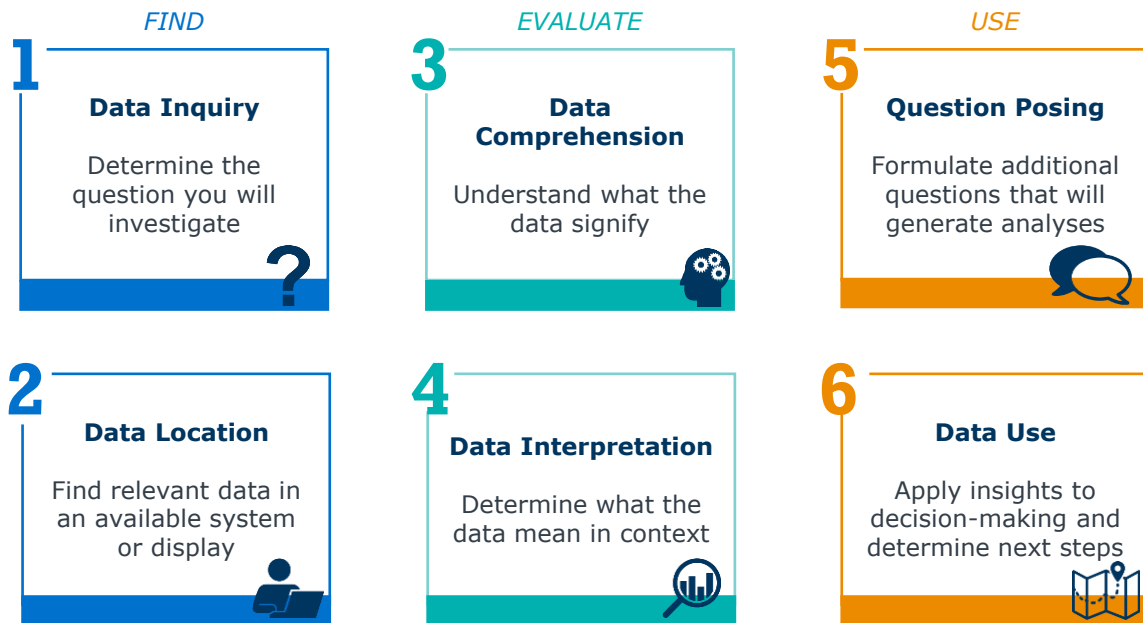
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## Tool 5b: Leveraging EAB's Data Literacy Toolkit

The APS [Data Literacy Toolkit](#) is framed around six skills that are core to being a competent data literate individual. The toolkit is designed to support users of the APS platform in laying the groundwork for data literacy by understanding basic statistics, data definitions, and methodology, as well as how to reconcile data incongruities and use data to tell a compelling story.

### Six Skills



### Download the Toolkit Online Today

Reach out to your APS Strategic Leader with any questions.

[Click to Download](#)

# Strategy 6: Facilitate Data-Informed Conversations

## Strategy Overview

A broad spectrum of avoidance exists when trying to initiate data-informed conversations. Learn different tactics and tailor your approach to successfully engage with each data persona.

### Three Data Personas to Strategically Engage When Interpreting Data

#### 1 “These numbers aren’t right”

Questioning data validity as a way to disengage from the conversation



#### The Data Denier

When presented with troubling data, the data denier attacks the methodology, rather than seeking to understand it

*Be Transparent When Presenting Data*

The more details you provide, the more likely the data denier will come to understand what you’re communicating.

- ✓ Obtain metric definitions and clarify methodology
- ✓ Be cognizant of your audience and what they care about
- ✓ Know the time period and any other filters that have been applied
- ✓ Anticipate any questions that may arise



#### Know When to Pause

Strong preparation helps counter staunch deniers, but debate beyond a certain point is futile and should be shut down.

#### 2 “Our situation is unique”

Justifying results with excuses and special circumstances to nullify comparisons



#### The Unrelenting Unicorn

When considering a data set, the unrelenting unicorn rationalizes the data rather than attempting to truly learn from the results

*Use Affirmative Statements to Push the Conversation Along*

Employ the “Yes and...” technique to rebuff unproductive responses.

