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
single interface.

of a candidate in his/her program through a

ics now provides a way to view the status

preparation candidates. Blackboard Analyt

review of performance data on all educator

data to faculty and administrators for

assessment platforms, and then provides

Blackboard Analytics platform allows for the

In addition to PeopleSoft data, the Black

board 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 ensur-

ing 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 per-
spective, 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

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 Black-

board 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 demon-

strate 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.”

“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