

King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals Builds Strong Foundation for Performance with a Leading BI solution



Overview

Challenge

Establish an information infrastructure across the University to better enable staff and students with information on demand and to implement a consolidated view of HR, finance and academic information; and to provide more strategic insight into budget, student and University operations.

Why IBM?

IBM Cognos offered a simple all-in-one solution that included the technology, implementation, ongoing support and education that King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals required to consolidate all University data cross-departmentally

Solution

The IBM Cognos 8 BI system enabled a streamlined approach for King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals to view the university's data from a single portal.

Key Benefits

Real-time view of academic and administrative reports; continuous access to key data; the ability to run ad-hoc reports and spot trends; create customized dashboards, the ability to do on-the-fly data with analysis studio.

"The IBM Cognos 8 BI reports are essential to the smooth operation of our department offices, and the data analysis capabilities of the solution are critical as we compete to attract and retain students."

– Dr. Muhammad Al-Khaldi, Chair, Raed Executive Committee at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals

Referred to as “the MIT” of its region, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) is one of the most prestigious University in Saudi Arabia focused on science and technology. The University currently has approximately 9,000 students and 3,300 employees, 1,100 of which are faculty.

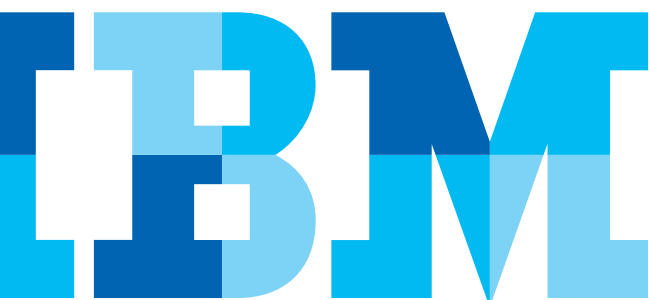
The successful management of Saudi Arabia's vast petroleum and mineral resources poses a complex and exciting challenge for scientific, technical and management education. To meet this challenge, the University has adopted advanced education in the fields of science, engineering, and management. Maintaining excellence in these areas helps to promote leadership and service in the Kingdom's petroleum, petrochemical, manufacturing, services and banking industries, among others. The University also conducts significant research in various fields of science and technology.

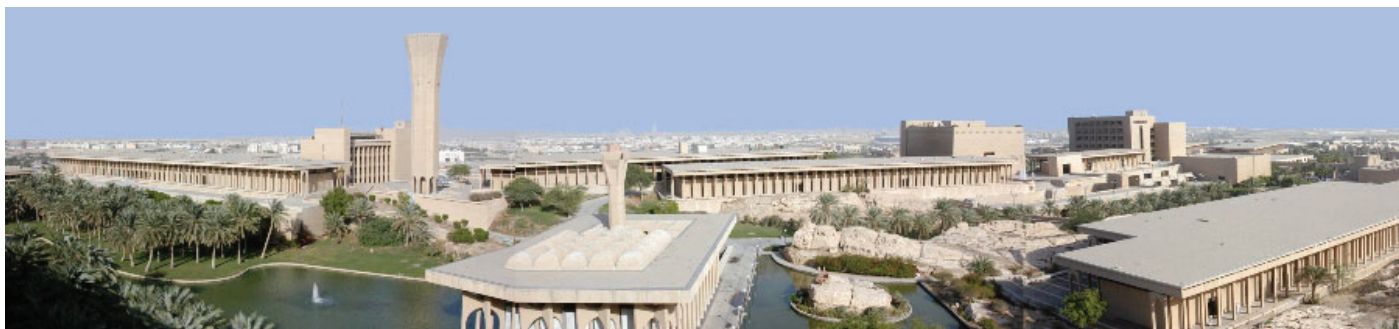
The campus is situated in Dhahran near the beautiful Arabian Gulf and near the port city of Dammam. It is surrounded by the oil-producing town of Abqaiq, as well as the ancient oasis of Al-Hasa.

Challenges faced

King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) had always viewed itself as a technology pioneer in its region, having been the first University in the 1960's to invest in hardware and software technology. When they wanted to maintain their reputation as the one to beat, they set their sights on deploying a business intelligence (BI) tool for monitoring performance across the University as well as for reporting needs across every department. KFUPM had very limited reporting capabilities, and administrators needed to deliver appropriate data to decision-makers efficiently and needed a better way to access their data whenever it was needed.

