Present: Borneman, Boutin, Clark, Douglass, Falkoff, Freeman, Goldenberg, Gordon, House, Kolb (for Birberick), Li, Molnar, Shortridge, Than

Guests: Chang Liu, Chair, Department of Operations Management and Information Systems; 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 3:10 p.m.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of November 18, 2013, and the motion passed unanimously.

Change Liu, chair of the Department of Operations Management and Information Systems; Denise Schoenbachler dean of the College of Business; and Beth Towell, associate dean for undergraduate affairs in the College of Business were introduced.

Schoenbachler thanked the subcommittee for the review of the documents; there is a good deal of work and time that goes into this process. In all our reviews this semester the subcommittees have done a great job, and they have identified things we should be working on. This is a department that has turned itself around in the last couple of years, and it is a model department. In terms of leadership, this is a great department.

Gordon thanked the members on Subcommittee B for their efforts throughout the semester. The review is well written and the departments within the college are walking the talk. We will raise many of the same questions that we discussed when you met with the subcommittee, and, in the interest of time, we will focus on the discussion points.

There are many strengths noted in the departmental section. This is a great department, which has great leadership. The programs in the department have access to many resources within the College of Business. Faculty members are involved in local, regional, and national activities related to their areas of professional interest. A big strength of the department is the academic advisor. The department supports many student scholarships, student organizations, and student-focused activities. The faculty in the department is very productive and supportive of students’ work with the Wounded Warrior Project and Habitat for Humanity. The alignment with the NIU mission is commendable. Faculty receive strong teaching evaluations, conduct relevant research, and have participated in several study-abroad programs.

One thing brought up in the report is that the department coordinates resumes, interviews, and space for employers to meet with students. How does the department coordinate activities with Career Services? The department has a course in career planning, and our advisor teaches this
course, which helps students sharpen their skills. Representatives from Career Services come to the class and talk to the students. The students also attend internship fairs, job fairs, and Meet the Firm day. Students have the opportunity to practice their interview skills, so the students can improve these skills. The department probably needs to interact more with Career Services.

The number of for-credit internships for undergraduate students has steadily declined. Does the department view this as a positive or negative trend? Explain how internships are viewed on an experiential basis. The internship is not required, and some students don’t want to pay the additional fees to register for a credit-bearing internship. The most important thing is that the students get a paid internship, and a lot of students do the internship in the summer and do not take it for credit. Also, a lot of our students come into the program in their junior year, and they don’t need an internship. These students have already done an internship, just not a for-credit internship. Do you track all of the students who complete internships? A question about internships has been added to our survey, so we can track this in the future. All of the students in the college have to participate in an experiential learning experience, and there is a co-curricular endorsement that appears on the students’ transcripts. There should be an opportunity to shape the internship experience with the students in advance of their experience. This is very important. Because the students have a career plan in their freshman year, we talk about this.

Does the low number and percentage of female instructors and faculty members affect the student gender ratio? What efforts are being made to recruit female faculty members for both tenure-track and instructor positions? We just hired a part-time female instructor. We are trying to do our best in looking for female candidates to hire.

Funding across the university remains a critical issue. What prospects are there, both internal and external, to increase funding to support and reward current faculty, hire new faculty to increase programs, maintain computer systems and programs, and continue departmental marketing efforts? We hope the budget situation will improve. In the meantime, we try to engage with our alumni for donations. Within the last week we had a donor who is donating $40,000 and this has a matching donation. Some of these funds will be used for women in technology scholarships.

There are a few recommendations for the future. Develop and implement programs to increase faculty research efforts, particularly in the area of refereed journal articles. The department should continue to grow efforts aimed at recruiting and retaining female faculty members, and you have already acted on this recommendation by hiring a female instructor. Keep growing the amount of alumni and external engagement activities in order to increase alumni and external financial support.

We noted several strengths for the B.S. in Operations and Information Management program. The program is doing well in terms of enrollment stability and growth. The program is well-run with high alumni satisfaction and employment post-graduation. There are many opportunities for students to meet firm representatives and engage with future potential employers. Students have achieved a high level of recognition, garnering academic honors and other awards.

One discussion point is about the increase in enrollment. The increase in enrollment is noteworthy, but the percentage of women enrolled in this area is relatively low. Are there programs the department can implement to increase the enrollment of women? The department has three women in technology scholarships, and there are two new scholarships for attracting female students. I hope this will help bring more females into the program. The program also brings in female
speakers. When students come here, they don’t know what operations management and information systems is. Now the curriculum has changed and freshman are taking a class where they are exposed to operations management and information systems. Often times students go into the computer science program. Some students find out that computer science is not what they want to do. We have the Career Compass program, which helps our students look at majors. Do you do things with the Women in Business group? No we don’t. I think you should.

