

Weber State University
External Board of Regents Program Review
Department of Business Administration

As part of its Regents Review process, Nicole Forsgren Velasquez (Utah State University), Ronda Callister (Utah State University), Brian Rague (Weber State University), and Matthew Mouritsen (Weber State University) reviewed the Department of Business Administration. The campus visit took place on March 18, 2014 and this report was submitted to Jeff Steagall, Dean of the Goddard School of Business & Economics, and Michael Stevens, Chair of the Department of Business Administration, on March 28, 2014.

A. Mission Statement

The Department of Business Administration has formulated a mission statement that clearly articulates its direction, desired learning environment and learning outcomes for students, balance between application and theory, and the emphasis on maintaining an “active community of teaching scholars.” The review committee **commends** the department for the achievement of its mission thus far.

In one particular area of the mission statement, the committee noticed a weakness in how the curriculum may not be accomplishing what the mission states. The mission statement reads: “Our students will be able to...appropriately deploy information technologies.” The committee determined that students need greater depth of learning in spreadsheet applications among all Goddard School students, expanded knowledge of both data analytics for Information Systems & Technologies (IST) and Supply Chain Management (SCM) majors, and social media for marketing majors.

The committee recommends that the department ensure that the mission statement is aligned with the University’s mission and the Goddard School’s mission. The University revised its mission statement within the past 3 years focusing on core themes such as learning, access, and community. The Goddard School is currently revising its mission statement. Given the addition of IST faculty to the department and the move of Finance faculty to the School of Accounting & Taxation, combined with the Goddard School’s strategic emphasis placed on the Supply Chain Management Program, the mission should be modified to reflect these changes.

B. Curriculum

SCM Curriculum

The review committee **commends** the faculty within the Supply Chain Management Program for the strategic design of the curriculum and supporting Center of Supply Chain

Excellence. Knowing that much is left to accomplish before it is fully implemented, the committee recommends that the faculty continue on its path to implementation. Because implementation is still under way, a more detailed review of the curriculum is not included in this report; however two recommendations are made at this time. First, the committee agrees that the role of technology and data analytics is a key area in SCM, and recommends that efforts be made to support the staffing and/or development of a course to address this area. Second, the committee recommends the SCM faculty utilize their Advisory Board to gather feedback on the newly designed curriculum.

The review committee **commends** the IST faculty for reviewing and streamlining their curriculum offerings. The current strategy to offer a focused IST degree is wise, considering current faculty/staffing levels. However, the committee strongly encourages IST to build an Advisory Board, which could advise the faculty regarding technology offerings and emphasis areas that are in demand locally and regionally. Due to these changes in the IST curriculum, a more detailed review was conducted.

To overcome the weakness related to spreadsheet applications identified in Section A, the committee strongly recommends that the department and/or Goddard School consider requiring Microsoft Excel certification as part of the admissions process. By having all Goddard School students achieving proficiency in spreadsheet applications, faculty in the cross-functional core, functional core, and major courses would be able to reinforce students' skills through discipline-specific applications. In addition, IST 2010 and IST 3110 should be deployed strategically to reinforce the enabling role of information technology in each business discipline.

The Department of Business Administration offers several IST degrees: Associate of Science (AS), Bachelor of Science (BS), emphasis for Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS), minor, and honors. The review committee suggests:

- The AS degree continue to be offered, because it provides applied skill sets to students who may want an option to start working in business technology fields earlier than a traditional four-year degree.
- The BS and BIS degrees continue to be offered, though the department should be careful about course coverage and over-commitments with the low IST faculty numbers.
- The minor continue to be offered. In particular, we recommend that the IST minor be leveraged throughout the business school, as technology is becoming a key component in all aspects of business. Furthermore, AACSB has recently updated its accreditation standards for Accounting to include technology and data analytics (AACSB 2013); the IST department could provide this course coverage.

- The honors degree continue to be offered as long as it does not negatively impact other IST course offerings.

IST Curriculum

The IST degree has submitted a proposal to streamline the curriculum. We have compared this new curriculum to the IS 2010 Curriculum Guidelines (Topi et al. 2010), which suggest seven core courses (designated as IS 2010.n), a capstone course, and career tracks.

