

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW – BUSINESS PEER REVIEW TEAM REPORT

California State University Fullerton Mihaylo College of Business and Economics

Section I: Peer Review Team Recommendation

The peer review team recommends **Extension of Accreditation** of the degree programs included in the scope of accreditation offered by the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics at California State University Fullerton. This recommendation reflects the opinion of the peer review team only and will be reviewed by the Continuous Improvement Review Committee during the next scheduled meeting on January 17-18, 2019. The primary role of the Continuous Improvement Review Committee is to ensure consistent application of the AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across peer review teams.

Concurrence by the Continuous Improvement Review Committee and ratification by the Board of Directors are required prior to the confirmation of the accreditation extension. Following ratification by the Board of Directors, the Official Representative of the school will be notified initially via email and subsequently by letter from AACSB. The applicant must wait until the Board of Directors ratifies the recommendation before making any public announcement.

Within ten days following the visit, the team provides the peer review team report to the school and the Continuous Improvement Review Committee Chair. Prior to issuing the final report to the school and the Continuous Improvement Review Committee, the school should be provided a review of the report in order to offer any clarifying comments and corrections related to factual information noted in the report. The school may also submit a response to the Continuous Improvement Review Committee (circ@aacsb.edu) within ten business days of receipt of the final peer review team report.

Section II: Accreditation Standards Issues Identified by the Prior Peer Review Team

1. *The University, the College, and the Department expect significant enrollment growth in the Business and Accounting programs offered at the Irvine Campus. The College should develop a strategic plan and appropriate initiatives to ensure that AACSB standards for faculty sufficiency and deployment are met at the Irvine campus for each program should the enrollment growth occur at the Irvine campus. (2003 Standard 9: Faculty Sufficiency; 2003 Standard 10: Faculty Qualifications; 2013 Standard 5: Faculty Sufficiency and Deployment; 2013 Standard 15: Faculty Qualifications and Engagement)*

Since 2013, the only program offered entirely on the Irvine Campus is the Fully-Employed MBA (FEMBA). Other coursework is available to students, but it represents only a small proportion of the degree requirements for other program. The team reviewed faculty qualifications for the FEMBA program, and found that it easily meets AACSB expectations. The peer review team believes the issue is being appropriately managed by the school.

2. *The College needs to interpret more rigorously faculty qualifications, particularly with regard to intellectual contributions standards. Under current CBE policy on intellectual contributions in determining faculty member AQ status, it is technically possible to be classified AQ without a peer*

reviewed journal article. As the College revises its faculty classification policy to comply with the new AACSB 2013 standards, the College should consider establishing a rule for a minimum number of peer-reviewed journals articles. (2003 Standard 10: Faculty Qualifications; 2013 Standard 15: Faculty Qualifications and Engagement)

The college has significantly revised its standards to focus on the quality of publication outlets, and at the same time essentially established a two-article minimum for meeting SA qualification. The peer review team believes this issue has been adequately addressed by the college.

Section III: Accreditation Standards Issues Identified During this Peer Review Team Visit that Must Be Addressed Prior to the Next Peer Review Team Visit

Review the assurance of learning process at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Specifically, the college should address the following:

- 1) Ensure that all assessment instruments and rubrics adequately test student learning goals at the program level
- 2) Ensure that all student assessment data are analyzed by a faculty college committee and not individual faculty members
- 3) Be able to show clear examples of how the assessment process informed changes in the curriculum. (Standard 8: Curricula Management and Assurance of Learning)

Section IV: Peer Review Team Observations and Feedback that Form the Basis for Judgement for the Recommendation

1. Strategic Management and Innovation

The school engaged in a robust strategic planning process in 2013 that included a variety of stakeholders. Since that time, the strategic plan has been updated on an annual basis. There is ample evidence that the plan drove resource allocation decisions, such as the significant increase in staff dedicated to undergraduate academic advising and job placement.

The university completed a strategic planning process in October, and now the school is poised to launch a planning process that develops a plan in alignment with the new campus plan. The process for developing the 2019-24 strategic plan commenced on October 26, 2018 when a group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni convened. The expectation is to develop a new plan consistent with the recently finalized university plan by December through a series of three meetings. The team notes that the school process has been delayed by the university process, and suggests that in the future the school consider staying with its planning schedule. The risk of developing a plan inconsistent with a university plan seems small, and could easily be corrected with the annual review process the school utilizes.

The school has a strong portfolio of peer reviewed publications, including publications in some of the top journals of a number of business disciplines. This solid performance is driven by an extensive journal ranking system, in which over 1500 journals have been placed into four different groups based upon journal impact. The scholarship portfolio seems appropriate for the mission.

