TEAM 4

Abhinaav Singh

Pranav Prasad

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Zeyuan Li

**PRODUCT WORKBOOK**

**Managing Academic Degree Programs**

Sep 25, 2021

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# **Customer Problem Narrative**

Michael is an Academic Program Administrator at Carnegie Mellon University. His colleagues from other departments have different titles for a similar role - Academic Program Manager, Executive Director for an Academic Program, Associate Dept Head of Academic Affairs and so on. He has more than a decade of experience managing academic degree programs, and is currently managing the MS ECE Program at his university. While there are several parts of his job that he enjoys, there are many other tasks in the job that he finds difficult to navigate with ease on a regular basis. Michael is looking for solutions to make his life easier, while benefiting his organization as a whole!

As an Academic Program Administrator, Michael works on a multitude of different tasks. During the season before the semester begins, he works on planning the curriculum and orientation. During the semester, his major role is to advise students on their careers, and ensure that they are on the right track to achieve their goals. Other major responsibilities include admissions, strategic planning to continuously improve the program, and organize events for students and faculty.

What does he want to achieve though? There are different kinds of outcomes that he looks for related to the variety of tasks. The one that encapsulates most of the goals is to ensure successful graduation of students. This can be measured in different ways - high placement percentage, quality of applicants, and also financial revenue generated and funding received. To achieve these goals on a consistent basis, he definitely needs solutions for some of the basic functions that he carries out.

As you can imagine, it can be a nightmare to communicate with the variety and number of stakeholders that Michael interacts with - students, faculty, and other program administrators as well. There have been countless days in his 14 years of experience where he has spent entire days together just waiting for responses from the right people. The average time for him to finalize the course plan is four weeks and most of it is spent on waiting for a reply from instructors. This happens surprisingly often, and it hinders Michael’s schedule to confirm the course list before registration opens for the students. It gets so much worse for cross-listed courses or adding a new course. In these cases he needs to call up his colleagues in other departments to manually compare department schedules to figure out a slot that works for the class. This can be so strenuous and cumbersome, and the back and forth email communication more often than not creates more miscommunication instead of sorting things out. Another related issue that he faces is when he is trying to schedule courses that are offered in different time zones. This is a massive challenge as well, as a lot of manual schedule comparisons are required to schedule one such class.

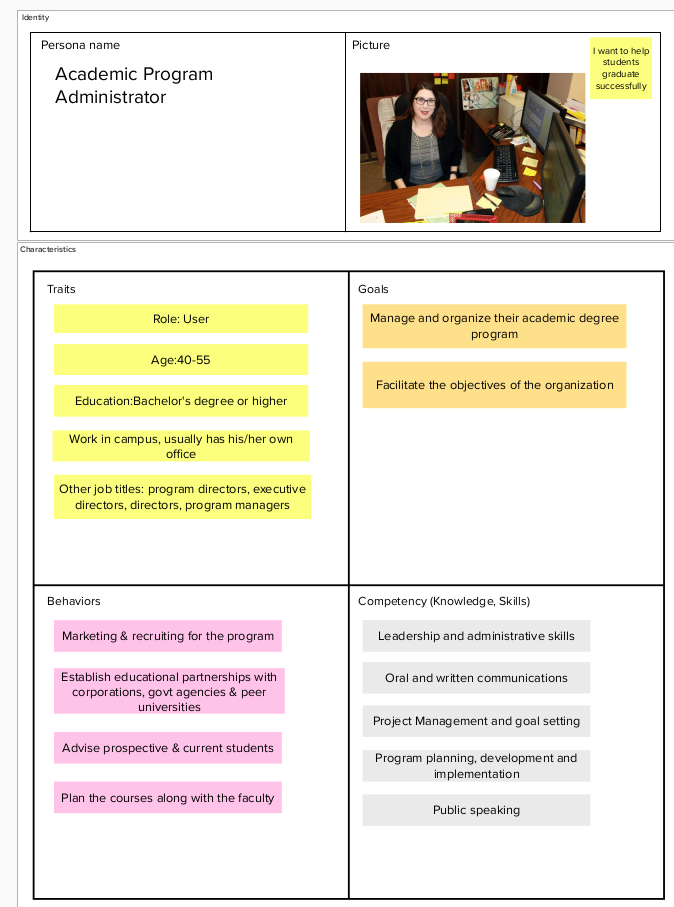
Why do these gaps exist between what Michael wants and what is actually happening currently? Well, the scheduling issues between departments for faculty time scheduling exist due to the same faculty taking classes in different departments are a major cause. Email replies take time as scheduling timings over email is not a natural process and also when Michael gets the reply email, he needs to get the desired information from it and compare with his plan manually, it costs him a lot of time so there should be a way to do this visually, directly, and also in real-time. Another thing Michael believes is that system related issues like information inconsistencies on SIO and Stellic exist due to a lack of automation for repetitive tasks. There is a huge opportunity to tap into this space with the technology that is available currently. Another cause that he mentioned is the communication gap between faculty and the Program Administrators. This exists because there isn’t a system that would ease their communication and would also consist of reminders and notifications for action items. Michael also mentions how important keeping a record of past communication is. Every semester, on average one of his thirty course instructors forgets what the promised course plan is and ends up withdrawing from the course schedule. Michael is hoping that we can provide a solution which can solve all these issues, and increase the efficiency of his work and the department!

