



Financial Health Index & Equity Indicators Dashboard Use Case

A Pennsylvania Regional University Compares Financial Indicators to Peer Institutions Within the State

MAPS
charting the shifting landscape
of the future of higher education

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How Well is Your College or University Performing Financially and Addressing Student Equity?

In the wake of student demographic changes and their accompanying and increasing needs, higher education leaders will need to take a data-backed approach to decisions affecting students, especially historically underserved students. The MAPS Project gives higher education leaders actionable insights and tools to navigate challenges, empowering them to create a more equitable future for historically marginalized students.

The Financial Health Indicators Index is the first system-wide data tool that allows governing boards, presidents, and senior leadership teams to evaluate how their institution's financial health directly impacts student experience and outcomes from an equity lens. Higher education leaders will be able to use the index to compare their institutions to others to gain additional layers of insight. Governing boards will also be able to get a fuller picture of health in the context of peer institutions and may get more insights by also working with university leadership.

The Equity Indicators contextualize racial and socioeconomic data to help leaders find ways to better serve historically marginalized students. Together, they provide a current state picture to support post secondary stakeholders in recognizing opportunities to better serve historically marginalized students.

Use Cases for the Financial Health Indicators Index and Equity Indicators

The goal of the use cases is to show higher education leaders how to use the Financial Health Indicators Index and Equity Indicators to gain insights into how their institution is performing in both areas.

These use cases provide fictional examples of higher education leaders, such as college presidents and governing board members, using the tools to gain insights into their institutions' financial performance with an equity lens.



Use Case: A Pennsylvania Regional University Compares Financial Indicators to Peer Institutions Within the State

THE CHALLENGE

Paul is a member of the president's cabinet at a regional university in Pennsylvania. He and other members of the cabinet advise the president and executive management team on matters affecting the university at large and serves as a coordinating point for inclusive communications, development of strategic goals, and assessment of strategic initiatives. He is eager to see how the university compares to its peers on key financial indicators, especially related to student spending. Knowing how other colleges and universities in the state are performing on key indicators helps provide helpful context for decision making.

KEY FINDINGS: MAPS FINANCIAL HEALTH INDICATORS INDEX (FHII)

- **University Overview:**
 - Full Time Enrollment Undergrad/Grad: 4,861/ 258
 - Pell Recipients: 32% are Pell recipients
 - Graduate Rate: 58%
 - Retention Rate: 75%
- **FHII percentile rank:** Paul sees his university falls in the **16th percentile within public, 4-year institutions of higher education.**
- **Comparing schools:** Paul then compares his university to similar institutions across the state and sees that their FHII score ranks in the middle.
When compared to peer institutions, the university ranked the lowest in:
 - RetentionWhen compared to peer institutions, the university ranked the highest in:
 - Academic support as percentage of expenses
 - Value of endowment as total expenses
- **Examining student spending:** He then takes a closer look at the numbers related to student spending, a major indicator of the overall score. He notices that when comparing peer institutions, his university ranks in the middle on student services as total expenses. However, it ranked last in or second-to-last on:
 - Discounts and allowances applied to tuition and fees per student
 - Scholarship Fellowships Expenses as % of total expenses
 - Retention



KEY FINDINGS: MAPS EQUITY INDICATORS

For greater context, he looks at the MAPS Equity Indicators that contextualize racial and socioeconomic data.

- **Majority Race of Instructors:** 84% White
- **Demographic Information:**
 - Race of Undergraduate Students:
 - White: 74%
 - Hispanic: 6.2%
 - Black: 12.3%
 - Asian: 1.5%
 - AIAN:
 - Additional Races: 5.5%
 - Graduation Rates for Specific Groups Compared to the Institution's Overall Graduation Rate:
 - White: 62%
 - Hispanic: 62%
 - Black: 40%
 - Asian: 46%
 - AIAN: 67%
 - Additional Races: 68%

INSIGHTS

Based on the data, Paul wants to understand why his university offers relatively low amounts of discounts tuition and fees per student as well as scholarships and fellowships.

He wonders what can be done to retain students and help them to complete their degrees, especially Black students, who despite comprising **12.3% of the undergraduate student population** at his college, have a **40% graduation rate**.

He knows this is especially important because, although all of the counties surrounding the university are majority white, the Black population has been steadily growing and is the next most common racial group. Understanding this population is vital because a vast majority of students who enroll at his university are from Pennsylvania, with half of them being from neighboring counties surrounding the university.

With over 80% of the university's instructors being white, he also sees an opportunity to explore the recruitment and retention of Black faculty, who can offer a sense of community and encouragement to Black students. Research has shown that Black teachers have higher expectations of Black students, which results in higher levels of college completion.



SOLUTIONS

Paul explores [MAPS Resources](#) to find examples and information about how colleges and universities can better support Black students.