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University Business

Solving Operational Roadblocks in Academic Affairs: Insights from 220 Higher Ed Leaders

April 7, 2022

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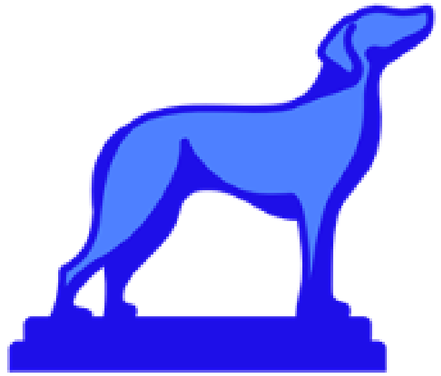

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UB University Business

Today's Speakers

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Agenda

- The Current State of Academic Operations
- Student Impact of Inefficiencies
- Barriers & Opportunities
- Questions

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What You Had to Say

"The university THINKS it has modernized the [academic operations] process. We have a fancy tool but do not use it appropriately."

"Change is slow and difficult to implement—too many folks are comfortable with the status quo and are unaware of newest trends in higher education."

"Modernized academic operations has helped us implement pathways and a better advising tool."

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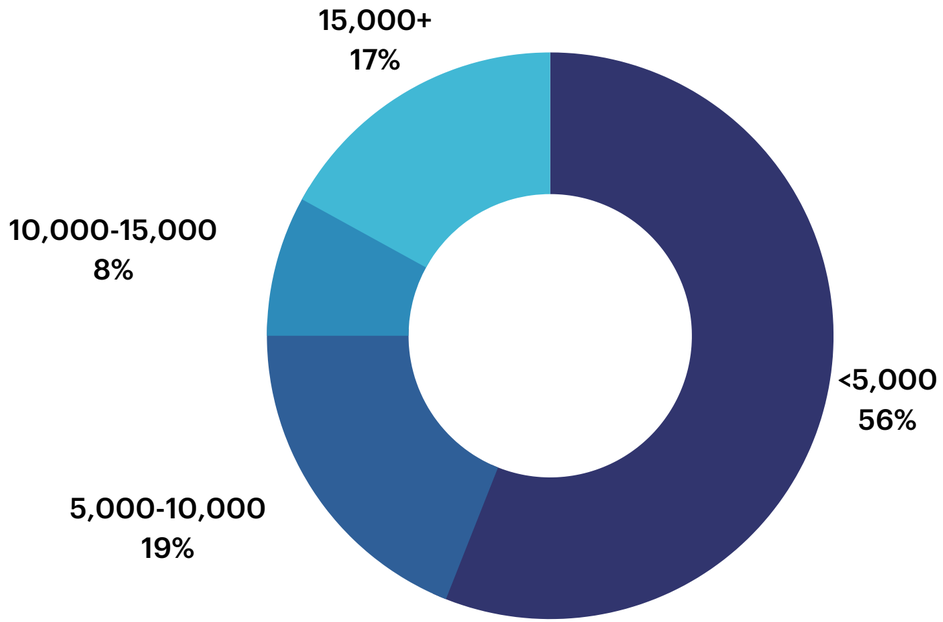
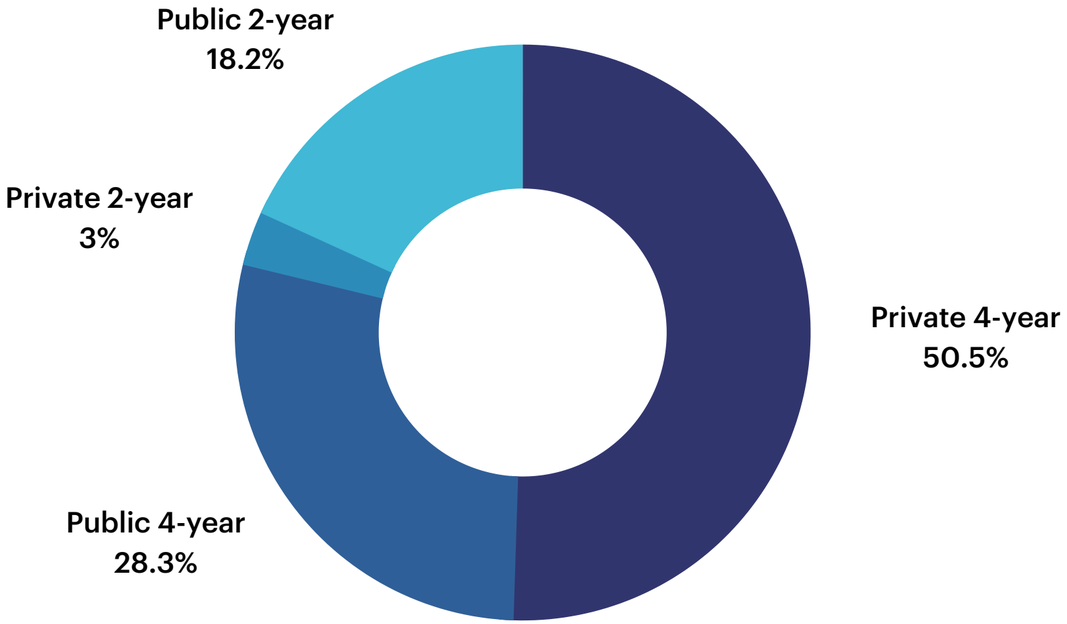
Voices Across Higher Ed

