

Data Powers Collegiate Risk Assessment and Attrition Predictor



Cornell College



Higher Education



www.cornellcollege.edu



Mount Vernon, IA

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE:

Cornell College was facing a recruitment and retention challenge and had difficulty managing data consistently across the institution. Staff needed a cleaner, more consistent approach to data collection and integrity.

SOLUTION:

Datatelligent was tasked with collaborating to build a unified data platform to bring all their information together and developed a dashboard to identify at-risk students. They also helped create a robust data governance approach and implemented cross training to improve organizational skills.

RESULTS:

With an integrated data approach, Cornell staff was able to quantify the amount of revenue lost to student attrition. The college invested in additional staff resources, created a Student Success Center, and has been more successful in recruiting and retaining students.

CHALLENGE

Located in Mount Vernon, Iowa, Cornell College is a private, four-year liberal arts college serving approximately 1,000 diverse students and looking to grow its enrollment. But the administration recognized they were heading into challenging headwinds.

In 2019, the college completed a comprehensive and ambitious organizational overhaul tied to a new strategic plan. This included adding new staff members, developing new assessment processes, and launching a new budget process. All of which required greater access to and integration of data. Then Covid hit.

With the added complexity of teaching in the Covid landscape paired with an already decreasing applicant pool, Cornell staff was faced with the need to accelerate their data maturity efforts. They recognized it was critical to empower their team to make data-driven decisions and determine programmatic ROI.

Staff recognized they needed to focus their efforts on tapping into their organizational data to uncover opportunities to improve their response to students' wants and needs, develop a more comprehensive approach to risk assessment and attrition prediction, and increase organizational efficiency. Basically, they needed the means to prove what was working and what was not and ensure they were more successful in recruiting and retaining their students.

But how? That's when they reached out to Datatelligent.

SOLUTION

Datatelligent was integral in implementing and optimizing Snowflake as the unified data platform across all of Cornell College. This improved data collection and integration throughout the institution, as well as supported data governance activities. The Cornell team now has access to the self-serve data needed to drive business decisions and measure the ROI necessary for the deployment of its strategic plan.

The implementation of a unified data platform enabled Datatelligent to activate its Student Success and Retention Solution Engine and tailor it to Cornell College's needs. The team collaborated to create a custom, highly visual Tableau-powered dashboard that integrates data points critical to the college's risk assessment and attrition prediction efforts.



SOLUTION (cont.)



The dashboard features an easily understood interface that collects and tabulates data to calculate a risk assessment score for each student. This helps staff identify at-risk students that need extra support, intervention, and outreach from advisors. Staff can immediately take action from the dashboard.

This all falls under Cornell's newly launched Student Success Center, which staff was able to create after utilizing data to quantify the revenue lost through student attrition. The college then recognized the value of hiring additional staff and creating more resources to retain students — all of which would be more beneficial to the college moving forward. The student risk assessment dashboard was part of this investment, along with the subsequent outreach efforts powered by data integration.



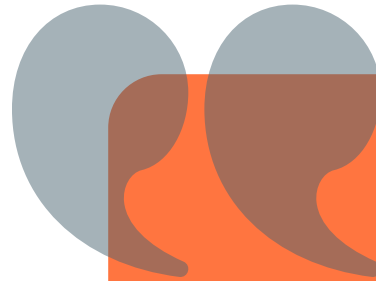
RESULT

With the purchase, implementation, and optimization of Snowflake as the unified data platform across all of Cornell College, staff now have a single source for information. This has increased productivity and reduced past frustration and the feeling of being overwhelmed with data. Additionally, Cornell administrators now have the key information needed to meet the goals of their strategic plan and support the work of the Data Governance committee and IT project planning committee.

The most immediate improvement that can be tied to data integration is the creation of the Student Success Center. Cornell staff was able to quantify the revenue lost through student attrition and made the case that adding team members to helm the Student Success Center would ultimately improve school revenue and the student experience. With improved access to integrated, accurate data, staff now have greater visibility into withdrawal trend analysis. And with the launch of the Student Success Center, Cornell staff now have the tools in hand to spend more time supporting those students who may need additional help.

For example, with the integrated data flowing in from throughout the college, staff are able to identify common factors that are key predictors for success or risk. Staff can then zero in on these components, like a student's performance in his or her first-year seminar class—and use those data points to drive programming and intervention efforts.

All of this was made possible with data.



“Our work with Datatelligent has been transformational. We now have self-service access to the critical data required to drive business decisions and support our student retention and enrollment efforts, as well as measuring the key analytics related to activating our strategic plan,”

Angie Bauman Power,
Director of Institutional
Effectiveness

