

Institutional Analytics at Montgomery County Community College

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Celeste Schwartz
VP of Information Technology



**Montgomery County
Community College**

The Challenge of Legacy Reporting

With an increase in enrollment of more than 35% over the past 10 years, Montgomery County Community College realized its standard printed reports were no longer adequate to manage increasingly complex business challenges and new student success initiatives. Existing simple row-and-column reports were fulfilling only basic informational needs, while the College’s high-end statistical analysis system was suitable only for certain projects.

Working closely with executives and managers, the College’s IT team identified unmet needs for actionable, meaningful information within enrollment management, student performance, institutional research and the College’s ongoing academic review process. “Successful efforts in these areas would conclude a self-service data analytics system was essential to ensure timely, data-driven decisions,” says Celeste Schwartz, VP of Information Technology.

Solution - Blackboard Analytics

Montgomery County Community College selected the Blackboard Analytics Student Module to significantly increase customized student information and analytics available to executives, administration and staff. The Blackboard Analytics Student Module provides a pre-built data warehouse with a comprehensive data model, calculated metrics, data dimensions, pre-defined reports, data cubes for dashboard analytics and more. The Blackboard Analytics solution includes data integration with the College’s Datatel Colleague ERP system (as well as ERP solutions from Oracle (PeopleSoft) and SunGard Higher Education).

“Blackboard Analytics aligned our ERP data within the Blackboard Analytics Student Module within a very short period of time,” Schwartz says. “We made more progress working with the Blackboard Analytics solution in two days

than nine months of previous work with a data warehousing consulting firm. We were also able to conduct internal Blackboard Analytics training sessions using our live data, not test data. As our executives and managers were training with the Blackboard Analytics Student Module, they were already strategizing its use for certain projects.”

Impact of Blackboard Analytics at Montgomery County Community College

Improved Enrollment Management Performance

The President, Cabinet and Enrollment Council now use an executive dashboard to independently monitor enrollment performance at an overall and individual program level. “Our old reports and database queries would yield ‘cause to wonder’ questions that could not be readily answered,” says Dr. Katherine Swanson, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Enrollment Management. “Our executive dashboard now delivers KPIs and drill-down capabilities for a clear understanding of what is happening.”

Blackboard Analytics enables in-depth enrollment analysis by campus, location, division, areas of study, and individual courses. For example, Dr. Stephen Grieco, Chief Academic Officer, West Campus and Dean of Arts and Humanities, regularly reviews enrollment data with individual program coordinators, including numbers of graduates and rates of degree success. This data-driven review identifies which enrollment strategies are working and what needs to be changed.

“We also review year-to-year trend data for individual courses, including numbers of sections and students enrolled,” says Dr. Grieco. “This detailed course data is essential for writing successful grants or applying for High Priority Occupation Status (HPOS) for additional state funding.”

Driving Superior Student Outcomes

With enrollment significantly higher at the College, it is essential to proactively identify and provide assistance to students at risk for failing. “We use the Blackboard Analytics solution to analyze student performance trends, such as from fall to fall and spring to fall,” explains Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez, Associate VP of Academic Affairs for the College. “Counselors and I will meet with students in need of intervention and support. Blackboard Analytics is a vital solution to help us ensure no students ‘slip through the cracks.’”

The College also instituted a dual enrollment initiative, enabling high school students to take college courses. This cohort is closely managed using Blackboard Analytics data. Dr. Bastecki-Perez says, “We analyze our dual enrollment student demographics, performance, majors and GPAs, compare the data with the overall student body, provide reporting to the faculty and administration, including the President and Board of Trustees, and take fact-based actions to help support this unique, fast-growing student group.”

New, Timely Academic Review Insights

The Blackboard Analytics Student Module has significantly improved the College’s academic review process. “The College must do a full review of every degree program every five years, including a review of curriculum and student performance,” says Dr. Joan Brookshire, Associate VP of Academic Affairs. “Before Blackboard Analytics, our Institutional Research department had the full burden of providing data to program deans. Now they have direct access to the data, have a stronger sense of ownership for their program data, and better understand performance to quickly identify essential program changes.”

The college has ambitious plans to use the Blackboard Analytics solution to transform its current five year process into an annual institutional scorecard. “With this initiative,” says Dr. Brookshire, “program deans will really be able to independently analyze trends in student enrollment and continuing enrollment, and monitor programs and make improvements at a much deeper strategic level than ever before.”

President’s Perspective of Analytics

The Blackboard Analytics Student Module has strong support at the College’s executive level. “Montgomery County Community College is ranked nationally in its use of technology, in part, because of its data culture, which helps administrators and faculty make informed decisions that support students and the College’s mission,” says Dr. Karen A. Stout, President of Montgomery Community College.

Dr. Stout adds, “Data-informed decision making is essential for continuous improvement because unless you have a system-wide structure that collects data, analyzes it, and makes adjustments on a routine basis, you really don’t know if you’re achieving your mission. By adapting national best practices, we are constantly assessing ourselves; always trying to make our student outcomes better using technology as a tool to focus on teaching and learning.”

Learn more about Blackboard Analytics at [Blackboard.com/Analytics](https://blackboard.com/analytics)

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