



rpK GROUP | MGT

Higher Education System Transformation Toolkit

Academic Portfolio Review: An Exemplar for Higher Education

A practical toolkit for evaluating program interest, demand, success, and system-wide opportunity.



How to Use This Resource

Use the toolkit in sequence — or jump directly to the institution or system example your team needs.



1 Learn about an APR (*Slide 3*)

Define the review and the decisions it enables.



2 Understand why and how to deploy an APR (*Slides 4–7*)

Establish the framework, safeguards, and data foundation.



3 View an institution-level APR output (*Slides 8–17*)

Read interest, demand, and success together to identify program priorities.



4 Replicate across the system (*Slides 18–22*)

Compare campus evidence to surface system-wide patterns and gaps.



5 Make system portfolio decisions (*Slides 23–24*)

Grow, consolidate, differentiate, and share programs based on evidence.

What Is an Academic Portfolio Review (APR)?

WHAT IT IS → WHAT LEADERS NEED → HOW IT WORKS → WHAT DECISIONS IT ENABLES

01 What it is



A system-wide review of every active program across student interest, enrollment demand, and completion outcomes.

03 How it works



Build a clean program list, analyze at least three years of applications, enrollment, and completions, then compare campuses.

02 What leaders need



A clear view of demand, trajectory, duplication, and where capacity no longer matches student or regional need.

04 What it enables



Use the evidence to grow, sustain, consolidate, teach out, differentiate, or share programs across the system.

Why a Consistent Academic Portfolio Framework Matters

Institutions face mounting pressure to show that every program serves student interest, demand, and success.

100%

of active programs reviewed

3-year minimum

of institutional data

**1 shared
framework**

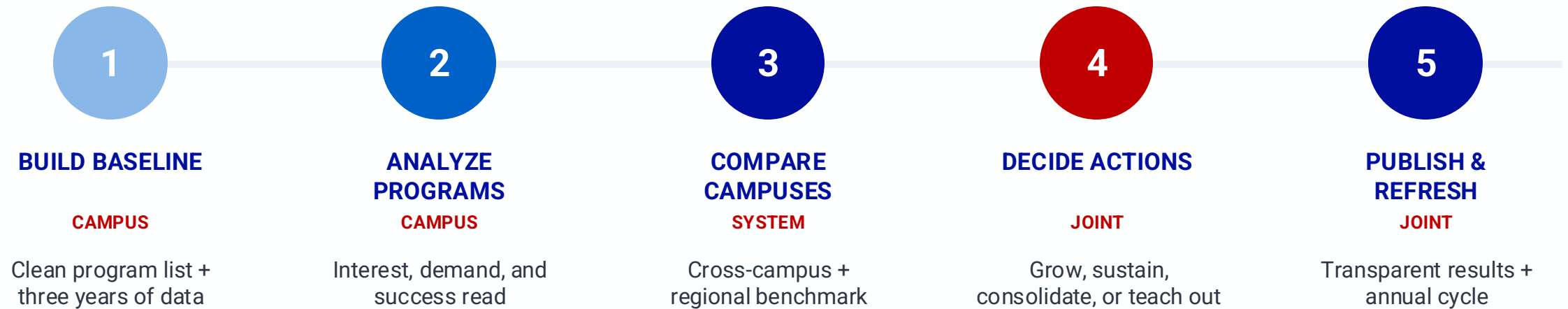
for consistent, transparent decisions

The institutional imperative

A shared method makes every program visible, comparisons fair, and resulting portfolio decisions transparent, data-informed, and student-centered.

How to Deploy This Approach

Five phases move the work from a campus data baseline to repeatable system decisions.



Each annual cycle returns comparable findings to campuses and improves the next round of portfolio decisions.

Four Safeguards Keep Portfolio Decisions Fair and Defensible

Use the same evidence, publish the method, protect student outcomes, and interpret results in context.



Data-informed

Avoid single-metric decisions: read interest, demand, and success together.



Transparent

Show the method: publish metrics, definitions, and results.



