Guided Scenario Worksheet

CIC 2026 Institute for Chief Academic Officers · Aligning Data, Strategy, and Financial Practices to Advance Student Success

NACUBO Student Success Hub
Council of Independent Colleges

Name: Institution explored: Peer group: Your cabinet role:

The situation: The president has asked cabinet for recommendations to strengthen student success while protecting the institution's financial sustainability. Before recommending anything, your group will use the **IPEDS Peer Benchmarking Dashboards** in the NACUBO Student Success Hub to understand where the institution stands, decide what questions to ask next, and identify where cross-institutional collaboration is needed.

ROUND 1 Explore: What does the data show?

- ☐ What are the enrollment trends over time?
- ☐ What has been the budgetary impact for the institution?
- ☐ What are the most important data metrics for the institution?
- ☐ What are the patterns in retention and completion over the past 10 years?
- ☐ What is the revenue impact of students not retained?
- ☐ What are the longitudinal trends compared with peers?
- ☐ How do our metrics compare with our peers?
- ☐ Are we allocating resources appropriately?

#	**Finding** A trend, peer gap, or surprise	**Peer comparison** How does the institution compare?	**Mission choice or drift?** Is the difference deliberate or unexamined?
1			
2			
3			

ROUND 2 Ask: What questions should be asked next?

IPEDS shows what is happening, not why. For each finding, name the question cabinet should ask and the internal data that would answer it (for example, course-level success, program costs, advising contacts, or aid by student group).

#	Question to ask next	Data needed beyond IPEDS	Who holds it?
1			
2			
3			

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Round 3 and Debrief

ROUND 3 Connect: Where is the opportunity for cross-institutional collaboration?

Consider academic affairs, finance, enrollment management, student affairs, and institutional research. Name exactly one Accountable owner for each opportunity.

#	Collaboration opportunity	Offices that must work together	Accountable	Consulted
1				
2				
3				

DEBRIEF Peer insights

What did the data reveal that surprised you?	Which question would you take to your own cabinet first, and why?