Is either of the two areas of study in the undergraduate program growing faster than the other? Does the offering of two emphases lead to any resource allocation or advising issues for the program? The program has two emphases: (1) operations management and (2) information systems. There has been a lot of growth in the emphasis in information systems. These two emphases are quite balanced so far.

Can you briefly explain the limited admission requirement? Does the requirement need to be adapted given the current resource constraints, declining female enrollments in the department, or other factors? The department follows the 2.75 GPA requirement within the college. There are several courses where students are required to obtain a grade of C or better. The 2.75 GPA requirement is a good indicator for student success in the program; so far this has not impacted our enrollment.

Given current resource constraints, why does the department want to grow enrollment by 24 plus percent? I feel this is a reachable number.

The recommendations for the future are to obtain more employer feedback, increase the number of females in the program, and conduct your own alumni survey. Gather more information from employers of NIU graduates as to how well NIU faculty and staff have prepared graduates for their careers. Use this to further differentiate NIU’s program from competitors. Attract more female students to the program. Conduct your own survey of alumni to better gauge the effectiveness of the program.

The M.S. in Management Information Systems program has many strengths. The document is well researched and very informative. The program is very much designed to meet the current technology demands of business. The integration of SAP throughout several courses should increase the marketability of students from the program. The SAP award and new certificate provide recognition of valuable career skills. The program is very flexible and well run. Faculty members, with limited resources available, are able to meet the needs of a variety of students seeking a good number of career objectives. There appears to be growing demand for the program. The program made significant progress to address the concerns from the last program review. The curriculum was revised to reflect a changing environment, additional recruitment efforts have resulted in increased enrollment, and stronger relationships have been developed with alumni and external stakeholders.

One discussion point is how do you juggle faculty in terms of staffing this program and the M.B.A. program? How are resources shared and allocated between the two programs? Is there co-enrollment in courses offered at different locations? Is one program a priority over the other program? The graduate program is important, but we also support the M.B.A. program. These are two different groups of students. For the M.B.A. students, we help them get some concentration in operations management and information systems.
In looking at the numbers, we wondered how long it takes to complete the master’s program. It takes about one and one-half years; it is a 30-hour program. Some students need to take Phase 1 courses.

Can you provide some details of the results of the exit survey of graduates and alumni survey conducted over the past year? You made a good amount of changes since the last review. In looking at the exit surveys we could tell that the students wanted more in-depth technology knowledge. This survey data also shows that they want more experience with the SAP. The SAP is an enterprise management system used in business. Approximately 75 percent of the Fortune 500 companies use this tool.

Could you clarify when you use or don’t use the GMAT? Should the department consider eliminating the GMAT? The University of Chicago waives the GMAT for business students who have a 3.0 GPA. Maybe this is a good way to get more students.

Would you like to say anything about the CIP Code change? We worked on a proposal to change the CIP Code for the master’s program, so that the code being used is in a STEM field. Since this program has a lot of technology requirements in it, it qualifies as a STEM field. We worked with the university and the IBHE to request a CIP Code change. This also helps our international students because they are allowed to work 17 months longer (29 months total) in the United States if they graduate in a STEM field. It is not an easy thing to get a CIP Code change, but this will help the university and our international students. Approximately 70 percent of our students are from India and China. At the undergraduate level, approximately 15-20 percent of our students are international students. This is higher than most of the other programs at the university. This is very high.

There are several recommendations for the future. Decide whether growth is feasible given resource constraints. If so, continue to develop and implement plans for increasing overall and minority/female enrollments. Continue to improve and solidify assessment activities around the new set of student learning outcomes. Keep working on reducing credit hour costs. Investigate partnering with other programs to provide really unique opportunities for students. For example, would a joint degree that would incorporate auditing and systems be beneficial? Another possibility might be a joint degree in systems auditing and online marketing. Again, gather more information from alumni and employers of NIU graduates as to how NIU faculty and staff have done a good job, and use this further to differentiate NIU’s program from competitors. Continue efforts to find and fund tenure-track faculty to teach in and promote the program. Continue the work to maintain an updated curriculum and to market the program. Those are critical to the long-term viability of the program.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck