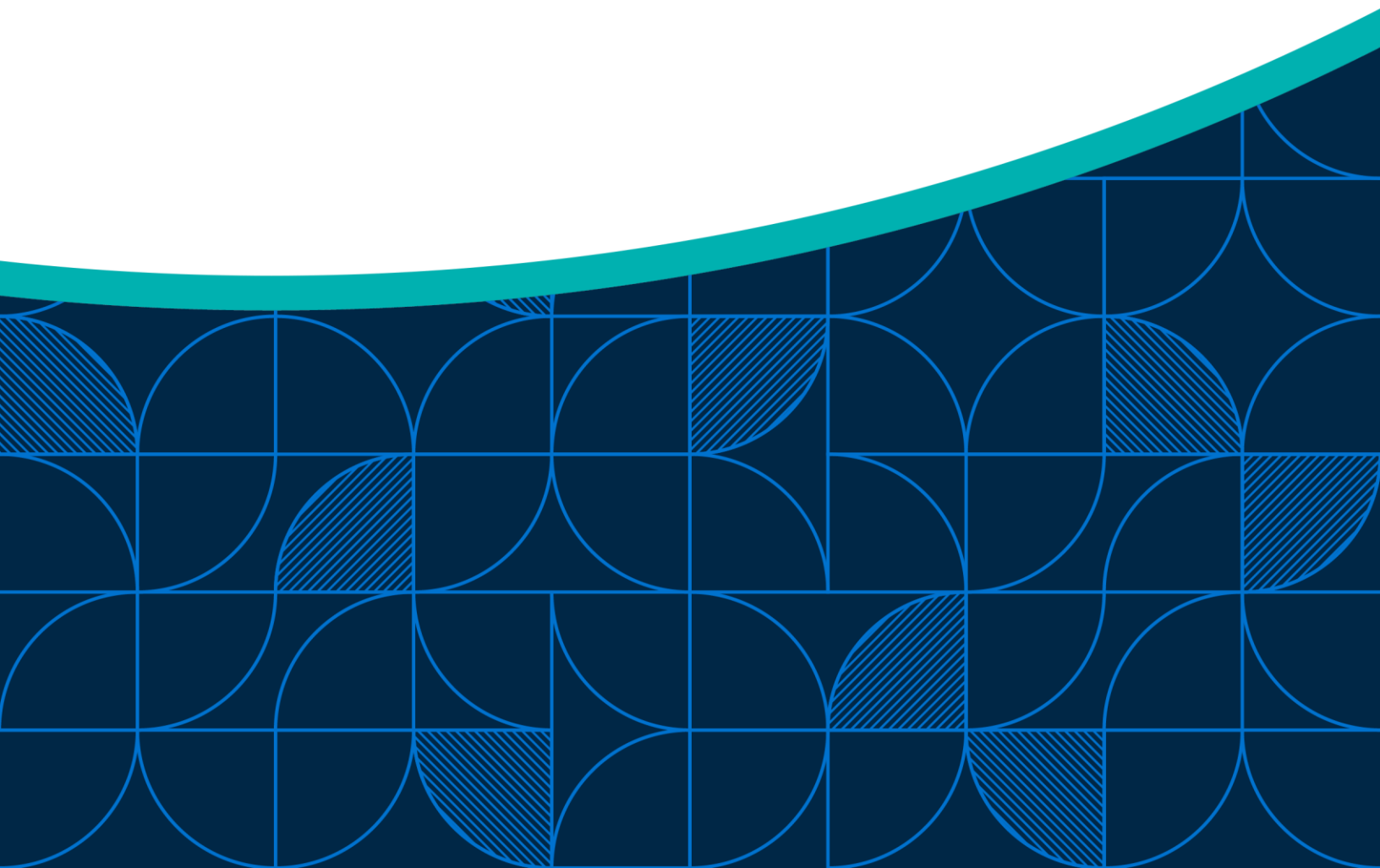
EAB

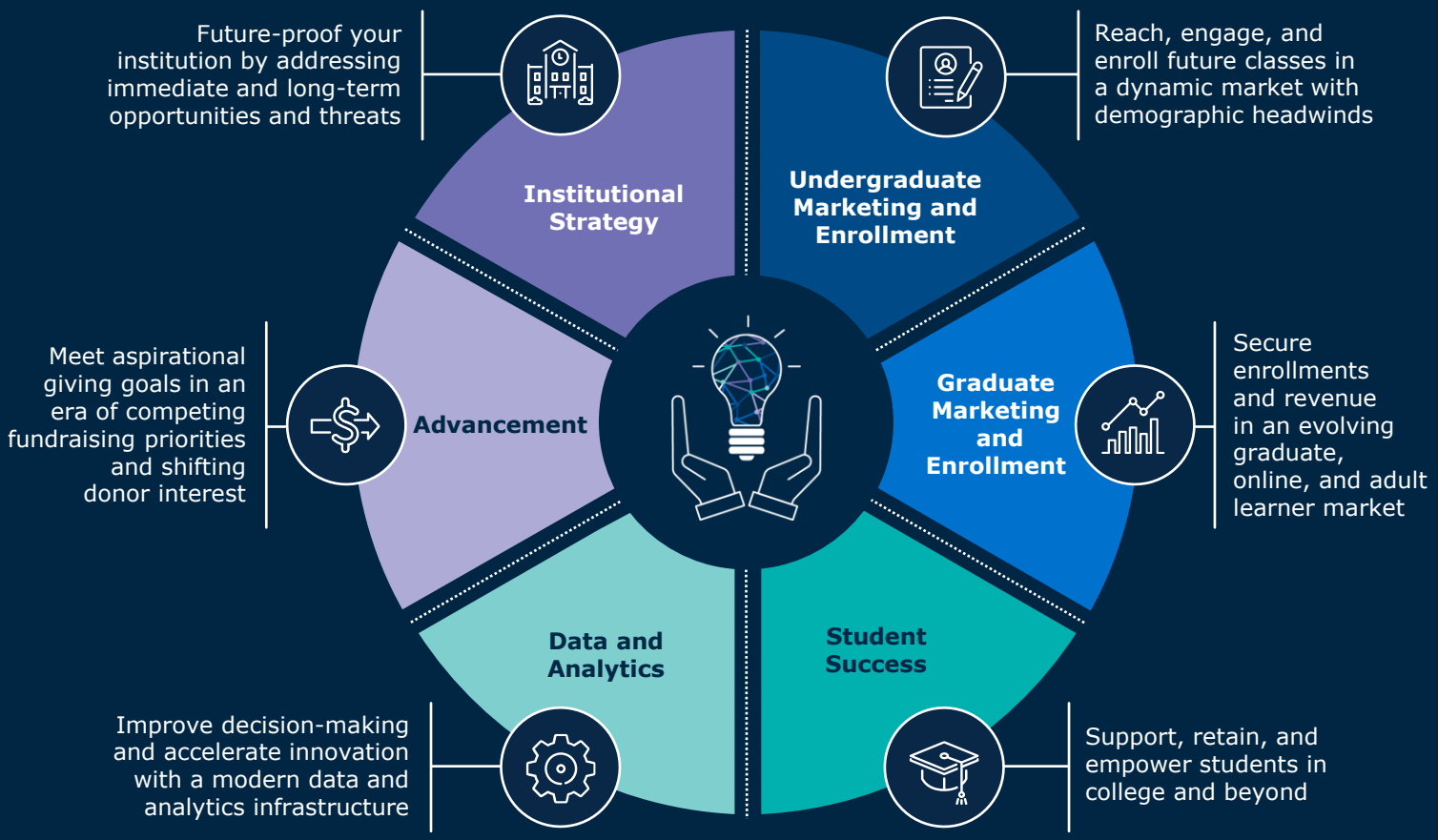
AUDIT

Information Technology Organizational Chart Audit



Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive

Insight-Powered Solutions for Your Top Priorities and Toughest Challenges



We partner with 2,800+ institutions to accelerate progress, deliver results, and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.

Table of Contents

Organizational Trends Across Higher Ed. 4

Takeaways from Peer Analysis. 5

Appendix A: Methodology 12

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Overview of Organizational Trends Across Higher Ed

Information Technology at the Core of Institution-Wide Technology and Sector Shifts

IT has long been positioned as a utility in higher education, and their structures often reflected that role. Today, rising AI expectations, cost pressures, and cloud migration are catalyzing reevaluation and redesign of IT organizations to serve as **strategic and service-oriented campus partners.**

Still, while 43% of presidents rank digital transformation as a top priority, only **16%** of IT leaders say **IT staffing meets needs** and 42% of institutions expect **IT budget cuts** in 2025–26.

