

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

Action Requested: Receive the annual governance report on academic program reviews, including student outcomes assessment, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Executive Summary: The Board of Regents' Policy Manual (§6.05B) requires that the universities review between one-seventh and one-fifth of their academic programs each year. Board policy also requires that information about student outcomes assessment, including program improvements resulting from the assessments, be an integral part of the academic program reviews and reports. During 2004-05, there were five academic programs reviewed at the University of Northern Iowa – Master of Business Administration; Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy; Bachelor of Arts in Religion; Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science in Earth Science; and Master of Arts in Women's Studies. As directed in the policy, each of the academic program reviews included two external evaluators. This report addresses the Board's Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to "offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students."

Background: This report represents a major quality assurance effort regarding Regent university academic programs. The following program improvements resulted from student outcomes assessments and academic program review team recommendations.

 Master of Business Administration

- ➔ "Improve student outcomes assessment/learning assurance with a primary focus on making appropriate changes to meet university recommendations and requirements and those of the College's accrediting organization, AACSB International." *In consultation with the Office of Academic Assessment, the MBA faculty are developing measurable learning outcomes consistent with the program mission which will be integrated into the program.*
- ➔ "Improve curriculum integration and enhance the curriculum with a focus on a framework of shared objectives for all courses, course integration, a contemporary, skill-enhancing curriculum, and enhancing international business topics in the curriculum." *After developing learning outcomes for the program, the faculty will conduct a review of current course content for application and theory; streamlining pre-requisites for the program; and implementing a strategy for curriculum enhancement and cooperation/coordination among faculty teaching the courses to balance application/theory and consistency in rigor throughout the curriculum.*
- ➔ "Engage in a strategic planning process to focus development and marketing efforts for the MBA program." *MBA faculty members have engaged in strategic planning; a mission statement has been developed and a marketing plan has been implemented.*

- ➔ “Continue the integration of executives in the MBA program to enhance learning through case studies and problem solving.” *Two new seminars were introduced in Fall 2005 – one on problem-solving and the other on real world cases.*
- ➔ “Improve delivery of off-campus MBA programs, such as the Hong Kong MBA program.” *Information materials for the Hong Kong program have been significantly improved during the past nine months. An on-line review statistics program offered by Harvard Business Online has been incorporated into advanced work for UNI’s Statistics course. Faculty members are implementing streaming video on business concepts in advance of on-site MBA classes to prepare students for their classes.*

 Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy

- ➔ “Consider pre-requisite for some advanced courses.” *The faculty revised pre-requisite requirements throughout the major and is implementing the changes.*
- ➔ “Consider adding a junior-senior seminar in philosophy.” *The department offered a pilot seminar in 2004-05 and in 2006-07. The change will be formally implemented during the current curriculum cycle.*
- ➔ “Focus on developing better skills in argumentation and writing throughout the curriculum.” *Faculty members initiated discussions on incorporating and assessing skill development in argumentation and writing across the curriculum.*

 Bachelor of Arts in Religion

- ➔ “Increase familiarity with Asian religions. Student outcomes assessment results showed there was less familiarity with Asian religions than was considered satisfactory.” *A course in Asian religions has become a requirement for the major.*
- ➔ Increase familiarity with the religion clause of the First Amendment.” *Faculty members added information about the religion clause of the First Amendment in the liberal arts core course, “Religions of the World,” and re-emphasized the topic in the upper division course, “Religion in the United States”.*
- ➔ “Increase student exposure to social scientific methods in the study of religion, such as ethnography.” *Faculty members will monitor increased student exposure to social scientific methods in the study of religion during the next two years.*
- ➔ “Make the Religions of the World course a pre-requisite to more advanced courses.” *Faculty members rejected this recommendation because students enter the major from a number of other courses. The course content, though valuable, is not considered essential for success as a major.*
- ➔ “Students reported low rates of familiarity with library resources in the subject.” *Faculty members will consider a junior-senior seminar that emphasizes research skills. A resource librarian with expertise in the subject is being consulted for on-going improvement of this aspect of the program.*

 Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science in Earth Sciences

- ➔ “Enhance field experience in the program by incorporating a one-day field trip in the course Physical Geology.” *This has become a standard part of the Physical Geology course with field trips added for two sections of the course in Fall 2005 and Spring 2006. Student feedback indicates that this is a desirable addition to the course and may help with recruiting new majors.*

- ➔ “Consider dropping the Environmental Emphasis in the Geology major; the Geology (B.S.) major may provide better preparation for work in several areas of the broad field of environmental geology.” *Appropriate revisions in the emphasis area will be made in the next curriculum cycle in Fall 2006.*
- ➔ “Study the feasibility of a new major in Air Quality to address an increasing need for air quality professionals.” *A major in Air Quality has now been implemented.*
- ➔ “Strengthen students’ laboratory experience in the major by developing a hydrology lab.” *A funding proposal was submitted in March 2007.*
- ➔ “Consider changing the name of the Department of Earth Science to convey more clearly to prospective students and other constituents the breadth of programs offered by the Earth Science department.” *There is not consensus among faculty to make a name change.*
- ➔ “Establish an Earth Science department advisory board to enhance ongoing program improvement and to provide better connections for faculty and students to practicing professionals.” *An Earth Science department advisory board was created in Fall 2006 and met in April 2007.*

 Master of Arts in Women’s and Gender Studies

- ➔ “Schedule the core graduate course, Comparative Feminist Theories, each fall to provide initial coherence to students beginning graduate study.” *Fall scheduling was offered in Fall 2006 and will continue as recommended.*
- ➔ “Eliminate the comprehensive exam question in the area of emphasis for the major.” *The comprehensive exam question in the area of emphasis has been dropped.*
- ➔ “Review and continue to improve student outcomes assessment procedures beginning in Fall 2006.” *Learning outcomes are being reviewed in consultation with the Office of Academic Assessment to comply with student outcomes assessment procedures for the campus.*
- ➔ “Develop an introductory workshop or seminar for incoming graduate students orienting them to graduate study in Women’s and Gender Studies and to the graduate student culture at UNI.” *Incoming graduate students participate in a seminar called Proseminar in Sociology, which orients students to graduate study and fosters interdisciplinary relationships among graduate students.*
- ➔ “Designate a full-time director for the Women’s and Gender Studies program.” *A full-time director was appointed in Fall 2006.*
- ➔ “Secure a critical number of faculty who teach core Women’s and Gender Studies courses on a regular and predictable basis.” *Agreement has been reached regarding a rotation of courses that divides responsibilities between the colleges of Humanities and Fine Arts and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The Director will continue to work with department heads to improve faculty availability to teach courses in the program.*
- ➔ “Establish a Women’s Resource Center at UNI.” *Office space has been shifted to create the “seed” of a Women’s Center with the assignment of Baker Hall Room 164 to the Women’s Gender Studies program. A steering committee is exploring funding and responsibilities for a women’s center.*

Details about the academic program reviews report are available in the Board Office.