Board of Regents, State of Iowa  
Summary Report on Academic Program Review

THE PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW: Board of Regent’s Policy (§6.05B) requires that each Regent university review each academic program once every seven years to help ensure that the program being reviewed is still relevant, of the highest quality and consistent with the institution’s mission and strategic plan. A special focus of the reviews is on assessing the teaching and learning processes, and on the collection and utilization of student outcomes assessment results for programmatic improvement.

1. Institution: University of Northern Iowa

2a. List title and degree level(s) of the program reviewed: Master of Business Administration

2b. List date(s) of program review: 2011-2012

3a. Was the program reviewed by non-institutional evaluators? Yes X No _____

3b. Number of non-institutional evaluators: 2

4a. Has there been a change in enrollment in the program of more than a third in the last three years? Yes ______ No X

4b. If yes, please explain the reasons for this change.

5. Is this the first time that this program has been reviewed since initial approval? Yes ______ No X

6a. If new, has the program met all the goals and objectives planned at the time it received planning approval by the Board of Regents? Yes ______ No ______

6b. If not, why not?

7. List the recommendations, conclusions, and program improvements resulting from this review, especially those resulting from student outcomes assessments.

Conclusions based on internal and external reviews

Program Strengths

- Curriculum format and portability allow students of diverse backgrounds to complete the program on campus and at off-campus sites faster than traditional semester-based arrangements while maintaining other responsibilities such as full-time jobs, family and community service. The curriculum is subject to ongoing analysis and improvement, including changes towards a more applied nature of core curriculum, a continuously refined integrative live Business Capstone Experience, and the introduction of international elective topics taught by international experts and team instruction by subject matter experts.
- Well-qualified, research-active faculty members are highly committed to the program and students, continuously monitoring learning assurance outcomes and making adjustments to the program.
- Student outcomes assessment process is well-developed. Student learning assessment data is regularly discussed at faculty meetings and serves as a basis for program improvement.
Student profiles demonstrate academic strengths, good international and professional diversity, and substantial work experience enhancing classroom interactions and learning with and from peers.

Opportunities for Improvement
- The coverage of ethics in the program curriculum may be expanded either by adding a course in this area or by enhancing the coverage in current course offerings.
- A regular strategic planning cycle that engages both internal and external stakeholders in structured critical analysis may be considered. Consideration of changes and best practices of MBA education from a global context and on a regular basis keeps the program fresh, relevant and competitive.
- Evolving learning technology and methodology should be monitored and new learning technologies and methods addressing the changing student needs and preferences should be more actively introduced.
- Marketing of the MBA program is an area for improvement. There are concerns with the lack of visibility and intentional recruitment. Selection criteria may be revised to attract strong business professionals.

Recommendations for program improvement based on internal and external review

Recommendation 1: Improve curriculum integration and enhance the curriculum with the focus on:
- Explore ways to integrate course content across the curriculum before Business Capstone Experience
- Explore ways to integrate strategic thinking and communication earlier in the curriculum
- Explore ways to enhance the coverage of ethics in the program curriculum
- Increase MBA faculty integration through presentation of course content at MBA faculty luncheon meetings
- In Business Capstone Experience, enhance client – mentor interaction through follow-up procedures

Recommendation 2: Maintain the established Student Outcomes Assessment Process and revise it for improvement. This will include:
- Report annually on assessment activities under the MBA Program Learning Assurance Program
- Based on annual assessment reports, introduce changes to the MBA Program Learning Assurance Program, if necessary
- Improve documentation to show the link between assessment data and recommendations to improve the MBA program, with an emphasis on analysis

Recommendation 3: Improve marketing of the MBA Program:
- Develop a marketing plan consistent with the strategic goals of the MBA Program
- Consider leveraging University resources that might be used to support the marketing of CBA graduate programs
- Explore new outlets for the MBA program and evaluate these relative to costs/benefits of current offerings