Top Drivers of IT Organizational Change

1

Demand for AI-Enablement
- Proliferation of AI tools requires CIOs to support experimentation, build literacy, and drive efficiency
- Immature and shifting vendor landscape complicates campus adoption of AI tools

2

Increasing IT Cost Pressures
- IT funding models still built for one-time projects and fail to address recurring cloud licensing costs
- Vendors increasingly use AI to raise licensing costs through add-ons and usage charges

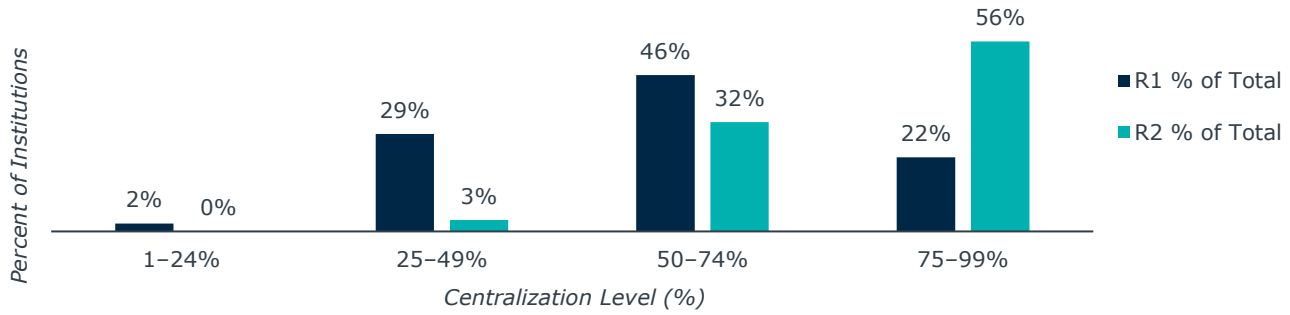
3

Accelerating Cloud Migration
- 88% of institutions planned to migrate major applications to the cloud by 2025
- Increasing emphasis on vendor and cloud management, system onboarding, and adoption

Institutions Increasingly Centralizing IT, but Majority of R1s Rely on Decentralized IT Support

EDUCAUSE, IT Centralization Levels at R1s and R2s; R1 n = 87; R2 n = 59

These drivers are reshaping not only IT priorities but also how centralized IT functions are. Overly decentralized IT models hurt central IT's visibility into campus problems and its ability to coordinate scaled initiatives. As such, **two-thirds** of institutions in 2024 operate **at least 75% centralized**. Among research universities, centralization levels diverge sharply. 56% of R2s are 75–99% centralized, compared with just 22% of R1s.



Emerging Trends Reshaping IT Organizations

Focus on Strengthening Security Function, But Staffing Shortages Persist

Renewed Emphasis on IT PM[1] and BA[2] Teams to Facilitate Campus Partnership

Short-term Repositioning is Solidifying Into Permanent AI Roles and Structures

1) Project management.
2) Business analyst.

Source: C Herridge, IT Centralization Patterns, *EDUCAUSE Review*, August 5, 2024; M McCormack, EDUCAUSE QuickPoll Results: Technology Budgets, *EDUCAUSE Review*, April 21, 2025; M McCormack, 2025 EDUCAUSE Technology Leadership Workforce, *EDUCAUSE*, July 21, 2025; A McIntosh, Higher Ed Institutions Want Increased, *EdTech Magazine*, October 11, 2024; EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Key Takeaways From Peer Analysis

Executive Summary

Introduction to the Information Technology Organizational Chart Analysis

This section provides an analysis of the audited institution's information technology services organizational chart, including a comparison with peer institutions. The assessment examines reporting structures, functional responsibilities, and alignment with emerging priorities across the higher education IT sector.

Strengths

- The audited institution has a comprehensive cybersecurity organization, with more IAM, analyst/engineering, and GRC roles than many of its peers.
- The audited institution maintains a stronger IT workforce management capacity than peers, with dedicated roles supporting staff development. This positions the audited institution well to upskill its IT workforce in the face of AI demands.
- The strategy office is well-positioned to spearhead AI initiatives, but the audited institution should consider investing in an AI strategy or coordinator role to steward projects with existing capacity.
- The audited institution's hosting services are closely aligned with how most of its peers structure their infrastructure operations. However, some peers have opted to include IAM within their infrastructure operations verticals.