This is a problem that affects academic program administrators all across the country, as planning the curriculum is always a part of their job. Any product that can solve this pain point would bring in a huge amount of revenue because of the massive market size. Firstly, there are about 4300 degree-granting universities in the USA. If a university has an average of 15 programs, that would be 64500 different degree programs and each one has an Academic Program Administrator. These numbers are conservative, and could be much larger in reality with universities like Carnegie Mellon University having close to 200 programs! Secondly, to demonstrate how big of an issue this is, let us look at the number of professors that exist in the USA. There are more than 600,000 professors across the country. This would mean there are ten professors for every Program Administrator. You can now clearly see why communication between faculty and administrators can be a difficulty. Any solution to streamline this communication and provide an automated interface would greatly benefit universities all across the country!

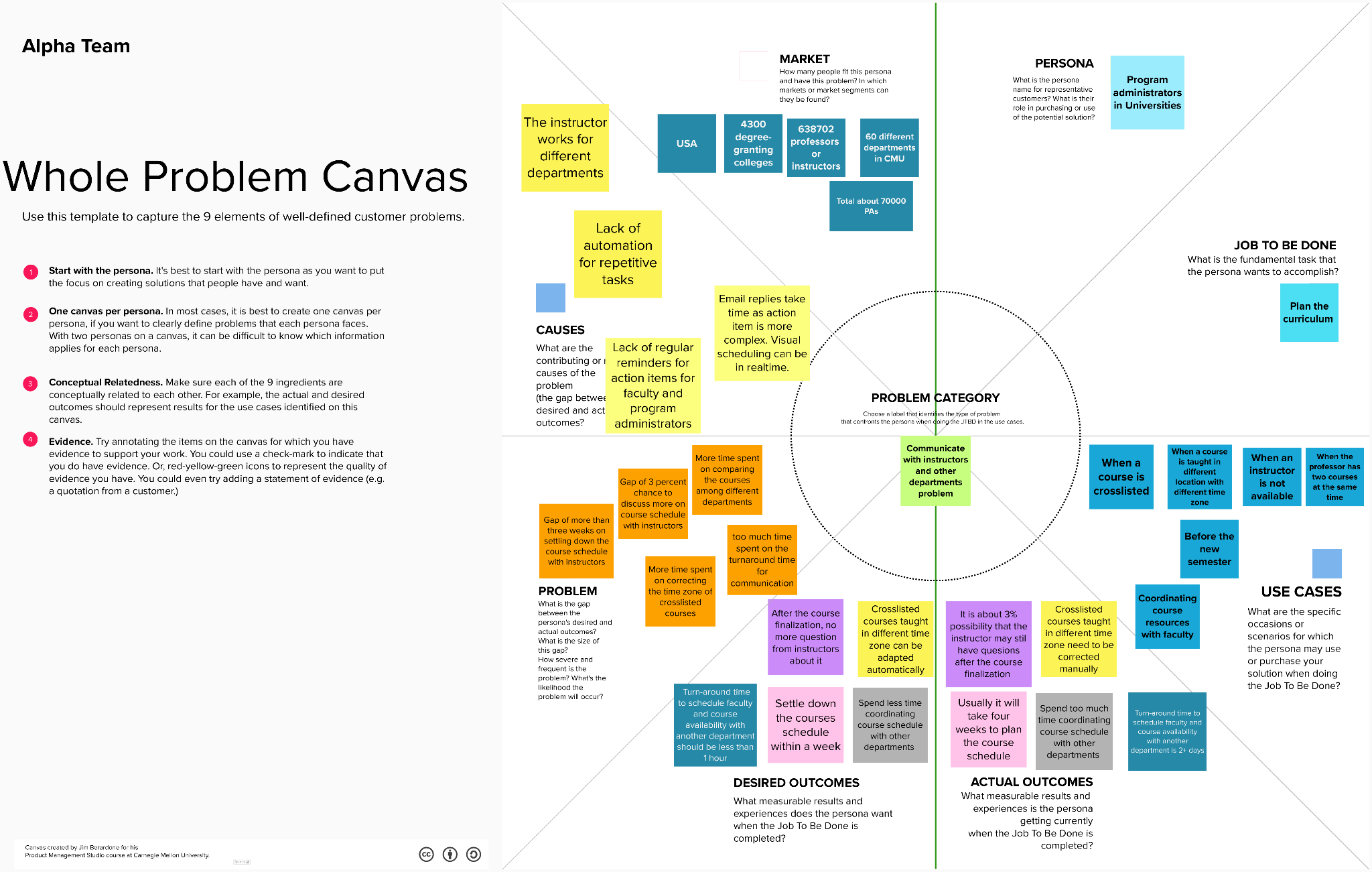
There is a real gap in the efficiency that can be achieved by Program Administrators, and miscommunication is one of the leading causes. Michael has helped us realize the opportunity that exists in this space, and we should tap into this market right away!