Student-centered

Protect outcomes: anchor trade-offs to access, quality, and completion.



Consistent & comparable

Compare fairly: apply consistent measures, then interpret campus context.

Foundation: Institutional Data Elements

Six data sets create one evidence chain: Interest → Demand → Success → Portfolio action.



FOUNDATION · Program List

Every active program by department, degree type, and CIP code.



INTEREST · Applications

Three years of applicant counts by program, FTIC, and transfer.



INTEREST · Admits & Yield

Admitted-student counts and yield rates by program and entry type.



DEMAND · Enrollment

Annual enrollment by program, with three-year growth or decline.



SUCCESS · Completions

Degrees and credentials awarded by program each year.



FOUNDATION · Program Context

Start dates, modality, and regional labor-market alignment.

FTIC = first time in college

Sample APR Approach & Output: Institution Level

See how interest, demand, and success combine into
program-level priorities.

Academic Portfolio Review Overview

The Academic Portfolio Review (APR) examines core institutional data trends to assess each program's trajectory.

1

Student Interest

Trends in prospective student interest in current academic offerings.

WHAT STUDENTS WANT



2

Student Demand

Trends in student enrollment and how it tracks against program interest.

WHAT STUDENTS DO



3

Student Success

Trends in the degrees and credentials students earn, relative to interest and demand.

WHAT STUDENTS GET



READ THE THREE LENSES TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY PROGRAM TRAJECTORY AND CAPACITY MISALIGNMENT.

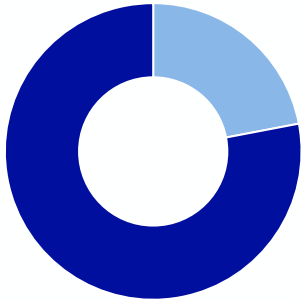
Interest → Demand → Success → Portfolio action

FTIC Represents 22% of Applicants – and Faces a 28-Point Admit-Rate Gap

Among 223 annual applicants, first-time-in-college (FTIC) students remain a small share – and are admitted at a substantially lower rate.

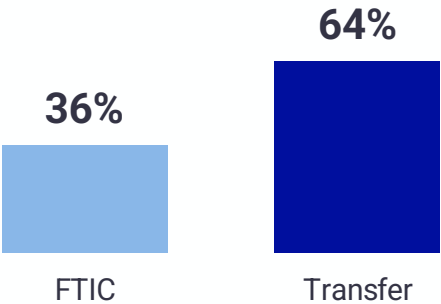
APPLICANT MIX

223
average
applicants
per year
2021–2024



■ 22% first-time in college
■ 78% transfer students

ADMIT-RATE GAP



28-point gap

PORTFOLIO IMPLICATION

Opportunity

Build awareness and appeal among first-time-in-college prospects.
Start with programs already showing FTIC interest or stronger admit rates.

TOP FTIC INTEREST

Business Administration • Software Engineering • Mechanical Engineering

HIGHEST FTIC ADMIT RATES

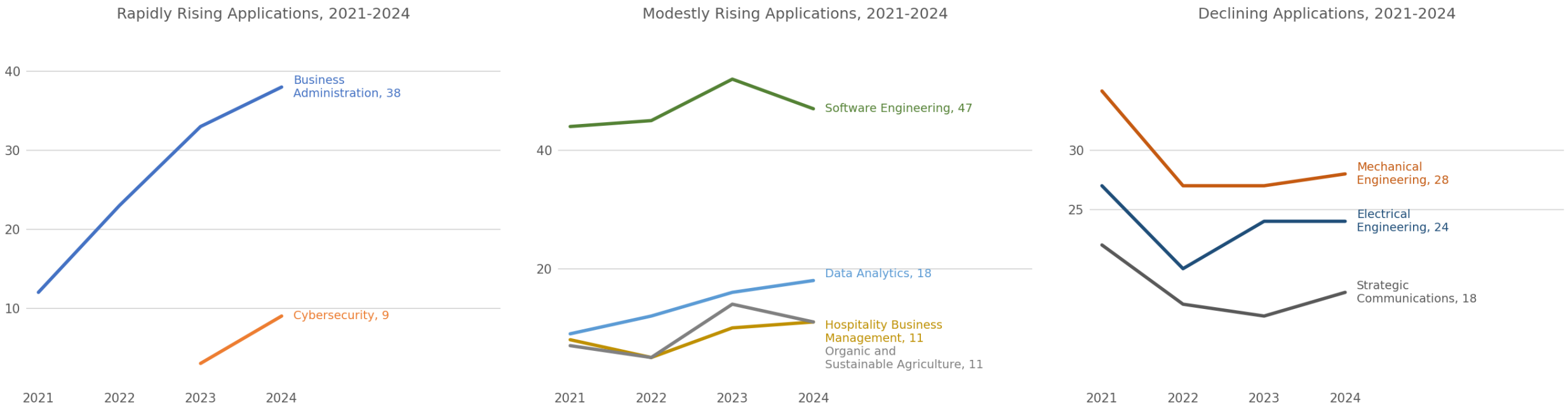
Business Administration • Hospitality • Data Analytics

