Let us do the DIGGING

10 Ways to Get In-Depth Department Insights on the APS Platform

Academic leaders are constantly balancing the imperative to support student excellence against the challenges of managing programs with scarce resources. This can be especially difficult at the unit level, where transparency into departmental performance is lacking. Embedding data, including peer benchmarks, into term course planning, annual departmental reviews, and budgeting can eliminate the perception of a black box when it comes to decisions about resources.

The Academic Performance Solutions platform gives leaders access to department-level data to enhance decisions about instructional capacity, student performance, and costs. **Use these 10 reports within the APS platform to uncover answers to your most pressing questions.**

Calibrate Course Offerings

1 Which other departments should I be monitoring, in addition to my own, to predict future enrollment?

Intercurricular Dependencies by Department
▶ *Find this report on the Department Scorecard tab*

What's in the report: Proportion of attempted student credit hours taught to your department's majors versus students majoring in other areas.

How to use the report: Understand which students are taking courses in your department. For example, what share of student credit hours taught in the English department are to students with a major within the English department? What share are to students with a major in the biology department?

2 Has there been unintentional proliferation of new courses within the department?

Distinct Course Offerings and Annual % Change by Course Type
▶ *Find this report on the Courses tab*

What's in the report: The count of distinct courses and change compared to previous year.

How to use the report: If your department is growing, look for parallel increases in distinct courses, to keep up with demand. If the department is contracting or had flat enrollment, an increase in the number of courses could indicate unintentional proliferation, which may contribute to low fill rates and underutilized capacity.

3 Are our smallest courses small by design?

Class Size: Percentage of Classes with Size <10
▶ *Find this report on the College Scorecard tab*

What's in the report: Drill in to view total enrollment, capacity and fill rate for all sections with less than ten students enrolled.

How to use the report: Evaluate your small classes to determine which are intentionally small and which are small due to low enrollment, but could accommodate more students. Consider opportunities to reduce the number of sections of under-enrolled courses, while continuing to invest in targeted small classes.

4 Compared with our peers', do our class sizes balance pedagogical and resource needs?

Median Class Size Benchmarks
▶ *Find this report on the Course Planning tab*

What's in the report: Your institution's median class size compared to your selected cohort's weighted average.

How to use the report: Filter this report by course type and division to see how you compare to peers in specific course types, such as lower division lectures. While the benchmark is not a target for class size, this can provide descriptive insight into current disciplinary norms.

Promote Student Progress

5 Are students facing course access barriers due to capacity constraints?

Number of Bottleneck Courses by Course Division
▶ *Find this report on the Students tab*

What's in the report: Count of courses at or above 90% capacity with drilldown to course level and course codes.

How to use the report: Focus on lower division courses, particularly those required for graduation, to pinpoint courses approaching or exceeding capacity. Consider offering more sections, or increasing the maximum capacity, if it has been unnecessarily restricted.

6 Which courses are ripe for redesign to promote student success?

Earned Credits and Final Grades by Course Code
▶ *Find this report on the Students tab*

What's in the report: Number of sections and total number of students enrolled in each course, the percentage of students that earned credit for the course, the range in section-level percentages of students earning credit, the distribution of final grades.

How to use the report: Look for wide ranges in completion among sections in high enrollment courses, indicating that student experience may be dependent on instructor differences. Consider supportive resources for instructors or course redesign where there is high variation that results in significant unearned credit hours.

7 Are there differences in completion rate among instructor types?

Class Size and Course Completion by Instructor Type: Trends in Median Course Completion Rate
▶ *Find this report on the Instructional Staff tab*

What's in the report: Historical median course completion rates for each instructor type, typically: tenure, tenure track, non-tenure track, adjunct, graduate assistants, and other.

How to use the report: Compare trends in course completion to determine if students are likely to be more successful based on instructor type. Consider additional support for groups with lower success rates.

Gauge Resource Allocation

8 How are we deploying different types of instructional staff?

Distribution of Student Credit Hours (SCH) Taught
▶ *Find this report on the Instructional Staff tab*

What's in the report: Count of SCH by course division for each instructor type.

How to use the report: Understand what portion of lower division and upper division courses are taught by adjunct or other part-time instructors. Are your undergraduate students getting enough exposure to tenured faculty?

9 How much are our instructors teaching, relative to our expectations and our peers?

Instructional Workload Benchmarks
▶ *Find this report on the Instructional Workload tab*

What's in the report: SCH produced, number of sections taught, and credit hours taught for both your institution and the selected cohort.

How to use the report: Filter this report by instructor type and rank to understand if there is opportunity to rightsize SCH production. For example, if your tenure and tenure-track faculty produce significantly less SCH than peers, consider evaluating course releases or class sizes to understand the reason for the gap.

10 How have decisions about resource allocation impacted our costs?

Trends in Cost Per Credit Hour by Account Category
▶ *Find this report on the Costs tab*

What's in the report: Costs per credit hour for each category: instructional salaries, non-instructional salaries, benefits, and general operating expenses.

How to use the report: Look for changes over the past few years. If you have made efforts to increase SCH production, look for a decline in cost per SCH. If there are unexplained increases, drill into the account details to learn about what's driving costs.