



**School of Business**

**Humboldt State University  
School of Business  
Undergraduate Program Marketing Plan**

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## ***Executive Summary***

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The School of Business undergraduate program has decreased from over 800 students in the late 1980s to approximately 300 students today. This marketing plan lists concise recommendations to attract more students from each of the identified target markets. These recommendations have been driven by extensive research that covers topics such as current HSU business student satisfaction and what potential students look for when selecting a business program.

Our research and recommendations were designed around our original objectives of:

- Identify key factors affecting the drop in undergraduate enrollment
- Define our target market(s) and potential future target markets
- Identify current marketing and promotional efforts

The School of Business does not have control over the place or price of the program itself. However, it does have influence over both the product and the promotion, the basis of this research project. Recommendations have been categorized into four categories:

- **Curriculum-** Focused on the design and offerings of the actual program
- **Networking-** Designed to develop relationships, primarily in the local community
- **Marketing-** Efforts to promote the program to the target market
- **Recruitment-** Involves attracting and retaining new full-time faculty and students

In order to effectively market and promote the School of Business, we have identified two target markets:

- **Primary Target Market-** Includes local high school seniors, College of the Redwoods transfer students and current HSU undeclared students.
- **Secondary Target Market-** Includes high school students and junior college transfer students from the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California, as well as out-of-state and international students.

Due to the nature of our research, we have limited our recommendations primarily to the local target market. We have made recommendations for further study focusing on the secondary target market.

The strategies of the research design and subsequent recommendations focus on capitalizing opportunities that make the most significant impact on enrollment in the shortest period of time, with the least amount of effort. Since not every recommendation can make a large impact in a short period of time, we have segmented them into three implementation categories.

- **Stage I-** Easy-to-implement and designed to create immediate growth
- **Stage II-** Substantial growth opportunities with a longer period of implementation
- **Stage III-** Need further research and development prior to implementation

## ***Scope of the Plan***

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This plan was designed to provide recommendations regarding how to effectively target regional students. This group is defined as Humboldt County High School students, College of the Redwoods transfer students, and current HSU undeclared students. While we recognize target markets exist outside of the region due to limited resources we narrowed the focus of this plan to groups that we determined could most effectively impact enrollment immediately.

## ***Primary Research***

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### ***Research Objectives<sup>1</sup>***

The research objectives of this plan were designed to guide us in determining an effective strategy to increase enrollment in the School of Business. The questions designed for research purposes help define the current status and future recommendations for the following three primary objectives:

#### ***a) Identify Key Factors Affecting the Drop in Undergraduate Enrollment***

- Our goal was to identify what causes students to select Humboldt State University. For example, where they come from, what they like about the school, and what factors they used when considering alternate universities. We also interviewed guidance counselors who help these students with their school selection, current professors in the School of Business, and local community business owners.

#### ***b) Identify Current Target Market(s) and Potential Future Target Market(s)***

- Currently there is no definition of a target market in the School of Business. We researched the attitudes, personalities and other demographics of both the current student body and those prospective students we identified as being potential targets. By defining and understanding the behaviors of this group, we were better able to tailor both our curriculum recommendations and marketing recommendations to meet the needs of the students in the target markets.

#### ***c) Identify Current Marketing and Promotion Efforts***

- In order to successfully increase enrollment in the School of Business, we defined our target market and focus all marketing efforts around the needs and desires of that group. It is imperative to understand how benefits of the School of Business are currently promoted. Is the School of Business fully evoking the power of alumni and providing relevant and engaging materials to guidance counselors? Are potential students aware that HSU offers significant advantages over other CSU campuses? The information we uncovered allowed us to create

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<sup>1</sup> See Research Proposal, Appendix 1

a customized promotions strategy that will help position the HSU School of Business at the top of the list for the students in our target market.

### **Research Design**

The collection of information from prospective students, current students, and members of the academic and professional communities, gave us prime information on where efforts should be focused. It is important to consider all individuals involved with the School of Business at Humboldt State and academic advisors who help guide students to Humboldt State University.

In order to compile a credible base of information from which final recommendations were made, it was imperative to obtain an effective cross-section sample. In alignment with the goals of this study the following groups were targeted:

Defined Population	Sampling Method	Sample Size Obtained	Data Gathering Method
Current HSU Business Students	Random	101	Paper survey administered in person
Current HSU Undeclared Students	Random	27	Paper survey administered in person
Current College of the Redwoods Business Students	Random	134	Paper survey administered in person
HSU School of Business Faculty	Population	8	In-depth interviews conducted in person
HSU Undeclared Academic Advisors	Population	1	In-depth interview conducted in person
High School Guidance Counselors	Judgment	3	In-depth interviews conducted over the phone
College of the Redwoods Academic Advisors & Business Faculty	Population	9	In-depth interviews conducted both over the phone (8) and in person (1)
Local Business Owners	Judgment	3	In-depth interviews conducted over the phone

## *Survey Research*

### *Analysis*

The first step in the analysis of the survey data was to check for entry errors. This was done by running descriptive statistics on each question and verifying that all values were within the acceptable range.<sup>2</sup> Next, we determined which questions we could do valid measures of central tendency for. For each of these questions we examined the mean, median, and range. This gave us an initial impression of the results that were then followed up by more in depth analysis. Tallies and percents were computed for each question. This information, allowed us to specifically gauge our participants attitudes towards the underlying subjects the surveys were designed to illicit. These tallies led to cross tabulations in an attempt to understand potential differences in attitudes among the various groups surveyed. When appropriate a non-parametric test (Mann-Whitney) was performed to test for statistically significant differences between question results.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix 5 for coding instructions for all surveys.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 7 for descriptive survey data including Mann-Whitney tests.

## **Current HSU Business Majors (n=101)**

### **Methodology**

The feelings and attitudes of undergraduate business majors were assessed by passing out surveys in business courses being taught in the spring 2006 session. These classes were chosen using our judgment in order to ensure we were reaching our target audience. Classes were picked that had the highest likelihood of containing business majors. Students in each class were asked to notify the survey proctor if they had already participated in the survey to ensure redundant data was not collected.

### **Limitations**

One limitation faced in surveying undergraduate business majors was the amount of student overlap in the classes available to survey. We ensured that no student took the survey more than once, and were successful in reaching a sample size of 101 out of a target of 150. We believe, however, that the sample we gathered is still representative of the population of business majors. Once the data was analyzed it was found that Question seven did not illicit the information from students we had hoped it would. This resulted from incorrect wording of the question. It reads “Have you recommend the HSU Business Program?” This is both grammatically incorrect and semantically not what we wanted. It would have been more effective to have worded it “Would you recommend the HSU Business Program?” This would capture a measure of satisfaction. In our case we found that students answered whether or not they had actually recommended the program.

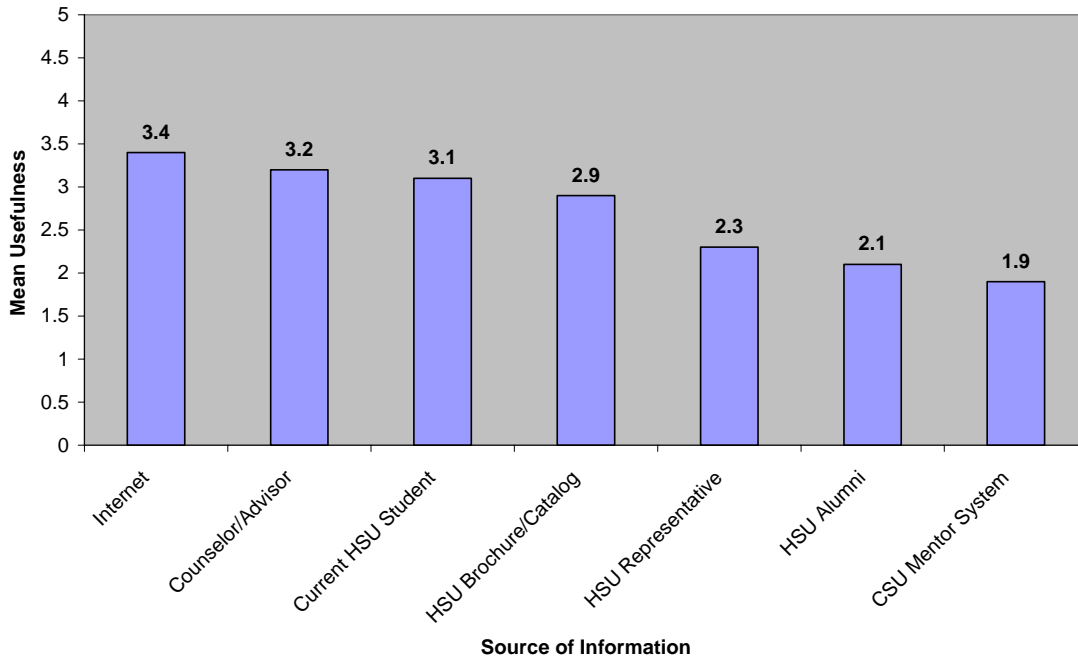
**Results**

1. How useful were the following sources in hearing about Humboldt State University (HSU) Business program ?

	Degree of usefulness				
	Extremely not useful	Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Internet	1	2	3	4	5
A counselor/adviser	1	2	3	4	5
A current HSU student	1	2	3	4	5
HSU brochure/catalog	1	2	3	4	5
HSU representative	1	2	3	4	5
HSU alumni	1	2	3	4	5
CSU Mentor system	1	2	3	4	5
Other	1	2	3	4	5

N = 94\*

**Undergrads Find the Internet Most Useful**



Students found the Internet a statistically significantly more useful information tool than HSU Brochures, HSU Representatives, HSU Alumni, and the CSU Mentor System (see appendix 10).

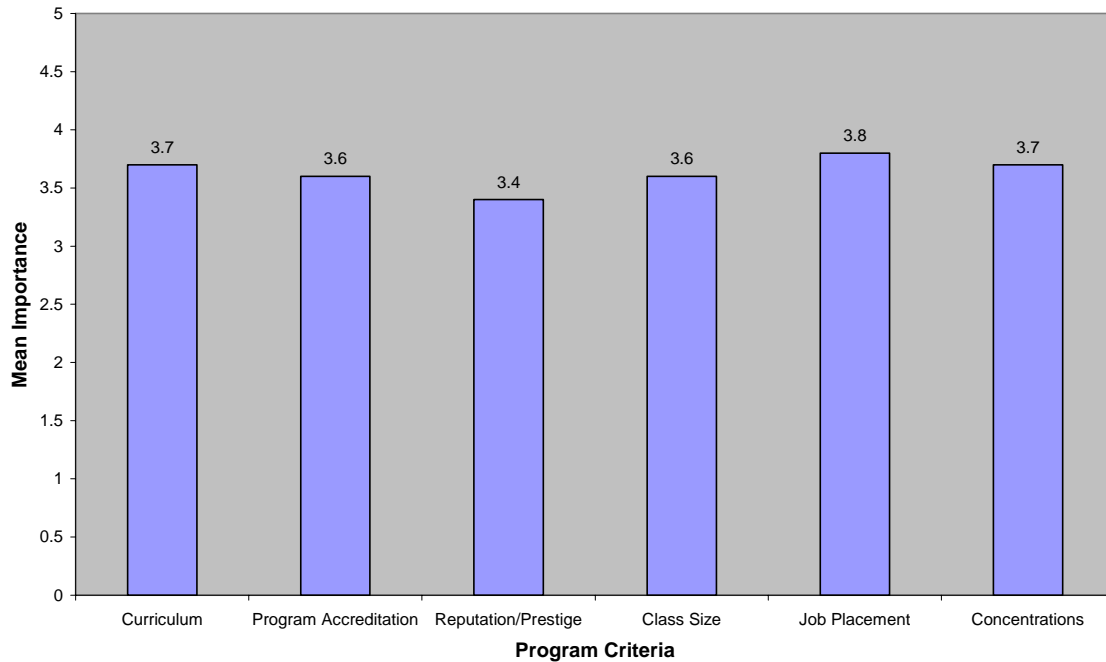
\* The N values presented in this section are average values based on the number actual responses to each component of a question. For example in this first question 99 people gave a value for the Internet, while only 95 gave a value for Counselor/Advisor.

2. How would you rate the importance of the factors that you considered in choosing Business as your major ?

	Extremely not important	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Program accreditation	1	2	3	4	5
Program reputation/prestige	1	2	3	4	5
Class size	1	2	3	4	5
Job placement	1	2	3	4	5
Concentrations offered	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

N = 99

**All Factors Are Of Similar Importance To Students**



There was found to be little difference among the means of the factors students gave importance to when deciding to pursue a business degree. It can be interpreted that all are important considerations when selecting a major.