Overall admit rate: 56% (unweighted program average).

Business Administration and Software Engineering Gain Interest; Traditional Engineering Declines



All applicants (FTIC and transfer) | 2021–2024



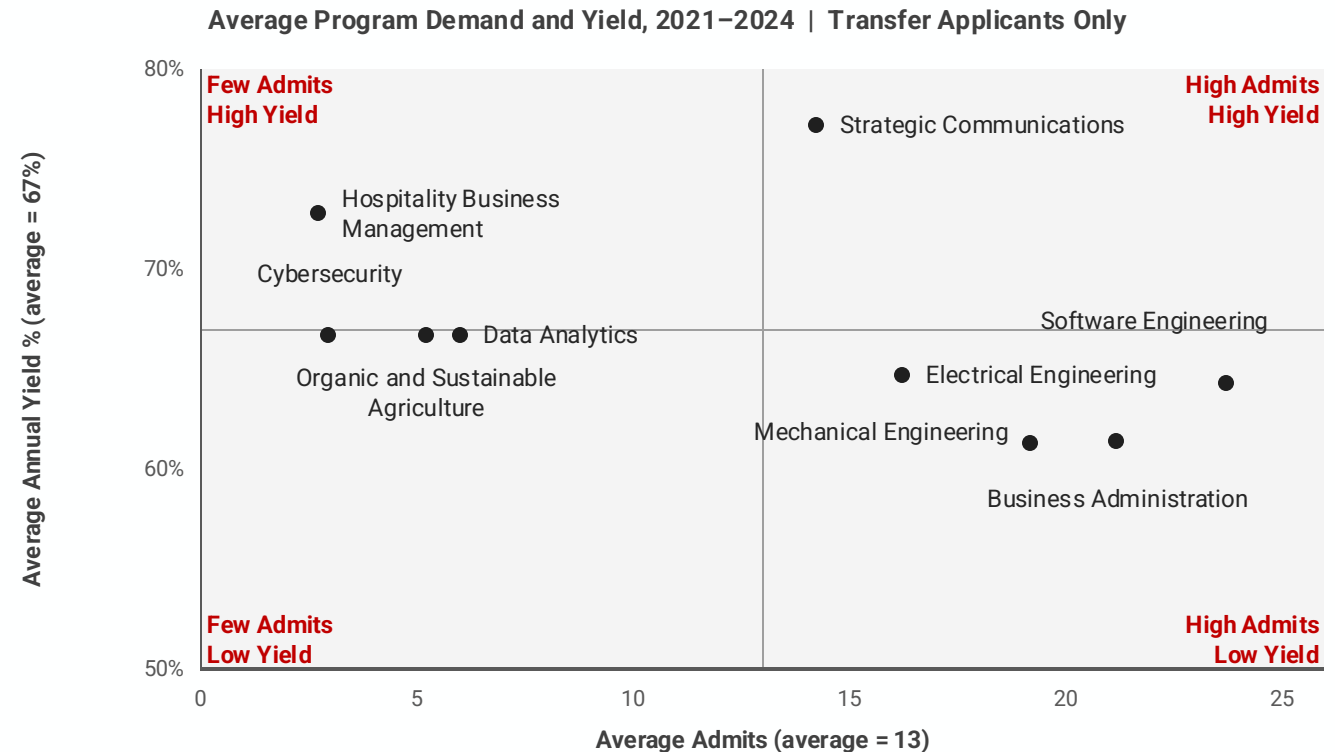
Why this matters: Rising interest signals where to add capacity; falling interest signals where to review it. Applications move first — enrollment and completions follow years later.



Strategic Communications Converts; Business Administration and Three Engineering Programs Need Stronger Yield

Transfer applicants only | Evaluate admits (volume) and yield (conversion) together.

- **CONVERT** — Business Administration, Mechanical, Electrical, and Software Engineering admit many students at below-average yield.
- **SCALE SELECTIVELY** — Strategic Communications yields strongly despite lower application volume.
- **BUILD AWARENESS** — Hospitality Business Management yields well from a small applicant pool.
- **MONITOR** — Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and Organic and Sustainable Agriculture stay small at near-average yield.



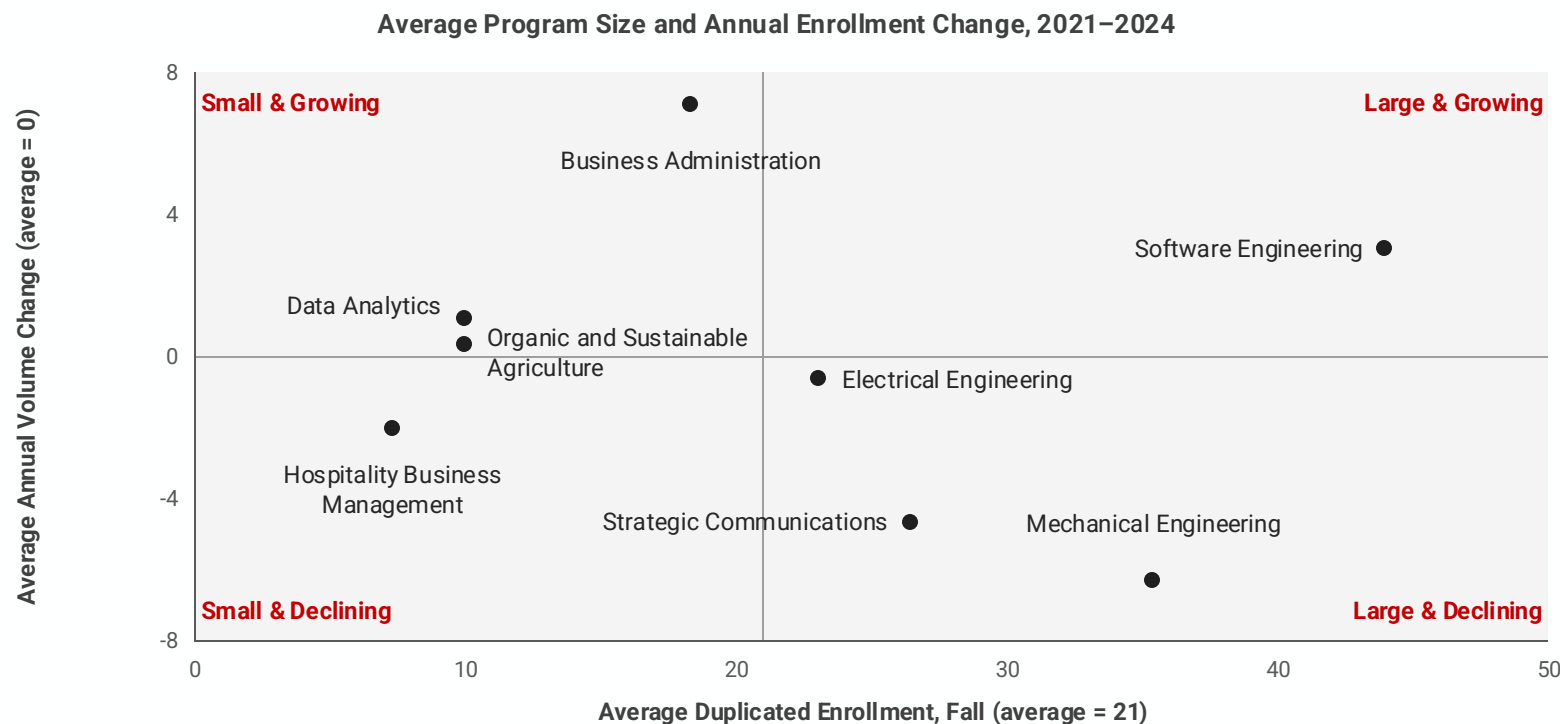
Why this matters: Yield shows which admits actually enroll. High-yield programs convert interest efficiently; low-yield programs may require a higher volume of applications to fill the same number of seats.