Survey Respondent Demographics

Enrollment



Institution Type



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Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

The Current State of Academic Operations

- Instructional Resources
- Curriculum Management
- Access to Data

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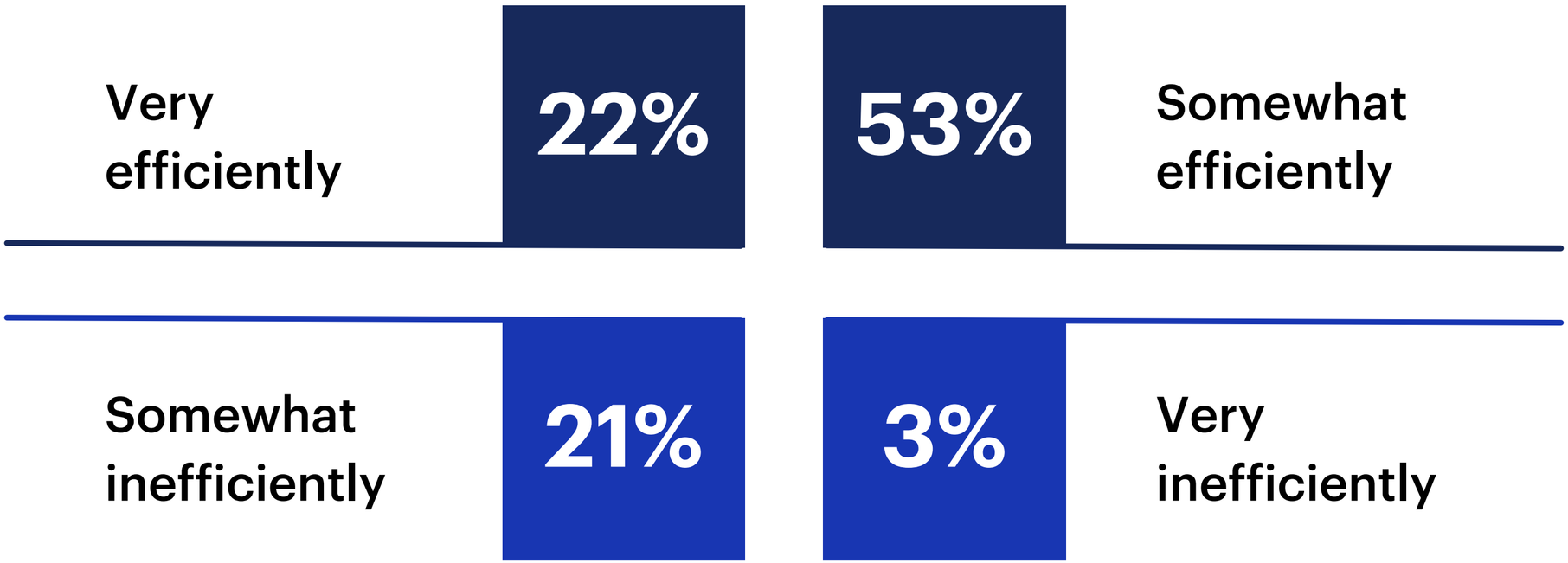
Instructional Resources Allocation