To help build a better foundation for higher performance across the University, KFUPM decided to deploy the IBM® Cognos® 8 BI solution for its 3,300 administrative staffers. The selection process and implementation was led by Mr. Iftikhar Nadeem, Information Strategy Advisor at KFUPM, with leadership support from Dr. Khaled Al-Sultan, Rector, and Dr. Muhammad Al-Khaldi, Chair, Raed Executive Committee. KFUPM selected IBM Cognos 8 BI to enable users to





integrate its reporting and analysis processes in real-time, gaining immediate insight into student information and University performance. They also wanted the ability to look at new perspectives, and needed business intelligence capabilities that could facilitate keeping pace with changes in student, administrative and budget data.

“The IBM Cognos 8 BI solution makes it easier to get data into the hands of those who need it, and in a timely fashion,” says Mr. Iftikhar Nadeem, Information Strategy Advisor at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals. “We now have the capability to create a new way of thinking across the entire organization, and take a more strategic approach to each decision we make across every department from Student Housing, Faculty, Admissions, HR, Finance, Research and Administration.”

Strategy followed

The University’s BI initiative included the creation of a three-step methodology to ensure a successful BI implementation that integrated seamlessly within their existing platform and infrastructure. The first step was to create a BI competency center (BICC) team, a group comprised of staff with different skill sets, who would help create the University’s BI strategy. The second step was the actual RFP process, which included a list of questions compiled by the BICC team as well as many demo sessions and on-site training sessions at IBM.

The third step to ensure a smooth and rapid deployment was to work with a system integrator. KFUPM signed on to work with Wipro. “We had a lot of questions and a lot of work ahead of us, but with the help of Wipro, the IBM professional training and education and our deployment team internally, the implementation went smoothly, especially considering the vast amount of data we are dealing with, with such a broad set of data for employees, students and faculty,” states Nadeem.

In addition to technical support, the IBM Cognos Professional Services team provided KFUPM with key best practices and knowledge sharing. “There was constant communication every step of the way,” states Nadeem. “We were literally able to uncover every single corner of the system during those training sessions and we felt we had good project management

support as well, arming us with the knowledge we needed to execute on a strategic BI initiative at the University that received strong support and feedback from the outset.”

KFUPM implemented IBM Cognos 8 BI in the fall of 2007 as the framework to help transform the University into more of a strategy-focused organization and to gain more insight into all aspects of the University’s operations. KFUPM also wanted to refine its budgeting and planning process, to make things simpler and faster so the school could be more responsive to their public sector funding.

At present, almost everyone at the faculty and administrative level uses the solution in some capacity and there are currently 100 power users accessing the solution a few times daily including KFUPM’s upper-level management. In addition, students are encouraged to run pre-selected reports as well. Since implementing the system, KFUPM currently analyzes more than 60 different metrics, runs more than 350 analytical reports, two scorecards and more than 20 Dashboards.

Benefits realized

From the outset, KFUPM could see immediate changes in the way they were doing business, as they quickly began to incorporate business intelligence and data analysis into their everyday work agendas. Administrators could now see pertinent information in one report, generated in mere seconds and with just the information they wanted to view. This capability has now allowed the staff to approach their programs more strategically and with some historical context. A wide range of administrators, including department heads and professors are running reports on items that include class rosters, course offerings, account balances, overdue library books and student graduation eligibility.

Based on all these successes, KFUPM continues to innovate and has rolled out one of the most talked about reports on campus – specifically designed for their students getting ready to graduate. This report allows students to receive a comprehensive report on anything outstanding they may owe including university fees, lab equipment, library books and more. Without being cleared by the system, students had run into the roadblock of not being able to receive their degree on



the day of graduation. Prior to the implementation of the IBM Cognos 8 BI solution, students had to walk to as many as 14 separate buildings across the sprawling campus to get the various department heads signatures, but now they know what they owe, if anything, by running this simple and customizable report. Graduating has never felt easier.

“That data is very important to our present and potential students,” notes Dr. Khaled Al-Sultan, Rector of KFUPM. “They want to know that if they come to our University, they’re not going to run into any loopholes and not have the opportunity to receive their degree over an administrative issue. On graduation day the students want to move out and move on with the next phase of their lives. These reports have been a huge win for us as the administrators and have been cheered by students. Successful students help make a successful school”.

Additionally, based on the success of the deployment and the substantial increase in insight into student and University performance, the BICC team at KFUPM will soon develop an executive dashboard providing the rector and vice rectors with quick insight into key performance measures.

Regardless of their role, everyone who has used the solution has walked away impressed.

“The biggest benefit is being able to use the solution to get key data into the hands of our management,” adds Dr. Al-Khaldi, “We have been very successful in giving them the ability to use the reports to their benefit. They now have the capacity to analyze data in ways they’ve never had before – all within just a few moments.”

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