

PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PS SAS): Student Records Topics

Minutes from Meeting with Associate and Assistant Deans on Friday, January 23, 2004, from 9am to 11:00am, in McManus Lounge, Hollister Hall

Presenters:

David Yeh
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Student and Academic Services

Chris Cox
Associate University Registrar
Student and Academic Services

Status of the transition of Student Records Systems into PS SAS (David Yeh)

Although the majority of requirements for this transition have been identified, we (the PS SAS project team) still need to hear confirmation from college unit representatives that all requirements are supported in the new PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PS SAS) at Cornell. PS SAS project team members are reviewing feedback on requirements from college registrars, which has been instrumental in helping them identify and address the unique needs of each college.

The Student Records portion of the new PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PS SAS) will go live (into production) on March, 2005. We have been exchanging ideas with a number of groups whose communities are affected by this project, such as college registrars, steering committees, AAD (Associate and Assistant Deans), and FABIT. At this point in the process, it's important for everyone to review what's been done in order to make sure it makes sense before we move forward into production.

Course Numbering (Chris Cox)

Over the last several years a number of departments have had to 'reuse' course numbers on a semester by semester basis that identifies a new or different topic/content of a course between fall and spring semesters (or over other time periods) even though the same course catalog number represents very different courses. This practice occurs in part to a large number of courses being offered within a particular subject and the system limitation of a three-field course number.

PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PS SAS) can accommodate the change of course material over time for a course represented by a particular course number; however, this practice will have detrimental effects once the PeopleSoft student records system is implemented.

The PeopleSoft *course number* is a ten character field with the format of #####AAAAAA. The first four character positions must be numeric and the following six positions are alpha/numeric. The PS SAS project team suggests utilizing only the first four numeric positions. Holding the following 6 characters in reserve will provide the University with long-term flexibility to adjust to a longer course number as departments run out of numbers or should a new numbering scheme be necessary in the future. Allowing for this long-term flexibility will allow all historical course work to maintain the proper historical perspectives without having to be adjusted to other course numbering schemes.

One of the long-term goals of this project is to allow degree auditing, which can be done as long as we can track a course and the requirements it meets over time.

It is important to be aware of “forbidden overlaps,” which are courses with the same content offered by different colleges.

The PS SAS system provides the flexibility for business rules to be applied at the class level. This means that if you have a class section restricted to engineering co-op students, for instance, you could set it up properly in the new system.

One attendee said that when a department cross-references a course, individual faculty members know about it, but not the colleges. We need an explicit procedure, managed by the AADs, that allows colleges to become informed about courses that get cross-referenced. Some concerns were raised about faculty members having open access to enter anything about a cross-listed course into the PS SAS.

David Yeh explained that the PS SAS project team needs to know the details of course approval processes, specifically who has authority to enter what.

A suggestion was put forth that college registrars lay out the general process of cross listing so that the PS SAS project team can include it in their design considerations.

Further discussion about cross-referencing and cross-listing courses was tabled as a “parking lot” topic.

Courses can be labeled as “inactive.” Inactive courses will stay archived permanently or can be reactivated. Inactive courses will not appear in the Courses of Study. Courses and course numbers should never be deleted; they are needed to preserve historical data over time.

The Courses of Study catalog will not get data from the PS SAS due to data incompatibilities. Some concerns were raised that if the data did not come from the PS SAS, course descriptions in the catalog may not be the same. Further discussion on content management for the Courses of Study was tabled as a “parking lot” topic.

Janet Gray explained the difference between a course and a class. A course is the higher-level name of a given offering in a college. A class is a subset of a course, specifying

when and where it will be offered in a given term. You can think of the course as the “parent” object and the class as the “child” object.

Another attendee asked if you could list a course as both undergraduate and graduate, and offered at the same time and location. Chris Cox explained that setting up a course using repeat rules and mini-sessions (repeat for credit function) in PS SAS can easily accommodate such a listing.

For courses with no credit, you can set the “credit” option to “0.”

In reviewing the course screens in PS SAS, Chris Cox showed that courses must be approved before they are scheduled. Until they are approved, they are set to “pending.” This led to questions about the course approval process. David Yeh tabled this topic for a follow-up meeting in which more detail on the course screens could be discussed.

