



Albany State University uses Smartsheet to enable student success and give educators more time to teach

Albany State University is a public historically black university in Albany, Georgia. More than 6,000 students are enrolled in the university, which offers 13 certificates, 14 associate, 30 baccalaureate, and 12 graduate degrees.

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We want to give students the best experience so they can be successful. Smartsheet supports that by giving faculty an extra tool to work with. By looking at Smartsheet dashboards, faculty can easily see which students are at risk and can then offer needed tutorial support.

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Dr. Dorea Hardy, Senior Instructional Designer,
Albany State University



Customer:

Albany State University

Industry:

Education

Organization Size:

Medium (50-999 employees)

Region:

North America

Website:

asurams.edu

Albany State University, located in Albany, Georgia, has a rich and diverse history. Founded in 1903 as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute, the school became part of the University System of Georgia in 1932 and was renamed Albany State College in 1943. In 1996, the school became Albany State University, the largest historically black university in Georgia and one of the 15 largest historically black universities in the United States. More than 6,000 students currently attend the school, which offers a wide range of graduate, baccalaureate, associate, and certificate programs.

Background

Albany State is committed to helping its students and faculty achieve excellence through four strategic goals and objectives: student access and success; institutional state sustainability and responsible stewardship; partnership and economic competitiveness; and leadership development and employee engagement. For the past several years, the university has used Smartsheet to support these goals. *"Smartsheet helps us meet at least the first two strategic goals for our university,"* says Dr. Dorea Hardy, senior instructional designer at Albany State University. *"We're enabling the first goal – student access and success – by using Smartsheet to manage attendance verification for our faculty, identifying when students are at risk of not passing a course, as well as helping faculty improve the quality of their courses. We're also supporting our stewardship objective by using Smartsheet to be more efficient and responsible with the tools and resources we already have."*

Prior to Smartsheet, the previous director used spreadsheets to pull data from the school's student information system and learning management system. *"She had to try and manually merge data from the two systems, and struggled to quickly create reports,"* Hardy says. *"Our deans and department chairs don't have the time to build reports based on the data – they need to focus on education."*

Increasingly, university deans and chairs asked Hardy and her distance learning team to create more reports showing student and faculty data. *"We were being asked for more reports, and that was challenging because I had already taken on*

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extra duties as interim director so I didn't have as much time," says Hardy. "We needed something to simplify report creation."

Solution

When the university's previous chief information officer began using Smartsheet for project management, he suggested Hardy try it. *"Instead of coding custom forms, Smartsheet simplified everything,"* she says. Hardy then discovered two features: Data Shuttle, which allows users to upload data from databases to and from Smartsheet; and Dynamic View, which allows users to share data with certain people for viewing and editing. *"Once I saw what those features could do, I fell in love with Smartsheet,"* says Hardy.

Hardy and her department use Data Shuttle and Dynamic View to automatically collect data from the student information and learning management systems to display updated attendance and grading information in a dashboard for faculty and chairs. Faculty and staff in several colleges and the university's academic affairs department use the data to quickly check if a student is at risk of not passing.

Albany State relies on Smartsheet to manage course development and review, giving faculty a way to automatically submit course content upon request from Hardy's team. Faculty, deans, department chairs, and distance learning advisors can review courses in Smartsheet forms. Distance learning advisors use Smartsheet to access a monthly report to see statistics and trends related to specific courses.

Albany State also uses Smartsheet to help college deans and department chairs track the faculty course grading process. For example, they use customized Smartsheet reports to check if online instructors have logged into courses and graded student classwork in a timely manner. In addition, Hardy's team collaborates with the university's testing center to manage test proctoring through Smartsheet. Students register for proctor locations online, and the data automatically flows into Smartsheet. This triggers a workflow in Smartsheet that emails test location and time information to

In a Nutshell:

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proctors and instructors. *"It used to take our staff at least 30 minutes to record and verify individual test locations and proctors,"* says Hardy. *"With Smartsheet, it only takes a few minutes for us to quickly check that information."*

Focusing on teaching instead of administrative tasks

Using Smartsheet, Albany State educators can focus more on teaching because they spend less time trying to find data and building reports. For instance, faculty can quickly review courses in Smartsheet via linked templates. *"Deans, chairs, and instructors can now view any course at a glance,"* Hardy says. *"In terms of course development and review, we can offload tasks through Smartsheet to makes things easier. Instructors only need to send us their content, and Smartsheet takes care of the rest."* Faculty also have access to updated data, which provides the latest statistics on the number of instructors logging into courses and grading classwork on time. *"Now, deans and chairs have this data whenever they need it, and it's fresh data instead of being a week old,"* says Hardy.

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Supporting student success

Albany State faculty can use Smartsheet to monitor at-risk students and proactively help them get back on track to avoid failing courses. *"By looking at Smartsheet dashboards, faculty can easily see which students are at risk and can then offer*



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needed tutorial support," Hardy says. "Students should be able to see their grades throughout the semester. It's not good for them to only get midterm grades, because that's not an accurate reflection of how they're really doing," Hardy says. "We can provide reports using Smartsheet data to let deans and chairs know that faculty are keeping the grade books up to date, so that students know how they're doing at any given time, which helps them see if they need a tutor."

By taking advantage of automated workflows in Smartsheet, Albany State students can drag and drop papers and submit papers to the university's online writing center for review. "This helps students get quick feedback before they submit papers for grading," says Hardy.

Smartsheet is also helping the university maintain academic integrity as it increasingly moves towards a hybrid learning model. "Our goal is to have a repository of high-quality courses approved for online delivery," says Hardy. "We don't want to just tell faculty to teach online - we want to help them provide the best educational experience for students. Smartsheet will help us meet that goal."

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