#### Start with Agreement

- Begin by accepting the suggestion, which can:
  - Minimize defensiveness
  - Cut down time spent on explaining unique factors
  - Establish trust, foundation for collaboration
- Be careful not to validate disputes of fact

“Yes and...”

#### Expand the Discussion

- Add to the narrative they’ve established
- Redirect to a story of improvement, not parity in numbers
- Reiterate that commitment to quality isn’t minimized because of unique factors
- Find common ground with peers to learn from differences

### 3 “Where we are is good enough”

Recalibrating expectations to avoid any further need to improve

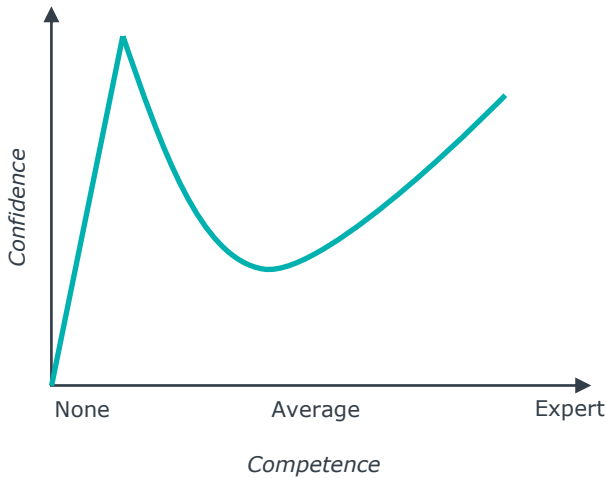


#### The Status Quo Champion

When thinking about outcomes, the Status Quo Champion opts to set a lower bar and aim easy, rather than striving for the highest ceiling of success and aiming high

#### The Dunning-Kruger Effect

Illusory Superiority Correlated with Low Competence



The Dunning-Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which people assess their cognitive ability as greater than it actually is. Individuals experiencing this bias believe that the current state is sufficient and there is no room for improvement.

*Provide Individuals with Visibility into Their Academic Unit's Performance and Exposure to Exemplars*

- ✓ Make the person aware of their academic unit's performance relative to peer cohorts
- ✓ Identify opportunities for the individual's academic unit to be more in line with cohort benchmarks (always bearing qualitative and pedagogical context in mind)

#### Learn About Additional Types of Data Detractors



[Use this link to view and download an interactive infographic about the six types of data detractors and how to respond to them.](#)

## Tool 6: Preparing for Cultural Shift Worksheet

An all-too-common challenge faced by institutions nationwide is getting leaders comfortable with using data to inform planning decisions. Beyond making the data accessible, it is critical to cultivate a culture that addresses concerns from all types of data deniers.

- 1 Use the space provided to describe your conversation topic. Include details you deem are important.

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- 2 Complete the chart to prepare for conversations with each data persona.

Persona Type	Anticipated Pushback	Proactive Ways to Mitigate Pushback	Other Comments
Data Denier			
Unrelenting Unicorn			
Status Quo Champion			
Rogue Operator			
Reverse Engineer			
Wishful Thinker			



# Strategy 7: Maintain Momentum with Strategic Follow-Up

## Strategy Overview

No matter how many initiatives or trainings an institution implements, efforts deteriorate and lose value without continuous follow-up with those who are involved. The Executive Team should create a follow-up plan that offers ongoing support, accountability measures, and opportunities for users to engage with APS data.

## Key Components of a Follow-Up Plan

An institution’s follow-up plan should be strategically made with goals in mind but stay within the scope of potential impact when considering the users involved and state of the institution.

- ✓ **Offer Ongoing Support:** Consider resources like office hours, custom use guides, standardized templates/documents, or even centrally produced reports to help new users get started
- ✓ **Hold Lunch and Learns:** Facilitate continuous learning by holding lunch and learns focused on a specific planning process or task, involving a group exercise and discussion
- ✓ **Track and Measure Progress:** Outline specific timelines and expectations around expected impact
- ✓ **Collect Feedback:** Use surveys or questionnaires to gather feedback after trainings and other group sessions to inform future session content and focus areas
- ✓ **Lean on Your APS Strategic Leader:** Frequently check in on progress, challenges, and questions, as well as opportunities for expanded use of APS data on your campus

### Case In Brief: Dixie State University

DSU’s Executive Team implemented an annual department health check-up. Department chairs were asked to complete a template using APS metrics.