Software Engineering and Business Administration Grow; Four Established Programs Decline



FTIC and transfer students | Cybersecurity excluded because the program is new.

- **GROW** — Software Engineering is already large and expanding; Business Administration is climbing quickly.
- **REASSESS** — Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Strategic Communications, and Hospitality Business Management are declining.



Why this matters: Enrollment size and direction show where capacity is already committed — and where it is quietly draining away.

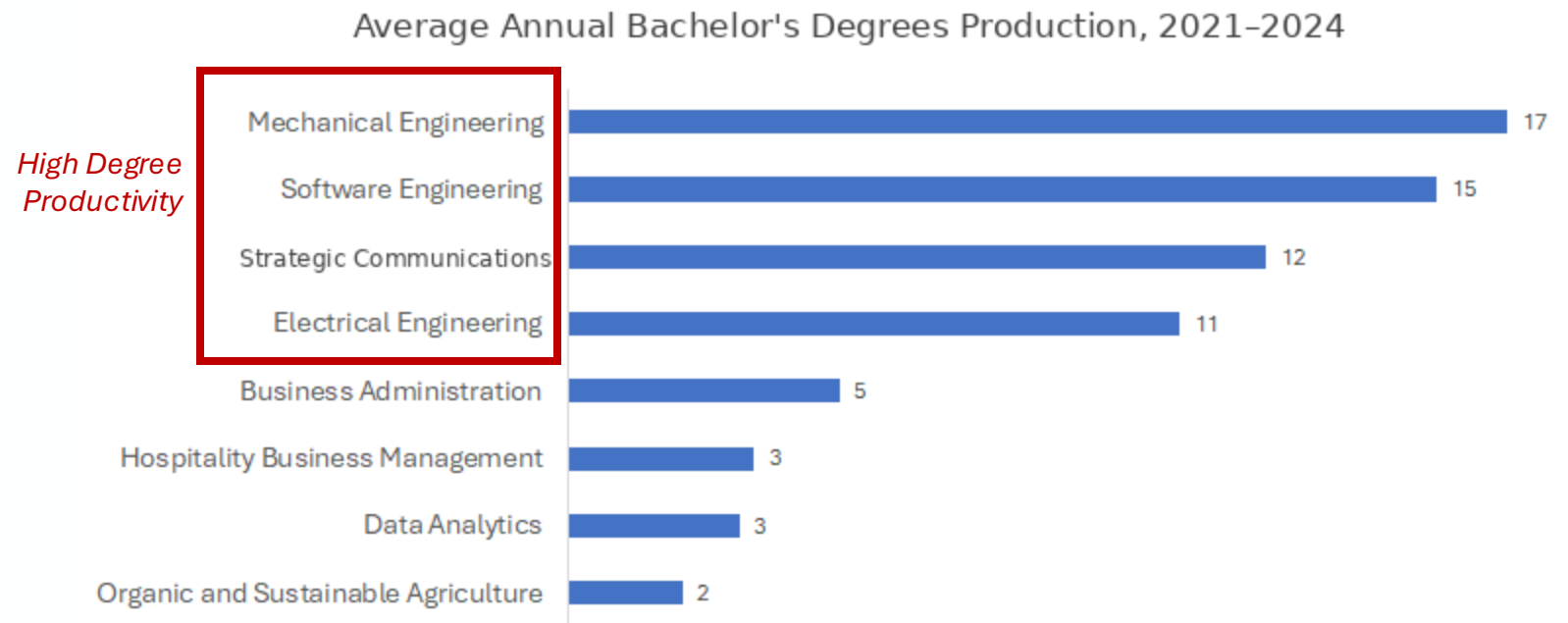
New-program caveat: Cybersecurity has no comparable enrollment-change history.

