Marketing for A Web-Based Master's Degree Program in Light of Marketing Mix Model

Cheng-Chang (Sam) Pan
The University of Texas at Brownsville
Sam.Pan@utb.edu

Abstract

The marketing mix model was applied with a focus on Web media to re-strategize a Web-based Master's program in a southern state university in U.S. The program's existing marketing strategy was examined using the four components of the model: product, price, place, and promotion, in hopes to repackage the program (product) to prospective students (customers) and to offset the impact of dissolved partnership with its state-funded coordinating body, which carried a stronger brand image than the university where the program was housed. Challenges and recommendations were addressed.

Introduction

The focus of this business research study is on the marketing and promotion efforts of an Educational Technology program in a southern state university (referred to as the University in this paper) in the United States of America in terms of product, price, place, and promotion, which is known as the marketing mix (4P) model. The program has been offering a fully Web-based Master's of Education (M.Ed.) for more than a decade. In addition to the M.Ed. degree program, the academic program also offers a specialization in Educational Technology for the Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction; an undergraduate Educational Technology track in three degree programs: Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT), Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS), and Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies (BMS); as well as two graduate certificate programs: Master Technology Teacher (MTT) and E-Learning. As the only online M.Ed. program in Educational Technology within the University of Texas System, the state-funded program is currently servicing 58 graduate students that occupy approximately 120 seats in various courses (M. Stevens, personal communication, September 16, 2010). The goal of this piece of applied research study is to investigate this particular academic program (i.e., Education Technology at the University) and concentrate on one of its products (i.e., M.Ed. in Educational Technology) in an effort to strategize a better marketing direction for this product than what currently exists.

Background

Through its online academic programs, the University was in a partnership with the University of Texas TeleCampus (UTTC). The partnership had enabled the UTTC to coordinate with five universities, including the University and UT-Austin, among others within the University of Texas (UT) System. The UT System is one of the six public university systems in Texas. Through the partnership, online programs were delivered system-wide and state-wide. The M.Ed. in Educational Technology program at the University was one of the earliest online programs offered. The M.Ed. program is still the only one of its kind within the UT System, competing against other online Educational Technology programs in five other state university systems within Texas. The coordinating office also had developed and executed a successful marketing campaign since the office was established in the mid-1990s. Since September 1, 2010, the UTTC has ceased almost all of its operations due to the UT System's organization restructuring ("UT System Officials," 2010). Perhaps the most probable threat, as a result of the restructuring, which concerned the faculty of the M.Ed. program is the decreasing student numbers, especially those from out of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. The cause of this concern is two-fold. First, the University's primary mission is to service the needs of students as a community university ("Mission Statement," n.d.). Promoting the online degree program as a product to out-of-area prospects will require the university administration's commitment and support, which can be a challenge, given the deep budgetary cut by the state (Castro, 2011). Second, those courses initially contributed by the participating universities may no longer be offered in the long run due to the dissolved coordination and formalization. Thus, the integrity of the existing curriculum of the online program may be compromised. Given all that stated above, one legitimate question to ask is, "Should the University implement a new comprehensive marketing strategy?" Although state universities are considered non-for-profit organizations, the competition among them for state funding is getting too severe for these public institutions of higher education to neglect student recruitment through a marketing strategy (Beneke, 2011).

Review of Literature

State universities, which compete for limited public funds, need to develop an integrated marketing plan to bring in revenues in order to continue its regular operations, just like other publicly funded entities (Amenta, 2010). Marketing in education has been employed pervasively (Gupta & Singh, 2010; Ning & Crossley, 2010; Ščeulovs & Gaile-Sarkane, 2010; Van Rooij & Lemp, 2010), and it is generally drawn upon theories and practices in business (Kerstetter, 2011). Beneke (2011) stated, "It would be foolhardy to assume that marketing and the institution [of higher education] are strange bedfellows" (p. 33). Therefore, it is paramount that the University takes on the responsibility for formulating and implementing a marketing strategy in an effort to prevent the issue of student enrollment previously mentioned. The University can start by integrating all existing resources and coordinating with the faculty of the M.Ed. in Educational Technology program.

