CASE STUDY

Embedding Data in Review Process to Improve Resource Allocation

St. Ambrose University, Private Masters University in Davenport, IA

• **About:** St. Ambrose University (SAU) is a private university with a total enrollment of 3,184.

• **Challenge:** Department chairs and deans lacked accessible data to inform and measure impact of resource allocation decisions. Existing reports included disparate data points and required extensive manual analysis.

• **Solution:** Using Academic Performance Solutions (APS), SAU was able to use key department level metrics to inform resource requests and make allocation decisions.

• **Impact:** SAU’s partnership with APS has improved transparency into the resource allocation process. With easily accessible data, the labor intensive and time consuming process of analyzing different data points has been drastically reduced. Additionally, SAU has identified opportunities to shift resources to high demand departments.

Impact Highlights

700 hours
Time saved by eliminating manual data collection and analysis

$446K
Dollars saved by reallocating 2.5 new faculty lines to departments with demonstrated need

Streamlining Department Review Process with Standardized Data

In previous years, SAU’s Faculty Finance Committee (FFC) reviewed data for a few select departments. Using APS metrics and analyses, the finance team was able to create comprehensive department-level reports to measure the health of all departments. By including both operational and financial metrics, department chairs were able to understand how their operational decisions impacted their financial results.

Building Comprehensive Department-Level Reports

40 departments analyzed
18 APS metrics used

APS Analyses Used to Create Departmental Reports

**Enrollment Trends**
- How many majors are enrolled in my department’s courses?
- How have attempted student credit hours changed over time?

**Faculty Mix and Workload**
- How many courses are instructors teaching?
- How has course load changed over time?

**Section Size and Utilization**
- How full are classes?
- Can we offer courses less often?

**Costs**
- What is current distribution of costs in my department?
- How does this compare to my peers?
Surfacing Resource Reallocation Opportunities Across Departments

Leveraging the reports generated for each department, the FFC was able to engage in data-supported conversations with deans, chairs, and faculty. Together, they reviewed the reports to identify insights and opportunities.

Faculty Finance Committee Meetings
Reviewed reports with academic stakeholders
• Used departmental reports to facilitate discussions about current use of resources
• Asked targeted questions to illuminate existing efficiencies and potential opportunities

Department Chair Buy-In and Agreement
Used reports to understand departmental performance and resource use
• Achieved consensus about which departments to prioritize for resources
• Did not submit requests to replace five retired faculty lines – allowing SAU to add 2.5 new lines for high demand departments

Opportunities Illuminated Through Updated Review Process

Maximum Capacity
Accurately document maximum capacity to correctly measure fill rates and instructional capacity

Intercurricular Dependency
Align distinct course offerings with student enrollment trends, such as in departments teaching large share of non-majors

Faculty Course Loads
Balance course loads – particularly for full-time, tenured faculty who currently teach most courses

Bottleneck Courses
Consolidate low-fill sections and reallocate resources to bottleneck courses

Impact of Engraining Data into Decision Making

Making Data-Informed Decisions with APS

700 Hours
saved by using standard reports, rather than the FFC creating reports from scratch

$446,000
reallocated faculty lines to their Computer Science Program and for a new Analytics Program

100%
departments reviewed, instead of select handful of departments