The State of Academic Operations & Student Success

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Today's Speakers

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Agenda

- Defining Academic Operations
- Curriculum and Catalog Management
- Projecting Course and Program Demand
- Uncovering Barriers
- Questions
Defining Academic Operations

- Definitions and scope
- Connection to student success
Defining Academic Operations

Academic operations is an umbrella term that describes a number of functions and routinely includes:

- Curriculum management
- Catalog administration
- Classroom space management
- Class section scheduling/timetabling
- Course/program demand analysis
- Degree audit management
Academic Operations Spans Beyond Traditional Functions

Functions Often Extend Into SEM Initiatives

- Accreditation compliance: 86%
- Degree-audit management/programming: 80%
- Faculty management and hiring: 79%
- Transfer articulation: 76%
- Enrollment management: 33%
- Admissions and recruiting: 20%
- Other: 8%

38% of institutions have strategic enrollment management initiatives related to academic operations.

"We have trouble during late registration having enough 'high demand' courses and sections available for all students"

"Despite high graduation rates, too many classes are clumped at the same time and overlapping timetable options generate time conflicts. This cause unnecessary stress for all constituencies and reduces student satisfaction"

"The academic course catalog, used regularly by every student and advisor to select courses and chart academic pathways, hasn’t changed much over the years."

Source: "4 ways to advance academic course catalogs", University Business, November 2019; Coursedog market analysis.
Student Barriers Persist in Academic Operations

Limitations to how we make students aware of these policies and practices: 51%
Lack of technology to support the functions: 47%
Lack of clarity in related policies: 46%
Incompatible or different practices for the same function that differ across the campus: 36%
Timing of curriculum and/or catalog changes impacting NEW students: 33%
Missing policies: 31%
Timing of curriculum and/or catalog changes impacting current students: 29%
Other barriers: 13%

90% of respondents agree academic operations barriers impact students

Inefficiencies Impact More Than Just Administrators

Student Impact of Inefficient Academic Operations

- Students are unaware of changes made to the curriculum that may impact them: 63%
- Students are unable to access courses they need: 50%
- Curriculum changes are not always accurately reflected on program maps, completion audits, the website, or other student-facing sources: 48%
- The catalog does not accurately reflect courses offered, program requirements, or other policies: 21%
- Students must contact administrators or go to offices in-person to access basic course or curriculum information: 18%

Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog, April 2022.
Curriculum & Catalog Management

- Curriculum change rules
- Time of year published
- Content that lives in the catalog
The Curriculum & Catalog Lifecycle

Curriculum Evaluation
- New courses, programs regularly assessed with agreed-upon metrics to assess alignment with student needs, institutional goals

Curriculum Change Process
- Curriculum changes proposed, evaluated, approved
- Each stage conducted in same place, ensuring transparency, accountability

Course Scheduling
- Newly approved, published courses built into the course schedule for student enrollment

Catalog Publishing
- Once curriculum change approved, automatically pushed into newest version of the catalog for student, faculty accessibility

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Over Half Allow Curriculum Changes More Than Once Per Year

Number of Changes Allowed per Academic Year

- **One:**
  - Courses: 33%
  - Programs: 47%

- **Two:**
  - Courses: 9%
  - Programs: 7%

- **Three:**
  - Courses: 7%
  - Programs: 5%

- **Three plus:**
  - Courses: 7%
  - Programs: 2%

- **No limit:**
  - Courses: 6%
  - Programs: 46%

Catalog Publication Timeline

Time of Year Catalog is Published

- Summer: 41%
- Fall: 30%
- Spring: 20%
- Other: 8%

54% of institutions do not have an approved catalog before students are recruited and admitted to that catalog.

## Content Displayed in the Catalog

### Academic Offerings & Policies Dominate Catalog Information

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<tr>
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<th>Catalog</th>
<th>Handbook or other publication</th>
<th>Both catalog and handbook</th>
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Content in the Catalog (cont.)

The Catalog Represents so Much More Than Academic Offerings

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Information Overload

Commonplace in the Catalog

319: average number of pages in reviewed community college catalogs

95-215: courses students had to choose from to meet 10-11 requirements

“...Catalogs are crammed with information for a variety of purposes and are largely indecipherable unless you know in advance what you are seeking. They offer a hodgepodge of basic and exotic information to ensure nothing is left out and are rarely written for the benefit of students.”

- Dr. Terry O’Banion and Dr. Cindy Miles

Class & Academic Program Demand Practices

- Institutional goals tied to demand analyses
- Use of data to project academic offerings
- Program demand analyses
- Class demand analyses
"Institutional culture around what classes to offer and how many seats is often based on preference and historic scheduling. Data is often provided but not used as expected to plan section offerings in all faculties. Some use data really well while others do not."

- University leader and AACRAO survey respondent
Demand Analyses Critical for Institutional Imperatives

Student Access & Resource Allocation Top List

- Ensure students can access classes they need for timely completion
- More accurately predict resources needed to offer necessary courses
- Budgetary considerations
- Decrease number of under/overfilled sections
- Take guesswork out of which classes to offer each term
- Inform new curricular offerings
- Inform creation of academic program maps/plans

Extent Data is Used to Project Demand for Academic Offerings

- 38% Use data to project both class and program demand
- 28% Use data to project class demand
- 7% Use data to project program demand
- 27% Do not use data to project both class or program demand

New Skills Emerging at Rapid Pace

By the time you create a two year program, you're already lagging. Because, if you go through all the systems, it's going to take you a minimum of one year, if not two. So you started a program that you needed two years ago, and now you're waiting two years to get it approved and then you're going to offer it... The workforce has passed you by.”

- Dr. Jill Wright, Illinois Central College

Source: “Shifting Skills, Moving Targets, and Remaking the Workforce,” May 2022, Emsi Burning Glass.
Sources of Data to Project Program Demand

- Number of students currently enrolled in a program: 88%
- Intended program declared by incoming students: 53%
- Time to completion by academic program: 28%
- Change in program by students in previous terms: 27%
- Educational plan data created by a student (e.g., in a degree planning tool): 23%
- Other: 4%

Use of Data for Program Demand

- Very little: 5%
- Somewhat: 60%
- Extensively: 34%

Sources of Data to Project Class Demand

Student Success Metrics Fall at the Bottom of the List

- Registration data from previous terms: 90%
- Which classes current students still need to take to complete their program: 64%
- Class and/or section fill percentages: 63%
- Educational plan data created by a student: 38%
- Number of credits current students have taken and still need to take for completion: 32%
- Class data on time of day offered: 30%
- Class data on day of week offered: 28%
- Class completion rates: 20%
- Other: 10%

Barriers in Academic Operations

• Barriers to achieving strategic initiatives
• Challenges around performing academic demand analyses
Barriers to Academic Operations
Strategic Initiatives

- Lack of staff resources: 67%
- Other initiatives competing for the same resources: 57%
- Lack of monetary resources needed to complete the initiative: 46%
- Lack of buy-in for the initiatives: 33%
- Lack of technology: 33%
- Lack of data to make decisions related to initiatives: 18%
- Lack of urgency for the initiatives: 18%
- Other: 4%

Barriers to Perform Analyses

Time to Perform Data Analysis Represents Top Barrier

"Deans and others creating the schedule might have the data but may not be using the data to make informed decisions or may be opting to use their own historical thoughts on enrollment to drive decision-making."

Improving student success is a holistic initiative – your academic operations should be, too.

**Student-centric**
Improve access, engagement, persistence, and completion of program pathways.

**Flexible technology**
Technology that fits the needs and processes of your institution.

**Data driven**
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