unizin

Town Hall Newsletter

University of Iowa Student Activity Score

The University of Iowa has developed its own Student Activity Score, accelerating its efforts with help from Indiana University's existing Canvas Activity Score model. Using the Unizin Data Platform (UDP), Iowa tailored IU's approach - adding additional tool data and refining engagement metrics - to deliver an analytics platform that gives instructors a simple, actionable snapshot of student engagement and performance.

This initiative highlights how Unizin member collaboration and shared infrastructure can lead to rapid development of impactful tools. The new instructor-facing tool, dubbed Course Activity Insights coalesces data across learning platforms to give instructors deep insights into their students and how they use tech to learn.

The University of Iowa is also using the student activity score for academic advising use cases, underscoring the model's potential across student success initiatives. The ICON indicator initiative adds things like gradebook scores and assignment submissions to create multi-level, real-time dashboard views of student engagement and performance to support proactive advising strategies.

University of Minnesota Carlson - Capstone Projects

Following the success of their first student-led analysis using the Unizin Data Platform

(UDP), the University of Minnesota's Academic Technology (AT) team and the Carlson School of Management have launched a second capstone project with graduate students from the Carlson Analytics Lab.

This new project focuses on building scalable, Tableau-based dashboards that analyze usage trends across key learning technologies including Canvas, Kaltura, and Zoom.

Using a de-identified sister environment of the UDP, students are developing actionable insights into system performance, service utilization, and instructional impact at UMN.

The first capstone project explored how course design influences student success. While the findings were exploratory, the project helped refine research questions, identify data gaps, and inform a new visualization and analytics initiative. It also sparked interest in Unizin's synthetic data tools, which UMN continues to explore as a way to expand student engagement with learning analytics.

Interested in using synthetic data for student projects? Contact support@unizin.org to explore possibilities.

INTRODUCING: UNIZIN WEBINAR SERIES

Previous Sessions

Unizin has launched a new Webinar Series highlighting how member institutions are using data and digital tools to enhance teaching and learning. These 60-minute sessions feature practical insights, emerging frameworks, and campus-level success stories that we hope will inspire others across the consortium.

In **April**, we explored microcredentialing with Natalie Murray, PhD (University of Texas at Austin), and Chris Drue (Rutgers University). The panel shared how their institutions are coordinating credentialing strategies, establishing new programs, and sharing what they've learned along the way.

In **July**, Dr. Chad Brassil and Dr. Amy Goodburn from the University of Nebraska– Lincoln shared how they're empowering faculty with real-time student engagement data from the Unizin Data Platform.

You can watch both sessions now on our YouTube channel.

Coming Soon

Ray Vadnais and Jeremy Thacker will present on Spark, UC Irvine's student-centered, mobile-first platform designed to support academic success. Spark combines LMS and SIS data with UCI's student support resources to deliver personalized recommendations through a secure, easy-to-use dashboard. Join us on October 8th at 12PM CT (1PM ET) to see how this innovative tool is helping students stay on track and thrive in their academic pathways.

Kyle Unruh and Elizabeth Seidle will share the story of Penn State's Performance

Outlook initiative on December 4th at 1PM CT (2 PM ET). Learn how they're delivering weekly risk metrics to advisers with data from the Unizin Data Platform (UDP) and leveraging real-time Canvas data to support timely, data-informed decisions.

If you have a story, use case, or tool to share, we'd love to hear from you. Let us know if you'd like to present at a future webinar!

Honor Lock

We are hard at work wrapping up our Honor Lock implementation with the University of Missouri System. We are finalizing the data and gearing up to push everything to production. If you are interested in bringing your Honor Lock data into the UDP, please let us know by reaching out to support@unizin.org.
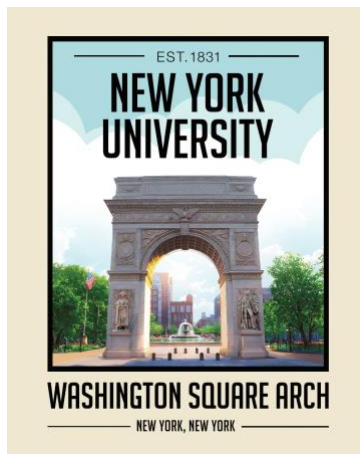
Zoom

Work is underway to explore a direct Caliper event pipeline from Zoom into the UDP. In early conversations with Zoom and the University of Minnesota, Zoom shared that they are testing their own Caliper feed - making them one of the first major video software platforms, aside from Kaltura, to lean into Caliper with us.

