



EAB

Achieving Graduate Enrollment Goals Through Smart Graduate Program Design

CGS Summer Workshop 2023

Today's Presenters



Beth Donaldson, MPA

Managing Director, Adult Learner Recruitment
EAB



Mark Garrison, PhD

Dean of the School of Graduate Studies
Morgan State University



About Morgan State University



- ▶ HBCU founded in 1867
- ▶ The School of Graduate Studies enrolls about 1,500 students
- ▶ Program offerings include:
 - 29 doctoral programs
 - 11 certificate programs
 - 42 master's programs
- ▶ Morgan seeks to ensure that the doors of higher education are opened as wide as possible to as many as possible
- ▶ In a phase of rapid growth at the undergraduate level, impacting the graduate school as well



The Program Planning Imperative

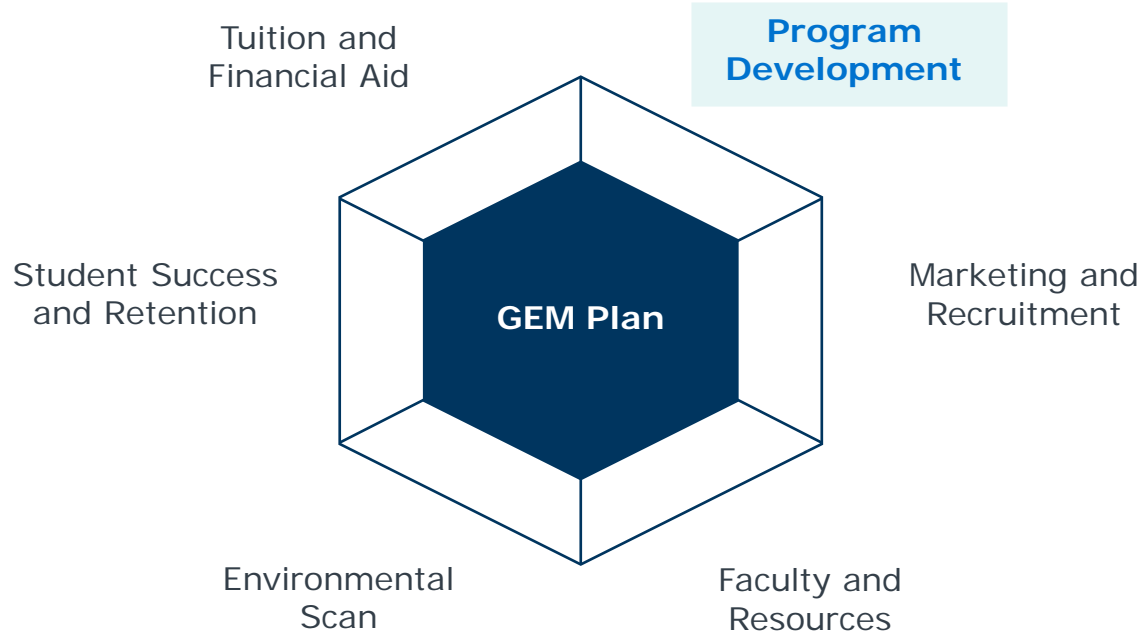
SECTION

1

Program Planning Is a Core Element of GEM



Key Pieces of Graduate Enrollment Management



Discussion Question

By a show of hands...

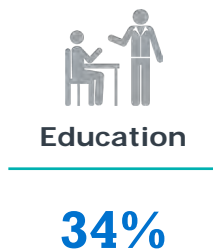
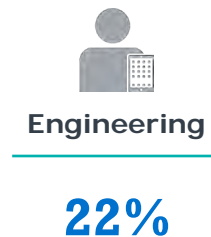
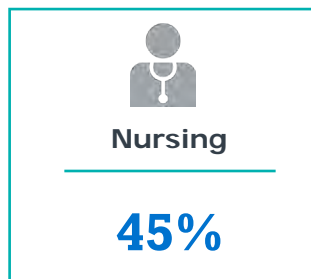
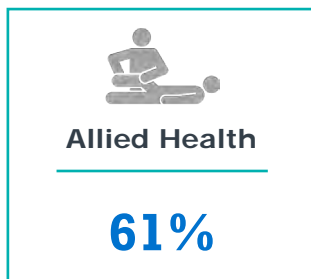


Are you in charge of program development at your institution?



