

## MANAGING MARKETING ENROLLMENT: A CASE STUDY

Loraine Lau

Marketing Department, Anderson Graduate School of Management  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, CA 90024; (714-773-3788)

Chiranjeev S. Kohli

Marketing Department, School of Business Administration and Economics  
Cal State Fullerton  
Fullerton, CA 92834; (714-773-3796)

Katrin R. Harich

Marketing Department, School of Business Administration and Economics  
Cal State Fullerton  
Fullerton, CA 92834; (714-773-2223)

### ABSTRACT

Many colleges and universities face challenges unparalleled in recent decades. The Higher Education Research Institute and the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) reported that the proportion of business majors among college freshmen declined from 24.6% in 1987 to 14.3% in 1992. As the pool of available undergraduate business majors continues to dwindle, competition among business departments to retain and gain student market share increases.

Recent developments at a California State University seem to mirror these overall trends and make it an ideal setting for a case study. The marketing department has been seeking new ways to revamp its undergraduate program aimed to encourage students to major in the field. By examining elements in the macro-environment that affect enrollment and by understanding the decision-making process of students when choosing a major will enable the department to develop effective enrollment management strategies.

The purpose of this case study is fivefold: 1) to examine trends in the macro- environment that appear to be affecting marketing enrollment, 2) to understand the overall state of business and more specifically, marketing, as a major of choice, 3) to identify new and verify existing sources of influence established by past research and to compare results among groups

(marketing vs. non-marketing majors and ethnic groups), 4) to determine business students' perceptions of the marketing field and compare results across segmented groups, and 5) to develop recruitment and retainment strategies aimed at college students.

60% of the 179 respondents indicated that they contemplated two to three different majors before selecting their current major while 21% considered only one. 17% of the students claimed to have made their decision at the last minute.

Although "printed material from department/school" did not receive a high mean (3.18), it scored the highest among the information sources provided. "Magazine and newspaper articles" (2.68) and "marketing faculty presentations about marketing in business writing classes" (2.61) ranked second and third, respectively.

Family and relatives (3.29) seem to play a rather important role in the students' decision-making process, followed by friends (2.92) and colleagues at work (2.73). The case study reveals students consider "job opportunities", "income earned" and "creativity allowed" the most appealing attributes of the field. On the other hand, students regard "being in sales" and "competition in the marketing field" as the most unattractive features.