

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**ACCOUNTING AND BUSINESS PROGRAMS ACCREDITATION REPORT
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report for the Accounting and Business Programs in the College of Business at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary: The programs (1) underwent a self-study, using a strategic planning process, that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The programs received accreditation for the maximum six-year period through the end of the 2015-2016 academic year. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to “offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students.”

Background:

- ◆ **Description of Programs.** The College of Business offers six undergraduate programs – Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management and Organizations, Management Sciences (MIS), and Marketing; six master’s level programs – full-time MBA program, MBA-PM for working professionals and managers, Executive MBA, International Executive MBA with locations in Hong Kong and Italy, Dual Degree Executive Engineer program that leads to an MBA degree from the University of Iowa and a master’s degree in systems engineering from Iowa State University, and the Master of Accountancy; and two doctoral programs – Ph.D. in Business and Ph.D. in Economics.
- ◆ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation.
- ◆ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
- ◆ **Review Process.** The review was conducted in two parts by AACSB; one was a review of the Accounting program and the other was a review of all other departments in the College of Business.

The self-study prepared by the College of Business contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body – mission statement; mission appropriateness; student mission; continuous improvement objectives; financial strategies; student admission; student retention; staff sufficiency student support; faculty sufficiency; faculty qualifications; faculty management and support; aggregate faculty and staff educational responsibility; individual faculty educational responsibility; student educational responsibility; management of curricula; undergraduate learning goals; undergraduate educational level; master’s level general management learning goals; specialized master’s degree learning goals; master’s educational level; and doctoral learning goals.

- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In February 2009, the visiting team determined that the Accounting and other business programs in the College of Business met the requirements for accredited status and recommended that the accreditation of the undergraduate and graduate programs in business be extended for an additional six years with a Maintenance Review to occur in year five.

- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
 - ☑ “The Stead Technology Services Group is recognized as a leader at the University of Iowa for its innovative and dedicated service to the advancement of technology campus wide.”
 - ☑ “The Pomerantz Career Center has an exemplary program aimed at keeping track of employment situations for all Tippie graduates. The Center staff also assists new graduates that are displeased with their initial employment situation. Graduates are contacted six months after graduation.”
 - ☑ “Tippie has a strong leadership team and a very collegial working environment.”
 - ☑ “Expansion of international activities to provide undergraduate students a more global experience. The executive MBA Program has a mandatory global experience for all students. The cost of this experience is included in the program fees.”
 - ☑ “The Krause Challenge Fund for undergraduate students and Henry Fund for full-time MBA students is a strength.”
 - ☑ “Tippie has an engaged and supportive advisory board and donor relations program to support its mission.”

- ◇ Identification of Areas to be Addressed Prior to Next Maintenance Review – Accounting Programs (Institutional responses are in italics.)
 - ☑ “Complete assurance of learning plans must be developed for each separate program including the BBA, MAc, and Ph.D. programs. Based on those plans, direct assurance of learning measures must be taken and the effect on curriculum changes, if any, must be evaluated. Outstanding assessment work is being accomplished with the writing program and that can serve as a model.”

The department accepts the team’s recommendation that more distinct assurance of learning plans should be designed for each program. While the treatment and assessment of learning outcomes in the three programs are sufficiently different as executed on a day-to-day basis, the department will make these differences distinct and explicit and document these differences. The writing program is essentially an assessment of technical competence. When addressing softer objectives, such as critical thinking skills, the assessment process becomes much more difficult.
 - ☑ “The AQ criteria must be strengthened to clearly reflect the high level of research mission evident in the college. This may be accomplished through a separate set of criteria based on faculty level.”

The AQ process has been strengthened to clearly reflect the high level of research mission in the College. The College and University require annual reviews for all faculty. Probationary and untenured faculty are also subject to an extensive review annually and tenured faculty are subjected to an extensive review every five years. This could provide the basis for the AQ criteria.

- ☑ “The faculty is collegial and very productive. The retention of faculty in the future is very vulnerable given salary inversion and problems maintaining summer support for research active faculty.”

Salary inversion and lack of summer support are problems noted in the five-year maintenance report and recognized by the visiting team. While the department outlines a strategy to start to address these issues, the five-year maintenance report notes that these problems cannot be solved at the department level alone. The College must actively participate in the solution.