Betting on Allied Health, Business, and Nursing

Q: Which program areas do you believe have the greatest enrollment potential?



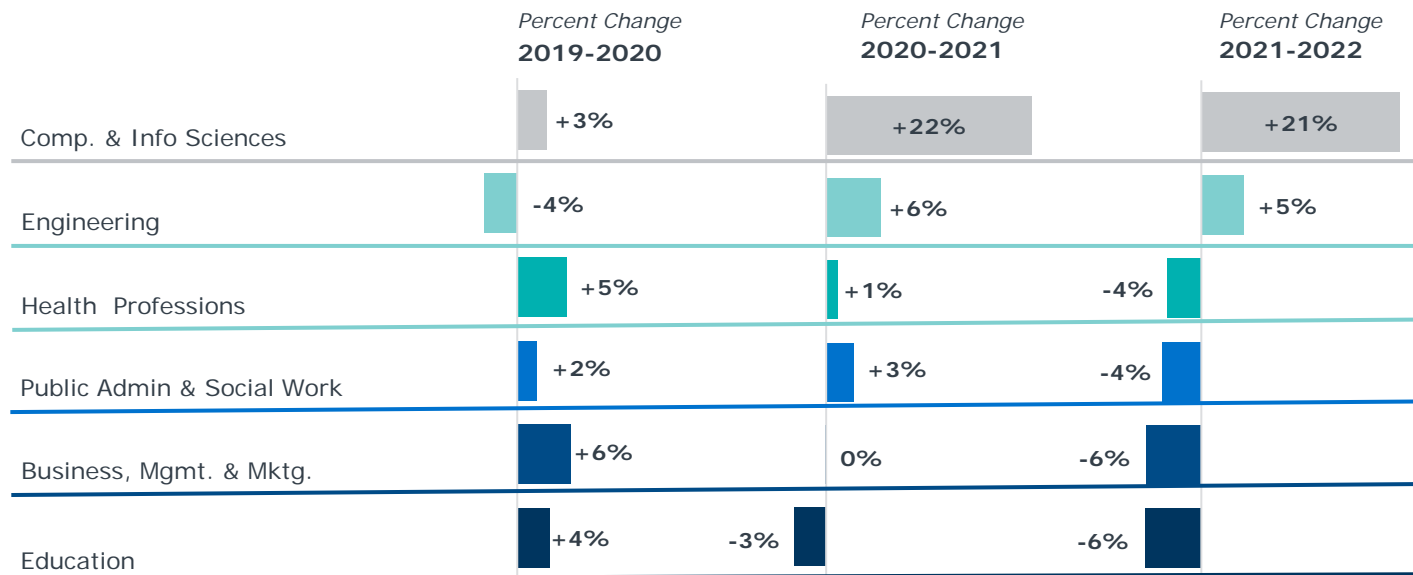
Most common "other" responses include leadership, criminal justice, cybersecurity, and data analytics

Already in Demand, CS Degrees Take Off in 2020s



Grad enrollment surges in computer & information sciences, but for other core programs, pandemic enrollment growth is all but dissolved.

Change in Estimated Master's Degree Enrollments by Major From Fall 2019 to Fall 2022





Principles of Program Design

SECTION

2

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?

Discussion Question



What challenges do you commonly encounter when developing new programs?

