



Microsoft BI is Head of the Class at Coppin State University

Overview

The organization: Coppin State University (CSU) is a fully accredited institution with quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs, attracting students from around the world. Despite its small IT staff and limited resources, CSU is widely recognized as an innovator in the use of information technology.

The challenge: CSU needed to find a way to provide quality business and student performance information to users across the organization. Additionally, it needed a better way to manage and access complicated metrics designed to measure the progress and success of students, as required to maintain its status as an accredited university.

The solution: CSU's fully integrated performance management solution includes the following Microsoft technologies:

- Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007
- SQL Server 2005 Enterprise Edition
 - Integration Services
 - Analysis Services
 - Reporting Services
- Microsoft Windows 2000

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Prasad Doddanna, Director of Information Systems at Coppin State University

Coppin State University (CSU) is a residential liberal arts university with a rich history in providing quality academic programs in the arts and sciences, teacher education, nursing, graduate studies and continuing education. As a fully accredited institution, Coppin serves Baltimore residents as well as students from around the world. It is widely recognized for its intelligent use of Information Technology (IT) and it is a recent recipient of the EDUCAUSE Award for Innovation in Network Technology. CSU also recently received the Campus Technology Innovator Award from Campus Technology magazine.

In 2005, CSU's small IT staff was facing some daunting challenges, which prompted the search for a fully integrated Business Intelligence (BI) solution. One of the largest issues was mounting pressure to provide dependable business performance information across the organization. "We faced the realization that our decision-making process should be based on data, not assumptions or politics, and we needed something that would help us make informed decisions in a timely manner," said Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan, VP of IT and CIO. "From the faculty level all the way up to the president, everyone needs access to data all the time, in order to make well-informed decisions on their own."

Equally important, CSU needed something to help the team deal with the data-driven rigors associated with maintaining the school's status as an accredited university. "Maintaining our accredited status is critical; without it we would lose revenue, students, staff and federal funding because we would lose all credibility and international appeal," said El-Haggan.

"We passed the NCATE accreditation with flying colors because we had the Microsoft BI solution, which gave us access to crucial information with a click of a button."

Dr. Sadie Gregory

Interim President and VP of Academic Affairs
Coppin State University

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Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan

VP of IT and CIO
Coppin State University

Microsoft BI solution is the obvious choice

Faced with a small IT staff, a limited budget and a need to optimize its existing PeopleSoft ERP application and HEAT helpdesk platform, solving the school's data access problems could have been a daunting task. Adding complexity, it needed a BI solution that would not take two or three years to implement. Finally any new tools had to be easy-to-use with minimal training since it would be deployed to 200 users across the organization.

But to El-Haggan and his team, the answer was clear.

"During our ERP implementation, we felt very strongly that the SQL Server environment was more than adequately scalable. However, our Service Center Board of Directors suggested we ask key industry analysts for guidance," said El-Haggan. "At the end of the day, our original strategy of SQL Server and Windows Server 2000 won out as the best choice for moving forward."

CSU also implemented Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007 for in-depth data analysis, an integrated performance management application designed to help improve operational and financial performance across the organization.

Finally, CSU worked with Microsoft Partner iStrategy to develop its HigherEd Analytics data warehouse and analytic reporting application, with pre-built integration to existing ERP systems, including PeopleSoft, Datatel and Banner. The iStrategy solution is built on a Microsoft technology stack including SQL Server, Integration Services and Analysis Services, with PerformancePoint Server as the front-end analytic application.

PerformancePoint Server 2007 spurs cultural change

CSU's decision to empower their users with access to information paid off even more quickly and profoundly than they expected.

The solution was deployed to 120 users, each with a personalized dashboard to track a variety of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) necessary to manage operations. Metrics such as applicant count, the number of new applicants admitted, enrollment count, student grade point averages and information from its HEAT helpdesk call tracking system are just a few of the items tracked to understand if the school is meeting projections. Additionally, from an accounting perspective, CSU tracks gifts and pledges, donor histories and changes in giving patterns.

"The Microsoft BI offering, combined with iStrategy's industry expertise, satisfied 90% of our analysis and reporting needs right out-of-the-box. It was a very quick return for us. Eyes open and mouths drop when we show new users how easy it is to use, and our ability to access and analyze information has created a cultural change in the way we look at things and make decisions," said Prasad Doddanna, Director of Information Systems at CSU.

Additionally, iStrategy delivered a data model which included both relational star schemas and OLAP cubes that enabled the application to be installed in days and implemented within weeks. Immediately after installation, CSU was able to drill-down to underlying detail, with the ability to quickly export the information to other applications, including Microsoft Office Excel, for further analysis.

