



Designing Graduate Programs to Stand Out In a Crowded Market

CGS Summer Workshop 2022

Today's Presenters



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An Overview of University of Massachusetts Lowell



**SUPPORTING YOUR
SUCCESS AT EVERY LEVEL**

Graduate, Online & Professional Studies

- ▶ Doctoral Intensive Research Institution with 17,500 students

- ▶ The Division of Graduate, Online, and Professional Studies is one of the largest in New England, with 6,894 students

- ▶ Program offerings include:
 - 33 doctoral programs
 - 4 associate's programs
 - 65 master's programs
 - 71 certificate programs
 - 16 bachelor's programs

- ▶ Offering online programs since 1996, with strong growth in online graduate enrollment in recent years



Principles of Program Design

SECTION

1

Before We Get Started...



Who is responsible for program development at your institution?



Who drives the program development process?



Who is the skeptic in your program development process?



What do you base the go/no-go decision on?

Where Program Launch Goes Wrong

The Four Most Damaging Mistakes in New Program Planning

1

Using one-dimensional market data to evaluate demand potential

2

Designing programs around academic norms and preferences

3

Overlooking indirect, incremental, and knock-on costs

4

Committing inflexible, fixed resources before programs demonstrate demand

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What other challenges do you encounter when developing new programs?

Determining Demand for Programs



Key Factors to Assess in Market Research



Labor market and student demand trends

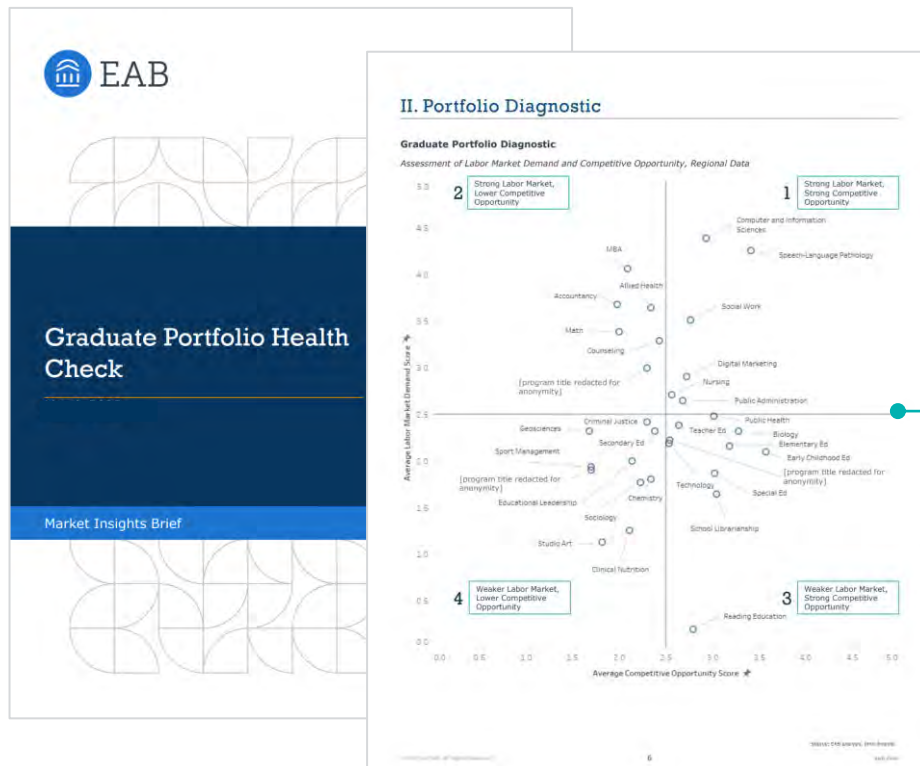


Intensity of competition

Data Sources

- Labor Market: govt. databases, industry associations, employer demand sources
- Student Demand: govt. databases, student surveys (use with caution)
- Competition: IPEDS conferral data, benchmarking & news monitoring
- Industry trends: advisory boards, trade associations, industry groups
- Hot topics: what does your elective pool show you?

Using Market Research to Identify Opportunities



Identifying Program Opportunities Based On...

- Labor market demand
- Regional job growth over time
- National projected job growth
- Saturation in your regional market
- Degree completions

Build Strengths Upon Strengths



How Will You Bowl Them Over?



Where Do You Have:

- Strengths among the faculty
- Strengths in other resources
- Strengths in your history and core brand
- Associations with your core mission



What is your Unique Selling Principle?

- Which of your resources and capabilities are truly special?
- What will be special about the student experience?
- What can students expect as program outcomes?

Look for clues in your student evaluations and your course registrations

Start by Conducting a SWOT Analysis



Sample from UMass Lowell

INTERNAL

STRENGTHS

- Strong professional, regional reputation, reflected in rankings
- Engineering, Health Sciences, Business, Computer Science, Life Sciences
- 25+ year history of online courses and faculty development

WEAKNESSES

- Disconnected service units spread across campus
- Inward focus means missing some demographic changes
- Legacy technology issues

EXTERNAL

OPPORTUNITIES

- Employer partnerships
- Targeted program growth opportunities, e.g., business, nursing
- Alternative credentials growing in popularity

THREATS

- Online giants (in some markets)
- Non-university education providers
- Changing demographics



Setting the State for Successful Employer Partnerships

Do You Have a Coordinated Approach?