Value Lead in the Institutional Research Office **led bi-monthly office hours** for department chairs to help them:

- Understand fundamentals of the APS data
- Find and interpret required APS metrics for the template
- Talk about the data

## Maintain Momentum by Working Towards a Goal

Without a defined goal, some uses may become lost or even opt out of next steps. Institutions can prevent this from happening by determining and communicating a goal from the very start. It is imperative to define the goals of every initiative or task involving APS data, so that leaders know what they are working towards.

- ▶ What are key milestones of the initiative or task?
- ▶ Who is owning which step(s)?
- ▶ What is the cadence for sharing updates with the Executive Team and whole group?

## Share Results On and Off Campus



Your institution’s achievements should be celebrated. Your Strategic Leader will help document project outcomes as a case study, which is a document that shows how your institution has leveraged APS data and the impact of your initiative.

The case study can be shared with all users to demonstrate success and gain support for data-informed decision-making. With permission, it can also be shared with other APS members to serve as an example of a successful initiative.

**Check out existing APS case studies [online](#). Reach out to your APS Strategic Leader with questions.**

## Tool 7: Creating Your Follow-Up Plan Worksheet

Use this worksheet to ensure your institution maintains momentum after training or the launch of a new initiative by developing a follow-up plan.

**1** What is our initiative?

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**2** What are key milestones?

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**3** Which specific individuals are owning each step? What is our designated Trainer's role?

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**4** How will progress be tracked?

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**5** What is the cadence for sharing updates with the Executive Team and the entire group?

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**6** What are the goals of the initiative?

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**7** What outcomes will be measured and how?

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**8** How will our APS Strategic Leader support us?

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**9** What self-service resources will we provide users for ongoing support?

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**10** How will we document results?

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**11** What mechanisms should we put in place to assess the initiative's progress and results to allow for iteration in the future?

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**12** What steps or areas do we wish to be highlighted in our future case study?

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# Strategy 8: Evaluate Results and Impact

## Strategy Overview

Given the significant investment required to implement new or expand existing initiatives, it is critical that leadership teams consider how they will evaluate the impact of those strategies. Understanding impact helps make the case for additional or continued investment in resources, informs future decisions, and highlights the excellent work that you and your team do to support your institutional mission, staff, and students.

### Why is Identifying Impact Important?



#### For You

- Make the case for resources, whether continuing or additional
- Self-assess to understand what is working and what is not
- Change gears, if necessary, to better support institutional goals
- Deploy your resources where they will be most effective
- Celebrate your successes more broadly
- Share your story to inspire other institutions



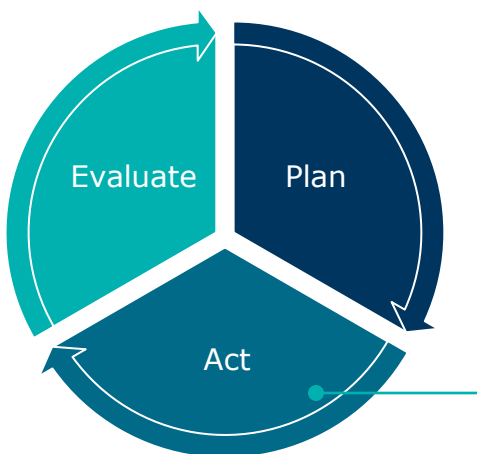
#### For Us

- Prove the need for expanded capabilities in highly impactful areas
- Better understand the impact of our recommended practices
- Inform our staff of where you need different types of support
- Share greater diversity of stories broadly to help the APS Collaborative
- Continue expanding our offerings and membership

### Plan, Act, Evaluate: Don't Forget the Last Step

All successful initiatives are rooted in three core phases: Plan, Act, and Evaluate. The preparation and work done in each phase is critical to the other two phases, as every initiative is iterative; there will always be areas for improvement.