# **Appendix**

## **Customer Persona Profile**



## **Whole Problem Canvas**



## **Customer Problem Analysis**

**Notes:**

1. Planning the curriculum involves several tasks, from course scheduling, coordinating with faculty for their schedules, providing faculty with course resources, coordinating with other program administrators to share resources etc. Program administrators should coordinate and prepare on which course is going to be taught by which instructor on what time and what resources or link students are going to use in this course.
2. Instructor is not available: Case 1. Instructors may take a year off. According to the interview, sometimes instructors may take a year off from teaching or researching then do something else. 2. Instructor is retiring or something else happens that the instructor can no longer teach in this university.
3. Cross-listed courses taught in different time zones: for example, the same course may be taught in both Pittsburgh and Silicon Valley. This creates scheduling difficulties which involve a lot of back and forth communication.
4. Coordinating course resources with faculty: The course resource links posted on the course registration page or canvas are managed by the program directors, they are the people who pay for it. So, they need to communicate with the instructors to prepare before the semester begins.
5. Communication has been mentioned several times, and this is a pattern across interviews. Difficulties in communication with faculty was mentioned both by Ms. Nesli and Ms. Matthews, while Mr. Eiben mentioned communication between departments as an issue to be addressed.
6. Deanna mentioned that it takes multiple days of turnaround time to manage a clash of professor availability timings with another department. With a real time scheduler, it should take not more than an hour to resolve the issue, considering that the primary issue is the complexity in handling schedule time clashes over mail.

**Evidence:**

1. There are about **4000** universities just in the US, each having multiple departments. (https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-many-universities -are-in-the-us-and-why-that-number-is-changing)
2. An assumption has been made for the average number of degree programs in a university. Considering that big universities can have a lot more than the assumed average, the number of Program Administrators assumed is conservative.
3. The desired outcomes for the program administrators interviewed were different. Ms. Nesli has more academic oriented goals like ensuring good graduation rate and job placements, although she has been working on financial benefits for her program as well. Mr. Eiben has been working on making the MS in Product Management degree program more marketable to the industry, which is a completely different goal.
4. For actual outcomes, Deanna Matthews mentioned the average time for her to finalize the course plan is four weeks and most of it is spent on waiting for a reply from instructors. The frequency for the case that the professor forgets what he or she has promised and wants to make a change is one of thirty courses in a semester which is nearly **3 percent**. For cross-listed courses, to avoid the conflict with the other departments’ core courses, program directors need to ask for the course schedule and compare it manually. Also, they need to consider the time zone.

**Why is this problem the most worthwhile?**

* As we are focusing on the college context, the JTBD of planning course curriculum happens on most program directors with each of the instructors in his or her program.
* Through the customer interviews, the problem of planning the curriculum came up repeatedly. From the perspective of risk priority numbers, the detection and severity parts are high, as for occurrence, we know there will be at least two semesters in a year, so every year the program administrators have to face this problem at least twice.
* To address the confidence we have in creating a solution, we believe the product or the idea is not that difficult to realize. Hence the confidence level of solving this problem is high.
* There is a lot of scope for technology to be used to automate and make communication more efficient, and hence solving these root problems will provide time for the Program Administrators to focus on making more impactful decisions that could positively change the program’s future.

## **Customer Interview Summaries**

**Zeyuan:**

**Summary of Customer Interview**

**Project Team *Team 4***

**Part 1. Interviewing Team**

**Interview Facilitator *Johnny Lau, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.***

**Interview Recorder *Zeyuan Li, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.***

**Part 2. Customer Interview**

**Customer Sean Beggs, CMU, Heinz College, Director of Master of Information Systems Management program (MISM)**

**Interview Date/Time *September 15, 2021, 10:30A.M.***

**Interview Location *https://cmu.zoom.us/j/9383051269***

**Interview Records**

**- Recording:**

[**https://cmu.zoom.us/rec/share/khY7upuBmWGDOvW5JctmKIOcCm7gt2aMesMlVhALz-Pewt0KlRr4KBlmxSRgID9s.60Q6ry4xjcfWS\_Nm**](https://cmu.zoom.us/rec/share/khY7upuBmWGDOvW5JctmKIOcCm7gt2aMesMlVhALz-Pewt0KlRr4KBlmxSRgID9s.60Q6ry4xjcfWS_Nm)

**Passcode: +i^32B#e**

**- Artifacts: none**

**Key Findings**

1. The goal in his work is the success of students. For students, he wants to help them succeed by registering the correct courses, finding a satisfying job, enabling them to connect with one another and enriching their own student experience. For faculty and staff, he wants to help them facilitate their process to help students succeed. He believes himself a supervisor and a team player.

