

Jenzabar Analytics supports the "new student"

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Ovum view

Summary

At Jenzabar's Annual Meeting (JAM) in May 2019, over 1,200 attendees from 300 different schools gathered in San Diego, CA, to explore how the vendor is working to create more modern, flexible experiences for the "new student": the digitally fluent, diverse student population enrolled at institutions today. This focus has already proven to be successful for Jenzabar, as it announced it has won 13 new clients in the last year, including Florida Memorial University, North American University, and California Health Sciences University.

The release of its new analytics portfolio in May 2019 was perhaps the biggest highlight of JAM, with many schools clamoring to learn more about how these tools – which include a data cloud and three data models – can lead to better insight into operational management, program management, and other core objectives.

Jenzabar unifies its portfolio for a convenient, seamless user experience

Jenzabar has primarily been known as an SIS/ERP vendor for small-to-midsize US schools with its JX, CX, and EX systems. In addition, Jenzabar provides career and technical education institutions with SONIS, its comprehensive SIS/ERP solution, which was acquired by Jenzabar in 2015. While many of its customers remain CX, JX, and EX users (and the vendor has no plans to de-support any of these solutions), the vendor's product strategy going forward rests firmly on Jenzabar One, its flexible and interoperable solution set, which was launched in 2017. Schools can add Jenzabar One's modules, including Advancement, Financial Aid, Student Records, Academic Management, and Student Registration, to support its existing systems.

This focus on better serving customer needs led the vendor to launch its Customer Ideas Portal in May 2019, which allows its clients to more easily communicate with Jenzabar team members on product requests.

Jenzabar Analytics enables data-driven decision-making

Jenzabar has been serving the higher education industry for over 20 years (in fact, 160 customers have been Jenzabar clients for two decades), and as a result, it understands the many challenges faced by the higher education industry, from improving operational efficiency to meeting student needs. Its SaaS-based analytics portfolio is intended to bring greater transparency and facilitate data-driven decision-making at an institution. The release of this portfolio is well-timed, as Ovum's *ICT Enterprise Insights 2018/19 – Global: Education* survey indicates that 61% of institutions across the globe named analytics as one of their top three IT projects for the next eighteen months, and 23% regard it as their top priority.

Jenzabar's analytics portfolio will be part of the Jenzabar One suite, and each module is available separately to meet institution-specific needs. Currently available are the Jenzabar Data Cloud, Financial Analytics Model, Program Economics Analytics Model, and Program Evaluation Analytics Model; the latter two modules were developed in partnership with Gray Associates. The vendor's ambitious roadmap includes future modules for Student Success, Enrollment, and an Executive

Dashboard (enabling senior execs to see KPIs across the institution in a single, intuitive yet data-rich view). The platform is visualization tool–agnostic, meaning that it will utilize the tools that schools are already using such as IBM Cognos, Tableau, and Microsoft Power BI.

The Jenzabar Data Cloud is built on Microsoft Azure cloud, allowing it to take advantage of the scalability and compute power of Azure. The Jenzabar Data Cloud collects data from Jenzabar's solution and third-party systems; its workflows then process, clean, and store the data in a reporting warehouse and data lake, which is single-instance for maximum security.

The Financial Analytics module's methodology is based on industry standards (NACUBO/KPMG Financial Health indicators) and uses ratios and KPIs to assess an institution's financial health based on core metrics (e.g., its resource management, asset performance, and operating results), culminating in a composite financial index (CFI) score. The system also creates projections of the CFI and four primary ratios by allowing institutions to alter financial component variables and play out a "what if" scenario: seeing how different strategic decisions may impact their financial wellness.

Jenzabar's Program Analytics module is made up of its Program Evaluation and Program Economics models. These analytics models will give insight into important factors such as the revenue, costs, student and employer demand, and competitive intensity of each academic program at an institution. Jenzabar is working with Gray Associates to build visualizations directly into the tool, with plans to release this capability later this year.

Jenzabar Analytics Services will provide workshops, training, and assessments for institutions considering these different modules. In a recent Ovum survey, 33% of respondents revealed that their greatest challenge with analytics implementation derives from cultural issues such as the lack of training, or difficulty in overcoming existing processes at their enterprise. These resources will allow users to more fully understand and maximize analytics' value for their business role and for the institution as a whole.

Appendix

Further reading

Ovum Market Radar: Student Information Systems, ENV006-000048 (March 2019)

Increasing Insights Across the Institution, ENV006-000043 (December 2018)

ICT Enterprise Insights 2018/19 – Global: Education, PT0141-000005 (October 2018)

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