Because the University is located in the southernmost part of Texas, it is paramount to market the University as a brand to areas outside the Lower Rio Grande Valley that it is currently servicing. The online Educational Technology program had defined a brand image known in the State of Texas as a competitive online M.Ed. in Educational Technology degree for teachers, instructional designers, and trainers. That image is now gradually fading away as with the deceased UTTC. A new brand must be created through marketing communications (Keller, 2009). When it comes to the conventions of marketing communications, print and television advertising are two popular and effective media, among others (Li, Sun, & Montgomery, 2011; Mulhern, 2009; Pfeiffer & Zinnbauer, 2010; Sethuraman, Tellis, & Briesch, 2011). One drawback, though, is their associated cost, particularly the television commercials (Newstead & Romaniuk, 2010). It is anticipated that marketing events often require the determination and dedication of the organization, which is anticipated with regular financial support. Even in rescission universities should invest resources in marketing communications because customers still pay attention to the advertising (Sethuraman et al., 2011). Nevertheless, Keller (2009) warned that "traditional approaches to branding that put emphasis on mass media techniques seem questionable in a marketplace where customers have access to massive amounts of information about brands, products, and companies and in which social networks have, in some cases, supplanted brand networks" (p. 139). The question in this context then is, "Are the various marketing efforts made in an integrated manner?" Keller's statement, too, supported a proposed viewpoint that the University recognizes and stresses the value of communicating not simply to but also with the customers (Groom & Biernatzki, 2008; Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Lee & Park, 2007; Luck & Moffatt, 2009; Mishra & Muralie, 2010). Having said all that, it makes perfect sense to seek alternative venues and solutions to marketing communications than paid services.

In the face of the shortage of the funds, use of the marketing techniques at no or a nominal cost seems to be an optimal albeit short-run option, especially for the non-for-profit organizations such as the University. The Internet appears to provide the graduate program and the University with a cost-effective and time-efficient venue to connect to its customers, the present and prospective students. "Technology and the Internet are fundamentally changing the way the world interacts and communicates" (Keller, 2009, p. 139). "The Internet provides the necessary tools; easy operation and exchange of information; and therefore affects all diverse industries and companies. The Internet has become a useful tool for selling, buying and distributing goods and services in a rapidly growing supply chain" (Ščeulovs & Gaile-Sarkane, 2010, p. 775). Besides, word-of-mouth is one of the most effective techniques in promotion (Chen & Xie, 2008; Gupta & Singh, 2010; Jose & Bhat, 2007; Katona, Zubcsek, & Sarvary, 2011; Li & Zhan, 2011; Sen & Lerman, 2007). The University, in its best interest, ought to collaborate with the faculty of the graduate program and start building its reputation outside the servicing area as (Ning & Crossley, 2010) suggested, and through the Internet-based social media (Saperstein & Hastings, 2010). This collaboration, if planned well, is able to ensure a concerted effort in the marketing communications with the customers. Of all the applications of the Internet, email can be used to solicit or attract potential customers effectively (Li & Zhan, 2011). Other social networking media (e.g., Wiki, Blog, and Facebook) should also be deployed in the marketing communications process (Katona, Zubcsek, & Sarvary, 2011). These social media can " . . . perform such aims as: mutual communication, communication and contact with partners, customers, potential customers; the new business contacts foundation; advertising of company's services and products" (Ščeulovs & Gaile-Sarkane, 2010, p. 779). Because the Internet capability is already a part of the existing information technology infrastructure in the University, those Internet applications will not exacerbate the cost concern aforementioned. All that has been said thus far is intended to provide a viable solution to the marketing communications need and to address two issues stated earlier, cost and integration associated with the University's need.

