

Self-Assessment: Cost, Efficiency, and Operations

Key Steps in Achieving Sustainable Administrative Cost Savings

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CURRENT APPROACH

Facing increasingly tighter budgets, colleges and universities are exploring any and all methods to control administrative costs. Rather than across-the-board cuts (which often do more harm than good), the best opportunities for cost savings lie in addressing unit-specific inefficiencies. So we can identify your top opportunities, please select a value (1 to 4; grading scale below) that best describes your institution’s approach in each of the large administrative cost categories listed below.

GRADING SCALE

- 1 = We will need a lot of additional support to improve performance
- 2 = We are behind and need additional support to improve
- 3 = We are slightly concerned with our performance
- 4 = We will exceed industry standards this year
- N/A = Not applicable

Facilities Operations and Maintenance

Spend and Contracts

Revising Policies to Maximize On-Contract Spend

We have effective disincentives for off-contract spend and routinely achieve 70%+ managed spend. Our distributed buyers understand the benefits of centrally negotiated contracts and seek central procurement’s expertise when making large purchases.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Technology and IT Services

Strengthening Governance in Technology Purchasing

Our IT department leads expert reviews for campus technology buyers in order to ensure investments meet security and technical standards. Reviews also consider existing services before considering new vendors and help avoid duplicate licenses.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Reducing Energy Consumption

We regularly recommission buildings and look for opportunities to retrofit equipment to current energy standards. We apply continuous commissioning to overall energy “hogs” and buildings with greatest potential for energy drift.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Labor Costs

Leveraging Position Control to Prioritize Resources

We employ a rigorous position control process, where central leaders review all vacated positions before being backfilled. The review is used to evaluate criticality of the role as well as explore potential role redesigns.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Workflow and Org Design

Investing Time and Energy in Process Improvement

We continuously seek opportunities to redesign administrative work across campus—either through a dedicated central team or rotating taskforce—as a means to reduce errors, mitigate risk, and improve efficiency.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Using Spend Data to Identify Purchasing Efficiencies

Spend and contract data is automatically and continuously aggregated in a central repository. We use this data to pursue new savings opportunities, including contract renegotiation, pricing negotiation, and invoice consolidation.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Optimizing IT Project Management

Our IT project prioritization framework helps the institution select those projects that best serve strategic goals. It provide ideas for eliminating unnecessary projects, making the best use of IT resources, and maximizing project impact.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Optimizing Space Utilization

A central space governance committee—comprised of business, academic, and facilities leaders—makes all space allocation decisions in the best interest of our institution and enforces policies and incentives designed to maximize utilization.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Reviewing Outsourcing Opportunities

We regularly solicit RFPs to outsource campus functions, subfunctions, and even select work processes, in order to evaluate potential cost savings or cost-neutral service enhancements.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Managing through Metrics and Dashboards

Each of our administrative and business units have selected 8-12 core metrics that link to strategic goals and reflect true unit performance. We regularly track and report these metrics on unit-specific dashboards and target improvement efforts to current performance gaps.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Evaluating and Negotiating Vendor Contracts

During negotiations, we present the most advantageous parts of each proposal to pressure vendors to match favorable terms. We calculate the expected total cost of ownership for products and services and negotiate lower prices to mitigate added ownership costs.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Rationalizing the Integration Architecture

We have an integration strategy that ensures that all vendors’ technical standards (e.g., platforms, protocols, etc.) are leveraged and can be supported on campus. Our integration tools promote workflow automation, minimal coding, and reduction of rework.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Prioritizing Preventive Maintenance

We have a long-term plan for addressing our deferred maintenance backlog, with particular emphasis on prioritizing and scheduling preventive maintenance work. We regularly achieve a preventive/ reactive maintenance ratio of 50%+ preventive work orders.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Rebasing Health Benefits Costs

To balance costs while also offering a competitive benefits package, we pursue savings strategies largely “invisible” to campus such as disease management for our sickest employees and generic prescriptions incentives.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A

Achieving Scale through Reorganization

We have consolidated some of our most transactional and/or highest volume administrative services through centralization, shared services, or multi-campus consortia.

Level of Performance				
1	2	3	4	N/A