ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of November 18, 2013
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center – 505

Present: Abdel-Motaleb, Borneman, Boutin, Brantley, Clark, Chakraborty, Douglass, Falkoff, Goldenberg, Gordon, House, Kolb (for Birberick), Li, Molnar, Olson (for Dawson), Shortridge

Guests: Amy Buhrow, AACSB/Assessment Coordinator, College of Business; Emily Cronauer, Academic Counselor, Department of Marketing; Dennis Dean, Interim Chair, Department of Finance; Geoff Gordon, Chair, Department of Marketing; Chris Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment; Denise Schoenbachler, Dean, College of Business; Beth Towell, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, College of Business

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Falkoff who is chairing the meeting on behalf of Interim Executive Vice President and Provost Freeman.

Eric Borneman is the new graduate student representative to the APC.

Dennis Dean, interim chair of the Department of Finance; Geoff Gordon, chair of the Department of Marketing; Denise Schoenbachler dean of the College of Business; Beth Towell, associate dean for undergraduate affairs in the College of Business; Amy Buhrow AACSB/assessment coordinator in the College of Business; and Emily Cronauer academic counselor in the Department of Marketing were introduced.

Schoenbachler thanked the subcommittee for taking the time to go through the program reviews for finance and marketing. This process is very productive and gives the departments the opportunity to dig in and see what they are doing well. The finance chair that wrote the review has left the university, and we have a non-academic serving as chair of the Department of Finance. Dean thanked the council for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Falkoff will be presenting the subcommittee reports today, and he thanked the subcommittee members and the program representatives. Thank you for the well written reports. We will raise many of the same questions that we discussed when you met with the subcommittee. In the interest of time we will focus on the discussion points.

There are many strengths noted in the departmental context section. Barsema Hall is a tremendous asset for this department. The Department of Finance Board of Executive Advisers has been a great help to the department. The faculty is ranked among the finest finance researchers in the country. The program produced more Certified Treasury Professionals than any other program.

One discussion point is that the department needs access to the Standard and Poor’s Capital IQ and Bloomberg’s services. Explain what kind of access you have now? How crucial is this? The topic of technology and databases is difficult. The faculty would say that what we have currently provides
them adequate information. It allows them to do some research, but not all financial research. Some faculty may have an interest in some topics, but we don’t have the databases to supply this type of information. From a student perspective, if they are going into certain types of careers in finance, they would need access to Bloomberg’s services. Today our students are being placed in treasury functions, commercial banking, or entry-level finance positions. Bloomberg’s services are not used in these career options. If we change our focus to high finance (investment management), we don’t have the technology to support students seeking careers in this area. This could become a problem when we recruit faculty. It is reasonable to think about ways to access funds for these databases. We are looking at ways to partner with businesses to help support the department, and this includes support for technology.

Is there concern about the low female representation on the faculty (two of nine tenured/tenure track)? This is always a concern. In general, in the finance field women and minorities have not been part of the pool. There are currently two female faculty in the department. One is tenured, and the other one is tenure track. If we have an opening, the number one priority would be for female and minority hires. There is no expansion schedule at this time. This is also a challenge with the student body. The decline in female enrollment is in line with the decline in female enrollment for the College of Business. If you look at other Illinois public institutions, their overall enrollments have been down 24 percent, and our enrollments are down 27 percent. Minority enrollment as viewed as a percentage of total enrollment has remained relatively stable. The challenge is we have to do a better job at recruiting students. The department has a new academic advisor that we are trying to get involved in recruiting. The stock market is going up, and this will help enrollment increase because more students want to go into finance when the stock market is doing well. The other thing is we need more partnerships and more gender specific scholarships. This would help us attract female students to the department. We also have to do a better job with our feeder community colleges and talk about our successes with them. Are other schools experiencing the drop in female enrollment? I can’t answer that. When I see such skews in gender balance, I see this as a great opportunity. Maybe having a mentoring program for females would be useful. This is a good idea, and our board is looking at this. We are thinking about having business executives mentor our students.

Do you like your students as writers? If you look at the writing assessments for finance students, we exceed all the assessments in the college. The department is satisfied with this. That being said, a couple of weeks ago I got a call from a person in the banking industry who wanted us to put on a summer writing seminar. He had hired two interns: One from NIU and one for the University of Illinois, and he spent more time working with them on their writing skills than on banking skills. We have to make sure our students have good writing skills. We do not require a full three hour credit writing course now, but I think we need one.

One of the discussion points for the B.S. in Finance program is that the number of degrees awarded has not been dropping in line with the reduction in enrollments. Why is this the case? This will drop. Do students usually complete in four years? Yes, four plus a summer. There is no master’s program that this program feeds into. Very few of our students go into the FastTrak M.B.A. program. If you look at the data, degrees awarded will lag behind enrollment changes by about three years.

