

Blackboard and the University of Louisville



SOLUTION FOCUS: ASSESSMENT & ACCREDITATION

Challenges

The University of Louisville's College of Education and Human Development recently needed to prepare for continuing accreditations under NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and the Kentucky EPSB (Education Professional Standards Board). Far from viewing the process as merely a compliance exercise, the University recognized the benefits of accreditation for continuous improvement. "With today's economic situation, especially if you are a public institution, you must be effective stewards of your funding," says Robert Goldstein, Associate University Provost, Office of Academic Planning and Accountability. "An excellent way to do this is by establishing accountability and transparency through accreditation."

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) developed a conceptual framework detailing the knowledge, skills and dispositions that all CEHD candidates should know and be able to do as reflected through constructs of inquiry, action, and advocacy, which align with the University's Quality Enhance Plan. In addition to these core constructs, there are national and state standards that guide performance assessment of future and advanced educators.

"The University's College of Education and Human Development offers over fifty educator preparation programs for teacher candidates and other school professions," says Ann Larson, Vice Dean, College of Education and Human Development. "We needed a technology solution that would enable continuous performance assessments and monitor progress of each of our educator preparation candidates and educator preparation programs related to professional, state and content standards and the College's conceptual framework."

An IT specialist was initially hired to build the needed educator preparation candidate assessment system, load necessary candidate data into it, and develop assessment reports. "We soon found this approach to be unsustainable," says Goldstein. "The original design was a system that was not integrated with critical data sources and was developed based on the technological proficiencies of one person. We needed a solution that leveraged existing University information systems, particularly our Oracle® PeopleSoft® Campus Solutions ('PeopleSoft') ERP system."

Solution

The University of Louisville had already implemented the Blackboard Analytics module for student data warehousing, reporting and analytics, to help achieve improved performance in all aspects of student persistence and academic progression. "Our Blackboard Analytics Student Analytics Module already included seamless integration of data sourced from our PeopleSoft ERP

QUICK FACTS:

- Kentucky's premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university
- Fall 2009 enrollment: appx. 18,000 FTEs
- 12 academic schools and colleges
- College of Education and Human Development: 3,300 students enrolled in over 50 programs
- PeopleSoft Campus Solutions on Oracle DBMS



system,” says Goldstein. “We consulted with Blackboard Analytics as to how we could extend the Student Module to incorporate additional data needed for educator preparation candidate assessment.”

As a result of that review, Blackboard Analytics developed additional student assessment resources enabling accreditation for NCATE and other accreditation authorities. “Blackboard Analytics extended its integration with the PeopleSoft ERP database to include milestone functionality that already exists within PeopleSoft,” explains Goldstein.

The CEHD’s assessment system has received accolades from the state and national levels. Representatives in the unit have also been invited to present at conferences of the Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), NCATE, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) on the innovation represented in the system.

In addition to PeopleSoft data, the Blackboard Analytics platform allows for the capture of data collected from multiple assessment platforms, and then provides data to faculty and administrators for review of performance data on all educator preparation candidates. Blackboard Analytics now provides a way to view the status of a candidate in his/her program through a single interface.

“Instead of merely complying with assessment processes [such as just] checking off boxes and moving on, Blackboard Analytics empowers us with informative, comprehensive data that actually enables improvement of student programs.”

Robert Goldstein
Associate University Provost
University of Louisville

Impact of Blackboard Analytics at University of Louisville

“Blackboard Analytics gives us the ability to track educator preparation candidates from the time they are admitted to the time they exit their program, based upon key assessments defined for each program,” says Katherine Hunt, Assessment Coordinator, College of Education and Human Development. “By the time an educator preparation candidate graduates, we will have evidence that candidate has the knowledge, skills, and disposition essential for success.”

Blackboard Analytics pulls data directly from the PeopleSoft Student milestone module which allows for the monitoring of educator preparation candidates based on performance assessment within multiple phases of a program. “Milestone reporting is vital to continuous tracking of candidates,” says Hunt. “First, we can quickly identify if any evaluation scores are missing and ensure they are completed in a timely manner. We can then identify candidates whose performance in meeting specific milestones may need improvement. By identifying these candidates before they near the end of the program, we can work with them to achieve these milestones.”

“Blackboard Analytics helps the University monitor much more effectively than ever before why a candidate is not advancing as we would expect,” Hunt says. “We can then document the reasons why a candidate may not be transitioning and continue to monitor individual situations to ensure that we are providing the appropriate support. The ability to identify candidates who are not transitioning is also crucial in ensuring that our system always has the most up-to-date information on candidates who are pursuing educator preparation degrees from the CEHD.”

“Using the Blackboard Analytics solution, we can now proactively identify and work with

candidates not achieving key milestones during their courses of study. No candidate just ‘falls through the cracks’ without any understanding as to what happened.”

“Our program chairs and faculty gain two vital assessment perspectives from our Blackboard Analytics solution,” Hunt says. “First, they gain a view from a candidate perspective, whether a candidate is meeting the standards for their education program; and second, from an overall program perspective how well the program itself is performing. Reports and data from Blackboard Analytics are provided to program chairs to review and discuss candidate performance as well as how well existing programs are fulfilling the knowledge and core competencies established in our conceptual frameworks.”

Future Assessment & Accreditation Plans

“Our Associate Provost, Robert Goldstein, has been very supportive of our continuous assessment activity,” says Larson. “We see a definite trend in higher education to more freely share data and improve processes.”

The University foresees utilizing Blackboard Analytics as an aid to manage future accreditations, including the future renewal of its accreditation under SACS. Additionally, the University is exploring the expansion of assessment processes beyond CHED. “Our assessment success within the CEHD is applicable within other colleges at the University,” says Larson. “Blackboard Analytics provides data essential to demonstrate candidate progress and manage the processes needed to enable that progress.”

“Blackboard Analytics is the difference between assessment compliance and assessment empowerment,” says Goldstein. “Instead of mere compliance – checking off boxes, answering a basic question and moving on – Blackboard Analytics provides informative, comprehensive, continuous data that actually enables improvement of educator preparation programs.”