Question: How efficiently do you feel your institution uses instructional resources (i.e., classrooms, curriculum, instructors)?



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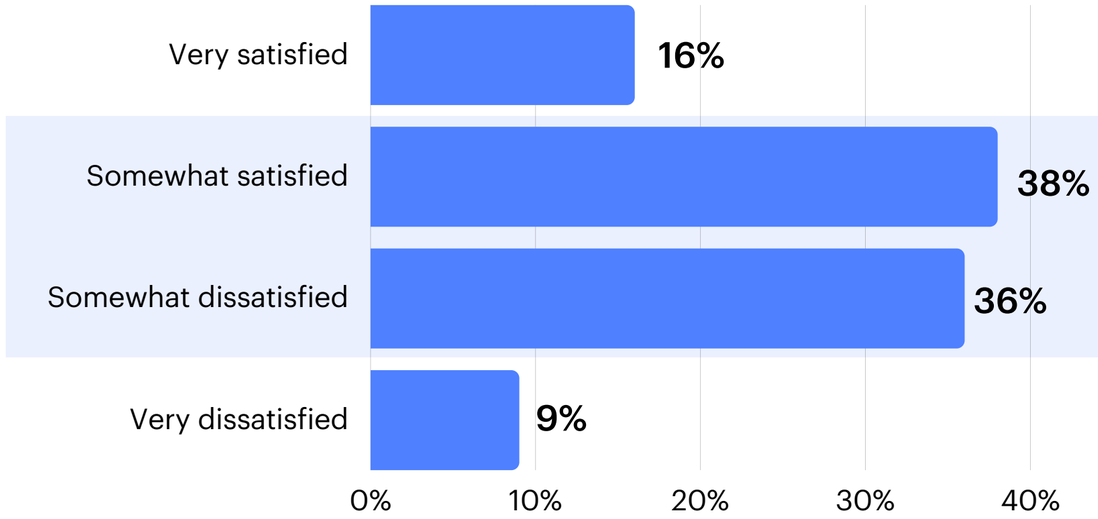
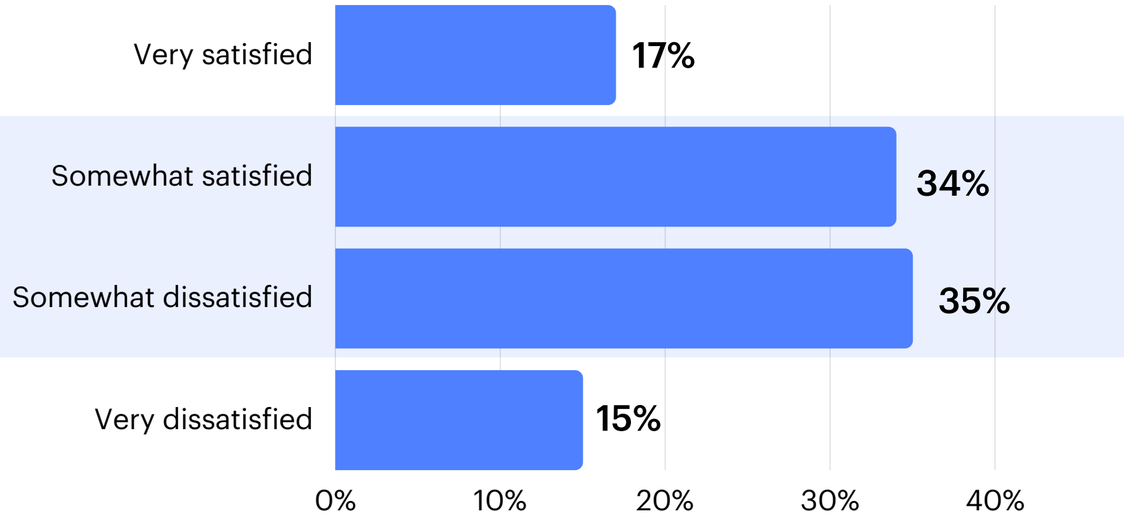
Higher Ed Unenthused With Curriculum Processes

