

This document identifies key higher education topic areas relevant to ESP project statements, curricular redesign, and institutional student success priorities. Each topic includes a brief explanation and representative metrics that ESP teams may explore as part of their data discovery, action planning, or assessment efforts.

Pre-Matriculation Information

Provides insight into students' academic preparation and context prior to enrollment, highlighting potential barriers and opportunities.

Key Metrics:

- High school GPA and class rank
 - Standardized test scores (SAT, ACT)
 - Dual credit, AP, or IB course completion
 - Intended major
 - FAFSA completion and financial aid eligibility
-

Matriculation

Tracks admissions processes, pre-college engagement, and enrollment status.

Key Metrics:

- Admission status and criteria
 - Tuition and fee payment status
 - Participation in pre-college programs or outreach
-

Enrollment Demographics

Helps describe the diversity and composition of the student population.

Key Metrics:

- Age
- Gender

- Race/ethnicity
 - First-generation status
 - Socioeconomic status
-

Special Population Status

Supports the identification and inclusion of students with unique needs or responsibilities.

Key Metrics:

- Students with disabilities (ADA)
 - Pregnant or parenting students
 - Caregivers
 - Former foster youth
 - Military-connected students
 - International students
 - Students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
 - Working or mid-career students
-

Retention, Progress, and Graduation

Assesses student persistence, academic momentum, and degree completion.

Key Metrics:

- Retention rates (term-to-term, year-to-year)
 - Credit hours attempted vs. earned
 - Time to degree
-

Academic Performance

Monitors academic achievement and identifies patterns that may inform curricular redesign.

Key Metrics:

- GPA
- Credit completion ratio

- Drop, Fail, Withdrawal (DFW) rates
 - Major changes
-

Student Engagement, Belonging, and Satisfaction

Captures indicators of student connection, inclusion, and learning engagement.

Key Metrics:

- Attendance and assignment completion
 - Participation in co-curricular activities
 - Faculty interaction (e.g., office hours)
 - Use of campus resources and support services
 - Student perceptions of belonging and inclusion
-

Student Financial Wellness and Basic Needs

Addresses financial stressors and basic needs insecurities that may impact academic success.

Key Metrics:

- Budgeting, debt reduction, and savings ability
 - Access to food, housing, healthcare, and transportation
 - Informed financial decision-making
-

Skill Acquisition

Tracks development of both technical and transferable skills gained during the college experience.

Key Metrics:

- Technical skills (e.g., software, data analysis, writing)
 - Interpersonal skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, resilience, time management)
-

Post-Graduation Outcomes

Assesses students' transitions beyond college into career, further education, and civic life.

Key Metrics:

- Employment and salary outcomes
 - Continuing education and upskilling
 - Health and well-being
 - Civic engagement
 - Alignment of credentials with workforce expectations
-

Course Offerings and Scheduling

Assesses course availability and scheduling to support timely completion.

Key Metrics:

- Course availability and variety
 - Scheduling patterns
 - Bottleneck course identification
 - Curricular complexity
-

Course Enrollment Trends and Capacity Utilization

Informs enrollment management and resource planning.

Key Metrics:

- Enrollment by course and section
 - Capacity utilization
 - Waitlist activity
-

Course Completion and Student Success Metrics

Measures student outcomes at the course level to identify challenges and opportunities for redesign.

Key Metrics:

- Course completion and pass rates
 - DFW rates
-

Course Evaluations and Student Feedback

Gathers input on instructional quality, relevance, and student experience.

Key Metrics:

- Evaluation scores and trends
 - Student comments
 - Feedback on content and delivery
-

Program and Degree Requirements

Ensures academic programs remain aligned with student goals and institutional objectives.

Key Metrics:

- Number and type of required courses
 - Alignment with learning outcomes
-

Curriculum Mapping and Alignment

Supports analysis of program coherence and intentional design.

Key Metrics:

- Curriculum maps
- Learning objective alignment
- Assessment of program-level outcomes

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Provides evidence of learning gains and achievement of educational goals.

Key Metrics:

- Assessment results (direct and indirect)
- Student performance benchmarks

Experiential Learning Integration

Monitors the incorporation of high-impact experiential learning opportunities.

Key Metrics:

- Number of experiential learning courses or programs
- Participation rates
- Demonstrated impact on student learning

Use of Advising and Support Services

Assesses how students access and experience academic and student support.

Key Metrics:

- Advising session attendance
- Use of tutoring or academic support
- Satisfaction with advising

Transfer and Articulation Agreements

Tracks alignment and success of transfer pathways between institutions.

Key Metrics:

- Number of agreements
- Transfer credit alignment
- Transfer student retention and completion

Career Pathways and Workforce Development

Assesses institutional alignment with workforce needs and student career readiness.

Key Metrics:

- Number of career pathway programs
- Workforce initiative participation rates
- Employer engagement

Student Progression and Completion Pathways

Monitors student movement through programs toward degree attainment.

Key Metrics:

- Progression milestones
- Pathway adherence
- Time to degree

High-Impact Practices and Co-Curricular Engagement

Tracks student participation in high-impact educational practices and co-curricular learning.

Key Metrics:

- Number of high-impact practices offered
- Participation rates
- Documented learning outcomes