

Isenberg School of Management

A School composed of the following departments:

Accounting and Information Systems (B.B.A., M.S.A.) [Separate AQAD review, 2000-01]
Finance and Operations Management (B.B.A.)
Management (B.B.A.)
Marketing (B.B.A.)

In addition, the School offers the M.B.A., the P.M.B.A., and the Ph.D.

■ The Review Process

This was a “mini-review,” conducted at the mid-point of the normal ten-year accreditation cycle of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The review focused on topics specified by the AACSB as a result of the most recent accreditation visit (1995) and a 1998 update submitted by the School as required by AACSB. No visiting team was required.

■ Executive Summary

The AACSB requested progress reports in four areas:

- The faculty planning process and plans for faculty resource management.
- Faculty development.
- Curriculum planning and evaluation processes.
- Comprehensive outcomes assessment.

The School prepared written progress reports in each of these areas, and provided extensive supporting material. The School’s responses are summarized below:

Faculty Planning. The AACSB had expressed concern that, given the School’s anticipated resource base, it needed careful planning to guide faculty hiring decisions. In response, the School fundamentally changed its faculty hiring process, moving from a decentralized system in which departments made independent hiring decisions to a coordinated system in which a steering committee (composed of the Dean, associate deans, and program and department heads) makes hiring decisions “from a more strategic school-wide perspective.” The School described this new approach as having already “helped to resolve the balance between department aspirations and the realities of staffing courses at the undergraduate, master’s and doctoral levels.” Through this process the School was able to support faculty hiring to create a new information technology emphasis.

Faculty Development. The School reported steady progress in this area, confirmed by an interim AACSB visit in 1997. The School’s faculty development plan grew out of faculty focus groups held following the last AACSB accreditation visit, and is organized around the principle that SOM’s broad mission of teaching, scholarship and outreach requires “flexibility to encourage faculty to develop excellence in any of the areas ... essential to the mission.” Under this view the School sees faculty as a “portfolio of players” with diverse development needs. Recent examples of increased faculty development activity include opportunities for summer research funding and grant-writing assistance, participation by nearly half the faculty in Harvard’s Case Teaching Workshop, in-house workshops on technology issues, and participation by School faculty in the Lilly Teaching Fellows program and the Technology

Fellows Program. Participation in the new, campus-wide Periodic Multi-Year Review (PMYR) program was also cited.

Curriculum Planning/Outcomes Assessment. In its report to AACSB, the School noted that the issues of curriculum planning and outcomes assessment “are inseparable in a continuous improvement environment,” and discussed recent progress in terms of curricular changes flowing from assessment efforts. Assessment at the undergraduate level included creation of a recurring review process for each of the courses in the “Academic Common Experience” (ACE), the core curriculum shared by all majors in the School. The School has also developed a new survey instrument to assess the ACE student experience. The undergraduate dean has been working closely with the campus’s Office of Academic Planning and Assessment to explore development of learning outcomes and assessment tools, and was one of a small group of faculty invited by that office to participate in a national conference on student assessment. Throughout the School, faculty have been examining student feedback, employer needs, and other input to revise the curriculum. As a result of these efforts, major revisions have been made in the introductory course in Business Information Systems, the introductory Accounting and Marketing courses, and the statistics sequence required of all School of Management majors.

At the graduate level, as a result of feedback from a number of sources, the School revised its M.B.A. program so as to improve the sequence of courses in the first year, allow greater options for electives and concentrations, incorporate a field experience into the curriculum, involve a broader group of faculty in M.B.A. teaching, and encourage development of joint degree programs with other units on campus. Curricular revisions have also occurred in the Ph.D. program, including merger of some related doctoral seminars and consideration of possible coordination of doctoral courses with the Department of Sport Studies.

Student Outcomes Assessment. The School’s review had a strong focus on student outcomes assessment, as described above.

Results of the Review. On June 22, 2001, the School was notified by AACSB’s Business Accreditation Committee that “all issues appear to have been satisfactorily addressed.” The accreditation process is therefore complete until the next visit in 2005-06.