Question: How satisfied are you with your institution's ability to quickly modify existing curriculum to respond to student demand and labor market needs?



Question: How satisfied are you with your institution's ability to quickly propose, approve, and implement new curriculum to respond to student demand and labor market needs?



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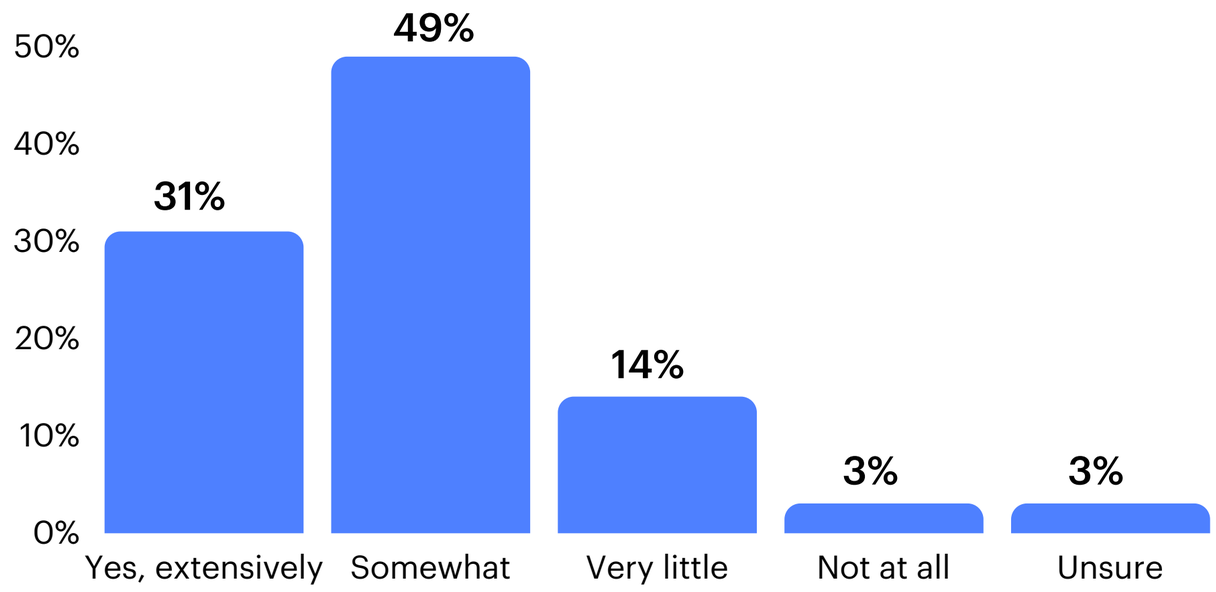
Is "Somewhat" Using Data Good Enough Anymore?

The Role of Data in Course Scheduling

Question: Does your institution's leadership have access to enrollment data that enables them to accurately forecast future course demand?



> “It was the lack of availability of classes that really hurt the overall student experience”
>
> - Student, California Public University

Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog; Student Impact Survey, Coursedog, 2021

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Where is the Data?

Course Offerings Misaligned with Student Demand

The classes I need aren't offered at a time that works with my schedule. I need to go to work.

I can't get into the course I need to take outside my program.

Why can't I get into the classes I need? They're always full.

Why are both the classes I need to take offered at the same time?