- ☑ “Stipends for doctoral students are below market. For the continued outstanding success of this program, progress must be made on finding opportunities to provide the students with increased support including differential stipends across different units in the college and across different colleges in the university. There are also other sources such as the AICPA Doctoral Program and perhaps even private money for the Ph.D. program alums.”

Providing competitive compensation and research time for doctoral students are problems that cannot be solved at the department level alone. The College and University must actively participate in the solution; the College and department are exploring ways to address these problems. The department is actively applying for outside funding to provide competitive compensation for doctoral students.

◆ Identification of Areas to be Addressed Prior to Next Maintenance Review – Business Programs
(Institutional responses are in italics.)

- ☑ “The definitions of academically qualified (AQ) and professionally qualified (PQ) should be expanded to reflect the doctoral mission and peer group.”

The College’s expectations for academically qualified and professionally qualified faculty are extremely high and consistent with the University’s overall research and teaching missions. In line with the team’s recommendation, the College will expand and refine the AQ and PQ definitions to reflect more explicitly its doctoral mission and peer group.

- ☑ “Assessment of learning should be more closely aligned to the Tippie College of Business mission, goals, and strategy for each degree granted. A plan should be outlined for measuring outcomes and continuous improvement.”

The College will continue to develop and refine the assessment of learning process and pay special attention to linking learning outcomes to the College’s mission and goals of each degree program. The College will commit additional resources to the development of a plan for measuring learning outcomes and continuous improvement.

◆ Relevant Facts in Support of the Team Accreditation Recommendation – Business Programs
(Institutional responses are in italics.)

- ☑ “Within the undergraduate and master’s academic programs, Tippie should continue developing and emphasizing experiential learning, leadership development, and globalization of academic activities.”

The expansion of experiential learning, leadership development, and globalization of the various programs will continue to be a top priority for the College to position itself as a destination of choice for students, both graduate and undergraduate. The College is committed to expanding the learning environment beyond the classroom and believes that the leadership skills and competencies provided by experiential learning are excellent complements to rigorous and high quality classroom teaching.

Experiential learning activities include required participation in the Business Solutions Center by all first-year MBA students; participation in student-managed investment funds at the undergraduate and graduate levels; elective courses and activities including field studies in Marketing; John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center courses; and Volunteer Tax Assistance Program (VITA) in the Department of Accounting.

- ☑ “To better build the bridge between theory and practice, build on communication between tenured/untentured faculty of practice (lecturers and clinical faculty).”

Ongoing modifications and improvements to the graduate and undergraduate curricula will more fully integrate theory and practice as tenure track and clinical faculty work collaboratively in the academic career academy tracks of the College’s MBA program and on the core curriculum in the undergraduate program. To ensure this integration takes place throughout the curriculum, the College has established core curriculum committees at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- ☑ “Continue the well-defined inclusive and participative process for strategic planning. There is a need to commit additional resources to attract a more diverse student body.”

One of the top priorities of the University is to increase the diversity of its overall student body and faculty. The Tippie College of Business has included diversity as one of its top goals for the next five years and will work in concert with the University to increase the diversity of its students and faculty. The College will actively use its direct admit program as one vehicle for improving the diversity of its programs, especially at the undergraduate level.

- ☑ “The College needs to develop an assessment process to be consistent with the mission and goals for each degree granted including measuring outcomes for continuous improvement.”

The College will continue to develop and refine its assessment of learning process and pay special attention to linking learning outcomes to the College’s mission and goals of each degree program. The College intends to commit additional resources in the form of an assurance of learning committee at the undergraduate level that will be charged with refining and improving metrics and rubrics used for documenting compliance and with developing an explicit plan for closing any observed gaps between learning goals and measurable outcomes, i.e., continuous improvement.

- ◆ Accreditation Status. In March 2009, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business awarded accreditation to the Accounting and other programs in the Tippie College of Business at the University of Iowa for a six-year period through the 2015-2016 academic year. A Maintenance Review will be scheduled to occur in year five. Responses to the visiting team’s statements were satisfactory; no further action is required prior to the maintenance review.