Another discussion point is why are the upper-division costs high? There were data anomalies in the 2009 cost study because NIU implemented a new student data system during this time. In the fiscal
2010 cost study there were a number of anomalies because of how the IBHE ran the data. In the fiscal 2011 cost study there was a little bit of a dip in costs, but not enough to worry about. These data represent the cost of everything that a student takes.

Tell us about the Certified Treasury Professional (CTP) examination. If you look at where our students obtain employment (commercial banking, treasury management, or investment management), there are two primary certifications: CFA and CTP. We are unique in the nation with the CTP program. The past president of the CTP teaches the class that prepares students to take this examination. Last year nationwide 57 students took the test; 21 passed, and 5 of these students were from NIU. Why are there only 57 people in the country taking this examination? The CTP is traditionally a professional program, and students have to work a number of years before they get the certification. Students have to take a certain curriculum to sit for the examination. Most individuals who take this test would be working in the field, not students. The student program is relatively new. There is an opportunity to grow this area.

Talk about enhancing the department’s social media and digital image initiatives. Our Facebook presence is growing nicely. Anything that is publicized by the university the department pushes out to our students. This is helpful with some of our activities. A lot of our students use LinkedIn too. These students are all self-selecting to participate. We push out information about job opportunities, internships, etc. to these social media groups. This also helps us connect with alumni. The department works with foundations. Because LinkedIn provides us resume information, we can share this information with the foundation employees. It allows us to get additional information which is kept up to date by the user.

The strengths in the departmental context section for the Department of Marketing are the facilities, the international exchange program, the productive faculty, the *Journal of Selling and Major Account Management*, and engagement. It goes without saying that Barsema Hall has been a tremendous asset for the department. The department has a terrific short-term international exchange program. The faculty is productive and highly engaged within and outside the NIU community. The department publishes the *Journal of Selling and Major Account Management*. The faculty engages in a variety of unique instructional practices, including administration of student role-playing exercises, devoting class time to teaching computer programs, and assisting students with real market research and presentations to clients in public forums.

The first discussion point is that enhanced funding is critical to adequately staff the international, professional selling, retailing, and interactive market subject areas. The department is externally focused and looking for opportunities as they come up. Two years ago we had a push to increase technology, and the college came up with the funds to do this. Some companies have given the department $25,000 to support our programs. We need to do a better job increasing alumni giving. Last year there was a small uptick in funding. We also have to do a better job with the foundation with looking for smaller donors. The university has supported the department; it funded a sales position a year ago so we could have overlap for training purposes with someone who was leaving.

You note the department places a heavy emphasis on written and oral communication skills and on ethics. What do you do, and how do you measure the success of what you do? The college has college learning objectives. We measure these objectives in UBUS 311 when students do presentations, and we look at oral communication skills. All of the students in the college take a writing course (MANG 346), except marketing students. Why do students in the marketing
program not take this course? In the past, the department used a different model for writing, and this will probably change. Writing is supplemented at the department level. Individual and group writing assignments are part of the portfolio process. We are making the writing assessment harder every year; we keep pushing on this. There is always room for improvement.

The department has had a lot of faculty turnover since the last review. Minority and female representation seems good, but how will you maintain diversity? We hired a female for marketing research. The department is fortunate that it has not lost a lot of women faculty members; this is about promotions. I think in terms of finding female and minority faculty we have had good female and minority representation. The problem will be when the next opening will come up.

Marketing majors don’t interact with the department until their junior year. Would having the academic advisor reach out to students earlier be helpful? These students see an undergraduate studies advisor in the college. When students enroll in UBUS 310, the advisor in the department reaches out to the students. The advisor also reaches out to students enrolled in UNIV 101. We have a college wide Career Compass Program; students can declare a specific major, but until they get into their junior year they don’t get the exposure.

The B.S. in Marketing program has many strengths. Students work closely with faculty. Accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business makes the program one of a select group of schools. The professional selling and interactive marketing areas of study are widely known for excellence in educating students. Demand for graduates is expected to grow at average or faster than average rates over the next ten years.

One discussion point is what are your thoughts about recruitment? We are looking into bringing in more qualified students. Enrollments have dropped some for a variety of reasons. We are really going after the students who can make it through the prerequisites and complete the major. Enrollment has dropped in marketing programs all over the country. When you give students the choice of NIU or the University of Missouri, NIU is a hard sell. In terms of the student population there is the whole perception of safety. You can say we are just as safe as other institutions, but there is a perception out there that we are not safe and this is hurting us, especially in female enrollment. With the colleges limited admission requirement of 2.75 and above these students have opportunities to go elsewhere. The program is doing a better job of hooking up with contacts at high schools and community colleges by having events. Do I see enrollment coming back to what it was in the peak years, probably not. Staying steady, I would say yes.

