Using Accudemia for Service Assessment and Security

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Abstract
The University Library at California State University San Marcos implemented the Accudemia student tracking software system this semester in our brand-new 24/5 space to determine the number of visitors during operational hours, as well as how the space and services are being used. Users swipe in upon entering the space and swipe out upon exiting, providing a credential check to determine current University affiliation for security. We also measure use duration, choices of study spaces, technologies, services, and desire for a safe, overnight facility on our campus. The power of Accudemia lies in integration with other data from across campus: touchpoints for student services, careful cross-referencing with enrollment and course completion information, and measures of student success like year-to-year retention and time to graduation. We'll share our assessment plan and some reporting available within this tool, which is already in use by campus centers like the Writing Lab and cultural centers within our student union facility.

What is Accudemia?
Accudemia is a cloud-based product from Engineerica Systems, Inc., a Florida Corporation founded in 1994 by College of Engineering and Computer Science alumni from UCF. Accudemia was developed to manage academic centers and provides institutions with the ability to track and collect feedback on labs and center visits, the purpose of those visits, scheduling appointments, and much more.

How is it Being Used on Campus and in the Library?
Campus
There are currently 34 centers across campus using Accudemia. Our campus ITS is responsible for loading active students into the system along with the courses they are enrolled in.

Library
There are two centers set up in the library:
- Research Help Desk – used for scheduling appointments with Subject Librarians
- 24/5 Zone – used to track student usage and activity in the new 24/5 Zone

24/5 Zone
There are two Accudemia stations set up in the 24/5 Zone, one at each of the entrances into the space. Students who use the 24/5 Zone after midnight are required to have a CSUSM ID and to sign-in and sign-out of the area.

What Data is Tracked?
In the 24/5 zone, students are asked the nature of their visit or more specifically which services they will be using and which classes or subjects they will be studying.

What Reports are Available?
There are several canned reports which can be run. Reports parameters can be set for a specific lab, date range, and desired data. The reports can be downloaded in pdf or exported into excel for additional manipulation. Samples of reports include the following:

- Attendance Summary Report by Service
- Attendance Summary Report by Subject
- Attendance by Service and Subject Area

We are able to use the data captured in Accudemia to assess:

- Number of students visiting our space (one-time and repeat users)
- Duration of their visits
- Unique service need(s) triggered their visit
- Classes or subject areas most often studied

This data may be used in combination with other data gathered in the space such as hourly gate counts and walk-through assessments to get a clearer picture of how our 24/5 space is being used. There may be other campus-wide uses for the data down the line looking at student lab visitation habits and overall student success, such as retention and years to graduation.

Challenges Encountered
While the software is fairly problem-free and easy to use, we did experience some technical and operational challenges:

- Technical
  - Lab/Center access is IP based and browser specific
  - Campus WiFi issues – chrome books unable to connect

- Product Restrictions
  - Auto logout at 11:59PM – unable track visitation beyond current day

- Operator
  - Unsuccessful user logins
    - Unable to login – not currently enrolled
    - Incomplete logins – no purpose or courses entered
  - Users not logging out – auto-logout is set for 8 hours

- Space
  - Unique space with 4 distinct areas and as many exits (marked below) making it difficult to monitor coming/goings and logins

Trouble-shooting and Potential Future Changes
For each of the challenges above, we have either already taken measures or have ideas on future adjustments to help overcome them, including the following:

- To remedy the Technical challenges...
  - Created manual sign-in sheet – to hand-key later
  - Consider adding desk computer as a lab sign-in station

- To address challenges with restriction of the Product...
  - Made procedural changes to ensure users who login before midnight sign-in again

- In response to challenges with User/Operator error:
  - Trained users on sign-in early on
  - May consider removing the requirement for course selection in the future to reduce login errors
  - Changed auto-logout to 6 hours
  - Used manual sign-in sheet for users unable to login

- Improved Accudemia signage

In response to challenges with the Space itself:
- Improved directional signage

Conclusion
Overall, Accudemia is meeting our needs and expectations. The program was easy to set-up and manage on the staff side and is simple for the students to use. The reports give us the data we need to track visitors and assess their use of our 24/5 space and services.