At many institutions, most of the time and focus is on the actual execution of the work (Act phase). But without intentional planning upfront and evaluation at the end, many challenges arise that prevent easily identifying impact and using that information to inform future work.



#### Common Challenges When "Act" Phase Takes Priority

- Work does not align with institutional goals
- Data not collected to allow for easy evaluation
- Purpose not clear, leading to "analysis paralysis"
- Potentially ineffective practices continue to be implemented
- Several initiatives happening at once, impact of each unknown

[Want more information on the Plan phase? Refer to Strategy 4: Embed APS Data in New or Existing Processes \(pg. 23.\)](#)



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

### Three Items to Support Effective Planning and Evaluation

Item	Plan (Before Initiative Starts)	Evaluate (After Initiative Concludes)
<b>Take a snapshot of the data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any data you'll need to snapshot before starting your initiative.</li> <li>If possible, keep a record of the current process with as much detail as possible.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How long does it take to approve a new faculty line?</li> <li>How many individuals are involved in this process?</li> <li>What is the typical outcome (e.g., approve or decline faculty line request)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare any "hard data" to the data snapshots you saved prior to the initiative.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Last year's faculty request process reviewed 20 requests in 2 months, approving all 20 requests. This year we reviewed 27 requests in only 6 weeks, approving 11 requests."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Collect participant feedback via a survey</b>	Send a survey to collect feedback from relevant stakeholders, like Deans and Department Chairs.	Repeat the same survey after completing the initiative to measure changes in opinion.
<b>Define subjective and objective goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make goals and evaluation criteria as specific as possible.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instead of "ensure faculty lines are balanced with institutional needs," consider framing your goal as "reduce faculty with overload by 10%" or "decrease median tenured faculty teaching load by one section per semester."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine a relative value of outcomes by returning to your list of outcomes made prior to the initiative and "ranking" all results.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"It is more important that chairs improved their opinion of this process than us saving two weeks of evaluation."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Iterate and Scale Impact

Rarely, an institution will conclude that the first attempt at their new initiative (e.g., faculty line request process) is the best possible version they can achieve. Progress and impact require iteration. Identify opportunities to improve your process, make changes, and measure impact – each time! In order to improve scale, consider how you can better reduce inputs and maximize outputs.

#### Example Inputs

- Time to implement technology
- Time to discuss new process
- Cost to maintain technology



#### Example Outputs

- Reduced time-to-decision by 2 weeks
- Reviewed 30% more requests
- Improved faculty satisfaction by 3 percentage points

## Tool 8a: Plan, Act, Evaluate Worksheet

Review the following summary on this page to get a better understanding of the recommended steps when planning for a strategic initiative on campus. On the next page, you will be able to map out your own plans for evaluating the impact of your efforts.

### Summary of Key Definitions in Planning and Evaluating Strategic Initiatives

#### 1



##### Define Primary and Secondary Objectives

- What is the primary goal you are hoping to achieve with this initiative?
- What are the significant milestones in attaining this goal?
- Which strategies are you going to employ to reach each of these milestones?
- Which additional goals, if any, are you pursuing along with the primary goal?

#### 2



##### Define Metrics for Success

- How do you intend to measure your primary goal?
- Which supporting metrics will contribute to your evaluation of success?
- Do any of these metrics also contribute to your secondary objectives?

#### 3



##### Define Key stakeholders and Participants

- Who are the primary stakeholders responsible for outlining the goal(s) of this initiative as well as the available institutional resources?
- Who are the primary participants in this initiative and what is their expected contribution?