2. Experience matters in this position. Sean said when he first began his career as a program director, there were redundant steps in his work, and he made some mistakes but now it’s okay.

3. Main problem faced:

Sean believes the biggest problem right now is how to get students engaged comprehensively. Many students currently don’t pay attention to the details of course description and prerequisite. They may also don’t think of the outcome if he or she doesn’t choose the right course or even fails it. Sometimes they make decisions just from talking with seniors which is not comprehensive. Sean hopes there can be an AI agent to remind or actively push his students to be right on track, keep details in their mind, know the timing and the target in a comprehensive format.

4. Perspective on information or data:

In the department of Heinz, there is a Heinz academic service center whose responsibility is to collect data. Then as the program director, he doesn’t need to do this job. He also believes he has enough information and doesn't need more. He respects the boundary between students and teachers. He doesn’t want to cross the line and make it creepy.

5. Respect for a student's personalized learning style: He respects that students have different agenda, different goals and different learning methods. It’s hard for the current advising platform to fit all students’ needs.

Some insights from the Interview with Nesli:

1. Except for planning the course schedule, the program director may also think of how to bring new blood from the industry or other departments to teach
2. Some program directors don’t have the right to edit or change the course schedule in the student system like SIO in our case, they share the final version course plan with the head department program director like the relationship between ETIM and EPP, then they will put these courses into SIO.
3. As they only have the view access on the SIO system, they need to make sure that everything is planned as expected. If there is anything wrong, they need to communicate with the head department to correct it.
4. Program directors care whether his or her students are doing well not only from an academic perspective but also from personal health. When the pandemic comes and they have a chance to talk via zoom, they hope the students can turn on the camera.
5. The program director's work may change a lot, like which software to use, how often the orientation, future admission plan.
6. The course resource links posted on the registration page are managed by the program directors, they are the people who pay for it. So they need to communicate with the instructors on the resource plan.
7. Sometimes the program needs to pay the instructor from another department or the industry to teach a course here.

**Pranav:**

**Summary of Customer Interview**

**Project Team** Team 4

**Interviewing Team**

*Interview Facilitator* **Abhinaav Singh**, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.

*Interview* *Recorder* **Pranav Prasad**, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.

**Customer Interview**

*Customer* **Brad Eiben**, Executive Director, MS in Product Management, Tepper School of Business at CMU

*Interview Date/Time* September 16, 2021, 1:30 P.M.

*Interview Location* https://cmu.zoom.us/j/96425743649?pwd=bWlTdlRXa1NTMXc5QzA3ZDV6Vi9xQT09

*Interview Records*

-- Recording:

https://cmu.zoom.us/rec/share/eAUQdsyR4iDnLI8ndOznjAuqGtKxMSrRHlcGeiWoG33FGQXKGKxZoS878os9eAGO.GmmqO2WJ1q\_Z\_WOI

Access Passcode: 95??34nX

-- Artifacts: none

**Key Findings**

Here’s what we discovered from our interview:

1 - **The most important challenge that he is currently facing is to increase the awareness about the MS in Product Management program in the industry.** As the program is quite new, the reputation of the program is still being built. Mr. Eiben has been working to market and increase the awareness of the program in order to gain a reputation like established programs such as the MBA program. To get the message across, he has been using strategies such as shining light on successful alumni of the program, collaborating with established programs to help each other, create relationships with the industry etc.

2 - **The goal of the program is to provide all skills required to be successful in product management under a single roof.** As Mr. Eiben puts it, “When someone thinks of product management, they should think of Tepper and CMU.” From a financial perspective, a revenue surplus is always a desired outcome. As it is a new program, it is being treated like a startup with more emphasis on the marketing aspect than a financial gain.

3 - **The least productive part of his job is the time spent in administrative work.** The time spent in approving employees’ hours etc. takes up a lot of time. This can be seen as an area of opportunity to make daily mundane tasks more efficient and less cumbersome. Mr. Eiben believes this is time would be better spent in strategic planning and more big picture decisions. Another point he mentioned in this area is the lack of communication between different departments, and hence the existence of an inability to share efficient processes to complete administrative work.

