2000-01 Planning and Review Committee

Consultant Report

I. Program Reviewed: B.S. in Information Technology Management

Program Director: Renee M. Gunderson

PRC Consultants: Loretta Thielman

Date of Review: March, 2009

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to assess the quality of the B.S. in Information Technology Management as part of a seven-year review cycle required of all degree programs at UW-Stout.

Committee Findings: The committee recommends continuation of this program through the next scheduled review in 2015 and that the recommendations made by the committee be implemented.

II. Abstract

The Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Management began as a Bachelor of Science Telecommunication Systems, which was introduced to UW-Stout in the fall of 1996. Prior to 1996, Telecommunication Systems was a concentration within the Industrial Technology program. The program changed its name to the current one in 2004.

The Information Technology Management program, as structured at UW-Stout, is an uncommon baccalaureate program and is not found in many institutions throughout the U.S. This program offers its graduates both financial and professional opportunities. It is an exciting, rapidly changing industry, with opportunities in technical and managerial areas. With technology booming throughout the world, Information Technology is becoming more important and its graduates are in demand.

The program requires 120 credits for graduation. Coursework utilizes current hands-on learning in the still developing telecommunications lab and is heavily tied into professional certification in several areas. Students, as part of their program of study, must pass professional certification examinations leading to the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), the Cisco Certified Design Associate (CCDA), and either the Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP), the Cisco Certified Design Professional (CCDP), or the Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE). These certifications are industry recognized and were added in during the program revision in 2001.

There are currently 123 students in the major, and there has been a 100% placement rate for graduates with a salary range of $42,000 to $57,000.

The program is accredited by the National Association of Industrial Technology (NAIT). The accreditation is as a general program, not as a specific Information Technology Management program, since NAIT does not yet have specific criteria for this type of program.

Information Technology managers are in high demand, and the program could grow, provided enough resources exist to do so.
III. Process Followed for Current Review:

The PRC Chair met with the Dean, Program Director and Chair of the primary department to discuss the review process. The PRC consultants also met with the Program Director to review the procedures and offer assistance. Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data were analyzed and returned to the Program Directors and PRC members. The Program Director then completed the self-study report and presented the report to the PRC. The consultants then wrote the recommendation report. This report was discussed and approved by the PRC and forwarded to the Dean, Department Chair, and the Program Director for their responses. The PRC forwarded the report to the Faculty Senate which approved the committee’s findings.

IV. Previous Review(s)

The previous PRC review of the B.S. in Information Technology Management program was conducted during the academic year 2000-2001. That report was written by Janet Polansky and Paul Wagner. There were also two Status Reports in the Spring of 2002, the report written by Annette Taylor and Paul Wagner, and the Spring of 2003, the report was written by Annette Taylor. The committees’ recommendations as well as the applicable responses are submitted below:

As a result of the 2000-2001 review, the committee recommended that in 2002 the program director and CTEM dean provide a status report that addresses the following:

a. concerns about program size and staffing;
b. include a detailed plan for managing enrollment growth in a way that enhances quality without sacrificing access;
c. program should demonstrate that it has a plan and has begun collecting data for assessment in the major, and
d. university needs a campus-wide examination of program growth and enrollment issues.

Issues of Concern

Management of enrollment growth. The present [John Weiss] reported progress about program size and staffing, although temporarily disrupted, is generally positive, with staffing searches being conducted and enrollment growth monitored. Contingency plans for maintaining flexibility in the face of changing funding and enrollment are formulated. The formal plan for assessment in the major is under development, and data is being continuously collected to satisfy multiple assessment needs.

Consultant’s response, 2008-2009

Getting a stable, continuing, teaching staff is still the biggest problem for the program.

As a result of the 2000-2001 review, the committee recommended that in 2003 the program director and CTEM dean provide a status report that addresses the following:

a. concerns noted about lab equipment and activities
b. Concerns about program mission and identity
**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 were 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.

**Consultant’s response, 2008-2009**

These issues have been resolved.

The last recommendation in the 2000-2001 review was:

“university needs a campus-wide examination of program growth and enrollment issues”

As yet (2009), the university has no overall plan for addressing funding and enrollment contingencies.

**V. Current Program Review**

*Program Strengths*

Data from the surveys, program self-study report and discussions with the program director support the following conclusions:
1. The program is felt to be on the leading edge of a rapidly changing professional field, offering technical depth in information technology with a managerial emphasis. **Source:** Program Director and Advisory Board

2. Advisory committee is very active and supportive. **Source:** Program Director

3. Fit between the program and industry demands is good. Students are receiving exceptional job offers directly out of this program. Graduates have experienced 100% placement with strong demand beyond the number of graduates of the program. **Source:** Program Director

4. Most faculty have current industry experience. **Source:** Program Director

5. Support from industry is evident in the development of the extensive lab in 213 Fryklund Hall, providing students many hours of hands-on experience. **Source:** Program Director, Advisory Board

6. The lab provides access for students to develop, apply and research contemporary strategies involving, voice, data, and video technologies. **Source:** Program Director, Key Instructors, Advisory Board

7. Students take multiple rigorous industry certifications which test their knowledge, and skill and ability in these areas, making the graduates superior to others applicants for similar jobs. **Source:** Program Director, Advisory Board

### Issues of Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Low number of instructors for the size of the program.</td>
<td>Program Self-Study Report Key Instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. High instructor turnover rate.</td>
<td>Program Self-Study Report Key Instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Very high quantity of professional development needed for the faculty to stay current in the field with other faculty duties</td>
<td>Program Self-Study Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students lack of experience in network management systems, storage and servers.</td>
<td>Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students communication skills need improvement</td>
<td>Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Classroom course scheduling problems exist.</td>
<td>Program Self-Study Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Over emphasis on CISCO curriculum</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Students (some)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Committee Recommendations for the Program Director

1. Work with the department chair and the dean to hire and retain tenure-track faculty.
2. Address the drop in student enrollment in the program from 2002 (252) to 2008 (123)
3. Review curriculum needs with regard to items 4, 5 and 8 in the table above.

### Committee Recommendations for the Department Chair

1. Work with the program director and the dean to hire and retain tenure-track faculty.
Committee Recommendations for the Dean

1. Work with the program director and the department chair to hire and retain tenure-track faculty.
2. Work with the program director to address the drop in enrollment in the past 6 years.
3. Provide resources for continuing professional development of the teaching staff to remain current with new technology.