I don't have enough time to get to my classes that are located far apart.

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Student Impact of Inefficiencies

- Student Ramifications
- Impact on Time to Completion
- Impact of Manual Data Entry

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It is easy to say students aren't following the plan or process. But we have to look at ourselves and say are we making it more difficult for students to get through? And what data do we have on this? Roadblocks come up. Students can't get into a class and it can make students change what they do that semester. How often are we doing this to students?

- Dr. Casey Bullock, Executive Director and
University Registrar at Weber State University

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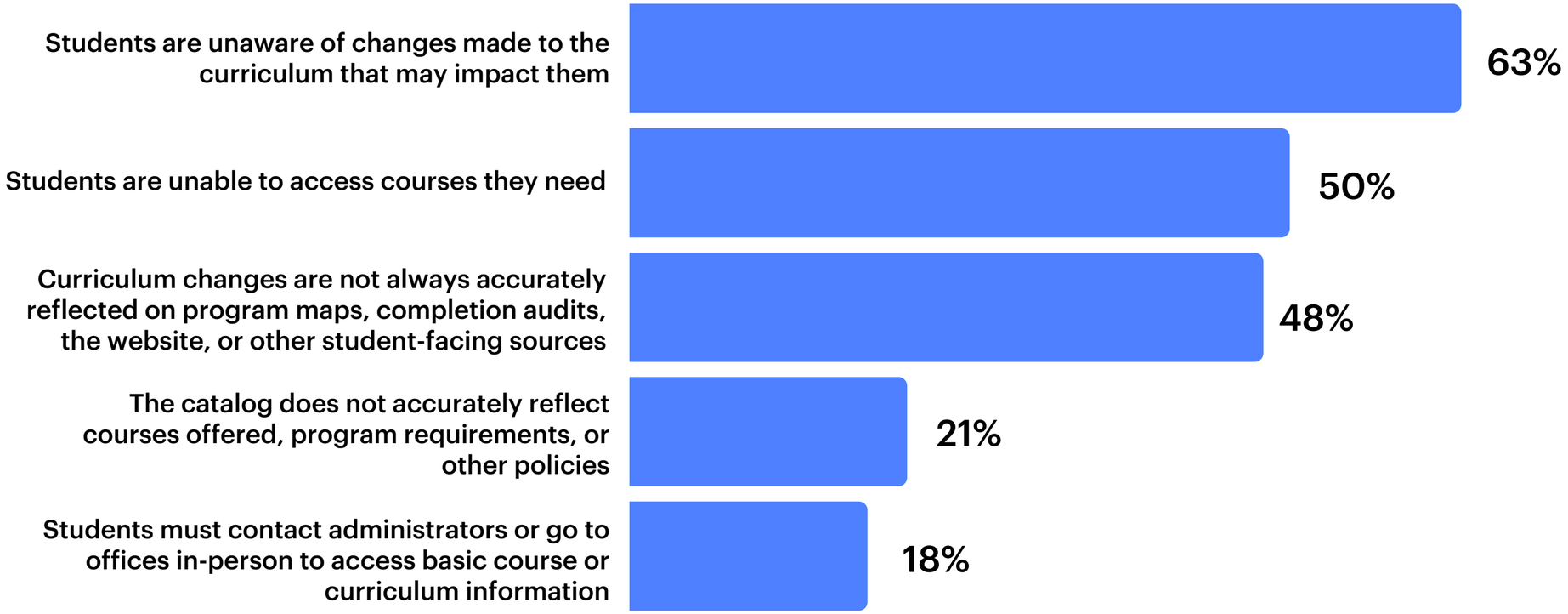
Inefficiencies Impact More Than Just Administrators

Student Impact of Inefficient Academic Operations



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Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

Curriculum Information Lives in More Than One Place

Consistency Across Locations Key to Prevent Confusion

Catalog

- The "contract" between the institution and the student for program requirements and policies

Website

- The first place prospective and current students often go to for information
- Used as an advertising tool