From a customer perspective, products' usefulness is one significant factor to consider. This utilitarian view of emphasizing the extrinsic value of business products is commonly held by the customers (Deli-Gray, Gillpatrick, Marusic, Pantelic, & Kuruvilla, 2010; Teller, Reutterer, & Schnedlitz, 2008). It is suggested that the University administration and the faculty of the graduate program attend to how the degree program is aligned with competencies set by the professional organizations in educational technology. The faculty and the university must acknowledge that " . . . targeting student or customer needs in programme development should emphasize getting the product 'right' by designing and developing market-oriented and outcome-based curricula . . . . This requires course developers [professors] to conduct market research to understand the changing needs of the market, work more closely with the business community, and capitalise on the expertise of professional bodies" (Ning & Crossley, 2010, p. 324). This attention to the degree product's usefulness is particularly paramount because the University as a new brand is presumably weaker than other competing institutions in the state, let alone the entire country. Chitturi, Chitturi, and Raghavarao (2010) found that organizations with a relatively small brand name can put more efforts into the product's functionality to compete against those with a bigger brand name. Thus, it is recommended that the M.Ed. in Educational Technology degree program as a whole be marketed as a useful product to appeal to the majority of its clientele (i.e., American students) (Lepkowska-White, Brashear, & Weinberger, 2003).

In short, the imminent student enrollment problem confronted is attributable to two predominant causes. First, all the marketing activities that were terminated because of the dissolved UTTC are now delegated to the Master's program and the University as the degree granting institution at their own expenses. Second, the curriculum of the program need be

reengineered to stay competitive (e.g., useful) because certain courses that were originally contributed by other institutions through the partnership may be unavailable in the long run. A comprehensive marketing strategy at the university level is needed to address this anticipated problem proactively. With the existing marketing strategy that inherently positions itself as a community university servicing the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the University will likely confront imminent difficulty in compensating for the lack of the previously established marketing efforts by UTTC and stand great chances of losing its competitive and comparable advantages in the post-UTTC era.

In other words, the University must strategize a new marketing plan that adapts the current traditional communication channels by incorporating social networking media (Godfrey, Seiders, & Voss, 2011) to afford a synergetic information infrastructure which addresses the cost issue. The new marketing plan will also enable the University to coordinate its marketing activities by tapping into the talent of the concerned faculty of the graduate program, which leads to an integrated endeavor. Most importantly, the strategy will reposition the University itself to serve outside the Valley. The other aspect of the new marketing strategy deals with the utilitarian approach to the product development. The University needs to acknowledge the need to (re)design the M.Ed. in Educational Technology degree into a more useful product that can attract its prospects and retain present customers outside the servicing area. To do so, this strategy should rely on the program faculty's content knowledge and the alignment of the curriculum with the industry standards as argued earlier.

Applying Marketing Mix Model to New Plan

In essence, there are four components of the original marketing mix model: product, price, place, and promotion (4P). Each represents one aspect or parameter of a marketing plan (Purnomo, Lee, & Soekartawi, 2010). The four, as a whole, make a well-known marketing toolkit that is catchy and applicable, and the model serves as a significant cornerstone of marketing management science (Constantinides, 2006). The four-parameter model is considered "…a conceptual framework that identifies the principal decision making managers make in configuring their offerings to suit consumers' needs" (Goi, 2009, p. 2). For the past decades, it has remained an instrumental beginning point for marketing analysts (Hakånsson & Waluszewski, 2005). Although the marketing mix model may only present a simplified, managerial view of marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2009), its simplicity is able to provide a viable framework that seems appropriate for the initial phase of the present investigation from the faculty's perspective. The model serves the purpose of this applied business research in a sense that "the core of marketing is the marketing mix [model]" (Grönroos, 1989, p. 53) in spite of its criticism. Interested readers may refer to prior studies by Akroush (2011), Constantinides (2006), and Möller (2006) for opponents' views on the marketing mix model.

