2002-03 Planning and Review Committee

Status Report Review

I. Degree: Telecommunications Systems (TCS)

Program Director: John Weiss

PRC Status Report Liaison: Annette Taylor

Date of Last Review: March 2001

II. Previous Review:

Issue(s) of Concern:

1. Lab equipment and activities. Lab activities were not available for students and the student perception was that lab instruction was not of the quality that it should be; additional equipment is needed to support the program; the program lacks a capital equipment plan for the Telecommunication Systems Lab; and structured lab activities are not developed in some areas due to lack of lab equipment.

Summary Response: Equipment has been added to the labs and almost all labs now are structured and scheduled with faculty close at hand. The caliber of lab assistants is much higher than it was. Because of the nature of speed of change within the industry, it will be an ongoing challenge to keep the lab modern and relevant. While it is difficult to plan because of the industry and the way equipment is funded, the Communications, Education and Training Department has shown strong support for TCS. A list of needed and wanted equipment is maintained and communicated to the department chair. The program director is working with the department chair to see that sufficient equipment is provided “to maintain Stout’s reputation for being on the cutting edge.”

2. Program Mission and Identity. The program was perceived to be a Cisco certification program, not Telecommunications Systems program. There was a lack of understanding of mission and vision of the program. Students did not understand new curriculum and telecommunications faculty did not agree on the direction of the program.

Summary Response: Cisco certification is just part of the curriculum and the program; students also get a strong background in business, management, policies and ethics. The industry advisory committee has discussed issues of program identity and mission and have validated that the course coverage and rigor are appropriate and that industry certifications are a valid and valuable part of the program. Current students understand the way in which industry certifications benefit them. Enrollments are strong. Faculty discussions about their vision for this program have benefited the department and all are now “on the same page working toward common goals.” This relatively new program currently serves 254 students and will provide highly trained communications specialists for the State of Wisconsin.

III. Committee Findings:

The committee was satisfied with the status report and believes the concerns have been adequately addressed. There are no further recommendations at this time.