"It's extremely intuitive and easy to customize. Boom - we get a graph to analyze whatever we need. This functionality is extremely important to us, and adding new dimensions to reflect what we need in reports is a piece of cake," said El-Haggan.

"The friendly interface of the entire Microsoft BI offering and the ease-of-use has been very important because we want to push it out to more users throughout the university," added El-Haggan.

A concrete example of this is the Nursing School. "Traditionally, we have been very good at getting grants, but the process is extremely long and research intensive. However, with PerformancePoint Server, we were able to independently get all of the pertinent data needed and saved two to three weeks worth of research work. As a result, we received a \$750,000 grant that we might not have received without the Microsoft BI solution," said Dr. Marcela Copes, Dean of the Nursing School.

Microsoft helps Coppin pass with flying colors

Also key to the success of CSU is its ability to maintain its accredited status across its six schools and colleges. Traditionally, it has cost the university upwards of thousands of hours to get through the process and the requirements are becoming exponentially more difficult to meet.

"Before the implementation of our Microsoft BI solution, it took our School of Education about 1.5 full-time employees to manually track our students' progress. That is about 3,000 work hours a year that we replaced with a push of a button," said Dr. Sadie Gregory, Interim President and VP of Academic Affairs. "It is not only the savings in work hours that we were interested in, but the business intelligence and the outcomes assessment as well as the ability to track the progress of our students down to a great detail. That was impossible before."

The accreditation process is designed to make institutions more accountable, and includes a peer review process conducted by organizations that have been identified as "experts." "A school cannot be successful without this seal of approval. If you don't meet the standards, it's a disaster... you lose the confidence of everyone," said El-Haggan. "We are able to address this accountability through our investment in Microsoft BI."

Several different government bodies accredit educational institutions, and there are varying levels of accreditation including general school,

specialized, and full vs. conditional accreditation. One of the more distinctive of CSU's accreditations comes from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Their performance-based accreditation system requires institutions to provide evidence of competent teacher candidate performance.

"Our School of Education has 99 different and very detailed rubrics and milestones to assess students and understand if they have been successful or not. Previously, there was no way to manage all of that information, but Microsoft has provided us with a solution to this challenge," said El-Haggan. "It helps the university keep track of student progress and identify those that are having a hard time before they get into real trouble."

"We passed the NCATE accreditation with flying colors because we had the Microsoft BI solution, which gave us access to crucial information with a click of a button," said Dr. Gregory.

"Now, many schools that are much bigger with much larger budgets are asking us to share the information on how we did it," added El-Haggan.

"Using the Microsoft BI solution our Education School was able to pull together all NCATE information for review in a matter of an hour, and then they integrated the results into the self-study," mentioned Dr. Habtu Braha, Chair of the Faculty Information Technology Committee.

Looking to the future with Microsoft BI

The marriage of Coppin State University and Microsoft BI has exceeded expectations, and El-Haggan and his team are looking forward to continued success. They are currently developing a Microsoft BI module for the assessment of Coppin's General Education, to address an important standard of Middle States Accreditation. Additionally, Coppin uses Microsoft Business Intelligence tools to access the impact of Instructional Technology on teaching and learning. It is working on assessment and

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www.microsoft.com

For more Information about Coppin State University, go to:
www.coppin.edu



iStrategy is a leading provider of analytic reporting and data warehouse applications for higher education. **iStrategy's Higher Ed Analytics Suite™** provides secure self-service reporting and analysis capabilities to a broad spectrum of information users spanning institutional research, management reporting, external reporting and analytic information needs across the institution built on the Microsoft BI technology stack.

tracking modules to assist them in specialized accreditation for Social Work and Rehab Counselling programs.

Future plans include deploying the solution to 200 users and using SQL Analysis Services to create more custom OLAP cubes to further analyze student data.

Microsoft Business Intelligence

Microsoft provides an end-to-end, enterprise-grade and cost-effective BI solution utilizing the intuitive Microsoft Office 2007 suite and robust BI components of SQL Server 2005 to enable decision makers throughout the organization to drive increased performance.

For more information about Microsoft Business Intelligence products and services, go to:
www.microsoft.com/bi

2007 Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server

Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007 provides all of the functionality that is needed for performance management including scorecards, dashboards, management reporting, analytics, planning, budgeting, forecasting, and consolidation. The application reaches all employees, across all business functions (finance, operations, marketing, sales, and human resources).

For more information about Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007, go to:
www.microsoft.com/performancepoint

Software and Service

Products

- Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server 2007
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Enterprise
 - Integration Services 2005
 - Analysis Services 2005
 - Reporting Services 2005
- Microsoft Windows 2000