The PS SAS team needs the colleges to come up with course numbers for courses within their colleges. Someone suggested the PS SAS team generate a template for colleges to use to provide this information. A template will be generated and sent to contacts within the colleges shortly.

Course numbers needed by college registrars by June 1, 2004.

Minors and Concentrations (Chris Cox)

Individual colleges define their minors and concentrations in different ways. In general, a minor is defined as “an area of study outside the major” and a concentration is defined as “a focused area of study within the major for which a student can receive more credit.”

Chris Cox gave a demonstration of associating minors within careers in the PS SAS. It brought up a number of questions about definitions:

- Are all business processes defined for the process of associating minors in academic plans?
- What about the problem of colleges not being told when a minor is completed?
- Should the minor appear on a student’s transcript?
- Should the definitions for minors and concentrations be the same for undergraduate and graduate programs?
- Should “specializations” appear on a student’s transcript?

A “specialization” refers to a program that does not fit into the “minor” or “concentration” category, such as “short-term study” or “study abroad.”

David Yeh asked if the following definitions (from the “Definitions of Minors and Concentrations” handout) for major, minor, concentration, and specialization were acceptable:

- Major – an area of study where successful completion is awarded with a degree or certification
- Minor – a concentrated area of study outside of one’s major area of study
- Concentration – a focused area of study within one’s major
- Specialization – a period of short-time specialized study

Attendees responded that the definitions should be more specific. The requirements for each type of program should be determined and included in each definition.

The PS SAS allows you to incorporate more than one minor or concentration into a given academic plan and can manage majors in more than one college. Chris explained that cross-college requirements are associated to the academic plan through the academic career.

Attendees agreed that we need to understand more about cross-college majors and other programs. More in-depth discussion of this was tabled as a “parking lot” topic.

An attendee asked if we could poll students to see what course topics they want covered. A keyword search was suggested. Janet Gray pointed out that a keyword search could be done currently with the on-line version of the Courses of Study catalog at <http://www.cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/Courses/CoSsearch.phtml>. Chris Cox indicated that a table on course attributes might be able to be set up to accommodate keyword searches.

Several attendees suggested the PS SAS project team create a glossary to help people translate PeopleSoft terminology into Cornell’s terminology for describing courses.

Decisions about how the minor and concentrations will be defined and how they will work in the PS SAS system need to be made by March 1, 2004.

The following action items for this project have been divided into “parking lot” topics, which will be addressed in future meetings of the PS SAS and AAD (Associate and Assistant Deans) group, and “follow-up” items, which will be address by the PS SAS Team alone.

| “Parking Lot” Topics for Future Meetings with Associate and Assistant Deans | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|----------|
| Topic | Owner | Open date | When due |
| Discuss security issues. | | | |
| Need to be aware of “forbidden overlaps” in course numbering. | | | |
| Develop a process that allows colleges to become informed about courses that get cross-referenced. This process needs to be managed by the AADs. Start by having college registrars lay out the general process of cross-listing a course and the associations of courses with degree requirements. Address concerns about who has access to cross-listed course information (e.g. faculty members). | | | |
| Discuss what information should appear on a student’s transcript. | | | |
| Need to look at system of approvals and who has the authority to enter what information. | | | |
| Course numbers needed by college registrars by June 1, 2004. | | | |

| “Follow-Up” Items for PS SAS Team to Complete | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|----------|
| Topic | Owner | Open date | When due |
| The AADs have agreed to using 4 digits for course numbering. Notify the departments that this has been approved. | | | |
| Post handouts, minutes, and presentations to the PS SAS web site. | | | |
| Schedule meeting with college registrars to discuss course screens in more detail. | | | |
| Complete and distribute template for AADs to use to provide information required by the PS SAS team about course numbering. | | | |
| Complete and distribute template for AADs to use to provide information required by the PS SAS team about minors and concentrations. | | | |
| Create and distribute a glossary to help people translate PeopleSoft terminology into Cornell’s existing terminology for describing student information systems. | | | |
| Decisions about how the minor and concentrations will be defined and will work in the PS SAS system need to be made by [date]. | | | |
| A keyword search was suggested. Janet Gray pointed out that a keyword search could be done currently with the on-line version of the Courses of Study catalog at http://www.cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/Courses/CoS_search.phtml . Chris Cox indicated that a table on course attributes might be able to be set up to accommodate keyword searches. | | | |