

Community College Transformed Through Data



Higher Education

www.cowley.edu

Arkansas City, KS

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE:

After the successful launch of Cowley's data-driven Student Risk Assessment dashboard, college administrators were energized to move the organization forward in its data maturity efforts. But they recognized a number of roadblocks — staff had inconsistent data skills, they needed a more uniform approach to data governance, and they needed to change the college's mindset about what they could accomplish.

SOLUTION:

Datatelligent was tasked with migrating Cowley's legacy systems to a unified data platform, expanding the use of Tableau throughout the organization to increase efficiency, and rolling out additional dashboards to help staff more creatively meet student needs.

RESULTS:

With the creation of a unified data platform, Cowley now has the foundation to introduce new solutions fed from an accurate, integrated data lake. Staff also have access to additional data dashboards, saving them time and allowing them to put more focus on supporting their students.

CHALLENGE

In 2018, Cowley College, a community college serving approximately 3,200 students in and around Arkansas City, Kansas, recognized that they had a problem. Retention of first-time, degree-seeking students was stagnant, and the college also anticipated challenges in recruiting students due to state and county population declines. Then Covid hit, and a number of complications negatively affecting both students and educators skyrocketed.

Cowley College began working with Datatelligent - a trusted data analytics partner in higher education - to make significant improvements in multiple source, data access to users outside the institutional effectiveness office. Most notably, they collaborated to create the Tableau-powered Student Risk Assessment, a comprehensive, visually rich dashboard that enables college educators and staff to actively monitor, identify and engage with at-risk students. The dashboard provided immediate benefits to the advising staff, improving their access to just-in-time information and enhancing student support.

But the Student Risk Assessment success highlighted other organizational challenges and opportunities. Cowley College recognized that it needed to:

- Improve staff data literacy across the college
- Create a stronger data governance approach and reduce inconsistencies in data collection
- Halt the "this cannot be done" mindset and embrace new opportunities to improve organizational performance through data

Cowley College already had the perfect partner for this collaboration: Datatelligent.

SOLUTION

Datatelligent and Cowley College got to work, leveraging the success of the Student Risk Assessment to create buy-in throughout the organization. They identified a number of projects that could provide immediate value by improving access to data and streamlining data collection and reporting.

The first step was the creation of a unified data platform to bring it all together. Datatelligent activated Snowflake for cloud-based data storage. This on-demand, flexible storage solution met Cowley College's current and future needs, with the essential feature of also adhering to the data privacy requirements critical for a higher education institution.

With this data lake in place, Datatelligent moved forward with building additional solutions for Cowley College — all with the goal of increasing access to timely, accurate data, quickly identifying opportunities for improving the student experience, and moving from a primarily manual reporting system to something streamlined and integrated.



SOLUTION (cont.)



In addition to the Student Risk Assessment, Cowley staff now have access to the following dashboards:

Student Financial Health Dashboard

Visual, fully filterable student financial health dashboard that provides staff with a comprehensive overview of Cowley students' accounts. Assists in identifying on-hold risk factors and enables staff to reach out to students quickly. Replaces a time-consuming manual approach that required staff to cobble together data from various reports.

IMPACT — TRIO Program Dashboard

IMPACT is Cowley College's federally funded Student Support Services TRIO program, which is designed to help Cowley students graduate and transfer to a four-year university. With the introduction of a Tableau-powered dashboard to support this program, staff now have greater insight into how to better support students participating in the program. Similar to the introduction of the other dashboards, staff now spend less time manually compiling reports, can work more efficiently, and focus more on their students' success.

Student Learning Engagement Dashboard

This custom dashboard collects and displays a comprehensive overview of data related to student use of Blackboard, Cowley's web-based learning management system. Staff can now see engagement in one view — by instructor, course, section, subject, term, etc. They can see how much time is spent (or not) to better identify trends, determine engagement and assess performance. This also helps them take action and reach out to students who are not meeting goals or are disengaged with content.



RESULT

In less than three years, Datatelligent has helped Cowley College jumpstart its data maturity efforts. With the introduction of a Snowflake-hosted cloud-based data storage solution, the development of a unified data platform, and the continued introduction of new Tableau-powered dashboards, the organization is working more efficiently and tapping into its data as never before.

Training opportunities have allowed staff to become more proficient in data collection and reporting, and the integration of legacy system data into streamlined dashboards has created greater efficiencies throughout the school. Educators have greater visibility into student performance and can reach out proactively; administrators can identify at-risk students and offer financial consulting to ensure greater retention.

Most importantly, Cowley College staff can put greater focus on supporting their students and enhancing their educational pursuits.



“Datatelligent is the perfect partner in our data maturity journey. Our collaboration has produced countless improvements throughout the college, but our greatest success has been seeing our staff empowered by data to support our students,”

Deborah Phelps,
Executive Director of
Institutional Effectiveness