Three Engineering Programs and Strategic Communications Lead Degree Production; Business Administration Lags



Degree volume and degree productivity must be read together.

- **PROTECT STRENGTH** — Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Software Engineering, and Strategic Communications combine high degree volume with high productivity.
- **IMPROVE COMPLETION** — Business Administration has strong demand and admits, but below-average degree production.



Why this matters: Completions are the payoff. A program can carry strong enrollment and still under-deliver degrees; that gap is where intervention pays.

New-program caveat: Cybersecurity has no comparable degree-production history.

Portfolio Priorities Emerge When All Four APR Metrics Are Read Together

Priority: **Grow** • Improve conversion • **Monitor** • **Reassess**

APR Metrics					
Priority	Program Name	Student Interest (Applications)	Student Interest (Yield)	Student Demand	Student Success
Grow	Cybersecurity	Strong	Moderate	N/A	N/A
Improve conversion	Software Engineering	Moderate	Limited	Strong	Strong
Improve conversion	Business Administration	Strong	Limited	Strong	Limited
Monitor	Organic and Sustainable Agriculture	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Monitor	Data Analytics	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Monitor	Electrical Engineering	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Strong
Reassess	Strategic Communications	Limited	Strong	Limited	Strong
Reassess	Mechanical Engineering	Limited	Limited	Limited	Strong
Reassess	Hospitality Business Management	Limited	Strong	Limited	Limited
All programs award bachelor's degrees.					

Example: How One Program Analysis Emerges

Six measures build the evidence; one portfolio judgment aligns capacity to the pattern.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The institution's largest program by applications and enrollment, and one of its largest producers of bachelor's degrees.

INTEREST

Annual applications increased nearly 250% in three years

ADMITTANCE

An above average number of students are admitted to the program

YIELD

Yield is below average at only 62%

STUDENT DEMAND

Enrollment growth is strong, but the program remains small, averaging fewer than 20 students annually

PRODUCTION

Degree production is below average, averaging only 5 degrees per year

SUCCESS

Completions per enrolled student are healthy

All six measures are tracked as trends over time.

Portfolio judgment: The six measures together align capacity to interest and demand — for Business Administration, strong interest paired with weak conversion (Slide 15: improve conversion).

Institution-Level Assessment: Outlook and Opportunity

Each action follows directly from a pattern across interest, demand, and success.

1 REASSESS — weakening key programs



Evidence: high degree output, but steadily declining interest and enrollment in Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Strategic Communications.

Move: reassess capacity and recruitment.

3 CONVERT — business-program demand



Evidence: Business Administration has strong interest and enrollment demand but low yield and below-average degree production.

Move: strengthen conversion and completion.

2 VALIDATE — Cybersecurity growth



Evidence: strong Cybersecurity interest, but outcome data are not yet mature; Software Engineering is growing but has weak yield.

Move: validate capacity and improve conversion.

4 BUILD — promising programs



Evidence: Data Analytics and Organic and Sustainable Agriculture are mid-tier but have low production; Hospitality Business Management converts well from low volume.