A lot of programs mentioned the safety issue. Is the university doing some kind of study on this? It is different to look at whether we are safe or if we are perceived as safe. Is there an overall drop in enrollment in women across the university? Yes, for many years the split was 54/46 (female/male). For the last three years the split has been exactly 50/50, and this is a 4 percent change, which is a significant decline. Is the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management doing anything to find out why this is the case? It has done a number of surveys, and safety is not the highest factor reported on the surveys. Studies have been done for students who applied, accepted, and don’t show. We look at where these students go. The factors depend on what school the student chooses. Surveys have been done for students who come for a year and then leave. The themes are money, family needs the student back home, students can’t find the program they want when they come here, or the students’ interests change. These are not gender biased factors. We haven’t broken this down by gender. Families and parents still think about the safety issue. This is more the
parents’ perception than the students’ perception. The change of 4 percent in a short period of time is a lot. The human resources management emphasis is traditionally an emphasis that females enroll in, and this emphasis has good female enrollment.

Another discussion point is the average starting salary for graduates is about $41,000. Is graduating with a marketing degree advantageous? Yes, 45 to 50 percent of our graduates go into sales positions, and these jobs come with bonuses and extra compensation. One advantage of these types of jobs is that in three years graduates can be earning salaries in the upper $80,000. The lowest paying jobs for our graduates are the jobs in interactive Internet marketing because of our weakness in this area. We have yet to attract the really large companies involved in interactive Internet marketing. One reason is that our students are reluctant to leave the Chicago area. This is relatively new, and we have done a good job recruiting students and the curriculum is in place, now we need to go out and attract larger companies.

Can you expand the number of students who complete internships? Most students complete internships, but not necessarily for credit because they don’t need the credits. If students complete a non-credit internship, then they do not show up in these numbers. By the time the students get into the major courses they choose to earn a certificate or work in the summer to earn money. If a student completes an internship over the summer, they can do that without credit. We are starting to track this through the portfolio. Are the students aware of the importance of completing internships? The way the students define an internship can be different than the way we define an internship. If a student says they didn’t do an internship, I ask if they have had a job related to marketing. If they say yes, then that is an internship. I followed up with the students last year who said they didn’t do an internship. It would be interesting if you could catch these students before they do the internship so that they could more clearly define the experience and their expected learning outcomes in advance. The Career Compass Program allows us to do this. When I went to the Internship Fair, I saw freshmen out there with their resumes. If the experience is shaped up front, it is more valuable. The Business Experiential Learning Center interacts with all the internship students, and this type of experience is an alternative to doing an internship.

What is the status of re-opening the minor? We closed out the minor when enrollments were so high. A few students complete the requirements for the minor even though they know we don’t have it. We were back dooring about 10 minors a year, and now we have plans to re-open it. We have capacity to do this. We will probably award about 40 minors this year. This minor is a great opportunity for students in other business programs in the college and students in the hospitality administration program. Employers love this. Students in the hospitality program have told me that the minor in marketing is not open. There is a one-page website that has been changed to say that the minor is now available. If you find another site where it says it is not available, please let me know. We also created a new link that highlights the minor. This minor serves our students well. There are some prerequisites (psychology, technology, and stats courses) that have to be completed before students declare the minor.

Do you want to comment on enhancing faculty and students’ exposure to international business? We have funding and assistance for this from the dean’s office for students to go overseas. We are doing shorter trips overseas now. There are more opportunities to promote overseas travel to our students. On the faculty end, because of the FastTrak M.B.A. program, faculty can do training overseas. We are excited about this.
It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of November 4, 2013, and the motion passed unanimously.

There are two interim reports on the agenda: the Center for Non-Governmental Organization and Leadership Development (NGOLD) and the Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, and Energy. The APC requires that centers/institutes submit an interim report three years after a temporary center is approved. These reports are not submitted to the IBHE. After the APC endorses these interim reports, we will seek permanent center approval from the IBHE. If you have any questions, please bring them up.

NGOLD was in transition for one semester (spring 2012), and I’m not sure that everything that occurred in that semester is reflected in the data they provided. I know there was at least one international symposium that NGOLD sponsored that was not reflected in this report. Are you asking us to ask the center to give us information about this or something broader than that? I just wonder if there are other things missing. We would be happy to ask for additional information.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the NGOLD interim report along with a request for additional information from NGOLD during the transition semester. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, and Energy interim report, and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is the 2013 Program Review Report. After we complete our reviews and we ask for changes in the reviews, we put this report together. It goes to the IBHE and the Board of Trustees. In 2012-2013 there were 22 programs and centers reviewed. We report to the IBHE on major changes in the program, major findings and recommendations, actions taken since the last review, actions taken as a result of this review, and the outcome decisions and explanations. All 22 programs and centers were found to be in good standing, but there are a number of follow-up reports due over the next couple of years. In the past, the follow-up reports were mostly related to assessment. What is different this year is that the follow-up reports are mostly related to enrollment, which also includes retention. We are looking for departments to give us feedback on program enrollments. Is there a set number for enrollment? We have never set an enrollment target, but we sometimes ask about this at these meetings. We have seen some big dips in enrollment, and, of course, the overall university enrollment has declined.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck

Planning/APCMinutes/2013-2014/Nov18