Abstract
The higher education sector encounters increasing number of students with more diverse attributes, expectations, and demands. In times of sinking budgets and severe competition among universities, student relationship management (SRM) has become a key instrument in attracting paying students and retaining a long-lasting relationship, which in turn provides financial benefits and enhances the reputation of the university. In this paper, a structured literature review revealed a lack of requirement analysis for a student relationship management system (SRMS) from the target group perspective. An online survey was conducted with students and alumni from four Ivy League universities. The survey showed that university administration needs to improve their relationship and communication habits with the target groups. Because modern communication channels such as social network, blogs and apps are not yet wide-spread in this context, SRMS need to be further enhanced to include them.

1. Introduction
Starting in the middle of the last century, a global trend of constant expansion in the higher education sector caused fast growth in the number of students [15]. Tight governmental budgets and the increasing economic orientation of universities [14] play an important role in reshaping their organizational culture, especially in reference to providing student services.

The higher education sector is characterized by a low level of standardization [15], in particular across national boundaries [17]. The academic communities, however, are global in nature, sharing norms and beliefs beyond national affiliation [17]. While academics identify themselves more with a discipline than with an institution [24], students regard their university as a “short-lived prelude to something greater” [17]. Acquisition of students and student and alumni retention are central topics for universities in times of shrinking governmental budgets and the high level of global competition for local and foreign students [29]. Today’s students are an increasingly diverse and socially segmented population [8] which is in part represented by the multitude of student associations. Parallel to the individualization of modern society, students regard themselves as individuals with rights and distinct demands. As a consequence, and based on interaction with students, universities are constantly being re-shaped into customer-oriented organizations [6].

The educational service provided by universities is difficult to formalize. The understanding of quality in teaching is ambiguous in nature and provides little causal explanation between the process and its outcome [17]. This creates a challenge for adopting standardized IT support. Nevertheless, universities are looking for a way to establish and enhance a “good” relationship with their students [10;11]. A major objective is to reduce student failure [5], enhance student loyalty and alumni retention, and in consequence, improve fundraising efficiency. As increasingly customer-centric organizations with a diverse customer base, universities strive to offer more individualized service based on their students’ preferences [5]. Therefore, customer relationship management (CRM) concepts need to be adapted to the specific needs of the higher education sector and must be translated into student relationship management system (SRMS) requirements. In particular, front-end systems that support the relationship between the university, students, and alumni require thorough analysis in the context of SRMS architecture. As a consequence, a requirement analysis of students’ communication needs in the university context needs to be conducted.

In this paper, a structured literature review and a quantitative study explore the communication functionalities of a SRMS that is required to support a positive relationship between universities and their prospective and currents students, as well as alumni. This main research objective leads to the following subordinated questions:

RQ1: Which factors influence students’ relationship quality with their university?
RQ2: What are students’ communication needs?