

# University improves marketing results and increases matriculation



*How IBM® SPSS® Statistics is helping transform institutional research at Wichita State*

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## Overview

### Challenge to Institution

Data describing students was housed in separate data “silos” that were difficult to integrate. This forced the administration to rely on tradition and intuition to make critical decisions.

### Solution

IBM SPSS Statistics software allows administrators to make evidence-based decisions.

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Wichita State University (WSU), one of six state universities in Kansas, is a Doctoral/Research Intensive institution offering more than 60 undergraduate, 57 master’s and 12 doctoral degree programs with an enrollment of more than 14,000 students.

### The headache of incompatible data systems

WSU had more than 30 years of institutional data on students (admissions, enrollment, degrees, financial support, revenue, etc.). Unfortunately, it was housed in separate data “silos” (admissions office, registrar, account receivable, etc.), making it difficult to integrate data across units. Compounding the problem was the institution’s switch in 2006 to a different information system, which made data prior to the conversion incompatible with the new data systems. The institutional culture was to use data for day-to-day transactional operations rather than for analysis, forecasting or planning.

### Promoting data-based decision making

Dr. David Wright, a sociology professor and WSU’s statistical project analyst, assembled a small team of developers who persuaded senior administrators that the institution would benefit from being able to predict future outcomes based on data rather than on tradition and intuition.

“Our software programs could tell us ‘where we’ve been’ and ‘where we are now,’ but couldn’t tell us ‘where we’ll be in the future.’ For that we needed a more sophisticated program such as IBM SPSS Statistics that could provide predictive modeling,” said Wright.



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## Benefits to institution

- The school improved marketing efficiency through models that predict which students are most likely to enroll.
  - Increased matriculation rates with models that show the types of candidates that will be helped most by scholarships.
  - Standardized reports can now be generated to support decision making in admissions.
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Using IBM SPSS Statistics software, the team created predictive models that demonstrated how enrollment could be increased by targeting scholarship awards more effectively. The demonstration convinced administrators to invest in IBM SPSS Statistics - enabling administrators to make evidence-based decisions.

Next, the university's IT programmers were shown that IBM SPSS Statistics was robust software that would be compatible with their current technology and required little training and support.

### **The team convinced the programmers by showing them that the software could:**

- Dynamically extract data directly from WSU's mix of in-house and third-party data storage applications
- Extract larger volumes of data at a substantially faster rate than their current data extract program
- Quickly upload data to existing tables and create new tables in both Microsoft® SQL Server and Oracle® databases
- Automate tasks reliably – running syntax scripts to execute jobs and document activity
- Automate job scheduling to protect production databases and optimize computing resources

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## Smarter solutions for higher education

For more than 40 years, colleges and universities have turned to IBM SPSS software to teach statistics and data mining – as well as to help them to harness data to achieve their goals. IBM SPSS predictive analytics touches every point of the student lifecycle so institutions can generate more value for their students and receive a higher return on their information.

From recruitment and retention to student success and institutional advancement, IBM SPSS predictive analytics provide the ability to direct and automate effective decisions. The result is a more efficient, successful, and accountable academic environment.

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*“The key is that IBM SPSS Statistics can perform data management, data analysis, data extraction, database construction, reporting and forecasting ... all in a single product.”*

— Dr. David Wright , WSU sociology professor,  
WSU’s Statistical Project Analyst

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## Generating standardized reports ... and smarter decisions

With IBM SPSS Statistics, the university can now generate standardized reports across campus, helping each administrative area make consistent, well informed decisions. Using predictive modeling, the institution has solid information on which students are most likely to enroll – so that the admissions can make the most of its marketing dollars. They are also increasing matriculation rates with models that show the types of candidates that will be helped most with scholarship funds.

“The key is that IBM SPSS Statistics can perform data management, data analysis, data extraction, database construction, reporting and forecasting ... all in a single product,” said Wright.

## About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics software delivers complete, consistent and accurate information that decision-makers trust to improve business performance. A comprehensive portfolio of business intelligence, predictive analytics, financial performance and strategy management, and analytic applications provides clear, immediate and actionable insights into current performance and the ability to predict future outcomes. Combined with rich industry solutions, proven practices and professional services, organizations of every size can drive the highest productivity, confidently automate decisions and deliver better results.

As part of this portfolio, IBM SPSS Predictive Analytics software helps organizations predict future events and proactively act upon that insight to drive better business outcomes. Commercial, government and academic customers worldwide rely on IBM SPSS technology as a competitive advantage in attracting, retaining and growing customers, while reducing fraud and mitigating risk. By incorporating IBM SPSS software into their daily operations, organizations become predictive enterprises – able to direct and automate decisions to meet business goals and achieve measurable competitive advantage. For further information or to reach a representative visit [www.ibm.com/spss](http://www.ibm.com/spss).



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Route 100  
Somers, NY 10589

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