4 - **Another major factor that the program is always trying to improve is the diversity in the program.** There is not much clarity as to why students are choosing this program over others. There is a need to learn more about that aspect of the program in order to market the program correctly in different areas of the world like Europe, Africa etc. At the moment, they are able to attract a large female population but again, more data is required to understand what is resulting in this.

**Improvement Opportunities**

Here’s where we could improve our interviews.

1 - The response to his answers can be different and more probing, especially with respect to numbers. For the awareness issue, we could have asked more about how they are tracking how the program is improving in that aspect. We did not clarify the numbers aspect to an extent which will be very useful. Hence there probably is less clarity than we should have in that aspect.

2 - More rehearsals of the opening and the questions themselves would definitely benefit in gaining more from the interview, as it would run more smoothly.

**Qianxin:**

**Summary of Customer Interview**

**Project Team**  Team 4

**Interviewing Team**

*Interview Facilitator Zeyuan Li, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.*

*Interview Recorder Qianxin Liu, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.*

**Customer Interview**

*Customer Deanna Matthews, CMU, Associate Dept. Head Undergraduate Affairs*

*Interview Date/Time* Sept. 15, 2021, 12:00 A.M.

*Interview Location* [https://cmu.zoom.us/j/4735164855](https://cmu.zoom.us/j/4735164855#search/zeyuanli%40andrew.cmu.edu/_blank)

Interview Records

-- recording: <https://cmu.zoom.us/rec/share/HdulzqTc-4IHjYqIb5_3SPvNmGomwgQItLQ6sKUSNy1AJNUkPjewlCjE7dwXn9cn.Dtn16BJGk0YHmoFP> . Access Passcode: \*pf%D1dh

-- artifacts: none

**Key Findings**

Here’s what we discovered from our interview:

1- Her role gives her chances to administrate all undergraduate EPP programs. She explained her role and her work scope very specifically in the beginning stage of the interview. Clearly, her role give her a very deep understanding and a big picture of being a program administrator.

2- She mentioned that there are many things that are done by the program administrator behind the scenes which are not relevant to many students. Maybe some technology or products which could enable the program administrator more exposure to the students will be more welcomed by the program administrator.

3- She think there are clear metrics to value her work. The students can successfully have their jobs are one of most important metrics that she thinks she has done a good job. For the undergraduate program, she thinks the scale of the program is important. And for the graduate program, she thinks the quality of the applicants is important.

4- There are some inconvenience functions in the process of using the program administering system. She mentioned the function of this system works very well in a large program. However, there are some ‘twists and returns’ sides of the system. This is the main part we could catch to improve this system.

5- For the improvement of the system, she mentioned “visual” several times. If we could make the system more visual, that would be better.

6- She mentioned the importance of records when solving the problems of assigning courses for the teachers. She mentions the hardest task is to negotiate with the faculty. If we have a system or tool for the administrators to better record their work process or their contact with other teachers. It would be useful.

**Improvement Opportunities**

Here’s where we could improve our interviews.

1 - For the first item above, we didn’t inquire further about how to better improve the system, the hidden process in this system, what other parts we could visualize this system. We should try to probe this further in our other interviews, if possible.

2 - There are a few of sharp transitions during the interview. Next time, we should respond more quickly based on the answers of the interviewees.

Abhinaav

**Project Team**  Team 10

**Part 1. Interviewing Team**

Interview Facilitator Pranav Prasad, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.

Interview Recorder Abhinaav Singh, Product Manager, TartanWorks Inc.

**Part 2. Customer Interview**

Customer Nesli Ozdoganlar,Sr. Acad. Program Manager for MS E&TIM

Interview Date/Time September 16, 2021, 1:30 P.M.

Interview Location

<https://cmu.zoom.us/j/98544931508?pwd=OUh2bSt3ZUhvUFlTYUoxT3RzaS84Zz09>

Interview Records

--recording:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1--yqUe8wEqxJmdDSO2of\_cygdr-EYm\_z

--artifacts: none

**Part 3. Key Findings**

Here’s what we discovered from our interview:

**1 - She really wishes that there was just ONE system for student management.** Right from admission, to evaluations, auditing, etc. She said if the student got in with one system, which carried the student over until graduation, then that would really help her do her job. Chances of error due to manual intervention while copying student data from one system to another would get minimized. It will also be easier to track student data all in one place, without having to sign into 3 different applications. This could be an opportunity as a solution could be envisioned where data from these different platforms could be fetched and displayed on a single dashboard.

**2 - Zoom calls didn’t make her feel connected to the students.** She spoke for quite long about how zoom calls did not make her feel connected to the students. She could not catch the non-verbal cues and could not tell if they were stressed, in trouble or if they were taking care of themselves (based on how they were dressed and how they were generally behaving). This is another area where she thought she was not satisfied with, as part of her role as a program administrator.