Opportunities

- The audited institution does not provide as much central IT support for student applications as peers and should more clearly dedicate and delineate responsibilities for student application improvements
- The audited institution's IT lacks clear data governance ownership capacity compared to peers; consider investing in a dedicated data governance role or clarifying IT responsibility within the data governance program

The remainder of this report provides feedback on the current and future structure of the IT organization for the audited institution in comparison to peer institutions (see Appendix A for methodology).

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

Audited Institution's IT Staff as Percentage of Employees Behind Peers

Audited Institution's Central IT Staff as Percentage of Total Employee FTEs Less Than Peers

Professional central IT staff FTEs account for 3.6% of the audited institution's employee FTEs. Among peer institutions with available data, the median is 4.5%. According to EDUCAUSE, institutions of a similar size (8,000-14,999 student FTEs) report a median of 4% of total employee FTEs in professional central IT roles.

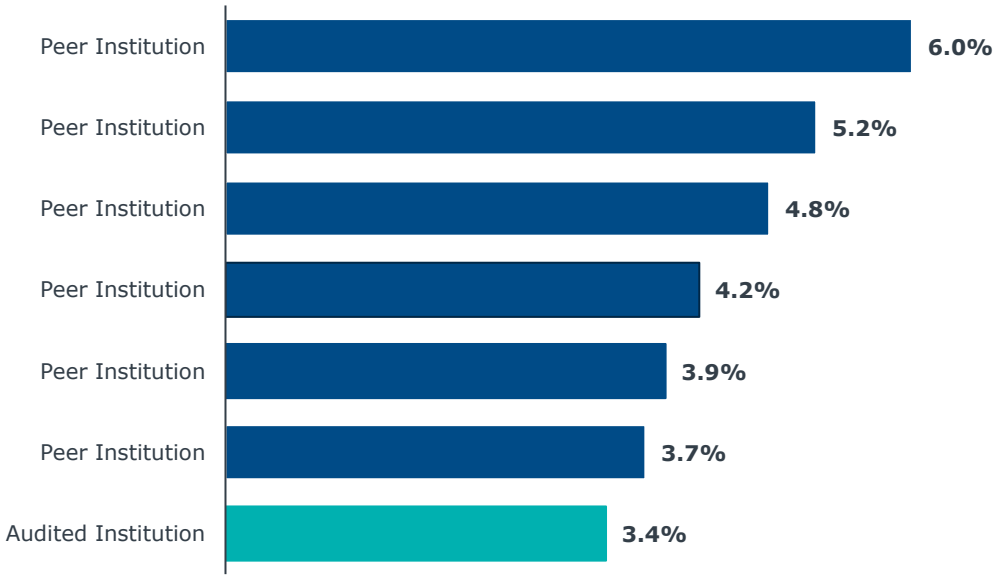
3.6
Audited Institution's IT Staff per 100 Employee FTEs

4.5
Peer Central IT Staff per 100 Employee FTEs

4
Size Class Central IT Staff FTEs per 100 Employees[1]

Peer Professional Central IT Staff Make up a Median of 4.5% of Total Employee FTEs

Percentage of Central IT Staff FTEs Among Total Institutional Employee FTEs



1) EDUCAUSE rounds percentages to the nearest whole number.

Source: "2025 CDS Interactive Almanac | IT Spending and Staffing," *EDUCAUSE*, September 8, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

Audit Institution's IT Staff to Student Ratio on Par with Peers

Audit Institution's Central IT Staff FTE to Student FTE Ratio Similar to Peers

For every 1,000 student FTEs, the audited institution employs 17.1 professional, central IT staff FTEs. Peers report a median of 21.4 professional central IT staff FTEs for every 1,000 student FTEs. According to EDUCAUSE, institutions with 8,000-14,999 full-time equivalent students report a median of 8.4 professional central IT staff FTEs for every 1,000 student FTEs.