Financial resources for the school appear to be reasonably adequate. State funding levels have held up over the five year period, as have gift and grant funding. On the expenditure side, total compensation has increased significantly, although base salaries for starting tenure track faculty are low and make it difficult to attract and retain faculty.

2. Participants

There is a high level of engagement among Mihaylo faculty and staff and a strong commitment to the mission. The school is characterized by a collegial and collaborative culture among its faculty and staff.

In the last five years, the school has significantly increased staff FTE devoted to undergraduate advising and placement, and this reflects a focus on the part of the university and school on student success. Despite the increase in staff, it is still a challenge for them to meet student needs given the number of students served.

Since the last review, the school has put in place a new system for supporting and evaluating faculty scholarship, and the faculty appear to appreciate the new system.

There is an adequate level of participating faculty, as can be seen in Table 15-1, and the definitions for participating and supporting faculty are appropriate for the school.

3. Learning and Teaching

The curriculum is current and relevant, and with its focus on applied learning, prepares students appropriately for industry. As an example, the school is well positioned in its efforts to add analytics into the curriculum, particularly in accounting and economics. It is also clear that the school consults closely with the business community on needed changes to the curriculum, such as can be seen in recent changes to the MBA program

The school dedicates significant resources to Assurance of Learning (AoL) activities and the faculty embrace the value of AoL. It has an established undergraduate AoL process that involves core level course coordinators from all departments. The core level course coordinators develop the student learning goals and map the learning goals to the courses in the curriculum. The core level course coordinators are also responsible for assuring consistency in course content delivery across multiple sections of core classes and reviewing the results of student learning outcomes. At the college level, there is a faculty senate with two elected representatives from each department that has responsibility for reviewing changes to the core curriculum that may result from the assessment process.

Although an extensive AoL process is in place, most assessment efforts at the undergraduate level are focused on insuring quality control across multiple sections of the undergraduate core courses. This is certainly important and understandable given the size and scope of the college, with over 9,000 undergraduate students and over 300 total full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty. Still, more emphasis should be placed on assessing the overall undergraduate program learning goals. Clear rubrics for each learning goal should be developed and assessment artifacts should be scored by a college committee against the established rubrics. Based on this analysis of the learning goal outcomes, the committee can then focus on any changes needed to achieve learning goals at the program level (as opposed to goals for individual courses in the core curriculum).

At the graduate level, there is an established assessment process for each of the individual graduate programs. Each graduate program has a faculty committee that develops the student learning objectives for the program. In some instances, there is not a clear connection between an articulated student learning goal and the assessment instrument used to measure the learning goal. In these instances, rubrics should be strengthened for each of the learning goals and assessment artifacts scored by a program committee against those rubrics. Currently, a number of student learning goals are assessed using a course embedded assignment that is graded by the individual faculty member teaching the course, a situation that would benefit from additional perspectives.

The school aspires to deliver high quality teaching to its students, and the faculty seem very student focused for a school with over 9,000 students. Discussions with students showed that faculty are available to students outside of class room. The CSUF Center for Faculty Development supports teaching improvement for both full-time and part-time faculty.

With a student body that has a high number of first-generation, Pell-eligible, and/or transfer students, retention rates and graduation rates for undergraduate students are a challenge. The university has launched a program to increase the four-year graduation rate to 44% by 2025, and as part of that the school has pursued a number of initiatives to improve student success. This includes increasing advising staff, offering new career professional development courses, creating networking events, initiating new student orientations, supporting student clubs, and so forth, all with an aim to increase retention and graduation rates. Many of these activities are coordinated by the Student Success Committee, which consists of academic and career advising staff.

4. Academic and Professional Engagement

Students are afforded a number of opportunities to interact with the business community. Many of these are organized by the Career Services Offices, and a number are fostered through the thirteen centers in the college. These include centers in economic education, insurance, entrepreneurship, sales, leadership, real estate, etc... Each of these centers connects closely with the local business community and provide students with opportunities for applied learning. The centers also provide a mechanism for faculty to connect with the business community. Examples include the twice a year economic forecast luncheons offered by the Woods Center for Economic Analysis and Forecasting, the Center for Corporate Reporting and Governance annual SEC "Hot Topics" Conference, the Real Estate and Land Use Institute's Commercial Real Estate Forum, and the Center for Insurance Studies iDay, to name just a few.

Maintaining strong faculty qualifications is a priority for the school, and the school easily meets most AACSB expectations across its various programs and locations. (The only program fully delivered at the Irvine Center is the Fully Employed MBA (FEMBA), and its ratios are appropriate). Exceptions occur in accounting, management and economics, where the 90% standard is not met, and in accounting and management they are very close. These combine to bring the undergraduate program slightly below the 90% standard. For each discipline, the school has a plan to remedy the situation with retirements and other moves available to it in the near term. The team is confident the problem will be remedied and the school is committed to having a highly qualified faculty.