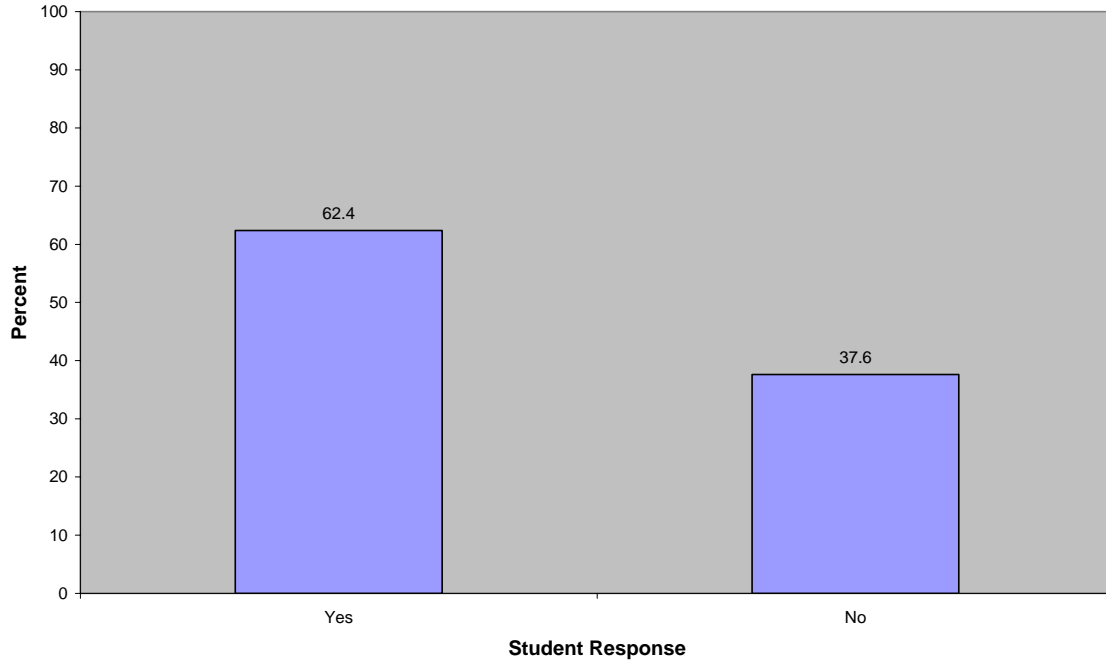
3. Do you have a concentration ?

Yes

No

N = 101

### Over Half of Students Have A Declared Concentration



4. If you answered YES to Q3. above, what is your concentration ?

Accounting

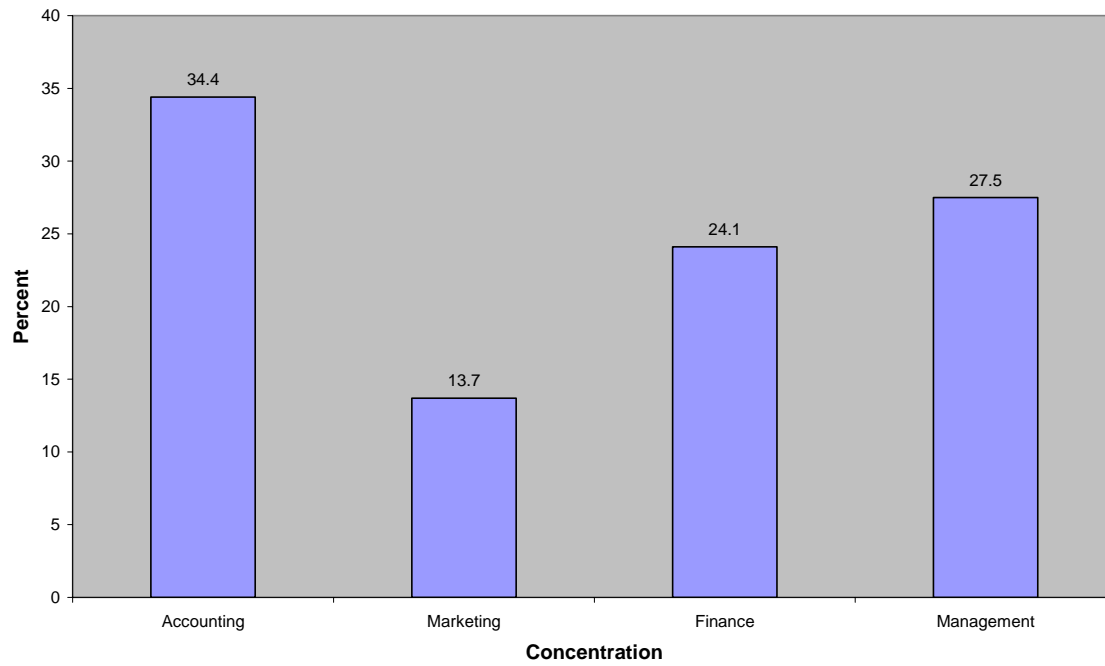
Finance

Marketing

Management

N = 58

### Accounting Concentration Has the Most Students

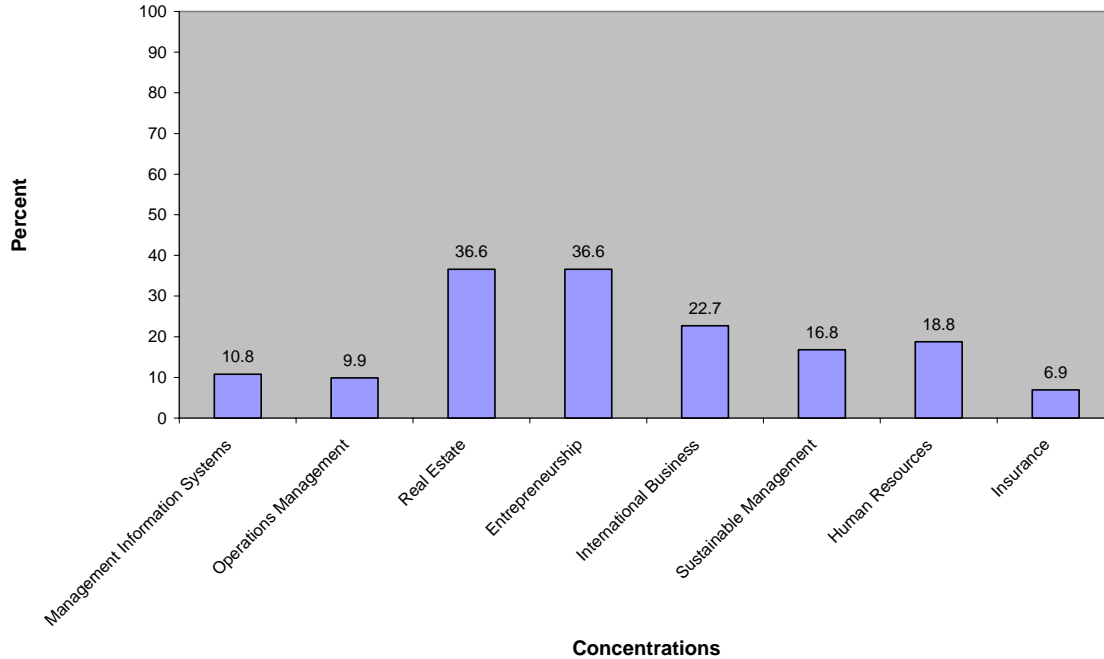


5. Are there any other concentrations you would have been interested in ?

- |                                                         |                                                 |                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management Information Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship       | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Operations Management          | <input type="checkbox"/> International Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____     |

N = 101

**Entrepreneurship and Real Estate Are the Most Desired Concentrations**



Students indicated they would be most interested in the concentrations of Entrepreneurship (36.6%) and Real Estate (36.6%). 16.8% responded that they'd like to see a sustainable management concentration, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> ranked choice.

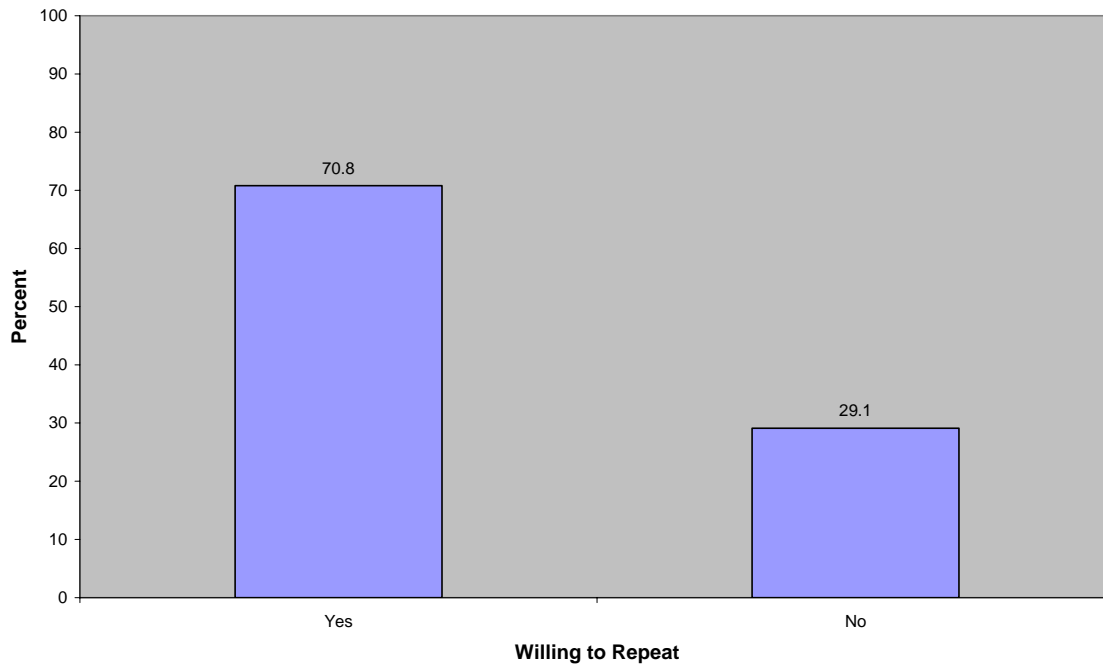
6. If you have to do it again, would you choose the HSU Business program ?

Yes

No

N = 96

### Majority of Students Would Repeat the HSU Experience



70.8% of students answered that given the chance they would repeat their experience in the HSU School of Business. These students cited small class sizes and convenience as the main factors affecting their decision. Students who would not repeat the program cited poor scheduling, lack of prestige, and lack of specialization as the reasons why. We dissected this result further by cross tabulating a student's willingness to repeat with whether or not they had transferred to HSU from another school. Transfer students are less likely to repeat their experience than non-transfers. This could speak to the ability to compete with business programs at other universities. In addition, by dissecting the results of question six based on class standing we observe that students become less satisfied with their experience as they progress through the business program.

6. If you have to do it again, would you choose the HSU Business program ?

Yes

No

**Cross tabulation of question six with whether or not a student has transferred to HSU showing that transfer students are less likely to repeat their experience at HSU.**

	<b>Would you repeat your HSU experience?</b>	
	No	Yes
Non-transfer student	22.0%	78.0%
Transfer student	36.9	63.0

**Cross tabulation of question six with class standing showing that students become progressively less likely to repeat their experience at HSU.**

	<b>Would you repeat your HSU experience?</b>	
	No	Yes
Freshman	0%	100.0%
Sophomore	15.3	84.6
Junior	29.7	70.2
Senior	33.3	66.6

7. Have you recommend the HSU Business program ?

Yes

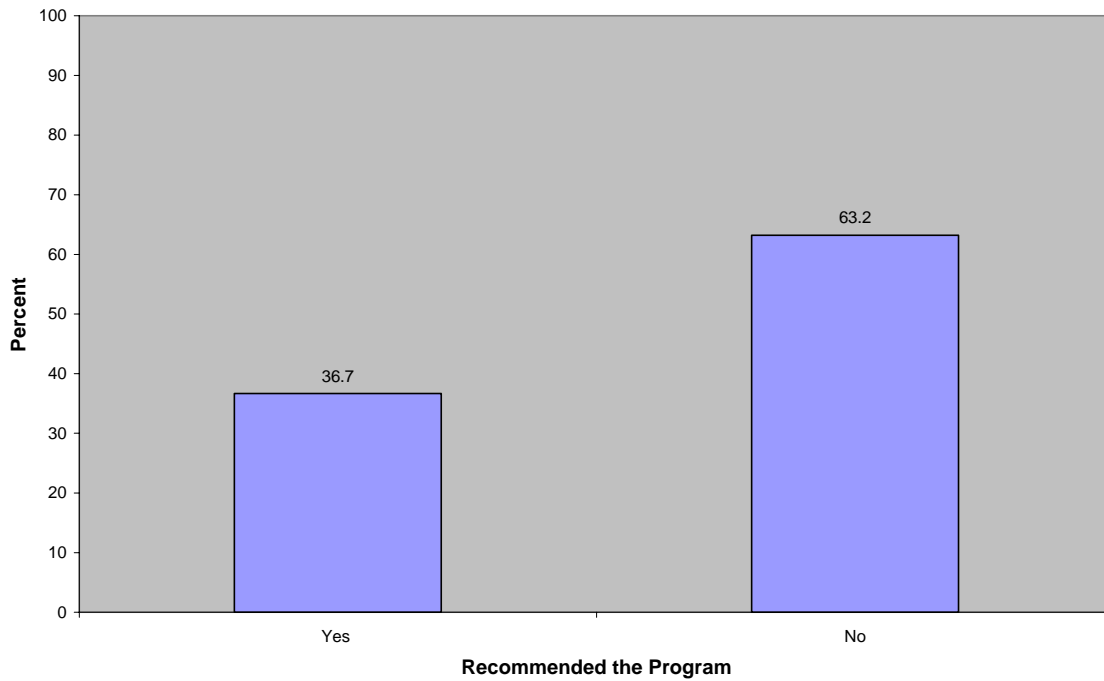
No

Why? (Please write your answer below)

N = 98

### Few Students Have Recommended the Program



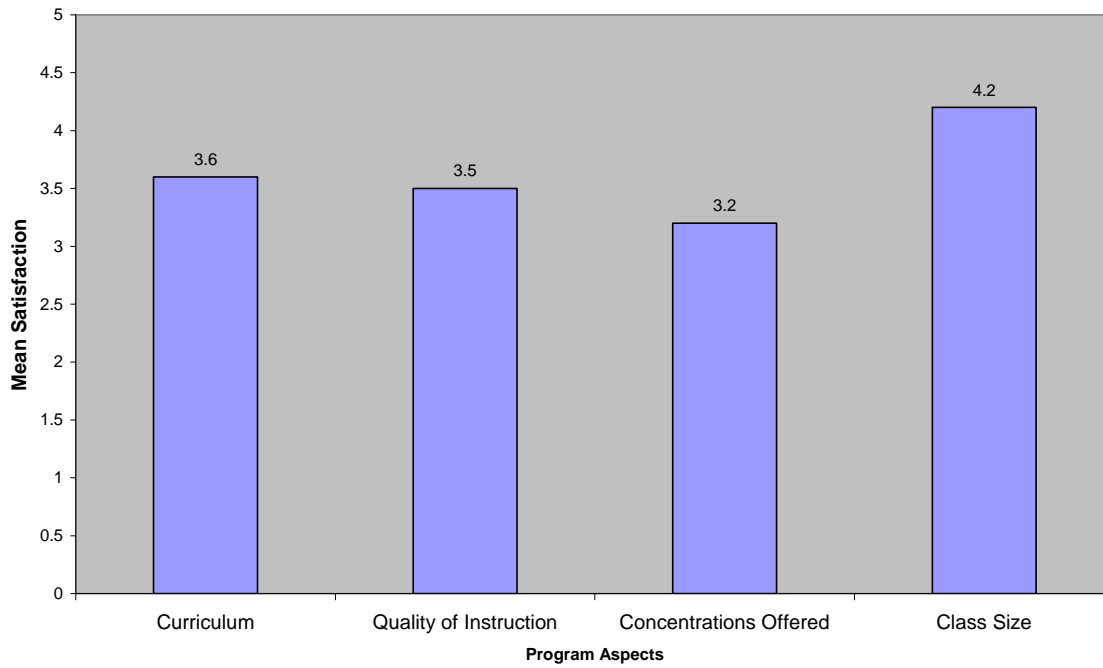
Although 70% of students would go through the program again, only 36.7% have recommended the program to someone else. The most often cited reason given for recommendation was again the small class size.