From the product's viewpoint, the Master's degree offered by the Educational Technology program at the University consists of eight required graduate courses (with one Introduction to Research course and one Learning and Cognition course) and four graduate elective courses from any discipline, in a total of 36 credit hours, which is the minimum requirement for a Master's degree in Education. This graduate degree plan is typical in the field of Educational Technology. In common practice, required courses include courses in education foundations and Educational Technology. The four-elective-course design allows students to bring in courses they completed in any accredited university and/or in any discipline other than Educational Technology. This flexibility is unique on the market. Such packaging enables the program to reach out to a different clientele (i.e., those without a background in education). Additionally, this fully Web-based Master's program had been in partnership with the UTTC, who coordinated with four other UT campuses (i.e., UT-Austin, UT-San Antonio, UT-Medical Branch, and UT-Permian Basin) since Summer of 1999 (M. Sullivan, personal communication, September 16, 2010). The UTTC was sometimes mistaken for a parent brand of the M.Ed. degree program (e.g., GetEducated.com). Perhaps because of its proximity to UT-Austin, prospects identified the UTTC with UT-Austin. This created a marketing opportunity and a rub-off effect on the degree program, which led to higher visibility of the M.Ed. degree in the State of Texas and the country. In addition, the quality control mechanism by the UTTC was instrumental in assuring the quality of those online courses and user support (for both faculty and students) was provided for 24/7 via email and telephone. Despite the fact that the UTTC ceased operations on September 1, 2010 as a result of its realigned operational support for e-learning by the UT System ("UT System Officials," 2010), most of the support systems were transferred and in some cases delegated to the individual UT campuses to maintain quality and support. Thus, the Educational Technology program has created a product that prospective students would want with all other variables controlled.

With respect to price, tuition and fees are not determined by the Educational Technology program. They are proposed by the University's top management team and approved by the UT System Board of Regents ("UT System approves," 2010). For resident students in Fall 2010, the cost (price) of each three-credit-hour online graduate course was $850.71 ("UTB Graduate Tuition," 2010). But, the price is reduced when students enroll in two or three courses. Students will pay $1,473.12 and $2,095.53, respectively, instead of $1,701.42 ($850.71 multiplied by 2) or $2,552.13 ($850.71 multiplied by 3) because some fees are considered flat fees per semester. This "discount" seems to encourage students to take more than one course per semester, and most students in the program take advantage of this discount rate as the enrollment numbers aforementioned suggest. See Appendix A for a comparison of the tuition and fees between major online graduate Educational Technology degree programs in the State of Texas. While it is impossible to determine how much prospective customers are willing to pay for this product (the master's degree in Educational Technology), the adapted tuition and fees comparison may shed some light on this price factor. In short, the tuition and fees for the Educational Technology program are more affordable than competing programs.

With regard to place or location, the Educational Technology program is fully Web-based, suggesting that its product, the M.Ed. in Education Technology degree, is also completely online and location independent. For those who work full time, this degree is a strong competing product because students do not need to set foot on the campus throughout their entire program of study. On the course level, content is provided both asynchronously and synchronously. The synchronous component is always archived and allows for recurring access. Concerning course registration, students sign up for courses through the University's online course registration system. The system is accessed through the University's home page because of its encrypted URL. This renders the URL invisible to the general public even through a few search engine attempts. For this potential threat and others (e.g., limited market coverage), further discussion is sought later in this paper.

Concerning promotion, the most important component of the marketing mix model was depending on the Educational Technology program's partnership with the UTTC for the past decade. The Austin-based office coordinated with the five UT campuses, counting the University, to offer the M.Ed. in Educational Technology degree in a fully online format, with the University conferring the degree. After the UTTC ceased operations in September 2010 (Parry, 2010), all coordinated promotional events were discontinued. These events included, but were not limited to, TV commercials in the Austin, TX area, news advertisements, and promotional booths at major technology conferences and graduate fairs throughout the State of Texas. A recent Google search showed three advertisements for/by the UTTC: http://www.suite101.com/content/texas-online-university-degree-programs-a180795, http://www.newsweekshowcase.com/education/distance-learning/ut-telecampus, and http://www.onlineuc.net/texastele.html. With an allotted marketing budget and smart marketing strategies, the UTTC was able to build its brand equity and increase the visibility of the M.Ed. in Educational Technology to a broader audience. Inevitably, the marketing effort by the UTTC, established over the past decade, will be in vain if a similar effort is not resumed in time. In this regard, several measures have been implemented by faculty of the M.Ed. program. They include creating a Facebook fan page, a Twitter account, several YouTube videos (see http://www.youtube.com/user/EdTechVideo) and revamping its own website at http://edtech.utb.edu to enhance search engine visibility. The University's Graduate Studies Office has also made recruiting efforts at four major State Graduate Fairs at UT-Pan American, UT-San Antonio, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and Texas A&M University-Kingsville (M. Stevens, personal communication, September 28, 2010). Although those efforts provide a good starting point, they may not be as extensive as those put forth by the UTTC.

