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Enhancing Homeland Security Career Pathways and Preparedness With A Custom Built AI Chatbot

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Abstract

The Homeland Security Enterprise (HSE), encompassing the Department of Homeland Security and other government agencies in national security, offers a wide range of public sector career opportunities requiring diverse skills and qualifications. However, students with an interest in this critical public sector career pathway are often unaware of the steps into this career and the opportunities available to them. This project maps the HSE in Southern California, identifies industry and educational stakeholders (such as regional Community Colleges, four-year colleges, and workforce investment boards), and combines important career and service-learning information into a unique, comprehensive database, paired with an AI-driven chatbot. This tool assists students at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), and creates personalized guidance, helping them identify potential careers based on their educational pursuits and advising on relevant coursework. Practically, this project enhances the career planning process for students interested in homeland security and serves as a scalable model for educational and career guidance in other disciplines. Pedagogically, this approach is tested in the classroom setting by engaging students in HSE educational and professional career planning exercises, and to gain insights into AI chatbot development and student learning and professional outcomes. This paper provides insight into the AI chatbot development process and findings from interviews with and surveys of students at CSUDH and local community colleges regarding public sector careers.

Conference Track

Public Policy and Public Administration