

Leveraging Assessment Insights to Improve Decision-Making at Stillman College

Stakeholders Learn About Their Data Environment to Transform Practices and Sustain Momentum

Stillman College is a private, historically Black liberal arts college located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, United States. Founded in 1876 by the Presbyterian Church, Stillman has a rich history of providing higher education opportunities to African American students. Committed to its mission of providing a quality education to students from diverse backgrounds, the college continues to adapt and innovate to meet the needs of its students while preserving its historic legacy.

Enhancing Data Management and Usage

Stillman College saw the need to enhance its data usage to strengthen its community's proficiency in data management and institutional practices. This need stemmed from the recognition of insufficient data availability hindering informed decision-making processes. The college sought to overcome barriers such as ensuring the reliability of collected data, enhancing accessibility across various institutional roles, and fostering a culture that prioritizes data-informed decision-making.

By improving data management and utilization practices, Stillman College believed this effort would create a more equitable and supportive environment conducive to the success of all its students. Access to reliable student-level data would enable the institution to develop and implement targeted strategies and programs aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes, increasing degree completion rates, and improving overall student services.

Implementing the Data Ecosystem Assessment

Stillman College introduced the Data Ecosystem Assessment to its campus community to evaluate the institution's current data infrastructure and practices. The selection of this tool was driven by the desire to gain valuable insights from data users regarding the effectiveness of existing data systems and processes. The college anticipated that feedback obtained through this assessment would shed light on areas for improvement within the data ecosystem.

Improvement Project

Produce Actionable Intelligence to Enhance Student Success

Toolkit Used

Data Ecosystem Assessment

Results

- The tool laid the groundwork for fostering awareness about data and establishing principles, practices, and standards. Additionally, it facilitated open discussions aimed at achieving effective data governance.
- Through in-depth analysis, the institution has enhanced its capacity for quicker and more informed decision-making. This has led to improvements in customer experience, heightened operational efficiency, strengthened data security measures, risk reduction, and an enhanced institutional reputation.



“The assessment ignited an awareness that piqued stakeholders’ interest and motivated them to leverage data insights.”

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Victoria Bowen Boman, Ed.D.

Vice President of Enrollment Management

The implementation of the tool was envisioned to empower colleagues by facilitating a comprehensive review of their daily processes and data practices. Individuals were expected to assess their reliance on data for decision-making and enhance their knowledge regarding data collection, storage, and sharing. Furthermore, the institution aimed to leverage the insights gained from the assessment to develop and enhance policies and procedures related to data usage, internal and external data source management, adoption of data software, and data security measures. This initiative also sought to promote training opportunities to improve data analysis skills among staff and faculty members.

Leveraging Assessment Insights

Following the administration of the Data Ecosystem Assessment, Stillman College utilized the gathered information as a foundational resource for instituting transformative changes within the institution’s data practices. The insights gleaned from the assessment were widely disseminated among all stakeholders, serving as a roadmap for targeted training initiatives aimed at equipping institutional personnel with necessary data skills. By addressing identified challenges and fostering trust in data quality, the institution aimed to instill a culture of data literacy and efficacy across its community.

Furthermore, Stillman is now developing crucial processes and practices to enhance its data governance framework. This includes the formulation of a Data Governance policy and training activities designed to safeguard sensitive data and ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations.

Sustaining Momentum

Stillman College is committed to maintaining the momentum generated by this assessment process. The institution recognizes the critical importance of capitalizing on the heightened awareness and interest sparked among stakeholders as a result of the assessment findings. Moving forward, Stillman intends to integrate data insights into daily practices, thereby fostering a culture where data-informed decision-making becomes ingrained in institutional processes.