



Informatica™

Flagship State University

More Data, More Grants:

Flagship State University Identifies Grant Funding Opportunities Faster

"Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services saves us an incredible amount of time. Without it, modernizing our systems would take much longer."

Data Architect
Flagship State University



Goals	Solution	Results
Give analysts faster access to research data stored in the university's transactional systems while saving time for data architects	Use Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to bring data together and provide a better user experience for reporting and analysis	Reduces daily database transfer time by 75 percent
Empower analysts to identify opportunities for grant funding more quickly to give the university a competitive edge	Bring data from Oracle and SQL Server into cloud applications such as Redshift and Salesforce with Informatica Cloud Data Integration	Accelerates the application process for competitive research grants, putting the university in a better position to receive funding
Prepare to modernize and consolidate core university systems and transition to cloud-based solutions while keeping research data consistent and up-to-date	Move toward real-time automation and data integration with Salesforce using Informatica Cloud Application Integration	Enables the university to replace legacy and homegrown research applications to reduce cost and complexity while offering new functionality

Business Requirements:

- Use a cloud-ready integration tool
- Minimize development time by utilizing pre-built connectors
- Integrate with Tableau for visualization

About Flagship State University

This flagship state university and a global leader in research, entrepreneurship, and innovation, with more than 40,000 students, 14,000 faculty and staff, and 350,000 alumni.



One of the nation's preeminent public research universities, this Flagship State University discovers and shares new knowledge every day, from exploring the impact and movement of malaria using satellite data and geospatial modeling, to improving learning outcomes for deafblind children. The university research addresses the global challenges society faces today, including terrorism, cybersecurity, drug evaluation, food safety, and climate change.

To support cutting-edge research and provide the best experiences to students, faculty, and staff, the university relies on data stored deep in its transactional systems. Like most large universities, it has a variety of decentralized applications and data sources that sprung up over decades. Until recently, delivering timely and trusted information for reporting and analysis for activities such as completing grant applications was a challenge for the university's small team of data architects. All data integration and data movement happened via Java-based batch processes, which were tedious to build and time-consuming to run.

As the university began to adopt cloud solutions such as Amazon Redshift for data warehousing and Salesforce for CRM, it wanted to give analysts faster access to data while saving time for data architects. For instance, every weekday morning, data architects had to manually initiate and monitor a database transfer of research grant and proposal data from MySQL to Redshift, which took an hour and 20 minutes to complete. As a result, data analysts typically couldn't begin looking at the most recent data until 11 a.m. This slowed their ability to apply for competitive research grants, potentially putting funding at risk.

To empower analysts to identify opportunities for funding faster, and accelerate the application process for research grants, the university began looking for a next-generation iPaaS (integration platform as a service) solution that it could also leverage to keep data consistent while modernizing systems and consolidating applications.

"With our data sitting in so many disparate systems, we needed a toolset that would allow us to bring that data together in an automated way so that people can do analyses, write reports, and gain new insights," says the Data Architect at Flagship State University. "In addition, as we prepare to replace our core student and HR systems, potentially with cloud-native solutions, we will need more flexible and powerful data integration capabilities."

Simplifying cloud data integration

The university looked at several integration tools, including Talend, SAS, SAP BusinessObjects, and IBM InfoSphere. After thoroughly reviewing the capabilities of each, it selected Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services to complement its cloud data warehouse and CRM applications with industry-leading data and application integration capabilities, including extract, transform, and load (ETL).



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"We wanted strong integration with cloud technologies, and Informatica is the leader in that area," says the Data Architect. "We're becoming more invested in cloud services such as Amazon Redshift and S3, and some of the other integration platforms weren't supporting those yet. Informatica stood out as a solution that has a strong foundation already, yet is consistently introducing new features and improvements to keep up with the changing data landscape."

The university used Informatica Cloud Data Integration to automate previously manual Java-based batch processes, bringing data from legacy transactional systems into cloud applications to enable more timely reporting and analysis. It used pre-built Informatica Cloud Connectors for Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, Redshift, S3, Salesforce, and REST Web Services to speed time to value for integrations. As the university replaces on-premises, student-facing applications with Salesforce, it will use Informatica Cloud Application Integration to bring in data from Oracle databases and update course availability and other information in real time.

"We'd be foolish to adopt cloud solutions such as Redshift and Salesforce but still use archaic, on-premises tools to move the data around," says the Data Architect. "Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services saves us an incredible amount of time. Without it, modernizing our systems would take much longer. And the benefits are ongoing, because the more we consolidate our application footprint, the more we free up our developers for other projects."

Accelerating the grant application process

The daily database process that transfers updated grant data into the Redshift data warehouse is now automated to kick off at 6 a.m. The transfer now takes less than 20 minutes, a 75 percent reduction in time. Data architects no longer have to initiate or monitor the process, which saves them an average of 6 hours per week, giving them 300 more hours per year to work on more strategic and valuable tasks.

Analysts can now work with fresh data as soon as they begin work in the morning, using Tableau to visualize the data. That means they can start the grant application process faster with fresh data, which can help them achieve higher levels of success.

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Inside The Solution:

- Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services
 - » Informatica Cloud Data Integration
 - » Informatica Cloud Application Integration

Fast access to actionable data improves both operational and trend analysis for the university, helping it verify that funding is appropriately documented and awarded while enabling timely and accurate reporting on top sponsors and research groups.

"Our researchers are going after sponsors to give them proposals for grant money that they want to use for their research," says the Data Architect. "Getting the right data in their hands as fast as possible and being able to report on that definitely improves the amount of grants we get and the amount of money we have available for research."

Improving user experiences and reporting

Moving forward, the university is gradually replacing and consolidating its legacy applications to reduce cost and complexity while offering new functionality to students, faculty, and staff. While technology modernization is a major undertaking for any university, it now has an advantage. More groups within the university are coming forward and asking for help in moving and integrating their data, which is exactly what the university's data architects had hoped for.

"What we're aiming for with Informatica is to offer a cloud data integration service to any group within the university that wants to use it," says the Data Architect. "We'll reach out and say, 'hey, we'll move that data for you.' But in turn, our own selfish goal is to be able to take that data and integrate it with applications across campus to continually improve the user experience and provide better reporting."



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