Assessment Plan

College: College of Business

Department: Inter-Departmental

Program: Master of Business Administration/2009-2010

CIP Code: 52.0201

Northern Illinois University’s M.B.A. program follows the professional degree model that emphasizes practice, skills, and training. Distinct from most traditional master’s programs that are departmentally-based, the NIU M.B.A. is a college-based, interdisciplinary program that incorporates all of the functional areas of business including accounting, finance, management, marketing, operations management, and management information systems. The courses that make up the M.B.A. are provided by the Departments of Accountancy, Finance, Management, Marketing, Operations Management and Information Systems. The M.B.A. is viewed as a terminal degree for business professionals. Common themes integrated throughout the program curriculum are a global perspective of business, leadership, ethics and social responsibility, and communications.

The primary objective of NIU’s Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) program is to prepare place-bound students, who are working full-time and intend part-time study, for greater leadership opportunities within their organizations. Understanding limitations of resources available, the College of Business made a decision in 1994, to refine its market niche for the M.B.A. program to meet the needs of place-bound, off-campus students.

Today there are three M.B.A formats available to candidates: the Evening M.B.A, the Executive M.B.A., and the Professional M.B.A. Each has the same curriculum but differs in admission entry, program delivery, and course scheduling.

The Evening M.B.A. offers evening classes at two off-campus sites. Admission is available during the fall, spring and summer terms, and progress is self-paced with electives chosen by the students. Short-term study abroad electives are available to all evening students.

By contrast, the Executive M.B.A and the Professional M.B.A are accelerated, lock-step formats. The twenty-one month Executive M.B.A. classes meet on Saturdays only at Naperville, with either a study abroad or independent study option between years one and two. Admission is during the fall term only and work experience is given greater weight as part of the admission decision process in the Executive M.B.A. than in the Evening M.B.A. Similarly, the one-year Professional M.B.A. program classes meet on Monday and Thursday evenings with admission in the spring term only and all students are required to participate in a short-term study abroad program component. Due to the
cohort nature of the Executive M.B.A. and the Professional M.B.A., the same electives are taken by all class participants in each program.

Design of the Program to Achieve the Objectives/Outcomes

The conceptual design of the NIU M.B.A. program is similar to that of most other M.B.A. programs within the state of Illinois, as well as across the United States. The program is composed of two major phases.

The Phase One foundation or deficiency courses are designed for the adult learner who is lacking an undergraduate background in business administration, allowing them to quickly obtain the needed theories, concepts, and skills prerequisite to successfully comprehend the Phase Two work. This design is especially appropriate when entering students have degrees in engineering, the liberal arts, or other areas outside business and economics and are lacking foundation courses in accounting, business law, economics, finance, information systems, management, marketing, operations, and statistics. Instead of forcing these students to return to a four-year undergraduate program the M.B.A. program accepts these students as graduate students and examines each student’s transcript and work record to determine if the student needs from zero up to nine Phase One courses. A typical student with an undergraduate degree in business will be exempt from taking Phase One courses with successful completion of a corresponding undergraduate equivalent.

All NIU M.B.A. students complete the academically challenging Phase Two curriculum, a common core of all AACSB-accredited M.B.A. programs that emphasizes a mix of theory and practice providing opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of business knowledge, to better understand complexities of the business organization, to facilitate applied learning, decision making and problem solving, to make use of information systems technology, and to develop an awareness of global and cultural diversity and ethical issues in decision making, with communication skills in listening, writing, and speaking integrated throughout the curriculum. This interdepartmental core (21 hours) includes ACCY 630, Managerial Accounting Concepts; FINA 607, Financial Analysis; MGMT 635, Organizational Behavior, MGMT 672; Strategic Management and Policy (capstone course); MKTG 654, Marketing Management; OMIS 627; Operations Analysis; and OMIS 640; Management of Information Systems Technology. In addition to the core courses, students take 9 additional semester hours (3 courses) of electives courses.

Completion of the NIU M.B.A. degree requirements varies depending upon the delivery format, with each delivery format designed to meet the diverse needs of the working-professional:

Students pursuing the Evening M.B.A. format are required to satisfy the Phase One foundation courses with completion of the graduate level course, successful completion of a corresponding undergraduate equivalent, or by exemption examination. To ensure students have the necessary business skill set for success in advanced courses, the foundation courses must be satisfied prior to enrollment in Phase Two course work. All
Evening M.B.A. students must complete the Phase Two 21 semester hour core and nine additional semester hours for elective course work. Students may use their electives to focus either in one area such as finance, international business (including short-term study abroad programs), marketing, management, or management information systems or broaden their degree taking electives across several areas. The program also allows for flexibility in that students, with prior approval, are permitted to use graduate study elective courses from outside the College of Business to satisfy degree requirements.

The Executive M.B.A. format adheres to the same criteria as that in the Evening M.B.A. The distinction between the two formats is that the Executive M.B.A. is a cohort lock-step format that allows students the opportunity to accelerate through the program (all Phase One and Phase Two courses). Students are assigned to study groups that remain intact throughout the duration of the program. Students are required to meet in their groups outside of regularly scheduled classes throughout the program. This added dimension in the program allows students the opportunity to strengthen their networking and broaden their perspectives on business and problem solving, thus allowing students to learn from each other and share their diverse perspectives on various topics. All of this results in a challenging, stimulating learning experience that provides for maximum return on time and resources invested.