Start by Conducting a SWOT Analysis



Sample from Morgan State University

INTERNAL	STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holistic approach to student support• Morgan Completes You Initiative: affordability through degree completion• 36-60-30 new program development requirement to eliminate roadblocks• Strong sense of community and emphasis on diversity	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legacy technology issues• Organizational structure• Unchecked accelerated growth• Lack of career pathing for staff
	EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build upon employer partnerships (e.g., Amazon)• Targeted program growth opportunities, e.g., nursing, public health, social work• Alternative credentials growing in popularity



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

Think Strategically: Rankings, Awards, Grants

Harmonize Actions With Your Strategy



Long-term actions you take to improve your rankings and awards 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 Awards Work



Each ranking and grant 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

Leverage Strengths in Marketing



MORGAN.EDU

Morgan State University Receives ETS®/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education

Program is Only As Strong as Your Weakest Link

Potential Weaknesses Can Be Wide Ranging



Alumni Success

When prospective students are searching your program, do they find that alumni have been successful?



Adult Student Support

Do you have intentional adult student support services in place? Would a current student confirm this?



Faculty Expertise

Does your faculty have the expertise necessary or the accolades to back up the legitimacy of the program?



Public Perception

Is your program ranked? Is your program well regarded? Are public reviews positive?



Industry Networks

Do you have employer partnerships in place that connect your students to go job opportunities post-grad?

Finding Right-Fit Programs to Launch

Require Data-Driven Market Analysis Prior to Launch

Prioritize Market Demand Analysis

- 1 Assess real-time labor market data



- 2 Assess structural labor market data



- 3 Assess intensity of competition



Questions to Ask About Labor Market and Consumer Demand Data



What **degree level** is necessary to obtain in-demand jobs?



Is employer demand apparent in **target geographic markets**?



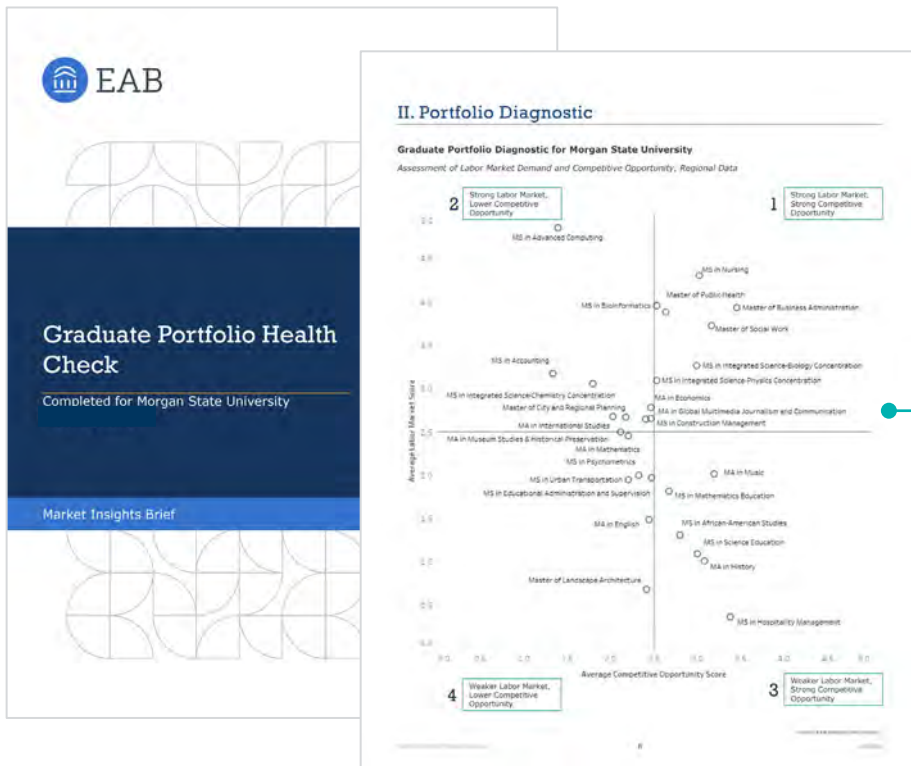
What is the **expected growth rate** of students' target industry or occupation?



What **modality** is most in demand for target program?

Using Market Research to Identify Opportunities

Portfolio Health Check by EAB for Morgan State



Identifying Program Opportunities Based On...