Student Degree Planner

- Where students go to plan for upcoming and future terms
- Planning takes into account personal considerations

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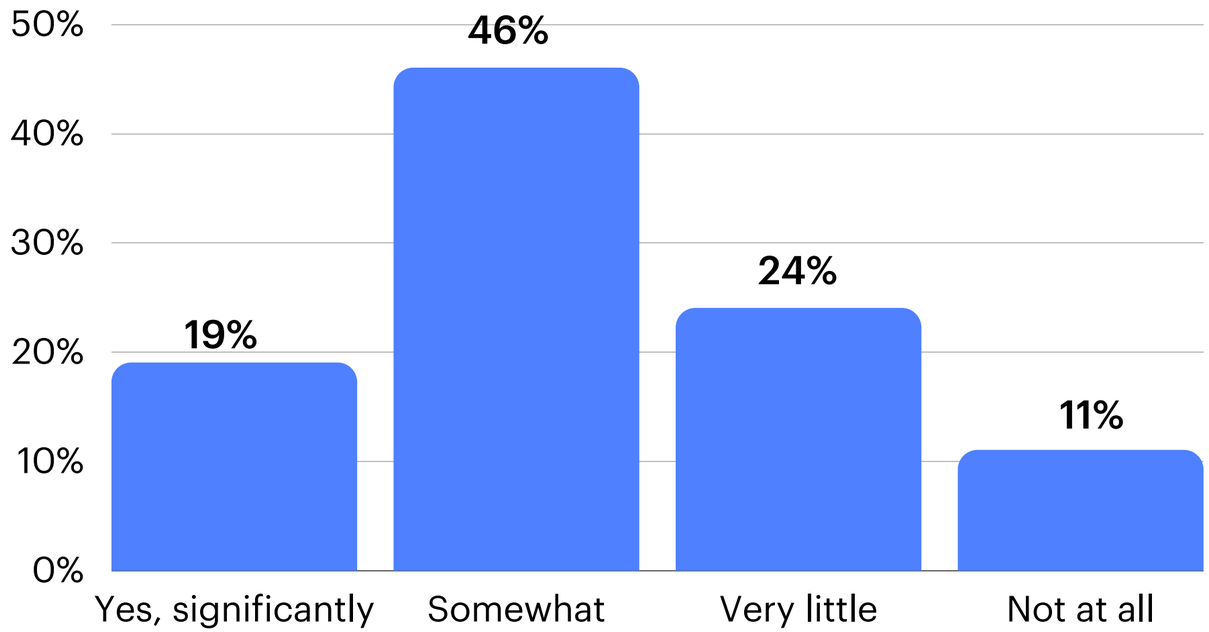
Inefficiencies Lengthen Time to Completion

Question: Would you say that there are course scheduling issues including bottlenecks, inefficiencies and course conflicts at your institution that can unnecessarily lengthen students' time to completion?



65%

of respondents report course scheduling issues significantly or somewhat impact students' time to completion

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Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

An All Too Common Culprit

The Impact of Manual Data Entry

Class Conflicts

Conflicting courses identified late must be cancelled or rescheduled

Students left scrambling to find new course or at-risk for delayed completion

Dual Grading Errors

Course advertised as dual grading, later changed to letter grade only

Students enroll for P/F in a course they aren't strong in, only to find out they will receive a letter grade

Variable Unit Errors

Course advertised with variable units, however only available for fixed number of credits

Students receive different number of credits than expecting, impacting progression or financial aid

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Opportunities & Barriers

- Benefits From Modernizing Academic Operations
- Opportunities For Predictive Analytics
- Barriers to Upgrading Academic Operations

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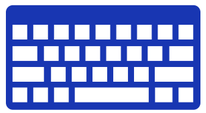
How Have You Benefited?