Recommendation 4: Ensure effective use of facilities and resources available for supporting MBA program:
- Explore faculty partnerships for the development of MBA materials using distance learning pedagogies that can be used both in Hong Kong and on campus
- Maximize use of available resources for online teaching and learning
- Explore grant opportunities to support MBA program needs

Program Improvements Resulting from the 2011-2012 Program Review

Strategic Planning
- Strategic planning process involving the MBA faculty was initiated in May, 2012. An all-day strategic planning session followed up by additional meeting and discussions resulted in the development of the 2013-2018 MBA Program Plan that incorporates the program review recommendations, including a formal strategic planning process incorporated into the MBA planning cycle.
Improvements to Student Outcomes Assessment:

- Area specialists are required to develop learning assurance plan for each course in support of Student Learning Objective 1 Knowledge of Current Business Practices and Management Techniques.
- Assessment artifacts collection and review of assessment data have been revised; while all courses are expected to contribute to assurance and assessment of student learning, data from those later in the curriculum will be given more weight.

Improvements to the Core Curriculum

- Improvements and adjustments to the MBA program curriculum are introduced systematically based on annual reviews of student learning data.
- In Spring and Summer of 2013, the coverage of ethics is reinforced in Business Capstone Experience. Students are asked to reflect on the ethical issues related to the projects they are engaged in, discuss them in course meetings and summarize their reflections in a short written report.

Improvements to Instruction through the Use of Technology

- The MBA faculty members are expected to use educational technology more actively, especially in off-campus settings.
- In off-campus settings, the MBA faculty are expected to share development efforts and course materials.
- In 2013-2014, the MBA faculty will share reports on the use and integration of educational technology.

Adjustment of Admission Standards based on Enrollment Demands

As part of the MBA Program Plan and in order to maintain steady strong enrollment, admission standards were revised as of Spring 2013 to include:

- As much as possible, attempt to maintain the high GMAT, high performance student body we have attracted over the past decade.
- Current admissions standards: 2+ years of work experience, GPA>=3.0, GMAT >=500 OR 2+ years of work experience, Composite score \([(GPA*200) = GMAT]\) >=1100
- Alternatives to be used to response to low enrollments:
  - Work experience < 2 years, require GMAT >=600
  - Composite score, 1100, enroll as non-degree business graduate students
    - Require earning 3.0 in first three courses
    - Students who do not earn the GPA requirements would not be admitted
  - “Last Minute” applicants with work experience and space available
    - Enroll as non-degree business graduate students
    - GMAT required for full admission
- For ethical reasons, no offer of admission to non-local candidates without GMAT

Adjustment of Pre-requisite Requirements based on Enrollment Demands

- To better serve the needs of students and ensure a smooth transition into the program based on educational and professional experience, a plan to eliminate formal pre-requisites to the core curriculum courses has been developed:
  - Pre-requisites to the core curriculum courses will be eliminated as of Fall, 2013
  - Special attention will be paid to student preparedness in the areas of statistics, accounting and finance, including preparatory and/or revisions coursework incorporated in relevant courses.
  - A list of essential incoming knowledge will be developed and shared with prospective and current students via the MBA Program website.
  - Resources to help students prepare for coursework will be available through the MBA Program website and individual course materials.
Improvements to the MBA Program Marketing

- A draft MBA Program marketing action plan has been developed and discussed with the MBA faculty. The plan is expected to be finalized September 2013 although various initiatives within the plan will be implemented prior. The plan includes:
  - Marketing as Professional MBA Program
  - Targeting a small cadre of recent high potential non-business graduates
  - Exploring external growth opportunities in north-west Iowa and China
  - Regular radio, web, and print marketing
- Changes to the MBA program website aimed at increased user-friendliness and relevance of the information provided have been designed and will be implemented in Summer of 2013.
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1. Institution __________ University of Northern Iowa

2a. List title and degree level(s) of the program reviewed: Masters in Public Policy
2b. List date(s) of program review: 2011-2012

3a. Was the program reviewed by non-institutional evaluators? Yes __X____ No _____
3b. Number of non-institutional evaluators: 2

4a. Has there been a change in enrollment in the program of more than a third in the last three years? Yes _______ No ____X____
4b. If yes, please explain the reasons for this change.