Challenges and Recommendations

Three imminent challenges are faced by the M.Ed. program due to the dissolved UTTC partnership. First, all promotional events sponsored by the UTTC have been discontinued; whether the degree program and the University are able to sustain a vigorous marketing effort is in question. Second, prospective students may no longer identify the degree program with the UT brand; this potential loss of branding is a concern. Third, the alliance with the four UT campuses lacks formal coordination and communication. These challenges, along with others, are affecting the distinctive, competitive and comparable advantages the M.Ed. program previously owned. Surrounded by its competitors in Texas alone, the degree program must take additional courses of action to sustain the advantages. To do so, below are six recommendations to improve its present marketing strategy.

1. Use social media to aid in recruiting efforts. The Web 2.0 social networking tools currently adopted should accommodate this effort. For instance, a recruiting event can be integrated into a simple contest in the program's Facebook page to generate more traffic in the virtual space.
2. Restructure the degree program to streamline the course completion effort. The present design of the curriculum is flexible enough to allow for four elective courses transferred from other disciplines or accredited institutions. However, required courses with low enrollment numbers are not always offered without a viable justification due to the University's current policy. More flexibility should be implemented.
3. Develop a marketing intelligence sub-system exclusively for the M.Ed. program within the existing marketing program of the University by working with Marketing Office of the University. A specific set of objectives resulting from this development will need to be formulated. With the objectives in mind, effectiveness of various ongoing marketing efforts will be assessed to identify a performance gap and eliminate recruiting events that are not effective. Whenever possible, consolidate available resources for smart marketing with an emphasis on addressing the previously identified marketing gap. This is also to maintain the comparable advantage of the program, suggesting letting the program focus on what it can do best. During the process, the marketing efforts that are proven to be effective are reinforced; while less effective efforts are adjusted or eliminated. For instance, the online application form may also collect the information on how prospective students learned about the M.Ed. degree. See Appendix B for a forwarded sample online form. Use the form and turn the gathered information into intelligence.
4. Remove barriers in admission and financial aid processes, as well as course registration processes. For example, the M.Ed. program should consider removing the GRE scores from the admission requirements within reason. See Appendix C for a brief list of graduate programs that do not require GRE scores. This is likely to sharpen the competitive advantage of the program.
5. Research current student demographics within the State of Texas to target untapped markets. Reaching a different clientele is another way to survive this competitive market. This piece of intelligence should be collected through the online application form.
6. Develop a product alliance with any complementary program in the state or the country while continuing to form product alliances with other UT campuses. Resuming the partnership with the four UT campuses can be an effective way to increase customers' "mind share" of the degree.

Major competitors of the M.Ed. in Educational Technology at the University are the M.S. in Computer Education and Cognitive Systems program at the University of North Texas, the M.Ed. in Instructional Technology program at Texas Tech University, the M.Ed. in Educational Technology program at Texas A&M University-College Station, the M.S. in Instructional Technology program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and the M.Ed. in Educational Technology Leadership program at Lamar University. All are Web-based

degree programs. As Appendix A indicates, most of these competitors are so-called flagship universities within respective public university systems in Texas. Among them, Lamar University is taking an aggressive, entrepreneur-type approach to its recruitment drive. Although there is not much known about the deal between StateU.Com and Lamar University, this approach appears to have posed an enormous threat to the M.Ed. program at the University and others on the market by offering a more competitive price. With that being said, the M.Ed. program must continue its existing delivery method to maintain the advantages as its own opportunity to survive. Speaking of its strengths, the M.Ed. program provides more flexibility in its curriculum and more synchronous instructor-student interaction. On the other hand, lack of brand awareness because of the phased-out UTTC is deemed one of its major weaknesses.

Summary

The present applied research is intended to offer a better marketing strategy for the M.Ed. in Educational Technology at the University in light of the marketing mix model. Taking into consideration the program (product) itself, its price, place, and promotion, three immediate challenges are identified. The challenges were caused by the demise of the UTTC. To address the challenges, six recommendations are made in an attempt to improve the marketing strategy for the M.Ed. program. It is also suggested that the program maximize its own strengths and opportunities while simultaneously minimizing its weaknesses and threats as indicated in the examination findings through the adopted model. Nevertheless, the degree program should continue to be adaptable and vigilant in its marketing strategy in the event that the state policy for formula funding changes in accordance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2010) recommendations.

