



University of Louisville Uses Smartsheet to Help Prepare Students for the Future

The University of Louisville, founded in 1798, is a public research university in Louisville, Kentucky with more than 23,000 students. Students can choose from undergraduate degrees in more than 60 fields, master's degrees in over 75 areas, and doctoral and professional degrees in more than 35 disciplines.

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Robert Kubash, Executive Director of the Digital Transformation Center, the University of Louisville

Customer:
University of Louisville

Industry:
Education

Organization Size:
Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Region:
North America

Website:
louisville.edu



The University of Louisville is a public research university in Louisville, Kentucky, founded in 1798. Mandated by the Kentucky General Assembly to be a "Preeminent Metropolitan Research University," the school is known for its medical research. For example, researchers at the university's School of Medicine created the first self-contained artificial heart transplant surgery, as well as the first successful hand transplantation in the U.S.

Background

The university's Digital Transformation Center (DTC) is committed to improving the digital agility of students, staff, and faculty, through a range of programs and partnerships. The DTC manages an extensive micro-credentialing program, to recognize short, competency-based course completion in areas such as project management and cybersecurity. "We want to train learners to be ready for the workforce, so we provide workforce skills, training, and upskilling resulting in branded micro-credential badges," says Robert Kubash, executive director of the Digital Transformation Center at the University of Louisville. "We at the DTC work with faculty members to embed micro-credentials as homework assignments in current curriculum, so students can pull in skills applicable to their future jobs while earning their degree." The DTC also manages the Cybersecurity Workforce Program, a grant-funded online program where students, faculty, and workforce participants gain skills and earn workforce certificates.

Kubash and his department are constantly striving to increase efficiency across teams. "We want to do things better, faster, and with a customer focus and we use Smartsheet to drive that efficiency," he says. However, driving efficiency was previously challenging because the DTC relied heavily on email and spreadsheets. "We had a limited project management skill set here, and we used spreadsheet software to manage project timelines," says Kubash.

Additionally, the DTC relied on an email-based support ticket system for people needing support with applications or courses. "We really needed automation to track projects and customer tickets," says Kubash.

Kubash also sought a way to more easily manage the Cybersecurity Workforce Program, including tracking application, enrollment, completion, and attrition data. "We really needed a project management platform to track things on a daily basis for the program," he says.

Solution

When Kubash was tasked with creating the curriculum for the university's Cybersecurity Workforce Program, he turned to Smartsheet. "I needed a good project management platform, and I knew we had a few Smartsheet licenses internally," he says. "After evaluating it, I saw that it could really help me organize everything."

Kubash began using Smartsheet to track application, enrollment, completion, and attrition data for the program. Smartsheet also manages the end-to-end process for curriculum development for the Cybersecurity Workforce Program, helping stakeholders including faculty and instructional designers complete the curriculum efficiently and on schedule. For example, Kubash uses a dashboard to show the progress of the curriculum development process for faculty, tracking the status of

Customer:

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project outlines, content development, instructional design, and validation of modules. Automated workflows in Smartsheet notify each team leader about key milestones and the status of their assigned tasks. The DTC also uses an applicant admission dashboard to track admissions and demographic data. Another dashboard gives leadership a view into attrition, showing the specific reasons why students left a university program.

Kubash also used Smartsheet to manage administrative tasks related to the Cybersecurity Workforce Program. After completing training courses in Smartsheet University, Kubash used templates to build the university's Cybersecurity Workforce Program project management application. He then began using the solution to manage the application process for workforce participants and students. *"We also use it to track students' progress throughout the program,"* he says.

Kubash and his team then built a support ticketing system that automates workflows in Smartsheet to manage technical support tickets for program participants. *"Smartsheet automatically notifies the employee responsible for each ticket, and that helps us respond to issues faster and more efficiently,"* says Kubash. *"Smartsheet also helps us track each ticket, showing us how many days it took to solve an issue before the ticket is closed."*

After their success using Smartsheet to manage the Cybersecurity Workforce Program, the DTC built a solution to manage the micro-credentialing badge process from beginning to end, including applying for, processing, and renewing badges. *"We use Smartsheet for the entire badging process, including application intake, badge approvals, and badge renewals for both workforce participant and academic badges,"* Kubash says. Once a participant applies for a badge, Smartsheet automatically sends an email to a faculty and staff subcommittee for review and approval, with a link to supporting documents for the application. The same notification process takes place for badge renewals.

Simplifying project management and data collection

Getting up and running on Smartsheet was a quick, easy process for Kubash and the DTC. *"Smartsheet University templates made everything easy from the beginning,"* Kubash says. *"When I initially started using it, it was very easy to create a form or a dashboard, make it public, and start managing our key projects right away."* Collecting data about the Cybersecurity Workforce Program or the micro-credentialing badge process is also simple for the DTC. *"With Smartsheet, I can publish a new sheet quickly and start collecting data immediately on whatever we need to track,"* Kubash says.

Driving efficiency and accountability in curriculum development

Using Smartsheet, the DTC simplifies the application and enrollment process, which ultimately delivers key learning programs to students.

In a Nutshell:

Smartsheet's automation has also helped the DTC streamline the process of approving and renewing micro-credential badges, a key part of the university's goal of equipping students with the practical skills they need to enter the workforce.



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Robert Kubash, Executive Director of the Digital Transformation Center



With Smartsheet, Kubash can collaborate and bring in faculty members and other university stakeholders, including the instructional designers who embed learning modules into courses. *"In the DTC, we manage 70-plus people across 19 organizations to help develop curriculum and provide regular updates on schedules and overall progress," Kubash says. "Using Smartsheet, we can easily manage this entire process and keep course development on track."*

Each week, Kubash leads a meeting with everyone involved in developing curriculum, sharing a Smartsheet dashboard to see where they are in their specific phase of development. *"The Smartsheet curriculum development dashboard displays the percentage completed for each task, which keeps everyone up to date and helps us drive productivity and accountability," he says.*

Streamlining the Approval and Renewal of Student and Workforce Participant Badges

Smartsheet's automation has also helped the DTC streamline the process of approving and renewing micro-credential badges, a key part of the university's goal of equipping students with the practical skills they need to enter the workforce. *"The entire badge approval and renewal process is fully automated in Smartsheet, and all the data is contained in the form that goes to each subcommittee member, which saves a lot of time," says Kubash. "We work with many different teams, and Smartsheet allows me to reach out to people, let them make a decision on a workforce badge renewal or approval, provide their feedback, and complete the process quickly."*

Automating key department processes

With Smartsheet, the DTC has centralized and automated project management for important departmental processes. *"We rely on Smartsheet to automate project management, our support ticketing system, administrative processes, and data collection," says Kubash. "In the original ticketing system we had, for example, we relied on email to communicate and we weren't able to help students quickly resolve their problems. Smartsheet changed that. Smartsheet is a powerful tool that centralizes everything so we don't have to jump between different applications to find information and contact people. It also automatically performs a lot of calculations for us regarding data management. Overall, Smartsheet makes most of our tasks easier."*

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