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



Setting the Stage 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?



Review Competitor Programs

Consider These Questions When Analyzing Competitor Programs



Prerequisites

What is the minimum education needed to succeed?



Program Length

Is your time to completion as short as it can be while still conferring necessary skills?



Electives and "Stackability"

How do competitor programs support students' needs and preferences for flexibility?



Starts

Do competitors offer multiple start dates?



Pricing

How do your tuition and fees compare to your competitors'?



What are your competitors offering which could hurt your program's success?

Changing Demographics, Changing Needs

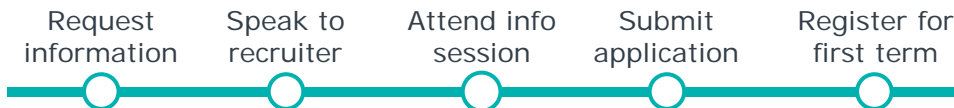
The Rise of the Stealth Prospect

Stealth the Norm

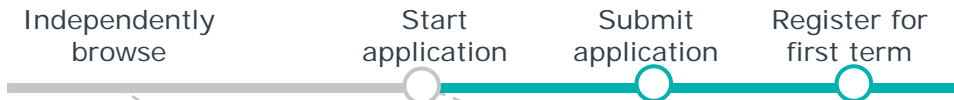


Stealth prospects as a percentage of total applicant pool

Traditional High-Touch Recruiting



Today's Stealth Prospects



Unable to find preferred course



Concerned about financing degree



Many silent prospects likely never apply



High volume of late inquiries may overwhelm staff



Difficult to forecast enrollments and plan instructional capacity



Activity

SECTION

3

SWOT Activity



- ▶ Reflect on the slides we reviewed. Did any of the SWOT examples stand out to you?
- ▶ Consider the following questions about your program:
 - What are your programs **strengths** and **weaknesses**?
 - What are its biggest **threats**? **Opportunities**?
 - Which aspect is hardest to pinpoint?
 - Who else should you involve in this conversation?
- ▶ Reconvene to discuss as a group

Questions to Consider

1. What is one **strength** you can build upon?
2. Which **weakness** feels the least moveable?
3. Which, if any, **opportunity** have you already begun to explore?
4. How can you proactively reduce one **threat**?



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

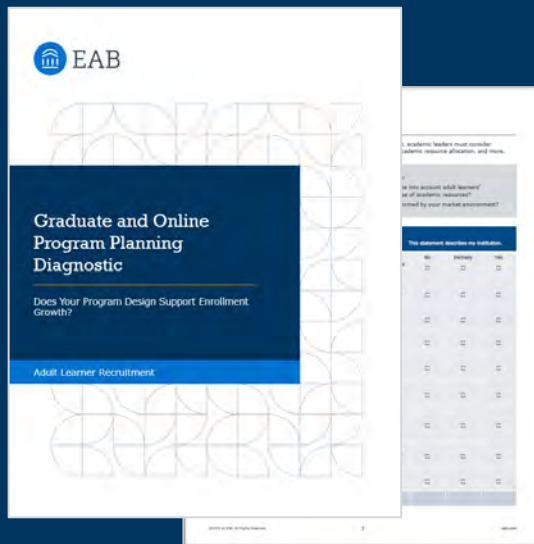
Embrace Digital Transformation

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.

Interested in More?



Complete the Program Planning Diagnostic

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

Thank you!





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Graduate and Online Program Planning Diagnostic

Does Your Program Design Support Enrollment
Growth?

Adult Learner Recruitment

Executive Overview

With widespread declines in traditional undergraduate enrollment projected over the next decade, many institutions seek to grow enrollment in graduate, online, and adult-serving programs. But growing graduate programs will be challenging, as the NCES estimates less than 1% average annual increase in graduate enrollment across the next decade.

The first step to increasing enrollment in this competitive market is to ensure programs are optimized for growth. When trying to expand existing programs or launch new ones, institutions often overlook important program planning and design factors, preventing programs from reaching their full enrollment potential.



