AT A GLANCE

CLIENT | Catholic and Franciscan university in Ohio

ISSUE | Seeking objective data for strategic decision making

THE CLIENT

Lourdes University is a Catholic and Franciscan higher education institution established in 1958 in Sylvania, Ohio, that offers undergraduate and graduate programs in diverse disciplines. The Princeton Review has named Lourdes a “Best in the Midwest” college for 13 consecutive years.

THE CHALLENGE

Lourdes increased infrastructure spending over the years as it transitioned from a commuter school to a more residential environment. It invested in facilities such as a wellness center, student center and residence halls. Demographic trends, improving employment conditions and regional competition for both traditional and nontraditional students resulted in enrollment challenges. Management sought BKD’s assistance to help stabilize the institution.

THE SOLUTION

BKD’s engagement team used contribution margin analysis (CMA) to help university leaders access objective data for strategic decision making. The team tapped into three years of university costing data and developed a Tableau report—a flexible, visual model with granular data and adjustable perspectives by school, department, faculty member and even course-level detail. CMA is a data-driven decision platform that helps leaders more confidently make financial decisions and address sustainability issues.

THE RESULT

BKD helped management take steps to preserve and improve operating margins as well as identify possible opportunities for improvement. The analysis also helped the Lourdes financial department extend its reach and expertise. Having the data and means to analyze it laid a solid foundation for conversations with program directors and deans about the stewardship and allocation of resources.

“We gained a data-supported understanding of the need to expand alternative revenue sources: enrollment, gift income and increase of our support base. CMA’s aggregated data supported our assertions that margins had not fallen, we were effective in controlling costs. CMA provided us with a defensible starting point for comparing year-over-year results, and by which Lourdes management and board can make confident decisions that are mission-important and actionable.”

Robert Rood, Ph.D.
Vice President for Finance and Administration

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