5. Is this the first time that this program has been reviewed since initial approval? Yes _______ No ____X____

6a. If new, has the program met all the goals and objectives planned at the time it received planning approval by the Board of Regents? Yes _______ No ______
6b. If not, why not?

7. List the recommendations, conclusions, and program improvements resulting from this review, especially those resulting from student outcomes assessments.

The external reviewers recommended that the number of hours in the program be reduced. Program revisions that reduce the length from 45 to 39 hours are currently going through the curriculum review process and will apply to students entering the program in the fall of 2014.

The reviewers suggested that a practicum, or capstone, requirement would be more useful to students than the current research paper requirement (the MPP is a non-thesis program.) This change was implemented successfully in the fall of 2012, using the existing course number. A new course number and title that reflect the changed content are included in the curriculum package just mentioned.
The reviewers also recommended that the program seek accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. In public administration and public policy accreditation is desirable but not essential for graduates. The current Director is retiring, but the accreditation process will be initiated by the new Director.
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1. Institution University of Northern Iowa 

2a. List title and degree level(s) of the program reviewed: Earth Science & Geology, Bachelor

2b. List date(s) of program review: February 13, 14, 2012

3a. Was the program reviewed by non-institutional evaluators? Yes X No

3b. Number of non-institutional evaluators: 4

4a. Has there been a change in enrollment in the program of more than a third in the last three years? Yes X No

4b. If yes, please explain the reasons for this change.
The number of majors in the Geology program has increased from 14 in 2008 to 28 in 2011 due to effective recruiting by faculty in the department. That number has been decreasing due to the elimination of the program by UNI in 2012 (graduation of remaining majors the main source of decrease).
The number of majors in the Earth Science degrees has remained steady of this period, therefore there are two answers to 4a.

5. Is this the first time that this program has been reviewed since initial approval? Yes No X

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The results of the program review were in many ways made moot by the elimination of the Geology degrees by UNI in 2012 and the decrease in staffing by two faculty identified as part of the degree program (in spite of their contribution to the Earth Science program), as well as the resignation of a third faculty member. Following the elimination of the Geology degree, the reviewers added an addendum to their report with the recommendation for the merger of the Earth Science department with Geography to create a Geoscience department. There are currently no plans to merge the departments.

One aspect that will be acted upon is a reevaluation of the SOA process through the assistance of the Science Education and Research Center who will be working with the faculty to revise the SOA plans and processes in fall 2013. Plans to also create an Environmental Science degree are also going forward, which have since been revised in a manner consistent with the APR recommendation. Other recommendations include –
1. More GIS content – currently done through advising.

2. Adjunct office in LAT 142 should be converted back to class space.

3. Creation of new storage facility – this has changed, but in a more complex way with the closure of the UNI Museum, the departure of faculty and the closing of the Geology degrees.

4. Better equipment for geology labs – this has changed to the need for equipment that would support the Environmental Science areas. At this point there is not a significant need, but some space allocation need to be completed.

5. Use of Earth Science department video in marketing.

6. Revising the curriculum to spread it across the faculty, and have it less dependent upon particular faculty. This may involve the creation of a core curriculum.

7. Revising the math component of the curriculum to provide content appropriate for majors.

8. Course sequencing of geology content (no longer an issue)

9. Definition of instructional time/workload accounting for lab-time. This has resulted in a new policy to pay adjuncts based upon contact hours, and faculty assigned teaching loads based upon contact hours.

10. Examine long term staffing in light of upcoming retirements (no longer an issue)

11. Increase the technician position to 100%.

12. Hire another hydrology position (no longer a significant issue in light of the lack of staffing for content areas due to the loss of 3 faculty members)