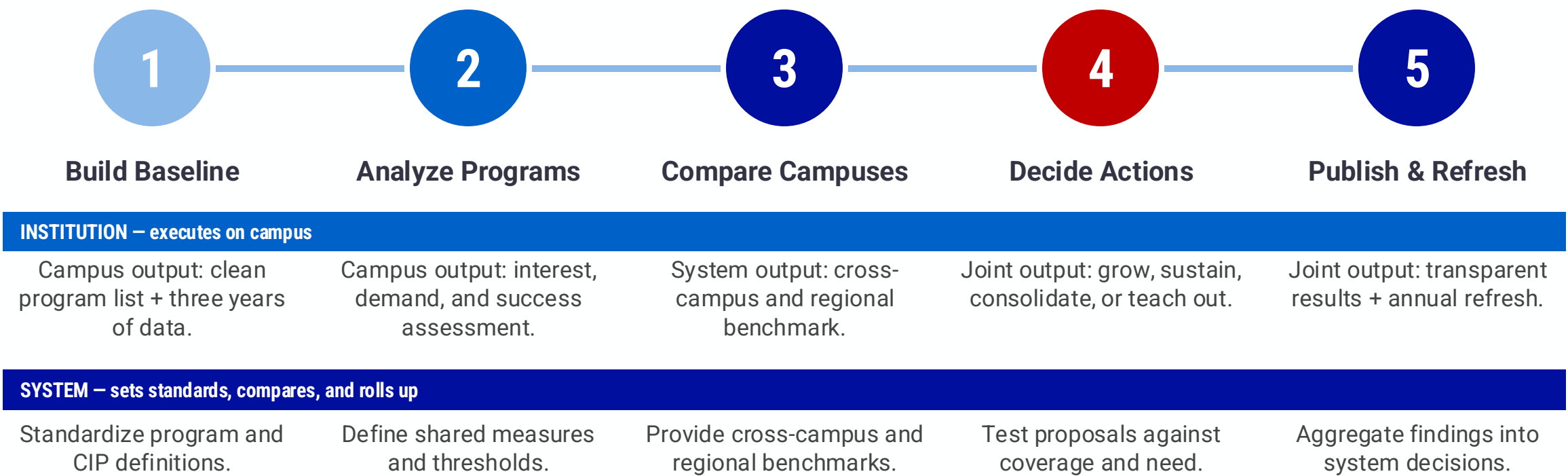
Move: build demand selectively and monitor outcomes.

Sample APR Approach & Output: System Aggregation

Repeat the campus analysis, then decide where the system should grow, consolidate, differentiate, or share.

APR System Implementation Roadmap

Five phases clarify what campuses execute and what the system standardizes, compares, and considers.



Ongoing: campuses maintain and publish metrics; the system refreshes comparisons and returns findings each cycle.

Interest Is Rising in Registered Nursing and Emerging Tech – but Weakening Elsewhere

STRONG Registered Nursing • Software Engineering • Cybersecurity • Data Analytics | **MODERATE** Business Administration • Mechanical Engineering | **LIMITED** Organic and Sustainable Agriculture

Program	Campuses offering	Student Interest (Applications)	Application Trends	Yielded Students (Count)	Yield Trends	System Interest Trend	Interest Read
Business Administration	4 of 4	7,945	→	2,781	→	Moderate	High application volume but flat yield signals broad awareness with weaker conversion.
Registered Nursing	3 of 4	3,640	↑	1,274	↑	Strong	Strong applications and rising yield show durable, improving student interest.
Software Engineering	3 of 4	2,960	↑	1,036	↑	Strong	Applications and yield rise together across three campuses.
Cybersecurity	2 of 4	1,415	↑	495	↑	Strong	Strong, rising applications and yield show growing interest across two campuses.
Data Analytics	2 of 4	1,185	↑	415	↑	Strong	Fast-rising applications and yield point to accelerating student interest.
Mechanical Engineering	3 of 4	1,230	↓	430	→	Moderate	Declining applications with flat yield indicate weakening student interest.
Organic and Sustainable Agriculture	1 of 4	870	↓	304	↓	Limited	Applications and yield are both declining from a niche base.

