

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS**  
**ACCREDITATION REPORT AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report for the Bachelor of Science in Accounting and the Master of Accounting programs in the College of Business at Iowa State University.

**Executive Summary:** The programs (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards of accreditation defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The programs were accredited for the maximum five-year period through 2020. However, two concerns were identified which must be addressed by the next review. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities for “access, affordability, and student success; educational excellence and impact; and economic development and vitality.”

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of undergraduate program.** The Bachelor of Science in Accounting program prepares students to analyze, synthesize, and report data so others can use it to make informed decisions. The Accounting degree helps students pursue diverse careers in business and accounting, including auditing, consulting, public accounting, budgeting, and forecasting.
- ◇ **Description of graduate program.** The Master of Accounting program is designed to meet the needs of accountants in public or private accounting focusing on interpreting and analyzing accounting information for decision-making. This program allows undergraduate accounting majors to complete an advanced degree while pursuing the additional hours needed to meet the 150 hour requirement in most states to become a Certified Public Accountant. Graduates comply with the Iowa Standards for Certification upon passing the Uniform Certified Public Accounting examination.
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met state and national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification. Accreditation is also intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International).
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-study prepared by the Accounting programs contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body – strategic management and innovation for accounting academic units; accounting unit participants – students, professional staff, and faculty; accounting learning and teaching; and accounting academic and professional engagement and professional interactions.

- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In October 2014, the visiting team determined that the Accounting programs met the requirements for accredited status, although two concerns were identified that must be addressed prior to the next review.
  
- ◇ Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - ☑ “The Accounting Writers Accountability Group is intended to help motivate and to improve the quality and quantity of faculty writing. The group, founded by a senior faculty member, meets regularly, sets personal goals, shares aspects of writing that they are struggling with and share advice. Some members have dramatically changed how they manage time as a result of this group; everyone’s awareness of the importance of regular writing has increased. The group is clearly an important part of the culture in the department.
  
  - ☑ The Department of Accounting participates in the mentoring program for new tenure-eligible faculty sponsored by the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost. Mentoring activities focus on both teaching and research activities of new faculty members. The program includes both peer to peer mentoring and senior faculty mentoring junior faculty. The program focuses on the first three years of a tenure-eligible faculty member’s career. In addition, senior faculty members continue to mentor non-tenured faculty throughout the duration of their probationary period. Two senior faculty members coordinate a writing group that meets weekly to encourage and support non-tenured faculty members’ writing effort. The Department also assigns mentors to non-tenure-eligible faculty.”
  
- ◇ Concerns identified by the visiting team.
  - ☑ “Develop a process to capture engagement and impact outcomes for both students and faculty (Standards A8 and A9; Business Standards 2 and 15).”
  
  - ☑ “The department should develop assessment procedures around standard A7 to measure the technology skills of its accounting graduates. (Standard A7 – Information Technology Skills and Knowledge for Accounting Graduates)”
  
- ◇ Accreditation Status. In January 2015, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business awarded accreditation to the Accounting programs at ISU for the maximum five-year period through 2020. The Continuous Improvement Review Application, which initiates the continuous improvement review process, will be due on July 1, 2017. ISU will be expected to provide an update on progress in addressing the concerns stated by the visiting team in addition to other relevant information for initiation of the next continuous improvement review. The Accounting Department is in the process of reviewing the concerns and developing appropriate action plans.