IST Course	Equivalent IS 2010 course (Topi et al. 2010)
<i>Required:</i>	
IST 2110 – Software Development I	IS 2010 elective
IST 2410 – Information Systems Architecture	IS 2010.1 (some coverage)
IST 3210 – Database Design and Implementation	IS 2010.2
IST 3610 – Networks & Data Communications	IS 2010.4
IST 4730 – Senior Practicum: Project Management and Systems Development	IS 2010 Capstone Course IS 2010.5 (Project Mgmt)
IST 3730 – Systems Analysis and Design	IS 2010.6
<i>Electives:</i>	
IST 3700 – E-Business Technologies & Web Development	IS 2010 elective
IST 3620 – Networks and Data Communications II	(extension of IS 2010.4)
IST 4600 – Information Security I	IS 2010 elective
IST 4700 – Information Security II	(extension of IS 2010 elective)

If evaluated in terms of compliance to the IS 2010 Curriculum Model (following Bell et al. 2013), the IST degree is 60% compliant: five of the seven recommended core courses are offered and a capstone course is required. Although the program does not formally identify career tracks, examination of course offerings suggest three emphasis areas: data communications and networking, information security, and programming/development. It should be noted that the information security courses might also provide value to the Accounting program (see AACSB 2013 Accounting Standard A7).

If the degree is classified relative to other AACSB IS degrees (following Mills et al. 2012), IST offers a Focused program: this type of program appears in approximately one fourth of AACSB IS programs, has medium adherence to the IS 2020 curriculum guidelines, requires a medium amount of courses, offers a low amount of electives, does not formally identify career tracks, and requires a capstone course. This type of program is characterized by an implied emphasis on one or two areas to meet local or regional market demands.

The committee also suggests the faculty consider adding a data analytics course to address growing trends in the field. Specifically, this course could provide a strategic bridge to other programs, such as Supply Chain Management (which has identified data analytics and technology as a gap in the current curriculum), Human Resources (which increasingly relies on data to make hiring, training, and promotion decisions), and Accounting (which can help address AACSB 2013 Accounting Standard A7).

Other Business Administration Curriculum

The committee recommends that a comprehensive curriculum review by degree occur on a five year cycle. This type of review may reveal curricular changes needed to serve the ever-changing business environment. For example, the committee recommends that the marketing faculty consider adding a course in social-media marketing to the degree.

C. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The review committee **commends** the department for its work in developing learning outcomes, measuring student performance, and reviewing results. There appears to be an open dialog among faculty related to assessment processes but more importantly to how assessment can assist in improving what was quite frequently referred to as a “culture change in students.” The faculty seem very determined to help students develop more fully their thinking, analytical, and communications skills as well as their work ethic related to course and degree requirements.

The committee recommends that the discussion continue among faculty to the point of achieving meaningful improvement in each learning outcome. It further recommends that learning outcomes be updated/modified to reflect any needed changes related to the addition of IST faculty to the department and the move of Finance faculty to the School of Accounting & Taxation.

Given that some assessment data gathering takes place outside the department, the committee recommends that coordination occur among BA faculty and those faculty who teach NTM 3250 to ensure the appropriateness of rubrics and data gathering processes.

Students were very content with the emphasis placed on team projects. They see the benefit in the workplace. They also appreciate the collaboration tools made available to them within Canvas, but spoke more specifically about how Google Chat and Google Drive aid in team project collaboration.

D. Academic Advising

The review committee **commends** the utilization of a centralized academic advising center. Students stated that the advising, either through a hands-on approach or by using

Cattracks, is very beneficial to helping them make timely progress toward degree completion. The review committee did notice that disconnects can occur between student-specific advising plans and the courses that are actually offered and when they are offered. With formal advising available, the review committee recommends that plans are enacted to encourage all students to take advantage of advising services and to engage in advising earlier in their degree program.

Although informal, the committee **commends** the department for career advising that is strong among faculty and appreciated by students. Faculty made it clear that they feel responsible to make themselves available as needed to advise students. The Nye Lecture Series is an important element in career advising for students.

The review committee recommends that faculty within the department show greater support for Career Center activities such as Business & Industry Night. It is important for the dean and chair to make faculty support expectations explicit. In preparation for career placement, the review committee recommends that the Senior Seminar also be made available to juniors and at times other than summer and early fall semester.