Modernizing Academic Operations Gets Results



Less time spent on manual data entry (58%)

Decreased time to review, approve, and implement new curriculum (28%)

Fewer errors in the course schedule, curriculum, and/or catalog (51%)

Optimized course schedule that better aligns with student needs (28%)

More user-friendly experience when interacting with course scheduling, curriculum, catalog processes (48%)

New tools provided the time and capabilities to implement innovative practices (25%)

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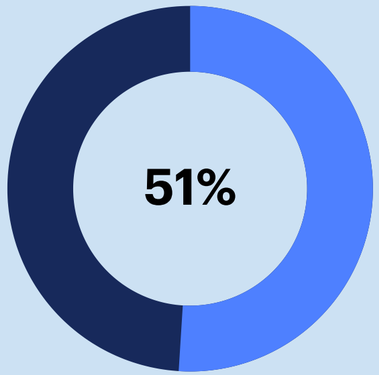
Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

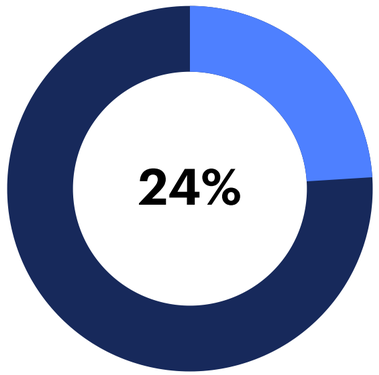
Predictive Analytics a Top Priority for Course Scheduling

Half of Institutions Yet to Adopt

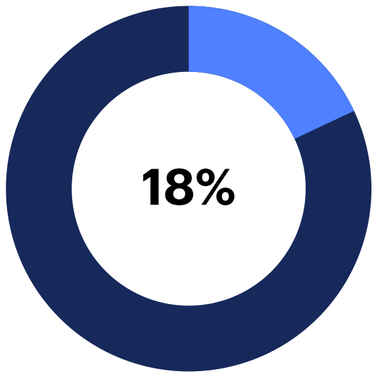
Question: Which aspect of academic operations at your institution is most in need of digital transformation to help you achieve your goals?



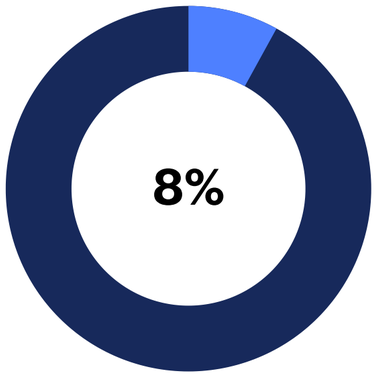
Predictive Analytics for Course Scheduling



Curriculum Management



Course Scheduling



Catalog Management

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Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

Follow the Data

Metrics to Build a Student-Centric Schedule

Course distribution throughout day, week	Are a high percentage of courses clustered on certain days, between certain hours?
Enrollment data by academic program, course	Which program have seen an increase in enrollment? A decrease in enrollment?
Enrollment trends by course modality	How have modality trends changed over time? How did the pandemic impact this data?
Course and section fill rates	What courses, sections are consistently at maximum capacity? At low capacity?
Time to completion by academic program	Which academic programs have higher rates of students not completing on time?
Time to completion by student segments	Which student groups take longer to complete programs? How might course access inhibit them?

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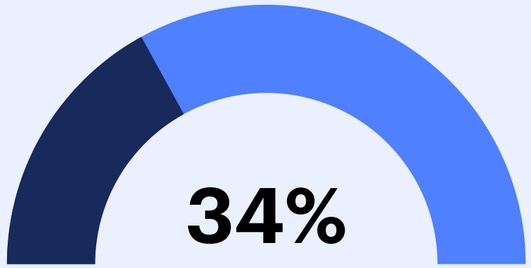
What's Stopping You?