#### 4



##### Evaluate & Iterate

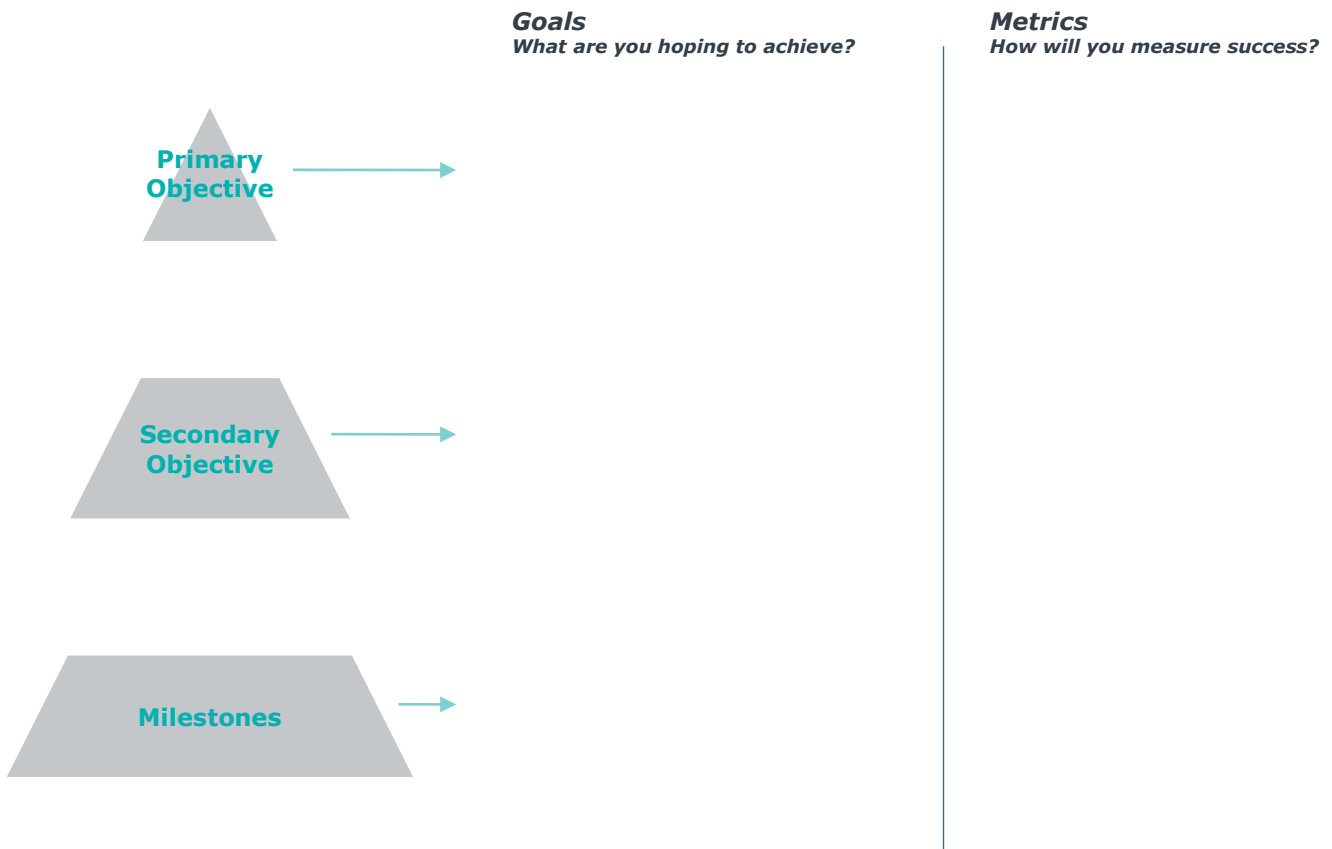
- Once your initiative is finished, return to this worksheet and complete pages 3 and 4. These will help you focus on quantifying and evaluating the outcomes of the initiative and planning for ways to enhance your results for future iterations.



## Evaluation Plan

Strategic Initiative (i.e., updating faculty line request process, revising course scheduling, etc.)

### Objectives and Metrics



### Stakeholders and Participants

*Who are the stakeholders(s) responsible for setting a timeline and providing oversight and direction for this initiative?*

*Who will be participating in this initiative and what are their responsibilities?*

## Evaluation and Iteration

### Quantify and Rank Outcomes

Fill in the boxes below to begin quantifying and ranking the outcomes of this initiative.

1. List the objectives of your initiative.

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. Repeat participant survey and attempt to measure subjective goals.

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
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| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. Compare objective data to your data snapshot to evaluate improvements. What changes did you achieve?

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
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| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

4. After completing questions 2 and 3, rank these outcomes in terms of their significance on your campus (1 being most and 10 being least significant).

