I. Degree: B.S. in Business Administration

Program Director: Karen Martinson

PRC Consultants: Deb Homa and Jonna Gjevre

Purpose of the Review: To assess the quality of the B.S. in Business Administration part of the seven-year cycle required of all degree programs at UW-Stout

Committee Findings: The committee recommends that this program continue to function as one of UW-Stout’s degree programs for the ongoing seven-year cycle, and that recommendations made by the committee be implemented.

II. Abstract

The B.S. in Business Administration program at UW-Stout is a competitive and hands-on program with excellent and committed faculty and a very high (94%) placement rate. With a total 2007-8 enrollment of over 900 students (10% of UW-Stout undergraduate enrollment), the B.S. in Business Administration is the largest degree program at UW-Stout. This popular program is characterized by a strong record of relevant co-ops and real-world experience, expertly handled advising, and an increasingly active advisory board. Its goals and performance are strongly aligned with UW-Stout’s polytechnic mission. The program’s high enrollments are a great strength, but also a source of concern. The program size is currently stable, but courses are often overloaded and many professors teach more than fulltime: over the long term, a strong commitment to both enrollment management and faculty recruitment and retention will be necessary to sustain the quality of this program. The program is currently developing an innovative emphasis area in Supply Chain Management and is beginning a three-year process of seeking accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.

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. In addition, the PRC consultants met with the program director several times during the process 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, and program advisory committee members through surveys. The data were analyzed and returned to the program director and PRC members. A total of 448 junior and senior students were surveyed. In addition, 9 (of 20) key instructors
within the department and 4 (of 7) key instructors from outside the department responded, along with 6 (of 11) program advisory committee members.

IV. Previous Review

**Recommendation #1 for the Program Director:**
The combination of the GBA program’s large size and startling growth is the most pressing concern. If left unchecked, the growth of this program could cause it to lose what its students value most. We recommend that the program director direct an effort to ascertain the number of students to whom we can reliably offer a quality education – a balance of student enrollment and available resources. Further, we recommend that the program director, in conjunction with the Admissions Office and the dean, institute measures to control enrollment at that appropriate size – and that these measures balance Stout’s tradition of open access with our mission to provide a quality education.

**Response:** “While it is difficult to predict the number of students who will have to be served by the courses in this program, the program director has worked with University Admissions to reduce the number of entering freshmen to the General Business Administration Program. In addition, internal transfer applications are reviewed and limited and external transfers are limited. These actions have been successful at reducing the number of students enrolled from 1,018 in 2000-01 to 913 in 2002-03.”

**Summation of Consultants:**
While recent enrollment numbers (938 students as of fall, 2007), are slightly lower than those of 2000-01, enrollment management continues to be a concern, as it strains the program’s resources and results in large class sizes.

**Recommendation #2 for the Program Director:**
As the program director notes, the digital campus will pose a number of challenges. It should also help those students who felt they were not adequately prepared for digitized workplaces. We recommend that the program director ascertain that the increasing use of computers includes foundational work for those students who need it.

**Response:** “The Business Development Chair surveyed faculty to determine plans and preparations for using the laptop initiative in his/her class and provided responses that demonstrate more computer-based course delivery. Early introduction to computers is believed to be effectively provided as an all-university effort in conjunction with the laptop program.”

**Summation of Consultants:**
With the full implementation of the laptop initiative since the last report, this issue no longer appears to be a concern.

**Recommendation for Program Director and Department Chair:**
The number of student complaints about teaching and advising is a concern. Controlling enrollment at an appropriate size should help – when it is accomplished. As some students correctly observed, advising is the arena in which personal and the professional domains are joined. Perhaps because some GBA teachers are especially effective at advising, students were harsh towards those who were not. We recommend that the program director monitor the effectiveness of advising.

Response: “The program director has taken very positive steps to inform students and faculty advisors and provide correct and consistent information to be used in advising and counseling. These steps include written documentation including a class handout, advising notes, a highlights piece that is a very detailed summary of the topics covered in BUMGT-100 classes, and another piece that summarizes the most important points in the program.”

Summation of Consultants:
The program has taken the steps needed to bring about significant improvement in the advisement process. Student survey results indicate that, on the whole, students are satisfied with advisement. The program has included information about the program in the Introduction to Business course. Faculty are available to schedule appointments with individual advisees and hold group meetings to assist students with scheduling. In addition, improved advisement may be a factor in the steadily rising six-year graduation rate since the last review.

Recommendation for the Dean:
The committee recommends that the dean continue to evaluate resources allocated to the GBA program and provide additional resources as needed. Of particular concern are the program’s need for an additional teacher of MIS and the remarkably lean GBA program office staff.

Response: “The department has been given an additional allocation beginning in January 2003 and has converted a graduate assistant position to an undergraduate assistant, thus gaining some additional work hours. The program director feels that the program is being treated fairly given the resources available as a whole.”

Summation of Consultants:
Additional MIS faculty continues to be needed, as identified in the Program Review Report. In addition, the program director reports a need for more instructor positions, given the current heavy teaching load.