References

Akroush, M. N. (2011). The 7Ps classification of the services marketing mix revisited: An empirical assessment of their generalisability, applicability and effect on performance-- evidence from Jordan's services organisations. *Jordan Journal of Business Administration, 7*(1), 116-147.

Amenta, C. (2010). Exploring museum marketing performance: A case study from Italy. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 2*(1), 24-35.

Beneke, J. H. (2011). Marketing the institution to prospective students - A review of brand (reputation) management in higher education. *International Journal of Business & Management, 6*(1), 29-44.

Castro, A. (2011, April 4). Texas house approves 2-year budget. Bloomberg Businessweek. Retrieve August 3, 2011, from http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9MCKJ6G2.htm

Chen, Y., & Xie, J. (2008). Online consumer review: Word-of-mouth as a new element of marketing communication mix. *Management Science, 54*(3), 477-491.

Chitturi, R., Chitturi, P., & Raghavarao, D. (2010). Design for synergy with brand or price information. *Psychology & Marketing, 27*(7), 679-697.

Constantinides, E. (2006). The marketing mix revisited: Towards the 21st century marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management, 22*(3), 407-438.

Deli-Gray, Z., Gillpatrick, T., Marusic, M., Pantelic, D., & Kuruvilla, S. J. (2010). Hedonic and functional shopping values and everyday product purchases: Findings from the Indian study. *International Journal of Business Insights & Transformation, 4*(1), 65-70.

Goi, C. L. (2009). A review of marketing mix: 4Ps or more? *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 1*(1), 2-15.

Godfrey, A., Seiders, K., & Voss, G. B. (2011). Enough is enough! The fine line in executing multichannel relational communication. *Journal of Marketing, 75*(4), 94-109. doi:10.1509/jmkg.75.4.94

Grönroos, C. (1989). Defining marketing: A market-oriented approach. *European Journal of Marketing, 23*(1), 52-60.

Groom, S. A., & Biernatzki, W. E. (2008). Integrated marketing communication anticipating the 'age of engage'. *Communication Research Trends, 27*(4), 3-19.

Gupta, M., & Singh, P. B. (2010). Marketing & branding higher education: Issues and challenges. *Review of Business Research, 10*(1), 46-53.

Håkansson, H., & Waluszewski, A. (2005). Developing a new understanding of markets: Reinterpreting the 4Ps. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 20*(2/3), 110-117.

Jose, A., & Bhat, I. (2007). Marketing of library and information services: A strategic perspective. *Vision--The Journal of Business Perspective, 11*(2), 23-28.

Katona, Z., Zubcsek, P. P., & Sarvary, M. (2011). Network effects and personal influences: The diffusion of an online social network. *Journal of Marketing Research, 48*(3), 425-443. doi:10.1509/jmkr.48.3.425

Keller, K. L. (2009). Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 15*(2), 139-155. doi:10.1080/13527260902757530

Kerstetter, K. M. (2011). Investigating high school band recruitment procedures using educational marketing principles. *Journal of Band Research, 46*(2), 1-17.

Kitchen, P. J., & Schultz, D. E. (2009). IMC: New horizon/false dawn for a marketplace in turmoil? *Journal of Marketing Communications, 15*(2), 197-204. doi:10.1080/13527260903003793

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2009). *Marketing management* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lee, D. H., & Park, C. W. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of multidimensionality of integrated marketing communications. *Journal of Advertising Research, 47*(3), 222- 236.

Lepkowska-White, E., Brashear, T. G., & Weinberger, M. G. (2003). A test of ad appeal effectiveness in Poland and the United States. *Journal of Advertising, 32*(3), 57-67.

Li, J., & Zhan, L. (2011). Online persuasion: How the written word drives WOM. *Journal of Advertising Research, 51*(1), 239-257.

