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Engaging IS Students Through Student Clubs and Chapters

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Engaging IS Students Through Student Clubs and Chapters

Panel

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Abstract

Despite the presence of information technology (IT) in our consumer and professional lives, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the increasing need for qualified IT workers to meet organizational demands for technology infrastructure and services, many Information Systems (IS) programs and departments struggle to attract and retain students. In this panel, we will examine solutions to this major problem through the lens of engaging students via clubs and chapters. We will discuss a) how student clubs can attract students to IS majors, b) how these organizations can support the professional development of their members, and c) how student groups can serve as a bridge between current students and alumni. Based on the experiences of the panelists, we propose that IS student clubs and chapters can be powerful allies to IS departments and faculty in helping to maintain or increase the vitality and footprint of IS programs in business schools.

Keywords

IS programs, student engagement, IS departments, student groups, student clubs, student chapters

Panel Overview and Objectives

While the presence of global information technology (IT) continues to increase rapidly the labor markets have not been able to provide sufficient qualified IT professionals to meet organizational demands for technology infrastructure and services (Korn Ferry, 2018). While IT careers are widely available and lucrative, many Information Systems (IS) programs and departments struggle to attract and retain students (Grand View Research, 2022). In this panel, we will examine solutions to this major problem through the lens of engaging students via clubs and chapters.

All panelists are active in the AIS community and are successful current or former advisors of various AIS Student Chapters. Based on their expertise and background, panelists will examine the lifecycle of a

business student and discuss strategies for leveraging IS student organizations to have a positive effect on the recruitment, retention, and placement of IS students. Specifically, panelists will discuss how IS student clubs and chapters can attract new IS students either from other majors or the many uncommitted students. Panelists will also provide evidence of IS student clubs and student chapters complementing the content covered in classes, by encouraging the presence of guest speakers in both technical and professional development areas. Finally, panelists will discuss how the establishment of IS student clubs and chapters can provide a bridge to alums, enhancing the connections of IS departments with corporate partners.

Regarding recruitment, the panel will share strategies that can facilitate the conversion of non-IS students to IS majors. Early in their undergraduate studies, college students might be undecided regarding their majors or pursuing finance and accounting due to parental influence. The panel will talk about some approaches taken by IS student clubs and chapters that led to students considering and pursuing an IS major.

Converting a student to an IS major is just the first step. The student needs to feel supported throughout their studies. The panel will also discuss strategies pursued by IS student clubs and chapters that can help IS students feel part of the IS community. With faculty and staff constantly asked to “do more” with the same amount of resources, IS student clubs and chapters can increase the outreach to IS students and provide both academic and emotional support in times of need.

Career placement tends to be an activity for which IS student clubs and chapters can play a very important role. Although students might neglect messages for professional events that might come from faculty and staff through “official” channels, they might respond better to communications coming from fellow students. IS student clubs and chapters can also organize events (for example, company visits, technical workshops, and resume reviews) that go beyond the availability of faculty and staff, complementing the official efforts in preparing IS students for a successful career.

Finally, IS student clubs and chapters can also serve as a bridge to alums, helping the IS department to maintain an alumni network that brings additional resources (in the form of job postings and technical expertise, for example) to IS students. If a student was a member of an IS student club or chapter, it is possible that the student will carry a stronger relationship with the department that supported her during her student life.

Panel Layout/Design

The approach to the panel is conversational in nature, encouraging the participation of the audience at each step. After short initial introductions, the moderators will ask panelists about their clubs and chapters’ experiences related to the recruitment of IS students. After that segment, audience members will be able to ask follow-up questions. That will be followed by the same structure with regards to questions related to retention, placement, and alumni relations. The panel will end with a general Q&A involving audience members.

Panel Participants

Alex Lopes (Moderator). Alex Lopes is the current AIS Associate Vice-President for Student Chapters. After working as a business analyst and consultant and several years of teaching, including directing the MSIS Program at the University of Cincinnati, Alex joined the Kelley School in 2011. He has taught in several programs, including the MSIS, the MS in IT Management, the MBA (in-residence and online), the Undergraduate, and several masters degrees and certificates. He created the Kelley Undergraduate Technology Consulting Workshop and served as its first director, and has led several international business courses with learning experiences in Brazil, China, Guatemala, India, and Thailand. His teaching focuses on artificial intelligence, automation, Big Data, strategic IT and digital transformation, process modeling, Agile development, Design Thinking, data intelligence, and consulting skills. As Associate Chair of Kelley Direct Online Programs, Alex’s responsibilities primarily focus on managing Kelley’s six online MS degrees and their edX programs, which include two master’s degrees and two MicroMasters.

