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Desperate Times? Recruiting students for your department

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- 1) Primary Presenter information and curriculum vitae or short biographical sketch:

William Hoon

William Hoon is Associate Professor and Chair of the department of Broadcasting and Journalism at Western Illinois University. Dr. Hoon developed a sports broadcasting curriculum at Western Illinois University. The sports broadcasting major is now one of the university's signature programs. Before being selected as chair, Hoon served as the Director for Sports Broadcasting for the department. He earned his PhD in Mass Communication and Media Arts from Southern Illinois University.

- 2) Additional presenter information (if applicable):
- 3) Title of presentation: Desperate Times? Recruiting students for your department.
- 4) Abstract: Presenter will discuss strategies and best practices to assist in recruiting students.
- 5) Keywords: Recruiting, enrollment, management, department culture.
- 6) Presentation topic themes: pressing issues and trends in higher education, management for enrollment swings.
- 7) Target audience: All Department Chairs as well as other University administrators
- 8) Type of presentation: best practice presentation
- 9) Objective(s) of the presentation: Participants will:
 - a. increase knowledge of strategies and practices for recruiting
 - b. develop specific strategies for their own academic department/units
- 10) Description of the session (300-500 words):

This presentation will review how one department at a regional Midwest university has dealt with the pressure of recruiting students. Some major/elite colleges and universities have the pleasure of deciding how many students will join them each fall. But as the cost of earning a college degree rises to levels that cause students to either leverage their future with heavy debt or stay home to save money, many schools (and departments) are fighting for their lives. A department's future can depend on the success or failure of attracting 18-year-olds to campus. Many administrators are realizing they must compete for these students.

The author has served as chair of the Broadcasting department at Western Illinois University over the last four years. In order to give some perspective to our situation, the number of Illinois high school graduates at public and nonpublic schools has been decreasing in that same period of time. Projections indicate that trend will only get worse in Illinois. Our university has been impacted. Total enrollment has also been in decline--11% university-wide over five years (WIU 2014-2015 Fact Book). The amount of state funding for higher education gets

reduced every year. Tuition rates increase to offset the loss in income. Even with these obstacles, our department numbers remain strong:

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Majors	178	211	216	207	196

In addition, the department continues to shine in other ways. Our students have been nominated and won more awards in media competitions at the state, regional, and national level than ever before. The department has also increased the number of news and sports productions. We have a live TV newscast twice a week and a live morning news/talk show once a week. Last year, we did 35 sports productions with our live truck. Our video at these events was seen live on a new video board and streamed over an athletic website. Our graduates are finding employment in media-related jobs at a fairly high rate!

Our initiatives are not new to some; in fact they are in line with the 5 P's of higher education marketing: program, price, place, people and promotion. The presentation will provide an overview of how we implemented these practices for our situation. Specific examples will be given in the following areas:

- **Face-to-Face Interaction**



- **Getting to high schools and community colleges**



- **Providing Incentives**



- **Promoting Yourself**



- **Keeping in Contact**



Why might other Chairs benefit from the presentation? The practices we have implemented might provide some insight for their own programs. We have been sharing our recruiting plan with other university departments. These practices are

not universal for all programs, but the strategies, designed to find ways to highlight your program and bring in prospective students, can be used by anyone.