Li, S., Sun, B., & Montgomery, A. L. (2011). Cross-selling the right product to the right customer at the right time. *Journal of Marketing Research, 48*(4), 683-700. doi:10.1509/jmkr.48.4.683

Luck, E., & Moffatt, J. (2009). IMC: Has anything really changed? A new perspective on an old definition. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 15*(5), 311-325. doi:10.1080/13527260802481256

Mishra, S., & Muralie, S. (2010). Managing dynamism of IMC - anarchy to order. *Journal of Marketing & Communication, 6*(2), 29-37.

Mission statement and philosophy. (n.d.). Retrieved August 3, 2011, from http://www.utb.edu/Pages/MissionandPhilosophy.aspx

Möller, K. (2006). Marketing mix discussion - is the mix misleading us or are we misreading the mix? *Journal of Marketing Management, 22*(3), 439-450.

Mulhern, F. (2009). Integrated marketing communications: From media channels to digital connectivity. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 15*(2), 85-101. doi:10.1080/13527260902757506

Newstead, K., & Romaniuk, J. (2010). Cost per second the relative effectiveness of 15- and 30-second television advertisements. *Journal of Advertising Research, 50*(1), 68-76. doi:10.2501/S0021849910091191

Ning, R. L., & Crossley, M. (2010). Marketing university programmes in China: Innovative experience in executive and professional education. *Journal of further & Higher Education, 34*(3), 321-334. doi:10.1080/0309877X.2010.484052

Parry, M. (2010, April 8). U. of Texas system plans to close its central distance-education arm. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/blogPost/U-of-Texas-System-Plans-to/22411/

Pfeiffer, M., & Zinnbauer, M. (2010). Can old media enhance new media? How traditional advertising pays off for an online social network. *Journal of Advertising Research, 50*(1), 42-49. doi:10.2501/S0021849910091166

Purnomo, S. H., Lee, Y.-H., & Soekartawi. (2010). Why is understanding customer attitude toward 4Ps marketing mix important? The case of the livestock input industry in Indonesia. *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics, 2*(4), 107-114.

Saperstein, J., & Hastings, H. (2010). How social media can be used to dialogue with the customer. *Ivey Business Journal, 74*(1), 6.

Ščeulovs, D., & Gaile-Sarkane, E. (2010). Electronic tools for company's presence, identification and marketing in E-environment: Theory and practice. *Economics & Management*, 775-782.

Sen, S., & Lerman, D. (2007). Why are you telling me this? An examination into negative consumer reviews on the web. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 21*(4), 76-94. doi:10.1002/dir.20090

Sethuraman, R., Tellis, G. J., & Briesch, R. A. (2011). How well does advertising work? Generalizations from meta-analysis of brand advertising elasticities. *Journal of Marketing Research, 48*(3), 457-471. doi:10.1509/jmkr.48.3.457

Teller, C., Reutterer, T., & Schnedlitz, P. (2008). Hedonic and utilitarian shopper types in evolved and created retail agglomerations. *International Review of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research, 18*(3), 283-309. doi:10.1080/09593960802113877

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2010). *THECB Formula funding recommendations for the 2012-2013 Biennium.* Retrieved July 31, 2011, from http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/

UT System approves tuition and fees for Fall 2010 and 2011. (2010, March 3). *News Today.* Retrieved July 31, 2011, from http://www.utb.edu/newsinfo/Pages/UTSystemApprovesTuitionandFeesforFall2010and2011.aspx

UT System officials announce strategic realignment of system administration. (2010, June 2). *UT System News.* Retrieved August 3, 2011, from http://www.utsystem.edu/News/2010/UTS-StrategicRealignment-06-02-10.html

UT System officials announce strategic realignment of system administration. (2010, June 2). *UT System News.* Retrieved July 31, 2011, from http://www.utsystem.edu/News/2010/UTS-StrategicRealignment-06-02-10.html

UTB graduate tuition and fees tables Fall 2010. (2010). Retrieved July 31, 2011, from http://www.utb.edu/ba/bo/Tuition/Documents/Tuition-Fees-Grad-Fall.pdf

Van Rooij, S. W., & Lemp, L. K. (2010). Positioning e-learning graduate certificate programs: Niche marketing in higher education. *Services Marketing Quarterly, 31*(3), 296-319. doi:10.1080/15332969.2010.486691