V. Current Program Review

Program Strengths
1. The program has a team of highly capable faculty who are committed to excellence in teaching. (Source: student surveys, program director’s report.)

2. Currently accredited with the International Association of Colleges of Business Education, the program recently joined the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs and will be seeking accreditation through this organization. (Source: program director’s report.)

3. The program’s Advisory Board has been increasingly active, meeting at least twice annually to ensure that the program stays current with rapidly changing needs in the business arena. (Source: program director’s report, program advisory committee member surveys.)

4. Graduates of the program consistently achieve high placement rates, ranging from 94% - 97% in positions related to their degree, and surveys of employers indicate satisfaction with the preparedness of the program’s graduates. (Source: program director’s report)

5. The program provides students with strong experiential learning activities, including an eight-week co-op experience and a minimum 320-hour supervised work experience. (Source: program director’s report, student surveys.)

6. The program has been able to provide effective advisement, despite high staff-to-student ratios (Source: program director’s report, student surveys.)

7. The program is currently developing of new concentration in Supply Chain Management to that will enable students to meet a increasing demand for employees with knowledge in this growing area (Source: program director’s report.)

8. The program is broad-based and allows students flexibility in selecting areas of emphasis through minors and concentrations. (Source: program director’s report, student surveys.)

9. The program has recently implemented an assessment process with the Educational Testing Service Major Field Test to evaluate the knowledge of business majors as they approach graduation. (Source: program director’s report, assessment in the major report.)

**Program Opportunities for Improvement**

1. **Program Administration**
   a. Size of classes. Students report concerns about the large size of some classes, which can potentially affect the quality of their learning experience. (Source: student surveys, program director’s report.)
   b. Number of sections. Related to concerns about class sizes are concerns about available sections. The department offers several Winterm and Summer Session classes, and many professors teach overloads, but with over 900 students in the major and 300 students in the minor, the demand is very high. (Source: student surveys, key instructor survey, program director’s report)

2. **Program Curriculum**
a. Students report some dissatisfaction with the number of accounting courses they are required to take, but the accounting requirements in the B.S. in Business Administration program are comparable to the requirements at peer programs. (Source: student surveys, program director’s report.)

b. A stronger “emphasis” area is desired by some students, and efforts should continue to provide flexibility in this area and to develop minors related to these emphasis areas. (Student surveys, program director’s report.)

3. Program Faculty and Resources
a. Faculty resources are currently strained. According to the program director, “Many professors are teaching overloads to provide the courses to allow students to complete degrees in a reasonable time.” In addition, each professor in the program has an average of 70 advisees. The current high levels of instruction and advising cannot be sustained without attention to this problem. High faculty/student ratios could negatively affect the program’s pursuit of accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. (Source: program director’s report, key instructor survey)

b. Support and time for faculty research is insufficient. In order to stay current/relevant in the field and achieve desired accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs, faculty will need more time and institutional support for research. (Source: program director’s report, key instructor survey)

c. Low faculty salaries and heavy teaching loads make it difficult to recruit committed and high-quality faculty. As a result, the program has already suffered a failed search in the critical area of accounting. Retention, recruitment, and replacement of needed faculty will continue to be challenging. (Source: program director’s report, key instructor survey)

d. Classrooms and classroom resources, including textbooks, desks, tables, and projectors, need to be continually updated and maintained. (Source: key instructor survey, student survey, program director’s report.)

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations for the Department Chair**

1. Work with the Dean and the Program Director to address concerns about class sizes and numbers of sections offered. Consider advocating for enrollment caps and/or additional FTEs. Work to address the program’s unsustainable reliance on faculty overloads.

2. Work with the Dean and the Program Director to address concerns about faculty recruitment and retention. Consider advocating for
salaries that more closely approximate the national average. Consider dropping Ph.D. requirements for the position in Accounting.

3. Work with the Dean and the Program Director to address need for more time and support for faculty research, as this will be an important factor in the program’s pursuit of accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.

4. Work with the Dean to address concerns about the need to maintain and improve resources, such as up-to-date textbooks, classroom desks and projectors. Hopefully, the construction of the new Science Wing will partially alleviate some classroom availability and classroom environment concerns.

Recommendations for the Program Director

1. Continue efforts to strengthen the emphasis areas available to students through the development of related minors. Continue development of emphasis area in Supply Chain Management.

2. Work to communicate effectively with students regarding the critical importance of accounting courses in Business Administration programs.

3. Support the efforts of the Department Chair to control class sizes and provide sufficient sections of courses to meet student needs.

4. Support the efforts of the Department Chair to advocate for sustainable teaching loads, research support, and attractive salaries for incoming faculty and to address concerns about failed searches and faculty recruitment.

5. Continue pursuit of accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.

Recommendations for the Dean

1. Support the efforts of the Program Director and Department Chair to sustain current quality of instruction. Remain mindful of high faculty/student ratios, faculty salaries, research support, and other challenges to recruitment and retention of quality instructors. Consider enrollment management, additional FTEs and other options for keeping this valuable program fully staffed.

2. Support the efforts of the Program Director and Department Chair to seek accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.