Once ready, this feed could allow us to ingest Zoom data directly into the UDP's event_store, enabling richer teaching and learning analytics. Zoom has what they need to send events to our endpoint, and the Modeling and Tool Integration Community of Practice is focusing on requirements for how that data will be modeled and used. We look forward to continued conversations with Zoom to move this work forward.

Blackboard Ally

We continue to work with Blackboard Ally to find the most efficient way to provide course content accessibility data for an entire member institution. At present, Penn State has had success through using the API - but has questions regarding the frequency of course scans. As next steps, and to test some of the workflows Penn State has put into practice our Data Services and Solutions (DSS) team will work with Indiana University practice, our Data Services and Solutions (DSS) team will work with Indiana University relative to what Penn State has developed, and if necessary, continue work with Blackboard on Ally data-pulls separate from their API on a daily cadence.

D2L BRIGHTSPACE MODELING (NYU)

We're making great progress on Brightspace modeling for our NYU implementation of the UDP! We are on track to provide Brightspace-driven UDP data marts by the end of August.

UDP Marts v1.0.86

In mid-July, we rolled out a new release to the UDP marts (v1.0.86) that introduces several important updates designed to improve historical visibility into tool usage and strengthen the accuracy of reporting across the platform.

Key updates include:

New Tool Usage Metrics Archive Mart

We've introduced an archive version of the Tool Usage Metrics mart to address the limitations of hourly-overwritten data. This new mart appends metrics on an hourly basis, enabling longitudinal analysis of tool engagement over time.

New Tool Low Events Mart

Built on top of the Tool Usage Metrics Archive mart, this mart identifies tools with low event volumes using a standardized flag. This allows institutions to quickly surface underused tools and investigate potential issues.

Expanded Utility Tables for Enhanced Context

Several utility tables have been updated to provide richer context in downstream marts. Notably, a new table now links EdApp IDs to consistent reporting names. Other updates include more

complete mappings in tool name and URL tables and refreshed CIP code data sourced from NCES.

Refined LTI Tool Classification Logic

We've improved how tools are flagged as LTI or redirect tools in the LTI Tool mart. This ensures more accurate classification by removing outdated logic that previously ensures more accurate classification by removing outdated logic that previously excluded some redirect tools from being properly labeled.

For additional information, see: https://resources.unizin.org/products/data-andanalytics/unizin-data-platform/release-notes/udp-marts-release-notes/1.0.86

Join the Modeling and Tool Integration Community of Practice!

As Unizin member institutions continue to invest in learning analytics, we know there's growing interest in how best to model LMS and SIS data and integrate tools like MyLA, Blackboard Ally, and others with the Unizin Data Platform (UDP).

To support this work and foster collaboration across the consortium, we're launching a Modeling and Tool Integration Community of Practice. This new group will focus on topics like:

- Data modeling strategies across LMS platforms (e.g., Brightspace, Canvas, Blackboard)
- Integration approaches for student-facing tools like MyLA and Ally
- Best practices for leveraging UDP for both research and operational goals Shared
- challenges and lessons learned when aligning institutional data models with the UCDM

This community is open to technical practitioners, analysts, researchers, and institutional leads who are engaged in or curious about integrating tools or modeling UDP data to support student success and institutional decision-making.

To join, please email kyle.unruh@unizin.org

Help Us Spotlight Consortium Work

As fall conference season approaches, we are gearing up to showcase the incredible work happening across the Unizin consortium. If your session has been accepted at EDUCAUSE, Learning Impact, or another national or regional event, let us know! We want to help amplify your work through our community channels, newsletters, and social media.

We are also planning to stand up dedicated Slack channels ahead of major conferences. These will provide a space for Unizin consortium presenters and attendees to connect, coordinate meetups, and share takeaways in real time.

If you're presenting or even just attending, we would love to hear from you.

Join the Unizin Community in Slack!

The new Unizin Community Slack space is officially live!

From this point forward, this consolidated Slack space will be the primary home for members to engage with the consortium, connect with peers and colleagues across institutions, and collaborate with Unizin staff.

We're excited about the potential of this space to support stronger collaboration, clearer communication, and a more connected Teaching and Learning community.

For questions or to learn how to join, please email support@unizin.org.