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of the HSU Business program ?

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of instructions	1	2	3	4	5
Concentrations offered	1	2	3	4	5
Class size	1	2	3	4	5

N = 100

**Students Are Most Satisfied With Class Size**



Overall students are satisfied with the business program. Specifically we can look at four aspects:

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<b>Curriculum</b>	0.99%	13.86%	23.76%	41.58%	19.8%
<b>Quality of Instruction</b>	3.0	18.0	20.0	44.0	15.0
<b>Concentrations Offered</b>	7.07	13.13	34.34	36.36	9.09
<b>Class Size</b>	1.01	2.02	13.13	40.40	43.43

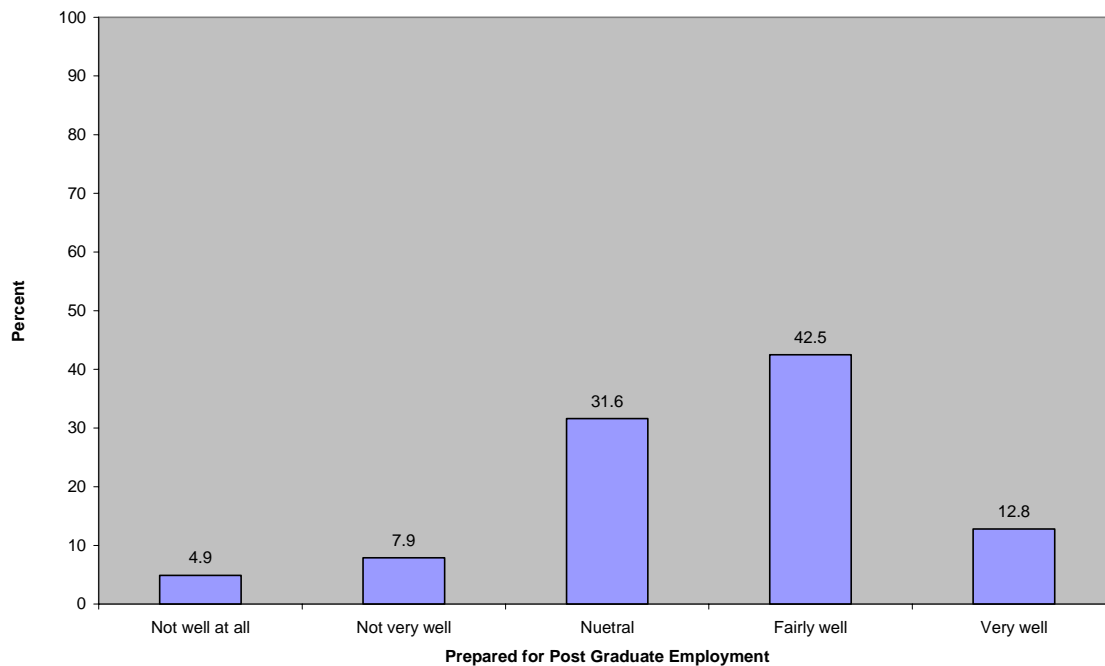
When performing a Mann-Whitney test it was discovered that class size is statistically significantly more satisfying than the other three aspects of the program (see appendix 10). This confirms our findings in questions 6 and 7. We can see that the greatest amount of dissatisfaction comes from the concentrations offered

9. How well do you feel the HSU Business program is preparing you for postgraduate employment ?

Not well at all     Not very well     Neutral     Fairly well     Very well

N = 101

### Students Believe They Are Prepared for Post-Graduate Employment



55.4% of students felt they were either fairly well prepared or very prepared for post graduate employment. 12.8% of students did not feel that the business program was adequately preparing them for post graduate employment.

10. Are you a ?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

N = 101

84% of participants were a junior or senior.

11. Are you a transfer student ?

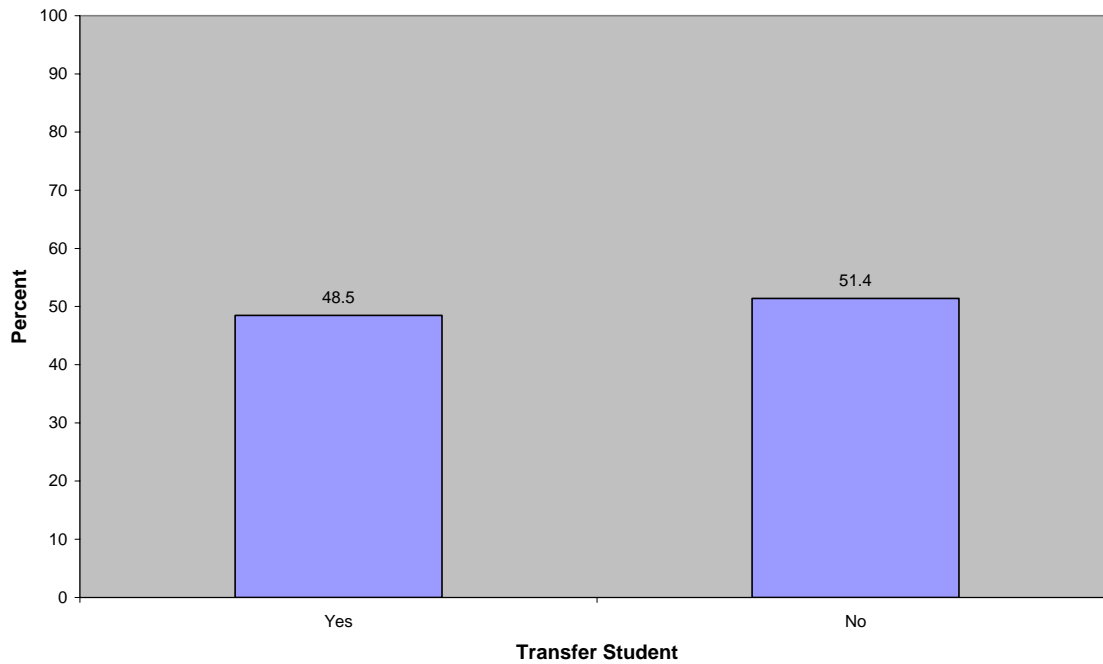
Yes

No

11.a. If YES, name the college/university \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

N = 101

### Almost Half Of Business Students Are Transfers

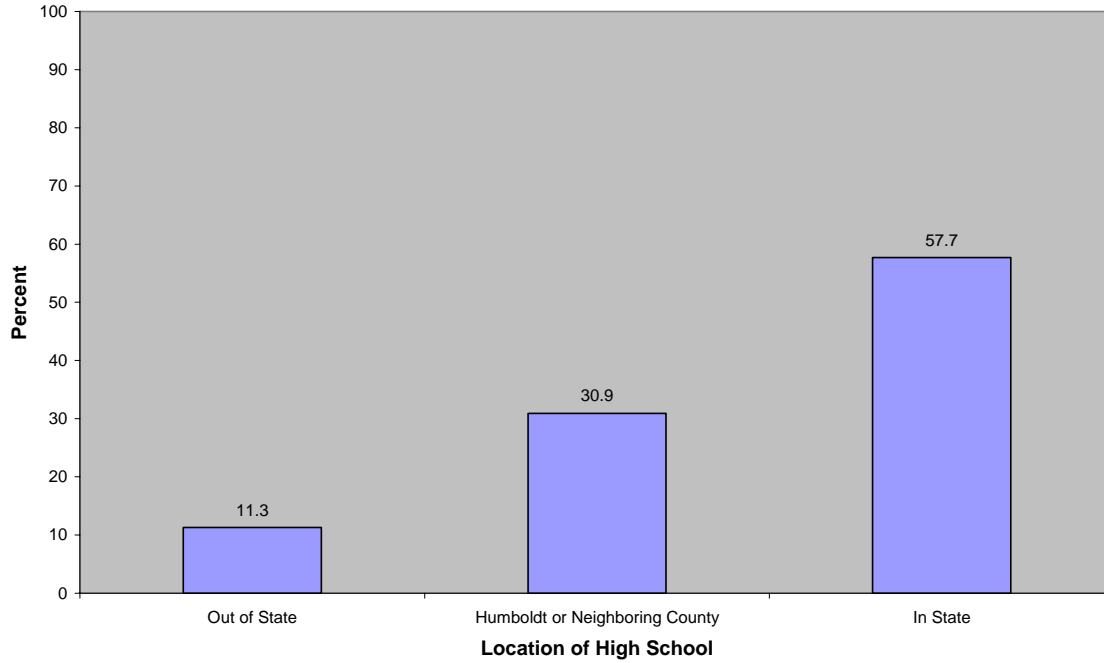


49.5% of participants are transfer students. It is interesting to note that 27.3% of these transferred from College of the Redwoods while 23.4% came from out of state. The remaining 50% of transfers came from other junior colleges and universities within the state.

12. The High School you graduated from \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

N = 97

### Most Students Went To High School In CA



13. Age \_\_\_\_\_

N = 97

The mean age was 23 years old.

14. Gender  Male  Female

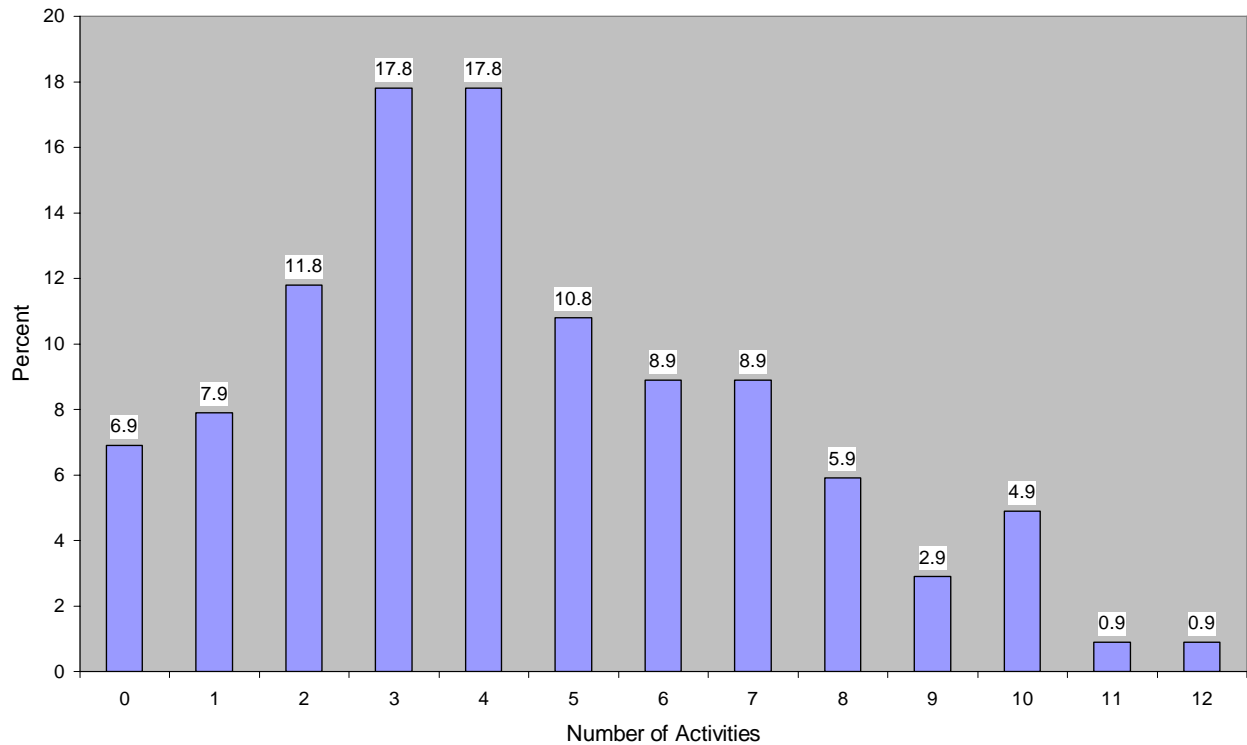
N = 99

60% of participants were male.