**3 - She sees international diversity in her program as a problem.** It is a problem she feels strongly about, but hasn’t completely been able to address it yet. She thinks that like with all other STEM courses, her program also has less diversity. This limits her program in some aspects and she wants improvement in this area. She herself has thought about some potential solutions, like establishing connections with other colleges and companies, hosting recruitment events and trying to get undergraduate students to enroll for the graduate program.

**4 - She pointed out that communication with faculty needs improvement.** She does not feel that she’s able to stay in touch with faculty in a reliable and an effective way. For instance, it’s her job to acquire resources like HBR articles, books, etc for the faculty that they need as part of their classes. She is unable to find out what they need and when, in real time.

**Part 4. Improvement Opportunities**

1 - For the second item above, we did not spend enough time to find out the root cause for her discomfort with Zoom. We should have probed a little more and dug deeper, as the reasons we have for her dissatisfaction with Zoom calls seem to be at a surface level.

2 - Our opening phase was not long enough and we dived into the questions too early. This was a lost opportunity to establish a better rapport with the interviewee.

## **Customer Interview Files**

Brad Eiben: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-0jFeleZCYP48ERJXauMD6Bv5Fro1bFQ>

Deanna Matthews: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-2V-X62XPGJJNvdA7c4vFQ1bcCYn6wwM>

Neslihan Ozdoganlar:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1--yqUe8wEqxJmdDSO2of_cygdr-EYm_z>

Sean Beggs:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-2I5N2rPzgH90XEKHtg7D2Qodl4Xi_2c>

Deanna Mathews

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-2V-X62XPGJJNvdA7c4vFQ1bcCYn6wwM

## **Fertile Land Research**

**Zeyuan:**

**Responsibility for academic program administrator:**

**1. Recruitment, admissions, and retention of students:**

**· work with the Chair to set the enrollment targets. Maintains records and updates admissions and recruitment plans at the program level**

**· contribute to student recruitment and orientation events**

**· assist faculty with special or unusual student advising needs including student complaints about program advisors or courses**

**· review course evaluations for the specific offerings of the program for the purpose of curriculum development and maintaining quality standards**

**· deal with student complaints about program advisors or courses.**

**2. Academic program development, policies and procedures:**

**· assure that curriculum development and other planning for the program takes into consideration current policy and/or anticipated changes.**

**· develop academic policies and procedures, and monitoring compliance of these**

**· make recommendations about routine scheduling of courses and rooms**

**· responsible for official student and graduate correspondence relative to confirming program status for loans, licensure, and insurance.**

**3. Administration of the program:**

**· make budget requests, have oversight of the program budget to ensure the financial stability of the program**

**· look for opportunities to foster professional growth and development of faculty and staff members within the program**

**· monitor and evaluate faculty and staff performance and advise the Chair in formulating recommendations for faculty and staff hiring, merit, equity, promotion, tenure, and termination.**

**· develop and maintains cooperative and collaborative relationships, activities and communication with other programs within the College**

**· keep strong relationship with Alumni**

**· provides the chair with an annual report of the core annual programmatic activities**

**Goal:**

**The goal of an education administrator is to organize and manage their administrative department while facilitating the objectives of the institution for which they work.**

**TOP ISSUES FACED BY Program Administrator**

**· Making decisions strategically: responsible personalities to overlook the discipline, making schedules, managing academic staff etc**

**· Recruitment of academic staff**

**· The discipline of the students**

**· Lack of attendance**

**· Staff and students retention**

**· The uncertainty of student outcome**

**· High cost in maintenance and operations**

**· Technology: not many school administrators’ strong suit, a real challenge for them to identify what and when they should adopt technology to improve performance**

**· Designing the 21st-century curriculum**

**Pranav:**

**Market: US Higher Education Market**

**Statistics: (Source: EducationData.Org)**

**Among first-time, first-year college students, 82.7% are full-time students.**

**2.3 million students are foreign-born.**

**4.43 million college students are projected to graduate in 2021.**

**24.6% will receive associate’s degrees.**

**49.9% will receive bachelor’s degrees.**

**20.8% will earn master’s degrees.**

**4.7% will earn doctorates or professional degrees.**

**50.8% of all bachelor’s degrees are in 5 fields.**

**19.1% in business**

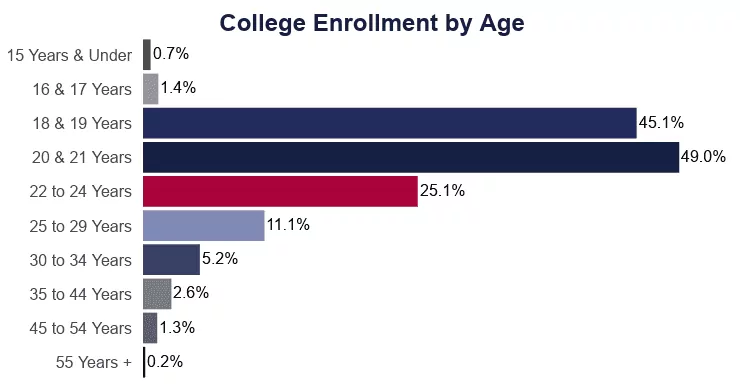
**11.9% in health professions and related studies**

