AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation


Submitted by the School of Management
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This annual University of Alaska (UAF) School of Management (SOM) Maintenance of Accreditation report covers the academic year of 2007-2008. During this year SOM was pleased to learn that it had received reaffirmation for its Accounting program.

(A) Progress Update:

(I) Strategic Plan

The December 2006 Strategic Plan listed its top three strategic goals: (1) develop and foster entrepreneurship among our students by creating a business accelerator/incubator, (2) establish a joint doctoral degree (Resource Science) between the SOM/Economics Program and the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences/Natural Resources Management (SNRAS/NRM) and (3) improve student learning in all programs through quality teaching. The Strategic Plan (SP) is unchanged from the previous year reflecting the fact that the School was continuing to work towards its previous goals. The progress on each of these is listed below:

(1) Business Accelerator: The first strategic goal for SOM these past two years has been to work with the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) and the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) to develop a business incubator/accelerator. After much work and initial University support, this program has all but died. Additionally, a consultant hired by UAF examined the technology transfer and economic development support from UAF and produced a negative report. A partial attempt to revive the accelerator was made through Western Edge Program; a steering committee (which included the Dean of SOM) was formed for an EDGE entrepreneurship development project. At this point further progress looks bleak. A recent change at the University’s Chancellor level may revive the incubator/accelerator project but at this point SOM will not give significant future resources to this issue and will remove it from the next SOM Strategic Plan slated to be ratified by the faculty in Fall 2008.

(2) New Ph.D. program: After three years of work the joint effort between SOM/Economics and the Department of Natural Resources (NRM) housed in the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences (SNRAS) received approval from both the UA Board of Regents and Northwest Accreditation for its joint Ph.D. program in Natural Resources and Sustainability. Imbedded in this program are three thematic tracks. One of the tracks is Resource Economics. SOM will benefit from now being a doctorate-granting school inside a research university. This will also assist us in recruiting top economics faculty and graduate students. We are very excited about this new graduate degree.

(3) Improve student learning in all programs through quality teaching: Under this broad category we focused on five areas: Enrollment Management Plan (See II below), Assurance of Learning (see IV below), increased funding of faculty development for teaching, increased exposure for our internship program, and increased involvement and support for our five student organizations. Of the last three areas the increased funding of faculty development was the one area in which we failed. Because of SOM budget problems we cut back on funding for faculty development. Nevertheless, we did have two faculty members earn prestigious awards. Sherri Wall (Economics) was named (by the Associated Students of UAF (ASUAF)) the university’s Faculty Member of the Year for 2008. Sherri was also chosen to compete in the Association of Private Enterprise Education “2008 Economic Communicators Contest” in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she finished 3rd out of 40 original entries. Will Finley (Business Administration) was chosen one of the top three teachers in
the greater Fairbanks area (all ages) in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Readers Choice awards. We have continued to focus on our internship program and currently have more internship possibilities for our students than we can fill. We are currently considering a Cooperative Education Program for UAF where students would graduate with one year of work experience.

Much of our focus last year was on our five student organizations: Students Who Enjoy Economic Thinking (SWEET), Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Great Alaskan Accounting People (GAAP), Associated Students of Business (ASB) and Native Alaskan Business Leaders (NABL). These organizations enjoyed unparalleled success within UAF and have become an integral part of our educational process. For example, SWEET created an economic lecture series for UAF; participants included Alaska Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell, Alaska Congressman Don Young, Alaska U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Ted Stevens, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, Alaska DNR Commissioner Tom Irwin and Deputy Rector of International Affairs at Russian State Gubkin University of Oil and Gas, Dr. Anatoly Zolotukhin. Our SIFE team won the SIFE regional competition in Seattle and competed in nationals in Chicago. GAAP was awarded the Academic Achievement Award by UAF, an award given to the student organization whose members have the highest academic achievement. ASB honored the CEO and President of Denali State Bank, Jo Heckman, the first woman bank president in Alaska, at a banquet attended by 300 people in the community, and NABL put on a “Professor of the Day” series of events in which they host CEOs of Native Corporations to address NABL members and to lecture in SOM classes. SOM invests both time and money in these organizations and believe that they are an important component of “experiential learning.” For example, during this past academic year, the SIFE team organized and participated in many community projects including forming SWEET, teaching eBay to senior citizens, teaching financial literacy to UAF students, initiating a residence life professional development program at UAF and marketing products for Burmese refugees.

(II) Enrollment Management Plan

The SOM AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation 2006-2007 Annual Report (July 14, 2007) included a detailed discussion of SOM’s Enrollment Management Plan (EMP), formed during a School-wide retreat on April 13, 2007. Much of this last academic year was spent implementing this plan. At this retreat four focus areas were addressed to increase enrollments and retention: (a) building minors, (b) examining prerequisites, (c) increasing strategic marketing/recruiting and (d) developing compressed classes. Action committees were formed to follow up on these focus areas.

(a) We overhauled all of our business minors to become both more attractive and relevant: Finance, General Business, Management and Organizations and Marketing. These updated minors reflect previous changes in curricula. Course prerequisites were also examined so that a student could complete the minor by taking five courses. A new minor was created (Sports Management) with three new courses created for the minor (1) Sports Management, (2) Sports Leadership and (3) Legal Issues in Sports and Recreation Management.

