

Partnering with the Majors: A Process Approach to Increasing IS Enrollment

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ABSTRACT

Information systems (IS) programs have been struggling with declining enrollment since 2001. The IS community has addressed the enrollment crisis by sharing best practices in journals and at conferences. Typically, such practices focus on improving enrollment through either (1) recruitment events or (2) program/curriculum development initiatives. While such efforts have been helpful, additional work is needed to examine this issue in a more systematic fashion within the interdependent process of recruitment, retention and placement. Furthermore, current research has been largely silent on the potential role that current IS majors may have in recruiting new students into the major – students recruiting students. This paper shares the enrollment initiatives that Baylor University has implemented over the past 2.5 years that have addressed both of these issues. First, we report on how we embedded enrollment initiatives within the overall student development process starting with recruiting students into the major, retaining them and then culminating in placement upon graduation. Secondly, we present a novel student-driven approach to enrollment; where current IS majors are at the heart of the effort. Our IS majors work in close collaboration with IS faculty and corporate recruiters to draw students into the major and help them find jobs. The paper shares these initiatives along with best practices and results.

Keywords: Enrollment, Retention, Job Placement, Education, Action Research