Barriers to Upgrading Your Academic Operations



of institution's digital transformation efforts in the past 3 years haven't included academic operations

Reasons Institutions Have Not Modernized Academic Operations

- 59% Justifying costs
- 56% Finding time, resources for implementation
- 33% Getting buy-in from leaders
- 29% Getting buy-in from users
- 27% Change management
- 16% Ongoing maintenance, upgrades
- 15% Training users
- 13% Couldn’t find tool that integrates well with SIS, other tools

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Source: Challenges in Academic Operations Survey, University Business & Coursedog

Emphasize Administrator & Student Benefits to Justify Costs

Time savings

Optimized resource allocation

Increased student course accessibility

"We've saved months of work. There's a huge impact on people's time. For scheduling that's coming from the room optimization. [Assigning rooms] now takes three days when we really get down to it, which used to take six weeks to do."
- Dr. Matt Winn, CIO at Dallas Baptist University

"Our new system is a fairly easy to use and the number one reason that we went with the system is to know how much space we have and how much space we need. Now, we're able to actually quantify our space numbers presented to the Board and easily make a case for additional space."
- Laguna College of Art & Design

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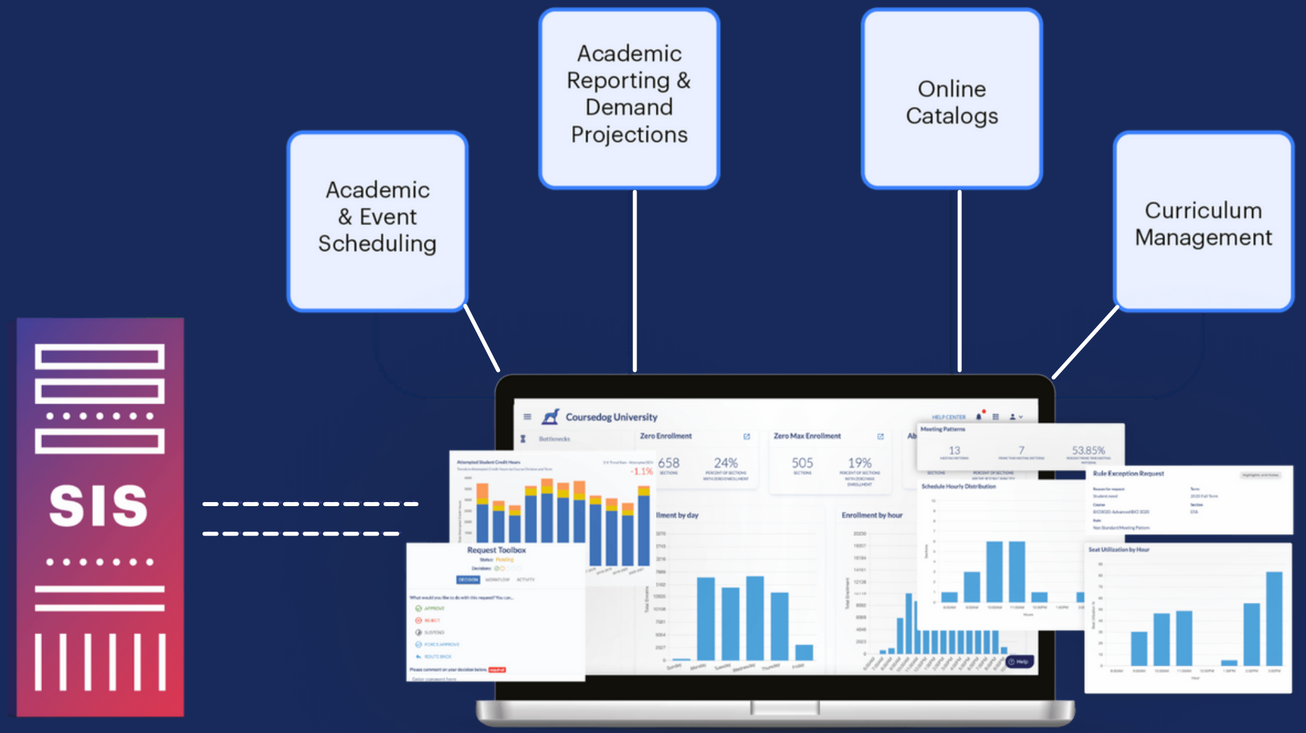
Improving student success is a holistic initiative – your academic operations should be, too.



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