

## Jacksonville State University Optimizes Productivity with Tableau Institutional Research and Assessment Group Conducts Analyses “in a Fraction of the Time”

### Company Profile

Located in Jacksonville, AL, public Jacksonville State University serves more than 9,000 students (primarily from the northeast Alabama region) and 1,000 faculty and staff. Its Institutional Research & Assessment group is a core element in helping manage the business of running a university.

### Customer Case Description

JSU wanted to look in-depth at the question of credit hour productivity. By analyzing productivity by department, by course, by day of week, by time of day, and by classroom, JSU can make better decisions about all elements of its class offerings and schedules. The earlier JSU Administration knows this information, the more optimally they can plan the next term’s course offerings.

In the past, JSU relied on a home-grown centralized system that fulfilled their operational needs. In order to analyze the administrative data and master schedule from that system, JSU used Excel, SPSS, Access, along with pages of reports. There were multiple challenges with this:

- Patterns in the data were hard to see. For example, JSU could not easily identify that 8am classes do well but the same course at 3pm is not as popular.
- There was not a consistent view of the data and what it meant. There was little agreement about what the data meant and therefore decisions could not be finalized rapidly.
- Any results from the analysis came too late in the year — JSU was missing the opportunity to make schedule adjustments in earlier terms resulting in multiple periods of less than optimal efficiency.

### The Solution

Tableau Software helped in multiple ways:

- Overall, JSU can now visually analyze its master schedule and can pick out opportunities to increase credit hour productivity. Tableau made analyzing the data easier and faster and the analytical results were easier to understand. “We can do analyses that we did before in a fraction of the time. Even more important, we can do analyses we never could before” said Dr. Alicia Simmons, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment.
- JSU has one view — everyone sees the same data. Decision-making has been accelerated.
- JSU can now analyze their data nearly real-time so as to see patterns now which could be corrected in the next term. This means a more efficient use of resources and higher productivity rates.
- JSU can respond more quickly and accurately to information requests from its core audiences.

### For More Information About This Case

Contact: [visualanalysis@tableausoftware.com](mailto:visualanalysis@tableausoftware.com) or call (206) 633-3400 x1

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*“We’ve been able to improve our productivity rates because of what we learned through Tableau Software. There are not many other software packages that you can say that about. It’s a delight to use Tableau.”*

*Dr. Alicia Simmons, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment*