

## Forecasting Dominican University GSLIS Electives Scheduling

### Problem Statement

Elective course offerings that don't match student plans and expectations result in course under-enrollment, lengthy matriculations, incomplete or unfinished MSLIS degrees, reduced satisfaction for the educational experience and may have a negative impact on semester tuition revenue. A non-binding forecast of student requests for electives from the existing course catalog, matched to faculty coursework offerings on a rolling two – three year basis will minimize enrollment gaps and optimize faculty teaching schedules.

### Project Proposal

Create a system that forecasts student elective course plans and matches them to faculty offerings and availability. New elective courses can be added to offerings based on perceived interest during high demand times maximizing the opportunity for student uptake.

### Background

Students enrolled in Dominican University's Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) complete thirty-six credit hours of coursework to qualify for graduation with the Masters of Science in Library and Information Science (MSLIS). Twelve credit hours are required "core" classes, typically taken during a student's first year of enrollment. Many students also complete a three credit hour Practicum. This leaves a maximum of eight courses (twenty-four credit hours) available as electives to be completed with the core coursework in a maximum duration of six years.<sup>1</sup>

Electives may be used to benefit a student's breadth or depth in their library and information science (LIS) career<sup>2</sup>. For the student focusing their electives and/or pursuing a certificate concurrent with their MLIS it is critically important that the courses available for registration match their study vision and graduation requirements. For the student expanding their breadth of knowledge across the LIS discipline it is equally important to have a wide variety of coursework available during the time they matriculate in the GSLIS program.

Adding to the difficulty of meeting student coursework expectations, many matriculating GSLIS students are highly motivated, non-traditional students with significant competing demands on their time and availability to attend courses during much of the

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<sup>1</sup> See [Master of Library and Information Science | Dominican GSLIS](#), Curriculum and Degree Requirements, accessed 24 February 2014.

<sup>2</sup> See [Courses | Dominican GSLIS](#), accessed 24 February 2014.

traditional classroom day, and at the traditional main campus location. Having a robust forecasting and scheduling methodology that considers the myriad of competing student and faculty priorities is useful because:

- Student expectations can be queried over a long-term period (two – three years) and used in future schedule planning exercises.
- Students can complete programs that have specific course requirements and limited durations with a higher level of assurance.
- Students will no longer perceive the need to register for more courses than they plan to enroll and complete during a semester.
- Faculty expertise and scheduling can be optimized.
- Faculty can plan and develop new course offers considering student vision and mission combined with faculty research and publication interests.
- Student, faculty, and staff frustrations are minimized, therefore allowing energy and time to be refocused onto more value-added activities.

### **Boundaries and Constraints:**

**Organization Scope.** This system is directed toward students enrolled in and faculty teaching in GSLIS at Dominican University. Courses at Dominican University at large and NOT in the School of Library and Information Science are not in scope.

**Data.** Direct methods for collecting student expectations are in scope. Indirect methods may become in scope if these methods can be articulated and defined during the requirements analysis stage of the project. Data collected is used for planning purposes, and is non-binding on actual registration. All students will continue to be required to register for all classes using the standard methods. Participating in course needs forecasting is no guarantee of actual course offering and no guarantee of course enrollment. No preferential registration is implied by participating in forecasting activities.

**People.** GSLIS students enrolling in LIS electives during future years are in scope. GSLIS faculty and staff with a direct or indirect interface with GSLIS students are in scope. In particular, GSLIS advisors may be the initial point of contact to ascertain student expectations.

**Procedures.** Registration procedures are not expected to change as a result of the system developed by this process.

**Policies.** Student privacy is of utmost importance. No recommendations or procedures that jeopardize student privacy will be established as a result of this project. Students are expected to provide forecasts for themselves only, on a schedule for the volume of courses that they might reasonably expect to complete.