Building a Culture of Evidence, Building a Culture of Trust

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UMass Amherst Profile

- Flagship of the UMass System
- Only public Carnegie highest research university in MA
- Sponsored research expenditures $210M
- Fall 2018 Enrollment: 30,000+
- 23,515 undergraduates, 7,078 graduate students
- Entering class of 5,010
- 9 Schools and colleges + Graduate School and Commonwealth Honors College
- Over 50 academic departments, over 100 undergraduate majors
UAIR-IT Analytics Journey

2008-2011
Data Rich
Info Poor
Individual
data requests

2015
IT Strategic
Plan
Broader data
access but no
specifics

2016
Tableau
Desktop & Server
Siloed efforts

2017
Strategic Plan
“Instill a culture of evidence
at all levels that applies the
best possible information
and analysis to decisions.”

2018

2019
Campus-Wide
Dashboards
Deployed

UAIR & IT
&
HelioCAMPUS
Analytics - Current Status

Extracts developed and vetted for official and live student data.

6000+ faculty and staff with access to basic dashboards with enrollment and completions data.

200+ trained users with access to more complex enrollment and completions dashboards as well as student success and financial aid. Faculty and admissions data dashboards in the next month.
Analytics Strategy – Data & Trust

• UAIR & IT have a good base for disseminating data campus-wide

• How do we now ensure:
  – Decision makers trust the information they receive?
  – The use of student data is consistently in alignment with our mission?
  – All analysts use the minimum amount of data and datasets needed to support decision makers?
  – We do not reify systemic biases?
  – Students experience the results of our analyses as helpful and not creepy?
  – Individuals have mechanisms to control the use of their data
Trust and Data

Building the Trust Infrastructure (1)

• Mission & Values Focused
  – Use of data for equitable student success

• Inclusivity
  – Build relationships between data creators, analysts, and consumers
  – Learn each others languages and interpretations of questions*
  – Broaden participation

• Transparency & Accountability
  – Clarity and accessibility regarding who is making decisions around data use and how data are being collected, maintained, used, combined, destroyed

*see Passi & Jackson (2018) Trust in Data Science: Collaboration, Translation, and Accountability in Corporate Data Science Projects. https://doi.org/10.1145/3274405
Building the Trust Infrastructure (2)

- **Beyond regulations**
  - Top-down FERPA, HIPPA, GDPR, etc. are the start. Values-driven community code of conduct.

- **Context is critical**
  - Prioritizing analyses
  - Operationalizing variables
  - Interpreting results

- **Collaboration and communication**
  - Collaborate for new perspectives and to challenge implicit biases
  - Build multiple channels for connection and conversation
Analytics - Current Status (2)

- Developing policies and procedures for users to access data extracts/views
- Launching data governance and data analyst groups
- Building processes for defining and sharing data definitions
- Crafting and piloting data literacy strategy
How are you building your culture of trust?

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