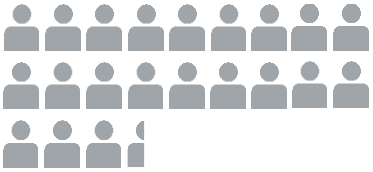
17.1

Audited Institution's IT Staff FTEs per 1,000 Student FTEs



21.4

Select Peer IT Staff FTEs per 1,000 Student FTEs



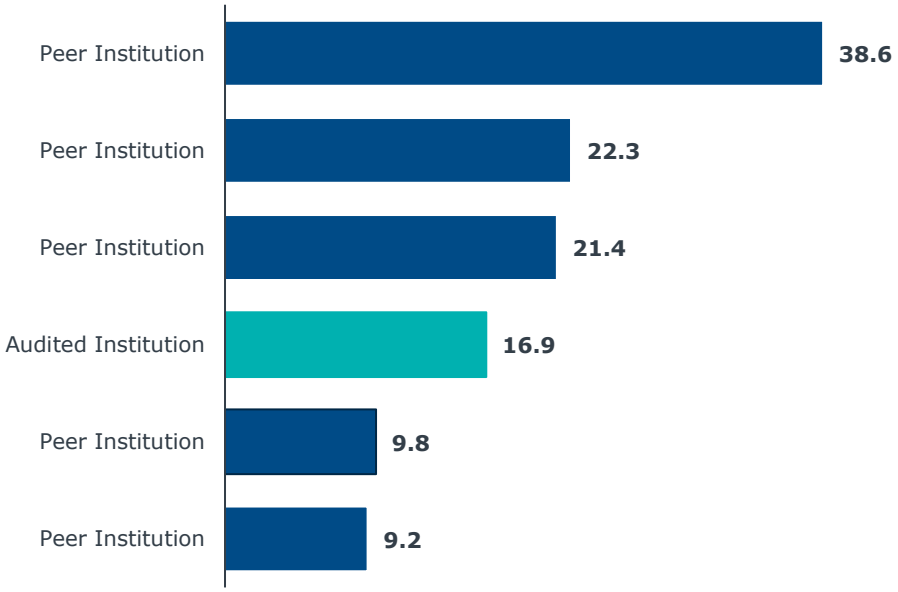
8.4

Size Class IT Staff FTEs per 1,000 Student FTEs



Peer Organizations Employ a Median of 21.9 IT Staff FTEs Per 1,000 Student FTEs

Number of Professional, Central IT Staff FTEs per 1,000 Student FTEs



Across Higher Ed, Central IT Spend per Student Full-Time Equivalent Has Increased Slightly

EDUCAUSE reports that, for institutions with 8,000-14,999 full-time equivalent students, the median central IT spending per student FTE increased from $1,000 to $2,000 across the fiscal years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. At institutions with 12,000 FTE students, this translates to a $12,000,000 increase in central IT spending.

Although the latest data does not yet reflect substantial budget and staffing decreases seen across U.S. higher education in 2024-2025, institutions should consider how to maintain sustainable staff spending levels compared to peers despite escalating technology licensing fees. Please note that these analyses do not account for differences in distribution of central versus non-central total IT staffing across institutions.

1) EDUCAUSE rounds percentages to the nearest whole number.

Source: "2025 CDS Interactive Almanac | IT Spending and Staffing," *EDUCAUSE*, September 8, 2025; EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

Audited Institution's CIO Role Is As Elevated As Peers

Audited Institution's CIO Reports to Highest-Level Administrative Officer, Which Is Similar Elevation to Peers

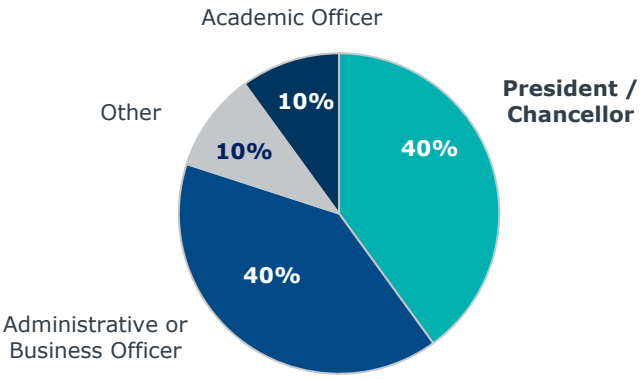
The audited institution's CIO reports to the highest-ranking administrative or business officer role at the audited institution. Most senior IT executives at peer institutions report directly to the highest university executive (president or chancellor)/highest-ranking administrative or business officer. CIOs at 4 out of 10 peer institutions report to the president or chancellor of their institution. Senior IT executives at four peer institutions, report to the highest-ranking administrative or business officer. Alternatively, the CIO at one peer institution reports jointly to the Provost and Vice President of Operations.

