

Enrollment focused questions:

1. What are the detailed enrollment patterns for the last five years and projections for the next five? By program (both undergraduate and graduate)? Locality? Ethnic group? Financial need? [Send PDF documents.](#)

On a related note, students in the Bachelor of Professional Studies receive an average discount rate of 9.5% vs. incoming freshmen who receive a 40% discount rate.

2. Which programs are in the highest demand? Which programs are not in demand?

There are three concentrations within BPS with the highest demand (within eight students of each other): Early Childhood, Information Technology, Interdisciplinary Studies.

The concentration with the lowest demand is Agri Business, which is not fully available online.

3. What factors drive enrollment for programs (employment opportunities, social factors, etc.)?

Employment opportunities because obtaining the degree eliminates ceilings for our students.

4. What are the freshmen fall to spring retention rates, freshmen to sophomore retention rates, and 4 and 6 year graduation rates for your programs? [Since Fall 2007 there have been 2963 BPS students enrolled at Tech. Of these, 1147 have graduated and 702 are still enrolled. The success rate using these numbers is 62.4%. The graduation rate is 50.7%.](#)

5. Has your college tried any programs that impacted retention/graduation rates? If so please describe these programs (even if they weren't successful). [We are working on a retention effort beginning this fall with PS courses \(for both 15 and 8 week\). However, we cannot impact non PS, eTech or Web courses outside the department. The fall PS internal retention effort has these key events:](#)

- 8/26 Full term courses begin. (Individual instructors email students in their courses)
- 9/3 List of non-attending students, by course, sent to the Department Head
- 9/4 Faculty/advisors contact student non-participating as identified. Department Head request a report identifying PS students who enrolled after 8/26 from tracking purposes.
- 9/8 Faculty contact students not attending and follow with individualized email
- 9/8 Department Head facilitates the step immediately above with adjunct faculty
- 9/10 11th Class Day
- 10/14 Mid-Term: Faculty sends to Department Head list of students considered in "academic distress" by the respective course instructor
- 10/18 Department Head publishes distress list to all departmental advisors
- 11/30 Last day to withdraw with a "W" or change to audit.
- 12/8 Final Day of Classes

6. Are there any enrollment opportunities that are not being pursued currently? [We have not targeted the corporate community in AR, specifically those that offer tuition reimbursement programs. There is an untapped market regarding this corporate community in the NW portion of the state. In addition, the program has not actively approached the military and veteran audience. Working with our Veterans Services office, we are obtaining information and partnerships that will allow us to more actively recruit to the BPS and all online programs. Lisa Clark, Director of Online Partnerships and Military Outreach has been tasked with both these efforts.](#)

7. What are the barriers to enrolling more students? [Not having AGRI Business completely online hampers enrollment, especially in the Delta area of the state. With continued growth we will require additional support via faculty positions and advisors.](#)

8. Are there any new programs that are in the pipeline? [Right now my focus is on certificates. There is initial exploration of potential certificates in 1. Meat Processing or 2. Food Safety with the AGRI department \(in working with another university\). Dr. Aulgur and are in preliminary talks regarding a Master's level certificate \(possibly in Nonprofit Leadership\). I've also had conversations with Dr. Sandy Smith and she has an interest in pursuing this idea, although we need to flesh out more details.](#)

9. Are there any concerns/problems in enrollment that will have a significant impact on the future success of your college? [There is an increasing number of online programs within the state and across the country in professional studies. If we continue to grow without additional staffing, we will lose our differentiator among other programs, which is personalized service.](#)

Marketing focused questions:

1. Are you given the authority to market your college/programs and develop strategic messaging for your college/programs? If not, would this be something you would be interested in owning? If you are given the authority how do you market your college/programs? [Working with University Relations and Academic Affairs, we have had the opportunity to advertise for the BPS degree with marked success. What we are working with the Development Office to "own" internally is to expand outreach to a physical presence in conjunction with university events.](#)

2. Are the faculty and staff actively involved in recruiting students? If so in what capacity? [Presently, through indirect opportunities. There is not currently a concerted effort. However, having a presence at university events has the potential to recruit online students even in a face-to-face environment. Indirectly, the manner in which we work with our students enhances referrals and is a recruiting effort unto itself.](#)

