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Meeting the Challenge of IS Curriculum Modernization: A Tutorial on the Successful Overhaul and Continuous Improvement of the IS Curriculum at Ohio University

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TUTORIAL SYNOPSIS

The IS department in the Ohio University College of Business recently completed a comprehensive curriculum overhaul, which spanned the last 2 years. This process involved discarding most course material and starting from scratch in the development of an entirely new curriculum, which was designed to be consistent, highly integrated, more modern and reflective of the “real world”. Through a highly collaborative and cooperative effort between department instructors, student focus groups and our executive advisory board, this project has been a tremendous success. New courses, which meet aggressive improvement goals, have been successfully rolled out in most areas over the past five quarters.

The decision to move forward with this initiative was driven by consistent concerns expressed by faculty, students and the IS curriculum advisory board regarding the following:

- Lack of clarity regarding the overall goals of the program,
- General inconsistencies across the curriculum,
- Use of outdated course materials,
- Methodologies, tools and deliverables for system development that did not reflect the “real world”.

Therefore, the goal of this project was to develop an overall vision for the IS program, and to use it to drive the development of a curriculum in which all courses were consistent, highly integrated, more modern and reflective of actual industry development methodologies, tools and deliverables. Our preliminary research has validated the new curriculum, as we have seen elevated course evaluations and highly positive feedback from students, employers and the executive advisory board. It is our expectation that enrollment in the IS major will also increase significantly as a result of this project.

In this tutorial, we plan to describe the details of our curriculum overhaul process, the resulting System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) curriculum model and descriptions of the new courses. We will also present in detail, two of our marquis courses: *MIS 201 – Information Analysis and Design* and *MIS 420 - Advanced System Development*, sharing course content, deliverables, sample projects and innovative ideas. Throughout this tutorial, we will offer anecdotes and contextual quotes to make the session lively and real. Our goal in conducting this tutorial is to share our success story in the hopes that other IS departments will benefit from our lessons learned.

Keywords

IS Curricula, Information Systems Courses, Information Systems Pedagogy