



Erik Bowe, Director of Data Warehousing

Kennesaw State University saves time and effort by liberating operational data with SAS®

Industry

Education

Business Issue

Create an enterprisewide platform to pull in data from multiple sources and allow business users to access that data.

Solution

SAS® Enterprise Intelligence Suite for Education

Benefits

Business users can instantly access information instead of waiting a week for IT to create a report. IT is freed from producing reports for business users and can concentrate on more advanced analytics.

With SAS Enterprise Intelligence Suite for Education, administrators at Kennesaw State University (KSU) don't need to request data from the IT staff. Instead, they can directly access the information they need to plan classes, develop budgets and track students. The IT staff is freed to look at the big picture and help the university hold down administrative expenses.

Kennesaw State University is the third-largest university in Georgia, with more than 22,000 students. Located outside of Atlanta, the rapidly growing university plays a key role in educating Georgia's future nurses, teachers and business leaders. But like so many universities, KSU kept its information jailed in one of the university's three ERP systems or isolated in desktops across the campus. Depending on how a request was written, a dean could get two wildly different numbers for a question like "How many sophomores are majoring in English?"

"Before SAS Enterprise Intelligence was implemented, there was no integrated database as well as no uniform set of reporting tools on campus," explains Erik Bowe, Director of Data Warehousing. "Data was left in data jails where we couldn't easily access, edit, extract, transform or analyze data." Added Bowe: "Many of our users had some mistrust about IT-generated reports." Meanwhile, when the IT professionals weren't answering basic queries, they were bogged down writing code to answer what-if questions. Questions like "What if we expanded a major – how

would that impact our budget?" were so difficult and time-consuming to work on that IT could only manage a limited number a year.

KSU's SAS initiative filled the void by providing the university with an enterprisewide platform that could draw from all the ERPs and other databases critical to the university, such as SunGard Higher Education Banner, PeopleSoft Managed Faculty Events and PeopleSoft Financials. "We had used reporting tools over the years that required a lot of expensive IT talent. Many of the tools lacked a complete information reporting life cycle," Bowe says. "SAS was the only vendor that addressed the entire life cycle and had tools that were robust enough for each stage as well as user skill level."



Information in the hands of business users

With SAS, KSU's enterprise reporting group condensed 320 Oracle-based student information reports into 89 reports in nine categories, corresponding to the main business functions of the university. These reports are easily accessible to approximately 230 users on campus, predominantly deans, department chairs, professors and administrative unit directors. Previously, business users would need to request reports from IT or Institutional Research – and wait one to two weeks. If they

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Director of Data Warehousing
Enterprise Information Management

realized after getting the report that they didn't ask the right question, it would take a few days to make revisions. Now users can pull up and change an enrollment report as needed, and drill down by department, major, or any of several other parameters. Confidence in reports has risen because business users are in control of the reporting function.

Administrators use the capability in multiple ways:

- Enrollment management: The school can check majors for admitted students to make sure enough entry-level classes are offered in those majors.
- Degree requirement tracking: Some majors require a student to take a concentration in a specific area. Department heads can easily find students not meeting those requirements and work directly with the registrar to make sure they are placed in the correct concentration.
- Retention efforts: Retention, progression and graduation rates are tracked by various cohorts to identify at-risk students. This effort resulted in keeping enrollment and program completion numbers up.
- Data exporting: Business users can export data to desktop products like Microsoft Excel without IT support.

KSU business users have employed their newfound data access to identify

the root causes of many different situations on campus. Business users are happy with their access. “By working with information maps and SAS Web Report Studio we are able to surface data in terms culturally familiar to Kennesaw staff,” Bowe adds. And because information is stored centrally, a department doesn't have to worry about a critical report or report template getting erased accidentally when a staffer leaves for another job.

Asking more advanced questions

Now that business users can find their own answers to basic questions, they've begun to think in broader terms. And with an IT department freed from both producing basic reports and needing to program to create reports, IT is available to help. “We've shifted our focus from report writing to assisting people in getting the right data out of those reports,” Bowe says. “And our users are coming to us with more complex questions.” Bowe's group was recently able to create some sophisticated revenue impact reporting around student waivers and a Guaranteed Tuition Program (GTP) that locked the price of tuition at the level it's at when a student enters the university. With SAS, the university was better able to understand how waivers and the GTP program impacted the budget.

Bowe is also able to spend more of his time looking at the bigger picture. “I can focus on data governance and perfor-

mance aspects of our system.” He can also work on strengthening KSU's enterprise information management assets with business unit needs.

Moving toward more sophisticated analytics

The next step for KSU is to bring online two additional SAS solutions, SAS Financial Management and SAS Human Capital Management. “We have business managers in every college on campus as well as several other units. For them to access financial data is a chore,” Bowe explains. In some cases, the financial data isn't kept in a consistent way, and individual snapshots of financial data reside on desktops across campus. With financial data liberated by SAS, business managers will have what they need, and Bowe's group can work on sophisticated analysis projects. For instance, there is interest in understanding how much it costs to educate a future nurse and whether nursing education should be expanded.

“We're able to get a whole lot more done with SAS, and a lot faster. And anyone, from a reporting analyst to one of my colleagues on campus, can get their own information without IT in the middle,” Bowe says.



SAS Institute Inc. World Headquarters +1 919 677 8000
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