- Has an institutional imperative been established and clearly communicated?
- Is there a central point of contact for potential partners?
- Do you have a task force or coordinating committee?
- Have you developed a coherent strategy for developing and supporting partnerships?

What Opportunities Exist?

- What aspects of your institutional mission can you emphasize with potential partners?
- What is the labor market condition in your target market—what needs can you help partners address?
- What avenues have been established for outside contact and advice? Alumni links? Advisory boards?

Rankings: Think Strategically

Harmonize Actions With Your Strategy



Long-term actions you take to improve your rankings should be compatible with long-term improvement of your program.

Build consensus among the faculty and staff about priorities and actions to be taken.

Learn How Your Rankings Work



Each ranking has its own data and its own formulas. Know these thoroughly to avoid mistakes or omissions.

Find help on campus to ensure the accuracy of data.
And don't "massage" the numbers.

Watch Out For Negative Impacts



Rankings have been criticized as being subject to various **forms of bias**. **Don't let the quest for rankings hurt program diversity.**

Test new ideas against prior entering classes. What impact(s) would this change have had?

Think Long-Term For Sustainable Gains



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UNDER \$20K**
Finish in Just 12 Months!



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ONLINE PROGRAMS**
US News & World Report
MBA PROGRAMS
2022



**BEST ONLINE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
MASTER'S IN NEW ENGLAND**



**BEST
ONLINE PROGRAMS**
US News & World Report
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
2022









Activity

SECTION

2

Group Activity

 <p>Basic Description</p> <p>Interdisciplinary master of science in health informatics that draws on existing faculty, staff, facilities, and courses from the Colleges of Health Sciences and Business.</p>	 <p>Intended Audience</p> <p>Designed for early to mid-career professionals working in healthcare who want to strengthen their analytical skills. Strong quant experience desired.</p>	 <p>Competitive Edge</p> <p>Offered in an accelerated 15-month format. Students learn from our world class faculty and engage with real-world data sets. Competitively priced.</p>
 <p>Resource Needs</p> <p>Course releases to redesign courses for the accelerated 10-week term format. Additional teaching faculty appointments.</p>	 <p>External Demand</p> <p>Job postings stipulating Informatics skills more than doubled across the last 5 years. More than 150 health informatics degrees nationally with strong enrollments. Two job postings per degree conferred.</p>	 <p>Perceived Risks</p> <p>Students may not immediately understand what an Informaticist is or does. Many competitor programs are offered online, but we want to differentiate on time to completion and price rather than modality.</p>

▶ Review a sample program proposal

▶ In small groups, consider the following:

- What questions would you ask about this proposal?
- What excites you about this proposal?
- What concerns you about this proposal?

▶ Reconvene to discuss as a group

Evaluating the Merit of a New Program Idea



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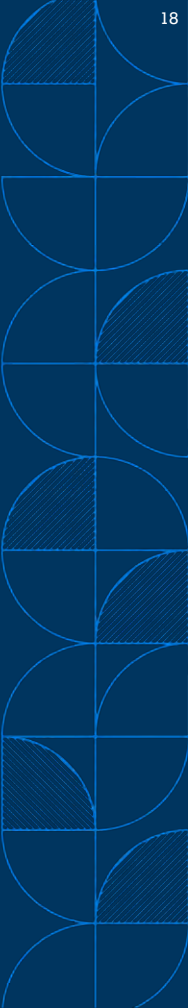


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Key Takeaways

- 1** Build new, improved strengths on top of the strengths you already possess.
- 2** Take a multi-dimensional view of the market opportunities.
- 3** External partnerships require a concerted strategy and cross-campus collaboration.
- 4** To make progress on rankings, don't let your long-term priorities be overtaken by short-term moves.
- 5** Employ a disciplined approach to program review and approval.





Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive



Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Prepare Your
Institution for
the Future

Executive guidance
rooted in research
to support your
strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

Achieve Your
Enrollment and
Growth Goals

Tailored partnerships
powered by a recruitment
ecosystem with unrivaled
reach to enroll your
future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS

Build a
Student-Centric
Campus

Technology trusted
by 850 schools to
retain, graduate,
and empower
more students

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Advance DEI on
Campus and in
Your Community

Technology, research,
and bold initiatives to
strengthen your DEI
strategy and eliminate
equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS

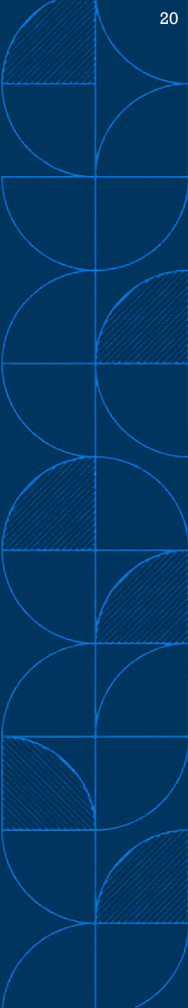
Embrace
Digital
Transformation

Data and analytics
solutions built for
higher education to
guide decisions and
accelerate innovation

We partner with **2,500+** institutions to
accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year
because of results we achieve, together.

Q&A and Final Discussion



Interested in More?



Complete the Program Planning Diagnostic

EAB experts are available to through the diagnostic with you and/or discuss results



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