

KSU'S SAS Initiative in Enterprise Information Management

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Two Key Performance Objectives for Information Management and Technology

Information management and technology at KSU are expected to add value at two critical levels of performance:

Level 1 Performance. Support efficient automation of essential routine operations such as employment and payroll processing, financial accounting, student admissions, course registration, financial aid management and related Web-based transactions (i.e., support operational database “applications”) -- ESS leads

Level 2 Performance. Facilitate the establishment of accessible, accurate and reliable systems for information generation to support reporting, planning, decision-making, strategic management, and organizational effectiveness (i.e., support “information reporting and management,” “enterprise intelligence” and “analytics”) -- EIM leads

Only Routine Operations Are Served Reasonably Well by Current Packages

KSU's Banner, PeopleSoft, and ADP systems are highly complex commercial software packages that focus primarily on Level 1 applications. They perform essential routine operations in student records, accounting, employment, and payroll reasonably well. Their vendors tout the capabilities of these systems to communicate with one another and serve as important Level 2 sources of decision-support information. However, those claims are not easily or routinely realized. The Banner, PeopleSoft, and ADP systems are weak in support of enterprise intelligence and analytics. They are often negatively characterized as “data jails” because the data they capture are not easily accessed, edited, extracted, transformed, analyzed, or reported and are often neither standardized nor “clean.” Queries are cumbersome, complex, and require technical intervention. KSU's considerable efforts over the past five years to use those systems for the creation of a data warehouse, data marts, operational and analytical reports and enterprise intelligence have yielded disappointing results. KSU's CIO and EIM professionals have concluded that although Banner, PeopleSoft, and ADP applications add value for routine university operations at Level 1, practical and cost-effective solutions for responding to the university's demands for data integrity, data integration, enterprise intelligence and analytics at Level 2 are not likely to evolve from those particular database systems and tools.

KSU's SAS Initiative for Enterprise Intelligence and Analytics

KSU's SAS Initiative aims to establish a practical and cost-effective alternative to meeting institutional demands for enterprise intelligence and self-service analytics at Level 2. In 2007, EIM acquired and installed the core components of the SAS Enterprise Intelligence Suite for Education (EISE). EISE is not a package that performs Level 1 operations. Instead, it is an

enterprise data warehousing and intelligence platform that is designed primarily to address Level 2 interests. The EISE platform overlays and interfaces with diverse application platforms, silo operations, and niche software tools such as our existing Banner, PeopleSoft, and ADP applications. It integrates and stores enterprise data in a unified data model and metadata repository that reinforces data integrity and efficiently disseminates descriptive and predictive decision-support analyses through dashboards and self-service ad hoc reports to the desktops of end-users with little or no technical jargon or programming. SAS is a recognized industry leader in business intelligence and analytics. Other early adopters in higher education of the SAS EISE platform include the University of Central Florida, University of Kansas, the Virginia Community College System, Broward Community College in Florida, and Slippery Rock University. Most of those institutions have integrated the SAS EISE with their existing PeopleSoft applications. KSU's EIM team integrated the SAS EISE with the existing Banner database. Acquisition of the Financial Intelligence, Human Capital Intelligence, and Strategy Management modules has begun to facilitate integration of the PeopleSoft databases (or their successors) with KSU's enterprise data warehouse. Even without the SAS FI, HCI, and SM modules, the present SAS EISE platform can be utilized to provide self-service data extraction and reporting functions from KSU's existing operational databases without the necessity of technical programming at the user level. KSU's SAS Initiative has substantial potential to address successfully the institution's Level 2 needs and could produce a proof of concept and scalable prototype for addressing Level 2 interests throughout the University System of Georgia.