ABA Update on Business Intelligence Tools

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ABA IT Committee Report: 2012

- Identified critical need for high-quality business intelligence (BI) tool to enable managers to perform ad hoc queries & reports without help from programmer to run them

- Related requirements include:
  - Ability to merge campus data with locally maintained data
  - Need to revamp some existing data structures
  - Develop shared databases that contain superset of what everyone wants
  - Expectation that individual units with unique needs should devote their own resources to meet specific needs
ABA IT Committee Report: 2012

- Confirmed already known Student Data issues
  - Some campus data sets not well-organized or well-defined
  - Some student data not being put into the campus Datawarehouse thereby making them unavailable for dept use
- Colleges already have robust IT infrastructure to meet college’s needs & some of their tools may be useful for other depts
  - Need to define what data should be in canned reports vs. ad hoc reports
  - Jonathan Whitman has made progress in this area
ABA IT: Analysis of BI Tools

- **Cognos** (*acquired by IBM in 2008*)
  - **Pros:** can operate across multiple databases & is “free” since ACT purchased a campus license
  
  - **Cons:** difficult or impossible for dept business users to do ad hoc reporting without significant assistance and time investment from programmers with in-depth knowledge of SQL who would need to create pre-defined data “cubes”

- **Conclusion:** Cognos is overly complex for average dept end-user (for ad hoc reporting) and requires more dedicated/ sophisticated programming support than is typically available in most units

- **Campus Business need and progress with Cognos:**
  - Central campus is using Cognos to help make educated decisions in fund raising (identifying potential donors & predict their donation amounts)
  - ACT using Cognos to replace legacy home-built QueryLink & ReportLink tools
  - Cognos may eventually be available to campus depts using pre-defined data sets for canned reports
ABA IT: Analysis of BI Tools

- **eThority** *(acquired by Equifax in 2011)*
  - Has fairly intuitive interface that allows for easy ad hoc reporting and the creation of end-user dashboards that can be relatively easily customized on the fly, per user requirements
  - Scalable solution with small upfront cost & time investment (as compared to Cognos)
  - Supercomputer starting using eThority in 2009 and has helped other units pilot & adopt this solution (via recharge)
    - Colleges
    - Libraries
    - SIO
    - Campus Budget Office
    - Disbursements (pilot pending)
How SDSC uses eThority

eThority is used to connect data from separate systems to:

- Perform ad hoc queries
- Analyze data in new ways
- Supplement campus reports
Combine Data from Separate Systems

- Combine Coeus award data and FinancialLink ledger data
- Display a breakdown of federal funding by agency using expenditure data
Quickly Evaluate Student Data

International Non-Residents Incoming FA12 Class

- Sixth College (22.0%) 224
- Thurgood Marshall Co (22.6%) 231
- Revelle College (15.7%) 160
- Earl Warren College (13.6%) 139
- John Muir College (6.6%) 68
- Eleanor Roosevelt Co (19.2%) 196

Total: 1,018.00
Student Data: Cumulative Units Report

Histogram of Sixth College students with at least 190 units. The “current record” label shows where the selected student record resides in the histogram.
BI Next Steps

- Jonathan already gave eThority demo using student data to broader audience including Assistant Deans, Bobb Barille, Kathleen Johnson, and student affairs colleagues from SIO & Rady
- ABA IT Committee to submit recommendation to EVC/VCAA office
- VCAA may want to pilot eThority to see if it could be made more widely available to Academic Affairs units using shared datasets