Michael A. Erskine. Michael A. Erskine serves as the faculty advisor for the AIS Student Chapter at Middle Tennessee State University for which he was awarded the AIS Student Chapters Chapter Advisor of the Year award in 2020. In 2022, he was also recognized as the AIS Student Chapter Volunteer of the Year.

Michael received his Ph.D. in Computer Science and Information Systems from the University of Colorado Denver and is an Assistant Professor at Middle Tennessee State University. Previously, he served as the Director of the Educational Technology Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver. His research interests include technology governance, educational technology, location analytics, technology workforce competencies, and disaster management. Michael's research has been presented at numerous international, national, and regional conferences. Additionally, his work has been published in several journals, including *Information Systems Frontiers*, *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing* and *Journal of Computer Information Systems*.

Rich Klein. Dr. Rich Klein serves as Vice Chancellor of Strategic Institution and Student Success at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He holds dual faculty appointments in the College of Business as well as College of Information Systems and Technology. Dr. Klein previously served as Associate Dean of the R. Kirk Landon Undergraduate School of Business at Florida International University's College of Business and Interim Director at the college's School of Accounting. He is a full Professor in the Department of Information Systems and Business Analytics, where he previously served as Chair. His research examines healthcare information systems and informatics, electronic business initiatives, and inter-organizational information systems. Dr. Klein has published work in top journals, including *Decision Sciences*, the *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Information and Management*, the *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *MIS Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Operations Management*. He also serves as an Associate Editor for the *European Journal of Information Systems* as well as co-chaired healthcare related tracks at both the Americas Conference on Information Systems and the European Conference on Information Systems. Additionally, Dr. Klein has over a decade of industry experience with Automatic Data Processing and the First Data Corporation, as well as consulting experience for Fiserv, General Electric Healthcare Systems, Sage Health Management Solutions, United Parcel Service, and the United States Army.

Tom Meservy. Tom Meservy is a faculty advisor for the AIS student chapter at Brigham Young University (10 years) and was also an advisor to the AIS student chapter (AMIS) at the University of Memphis (4 years). He has been involved in the broader AIS student chapter initiative since the beginning and has enjoyed working with others on the AIS student chapter steering committee, coordinating the evaluation of student chapter awards, and hosting the AIS Student Chapter Leadership Conference. He helped to initiate the AIS Student Competitions and has been involved with those over several years. He has published in the top journals (MISQ, ISR, JMIS, JAIS) and conferences (ICIS, HICSS, AMCIS) in our field. He is an advocate of the student experience and sees most of what he does as working with others to build a vibrant community. He received the AIS Student Chapter Advisor of the Year award in 2021. He would love to interact with you if you are thinking about starting a student chapter.

Steve Sclarow. Steve Sclarow is the former faculty advisor for the AIS student chapter at Temple University and active faculty advisor to the chapter's student run consulting group. During Steve's tenure, Temple AIS was awarded the 2019-2020 Student Chapter of the Year, and 2020-2021 Distinguished Student Chapter awards. Steve is the recipient of the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 AIS Student Chapters, Volunteer of the Year Awards. He is an active participant on the AIS Student Chapter Advisory Board, developing content for the AIS Student Chapter Leadership Conference and was the 2022 Microsoft Analytics Challenge Faculty Organizer. Steve first joined Temple University's Fox School of Business as an adjunct professor of Management Information Systems in 2016. He joined the school as a full time Assistant Professor in January 2017. Steve has taught multiple sections of Information Systems in Organizations, Digital Design & Innovation, Design Thinking and Process Improvement & Innovation in the undergraduate, graduate and MBA programs.

Gladys Simpson. Gladys Simpson has been the faculty advisor for the AIS student chapter at Florida International University since 2015. During her tenure FIU's AIS student chapter has won several awards and actively participated in the Annual Student Leadership Conferences. She has over 25 years of experience in the management, design and development of information systems and the application of quantitative methods working for private and public organizations. She is a Fulbright alumni and member of the Inter-American network of OAS scholars. She teaches courses in Information Systems and Business Analytics at the undergraduate and graduate level and is a Faculty Fellow for FIU's Center for the Advancement of Teaching. She is one of the Faculty Directors of FIU ATOM Think Tank initiative which provides students opportunities to engage with industry partners in the solution of real world problems.

She is currently an e-board member of the Latin American Chapter for the Association Information Systems of AIS.

Equipment Requirements

A data projector and microphones, including one for audience members to ask questions, are the only equipment requirements. Depending on the size of the room, microphones might not be needed.

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