16. When you have free time, what activities do you enjoy ? (Check all that apply)

- |                                  |                                  |                                       |                                   |                                        |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking  | <input type="checkbox"/> Surfing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Golfing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowboarding | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rafting       |

### Students Participate in Outdoor Activities



93% of students participate in at least one outdoor activity.

The last question was open-ended and asked business students for any recommendations. Thirty eight participants responded. The responses have been grouped into categories of common answers and the number of answers in parentheses.

- Improve concentrations making them more specialized. (12)
- Improve scheduling. Offer required courses every semester. (8)
- More full-time faculty. (5)
- More Entrepreneurial classes. (2)
- More real-world examples. (2)
- Expand the accounting program to a degree. (1)
- Expand MBA program so graduates of the B.S. degree can enroll. (1)
- Other (7)

## **College of the Redwoods Business Students (n=134)**

### **Methodology**

College of the Redwood students were surveyed in the same fashion as students at HSU. In this case, classes were picked from the online catalog using our judgment. The goal again was to pick courses that potentially had the most business students. Once classes were selected, the instructors were contacted and their permission was requested in allowing us to administer the surveys. Students in each class were asked to notify the proctor if they had already taken the survey to ensure there was not redundant data.

### **Limitations**

The only limitation of the survey was the amount of students who came tardy to class, were absent, or otherwise missed the survey. We still reached our target number of participants for this group so we do not feel this minor limitation had an effect on the results.

**Results**

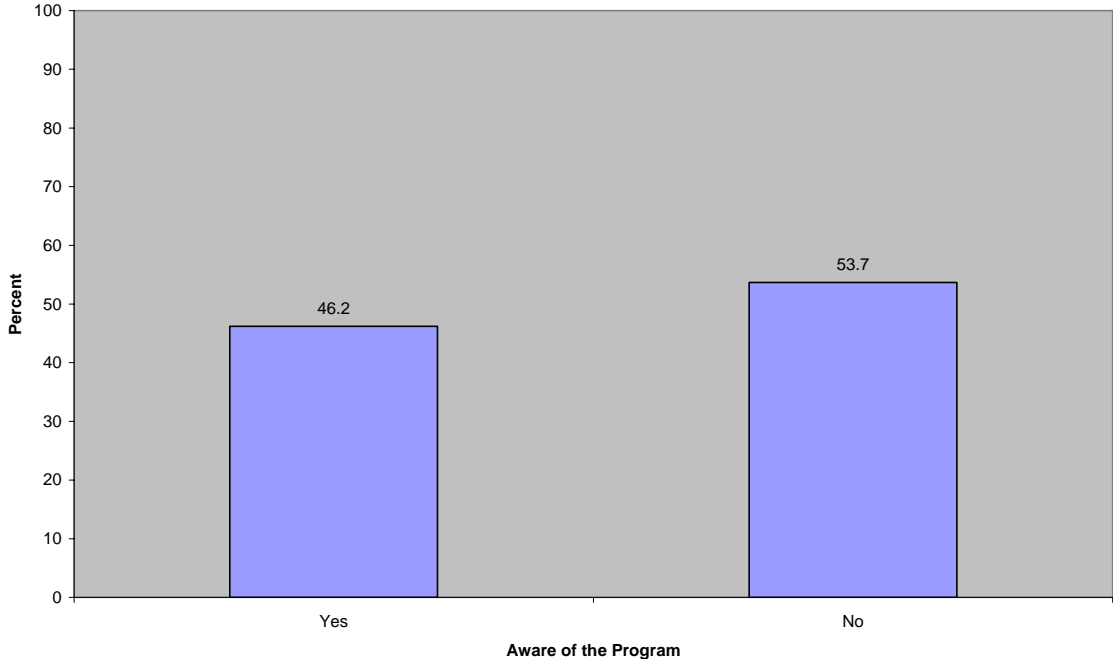
1. Are you aware of the Humboldt State University (HSU) undergraduate Business program ?

Yes

No

N = 134

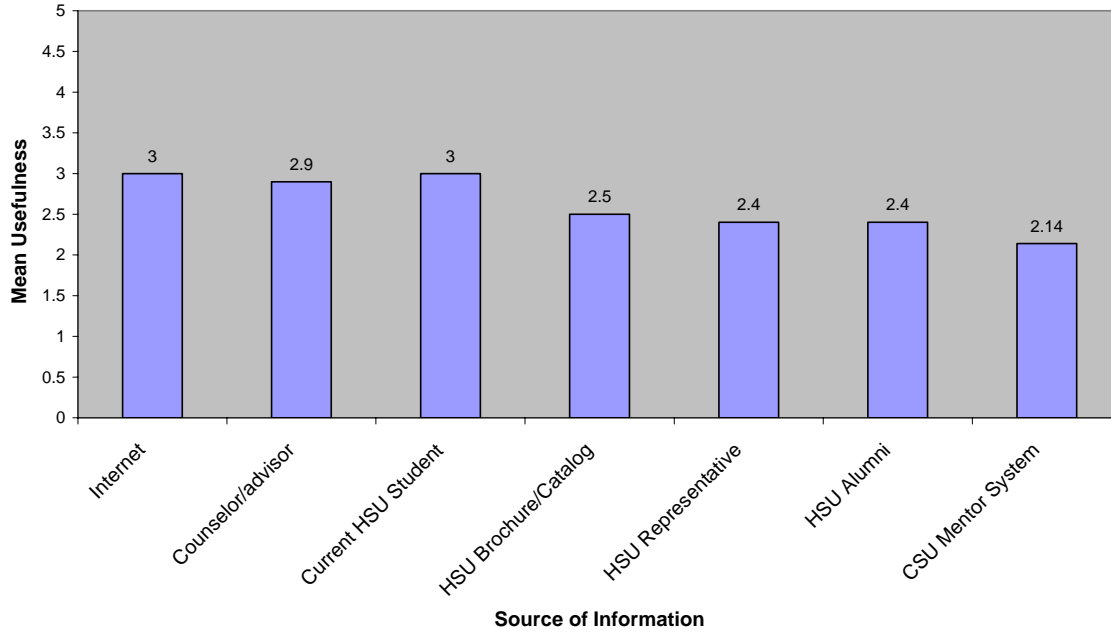
**Over Half of CR Students Are Unaware of the HSU Business Program**



1.a. If Yes, how useful were the following sources in hearing about the (HSU) Business Program ?

N = 52

**The Internet is the most useful resource in getting information on the HSU Business Program**



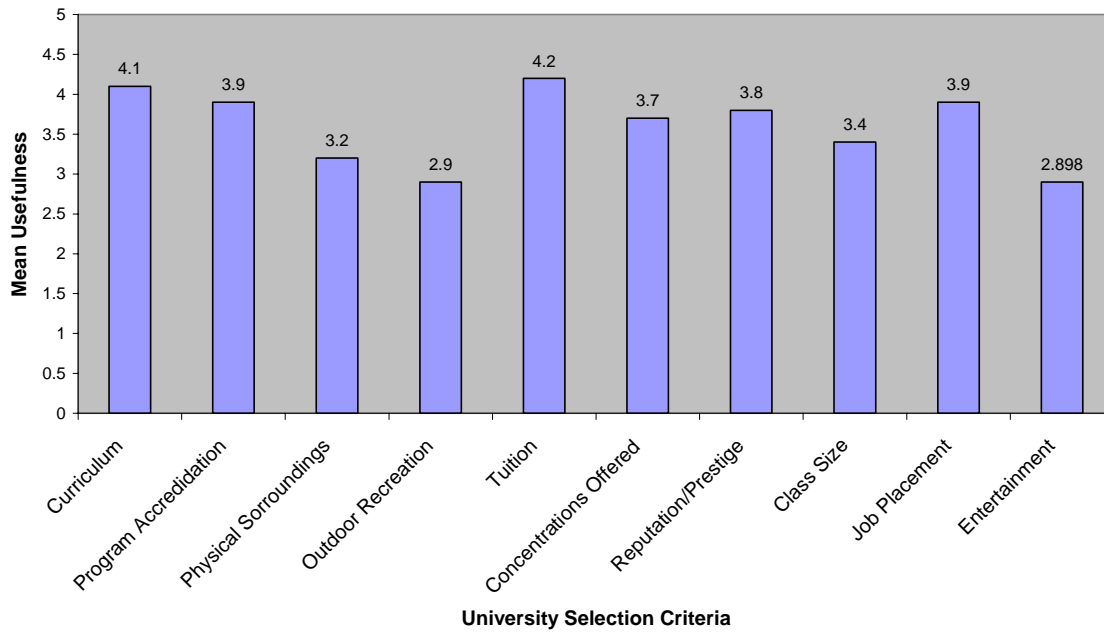
53.7% of CR students surveyed were not aware that HSU had a business program. The 46.2% of students, who knew of the program, found the Internet and an advisor most useful for gathering information regarding the department. HSU Alumni were among the least helpful to CR students in providing information; 80 out of the 100 participants to this question ranked alumni somewhat helpful to extremely not helpful.

2. How would you rate the importance of the factors that you would considered in choosing an undergraduate degree at a University ?

	Extremely not important	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Program accreditation	1	2	3	4	5
Physical surroundings of HSU	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor recreation	1	2	3	4	5
Tuition	1	2	3	4	5
Concentrations offered	1	2	3	4	5
Program reputation/prestige	1	2	3	4	5
Class size	1	2	3	4	5
Job placement	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Other	1	2	3	4	5

N = 128

**Tuition Is the Most Important Consideration When Choosing A University**



3. Are you interested in Business as an undergraduate degree ?

Yes

No

Not sure

(If you answered "NO" to question 3, please skip to question 6.)

N = 130

45.3% of participants are interested in a business degree.

4. What concentrations would you consider ? (Check all that apply)

Accounting

General Management

Human Resources

Finance

International Business

Management Information Systems

Marketing

Sustainable Management

Operations Management

Real Estate

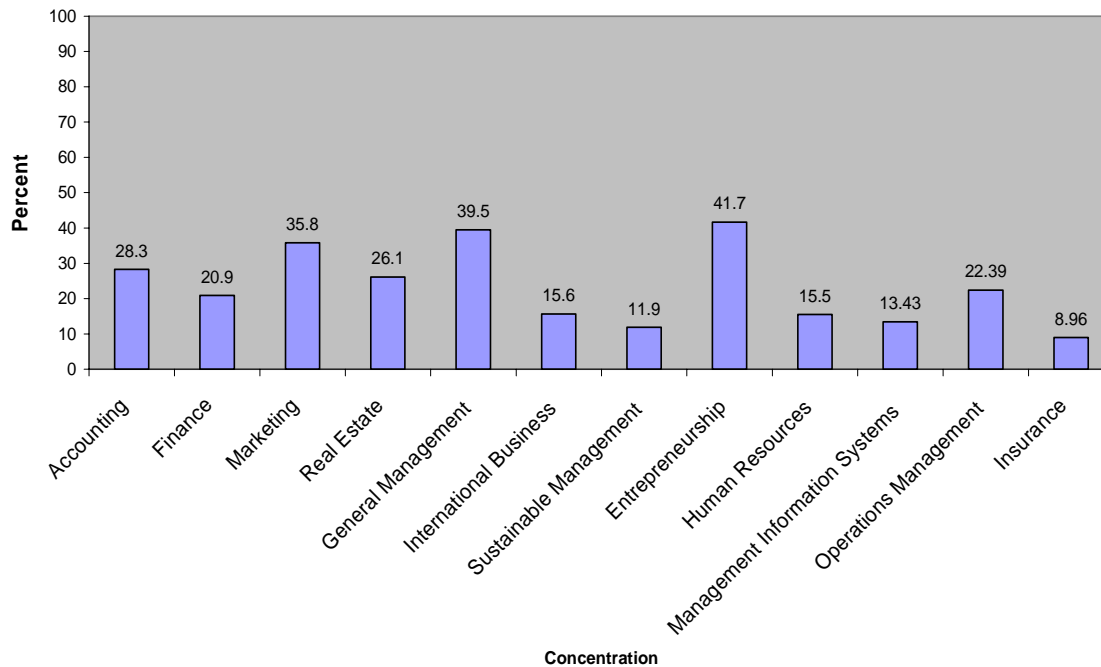
Entrepreneurship

Insurance

Other \_\_\_\_\_

N = 134

### Entrepreneurship Is the Concentration Of Most Interest To CR Students



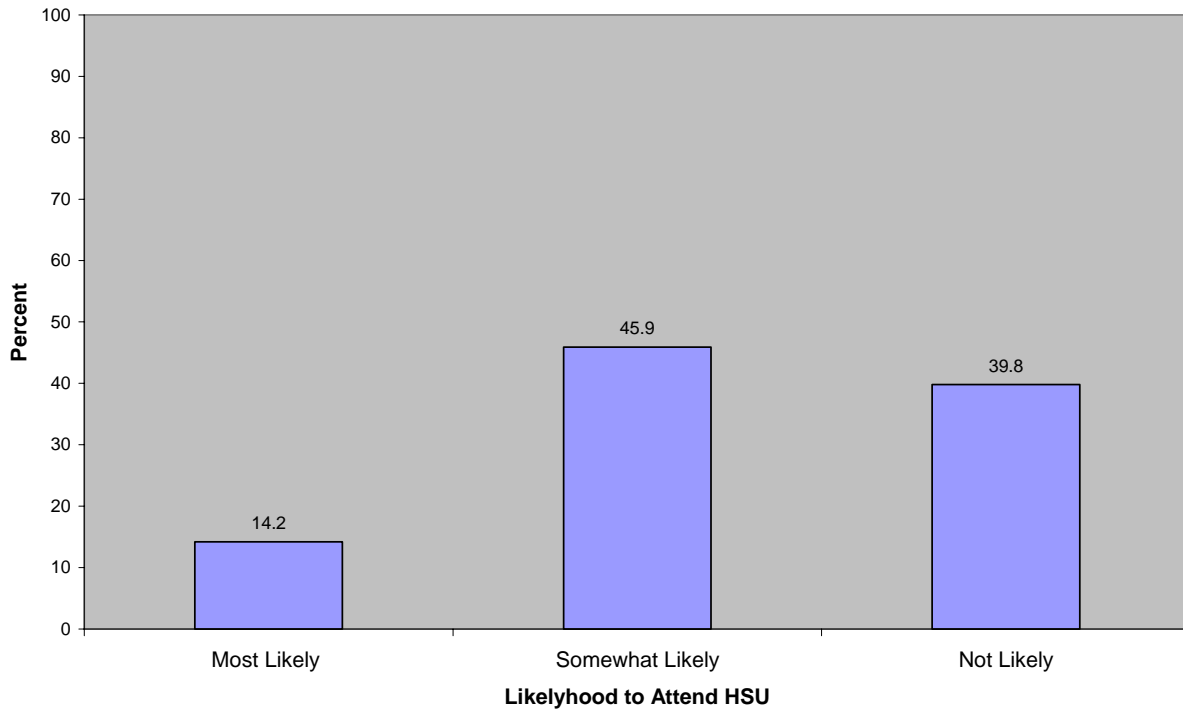
5. How likely are you to attend Humboldt State University for an undergraduate degree in Business ?