DETAILED REFERENCE | **Strong** = favorable • **Moderate** = mixed • **Limited** = concern | Illustrative four-campus system

Enrollment Demand Is Strongest in Registered Nursing and Emerging Tech

STRONG Registered Nursing • Software Engineering • Cybersecurity • Data Analytics | **MODERATE** Business Administration • Mechanical Engineering | **LIMITED** Organic and Sustainable Agriculture

Program	Campuses offering	Annual System Enrollment	System Demand Trend	Demand Read
Business Administration	4 of 4	1,589	Moderate	The system’s highest enrollment volume remains flat.
Registered Nursing	3 of 4	728	Strong	High and growing enrollment confirms strong demand.
Software Engineering	3 of 4	592	Strong	Large, steady enrollment across three campuses confirms durable demand.
Cybersecurity	2 of 4	283	Strong	Enrollment is growing from a smaller two-campus base.
Data Analytics	2 of 4	237	Strong	Enrollment is expanding quickly from a smaller two-campus base.
Mechanical Engineering	3 of 4	246	Moderate	Enrollment is softening across three campuses.
Organic and Sustainable Agriculture	1 of 4	174	Limited	Enrollment remains small and concentrated at one campus.

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Completions Confirm Registered Nursing and Tech Strength; Business Administration Remains Flat

STRONG Registered Nursing • Software Engineering • Cybersecurity • Data Analytics | **MODERATE** Business Administration • Mechanical Engineering • Organic and Sustainable Agriculture

Program	Campuses offering	Annual System Completions	System Success	Success Read
Business Administration	4 of 4	420	Moderate	The system’s highest completion volume remains flat.
Registered Nursing	3 of 4	180	Strong	Rising completions confirm strong program success.
Software Engineering	3 of 4	150	Strong	Completion volume is strong and aligned with interest and enrollment.
Cybersecurity	2 of 4	70	Strong	Completions are rising from a newer, smaller two-campus base.
Data Analytics	2 of 4	60	Strong	Completions are rising with interest and enrollment.
Mechanical Engineering	3 of 4	140	Moderate	Completions remain substantial but are softening.
Organic and Sustainable Agriculture	1 of 4	40	Moderate	Completion volume is small but steady.

DETAILED REFERENCE | **Strong** = favorable • **Moderate** = mixed • **Limited** = concern | Illustrative four-campus system

Four System Moves Follow From Combined APR Evidence

USE THE SAME EVIDENCE TRIGGERS ACROSS CAMPUSES TO MAKE PORTFOLIO DECISIONS CONSISTENTLY

CONSOLIDATE — duplicated, flat, or falling



Business Administration is offered at all four campuses while yield, enrollment, and completions remain flat. Concentrate output at the two strongest sites; review Mechanical Engineering's weakest site.

SCALE — rising demand + completions



Data Analytics and Cybersecurity are rising across applications, yield, and enrollment. Add capacity; protect and grow Registered Nursing, which is strong across all measures.

DIFFERENTIATE — distinct campus strengths



Coordinate Software Engineering specializations, place Cybersecurity growth at the strongest campus, protect Registered Nursing where demand is highest, and retain Organic and Sustainable Agriculture as a signature.

SHARE — niche demand across campuses



Use joint delivery, shared faculty, and articulation to meet niche demand without duplicating full programs. Reinvest released capacity in each campus's strongest offerings.

A Four-Step Pathway Enables Program Sharing Across the System

SHARE DELIVERY WHEN ENROLLMENT IS LOW, DUPLICATION IS HIGH, AND CROSS-CAMPUS ACCESS CAN EXPAND

1 Identify candidates

Use three tests: low enrollment, duplicated delivery, and cross-campus access potential. Candidates include Organic and Sustainable Agriculture and selected Software Engineering or Data Analytics tracks.

2 Choose a host model

Select either a system-hosted signature program or a lead institution with disciplinary strength and capacity.

3 Establish shared enrollment

One campus hosts the program; students across the system enroll through a shared agreement with common advising, articulation, and access rules.

4 Reinvest capacity

Reduce duplicated small offerings, then redirect faculty lines and advising capacity to the programs each campus delivers best.

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from mission to market

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