April 13, 2008

TO: Janice Coker  
   Associate Vice Chancellor

FROM: Carol Mooney  
       Interim Dean

RE: PRC Response from the Dean: Retail Merchandising & Management

Attached you will find the Program Review Committee’s Recommendations to the Retail Merchandising & Management Program Director, Business Department Chair and Dean of the College of Technology, Engineering and Management. Our responses follow the recommendations.
Recommendations

Recommendations for the Department Chair

1. Work with the program director and the dean to ensure effective enrollment management. Examine student concerns about limited course offerings and too-large numbers of students.

2. Work with the dean to address the need for enhanced facilities/labs and equipment

3. Work with faculty and program director to review the RMM curriculum in the retailing/marketing coursework to address student concerns regarding coordination and especially duplication.

Response from the Department Chair

1. Dialogue with the program director, and in consultation with the dean, a plan is in process to ensure effective enrollment management. In the past, the students’ concern has been about the limited course offerings and the large numbers of students in some classes. The following are the plans to alleviate these concerns:
   a. With the assistance of the dean, the department has gained additional resources through Access to Learning for student help and for graduate assistantships in high demand areas of the RMM such as the Niche and the lab for visual merchandising and promotions.
   b. The department has requested an additional .75 FTE through the Tuition Based Positions offered annually via the Provost’s Office. This will support a position for the additional course sections of high demand courses in the Business department.
   c. The dean, on behalf of the business department, has also requested additional funding in the 2009-11 DIN for the purpose of recruiting a series of visiting professors, as needed, which could be used to bring in industry experts in the area of retail merchandising management.

2. To address the need for enhanced facilities/labs and equipment, the Chair met with both the RMM program director and the College dean to agree on the following steps:
   a. Complete a Lab Modernization in the fall of 2008 to address concerns in the Visual Merchandising and Promotions laboratories.
   b. Work towards a long term objective of centralizing the RMM facilities by locating the Niche, the Visual Merchandising and Promotions laboratories in the Micheels’ Hall.

3. To address students concerns regarding coordination and course duplication, the Chair and the program director, in consultation with faculty members, have worked out the following modalities:
   a. RMM courses are now scheduled to be offered during summer/winterm sessions
b. Attempts are being made to offer courses in a manner that provides instructional effectiveness and efficiency with adequate management of resources.

c. The chair will coordinate a review of the professional courses required in the Retail Merchandising and Management program to address the concern of course duplication.

**Recommendation for the Program Director**

1. Work with the department chair and the dean to ensure effective enrollment management.

2. Work with the dean to address the need for enhanced facilities/labs and equipment

3. Work with faculty and department chair to review the RMM curriculum in the retailing/marketing coursework to address student concerns regarding coordination and especially duplication. Monitor 2007 revisions for their impact on these concerns.

4. Work with faculty to maintain improvements in student advisement.

**Response from the Program Director**

1. Based on student demand for concentrations within the RMM program, the program director will continue to provide the chair of the Department of Business with enrollment projections for courses required and suggested in the program for planning future course offerings. The program director will continue to work with the chair of the Department of Business to avoid/decrease potential scheduling conflicts among single-section BURTL and other BU courses.

2. The program director will develop and submit a lab modernization proposal for the Visual Merchandising/Promotions Laboratory to improve the current facilities assigned in HE-345/347. Along with the Dean and Department Chair, the program director will work toward centralizing the Retail Laboratory (Niche) and Visual Merchandising/Promotions Laboratory in the Micheels Hall General Access Lab space that was previously offered when the lab ceases to exist.

3. The Program Director will work with other retail faculty and the chair of the Department of Business to align course content with approved course objectives and, when appropriate, revise courses to eliminate overlap/duplication and ensure that concepts of consumer behavior, marketing and leadership development are appropriately introduced in lower-level courses and applied expanded in subsequent courses. Primary courses to be addressed will be those mentioned in the student survey, including:
   - BURTL-127  Basic Merchandising
   - BURTL-212  Trend Forecasting
   - BURTL-329  Retail Promotions (includes Advertising)
   - BUMKG-385  Target Marketing
   - BURTL-417  Social Psychological Aspects of Clothing
4. The program director will provide leadership and the department chair will communicate advisement expectations to RMM faculty. Regular meetings with the retail faculty advisors have already begun in an effort to enhance academic advising for RMM majors. Current RMM seniors will be surveyed to identify specific areas of concern and improvements they would like to see in the advisement process. Retail faculty advisors will continue to be encouraged to attend the group advisement meetings held on Advisement Day to take advantage of the information provided by the Program Director and to improve visibility for their academic advisees. All retail faculty advisors will continue to receive advisement-related emails sent out by the Program Director to all RMM majors. To further assist the retail faculty advisors, the program director will develop a step-by-step narrative to accompany the advising tools used by the RMM majors, including:
   a. Program Plan Sheets for each academic year
   b. Eight-Semester Sequence for each of the eight possible concentrations
   c. Projected Course Rotation Schedule for professional courses
   d. Graduation Plan Sheet
   e. Retail Work Experience Form
   f. Frequently Asked Questions Sheet for Program Plans Prior to 2007
   g. Frequently Asked Questions Sheet for 2007-2008 Program Plans and beyond
   h. Gen. Ed./Ethnic Studies/Global Perspectives Requirements

Recommendations for the Dean

1. Work with the program director and the Department Chair to ensure effective enrollment management and/or adequate staffing. Examine student concerns about limited course offerings and too-large numbers of students.

2. Work with the program director and the Department Chair to address the need for enhanced facilities/labs and equipment.

Response from the Dean

1. As presented in this report, the Retail Merchandising and Management has shown consistent program enrollment over the past 5 years. Four full time faculty deliver the professional core for the program; the faculty in the Department of Business also provide significant support to the program. The college has applied for and been successful obtaining additional resources through Access to Learning. These resources have been used to provide student help and graduate assistantships in high demand areas of the RMM program including the student run enterprise, the Niche, and the visual merchandising and promotion laboratories.
The college has also made a request for a .75 FTE through the Tuition Based Positions offered annually through the Provost’s Office. An additional position allocated to the Business department would allow for additional course sections of high demand courses. The dean has also requested additional resources in the 2009-11 DIN to support a visiting professor in the business department. This could be used in the RMM program to bring in industry experts to participate in classes as guest lecturers and visiting professors.

To meet increased student demand, many of the RMM courses are offered during summer session and winterim. The response to these offerings has been very positive and enrollments have been healthy. This appears to elevate student concerns about limited course offerings. Regarding class size, every attempt is made to offer courses in a manner that provides instructional efficiencies as well as efficiently manage resources.

2. The RMM program director and the Business department chair have met with the dean to identify the most critical needs related to facilities and lab equipment. A Lab Modernization request will be completed in the fall of 2008 to address concerns in the Visual Merchandising and Promotions laboratories. Long term, it is most desirable to secure permanent space in Micheels Hall and relocate the Niche, the Visual Merchandising and Promotions laboratories. This would centralize the RMM facilities and align faculty in reciprocity to the labs and students they serve.