Many Peer CIOs Report Directly to the Highest University Executive

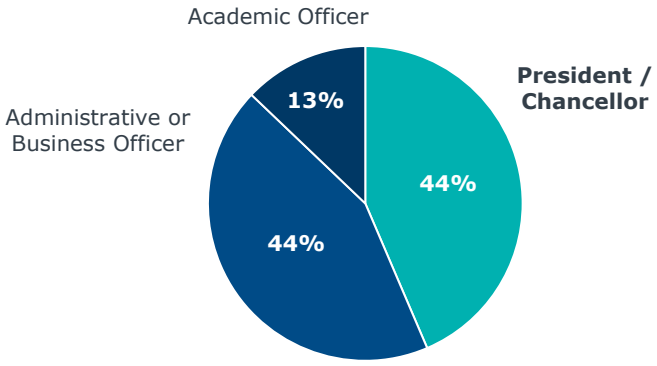
Proportion of CIOs that Report Directly to Different Executive Officers

EAB Analysis of Peer Institution CIO Direct Reporting Lines

n =10



EDUCAUSE Analysis of CIO Reporting Lines for Institutions with 8,000-14,999 Students[1]



Many Higher Education CIOs Remain on the Outskirts of Cabinet Conversations

The share of CIOs reporting directly to the president rose from 29% in 2019 to 39% in 2021. In fiscal year 2023-2024, 44% of CIOs at institutions with 8,000-14,999 student FTEs reported directly to their institution's president or chancellor. However, 71% of CIOs at institutions with 8,000-14,999 student FTEs are members of their president or chancellor's cabinet.

Source: "2025 CDS Interactive Almanac | IT Spending and Staffing," *EDUCAUSE*, September 8, 2025; Herridge, Curt, "IT Centralization Patterns and CIO Reporting: An Update," *EDUCAUSE*, August 5, 2024. EAB interviews and analysis.

1) Student FTEs

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

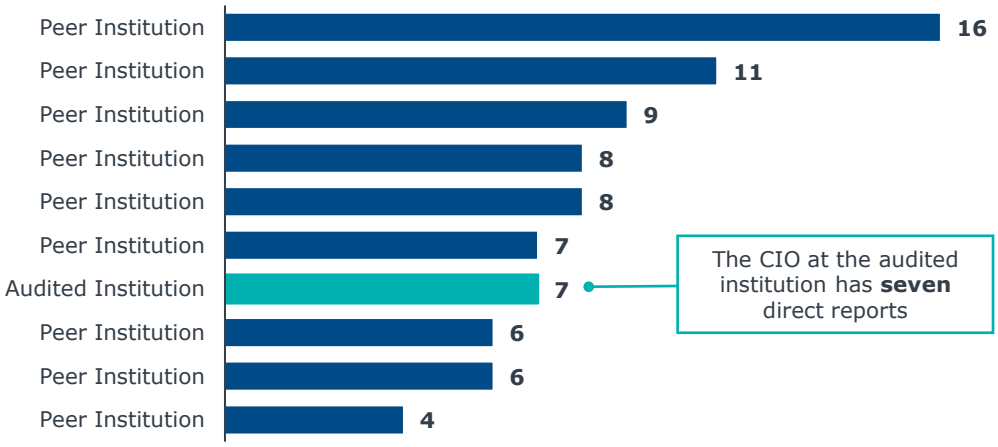
The audited institution's CIO Has a Number of Direct Reports Similar to Peers

The CIOs at peer organizations have a median of eight direct reports. Number of direct reports to the CIO at peer institutions range from four to 16. The CIO at the audited institution has **seven** direct reports, one less than the peer institution median.

CIOs' direct reports commonly include leaders of units of infrastructure, applications development, client/end-user support, information security (CISO), and internal operations support (Office of the CIO).

