



Connecting Financial Health and Student Success

Fast Facts

- Increased enrollment and improved student-centric schedules
- Improved financial health of institution
- Improved graduation rates

The Challenge:

Traditional Methods of Building a Course Schedule are No Longer Effective

West Virginia Northern Community College, “Northern,” is a two-year commuter college located in Wheeling, West Virginia. The institution serves students from five counties within the state with campuses located in Weirton and New Martinsville. Its diverse student body includes students who are socioeconomically underserved, first-generation, and Pell-eligible.

When Jill Loveless joined West Virginia Northern Community College as Vice President of Academic Affairs she knew there had to be a better way to build the schedule to ensure students get the courses they

need. Loveless recognized that pulling “dead” data from spreadsheets was not an efficient way to predict a good schedule, because the schedule always ended up changing.

Loveless sought a way to determine if a program was sustainable and/or what was needed to make it become sustainable. Without this insight, she found the schedule would be plagued with last-minute cancelations and additions, which are costly for the institution and for students. Inefficient schedules also inhibit a clear pathway for the long-term success of students.

“The opportunity to partner with Ad Astra allowed Northern access to predictive analytics,” Loveless said. “These analytics allowed us to start building a schedule based on the needs of current and future students.”



The Solution:

Using Data to Improve ROI

Partnering with Ad Astra, Northern could create an ROI for each class that included all the costs and all of the expenses. Using this information, the institution can look at a program and determine the breakeven point or the growth point. Data also provides the information to make a cost-effective decision to adjust a program or retire it. Using Align, Northern can determine the types of schedules to build and

Ad Astra Products

Align	Pathway
Astra Schedule	Predict
Monitor	



Students need classes when they want them, and we need to be open to change. This flexible mindset is necessary to help others change. Leaders in higher education must be change makers to create a stronger institution.”

the modalities needed to strategically reduce the number of cancellations and increase enrollment ratios – furthering increasing financial health. During registration, Monitor is used to track and manage section growth and its data allows Loveless to demonstrate to Department Chairs how flexibility and better schedules benefit Northern’s students.

With better schedules in place, Northern was able to reach its enrollment goals and students can plan the rest of their life around these schedules. When students can also be full time at 15 hours, they increase Degree Velocity® and boost the likelihood to graduate on time and enter the workforce expediently.

Using this foundation, the institution can now take a closer look at the impact of toxic combinations on the schedule. If students have to repeat a class, it costs the institution more and students feel an impact on their time and resources. Northern is also looking at DFW rates because this impacts the institution based on performance funding. Both efforts further assist financial health and help students create a better ROI on success.

“In this current environment, those who want to sustain their institution and improve student success need to throw away all the old models and start thinking of new ways to attract students because we don’t have the same students that we used to,” Loveless concluded.

Ad Astra Advocate:

Jill Loveless is Vice President of Academic Affairs at West Virginia Northern Community College. Before taking on her current role, Loveless served as Dean of Instruction at Mohave Community College where she was in charge of administering the college instructional programs. She also held the role of Associate Dean of Humanities at Arizona Western College. Loveless received her Ph.D. in Leadership in Higher Education from Capella University.

School Background:

West Virginia Northern Community College, “Northern,” in Wheeling, West Virginia, is a two-year public community college located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain range. Established in 1972, the commuter institution serves all six counties in West Virginia’s northern panhandle. Northern welcomes students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and first-generation students make up more than half of its student population. West Virginia Northern Community College is part of the West Virginia Community and Technical College system.



Every improvement Ad Astra makes helps us to create financially healthy programs that assist our students in becoming more successful and gaining financial independence.”

Interesting in learning more? Connect with an expert.