



SLIMS: What can we expect from this investment

Over the last 10 or more years many higher education institutions have sought to improve services and reduce costs by undertaking business process reviews and implementing new technologies, both hardware and software. What has been achieved? A survey of 335 North American higher education institutions indicates that higher levels of performance improvement have been made in transactional processes than in monitoring or managerial processes and that the highest levels of performance improvement have been made in student related processes. Institutions tended to put more emphasis on process improvements in areas of strategic importance, often those related to reputation or which had a direct impact on revenue. In the student area the strategic processes were viewed as recruitment, admissions, enrolment and retention.

In identifying the most significant factors in process innovation, factors grouped under leadership were identified as the most significant, followed by factors grouped under technology and finally factors grouped under environment (which included institutional culture). The purchase or implementation of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system including student information management systems acts as a catalyst for change either deliberately through business process review then enacted in new systems or because the systems require change.

The institutions achieving the most in process improvements were relying on new systems, coupled with business intelligence tools and the self-service capabilities of the Web to underpin their achievements. These technologies allow institutions to link transactions end-to-end and across functional areas to achieve both efficiencies and higher levels of service.

SLIMS will need to understand these experiences to assure that UTAS gets the best return for its investment.

Good Enough! IT Investment and Business Process Performance in Higher Education by Robert B. Kvavik and Philip J. Goldstein, with John Voloudakis for Educause Centre for Applied Research (ECAR), 2005

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