

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Accreditation Report for the Graduate Program
in Hospital and Health Administration, University of Iowa
Date: January 31, 2000

Recommended Action:

Receive the report on accreditation for the Master's degree programs in Hospital and Health Administration in the College of Public Health, University of Iowa.

Executive Summary:

In November 1998, the Board of Commissioners of the Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration voted to renew the accredited status of the Graduate Program in Hospital and Health Administration at the University of Iowa. In addition, the Commission required that a first-year progress report should be submitted in time for review at the Fall 1999 Commission meeting. That report, described below, addresses concerns and criteria-related recommendations and sets out a timetable for addressing all concerns and recommendations. The Commission also requires a fourth-year progress report in the Fall of 2002. Contingent upon acceptance of these reports by the Commission, the next site visit is scheduled for Fall 2005.

One method of measuring quality of academic programs is to have them accredited periodically by appropriate professional/state agencies. The accrediting process typically focuses on the internal governance structure, faculty, curriculum, student background and performance, facilities, and resources. Accreditation is consistent with KRA 1.0.0.0, Quality, of the Board of Regents' strategic plan. More specifically, it relates to Objective 1.1.0.0, "to improve the quality of existing and newly created educational programs," and Strategy 1.1.2.0, "strengthen the quality of graduate and professional education at Regent institutions within the unique mission of each institution."

Background:

The graduate program in hospital and health administration is now located in the new Department of Health Management and Policy in the College of Public Health. At the time of the preparation of the self-study document (1996-97) and the visit of the site team (March 1998), the program was in the College of Medicine. Four degrees are offered under the program: an MA in Hospital and Health Administration, the MA/MBA in conjunction with the College of Business, the MA/JD in conjunction with the College of Law, and an MA/MS in conjunction with the Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning.

The first-year progress report submitted by the University (September 21, 1999) agreed with the three major recommendations from the accrediting group and provided evidence of implementation. They were:

1) Coverage of Human Resources. Management and Information Management should be enhanced in the required curriculum.

Response: A new required course (80:208) Health Services Information Systems was added in Fall 1998. A second required course (80:224) Human Resources Management was begun in Fall 1999.

2) The Program should enhance its efforts to attract a diverse faculty, based on race, ethnicity, and gender. In addition to full-time faculty, recruitment efforts should seek diversity in the adjunct faculty, preceptors, and lecturers.

Response: Substantial efforts have been made to enhance the diversity of the faculty. Currently, there are a total of 12 full-time faculty (4 females, 8 males). None of the new full-time faculty members are members of federally recognized minority groups. There has been no recruitment of additional teaching adjunct faculty. Five additional secondary faculty appointments (1 female and 4 males) will be completed by the end of Fall 1999. All recruitments of full-time positions require a national search. Increasing the diversity of the faculty remains a very high priority and the Program is working diligently with the staff of the President's and Provost's offices to enhance the diversity of the faculty.

3) Assure the adequacy, stability and continuity of support provided to the Program, as well as the Program Director's authority to direct the Program, are maintained in its new organizational home.

Response: The formation of the new College of Public Health and the resulting creation of the Department of Health Management and Policy have brought significant new resources to the MHA Program. The Department Head is also the Program Director, and has the authority to direct the Program.

It should be noted that the site visit report (March 1998) included some concerns and consultative recommendations. The concerns are addressed above. One exception is the decline in the number of completed applications. The self-study indicated that the Program seeks to recruit 18-22 students each year, but that enrollments had declined for three years. The University has responded that in Academic Year 1998 new MHA enrollments were 17 and totaled 15 in Academic Year 1999. The decline was directly attributable to the merger of the program with the Department of Preventive Medicine in 1997 as a precursor to the formation of the new College of Public Health on July 1, 1999. Because health management programs are found in departments of preventive medicine anywhere in the country, marketing the program was a great challenge. Faced with a decline in the number of high-quality applications, a deliberate but interim decision was made to admit a smaller, academically higher-quality class. The average GRE for students entering in Academic Year 1998 and Academic Year 1999 was approximately 1,130 for the combined verbal and quantitative sections. Since a permanent head has been appointed and the program became a Department, several new marketing efforts have been undertaken. These include updating the departmental web page, printing and distributing a recruitment poster, increasing attendance at recruitment fairs, and requesting alumni to identify potential applicants.

The self-study noted that students in the MHA program were experiencing some difficulty enrolling in courses in the College of Business, especially an accounting course. The development of an accounting course offered through the College of Medicine alleviated the problem.

While not required, the recommendations, if implemented, would presumably make a positive impact upon the program. Here are two recommendations which were not discussed in the first-year report:

- Students and alumni should be more involved in the strategic planning process.
- The program should consider developing a vision, mission, and goals that solely apply to the program, rather than encompassing the whole Division of Health Management and Policy.

Analysis:

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) Program at the University of Iowa has maintained its stated mission since its revision in 1997, although a number of changes have occurred since the preparation of the self-study document. As part of the creation of a new College of Public Health, significant strategic planning has been undertaken at both the collegiate and departmental levels.

In a sense, then, it can be said that the Department's mission, vision, and goals have been revised; students were consulted, and they have provided input. Other changes in the Program include: a new program administrator, a new location (in the College of Public Health), and significant expansion of the faculty (six full-time lines). A new degree, Master of Public Health, has been added. The curriculum has been reviewed and strengthened. Two new required courses have been added.

Since 1998 three senior, two junior, and one visiting full-time professor have joined the Department. Three of the new faculty are female, three are male. Four additional and one replacement for an existing position will be recruited during the 2000 Academic Year.

The report of the site visit team noted that the program had many strengths, including the leadership of the Interim Director (now the permanent Director), a high level of faculty productivity in research and scholarship, a high degree of application of course material in practical settings, and affiliated practitioners readily available for formal and informal advising and mentoring.

While there has been an increase in the number of women faculty members, the lack of faculty representing different ethnic and racial backgrounds remains a concern.

A copy of the self-study, on-site visit report, and extensive correspondence between the institution and accrediting organization is available in the Board Office.

Charles R. Kniker

Approved:

Frank J. Stork