3. How do your programs differentiate themselves from similar programs at other comparable institutions (specifically UCA, UALR, ASU, UA, etc.)? [Very few programs within the scope of the state of Arkansas are direct comparatives to the Bachelor of Professional Studies program. The BPS program is competitive regarding cost in the Arkansas market, with the exception of the University of Arkansas' eVersity initiative. The BPS program at Arkansas Tech offers a more liberal transfer policy and allows the program to "meet students where they are" as opposed to prescribed requirements. The BPS program, with a required Professional Core, combined with an 18 hours concentration area, is designed to develop professionals who have the knowledge, skills and abilities to be a force-multiplier for their employers. With a residency requirement of 30 hours, Arkansas Tech is able to accept more transfer hours from potential students. The majority of BPS students enter the program deficient in upper-level course work. A key component of the program's success has been the implementation of a proactive advising model with non-traditional students in a 100% online degree program. Proactive advising involves five key components:](#)

1. deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation,
2. using strategies to show interest and involvement with students,
3. intensive advising designed to increase the probability of student success,
4. working to educate students on all options, and
5. approaching students before situations develop.

Proactive advising is a deliberate, structured intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate the student to seek help. This practice applies to retention, at risk student advising, critical outreach points, and student communication to resolve difficult situations. The Department of Professional Studies strives to serve as a one-stop resource center for students. As mentioned above, since Fall 2007 there have been 2963 BPS students enrolled at Tech. Of these, 1147 have graduated and 702 are still enrolled. The success rate using these numbers is 62.4%. The graduation rate is 50.7%.

- The pending launch of eVersity by the University of Arkansas system (Bachelors programs to launch Fall 2016) is major competitor and threat to the BPS program. eVersity offers stackable degree programs delivered completely online with a market-low tuition rate of \$165 per hour (with no additional fees and with no textbooks to purchase). Additionally, eVersity is marketing a tuition rate guarantee, stating a student's tuition will not increase if he or she remains continually enrolled in the program. Areas of study include Business, Criminal Justice, Healthcare Management, Information Technology, and University Studies.
- The University of Central Arkansas offers a Professional Studies degree with an emphasis in Leadership and Technology or Health and Safety. It is housed in the Department of Health Sciences and has a very specific target audience: associate's degree holders in medical-related fields and information technology. The targeted market of this program is associate's degree holders in the areas of health and technology. UCA only allows a student to transfer 60 hours into the program.
- The University of Arkansas at Fort Smith offers a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership, designed for students who have completed an associate degree. The program is delivered through a combination of online courses, eight-week sessions, evening and weekend courses and/or in a traditional classroom setting.
- The University of Arkansas at Little Rock offers a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in an online format. Multiple concentrations are offered. UALR requires the same number of residency hours as the BPS program, but requires 45 upper division hours as opposed to 40 at Arkansas Tech. This program requires students to complete a 2000-level second language course or demonstrate equivalent proficiency as measured by a competency test. The concentration requirement is convoluted. Student must select three concentration areas and complete 18 hours in each concentration (e.g., History, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Professional and Technical Writing, Sociology)
- Arkansas State University offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. This program features an alternative to traditional majors and experiential learning. Key course differences from the BPS program include core courses in service learning, professional development and critical thinking. This degree program has a professional core requirement of 21 hours and a foreign language requirement of 6 hours. Students are asked to choose one thematic concentration from the four areas and complete 45 hours in this thematic area (of which 36 must be upper division hours): Occupational and Health Safety, Media Relations in Sports, Law Enforcement Communication & Information, and Public Health Awareness.

4. Is there an internal marketing strategy? Should there be? If so what should it emphasize? [Addressed in 1 and 2.](#)

5. Are social media channels effectively deployed in communicating with the University's constituents? [Not currently, however we will be starting Instagram and Periscope accounts for the Professional Studies department following university standards and protocols.](#)

Wrap-Up

1. Is there any information about your college/programs that you feel needs to be considered when we develop our initiatives? [We would like to become part of the university's larger, integrated marketing effort for all online programs.](#)

2. I would like each of you come up with 2-3 strategic initiatives for your college/programs related to enrollment and marketing (that's 2-3 initiatives for both enrollment and marketing for a total of 4-6). Don't be afraid to be bold for your initiatives. I specifically chose the members of our group because they aren't afraid of big ideas, so think outside the box!! Just make sure you're able to articulate how your big ideas will impact your college/programs.

1. [To enroll online students \(all programs\) from first contact through course enrollment in 72 hours.](#)
 - a. [This would require additional staff and coordination in admissions, financial aid, registrar, and advisement.](#)
2. [Pursuit of online certificates at the undergraduate and graduate level.](#)
 - a. [These would be credit bearing certificates.](#)
3. [A global marketing campaign educating about all online programs at the undergraduate and graduate level.](#)
 - a. [This could feature sub-campaigns on distinct programs.](#)
4. [To strategically foster an alumni base from admission through graduation and beyond.](#)
 - a. [This effort is in collaboration with the university's Development Office.](#)