Most likely       Somewhat likely       Not likely

Why? or why not?

N = 98

**CR Students are only somewhat likely to attend HSU**



The responses to this question were dissected by whether the participants had an interest in a business degree. The resulting cross tabulation table indicates that a significant portion of participants are somewhat likely to attend HSU.

**Cross tabulation of the level of interest in pursuing a business degree with how likely a participant is to attend HSU.**

	How likely are you to attend HSU for a business degree?		
	Most Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Yes	23.7%	40.6%	35.5%
Not Sure	0	54.0	45.9

6. If No, would you be interested in a minor in Business ?  Yes  No

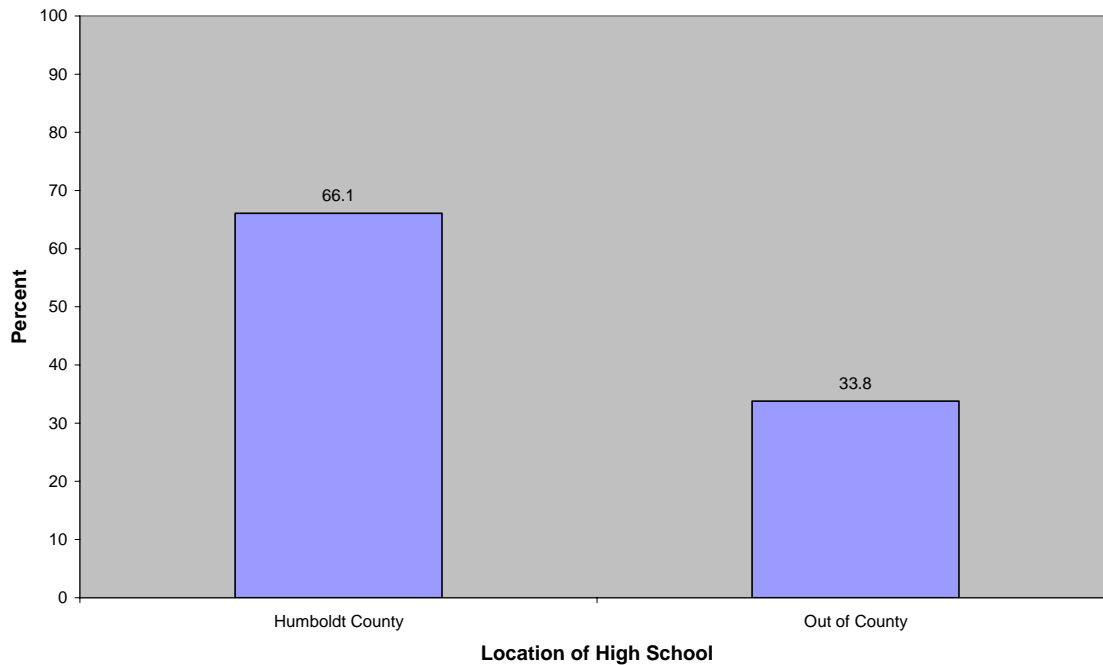
N = 130

61.5% of participants would be interested in a minor in business.

7. The High School you graduated from ? \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

N = 130

### Most CR Students Went To High School In Humboldt County



8. Age \_\_\_\_\_

N = 133

The mean age of participants was 26.

9. Gender  Male  Female

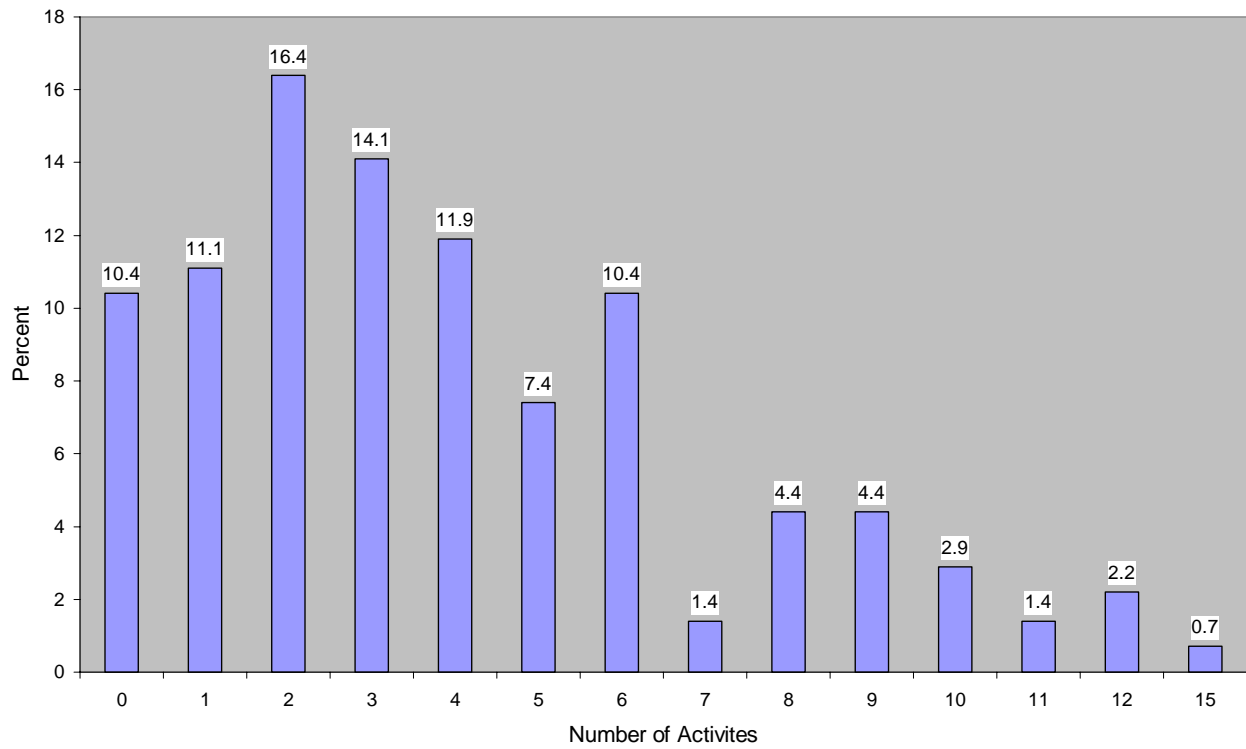
N = 133

52.6% of participants were female.

11. When you have free time, what activities do you enjoy doing? (Check all that apply)

- |                                  |                                  |                                       |                                   |                                        |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking  | <input type="checkbox"/> Surfing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Golfing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowboarding | <input type="checkbox"/> Jogging  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rafting       |

### Students Participate in Outdoor Activities



89% of CR students participate in at least one outdoor activity.

## *Undeclared Students at HSU (n=27)*

### *Methodology*

This sample was taken in the classroom. Since there are no classes specific to undeclared students we formed a group of 100-level general education classes from which we randomly selected courses to survey in. After instructor permission was granted, a proctor passed out questionnaires to students who had indicated they had not yet taken the survey. Only students without a declared a major were asked to participate.

### *Limitations*

Our primary research suffered its greatest setback in the undeclared sample. Multiple factors led to a sample size of 27. This sample cannot be assumed to be representative of the population and consequently no statistical analysis was performed. The first area of difficulty was obtaining permission from instructors to donate class time to this survey. Our research came right behind a mandatory general education survey. This resulted in a number of instructors who were unwilling to allow us to survey their classes. Once in the lower-division GE classes we were disappointed to find very few students who had not yet declared a major. In some classes as few as four students were qualified to participate. In addition, some of the responses from the undeclared students were of little quality. These responses showed evidence of intentional misrepresentation as well as nonsensical remarks to open-ended questions. See appendix 10 for tally and percent data from this sample. We did not use this data in our analysis or recommendations.

## **In-Depth Interviews**<sup>4</sup>

### **HSU School of Business Faculty (n=7)**

#### **Methodology**

When choosing the sample of participants, we needed to realistically consider who was available to interview. Most members of the sample were away from campus for various reasons. Thus, we interviewed as many faculty members of the School of Business as possible. One team member visited their offices and conducted the in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted over the course of two weeks. The duration of each interview was between 15 and 20 minutes.

#### **Limitations**

The main limitations of the in-depth interviews were the size of the sample. The School of Business has a limited number of full time faculty members and part time faculty members. Some members of the sample were not available for an in-depth interview. Additionally, the interviewer inadvertently used an early draft of the questionnaire and we were not able to have faculty members rate the importance of offering a Small Business Entrepreneurship or a Sustainability Concentration.

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 6 for copies of all the interview forms.

## **Results**

### **Humboldt State University School of Business Faculty In-Depth Interview Guide**

*(Survey is to be completed by a team member over the phone or in person, not by the participant)*

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#### **1. Tell me three strengths of the business program that would appeal to perspective students:**

- Small class size. (5 responses)
- Interaction between faculty and students. (3)
- Accessibility of faculty, counseling and advising.
- Access to faculty – directly meeting with them and talking to them.
- Students are visible and known.
- HSU has its own appeal; it has a different culture from other universities.
- Financial education, but we need more financial classes, dynamic real world classes like what Nancy Vizenor, Jasy Duncon , and Jamie Lancaster teach.
- Diverse student population -you have students from all over California, there are some international students, but we need more international students.
- Opportunity for written assignments, students may not see it that way, but it is an opportunity.
- Group Presentations.
- The program is more applied, you learn how to work with teams, it is more relevant practical work.
- Business communication is important –writing and reading skills.
- Options- not concentrations- Accounting, Management, Marketing, Finance, International Business.
- Friendly faculty.
- Strong focus on analytical studies, statistics.
- We are focusing a lot on business ethics, social responsibility.
- An emphasis on sustainability and ethics.

**2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being extremely important, rate the importance of offering each of the following concentrations for a bachelor's degree in business:**

	Not At All important			Extremely important	
<b>Accounting</b>	1	2	3	4 (3)	5 (4)
<b>Finance</b>	1	2	3 (1)	4 (1)	5 (5)
<b>Management</b>	1	2 (2)	3	4	5 (5)
<b>Marketing</b>	1	2	3 (1)	4	5 (6)
<b>International Business</b>	1	2	3 (1)	4 (2)	5 (4)

**3. Do you think the business school should establish an internship requirement for a bachelor's degree?**

- No - because it could be costly to students (since they may have to travel out of Arcata). I'm not sure if we can place them all locally. It should not be a requirement; it should be a choice – a matter of student choice.
- Sure - theory to practice, we can start right away by contacting local businesses to see if they can accommodate one or more interns. Semester to semester rotations in Arcata, Eureka, McKinleyville, and on-campus internships.
- I wish we could, but it is not practical. I believe internships should be required, but there is no recourse to do it. Internships should have major educational results. If we had the financial resources and the time for faculty to oversee, it would be great. If the faculty grows, it is a possibility. Mandatory internship requirements will not work due to the budget, not due to lack of desire.
- Yes - it could be a logistical problem, but it would be very important. It takes a lot of planning and contacts with outside businesses. It takes a huge effort, but it goes back to applied learning that I mentioned before.
- My opinion is that at least it should be an option.

- Yes - but we are living in an environment with limited resources, that's why we are not making it a requirement.
- Yes - you would not hire anyone with no work experience, experience is as important as book knowledge. We have to work with local businesses to create part-time jobs for our students. It should be a requirement since it is something highly valued by companies.

**4. Are there undergraduate course that can be adapted from a theoretical teaching method to an experiential learning method?**

- Elective courses in each concentration could be adapted, not to replace what we have, but as an alternative. I do not think that experiential learning is suitable for core courses. For example, with Business Law, the problem with experiential learning is that it is inefficient. If we take accounting as an example, they are going to learn very little, it could take months. We provide foundation, applying it is called a career or the rest of your life.
- Yes - All courses could be adapted. For example, cross disciplinary fusion, technical writing with marketing development, and graphics department with marketing courses.
- NO
- There is no sufficient faculty or budget. There are too many business majors and very few faculty members. Maybe in the future if we get sufficient faculty, resources, and class sizes. The answer to this question is no at this point (300 BA student and 1 full time faculty).
- Upper division course (400 levels courses), mostly taken by seniors. For example Change Management 472, and BA 414 already use applied learning (strategic management) but I would not know how internships can be done on BA 414 to senior level to apply in an internship, since it is strategy. How can they just go to firms and as soon as they start an internship apply strategy (strategy is at a higher level).
- Yes - management, marketing
- Yes – For example, the investment class starts with a theoretical foundation and gives practical information that can be used in the real world.
- Yes - All business courses, even statistics. Think about marketing research, that's an experiential application of statistics.

