PRESENT: Abdel-Motaleb, Alden, Boutin, Brantley, Chandler, Damodaran, Falkoff, Goldberg, Gordon, Kolb (for Birberick), Molnar, Olson (for Dawson), Shortridge

GUESTS: Amy Buhrow, AACSB/Assessment Coordinator, College of Business; Ann Carrel, Director, M.B.A. programs; Sarah Marsh, Chair, Department of Management; Chris Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment, Office of Assessment Services; Joan Petros, Director, Business Experiential Learning Center; Mona Salmon, Assistant Director, Graduate Studies in Business; Denise Schoenbachler, Dean, College of Business; Beth Towell, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, College of Business

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of September 23, 2013, and the motion passed unanimously.

The APC stills needs a representative to serve on the University Assessment Panel (UAP); at the last meeting nominations were sought for a representative of the APC to serve on the University Assessment Panel. A motion was made to nominate Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb to serve on the UAP pending his willingness to serve. Ibrahim is unable to serve on the UAP this year, so we still need to elect a representative to serve on the UAP. Purushothaman Damodaran volunteered to serve on the UAP. A motion was made to have Damodaran serve as the APC elected representative on the UAP, and the motion passed unanimously.

Denise Schoenbachler, dean of the College of Business; Amy Buhrow, AACSB/assessment coordinator in the College of Business; Beth Towell, associate dean for undergraduate affairs in the College of Business; Sarah Marsh, chair of the Department of Management; Ann Carrel, director of the M.B.A. programs; Mona Salmon, assistant director of graduate studies in business; and Joan Petros, director of the Business Experiential Learning Center were introduced.

Schoenbachler expressed appreciation to the APC members and especially the subcommittee members who reviewed the programs. The comments and feedback were very right on with things we have concerns about as well. We appreciate the attention to those details. The timing for the reviews was appropriate given that the college is up for an AACSB accreditation review visit in January. The work that we did for the program review process has helped us with preparing for the site visit. One of the college-wide best practices is the Business Experiential Learning Center (BELC) that is under the direction of Joan Petros. The BELC is poised to provide leadership across the colleges. The M.B.A. programs are college-wide programs, and faculty who teach in this program come from the different departments within the college. The M.B.A. program uses different formats and is offered in many locations. The challenge is that we have so many different formats and ways that we offer the M.B.A. program. The B.S. in Management and the B.S. in Business Administration
have been with us a long time. They have evolved over time, and they face challenges in respect to staffing.

Marsh said she would echo what the dean had said. My department and I learned a lot through this process. It is helpful to have you look at the document and provide feedback.

The meeting was turned over to Marc Falkoff for the presentation of the subcommittee reports. Falkoff thanked his subcommittee members for their contributions and for helping work up the subcommittee findings. One of the neat things about being on this council is that you learn so much. The report is really well written. Thank you for that. We will not spend a lot of time on the strengths because of time constraints. Take the strengths as a given. Also, we will not hit on every question or comment in the reports.

The department context for the Department of Management has several strengths. One is that Barsema Hall has been a tremendous asset for the department, which seems to have fully exploited it. Another strength is that the department is productive and has strong alumni involvement that supports student scholarships.

One of the discussion points is that 18 of the 29 faculty are temporary/instructors rather than tenured/tenure-track, apparently due to a 27 percent decrease in tenured/tenure-track faculty since the last program review. What are the qualifications for the instructors? Is the balance OK? This is an area of concern; there have been a number of retirements and resignations. Every decision to replace is a big decision. Right now there are two open positions that we are hiring for. We have also been strategic when we hire. Our accrediting body has stringent standards for the quality of the instructors. They have to have substantial professional experience in the classroom and they are reviewed annually. That said, there are areas where I don’t have the kind of leadership I need in tenure-track positions. We are fortunate in the College of Business because there are professionals who have the business expertise and teaching experiences when they come to us. Some of the instructors are full-time (four right now). Others teach a course or two in the M.B.A. program. Eighteen is a big number. Are the courses for the B.S. in Business Administration taught by instructors in your department? The B.S. in Management courses are largely taught by faculty in the department, but the courses for the B.S. in Business Administration are taught by faculty/instructors in all of the departments in the college.