The Professional M.B.A. is designed for individuals with an undergraduate degree in business (or those that have completed corresponding equivalents to Phase One courses) and is offered in the same cohort, lock-step and accelerated format as the Executive M.B.A. These students are assigned to a study group and required to meet outside of regularly scheduled classes.

In addition to the course knowledge and skills that enhance the student’s ability to develop leadership, decision making and problem solving skills, opportunity to network with business leaders and gain exposure to cutting-edge business issues are provided through the M.B.A. colloquium events. The M.B.A. Colloquium Lecture Series was designed to provide out-of-class learning experiences. Topical discussion includes: The Quality of Leadership, The State of Business Ethics, Leadership Development in a Changing and Complex Environment, The U. S. Auto Industry at a Crossroads.” Guest speakers include business experts, community leaders, and faculty from NIU and other institutions.

Focusing on skills needed for success in courses and “real-time” take-aways for the workplace, the M.B.A. program offers numerous professional development workshops for students. Scheduled throughout the academic year, these workshops have covered the following topics: Effective Written Business Communications, Effective Presentation Skills, Business Ethics, Team Building, Leadership Skills, and Reality IT: Spreadsheet Modeling.

As part of the on-going AACSB re-accreditation review, the M.B.A. program conducted a thorough review of the program design and courses to assess whether or not the desired learning outcomes were being achieved.
1. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The M.B.A. Faculty Team (the College of Business AACSB Faculty Team and the College of Business standing committees: Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate) with assistance from the College of Business Executive Advisory Board M.B.A. committee, identified learning and strategic outcomes for program assessment. Each is associated with achieving goals outlined in the M.B.A. program mission.

In support of the mission of the College of Business, the M.B.A. Program strives to provide graduate business education to meet the needs of adult learners in the northern Illinois. The Northern Illinois University M.B.A. Program is designed to serve businesses and other organizations by preparing student to be leaders.

Graduating students are expected to possess specific skills and knowledge outcomes as related to the M.B.A. program’s Learning Outcomes:

1. Our graduates will be able to integrate information across business disciplines. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to solve business problems and make feasible decisions recognizing the relationship of the various business functions including accounting, finance, marketing, human resources, operations and productions, information technology, and strategic planning.

2. Our graduates will be effective decision makers. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to analyze data using the appropriate qualitative and quantitative tools and apply business concepts such as managerial accounting, financial analysis, organizational behavior, marketing management, operation analysis, management of information technology, and strategic management.

3. Our graduates can identify and understand the importance of ethical decision making for the organization and society. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to recognize and evaluate the ethical and social impact of business decisions.

4. Our graduates will have an awareness of the global and cultural diversity issues that impact business decision making. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to understand the role of cultural diversity in making decisions in the continuously changing global business environment using analysis of the appropriate strategic framework.

5. Our graduates will have effective communication skills. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to integrate interpersonal skills with professional written and oral delivery and appropriate technology to communicate ideas effectively.
2. EXPLANATION OF METHODS

The following chart lists the current and future methods to be used as well as a description of each method, a timeline for implementation, the person(s) responsible, and the program learning outcomes each method addresses.

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<th>METHOD</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TIME LINE</th>
<th>PERSON (S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>OUTCOME(S) Addressed</th>
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<td>Capstone Course (MGMT 672)</td>
<td>MGMT 672, the capstone course includes strategic simulation and comprehensive course project demonstrating successful integration of the functional areas of business and analysis the firm in its environment. Written presentation of project results with oral defense of conclusions and recommendations.</td>
<td>Students must take course within the last 9 hours of program.</td>
<td>Evaluation of student performance completed by MGMT 672 Faculty.</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5</td>
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<td>M.B.A. Alumni Survey</td>
<td>Survey alumni (3 years after graduation) regarding their experiences at NIU, and their perceptions of how well the program achieved its learning outcomes and prepared them for their careers, their own career advancement, and lifelong learning (continuing education) endeavors and future needs.</td>
<td>Implemented by M.B.A. Programs in April 2003.</td>
<td>Directors of Evening M.B.A., Executive M.B.A., and Professional M.B.A. M.B.A. Faculty Team (standing committees) will evaluate results.</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes: 2, 4, and 5</td>
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<td>MBA Graduating Student Survey: Part 2</td>
<td>Implemented in 2001 and ongoing each term.</td>
<td>Directors of Evening M.B.A., Executive M.B.A. and Professional M.B.A. M.B.A. Faculty Team (standing committee) evaluate the results.</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes: 1,2,3,4,5</td>
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<td>Part 2: Demographic survey administered to candidates for graduation, used to determine level of advancement or career movement while in the M.B.A. Program. Part 3: Graduating students will assess how well the M.B.A. program has prepared them to work in teams, integrate the functional areas, process information for strategic, ethical decision-making, etc. TARGET: Average rating on each of the learning outcomes assess will be a 4.0/5.0 point scale.</td>
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