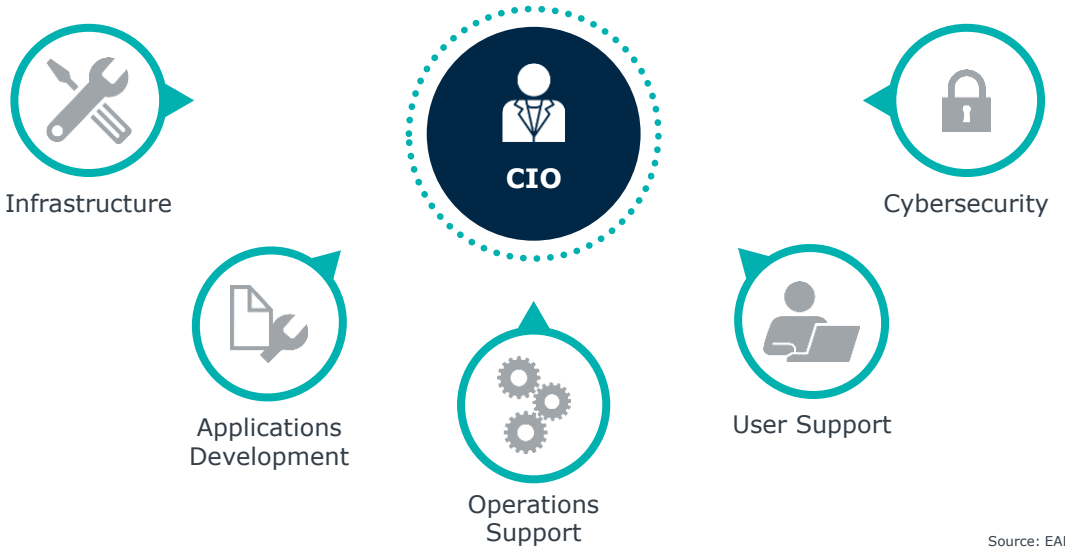
Peer Institution CIOs Have a Median of Eight Direct Reports

Number of Direct Reports to the CIO



Key Functional Areas within the IT Unit Report to the CIO

Top Five Functions Reporting to the CIO, Based on Peer Institutions



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

The strategic office is well-positioned to spearhead AI initiatives, but the audited institution should consider investing in an AI strategy or coordinator role to steward projects with existing capacity. Because the strategic office includes teams and skillsets ranging from data architecture and engineering to change management, it is particularly suited to spearhead AI innovation designed to scale. However, it currently lacks the AI strategy or coordinator role that can help prioritize and manage time among engineers and architects in the office to kickstart and sustain projects. Simply incorporating AI into an existing project management staff's title would signal that it is a formal expectation of the role.

A growing number of peer institutions are beginning to hire new staff or change existing staff roles to specifically include AI or emerging technologies-focused responsibilities.

The audited institution's hosting services is closely aligned with how most of its peers structure their infrastructure operations. Some peers have opted to include IAM within infrastructure operations verticals. The majority of the audited institution's peers also organize hosting services to include cloud services, open systems and storage, and data center operations. However, a select few organize IAM closely within hosting service. There is not necessarily a preferred approach; both offer potential benefits and tradeoffs.

- Benefits:
  - Tighter integration with core systems through direct alignment with cloud, directory services, and endpoint systems, etc.
  - Since infrastructure teams already own these systems, this leads to faster execution, less friction in provisioning/deprovisioning, and more automated identity lifecycle management
- Tradeoffs:
  - Weaker separation of duties, as combining system ownership and access control increases risk concentration
  - Identity governance may become underdeveloped; IAM is not just tooling, it includes role design, entitlement reviews, etc., which infrastructure-led models may underinvest in

The audited institution's model of primarily offering faculty research support through a research computing center is different than most of its peers, who maintain central IT teams for research support.

The IT department lacks clear data governance ownership capacity compared to peers; consider investing in a dedicated data governance role or clarifying IT responsibility within the data governance program. While the data office manages the audited institution's data governance program and works closely with IT, it is unclear in the IT org chart whether specific roles have been designated to work with the data office or provide IT representation in data governance. This is an opportunity for IT to take more ownership of data governance, especially since provost-reporting IR shops don't always focus on the full scope of data needs in areas like AI and admin efficiency.

