

REVIEW OF THE B.S. IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 52.0201
Business Administration and Management, General

Review Outcome: The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.S. in Business Administration program to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee recognizes that many of the efforts and activities that led to the development of the self-study report were accomplished during the time period coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee thanks the program for a comprehensive and critical self-study report that included input from multiple stakeholders. The curriculum in the B.S. in Business Administration offers coursework that emphasizes a generalized set of knowledge and skills necessary in today's multifaceted business world, preparing students for a broad range of entry-level positions in a wide array of organizations. The objective is to create a well-rounded business professional. The curriculum is delivered by faculty members who collaborate to provide foundational courses and specialized courses.

The committee commends faculty efforts to sustain the program's enrollment during the period covering the program review cycle through the use of several recruitment strategies identified in the self-study report (e.g., the Diversity Excellence Business Scholarship and other scholarships, and participation in open houses). These efforts have resulted in relatively steady enrollments that have made the B.S. in Business Administration consistently the largest program in the College of Business. We further commend the program faculty for their actions that have resulted in an increase in students from traditionally underrepresented groups, rising from 17.9 percent in 2015 to 27.1 percent in 2019.

The committee recognizes the program faculty's commitment to activities that support student success. We commend the program on its ability to continue to limit enrollments in many of its courses, which is in keeping with the University's commitment to fostering a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities. The committee commends the program for the variety of opportunities for direct community involvement both inside and outside of the classroom (including small business consulting and not-for-profit fundraising and awareness initiatives). We also note that the program encourages and supports student participation in study abroad opportunities, internship programs, and several registered student organizations (RSOs). The committee also commends the program advisors for their efforts to support students transferring both into and out of the program. We note that the fall-to-fall retention rates are generally at or above the University-wide rates overall. The committee commends the faculty for their efforts that have allowed nearly 75 percent of students to complete their degree within 4 years (and for increasing the completion rate within five years from 93.6 percent in 2016 to 100 percent). We also note that the employment and salary data indicate strong outcomes for program graduates.

The committee recognizes the faculty's work to revise the curriculum during the period of review such that the program remains comparable to peer institutions. The committee recognizes the program for maintaining and expanding industry partnerships for the benefit of the program, its students, and its faculty. We further commend the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods and the College of Business for their continued accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business-International (AACSB) and wish them well for their reaccreditation efforts in fall 2021.

The committee notes the faculty members for their scholarly contributions to the B.S. in Business Administration. Faculty members are active researchers who publish in national and international peer-reviewed journals.

The committee commends the program faculty on the development and implementation of their plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes, especially in light of the additional challenges of operating within a program that has coursework and faculty that span the entire college. The assessment plan provides for collecting evidence of student performance, evaluating this evidence with rubrics, and consulting with the program advisory board in curricular and program review based on this evidence. The self-study report provides ample evidence that evaluation and assessment findings continue to be used by faculty to design and implement program modifications.

Follow-up Report.

Aspirational Programs. The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational programs in the self-study report guidelines to provide faculty with opportunities to consider the niche their program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The committee would like the program to revisit the aspirational section of the self-study. Although the faculty did briefly discuss aspirational initiatives the committee believes that a more extensive analysis could help develop strategies for addressing the initiatives faculty has identified in their self-study. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of aspirational institutions and to summarize the findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2022.

Recommendations.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty and staff of the B.S. in Business Administration program for the opportunity to provide input regarding the program at Illinois State University through consideration of the submitted self-study report. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with all faculty and staff participating in the B.S. in Business Administration program. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2028, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue to monitor enrollment trends and program growth. The committee encourages faculty to continue to actively monitor the growing enrollments and how they are impacting the program. We encourage the program faculty to look to their comparator and aspirational institutions for indicators of enrollment growth impacts on program quality. The committee encourages the program to continue to monitor their strategies for increasing enrollment by students from gender, racial, and ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented in the program and discipline.

Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. The committee encourages the program to pursue its goals related to further developing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. The committee notes the self-study finding that there is a need for students to better understand diversity, equality, and inclusion. We recommend that these efforts include examining ways to infuse diversity issues into the curriculum beyond the international component.

Develop a plan for student success and retention. The committee recommends that the program faculty develop a plan for student success. The plan should be used to increase transparency and communication around “student success” by defining the program’s goals for, assessment of, and actions towards supporting students enrolled in the program. The plan may provide an overarching structure for other plans (e.g., retention, time-to-degree, curriculum, alumni engagement). The committee supports the program-identified need to develop more opportunities and supports for student participation in research and creative activities. The committee suggests that faculty members investigate student interest and participation in the Honors program to ensure that students desiring to complete the program with Honors have sufficient opportunities to do so. The committee notes the program’s concerns regarding extremely high advisor loads. We support the efforts to develop avenues designed to reduce these loads. We also recommend that the College Advisement Center review their metrics for advising effectiveness, looking beyond student outcomes exclusively. We suggest that looking to aspirational institutions may provide valuable insights for the development of action items for this plan.

Conduct a review of the curriculum. The committee notes the recommendations from the program’s advisory council regarding a need for more hard skills (e.g., quantitative analysis and data visualization) and soft skills (e.g., written and verbal communication). We support the program faculty’s plans to review, assess, and revise the program curriculum to ensure that it aligns with current demands and future expectations of the industry. We suggest that looking to aspirational institutions may provide valuable insights for the development of action items for this plan.

Continue the collaborative work with Milner Library. The committee recommends that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to examine and evaluate the library's journals and monograph collection related to business administration to aid in both the selection and deselection process of these sources. Given recent journal cancellations and expected increases in distance and hybrid courses, we encourage the Department and Library to further collaborate to increase awareness of alternative access to resources, such as Interlibrary Loan and I-Share

lending, among faculty and students. We also recommend that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to develop a tiered approach for information fluency learning outcomes for the Department, align those outcomes to the curricula, and integrate those outcomes into the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program.

Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan. The committee encourages faculty to continue its implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary.

Continue to refine a plan for alumni tracking and engagement. The committee encourages the program faculty to continue to refine their plan for tracking program alumni and use this system to enhance alumni networking. These activities may become even more important in the years ahead as the program's alumni become more diverse. The program could benefit from increased involvement of its alumni in providing input regarding the program and in mentoring students.