



# Introducing EAB

Launching the Collaboration with the Committee of Nine

DRAFT

# EAB Engagement Leaders



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# How EAB Already Works with UofSC

## A Long-Standing Partnership Across a Range of Functions

### Enrollment Services

Partner since 2010

Targeted recruitment of new freshmen

42% of Fall freshmen enrollment influenced by EAB outreach



### Navigate

Partner since 2013

Coordinated student support across units

Over 35,000 early alerts and 350,000 messages to students processed last year



### Academic Performance Solutions

Partner since 2015

Dept-level data on instructional demand, capacity, and cost

40 academic leaders used APS across the past year to support academic planning decisions



### Market Insights

Partner since 2013

Real-time labor market and competitor analysis

9 custom market research reports completed last year



### Research Forums

Partner since 2007

Best practices research and role-specific workshops

445 active users on EAB.com and 30 individual expert consultations delivered last year



# A Decade of Relevant Research



## EAB Studies on Measuring and Improving Academic Program Performance

- Maximizing Space Utilization (2010)
- [Smart Growth](#) (2011)
- Revitalizing the Program Portfolio (2012)
- [Reaching Search and Shop Students](#) (2013)
- Dean's Dashboard (2014)
- [Breaking the Trade-Off Between Cost and Quality](#) (2014)
- [The New Academic Program Review](#) (2015)
- [Making the Academy Market Smart](#) (2016)
- [The Instructional Capacity Playbook](#) (2018)
- [Academic Vital Signs](#) (2018)
- [Rightsizing the Program Portfolio](#) (2019)
- [The Multidisciplinary Reorganization Toolkit](#) (2019)
- [Market Insights and Industry Futures](#) (2020)

# The Charge from President Caslen



## The Formal Framework for Our Respective Roles

“The University will retain an external consultant to assess cost-savings and revenue-generating opportunities through academic program realignments.

Your first task as a committee will be to review the draft scope of work for this consultant and recommend any changes you feel necessary.

You will also meet with the consultant as part of the engagement to inform the production of their report.

The committee will review the external consultant’s report... Upon review, the committee will provide a written evaluation.

It is not expected that the committee perform an independent audit of the quantitative or qualitative measures employed by the consultant... as a basis for their recommendations.

Rather, the committee is asked to assess the reasonableness of the process followed and the feasibility of the recommendations generated, as well as to weigh comparatively any specific options proposed.”

*Committee of Nine Charge from President Caslen  
June 11, 2020*

# Proposed Outcomes



- The entire campus understands the financial situation and what it will take to address it
- UofSC identifies the best options for closing the budget deficit in the short term while building a sustainable financial model in the medium and long term that aligns with the new strategic plan
- Deans and chairs have actionable data and recommendations on adjustments to the program portfolio and changes to academic resource allocation as well as an accountability plan to track implementation
- Enrollment strategy and student success infrastructure support the strategic plan and financial health of the institution and support the recommended adjustments to the program portfolio

# High Level Proposal for EAB's Approach



## Proposed Process

1. Detailed Scoping and Expectations Setting (July-Aug)
2. Preliminary Data Analysis and Initial Hypotheses (July-Sep)
3. Additional Data Collection and Hypothesis Testing (Sep-Oct)
4. Training for Deans and Chairs (Sep-Nov)
5. Formal Recommendations (Nov-Dec)
6. Plan of Accountability (March)

## Areas of Focus

- Academic programs offered at the Columbia campus
- How academic units are currently organized

## Out of Scope

- Central administrative costs
- Programs offered at regional campuses

# A New (and Uncomfortable) Approach



## A Changing Environment Requires New Management Tools

### **The Era of Incremental Growth**

- Consistent enrollment growth
- Predictable increases in tuition
- Consistent increases in state funding



### **Low-Stakes Management**

- Across-the-board funding increases
- Launch new programs and keep the old
- Enhance quality by spending more
- Build consensus by spreading resources

### **The Era of Revenue Volatility**

- Revenue growth not keeping up with costs
- Volatile swings in program-level enrollment
- State funding per student declining



### **Difficult Trade-Offs**

- Reallocate resources across academic units
- Launch new programs and retire or reorganize underperforming programs
- Find ways to maintain or increase quality with fewer resources
- Engage deans and chairs in understanding the financial impact of academic decisions



# The Value and Limitations of Quantification



## Neither a Silver Bullet Nor a Neoliberal Attack on the University

### With Little or No Data

- It is impossible to understand the consequences of your decisions
- The most powerful person or group makes the decision
- Arguments based on different understandings of the facts cannot be resolved

### With a Narrow Focus on Data

- Essential but hard to quantify values (such as quality) are ignored
- Decisions are made without understanding the full context
- Perverse incentives lead people to boost certain metrics at the expense of the institutional mission

The data can highlight and quantify tradeoffs, but **all tradeoffs require value judgements**  
EAB can frame those tradeoffs for you, but we cannot make them for you

## Avoiding the Risks of “Metric Fixation”

“We increasingly live in a culture of metric fixation: the belief... that scientific management means replacing judgment based on experience and talent with standardized measures of performance. Though often characterized as “best practice,” metric fixation is in fact often counterproductive, with costs to... organizational effectiveness and economic growth.”

Jerry Z. Muller, *The Tyranny of Metrics*  
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018)

## Politics Are Inescapable

“The familiar criteria of cost, quality, and centrality are not the key indicators on which decision-makers identify programs for termination. Instead, institutions close programs that have novice or ineffective leaders, have weak links to other programs, are not central to the mission of their college (as compared to the mission of the university), have low numbers of students and faculty, and have few influential off-campus champions.”

Peter D. Eckel, *Changing Course: Making the Hard Decision to Eliminate Academic Programs* (New York: American Council on Education and Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009)

# Quantification as a Political Strategy

“The appeal of numbers is especially compelling to bureaucratic officials who lack the mandate of a popular election, or divine right. Arbitrariness and bias are the most usual grounds upon which such officials are criticized. A decision made by the numbers (or by explicit rules of some other sort) has at least the appearance of being fair and impersonal...

Quantification is a way of making decisions without seeming to decide. Objectivity lends authority to officials who have very little of their own.”

Theodore Porter, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995)

# Where We Need Your Initial Guidance



- What do you think success would look like for this project?
- What are the barriers most likely to get in the way of that success?
- How can we work together to overcome those barriers?



## **Opportunities (and Risks)**

- Communicating the scale and urgency of the challenge
- Engaging key stakeholders while making rapid progress
- Understanding your unique constraints
- Empowering faculty to envision new approaches that will better support excellence in teaching and research

## **Avoiding Common Mistakes**

- Expecting the data to be perfect
- Basing decisions on 1-2 simplistic metrics
- Emphasizing short-term cost savings at the expense of medium- and long-term success
- Ignoring factors that cannot be quantified
- Seeking solutions that no one objects to
- Ignoring the concerns of stakeholders not directly represented on the committee



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