The audited institution should consider designating responsibility for data strategy/governance within the IT department. Peers have established explicit ownership and roles to cover data strategy and/or governance:

Peer CIOs are also investing in analytics capacity within IT. The audited institution's IT office supports capacity for analytics by maintaining architecture and engineering within its strategic office. However, given the growing strategic importance of analytics, several peers have begun further consolidating analytics functions within central IT. This mirrors a broader higher education trend in which CIOs are investing in analytics capacity to better support and leverage institutional data for future decision-making and AI initiatives.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Takeaways from Peer Analysis

The audited institution does not provide as much central IT support for student applications as peers and should more clearly dedicate and delineate responsibilities for student system improvements. The audited institution maintains staff-facing, software-specific administration. However, it is unclear in the IT org chart who within application development is focused on supporting/improving student-facing applications.

The central IT service desk does help troubleshoot issues with student-facing applications, but students still crave more ongoing, remote technical support.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.

Appendix A: Methodology

Analysis of Core Cybersecurity Functions for 50+ Higher Education IT Organizational Charts

EAB reviewed IT organizational charts from more than 50 higher education institutions to assess the explicit presence of core cybersecurity functions. Functions were coded as "present" only if they were clearly identified on the org chart (for example, a CISO, director, office, or unit explicitly labeled IAM, SOC, GRC, Privacy, or Research Security). Counts represent the number of institutions where each function was explicitly named, allowing us to compare the relative prevalence of operational security functions (IAM, SOC, Security Architecture) versus governance and oversight functions (GRC, Privacy, Awareness & Training, Research Security).

Compliance is the Most Established Security Function for R1s, But Remains the Area With the Most Skill Shortages

EAB reviewed IT organizational charts from 27 universities to assess the explicit presence of four core cybersecurity functions: Identity and Access Management (IAM), Security Operations/Incident Response (SOC/IR), Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC), and Privacy. A function was coded as "present" only if it was clearly identified on the org chart (for example, a director, office, or unit explicitly labeled SOC, IAM, GRC, or Privacy). Percentages represent the share of the 27 institutions where each function was explicitly named.

Peer Institution Selection

EAB selected 10 peer institutions with publicly available IT organizational charts to benchmark against the audit institution. For the purposes of this audit, EAB prioritized including institutions for analysis that shared the following characteristics with the audit institution: control/affiliation (public or private), Carnegie classification, total student enrollment[1], and location by state when possible, or the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) region. EAB referred to institutional data publicized on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for institutional classification, location, student enrollment, and employee headcount data. For the purposes of staff full-time equivalent, we count each reported part-time employee as 0.33 FTE. For consistency with the most recently available EDUCAUSE benchmarks, the most recently published data from IPEDS we use is based on the 2023-2024 academic year.

Peer Organizational Chart and Staffing Analysis

The analysis focuses on key and emerging functions, as well as the overall IT organizational structure of the audit institution compared to peer institutions. Findings reflect patterns in how peer institutions organize these functions and where the audit institution's structure aligns or differs.

To conduct this audit, EAB relied on publicly available information including data sourced from IPEDS[2] and directly from higher education institutions' IT organizational charts and directories. Additionally, EAB incorporated research from EDUCAUSE to augment the analysis and contextualize the benchmarking results.

Note, some of the publicly available information in this report may be incomplete or outdated. EAB selected higher education institutions with the most complete and up-to-date information possible to provide a representative sample. Many IT organizational charts do not reflect staffing levels beyond managerial levels. To address this discrepancy between staffing and roles represented on the organizational chart versus in practice, EAB cross-referenced IT organizational charts, IT staff websites, and related LinkedIn profiles to get the most complete picture of current IT staffing levels and roles at peer institutions. When an institution do not publicize enough information to determine central IT staff headcount, they were excluded from the analysis. When analyzing an institution's IT organizational chart, vacant positions were included in all calculations and student employee positions were not included.

In this audit, EAB defines Chief Information Officer (CIO) as any leader of the central IT unit including the CIO, Vice President of IT, Vice Provost of IT, etc.

1) Unduplicated 12-month total student FTE (2023-2024) from IPEDS.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis.

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved.



202-747-1000 | **eab.com**

@eab **@eab_** **@WeAreEAB** **@eab.life**

ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with thousands of institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across five major areas: enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.