## **5. Tell me three areas in the school of business that could use improvement.**

- We need more full time faculty. **(5 responses)**
- We have been turning in too many directions. We are trying to do too many different things; 2 BA's in business, 1 MBA, we are interested in concentrations, sustainability, international business and there is barely enough faculty to do it.
- We need less focus on management (middle management) and we need more focus on leadership.
- Diversity – cultural and experiential learning.
- Reasonable class sizes. Example: Business Law needs less than 30 students.
- More resources and a bigger budget.
- We need to partner with CSU – do collaboration work, video conferencing, since HSU is isolated, to co-teach you need the technical facilities- it's a way getting broader exposure, learning from each other, sharing knowledge.
- Increase enrolment.
- Greater class room availability.
- Offer more electives in all other areas (concentrations).
- Offer more small business management, entrepreneurships classes.
- Offer more sustainable business management.
- Make classroom schedules more convenient for students. Get a logistics major to develop a program for scheduling classes university wide.

## **6. Who do you see as the business program's target market?**

- Students that are attracted to HSU's culture, but who want a practical degree for job potential. The most important factor is the culture. For example, students in Chico University would not like this culture. Our business program is not likely to have traditional business students, because we are HSU. It is not bad but it is different.
- All graduating high school students – students who want to go to impacted programs (CSU's are all full and they are waiting in line).
- Every student who is not a business student at HSU- for a business minor.
- I think the university sees us getting as many students as possible, regardless of their qualifications and interest in business. I think it should be motivated students who need challenging task. I think the best teaching occurs in small groups.

- Mostly California – I would like to see a balance of possibilities looking at sustainable, ecological interest group, but we need a broad breath of students all over the country, not only locally. However, who will come to HSU for business and pay out of state tuition fees? Exchange programs with other CSUs would be great.
- Southern California –because HSU is geographically most north, they want to get away from home, beautiful location, concerned for environmental issues, sustainability.
- Basically high school graduates, transfer students from JC's . However, we should really work with freshmen who have limited exposure to the business discipline.
- All of California – because most of the potential business students live in central and southern California.

**7. Have you recommended the undergraduate business program to anyone in the last 3-years?**

- Yes (5)
- No (2)

**If yes, what attributes of the business program did you highlight?**

- Small class sizes. (3)
- Importance in the global environment.
- Individual attention.
- Where we are located because students want to get away from the city and we have a good business program, but with a world community. Where we are located does not have the pressures of living in the city. Calmer locations, beautiful, outdoor activities and you still get a good education.
- HSU's location.
- HSU's high ETS scores. ETS is an exit exam for undergraduates programs. Availability of instructors to talk with.
- An emphasis on Sustainability
- An emphasis on Ethics

**If no, why not?**

- I do not recommend - It is not for me to recommend, I only describe, it the student's decision.

- Due to lack of familiarity with the program and lack of exposure to students I may recommend it to students in the future.

**8. Have you recommended any other CSU School of Business anyone?**

- **Yes (2)**
- **No (5)**

**If yes, why did you recommend that School of Business?**

- It is the student's job, but I tell them to go find out, go to other CSUs and find information by themselves, it is called the "Fit", HSU may not be for everyone.
- San Diego State – they have a large business program.
- I know the professors on other CSUs, mostly because of networking with other professors.

**9. In what ways can you link the business program to other programs at the university?**

- Students from other programs can do a minor in business.
- Communication, cross disciplinary courses, integrating business concepts, CCAT can be added to the business as a component. I would build the course to co-teach or two courses to be done tangently, have complementary courses.
- Management and marketing can help with other areas, they are basic skills. How you improve some aspect of any organization, you need to have learned business. To run an organization you need business skills.
- There could be an economics minor, like we do recreation administration; they get a minor in business.
- Business tools for making decisions. Business can help them.
- Sustainability and Ethics.

**10. Can you name some successful business program alumni that the university can contact, to potential solicit their endorsement of the program?**

- I know a number of them.
- Holly Busse
- Chris Gaines
- Jessy Duncan

- Stacy Lion – recruitment advisor
- Michael Crooke
- Eric Ramos - distinguish alumni of the year
- Heather Bonser-Bishops

### **Other comments**

- How many faculty should we ideally have? At least 10, Faculty should not be improving the curriculum they should be focusing on teaching. We have wonderful lecturers in the part time faculty.
- We need a real world, cutting edge, practical business curriculum. Heavy on experiential learning with strong green or international focus “beyond offering all the individual concentrations”.
- We need to let students in other parts of California know that they are a part of our market.

## HSU Undeclared Academic Advisors (n=1)

### Methodology

There are only two full-time undeclared academic advisors at HSU. The goal was to interview both. They were contacted via email and asked to participate in a 10 to 15 minute interview regarding their approach to guiding undeclared students towards majors, as well as their understanding of the business department. One team member met the willing participant and the interview took 15 minutes.

### Limitations

While we hoped to speak with both undeclared academic advisors we were only successful in reaching one. After an initial email was not returned, a phone call was placed and a voicemail message left. This also went unreturned. It was confirmed that the faculty member was on campus this semester. This limitation is somewhat mitigated by the thorough responses given by the advisor who participated.

### Results

## **Humboldt State University Undeclared Student Academic Advisor In-Depth Interview Guide**

*(Survey is to be completed by a team member over the phone or in person, not by the participant)*

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### **1. What recommendations do you give a student who is undecided on a course of study?**

- Asses their strengths/weaknesses
- See if they have a major they are interested in.
- See what classes interest them or that they enjoy.
- Really focus on students that are past their second semester.

### **2. In the past two years, approximately what percentage of your students expressed interest in pursuing a bachelor's degree in business? \_\_\_\_\_**

Quite a few (hesitates to give a percentage but settles on 5-10%). A current rec major today specified interest in the business program. Advised to try BA232 and Econ210.

### **3. What recommendations do you give a student who is interested in studying business?**

Recommend taking GE math and BA210 to get a feel for business classes. BA210 is nice because it also satisfies a GE requirement so there is little lost if the student decides not to pursue business.



## **High School Guidance Counselors (n=3)**

### **Methodology**

When choosing the sample of participants, it was necessary to realistically consider who was available to interview. We determined that counselors from McKinleyville, Arcata, Eureka, and Fortuna high schools have access to the largest student population. Thus, we interviewed counselors from these high schools. One team member called their offices and conducted the in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted within a course of one week. The duration of each interview was 15 to 20 minutes.

### **Limitations**

The main limitation of the in-depth interviews is the size of the sample. Local high schools employ very few counselors. Some members of the sample were not available for an in-depth interview.

### **Results**

#### **High School Guidance Counselor In-Depth Interview Guide**

*(Survey is to be completed by a team member over the phone or in person, not by the participant)*

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#### **1. What recommendations, regarding university selection, do you give a student who is undecided on a course of study?**

- Utilize a computer program call COIN to provide information.
- Analyze the states and colleges within the states that interest you.
- Research schools based on where you are with regards to grades and SATs.
- During the first year take general education to find what most interests you.
- Guide them through the use of information regarding perspective schools.

#### **2. In the past two years approximately what percentage of students expressed interest in pursuing a bachelor's degree in business?**

- 5% **(2)**
- 15% **(1)**

**3. What recommendations, regarding university selection, do you give a student who is interested in studying business?**

- Go to a private school or California State school for business administration.
- Let them decide based on their interests.
- Give them the informational tools required to make an educational decision

**4. When advising students, regarding university selection do you provide them with any of the following information?**

- University brochure's or folders (3)
- Web page address (3)
- Career fair information (3)
- Contact names at a given school
- Alumni information (1)

**5. Is there other information that you provide?**

- Stress math as a necessary component for continuing education.
- Videos and catalogues. (2)
- Career Exploration.
- Summer programs.

**6. Are you aware that HSU has an undergraduate business program?**

- Yes (3)
- No

**6.1. If yes, on a scale of one to five with 1 being not at all familiar and 5 being very familiar; how familiar are you with the business program?**

Not At All Familiar

Extremely Familiar

1 (1)

2 (1)

3

4

5 (1)

**6.2. If yes, how familiar are you with the business programs curriculum?**

Not At All Familiar

Extremely Familiar

1 (2)

2

3

4

5 (1)

**7. Have you recommended the HSU undergraduate business program to a student?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**7.1. If yes, about how many times in the last 2 years?**

- 2-3 times per year.

**7.2. Why did you recommend the program?**

- Hands on experience with professors
- Drawback ---- no internship requirement or mentorship program

**7.3. If no, why not?**

- Disseminates information rather than making recommendations.

## CR Academic Advisors and Business Faculty (n=9)

### Methodology

We chose to interview all of the academic advisors, guidance counselors, and business faculty at College of the Redwoods. Each participant was initially contacted by email and asked to participate. Eight interviews were completed over the telephone. One interview was completed in person. The interviews were conducted over the course of three weeks. The duration of each interview was 10 to 15 minutes.

### Limitations

There were no limitations identified for this group.

### Results

#### **College of the Redwoods Academic Advisor and Business Faculty In-Depth Interview Guide**

*(Survey is to be completed by a team member over the phone or in person, not by the participant)*

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### **1. What recommendations, regarding university selection, do you give a student who is undecided on a course of study?**

- I recommend that they survey classes at CSU's and JC's.
- I give them tools to help them decide what they want to study. I encourage them to explore the internet career center and encourage them to look at catalogues of California universities.
- I help them narrow down a location and choose universities to look at there.
- I help them to first figure out what they want to do, then give them information to help pick the school. I also show them what classes to take to help them get where they want to be.
- If it is a woman I encourage her to do anything with business or involving handling money.
- I tell them to do some internet research. I send them to the career center and encourage them to come to campus when we have representatives from universities here.

### **2. In the past two years, approximately what percentage of your students expressed interest in pursuing a bachelor's degree in business?**

- 30%
- 20% (2 responses)
- 15%
- 10%
- < 5%

### **3. What recommendations, regarding university selection, do you give a student who is interested in studying business?**

- I look at the strengths of the student and we talk about their goals, their financial situation and if they want to stay local.
- I tell them to look at websites of leading schools – Berkeley, Stanford, Wharton.
- I also quiz them about their interests to see if there is a specialization they might be interested in. HSU is way at the bottom, I only recommend their business program if the student wants to stay local. I try to dig into what they really want in their heart and soul.
- I try to find out why they are interested in business. Do they want to work for a large corporation, own their own business, become an accountant, etc ...If they want this, then - here are some ideas.
- I encourage them to find a major they like then minor in business. I tell them about HSU and how the minor sets up the prerequisites for the MBA program.
- I show them which universities have business programs – undergraduate, graduate and doctorate. I help them choose locations and go through catalogues.
- My first question is do you want to stay local? If so I show them the HSU articulation agreement. If they want to go somewhere else in California I recommend CSU's and UC's.
- I find out if they are interested in a bachelors or a masters. I find out where they want to get their final degree at and build backwards to determine where they should get their bachelors from. I encourage students to look at a list of 20 things to consider when choosing a college. I tell them to visit the college when students are there to get an idea about the student population.
- Pretty much Humboldt because the students I counsel are reentry and they are staying here.
- I tell them to do some internet research. I send them to the career center.



### 7.1 If yes, about how many times in the last two years?

- 60
- (2)
- 2-3 dozen
- (2)
- 6
- 4

### 7.2 If yes, why did you recommend the program?

- It's local and they have an excellent staff. They have a good MBA program, too.
- I recommend it only if people want to stay local.
- The associate faculty and Peter Noble.
- Because they were interested in going to HSU.
- It was a good match to the student's educational goals.
- Humboldt has a good reputation and when a student stays local they have a good support system.
- If someone wants to stay in the area I recommend Humboldt. You can get a reasonably good paying job – especially for reentry students injured on the job.
- When staying local is a top priority. Up until recently I would recommend HSU to students because they didn't require business calculus. Now they do – they are up to par with the other CSU's.

### 7.3 If no, why not?

- I encourage students to work towards earning a degree in a top notch business school.
- Because the specific needs of a student sometimes makes HSU not a good fit.
- I don't recommend a particular university, I just tell students what they offer.
- I can't think of any reason not to send them to Humboldt.

**8. Do you have any of the following marketing materials from the HSU undergraduate business program?**

- University brochure's or folders (1)
- Contact names (1)
- Web page address(0)
- Alumni information (0)
- Career fair information (0)
- None (7)

**9. Have you recommended any other college undergraduate business program to a student?**

- Yes (7)
- No (2)

**9.1 If yes, why did you recommend that business program?**

- Because they are strong programs.
- I encourage students to aim high and go to the best business schools.
- I recommend the universities I know something about or have some personal experience with.
- I recommend universities that are a match to the students goals and plans.
- I recommend Chico because they have a construction management/engineering specialty.
- Location.

**10. What areas of emphasis, in the HSU business program, do you feel would most benefit students who plan to work in Humboldt County after college graduation?**

- Any programs that are in the students area of interest.
- Focusing on entrepreneurship, marketing, sustainability, and innovation.
- I think they should emphasis finance and accounting.
- Small business consulting.

- I don't know what the community needs. My job is to give students linkages to universities.
- Marketing and real world accounting.
- I am not familiar with what is in demand locally.
- Accounting, marketing, data analysis, and finance projections.
- Don't know.

