EXSYS Case Study

Class Selection Student Advisor

Experience of educators shows that good undergraduate guidance in terms of class selection and registration process substantially helps to retain students. Advising consumes considerable time and effort of the faculty involved in the advising process. Greater needs for advising, coupled with a smaller number of faculty, has resulted in the deployment of automated advising systems in many departments. Good advising is especially important in an environment where there are many transfer students requiring individual assistance during the registration process, and where there are many full or part-time working students whose availability is limited.

EXSYS was selected for these projects because of its availability on several different types of computers and workstations; wide use for different applications in industry and business; and popularity in academic environments. The advisor suggests consecutive courses to be taken by students to ensure progress toward completing degree requirements, while taking into consideration student availability and individual interests. The advisor also suggests courses that are prerequisites for the largest number of other courses. Students can minimize the time needed to obtain a degree, particularly in the small departments that cannot offer all of its courses every semester at a convenient time.

Students run the knowledge automation systems with no training other than how to start the program. Course offerings for the next semester are always presented with the current class schedule to help students plan ahead.

The systems track student's interests, and records of taken courses. Departmental (or university-wide) databases consisting of all students records are called by the knowledge automation systems for the list of completed courses for every student. This feature is important in departments having many "transfer" students coming from nearby colleges. Courses taken by students elsewhere can be evaluated and their correlative courses can be entered into the database. The capabilities of the knowledge automation system to make fast and easy modifications each semester contributes to the adaptation of the system by other departments and colleges.