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

## Identify Opportunities for Improvement in Future Iterations

Take an opportunity to reflect on all of the hard work you did over the last academic year, both within the leadership team as well as the users involved in the initiative.

**Once your initiative has concluded, reflect on the questions below, using the space provided.**

- Which parts of the initiative do you think went well? Not so well?
- Did your initiative accomplish its goals? Why or why not?
- Was this a one-time event or do you intend to repeat this process in the future? If you are repeating this event, consider ways to boost or at minimum maintain its success.
  - > Reflect on the input required for this initiative. How can you reuse existing infrastructure to reduce overall input for the second iteration?
  - > Reflect on the outcomes from the previous page. How can you duplicate these outcomes for other units on campus? How might you be able to improve these outcomes for the second iteration?

## Tool 8b: Sample Results Worksheet – New Annual Health Check-Up Process

Measure results of your institution’s department health check-up process using this worksheet. Before implementing the new process, ensure your institution plans to measure and keep track of the information asked in the following questions.

**1** Which programs at or near capacity were identified for review?

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**2** Which programs with either declining enrollment or excess capacity were identified for review?

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**3** Which departments and programs were identified for course completion improvement efforts? Was there a change in course completion rates for the term?

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**4** Which departments were prioritized for additional support? In what ways is support being provided?

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**5** How many sections were consolidated?

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**6** How many additional sections were you able to create in bottleneck courses? Did the new sections accommodate all student demand?

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**7** Have the consolidation and expansion of sections brought class sizes in line with peers?

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**8** Have the consolidation and expansion of sections brought instructional workload in line with peers?

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**9** How many faculty lines were and were not approved?

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**10** What is the cost savings associated with the faculty lines that were not approved?

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**11** How has the new faculty line(s) impacted instructional workload?

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**12** What is the cost savings associated with faculty lines that were reallocated to departments with demonstrated need?

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**13** How much time did it take for department leaders to complete the annual check-up guide? How does this compare to the process before the standardized guide (i.e. Hours in manual data collection and analysis by IR staff)?

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**14** How much time did it take leaders to review all report submissions? How does this compare to the process before the standardized guide?

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# Strategy 9: Build Enterprise-Level Data Governance

## Strategy Overview

Data governance is an enterprise capability that supports effective data management. It includes defining ownership and responsibilities; determining data’s meaning, storage, accessibility, usage, and security; and enforcing institutional standards and policies regarding data. Without strong data governance, institutions cannot maximize the full potential of their data analytic tools, like APS.

### Data Governance Center of Excellence by EAB’s IT Forum

This center provides leaders with resources on processes involved in establishing an enterprise data governance capability. It includes basic concepts and tutorials to educate peers and stakeholders who may be unfamiliar with the process, as well as advanced proven practices, and the toolkits, exercises, and templates to replicate those practices on your campus.



Access the Data Governance Center of Excellence [online](#). You must be logged into your [eab.com](#) account to view content.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



## Tool 9: Data Governance Maturity Self Test

Complete the diagnostic on this page and the next page (pages 50-51) to determine the effectiveness of current data governance capabilities, readiness for change, and areas for focus.

### Capability #1: Organizing Your Data Governance Initiative

Grading Key

Please indicate **how well** each statement describes your institution.

1

2

3

4

5

Not at all

Poorly

Somewhat

Fairly well

Well

Topic	Grading		Row Subtotal
Institutional Strategy	The institution has a formal data plan which articulates the steps to be taken to better leverage data and which names those responsible for executing those steps.  Score: _____	Campus leaders recognize data governance as an enterprise-level capability, requiring shared governance across the institution.  Score: _____	<input type="text"/>
Data-Driven Culture	Campus members recognize that data is an institutional asset and as such is not owned by individuals or departments, but is owned by the institution.  Score: _____	Leaders promote a culture of data informed decision-making, pressing campus to base resource decisions and choices on fact, not intuition.  Score: _____	<input type="text"/>
Data Committee Structure	We distinguish between strategic and operational data issues and match the seniority and expertise of people to the data governance activities we task them with.  Score: _____	The roles and responsibilities of each committee and its members are clearly defined, recorded, and revisited regularly.  Score: _____	<input type="text"/>
Organizational Continuity	A designated individual(s) oversees data governance and management, working in tandem with unit-level data stewards.  Score: _____	We have an established and clearly documented process for onboarding new members of the data governance group at the leadership and implementation levels.  Score: _____	<input type="text"/>
Implementation Framework	Data stewards are appointed and known within all operational units, and have clear policies outlining their roles and responsibilities.  Score: _____	Our data domains are clearly mapped, providing full coverage of enterprise information across different functional areas and silos.  Score: _____	<input type="text"/>

Copy these scores to page 52.