### **11. Do you have any recommendations for the HSU School of Business?**

- I have heard they are bringing back the concentrations – that's good.
- They need to write a five year strategic plan. The business department needs to broaden their circle of influence – create stakeholder groups. They need to REQUIRE undergraduate and graduate internships. They need to define the program with a niche emphasis. They should become a community business leader.
- They need to find a niche that gives people a reason to come. Sustainable business would be a perfect fit for HSU. They also need a strong internship program. It would be an impressive statistic to be able to tell prospective students and their parents that 85% of undergraduates are placed in internships.
- To offer a small business program in conjunction with their business program.
- I'm not very familiar – so no. Each year Rhonda Geldin coordinates a transfer meeting at HSU, each year they highlight a particular department. It would be a good opportunity for the business department to market themselves.
- They could provide us with promotional materials and specific contact information for the business department.
- They might want to reconsider their articulation requirement – calculus and stats – students struggle with the math prep.
- Contact people in the community – see how to meet their needs. HSU should cater to local business needs. They should offer a small business/entrepreneurship certificate.
- Do a better job marketing your program.

## *Humboldt County Business Owners (n=3)*

### *Methodology*

Ten local business owners and senior managers were selected based upon the size of their company, the availability of being a potential employer of students from the School of Business and being the type of company with whom the School of Business would like to develop a strategic relationship. Each participant was contacted via the telephone and asked to participate. After repeated contacts, the process produced three completed interviews with seven non-participants. Interviews were conducted over the period of one week for a duration of 10 to 15 minutes.

### *Limitations*

The main limitation of the in-depth interviews for local business owners was being unable to establish contact with them. Repeated phone calls were made to the specifically chosen participants. Unfortunately, only three business owners returned the phone calls. They all agreed the estimated survey length of 10 to 15 minutes was acceptable. Also, due to project time limitations we were unable to contact more business owners.





## **7. Do you have any recommendations for the HSU School of Business?**

- They need to involve the community more and do a better job of marketing the program.
- Hire new, young and motivated teachers. Class offerings need to be expanded in specific concentrations such as Accounting.
- The school of business needs to expand and offer more classes, both class type and the number of sections. They need to add more night classes or online classes. Need to bring in motivated, energetic, young, full-time professors. Current professors are unmotivated and boring. Perhaps name the school after someone and market properly.
- Stop unprofessional presentations to the community. The professors can teach theory, but they are so far removed from reality, they can't apply. They are completely outdated. They are purely academic & don't have a clue about modern business practices, especially outside of Humboldt County.

## ***Situation Analysis***

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### ***Market Analysis***

The target market for the School of Business at Humboldt State University has not been clearly defined. Without a clearly defined target market, specific marketing efforts cannot be made. It is important to note that the market has seen an increase in the amount of college-bound students, which represents an opportunity for growth among all university programs.

This plan focuses on the primary market of local students as potential entrants to the program. Latest figures show that there are approximately 7,000 high school students in Humboldt County.<sup>5</sup> The Business Program should be marketing to this is large population because these students will be college-bound within four years.

Another body of local students is the College of the Redwoods population. There are 6,521 students enrolled in the spring 2006 semester at CR. Of these, 640 are enrolled in business classes (9.8%). While the students in the business classes provide the best opportunity, all CR students have potential as university transfers.

Students at Humboldt State without a declared major also represent an opportunity to the business program. There are 489 undeclared students enrolled in the spring 2006 semester at HSU.<sup>6</sup> This group is more populous than any degree program on campus.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.schooltree.org>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.humboldt.edu/~anstud/>

## **Product Analysis**

Currently the School of Business offers two undergraduate business programs a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Business Administration.<sup>7</sup>

The Bachelor of Science degree program consists of 68 semester units, 20 of which are chosen by the student from several areas of emphasis. These concentration areas include Accounting, Finance, International Business, Management, and Marketing. Classes in these areas are often limited in nature, with offerings once per year or once every other year.

The Minor program consists of six classes with study in the areas of Law, Marketing, Financial and Managerial Accounting, Finance, Management, and Economics. This minor course of study also completes the requirements for non-business students looking to further their education by obtaining a Master of Business Administration Degree from Humboldt State University.

Current course offerings are located on campus in Arcata. There are no classes being offered via alternate media options such as television or the Internet. Most classes are held during the day, with limited offerings at night. This scheduling arrangement makes it difficult for local business professionals who would like to further their education at Humboldt.

## **Promotion Analysis**

Currently the HSU School of Business has a passive style of promoting the undergraduate program. There is very little promotional activity to attract potential students.<sup>8</sup> The HSU School of Business has a website, however it is very simple and only functions as a basic reference for the program.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the School of Business and Economics club has a small “mixer” type event once or twice a year where HSU students interested in Business or Economics can meet other students and faculty in each program. The School of Business hosts The Watson Memorial

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix 4 for a list of current class offerings in the business program.

<sup>8</sup> See appendix 2 for copies of the program’s current promotional materials.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 3 for an example of an effective webpage (Chico State).

Lecture Series where every year a prestigious speaker gives a presentation to students and the business community on relevant and current business topics. Although these activities potentially promote the School of Business they are relatively infrequent and ineffective in promoting the program. The ineffectiveness may be due to limited association between these events and the School of Business.

A new brochure has been recently designed for the School of Business and is in the production process. A university wide colored brochure has been produced and has a short quote by a former student regarding a business professor. The implementation of these brochures still needs to occur.

The HSU School of Business lacks a brand strategy. There is no single person responsible for promoting the School of Business. Target markets and main competitors have not been identified nor has the product been defined or differentiated. There is no active promotion targeting local high schools, College of the Redwoods, or undeclared HSU students.

## *Competition Analysis*

A comparison was made among all the campuses in the CSU system in terms of tuition fees, location, estimated cost of living, number of Business undergraduate students, and the number of Business undergraduate students as a percentage of the total number of students in each campus (see table 1). Secondly, we considered a few universities located in Northern California to be the primary competition. According to our survey of the current HSU Business undergraduates, 27% of the students transferred from College of the Redwoods. The implication is that College of Redwood students are likely to transfer to universities located in Northern California. Other factors such as status of accreditation, number and types of concentrations offered, and internship requirements are compared among these Northern California CSU campuses.

There are 22 campuses in the CSU system excluding HSU, out of which five are located in Northern California, 11 are located in Southern California, and six are located in Central California. According to research conducted by Noel-Levitz a considerable percentage of our target market comes from Southern California (in order relocate from their home city). This indicates that any of the campuses located in Northern California could be considered as an option.

In terms of tuition fees, campuses fall between the range of \$2,658 to \$3,974, with CSU Long Beach having the lowest tuition fees and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo having the highest. HSU is offering a competitive fee of \$2,863. Campuses offering the highest and the lowest tuition fees have a similar number of undergraduate business students as a percentage of total enrollment.

When comparing the estimated cost of living on campus, CSU Channel Islands shows the highest cost of living at \$13,440 per year and CSU Stanislaus shows the lowest cost at \$8,820. HSU offers a competitive price of \$ 11,100 per year.

Cal Poly Pomona has the highest percentage of undergraduate business students to total enrollment at 25%. This accounts for 4916 undergraduate business students at Pomona. HSU has the lowest percentage at 4%, which accounts for 301 business undergraduate students.

**Table 1****CSU Campus Statistics**

<b>Campus</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Fees only (\$)</b>	<b>Est. total cost living on campus</b>	<b>Total enrollment</b>	<b>No. of BA students</b>	<b>% of BA students</b>
Cal Maritime	Northern CA	3240	11770	702	80	11%
Cal Poly Pomona	Southern CA	2811	11223	19804	4916	25%
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	Central CA	3974	12170	18475	2221	12%
CSU Bakersfield	Southern CA	2707	10173	7549	889	12%
CSU Channel Islands	Southern CA	2980	13440	2577	500	19%
CSU Chico	Northern CA	3154	12400	15734	2466	16%
CSU Dominguez Hills	Southern CA	2771	10827	12613	1610	13%
CSU East Bay	Central CA	2706	11058	13061	2550	20%
CSU Fresno	Central CA	2704	13038	19781	2633	13%
CSU Fullerton	Southern CA	2804	11289	32744	7691	23%
CSU Long Beach	Southern CA	2658	10334	34566	4400	13%
CSU Los Angeles	Southern CA	2849	11170	20637	2736	13%
CSU Monterey Bay	Central CA	2761	11441	3020	563	19%
CSU Northridge	Southern CA	2778	12010	31448	5811	18%
CSU Sacramento	Northern CA	2824	11224	27972	4330	15%
CSU San Bernardino	Southern CA	2906	12075	16341	2270	14%
CSU San Marcos	Southern CA	2776	13370	6728	1738	26%
CSU Stanislaus	Central CA	2807	8820	7858	1086	14%
San Diego State University	Southern CA	2936	12852	32936	6259	19%
San Francisco State University	Northern CA	2880	9745	28804	4422	15%
San Jose State University	Central CA	3292	9039	28932	4780	17%
Sonoma State University	Northern CA	3408	12103	7977	1062	13%
Humboldt State University	Northern CA	2863	11100	7550	301	4%

When concentrations offered by these universities are compared, as shown in Table 2, it is apparent that HSU is offering the fewest choices with five, while other universities are offering on average 8 to 9 concentrations for business majors. Human Resources, Small Businesses, International Business, Wine Business strategy, Risk Management and Insurance, Real Estate, Corporate Finance, Decision Science, Management Information System are among some of the concentrations offered by HSU's primary competitors, which gives them a competitive advantage over HSU. More students are likely to apply to these universities than HSU, due to the wide choice of concentrations offered.

**Table 2**

**Primary Competitor Matrix**

Campuses	AACSB	Internships	Concentrations																
			Ac	MK	F	MG	GB	HR	IB	SB	WB	MI	OM	RE	RM	CF	DS	IS	TM
CSU Sacramento	Yes	Yes	Ac	MK	F	MG	GB		IB				MI	OM	RE	RM			
San Francisco State University	Yes	Yes	Ac	MK	F	MG			IB	SB							CF	DS	IS
San Jose State University	Yes	Yes	Ac	MK	F	MG		HR	IB								CF		TM
Sonoma State University	Yes	Yes	Ac	MK	F	MG		HR	IB	SB	WB								
CSU Chico	Yes	Yes	Ac	MK	F	MG	GB	HR									CF		
<b>Humboldt State University</b>	No	No	Ac	MK	F	MG	GB												

- AC- Accounting
- MK – Marketing
- F- Finance
- MG - Management
- GB - General Business
- HR-Human Resources
- SB- small Business
- IB-International Business
- WB- Wine Business Strategy
- MI- MIS
- OM-Operations Management
- RM- Risk Management and Insurance
- RE- Real Estate
- CF- Corporate Finance
- DS-Decision Sciences
- IS-Information systems
- TM- Transportation Management

In addition to concentrations, some of HSU’s competitors are offering specialized degrees such as Accounting, Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Risk Management and Insurance, and Real Estate under their School of Business. For example, CSU Sacramento offers similar majors to its business students. Similarly, San Diego State University offers specialized degrees such as Hospitality and Tourism for their Business majors. The HSU School of Business lacks the number of concentrations and degrees of its competitors.

## ***SWOT Analysis***

<b><i>Strengths</i></b>	<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small class size</li> <li>• Instructor accessibility</li> <li>• Great location</li> <li>• Overall school size</li> <li>• Status as a CSU gives us credibility and more marketing exposure</li> <li>• Price</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaccurate and outdated webpage</li> <li>• Lack of internship options</li> <li>• No active Alumni Association specific to the School of Business</li> <li>• Lack of cohesive, organized marketing strategy</li> <li>• Lack of concentrations other than Management, Marketing, Accounting, Finance and General Business</li> <li>• No AACSB accreditation</li> <li>• Lack of class breadth, scheduling and opportunities for distance learning</li> <li>• Lack of Full-Time faculty</li> <li>• Unawareness of program among students, faculty, and the business community</li> </ul>
<b><i>Opportunities</i></b>	<b><i>Threats</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large pool of undeclared students at HSU</li> <li>• Developing special-interest programs such as sustainability</li> <li>• Opportunity to develop and offer specific niche concentration programs with other departments at HSU</li> <li>• LOHAS opportunity (Crooke)</li> <li>• Take advantage of the local business community</li> <li>• Develop relationships with regional community colleges</li> <li>• Distance learning classes (internet/TV)</li> <li>• Student Managed Investment Fund</li> <li>• Potential to grow the external network with the Business Club</li> <li>• Dedication of the President's Office to grow and develop the School of Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enroll at alternate universities; competition</li> <li>• Current HSU undeclared students enroll in alternate degree programs</li> <li>• Alternate options (online/TV) with most other CSU campus, as well as groups such as Walden and University of Phoenix.</li> <li>• Other CSU campuses have their School Of Business accredited</li> <li>• Small local job market and limited recruitment for jobs after graduation</li> </ul>

## ***Marketing Recommendations***

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Research shows that in order to reach the objectives set forth for this study, the following areas must be addressed.

### ***Curriculum***

The research shows there is interest in further developing and refining the existing curriculum. Specifically, based upon our surveying of students, advisors and the business community, it is evident that we have identified key factors that explain the decline of enrollment and how the HSU School of Business can be restructured to meet the desires of the current and proposed target markets. The following are recommendations related to enhancing the current curriculum:

**Design a specific degree program in Accounting, offering intermediate and advanced classes focusing on preparing students to pass the CPA exam-** Our surveys and in-depth interviews indicate that accounting is the top priority for both the local business community as well as students. Currently there are classes in accounting, but not to the level desired by many local employers. As shown in our secondary research, the HSU School of Business once had an extremely developed degree option in Accounting. We recommend further developing advanced learning opportunities in this area. In addition, we encourage the HSU School of Business to research the potential of developing an actual Bachelor of Science in Accounting to meet the need of the business community as well as the students.