Appendix A

An Overview of Major Online Graduate Educational Technology Programs in Texas by Program, Public University System, Required Hours, Tuition and Fees, and Allowed Transfer Hours.
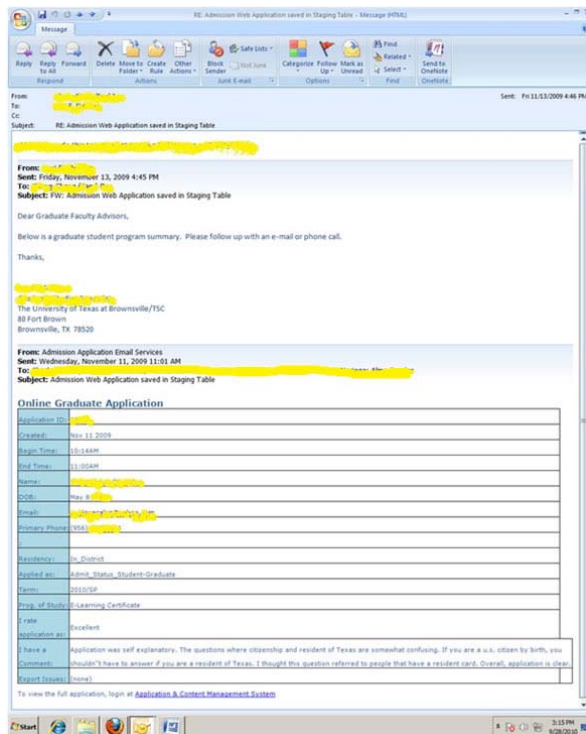
University	University of Texas at Brownsville	University of North Texas	Texas Tech University	Texas A&M University-College Station	University of Houston-Clear Lake	Lamar University
Program	M.Ed. in Educational Technology	M.S. in Computer Education and Cognitive Systems	M.Ed. in Instructional Technology	M.Ed. in Educational Technology	M.S. in Instructional Technology	M.Ed. in Educational Technology Leadership
Public University System	UT System	UNT System	TTU System	TAMU System	UoH System	TSU System
Required hours	36	36	39	39	36	36
Tuition & Fees for 3, 6, and 9 hrs (Fall 2010)	$850.71 $1473.12 $2095.53	$1,075.13 $1,932.41 $2,789.69	$1032.97 $1987.94 $2,125.94	$1,339.92 $2,251.92 $3,163.92	$1,063.80 $2,127.60 $3,191.40	$970.50 $1,800.00 $ 2,629.50
Allowed transfer hours	12	6	6	12	6	6

Note. Tuition and fees for University of Houston-Clear Lake are adopted on the basis of $7,092 for 20 hours per year published at http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/FAO/Costofattendance-2010-2011.

Other Web sources used include: http://www.depts.ttu.edu/distancelearning/tuition/, http://finance.tamu.edu/sbs/tuition/GR-Resident-FY11.pdf, http://essc.unt.edu/saucs/tuition-and-fees.html and http://students.lamar.edu/paying-for-school/tuition-and-fees.html.

Appendix B

Sample Forwarded Admission Web Application Form.

Appendix C

Graduate Educational Technology Programs That Do Not Require GRE.

University	Program	Admission Requirements
Boise State University	M.E.T. and M.S. Educational Technology	No GRE requirement; just a 3.0 or better GPA and a well-written essay.
University of North Dakota	M.Ed. and M.S Instructional Design & Technology	No GRE requirement for students with 2.75 undergraduate GPA.
Texas State University – San Marcos	M.Ed. Management of Technical Education	No GRE requirement for applicants with a 2.75 GPA or above on the last 60 undergraduate semester hours. Applicants with GPA below 2.75 are required to submit GRE scores of 900 (verbal and quantitative combined) and personal interview.
University of Texas – El Paso	Master of Education-Instructional Specialist - Educational Technology	No GRE requirement. Undergraduate GPA 3.0 or above.
University of Arkansas – Fayetteville	M.Ed. Educational Technology	No GRE requirement for applicants with a 3.0 GPA in all undergraduate coursework.
California State University – Fullerton	M.S. in Instructional Design and Technology	No GRE requirement.

Note. The table above is only intended to present a brief list of graduate programs that do not require GRE in their admission process.

Back to the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration Contents