You only have 3 minority faculty members out of a total of 40 faculty members. It sounds like you have tried to address this. I went to HR regarding our current search and asked for the percentage of minorities who had applied for the position. There were 8 Asian and 0 African-American and Hispanic applicants out of 40 applicants. There have been some recent retirements, and two out of the five were minorities and women. You have the same issue for female faculty members. The department has lost more males than females recently. This is also true for the college in general.

The recommendation for the future is to figure out how to attract minority faculty and enhance representation of women. The business market place is very competitive, and for minorities it is extremely competitive. As an institution, NIU does not have salary/benefit packages that attract minority candidates.
There are several strengths noted for the B.S. in Management section. Demand for graduates will continue to grow. Graduates are successful landing jobs. Minority representation in the student body has increased over the review period.

One discussion point is that overall enrollment has been declining (from 334 students to 226). This could be because students are attracted away from management and there are fewer women enrolled in the college. Are there other potential issues in play here? When students are at the junior level, we try to help them find the best major for them. Enrollments are down overall. The biggest decrease has been in the emphasis in human resources. Usually about two-thirds of the students enrolled in this emphasis are females. This is something we continue to work on. We are looking at increasing our outreach to community colleges and the communications with our majors.

Another discussion point is the 30 percent reduction in enrollment, which seems to be at odds with the claim that demands for graduates of the program is projected to grow significantly. I don’t know, I don’t think students are reading the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Tell me about the Center for Human Capital and Leadership. This is a center for engaged scholarship where faculty are engaging in the community to help business organizations address issues of interest over time. This also helps faculty generate data and field sites to help them publish. We were advised, since it was in the process, to take it out of the review, but that didn’t happen.

The B.S. in Business Administration strengths are the demand for graduates and the alumni employment rate. Demand for graduates of the business administration program is projected to grow. The major is a popular one, and alumni are employed at a high rate.

One of the discussion points is that the female enrollment has been fluctuating. Do you know why? I looked at the college female enrollment, and the college has been up and down too. Over time, female enrollment will increase as a percentage of the college. Approximately 70 percent of the business administration students are transfer students, and the number of transfers has declined.

Can you explain the reason for the increase in upper-division costs from FY2010 to FY2011? The shortfall in credit hours does not seem very high. Is it because of the offerings at Rockford? The lower-division costs were down on average about the same as the upper-division costs were up. The Rockford program is a possibility because these are small class sizes, and pulling a full professor into the program could have an impact on the costs. I talked to Institutional Research about this, and we talked about the different kinds of staffing, but nothing systemic came up. Do you want to continue the Rockford program? This is an important question to ask whether the Rockford program is where we want our resources to be. Every program at every location has to have a certain balance, and this is where costs variation occur as well. The cost study data from the IBHE was questionable during one year of the review period.

Looking at benchmarking there are some issues, and we want to focus on this. Internship participation and employment in current job post-graduation are excellent. We appreciate your explanation of why you want a lower percentage of graduates in the same job post-graduation. This information is part of our exit survey. We asked if graduates are currently employed and what were their plans for the future. We want to see the number of graduates taking new positions go up so graduates can reach their full potential after they get the degree. Finishing the degree should allow graduates more and better job opportunities. At the same time, you want students to have positions
before they graduate. Approximately 80 percent of the students in this program are working while they go to school.

You express that the external benchmarking process was useful. That said, it is not clear how the numbers presented in the chart help you draw the conclusion that NIU’s structure is a strength compared to other schools. How did you come to that conclusion? We do not have quantitative data for that conclusion, but there is anecdotal information. Leaders talked about the confidence that our students have.

How do you get the high numbers of transfer students to take advantage of the out-of-classroom opportunities. We are trying to do this through advising and we also have the passport program that will have an impact on this. This program links students to engagement activities outside the classroom, and it is a college-wide program. We are working with college faculty to make them aware of this issue, so they can get this across to the students. Many of these students are working. It is a challenge.

You talk about the challenge of operationalizing the learning outcomes. The problem is that the faculty are not together much because they are not housed in the department. We should bring cohorts into the program. There are no consistent communications going on about operationalizing the learning outcomes. The faculty that teach in this program do talk about other issues. This is more about the student perspective; they cannot differentiate between a B.S. in Business Administration and a B.S. in Marketing. We are trying to figure out what this means. The learning outcomes have been with the program for a while. We think we have been doing a decent job of addressing those outcomes, but we are trying to feel really comfortable about the outcomes.

