



Blackboard Analytics Symposium

# Turning the Tools Inward

## INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Enrollment (Fall 2016):	18,295
Undergraduate	16,595
Graduate	1,700
Retention Rate:	87%
5-year Graduation Rate:	70.5%

**Budgeting at a public institution can sometimes seem to be more magic than science, especially in a state where the relationship with higher education is, well, complicated. Wrangling at the state level can sometimes mean budgets aren't distributed to the institutions until 3 months before the fiscal year ends. Adding to that an ERP that doesn't handle the planning function of budgeting very well means essentially flying blind when making expenditures. Include with this mix a healthy dose of aging and dying IT infrastructure, and you're facing an IT budget crisis.**

At Appalachian State University, the scenario above was wreaking havoc on the ability to effectively plan for expenditures and stay within budget. Inevitably at the end of the year, the CIO would approach the Vice Provost for Resource Management with the news that IT had overspent their budget. Again. There were two problems that needed to be solved. First was the ability to track expenditures against prior years in order to be more strategic with IT spend, and second was to demonstrate that IT was significantly underfunded at App State when compared to sister state and peer institutions.

### Goal(s)

- Provide the ITS leadership team with the tools necessary to plan their expenditures and be more strategic in budgeting
- Increase the budget for ITS

### Activity Summary

App State had participated in the EDUCAUSE Core Data Service (CDS) survey since 2014, which categorizes expenditures so that they can be compared across institutions (think IPEDS for IT spend). Due to imprecise use of account and fund codes, every single IT expenditure had to be examined and categorized for the survey. After installing Blackboard Analytics, the Analytics team (which had also taken over responsibility for the CDS survey) recognized that the row level data for CDS lent itself quite well to becoming a cube. Adding just a few more dimensions, and moving the categorization to a weekly basis instead of the end of the year provided the tools to track expenditures based on prior years, furnishing a point of reference when budgets were distributed late in the fiscal year. Preparing comparisons to IT funding per student FTE across the state and peers showed that App was consistently among the lowest funded in all categories, and has since seen steady increases in budget. Using the tools, IT was able to gain internal value from both the CDS and Analytics, and fiscal year 2016 was the first year in a long time that ended in the black.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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