**8% in social sciences and history**

**5.9% in psychology**

**5.9% in biological and biomedical sciences**

**12 million or 55.2% of college students are White or Caucasian.**

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**Trends: (Source: InsideTrack.org)**

**1. The need for student crisis support continues to escalate.**

**In a survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on mental health during the pandemic, 25.5 percent of respondents aged 18 to 24 reported that they had seriously considered suicide. Roughly one-quarter of this same group said they had increased their substance usage to cope with the pandemic.**

**2. Online learning experiences - Expect online learning to take a higher Ed pie, even after Covid-19**

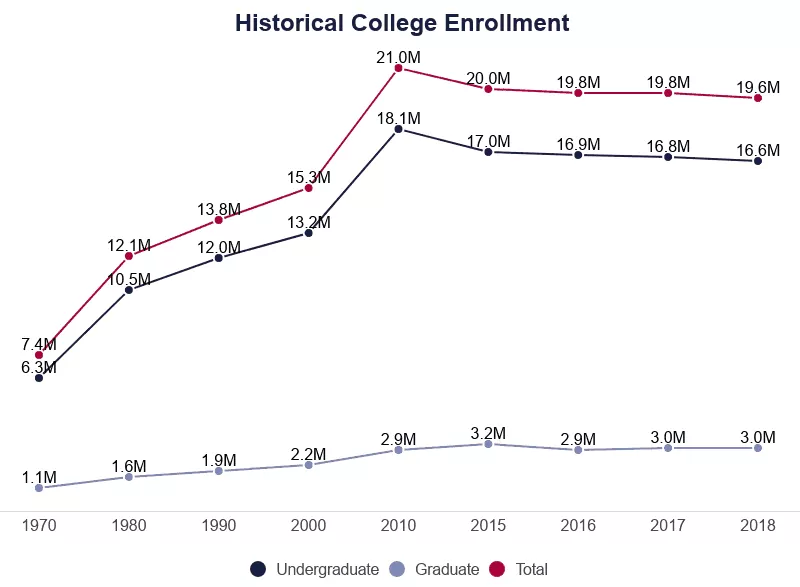
**3. Competition with nanodegrees and skills training**

**According to a 2020 Strada Education Network survey of more than 25,000 responses, only 17 percent of adult learners believe additional education will be worth the cost, compared to 37 percent in 2019. In the same survey, just 24 percent believed additional education will make them an attractive job candidate to potential employers and help get them a good job, down from 56 percent the year before. Since the pandemic began, adult learners are opting for quicker, less expensive nondegree credentials (39 percent) and skills training (24 percent) over the traditional bachelor’s degree (11 percent).**

**4. Adding a three-year college degree to the mix at four-year institutions.**

**Challenges:**

**- College enrollment is going down through the years (Source: EducationData.org)**

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**- COVID-19 Impact: Not only are universities forced to transition all on-campus classes to a virtual setting, but they are also faced with concerns around enrollment, finances, and student support.**

**- Decreased State Funding: Multi-year decreased state funding for public institutions and community colleges has resulted in reduced critical services for students, putting significant strain on institutions.**

**- Tuition costs are too high for students, continuing to worsen the $1.56 trillion student debt that plagues the US as of September 2020.**

**Opportunities:**

**- Skills Gap: 64 percent of surveyed employers said that their organization has a skills gap. This is an opportunity for universities to work with businesses to develop courses and programs that prepare workers for highly valued roles. (Source: Wiley Education)**

**- AI Will Personalize the Student Journey: Administrators should explore the variety of benefits AI offers and identify ways to tailor student support for every step of their journey.**

**- Make online education a more complete and immersive experience to reduce university costs, overheads and consequently helping reduce the student debt as well.**

**- Emergence of new technologies at a rapid pace allows colleges to create new degree programs targeting specific domains of technology. The emergence of machine learning degree programs in the last few years is a prime example. This can be extrapolated to computer systems, autonomous vehicles etc having their own degree programs.**

Abhinaav:

**Fertile Land: College Degree Program**

**The following information was taken from multiple secondary sources and try to give a holistic picture of the given fertile land.**

**Degree Programs**

**An academic degree is a qualification awarded to students upon successful completion of a course of study in higher education, usually at a college or university. These institutions commonly offer degrees at various levels, usually including bachelor's, master's and doctorates, often alongside other academic certificates and professional degrees. The most common undergraduate degree is the bachelor's degree, although in some countries there are lower level higher education qualifications that are also titled degrees.**