**Investigate creating concentrations in Real Estate, Entrepreneurship and International Business-** While there is a focus on offering five basic areas of study, our research showed that students have a strong interest in Real Estate, Entrepreneurship and International Business. We recommend the School of Business further research the potential for adding additional course offerings in these areas.

**Work with the community to develop more internships, increase the level of applied knowledge and student satisfaction-** Our research into the top five business schools in the CSU system shows that they all require students to have an internship prior to graduating from their program. Currently the HSU School of Business does not have a formal internship requirement for students. Listed by students as something they feel is important, we recommend the HSU School of Business continue to foster relationships with the community to help facilitate learning outside of the academic environment.

**Increase breadth of class offerings, scheduling flexibility and distance learning opportunities-** In addition to the previously mentioned recommendation to expand the class opportunities in areas such as Accounting, research showed that students also have a need for greater flexibility in scheduling and options for learning. Currently the HSU School of Business is only able to offer many classes once per academic year, primarily during the day and exclusively on-campus. The top five CSU Business Schools offer greater flexibility with their scheduling and learning options. We recommend the HSU School of Business investigate expanding classes to once per semester, multiple sections for more popular classes, evening classes and distance learning options such as television and the internet.

**Offer a one semester certificate program in Sustainability, available for both undergraduate and graduate students-** Research shows that students have a minor interest in a degree in Sustainability. While this is a relatively unknown area of study, it may be one in which there is tremendous future opportunity both as an academic program and a recruiting tool in for a very specific target market. We recommend the HSU School of Business investigate developing a certificate program available to both undergraduate and graduate students, in addition to their generalized Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. This will give the business program the opportunity to develop an undergraduate concentration in a niche that would build on Humboldt's prestigious reputation in environmental sciences.

**Prepare students for post-graduation job searches by conducting professional mock interviews-** Interviews with local business leaders show that they feel communication skills are of utmost importance in today's work environment and that most students are not prepared for communication in a professional environment. One way to help students overcome this perception is to coach them for "life on the outside." We recommend developing a series of coaching seminars culminating with mock interviews to prepare students in presenting themselves in a confident and effective manner when conducting their post-graduate job search.

**Investigate obtaining additional accreditation specific to the School of Business-** Currently the HSU School of Business is not accredited by the AACSB. In analyzing HSU's top five competitors one aspect they all share is this well-regarded distinction. We recommend investigating the potential of obtaining this accreditation.

### **Networking**

One of the key areas we identified as a deficiency in the HSU School of Business is the lack of interaction between the students, faculty and the local business community. Following are recommendations designed to build interest in the HSU School of Business with our target student market, influencers of our target student market (parents, guidance counselors and academic advisors) and the local business community:

**Focus on building a strong relationship with College of the Redwoods business faculty, academic advisors and transfer students-** As noted previously, the academic advisors at College of the Redwoods are not familiar with the program at the HSU School of Business. In addition, surveys and in-depth interviews with the business faculty and students at College of the Redwoods showed the same result. We recommend working to develop a strong relationship with the academic advisors, business faculty and students at College of the Redwoods.

**Focus on building a strong relationship with academic advisors and business teachers in all local area high schools-** Overwhelmingly; our research showed academic advisors at the local high schools do not have information about the undergraduate business program. Some stated they did not know Humboldt offered a degree in business. Despite their lack of knowledge on the program itself, all were eager to refer students if they could learn more about it. We recommend developing a strategy for keeping the local high school academic advisors informed on the program in the School of Business.

**Create a synergistic relationship with the local business community by holding focus groups, mixers and integrating their business methods into in-class lectures-** In depth interviews with local business representatives revealed they want to have a relationship with the HSU School of Business, but do not know much about the program. We recommend involving the business community in the School of Business on a regular basis by holding community mixers, information-gathering focus groups and inviting successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences in the classroom.

**Integrate with local business organizations such as Rotary and the Association of Certified Public Accountants-** Humboldt County is an area rich with entrepreneurial spirit and business professionals who are more than willing to help students learn. There are many educational-based service organizations in the immediate area, including Rotary and professional organizations such as the Association of Certified Public Accountants. We recommend the HSU School of Business work to develop relationships with these organizations to foster interest in the program as well as opportunities for student employment both during school and after graduation.

**Utilize the Business and Economics Club to motivate and encourage students to participate outside of the classroom environment-** The Business and Economics Club is a group of students motivated to learn more about business practices in addition to their academic studies. These students are motivated and are excellent candidates for post-graduate job placement. We recommend working closely with this organization to foster enthusiasm throughout the student body of the HSU School of Business.

**Create a fiduciary relationship between the business community and students by creating a series of sponsored annual academic scholarships-** Research has shown that local business professionals have expressed an interest in developing a stronger relationship with the HSU School of Business. Support is available both financially and in the form of internships and speaking opportunities. We recommend developing a series of sponsored academic scholarships by the business community designed to support students active in the HSU School of Business and create an ongoing financial relationship between these businesses and the HSU School of Business.

**Investigate capitalizing on the opportunities presented by LOHAS-** Humboldt State University has developed a relationship with Michael Crooke. Through this relationship, the opportunity to develop the LOHAS connection has evolved. While not a focus of this research study, we recommend the School of Business contemplate how they would like to approach this unique opportunity and how this relationship could help with implementation of the primary goals of this study. This research shows that the majority of students and potential students surveyed indicating they participate in outdoor activities. This provides evidence that the LOHAS market could be a potential target for the business program.

## **Marketing**

One of the research objectives of this study was to define the target markets of the HSU School of Business and what they are looking for when selecting a school. By understanding the needs and desires of the target markets, we were able to develop recommendations specifically designed to market the aspects important in generating increased enrollment. Following are our recommendations designed to market and promote the School of Business to future students, academic advisors assisting students in school selection and the business community.

**Continue to heavily promote small class size-** Currently the HSU School of Business has a low student teacher ratio in the majority of the classes it offers. This was seen by participants in an extremely favorable light. We recommend the HSU School of Business continues to place an emphasis on small class size as it begins to grow.

**Create a branding strategy for the school of business by naming the program after a distinguished alumnus or faculty member-** In-depth interviews reveal that there is a perception that the HSU School of Business is not a highly academic institution. While ETS scores show this may not be the case, the perception still exists. In accordance with the goals of marketing this program effectively, we recommend the HSU School of Business consider instituting a campaign to rename itself after a distinguished alumni or faculty member. This would potentially support the perception of being a program dedicated to academic achievement.

**Redesign and develop a modern and appealing web site-** Research into the websites of the top business schools in California shows that the HSU School of Business website, while visually appealing, lacks the draw of its CSU competitors. Since the internet is one of the top resources students draw from in deciding on which school to attend, it is important that it be engaging and interactive. We recommend redesigning the layout and copy of the current website to meet these goals.

**Increase placement of photographs depicting outdoor activities in the community, rather than using written emphasis-** While research shows students are interested in the environment and outdoor activities this area has to offer, it is not a top concern when deciding which school to attend. However, it is important to show students finding a balance between academics and recreation. We recommend using pictures in the promotion of the HSU School of Business to show this balance instead of using words to describe it.

**Strengthen branding of the Watson Academic Lecture Series with the School of Business-** The Watson Academic Lecture Series is currently co-branded with the School of Business. However, marketing efforts in promoting this relationship don't seem to have reached its full marketing potential. We recommend strengthening the promotion of this excellent program to draw interest to the HSU School of Business from the many undeclared students on campus.

**Hire a part-time Community Relations Manager to develop a perpetuating marketing strategy, build community relationships and lead recruitment efforts-** While this research has developed many opportunities for the HSU School of Business, they cannot be fully implemented on a long-term basis without an individual overseeing the marketing and strategy of this campaign. We recommend the HSU School of Business hire a part-time Community Relations Manager to develop, implement and oversee the facilitation of this plan, to market the program, and increase student enrollment.

**Develop dynamic marketing materials to be used in conjunction with the branding strategy of the University-** Currently there are no formalized marketing materials specific to the School of Business. However, we recognize there is a definite interest in developing these materials. We recommend the School of Business capitalize on the strength of the Go Humboldt promotional materials and use that branding design as the focal point of their individual marketing materials.

**Market the strength of ETS scores from the School of Business-** In our secondary research it was discovered that the ETS scores from students leaving the School of Business were very high. Compared to other CSU campuses, Humboldt State was near the top in academic achievement. We recommend capitalizing on this accomplishment as much as possible in all marketing and promotional efforts.

**Develop a public marketing campaign around the launch of the Student Managed Investment Fund-** The Student Managed Investment Fund is an amazing opportunity for students to gain real-world experience while in the realm of academia. This is a key program to highlight to perspective students and the community alike. It is extremely important to make the launch of this fund public and exciting. We recommend the HSU School of Business develop a strategy designed to gain maximum exposure in the regional marketplace, encouraging both student and community support.

**Develop an annual award honoring a distinguished member of the Alumni Association-** The HSU School of Business does not currently offer its own end of year awards banquet or ceremony. In addition to the presentation of student scholarships mentioned previously, we recommend developing an award for a distinguished member of the to-be-formed School of Business Alumni Association.

## **Recruitment**

The goal of recruitment is to attract students and faculty to Humboldt State University, to form an exciting and opportunity-enriched academic experience. By studying what is important to students in selecting a school we were able to develop a series of recommendations tailored to increasing enrollment in the School of Business. Following are our recommendations for attracting and retaining both new students and full-time faculty:

**Dedicate resources to attracting and retaining enthusiastic full-time faculty members-** There is currently a lack of full-time teaching faculty in the HSU School of Business. This was an area listed by students as something they would like to see changed. Recruiting new professors has been a top priority for the department, resulting in two new hires to begin in the Fall of 2006. We applaud the efforts in this area and recommend continuing to pursue new full-time faculty.

**Increase marketing efforts in the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California, focusing on areas statistically identified by the Admissions Office-** Our research shows that there are a tremendous number of students attending Humboldt State University from within the State of California, but outside of Humboldt County. Specifically, this includes the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California. We recommend working directly with the Admissions Department to develop a strategy aimed at marketing specifically to high school and junior college students in these areas.

**Evoke the tremendous power of alumni support by creating a specific alumni association for the School of Business; gathering and maintaining a database to manage the process-** The School of Business does not currently maintain its own active alumni association. Organized alumni interaction takes place on a school-wide level. The largest CSU business programs maintain their own networking with former students. We recommend developing an alumni association maintained exclusively by the HSU School of Business.

## ***Implementation Schedule***

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Since there are many items that need to be implemented in order to increase enrollment, we have identified an order in which they should be completed:

- Stage I efforts are those that are easier to implement and will make an immediate effect on enrollment. These should be completed within the next six months.
- Stage II efforts are those that will have significant impact, but are more difficult in scope. These should begin within the next 6-12 months.
- The Stage III recommendations are those which are the most difficult to implement and/or need additional research in order to be achieved. While important, the effect of these items will not be felt for some time. However, research into their implementation should be started no sooner than one year from now. Research into these items may be started earlier, but their impact will not be felt for some time.

### ***Stage I (next 3-6 months)***

1. Continue to heavily promote small class size.
2. Strengthen branding of the Watson Academic Lecture Series with the School of Business.
3. Create a synergistic relationship with the local business community by holding focus groups, mixers and integrating their business methods into in-class lectures.
4. Redesign and develop a modern and appealing web site.
5. Focus on building a strong relationship with academic advisors and business faculty in all local area high schools.
6. Focus on building a strong relationship with College of the Redwoods business faculty, academic advisors and transfer students.
7. Continue to dedicate resources to attracting and retaining enthusiastic full-time faculty members.
8. Market the strength of ETS scores from the School of Business.
9. Design a specific degree program in Accounting, offering intermediate and advanced classes focusing on preparing student to pass the CPA exam.

10. Integrate with local business organizations such as Rotary and the Association of Certified Public Accountants.
11. Utilize the Business and Economics Club to motivate and encourage students to participate outside of the classroom environment.
12. Work with the community to develop more internships, increase the level of applied knowledge and student satisfaction.
13. Create a branding strategy for the school of business by naming the program after a distinguished alumni or faculty member.

**Stage II (next 6-12 months)**

1. Increase breadth of class offerings, scheduling flexibility and distance learning opportunities.
2. Create a fiduciary relationship between the business community and students by creating a series of sponsored annual academic scholarships.
3. Investigate obtaining additional accreditation specific to the School of Business.
4. Increase marketing efforts in the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California, focusing on areas statistically identified by the Admissions office.
5. Create an alumni association specific to the HSU School of Business.
6. Prepare students for post-graduation job searches by conducting professional mock interviews.
7. Increase placement of photographs depicting outdoor activities in the community, rather than using written emphasis.
8. Develop dynamic marketing materials to be used in conjunction with the branding strategy of the University.
9. Develop a public marketing campaign around the launch of the Student Managed Investment Fund.
10. Hire a part-time Community Relations Manager to develop a perpetuating marketing strategy based upon current research findings and recommendations.

**Stage III (next 12 months or more)**

1. Investigate creating concentrations in Real Estate, Entrepreneurship and International Business.
2. Offer a one semester certificate program in Sustainability, available for both undergraduate and graduate students.
3. Investigate capitalizing on the opportunities presented by LOHAS.

## ***Outcome Assessments***

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We recommend that this plan be reviewed once per year on a strategic basis and new data compiled every two years. This plan is concrete, but flexible. Changes should be made annually to keep in compliance with the objectives.

# Appendices