Section V: Commendations and Best Practices

The school has an impressive mission of serving many first generation/Pell eligible/transfer undergraduate students. It is a source of opportunity for many students who would otherwise go unserved and unable to achieve their potential.

The school has benefitted from excellent leadership provided by the current and former dean. They instill a high level of trust and confidence across faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the business community, and have created a collegial and collaborative culture in the school.

The school has an impressive roster of centers, as mentioned previously in this report. The centers connect the school and its students and faculty with the Orange County business community and have become an important mechanism for garnering financial support.

The research productivity of the Department of Information Systems and Decision Sciences is impressive, with its high global ranking (84th) by the Association of Information Systems.

Section VI: Consultative Feedback

The school is challenged when recruiting tenure track faculty by the low base salaries it can offer. While summer support can improve offers for the first few years, it becomes difficult to retain faculty once those expire. If the school cannot be given more leeway on starting salaries, perhaps professorships and similar enhancements to attract and retain faculty could be a theme in the upcoming capital campaign.

The increase in staff devoted to undergraduate advising and placement is commendable, however these staff members are hard pressed to meet student needs given the number of students served. Staff salaries are relatively low, and in a number of cases, staff salaries are not in the base budget of the school, giving these important services tenuous standing. A multi-year plan to increase the number of staff serving in these categories, increase staff salaries, and find ways to fund these positions through the base budget would go a long way to support the university effort to raise retention and graduation rates

Section VII: Attachments

Peer Review Team Roster

Joseph M. Phillips Seattle University, Business Chair
 Robert Dooley University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Business Member
 Ann L. Watkins Texas State University, Accounting Chair
 Lloyd Seaton University of Northern Colorado, Accounting Member

Peer Review Team Schedule

DATE/TIME SUN., 10/28	BUSINESS	ACCOUNTING
Various	Arrival – Transportation to Hotel	
4:00 pm	Peer Review Team Meeting Fullerton Marriott	
5:30 pm	Meet in Hotel Lobby Reception + Dinner	
DATE/TIME MON., 10/29	BUSINESS	ACCOUNTING
7:45am	Meet in Hotel Lobby	
8:00am	Breakfast – Dean Rahmatian and Associate Deans – Fullerton Marriott	Breakfast – Dr. Mande and Faculty – Fullerton Marriott

9:00am	Bus. PRT SGMH-3210		Acctg. PRT SGMH-3210	
9:30am	Executive Committee SGMH-3119			
10:00am	Student Success SGMH-3119			
10:45am	Break			
11:00am	College Senate SGMH-3119			
11:30am	Business Assurance of Learning SGMH-3119		Accounting Assurance of Learning SGMH-3100A	
12:00pm	LUNCH – Student Representatives SGMH-3230 (separate room) 1 table with undergraduate students and 1 with graduate students		LUNCH – Student Representatives SGMH-3230 (separate room)	
1:00pm	Document Review SGMH-3210			
2:00pm	Center Directors SGMH-3119			
2:45	Break			
3:00pm	MBA, MSIT, MSIS faculty coordinator SGMH-3119		MSA & MST faculty coordinator SGMH-3100A	
3:30pm	Business PT and FT Lecturer SGMH-3119		Accounting PT and FT Lecturer SGMH-3100A	
4:00pm	Business Tenure- Track Faculty SGMH-3119	Business Tenured Faculty SGMH 3100A	Accounting Tenure- Track Faculty SGMH 3230 A	Accounting Tenured Faculty SGMH 3230 B
4:30pm	Document Review & Report Preparation SGMH-3210			
5:00pm	Meet with Dean and Department Chairs regarding any end of day questions			
5:30pm	Report Preparation			
DATE/TIME TUES., 10/30	BUSINESS		ACCOUNTING	
7:45am	Meet in Hotel Lobby Breakfast			
8:30am	Mihaylo Leadership Team SGMH-3100A			
9:00am	Provost and Dean CP-1060			
10:00am	Depart for Airport			

Peer Schools

Boise State University
Grand Valley State University
Kennesaw State University
Southwest Missouri State University

Texas State University
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Massachusetts Lowell
University of North Florida

Competitive Schools

California State University, Long Beach
Chapman University
Pepperdine University
San Diego State University
University of California, Irvine
University of Southern California

Aspirational Schools

Ball State University
Colorado State University
Farmer School of Business, Miami University
Georgia State University
James Madison University
Northern Illinois University
University of Central Florida
University of Denver
Western Michigan University

Additional Information Reviewed

CSFU Website
Additional materials and information requested by the peer review team on budget, faculty qualifications, Assurance of Learning, faculty salaries, etc...