**Program Administrators**

**College administrators make recommendations about admissions; oversee the disbursement of university materials; plan curricula; oversee all budgets from payroll to maintenance of the physical plant; supervise personnel; keep track of university records (everything from student transcripts to library archives); and help students navigate the university bureaucracy for financial aid, housing, job placement, alumni development, and all the other services a college provides.**

**Many administrators eventually specialize in one field, such as financial aid, in which responsibilities include the preparation and maintenance of financial records and student counseling about financial aid. Specialists in information management are responsible for coordinating and producing the majority of university publications.**

**Administrators who specialize in student affairs (sometimes referred to as student services) deal with residence life, student activities, career services, athletic administration, service learning, health education, and counseling. Competition begins with the onset of a specialization. At upper levels, a graduate degree in education, business, student personnel administration, counseling, or information management is required. The hours increase, and administrators spend even more time away from the office at university events or other schools.**

**Requirements to be an academic program director**

**There are stringent academic requirements for positions as college administrators. While entry-level positions in financial aid offices, registrar’s offices, and admissions and academic offices often require only a bachelor’s degree, a PhD or an EdD is standard among those who hold influential positions in college administrations. Candidates for administrative positions should have good managerial instincts, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to work effectively with faculty and students. People involved in the financial aspects of administration, including administering financial aid, should have significant statistics backgrounds and mathematical skills. Computer proficiency is necessary at all levels. Universities are just that: miniature universes. Most of their administrations involve all functions of a big corporation, even a small city, within the larger community in which they are located. A person can work for the same university for 20 years and have 20 different jobs during that time!**

**Present and Future**

**In 1865, the average-sized university in the United States employed approximately four administrators for all its students.**

**By 1965, the average administrative staff at a United States university averaged more than 225 people. Today the number is closer to 500 employees.**

**The number of administrators at a university depends on funding, except for admissions offices, which exist nearly independently of funding decisions.**

**As state education budgets wax and wane, the number of jobs available at publicly funded schools (roughly 25 percent of all institutions of higher education in the United States) varies.**

**5 years out**

**University administrators break into two tracks at the five-year point. People who are happy with their positions frequently begin taking classes at the university that employs them. Administrators who enjoy the profession but dislike their positions aggressively pursue other university administration positions. The majority of position switching among university administrators happens in years three to seven. Geographical mobility is frequently a factor in obtaining the best opportunities.**

**10 years out**

**Ten-year veterans have supervisory authority and administrative responsibility. Many administrators have complete responsibility for the administration of substantial budgets and become more personnel managers than student advocates, a trend that may explain the sag that occurs between years 7 and 11 in terms of satisfaction. Pay increases; the hours remain stable.**

**How To Become a Program Administrator**

**If you're interested in becoming a program administrator, one of the first things to consider is how much education you need. We've determined that 57.9% of program administrators have a bachelor's degree. In terms of higher education levels, we found that 15.8% of program administrators have master's degrees. Even though most program administrators have a college degree, it's possible to become one with only a high school degree or GED.**

**Choosing the right major is always an important step when researching how to become a program administrator. When we researched the most common majors for a program administrator, we found that they most commonly earn bachelor's degree degrees or master's degree degrees. Other degrees that we often see on program administrator resumes include associate degree degrees or high school diploma degrees.**

**You may find that experience in other jobs will help you become a program administrator. In fact, many program administrator jobs require experience in a role such as administrative assistant. Meanwhile, many program administrators also have previous career experience in roles such as internship or program coordinator.**

**Challenges for Program Administrators**

**1. Construction and Repair**

**Most colleges and universities are coping with increasing numbers of students, evolving programs and aging facilities. That means many schools will be constructing new buildings and sprucing up old facilities in the near future to help attract the best and brightest students.**

**2. Funding**

**To accommodate more students, as well as add the variety of programs required to meet diverse desires, colleges and universities need funding to pay for improvements.**

**3. Housing**

**Colleges and universities have to offer housing that consists of more than just a bed and a desk. Students want the comforts of home in their residence halls, and schools are building new residence halls and renovating old housing to provide more amenities.**

**4. Improving the Learning Environment**

**Students are more likely to perform well in conditions that are conducive to learning, so colleges and universities that provide these kinds of environments will be more successful in attracting students.**

**Links:**

[**https://www.princetonreview.com/careers/40/college-administrator**](https://www.princetonreview.com/careers/40/college-administrator)

[**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic\_degree**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_degree)

[**https://www.zippia.com/program-administrator-jobs/**](https://www.zippia.com/program-administrator-jobs/)

[**https://www.asumag.com/planning-design/facility-planning/article/20851194/top-ten-issues-impacting-college-administrators**](https://www.asumag.com/planning-design/facility-planning/article/20851194/top-ten-issues-impacting-college-administrators)