How Program Design Choices Can Impede Graduate and Online Learner Growth

Three Commonly Overlooked Factors

1

Program offerings are not backed by robust data indicating market demand.

Without a rigorous investigation of labor market demand and existing program competitors, institutional growth plans may be misaligned with actual opportunity in the market. This process is becoming increasingly critical as the graduate and online market matures.

2

Program features are not rigorously assessed in comparison to competitors' offerings.

Prospective students compare programs across a range of factors, including price, admissions requirements, modality, time to completion, and more. Without conducting a similar self-assessment, institutions may inadvertently miss out on enrollment opportunities.

3

Program features are misaligned with graduate and online learners' preferences and lifestyles.

Today's graduate and online learners are increasingly pragmatic, cost-conscious, and require flexible options. To build a competitive program, institutions need to ensure that they can market offerings based on the factors that matter most to prospective students: affordability, flexibility, and time to completion. When admissions and enrollment processes are not sufficiently student-centric, institutions lose out on potential enrollments.

Use This Resource from EAB to...

- ✓ Understand common ways in which program design choices can inadvertently hinder enrollment growth
- ✓ Assess your own program planning and recruitment practices
- ✓ Identify areas to critically evaluate in support of growth goals

Program Planning Diagnostic

To successfully expand graduate and online enrollment in a competitive environment, academic leaders must consider numerous factors related to program design, admissions requirements, and more.

This diagnostic is designed to evaluate the following questions:

1. In your program and curriculum design, to what extent do you consider graduate and online learners' enrollment preferences and your market environment?
2. Are your admissions policies and practices student-centric and informed by your market environment?

Section 1: Program and Curriculum Design

This statement describes my institution.

	No	Partially	Yes
Part-Time Our program(s) schedule courses to accommodate students who want to study part-time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modality The college or program considers the best modality or modalities for its program(s), whether that be fully online, hybrid, or in-person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time to Completion Our program(s)' time to completion is as short as it can be while still conferring necessary skills and remaining competitive with other programs of this type.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Length The college or program evaluates course length, and for online courses, considers half-semester and full-semester courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experiential Learning Program curriculum includes options for students to gain real-world professional experience (e.g., via an internship, project).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curricular Flexibility Our programs are flexible to allow for customization, including stackable credentials, concentrations, and electives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Market Relevance Leadership evaluates the program on a regular basis to ensure market relevance (e.g., based on labor market demand data).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Name The program name is optimized for search engines, resonates with employers, and is on par with competitor programs' names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuition The college or program evaluates tuition based on the peer and competitor pricing for the particular credential.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" Responses			

Program Planning Diagnostic

Section 2: Admissions Policies and Practices		This statement describes my institution.		
	No	Partially	Yes	
Program Start Dates The college or program admits students at least three times per year (i.e., fall, spring, and summer).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Application Review Completed applications are reviewed by the college or program on a rolling basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Admissions Decisions Upon reviewing completed applications, the college or program makes prompt admissions decisions on a continuous rolling basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prerequisites The college or program ensures that prerequisites are truly necessary for students to succeed in the program and are clearly communicated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standardized Tests The college or program only requires test scores if they are expressly considered in the admissions process—and regularly evaluates if standardized test requirements remain necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Admissions Competition All admissions requirements have been evaluated against those of peers and competitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Admissions Criteria Admissions criteria have been evaluated for usefulness and relevance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Admissions Transparency Admissions requirements are clearly published and comprehensible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Total “No,” “Partially,” and “Yes” Responses				

Interpreting Your Results

Fill in the section totals below to identify where your institution has the greatest gaps.

Section	“No” Responses	“Partially” Responses	“Yes” Responses
1. Program and Curriculum Design			
2. Admissions Policies and Practices			

If your results include many “No” and “Partially” responses, you may want to evaluate new approaches to program design.



To learn how EAB can help you plan for growth and meet your graduate and online learner enrollment goals, visit EAB.com/ALR or email eabalrcommunications@eab.com.



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