How Central Michigan University Simplified Access to Student Data with Anthology Reach + Power BI

By leveraging Anthology Reach's native Microsoft foundation, Central Michigan University seamlessly integrates Power BI to centralize data and deliver actionable insights campus wide.

A Leading Public University in the Midwest

Central Michigan University has deep roots in the Mount Pleasant community, having begun as a teaching school in 1892. Now, as a leading public research institution, CMU educates over 14,000 students across more than 200 programs, in disciplines ranging from education, business, STEM fields, humanities, and more. CMU seeks to provide an inclusive and equitable learning environment for their diverse community of learners and to prepare them for not only the workforce, but for lifelong learning.

INSTITUTION TYPE:
FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC

LOCATION:
MOUNT PLEASANT, MICHIGAN

POPULATION:
14,000+

ANTHOLOGY SOLUTIONS:
ANTHOLOGY REACH, BLACKBOARD

The Challenge

Multiple Systems and Disconnected Data

Like many universities, CMU collects data on enrollment, courses, and engagement across multiple systems. Different departments often relied on their own platforms, including Anthology® Reach for advising and Blackboard® for learning management. However, the built-in reports and advanced finds weren't meeting campus stakeholders' needs.

> *"One of our teams needed assistance with pulling in CRM data for a departmental report. Previously, this took a lot of their time creating and running individual advanced finds to get the data they needed."*

Tracey Uhler
CRM Technical Analyst, CMU

The Solution

Streamlining Report Access in Reach

The CRM team turned to Microsoft Power BI, making it possible to combine data from multiple campus systems into reports tailored to stakeholder needs. Through data integrations, information from various sources was brought into Anthology Reach, and the reports were created connecting with Dataverse and then displayed directly in the CRM.

Staff can quickly access the insights they need—without leaving Reach. "The reports we've created are really user-level, helping [faculty and staff] analyze 'how are my activities impacting students in the day-to-day,'" said Emma Eerdmans, CRM manager at CMU. "The fact that Reach is based on the Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform—and that CMU is heavily invested in that platform—has worked really well for us. We've been able to expand on the system in ways that wouldn't have been possible before."

The Transformative Effects of Centralized Data

Centralizing data in Power BI and making reports directly accessible in Reach has immediately improved the flow of information to campus teams. "All of our teams are focused on student retention and current students, but each has different goals," Eerdmans explained. "Our advising team, financial aid team...they all have separate communication plans. These reports give a bird's-eye view—a more holistic perspective—of the communications students receive and how effective those efforts are."

"People hate having to go to different systems to get information. Being able to see the report in the CRM is very convenient to our CRM users."

Tracey Uhler
*CRM Technical Analyst, CMU*

The CMU CRM team was also able to replace a static daily Excel report with a Power BI report on a Reach dashboard. "Staff love being able to use bookmarks to save filters they've set up," said Aubrey Hammond, CRM technical analyst.

"We have empowered users to view their data without needing to request our assistance with advanced finds," Uhler noted.

An unexpected benefit has been better data quality. As more staff review their own information, they've been able to identify and report issues. "Users know their data best," Uhler explained. "When they see something off, they let us know, and we can make corrections. That's a real advantage."

Looking ahead, CMU is eager to expand its reporting with data from Blackboard. "The integration with Blackboard will create a more holistic view of our students and help advisors and student support staff collaborate more effectively," Eerdmans said.

"For CMU...we use Blackboard, so we are excited about those integrations."
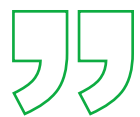
Emma Eerdmans
CMU Manager, Central Michigan University

📖 Epilogue

Anthology would like to sincerely thank Tracey Uhler, Emma Eerdmans, and Aubrey Hammond for sharing their experiences with Reach and Power BI. We look forward to seeing how CMU continues to innovate with Reach and Blackboard integrations.

> Ready to see how Reach can help your institution make deeper data connections? **Explore the CRM today.**

Product highlighted in this customer case study:
Reach Blackboard

Anthology