

School of Business Program Review

Faculty of Professional Studies

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Rosetta Khalideen, Dean of the Faculty of Professional Studies

Accepted by:

Senate in November 2013

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in September 2013

TO: Dr. Eric Davis, Chair APPC

FROM: Rosetta Khalideen, Dean, Faculty of Professional Studies

DATE: September 4, 2013

RE: Response to Review – School of Business

Based on the Report of the External Review Committee of the School of Business, my meeting with this Committee, and the Response to the Report from the School, I would like to make the following observations on the review of the School of Business:

Process

The Dean's scope letter was used as the basis for the conduct of the review of the School of Business. The general intent of the review was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of programs offered in the School, to highlight factors which contribute to, or inhibit the success of the School and to use the recommendations from the review to shape the strategic direction of the School over the next five years.

As part of the review process, the School of Business completed a self-study of their unit and this information was provided to the External Review Team. The self-study report included information on the history of the School, detailed descriptions of programs being offered, description of the School's administrative structure, data from surveys conducted with students and the external community on the effectiveness of programs and the School's own reflections on their challenges and opportunities. In addition, the External Review Team conducted a two-day site visit and met with a number of stakeholders including students, faculty, sessional instructors, staff, members of UFV's senior administration, and members of the external community.

Review Results

(a) Programs

The Review Team found that programs offered within the School of Business are of a high quality. The level of content delivered in courses and the pedagogical practices of faculty, coupled with small class size, make the programs attractive and provide students with an enriching learning experience. Program laddering provides flexibility for students and the opportunity to plan and prepare for their education. The programming which currently exists within the School is comparable to programming by accredited Schools of Business in similar post-secondary institutions and would be viewed positively by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs Accreditation Body. Appropriate courses within the School are currently eligible for the CGA and CMA designations. The report mentioned that, "... courses are strong and as a result, applicable courses receive credit towards professional designations." The current waitlists of students seem to be indicative of the positive academic reputation the School enjoys and is significant to the consideration of program growth. As the Committee noted, "... the potential for the business program to attract new students is very high."

However, program growth has to be tempered with the availability of resources. Long waitlists can also lead to frustrated students who are sometimes unable to take their courses in a timely manner. If not

addressed, the reputation of the School can be negatively impacted. There were also comments on the priority registration of international students and the way this is handled. With the large number of international students who enroll in the business programs, registration in courses is at a premium. Although the two issues of waitlists and international student enrollment appear to be driven by factors outside of the control of the School, they still need to be addressed in the development of an enrollment management plan of the School. This plan will have to consider class size and as the report points out, "Small class sizes are an important advantage for the School (although this contributes to a shortage of class space availability)." Another issue is the number of credits required for the Certificate program in Business Administration. The report notes that the extensive number of required credits places this program at a "competitive disadvantage" with other institutions offering the same program. This is an issue that warrants urgent attention as the credits for the Certificate are reviewed. There could also be the opportunity to review the requirements and pre-requisites for courses and various options within programs. The report also suggests that attention needs to be given to the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) so that there is alignment not only with programs but also with specific courses.

(b) Staffing and Administration

The review report detailed the commitment of faculty to the work of the School and their understanding of the importance of developing clear and strategic directions for this Unit. The report noted that, "... Instructors have a lot of pride in their students and the School." The School is focused on student success and on maintaining high standards and academic integrity. One of the challenges in the School is the inadequate number of faculty members. Almost fifty percent of the courses in the various programs are taught by sessional instructors. In addition, there is a low number of faculty members with terminal degrees which will be an issue if the School were to seek accreditation. The review team was also of the view that the School of Business is inadequately resourced not only in terms of faculty but also support staff. The School has an enrollment of over 2,000 students and a complement of twenty three faculty members and three support staff. About 250 course sections are scheduled to be offered by the School on an annual basis. The fill rate of these courses averages about 95%.

Adequately resourcing the School of Business has been challenging in the current situation of dwindling government funding to PSE Institutions. However, the School of Business is well positioned to explore income generating activities. There are some small steps which have been taken in this direction but entrepreneurialism needs to be entrenched in the School's strategic plan. This is an area the School needs to immediately address.

There were comments in the Review Report related to more "authority" being given to the Director of the School with consideration for this position to become that of a Dean in the next few years. This will be a recommendation that the University might want to address in the next two to three years. In light of current budget constraints, it is not feasible to explore this option in the short-term. It was also recommended that more supports need to be in place for sessional instructors, particularly those who work in the evenings. This is a situation that the School can strive to improve.

(c) Community Engagement

The School has been able to work with some external agencies and businesses on projects and research. Many of the graduates of the School have been hired by these organizations. As the report of the Review Team mentions, "Graduates were viewed as job ready and able to 'hit the ground running.'" However, there is a significant opportunity to develop partnerships with the community more fully." A lack of more formalized partnership arrangements is preventing the School from moving forward with

some of its entrepreneurship activities. The development of an external Program Advisory Committee is key to solidifying business and industry partnerships. In today's tough economic times, Business Schools as a whole are leaning towards building strong and supportive industry partnerships. This is an opportunity that must be urgently explored by the School of Business.

(d) Space and Facilities

The lack of physical space for potential growth of the School of Business was a concern expressed by the Review Team. There is a lack of faculty office space resulting in faculty sharing single offices. There is also a lack of classroom space which will have implications for the decision to increase class size since many of the classrooms used for the Business programs can only comfortably accommodate twenty-five students. Class size will be important to an enrollment plan. The students interviewed expressed their concerns with the lack of "student space" for study purposes, not only for the Business students, but for the entire UFV student body.

Recommendations

In view of both short term and long term planning, the response to the review report from the School of Business highlights areas of focus. These have been addressed in some detail. The new Director of the School will need to work with faculty and staff to determine annual work plans for the next two years, in addition to developing a five-year strategic plan.

The following will need to be given attention by the School in some order of priority:

- Develop an annual work plan at the start of each academic year
- Develop a 5-year strategic plan for the School
- Develop an enrollment management plan (including the enrollment of international students). Start with an annual enrollment plan which can later become part of the 5-year strategic plan
- Create an annual timetable which focuses on the needs of students; the logical sequencing of courses; providing classes at various times of the day/days of the week including evenings and weekends and developing a more robust summer semester
- Create an External Advisory Committee to assist with building bridges with the School and business and industry
- Create and strengthen business and industry partnerships, not only for student research and work experience opportunities, but also for financial support
- Diligently seek out entrepreneurial activities and make these integral to work plans
- Review program/course requirements, pre-requisites and co-requisites to facilitate student access and retention
- Ensure course learning outcomes are aligned with program and institutional learning outcomes
- In collaboration with the ESL Department, create a Business English credit course for international students who show evidence of being unable to cope with the language requirements of their courses
- Develop a faculty retention plan
- Seek ACBSP accreditation for the School
- Strategically hire faculty with terminal degrees and with expertise to teach a broad spectrum of courses instead of a few specific courses

On a more long term basis, the School could explore the merging of Business, Economics [and any other related programs in the University] to create a Faculty of Business and Economics.