E. Faculty

The review committee **commends** the department for its use of the annual faculty review process. It **commends** the effort made by senior faculty to mentor junior faculty. Junior faculty welcome any feedback and feel that they can have questions answered by senior faculty. They also feel that WSU provides ample resources for them to improve in the classroom. The committee **commends** the department chair for his culture of collaboration such that faculty feel that they have a voice in strategic decisions. The orientation of new faculty is to be **commended** as well.

The review committee recommends that the department hire strategically as future faculty replacements occur or new faculty lines emerge.

The department currently has four full-time IST faculty members. One senior faculty member teaches only partial load (1-1) as an Associate Dean, and another senior faculty member is retiring. There are currently plans to replace the retiring IST faculty member with a new faculty line.

The review committee strongly recommends hiring the new IST faculty member strategically. For example, data analytics is a course that could complement (or possibly be worked into) the existing database course, offering students exposure to important and relevant content. Furthermore, this area could also fill an identified need in the Supply Chain Management program, as well as offer important coverage to meet new AACSB Accounting accreditation requirements (see AACSB 2013 Accounting Standard A7).

Therefore, hiring someone who could teach an analytics class (or add an analytics component to other IST courses, such as database) would be extremely valuable to the department (as well as in the MBA Program). Furthermore, finding a faculty member with an interest/ability in supply chain management in addition to data analytics and technology would help support that strategic direction of the department as well. While it may seem difficult to find a faculty member with this list of specialties (data analytics, supply chain or operations management, database), it may be possible to find MIS faculty who are able to teach in these areas regardless of their research interests; possible venues for recruiting include AIS (Association of Information Systems) and DSI (Decision Sciences Institute) conferences.

Faculty have high research expectations and will need faculty development funds to meet those expectations. The committee **commends** the recent increase in travel funds and suggests the need to increase them further. There was strong support among faculty for the Safe Harbor List (SHL) of journals. Although it is specifically used as part of the Research Incentive Program (RIP), faculty refer to the SHL when looking for high quality publication outlets.

F. Program Support

The review committee **commends** the resources available to the department in terms of administrative support, facilities, and equipment. It should be noted that there are resources that exist that faculty do not know are available to them, such as in the Library.

The review committee recommends that classroom technology support be improved. Technology should be more reliable and support should be able to respond to breakdowns on a more timely basis. The committee acknowledges that the college only maintains some of the classrooms where there courses are taught so a solution to this problem may extend beyond the department and Goddard School, but the School may be able to have some influence over time. Other Universities have instructional technology support staff on call and in proximity to classrooms so that they can be dispatched within 5-10 minutes of a call from an instructor who has experienced a technology breakdown. Where quality teaching is a core mission, maintaining classroom technology can be pushed to a priority.

G. Relationships with External Communities

The review committee **commends** the Supply Chain Management program for envisioning a plan that will 1) form an SCM advisory board whose members will be integrated into the classroom and will 2) create a Center for Supply Chain Excellence. These two initiatives are prime examples of how to develop relationships with external communities.

It is recommended that IST faculty reach out to the technical community locally and regionally to build an Advisory Board as well as build relationships with potential employers to identify key technologies and find job opportunities for graduates. The faculty should be active participants in promotional activities such as Major Fest to enhance the visibility of the IST degree offerings. Although not external to the University, the review committee recommends that IST faculty communicate and coordinate with the Computer Science (CS) Department and the Network Technology and Business Multimedia (NTM) department for the purpose of finding ways of efficiently delivering technology education, including the utilization of computer labs at the Ogden and Davis Campuses.

H. Program Summary

The review committee **commends** the department for its reduction in overload teaching and the development of useful assessment processes. The review committee strongly encourages the program to maintain and strengthen these efforts.

References

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). (2013). Eligibility procedures and accreditation standards for accounting accreditation.
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- Mills, R. J., Velasquez, N. F., Fadel, K. J., & Bell, C. C. (2012). Examining IS Curriculum Profiles and the IS 2010 Model Curriculum Guidelines in AACSB-Accredited Schools. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 23(4).
- Topi, H., Valacich, J. S., Wright, R. T., Kaiser, K., Nunamaker Jr, J. F., Sipior, J. C., & De Vreeda, G. J. (2010). IS 2010: Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programs in Information Systems. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 26.