

Bellevue University: Growing Enrollment and Revenue with Axiom Budgeting and Financial Planning Solutions



Nebraska's Bellevue University is having a banner year. "That's in terms of revenue, margins, and student recruitment—across the board in almost every single category," said Matt Davis, University Executive Vice President. "A lot of planning went into making market-based decisions using integrated, up-to-date information, and now those data-fueled decisions are paying off."

About five years ago, Bellevue University implemented Kaufman Hall's Axiom® Budgeting and Forecasting, Reporting and Analytics, and Long-Range Planning solutions for higher education. Today, Davis credits the software with empowering the data-driven decision-making that led to their success.

Accommodating a Complex Model

As a non-profit university serving 13,500 students, Bellevue University has a complex educational and financial model. It serves five key market areas: residential students, online students, international students, corporate students, and community college transfer students.

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To support their diverse student body and multi-market strategy, the University provides variable pricing by offering special tuition rates to partner organizations. "For instance, we have a program called Campus@Work™ that provides tuition assistance matches," Davis explains. "We sponsor corporate students dollar for dollar. If a corporation puts a tuition assistance dollar in, we'll match it up to a certain amount. At corporation X, there might be variable pricing if you're a full-time versus part-time



Savings in labor and benefit costs in
Finance Office



More effective decision-making



Reduced FTEs from 4 to 1.5

employee, or a family member attached to a full-time employee, or a seasonal worker. It's difficult to manage from a financial standpoint, but it's very popular due to the unique value proposition."

Prior to using Axiom Budgeting and Forecasting and Long-Range Planning solutions, Bellevue University would not have been able to manage such a complex program. "It would have been impossible to bring it to market and show that it's financially sustainable and actually works," Davis said. "Axiom data structures allow us to demonstrate program success with nearly real-time reporting, which is very important for our strategic planning."

Ease of Use and Integration

Axiom's Budgeting and Forecasting user interface has a spreadsheet-like look and feel, which employees found familiar and easy to use. But it also has powerful functionality, such as system integration, which eliminated manual aggregation of data from finance and operational systems such as Salesforce CRM and Oracle PeopleSoft Student Information System. This automated process minimizes the potential for human error and ensures more complete, accurate data is used in reports and analysis.

"We have daily updates from our financial system, our general ledger, our CRM, and our student information system," Davis said. "With Axiom Long-Range Planning, we can automatically combine all that information and push it to the person who needs to make the decision, knowing that he or she has the comprehensive, accurate information required to get the job done."

With Axiom, Bellevue University needs fewer full-time financial analysis employees and has reallocated one part-time and two full-time employees, which translates to a 60% savings in labor and benefit costs in the office.

Efficiency and Superior Decision-Making

Bellevue University values real-time data that enables them to make decisions that expand in-demand student

services and fuel financial success. "Axiom gives us the insights we need to answer key questions like 'should we add more money and more effort in this certain market, or to that certain client? Should we withdraw effort from certain markets?' Answering questions like those is really where we get the most value," Davis insists. "Operational efficiencies are gained through Axiom's automation and the ability to tabulate quickly and push it out to many users at once. So really our driver comes from revenue performance and having confidence that a particular program is working — so therefore do more, push more resources that way — or conversely, to know that something's not working as well."

Davis rates the organization's decision-making as 40% more effective with the use of Axiom higher education software.

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Matt Davis, Bellevue University Executive Vice President

A True Strategic Partner

Davis thinks of technology providers as falling into two categories: vendors and strategic partners. "Vendors are just day-to-day service providers," he said. "They handle transactional pieces but don't create strategic value or drive the organization forward. Strategic partners do both."

"Kaufman Hall understands our business model, which is a somewhat complex one for higher education," Davis continued. "I can't say enough about the innovations they continue to bring to the table. We talk on the phone and they're always introducing a new product or improving an existing one. Kaufman Hall drives value and they're always pushing the envelope and working to understand our complex environment more fully."