For the M.B.A. program in the departmental context section there are many strengths listed. Given the nature of the program, these pieces overlap. The four delivery formats accommodate the needs of a diverse potential student pool. The program draws faculty from across the college, and is truly interdisciplinary. The program is exploiting the technologies. Accreditation by AACSB is also a strength of the program. The program has a diverse student population. This is a very impressive program.

One of the discussion points is that 16 of the 38 teachers in the program are temporary or instructors. We realize that these individuals are pulled from multiple departments. Is this a concern? Yes and no. Having temporary instructors teach the Phase 1 classes is fine. The Phase 2 classes must be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty. The Phase 1 courses are considered foundation courses, and we bring in experts in specific fields to teach some courses. There is an expectation that 70 percent of the faculty teaching in the M.B.A. program are academically qualified. Why is this the case? This has to do with AACSB standards. For the undergraduate programs, 50 percent of the teaching faculty have to be academically qualified, but for the graduate programs the percentage needs to be higher. AACSB does not tell us specifically what this percentage should be, so we made it 70 percent have to academically qualified. In order to be academically qualified you must have a terminal degree, publish two peer reviewed articles every five years, and have something that moves your research forward. The professionally qualified individuals are experts in the field. There are other quality requirements that require individuals to do certain things on an annual basis. If you are not academically qualified, you are in the “other” category. Across degree programs, delivery format, and delivery location, 90 percent of the faculty must be academically or professional qualified, per AACSB. We have to look at every program and every location where the program is offered.
You note as a challenge the increased threat of online delivery and in-house corporate education programs. Can you elaborate on this a little bit? Is this a threat or an opportunity? It is both. The threat is if you don’t do anything. There are several completely online programs in the state. The opportunity is for us to look at developing an online program. Some of the Phase 1 courses are offered online. The dean is looking at ways to develop this.

One discussion point is that the program accepts entering students even if they do not enter with an undergraduate business degree, so long as the students take appropriate Phase 1 courses. Do other schools do this? It depends on how the program is formatted. If the programs use a cohort (like the Executive M.B.A.) format, then they would not do this. In the evening M.B.A. program we allow students to waiver out of particular courses. We thought about this issue, and it is not a bad idea; it builds retention. If we tell students that they need three Phase 1 courses that they can take anywhere, we might lose these students. Part of the advantage is that we have control over the content of the Phase 1 courses at NIU. The faculty who teach the Phase 2 courses work with the individuals who teach the Phase 1 courses to make sure that the content is what it needs to be so these students are prepared for the Phase 2 courses.

Women account for about one-third of the students enrolled in the M.B.A. program. We need to make our students more aware of what is available to them. It depends on where these graduates are in terms of their careers. We do have some things in place that focus on women. This is an industry problem.

NIU’s program is doing well if you compare it with other programs that deliver the degree on-site, but it is not doing well compared to schools that offer an online program delivery.

For the written business communication skills, only 71 percent meet or exceed expectations overall, in the Fast Trak M.B.A. only 41 percent of the students meet or exceed expectations, and in the Executive M.B.A. program only 53 percent of the students meet or exceed expectations. Across all of the formats, the written business communication skills vary. Writing skills workshops are available to all full-time students, and students have to participate. Why are you looking at ways to modify how the tests are graded? The faculty team decided that rather than looking at ways to improve writing performance now, they want to look at some of the other issues that came up in terms of assessment. We looked at written communications across all the programs, and there was a lot of variation. There were some ideas that were brought up regarding these issues. These data are gathered when students take their final examinations. The faculty decided that we need to do this in another place in the program, and the faculty would like to look at other factors before they change this. The same rubrics is used, we are just looking at the timing of this. We are looking at ways to make the Writing Center more visible.

There are a couple of benchmarking issues. Why do the learning outcomes benchmark indicators have target goals lower than the current baselines? We should have included an attachment in the report regarding this issue. We don’t just look at the format as a whole, but the numbers reported were the cumulative benchmarking indictor targets. When you look at the individual results, these vary. The targets were set for across all program formats. Is using faculty qualifications a good benchmarking indicator? Don’t you want this to be 100 percent? Yes, in an ideal world. With going along with the AACSB standards, 70/90 is what we were looking at. You expect a jump in minority degrees awarded from 4.4 percent to 25 percent. Is this realistic? I believe it is. Ten years ago the
benchmarking target was 4.4 percent. In 2008-2012, 22 percent of the degrees awarded were awarded to minorities. In 2011, the minority population increased 19 percent. This is a realistic expectation.

The GMAT scores for incoming students seem pretty low compared to other schools. The program made a conscious decision to look at the entire application. We look at work experience that students bring into the classroom. The full-time students have to take the GMAT, work experience is not required. Looking at the undergraduate degree and the courses that the students have completed is a better indicator of success in the program. If that works, why do the other schools insist on the higher GMAT score? More and more schools are looking at the work experience. Work experience is so important in what they can contribute to the classroom discussions.

The report suggests that the mission and strategic objectives are no longer completely aligned with all the program delivery formats. When our mission was written we were only delivering off-campus programs to working professionals, so this needs to be aligned with what we are currently doing. We are working on this right now as part of the Strategic Planning process and other processes. There will be new AACSB standards coming up in the future.

There are a few recommendations for the future. Consider moving forward with an online delivery format for the M.B.A. program. Look at ways to partner with in-house education programs. We haven’t looked at this in terms of partnering with corporations. There are a lot of corporations offering the M.B.A. within the company. These programs would be tailored to the companies’ employees. Most of these individuals don’t receive degrees from institutions. We did look into this a number of years ago. It is a pricing issue. You can’t convince the companies to offer a program where their employees would get a degree from an institution? This causes pressure on our staff and other resources.

The Business Experiential Learning Center (BELC) pairs up teams of students with real organizations to work on real issues. Students earn three credit hours for participating on a team and are given a problem for them to go out and come up with solutions to the problem. At the end of the semester the student teams give a formal written report and a presentation.

There are several strengths noted for the unit context section for the Business Experiential Learning Center (BELC). Students are provided with real-world professional experiences, including the ability to work with ambiguity. Students are hired by organizations that support the center’s projects. How do you know what projects are good to work on? I look at the proposal and ask for faculty expertise if appropriate. I also consider if students can complete the project in 16 weeks. Companies pay a fee for sponsoring a project. Therefore students have to apply to be on a project team, and the faculty pick students who have the qualifications to be on the teams.

Is most of the money coming from sponsors or donors? Most of the money comes from sponsors. We did have two large donors, but they have retired. We still have a small foundation account balance. Will the center be able to secure more donors? I hope so. I had a conversation last week with someone who thinks they might have a potential donor.

The center is self-funded, and has a $10,000 project fee. We have had discussions about how big the center should be. Having five or six projects a semester is about the right amount with how the center is set up right now. When we first started the center we had four students on a team, and
when one person dropped out it was problematic. Then we decided to put more students on the teams, and six students per team seems to work well. The students are also self-selecting. They understand that it is a lot of work. For the students that do apply, there is pretty much a 50/50 chance of being selected. Students learn about the BELC through the open houses. We talk to incoming freshmen. When they get to know the faculty, that is how they get on a team. Do students come back and participate in this after they graduate? Yes, we have a network for this, and money has been raised by doing this. Some students come back and participate as sponsoring organizations.

How will the center deal with the departures of the director and operations manager? Did sponsors leave when these individuals left? The companies we deal with are staying with us for the most part. One individual may be able to attract some companies located in Denver, but we are in the right location with our proximity to Chicago.

One of the discussion areas is how are appropriate projects identified? Project proposals are reviewed.

We know the faculty are very busy. It seems you have been here for a long time and the college does a lot of things. What about having a doctoral degree? Actually the college did a review and a proposal for developing a doctoral degree. We evaluated the costs and presented this at the university level in 2008-2009. At that time, it was not a good investment. It is a conversation that could be re-evaluated. It is very expensive and takes a lot of resources. Up until recently you couldn’t get a differential tuition model to support these types of programs. The president is working on a business model. We will see where this goes. The faculty in the department teach in all these other types of formats and programs too. A doctoral program is faculty intensive, and this would be a challenge.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck

Planning/APCMinutes/2013-2014/Sept30