**Capability #2: Operationalizing Your Data Governance Initiative**

Grading Key






Please indicate **how well** each statement describes your institution.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not at all	Poorly	Somewhat	Fairly well	Well

Topic	Grading		Row Subtotal
Definition Strategy	Our institution defines data terms in clusters, with a strategic focus, and in pursuit of higher objectives for the institution.  Score: _____	We have a data definition decisioning framework that includes the right people at the right time, enables opt outs, and provides an agile mechanism for creating shared data definitions.  Score: _____	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
Common Data Dictionary	Institutional data-of-record is clearly identified, and definitions are readily accessible from a common or centralized location.  Score: _____	Our data dictionary is accessible and understandable by all campus stakeholders, including all metadata associated with represented terms.  Score: _____	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
Data Access Controls	Our institution has a standardized method for segmenting confidential data from public data.  Score: _____	Our institution grants data access on a principled, (semi-)automated basis.  Score: _____	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
Data Quality Assurance	We actively monitor for anomalous data in enterprise systems and take steps to identify and remediate the underlying causes.  Score: _____	We hold units accountable for data quality by designating unit-level stewards and monitoring compliance with university-wide standards for data cleanliness.  Score: _____	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
Data Consumption	Analytical resources are structured so that campus members are guided to the most useful resources associated with their roles and responsibilities.  Score: _____	End users' needs and usage patterns are monitored and incorporated in planning to determine future investments.  Score: _____	<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>

**Copy these scores to page 52.**

Copy numbers from pages 50-51 below and add up to discover your data governance maturity score.

Page 50	Page 51		
Institutional Strategy <input type="text"/>	Definition Strategy <input type="text"/>	20-30	 <h3>Data Denier</h3> <p>Your institution is sitting pretty—pretty behind the times. As the world of higher ed marches steadfastly into the data revolution, you're still juggling multiple spreadsheets and arguing about the number of students enrolled for the coming semester. Time for the journey to begin.</p>
Organizational Culture <input type="text"/>	Common Data Dictionary <input type="text"/>	31-50	 <h3>Barely Begun</h3> <p>You're starting to make headway. Maybe there's an evangelist, and people are starting to take notice. But there's no coherent plan, and no-one is taking steps toward an enterprise-wide data-asset revolution. You need more guidance and guardrails, but at least you're on your way.</p>
Committee Structure <input type="text"/>	Data Access Controls <input type="text"/>	51-70	 <h3>Gathering Steam</h3> <p>You've got your committees and stewards; you've got a plan. Someone's leading the charge and people are plodding along--but mostly at higher ed's typically glacial pace. Although you've got the right folks beginning to line up, you just need the right approaches and structure to push them over the line.</p>
Organizational Continuity <input type="text"/>	Data Quality Assurance <input type="text"/>	71-90	 <h3>Leading the Pack</h3> <p>When it comes to data initiatives, you're ahead of the curve. You've got standards and documentation, stewards and evangelists. Your data is reliable, it's inflecting decisions, and the institution is deriving strategic value from your hard work. It's hugs and smiles--not doom and gloom--when the data folks walk into the room.</p>
Implementation Framework <input type="text"/>	Data Consumption <input type="text"/>	91-100	 <h3>Data Dominance</h3> <p>What data problem in higher education? Your university is humming with the excitement of seamless data flows careering through the institutional ether. Data-driven decision-making feeds off clean, secure data, and silos are a thing of the past. "Student success" and "Institutional Efficiency" have replaced traditional business concerns, and the institution is always looking for new ways to add to central data and leverage it for innovation. Well done you, Data Hero.</p>

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**Your Data Governance Score**



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