(b) The UAF Faculty Senate approved over 70 proposed changes to our curriculum – mostly involving changes to prerequisites. The largest change concerned removing the requirement that a student have upper division BBA standing to take any of our 300- or 400-level courses. Instead, now any students may take our courses (with the exception of the capstone courses) as long as they have the specific course prerequisites.
For our strategic marketing and recruiting we focused on the MBA program. Primarily, we concentrated on students with undergraduate degrees that were not business related. We wanted to facilitate student entry and success in the MBA program. Our past policy was that students would need to take 9 of our undergraduate courses in order to qualify for the MBA program. This requirement prohibited most non-business students from seeking an MBA. We replaced this requirement by designing 4 leveling courses so that all non-business students would be on a more level playing field with business-related majors in the MBA program upon completing these courses. These courses are (i) BA 652, Fundamentals of Business, (ii) Acct 602, Accounting for Managers, (iii) Economics 622, Analytical Methods for Economics and Business and (iv) Economics 621, Fundamentals of Economics. This change should facilitate our offering accelerated programs. We added an ongoing summer seminar course for the MBA program funded by Flint Hills Resources which this year is being taught by our guest professor Dr. Satish Deshpande (Haworth College of Business at Western Michigan University) and is titled “Managing in a Complex Environment”.

Some of our undergraduate and most of our MBA offerings are now compressed into seven-week courses. This will allow students to have an easier time satisfying course prerequisites and allowing more undergraduates and MBA students to graduate in a timely fashion.

(III) Faculty Development and Administration Changes

The following are changes to faculty status and important committees.

(a) Faculty Leaving: none.

(b) New Faculty:

(i) Erin Berry, from Bradley University, has been hired as term faculty to replace Dr. Laura Milner in the Marketing Program.

(ii) Dr. Mo Zhou, University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been hired as Assistant Professor in the Economics Program. She is a forestry economist.

(c) Administrative Changes:

(i) Dr. Mark Herrmann was named Dean after serving as Interim Dean.

(ii) Dr. Kevin Berry was appointed Associate Dean starting in AY09, replacing Dr. Greg Goering.

(iii) Dr. Ping Lan was appointed MBA director starting in AY09, replacing Dr. Kevin Berry.

(d) Tenure and Promotion:

The School of Management had the following tenure and promotions:

(i) Awarded Tenure:
Dr. Kevin Berry

(ii) Awarded Professor Emeriti:
Dr. Laura Milner and Sheri Layral
(IV) Assurance of Learning

Assurance of Learning (AOL) was addressed in the SOM AACSB Maintenance of Accreditation Annual Report filed on July 14, 2007. As this report noted, SOM continues to make substantial progress in adopting an assurance of learning process consistent with AACSB standards and to have outcomes assessments for 100% of its programs, as acknowledged by UAF.

In particular, in the 2007-2008 academic year SOM adopted and implemented a number of AOL measures and strategies including the following:

1. A revised and streamlined committee structure. The faculty AOL committee and curriculum committees (at both the MBA and undergraduate level) have now been combined. This change helps ensure a more cohesive feedback loop between AOL and the SOM curriculum at both the MBA and undergraduate levels.

2. The learning goals and objectives were reevaluated and modified by the AOL faculty committees.

3. AOL alignment matrices have been developed for both the undergraduate and MBA curriculum to aid in mapping the learning goals and objectives to the SOM curriculum. Currently, these matrices are based on the 2006 learning goals: (i) oral communication skills, (ii) written communication skills, (iii) analytical skills and (iv) technical skills.

4. A new direct AOL measure, the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal® test, was implemented in the Spring semester to begin tracking the critical thinking learning goals at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

5. A mandatory AOL faculty retreat/workshop was held in the Spring 08 semester with guest lecturer Dr. Douglas Eider, AACSB AOL workshop presenter. Dr. Eider met individually with all SOM programs and with both AOL committees to provide guidance on AACSB and AOL. Additionally, he presented a one-day seminar for the faculty as a whole on best practices in AOL.

(V) Other

(a) Board of Advisors. The SOM Board of Advisors lapsed without a single meeting during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years. Interim Dean Herrmann attended an AACSB seminar on Advisory Boards and then met with SOM’s Executive Management Committee, who approved disbanding the existing Board of Advisors. It was also decided that the new board should not be formed until a permanent Dean was named. After Dr. Herrmann was named permanent Dean on March 17, 2008, he changed the board’s name, wrote the by-laws and appointed a fifteen member SOM Business Advisory Council (BAC) which will first meet on September 26, 2008.

(b) Student Advisory Council. An SOM Student Advisory Council (SAC) was formed and met twice during the April 08 semester.

(c) Integrating with other UAF programs. Integrating the School with others across campus has been a major focus for SOM. This year we made substantial progress in a number of areas.
(i) The UAF Board of Regents approved a new BA degree in Fisheries. This degree will have several business courses and also promote a business minor as an option for its students. Dean Mark Herrmann is a member of the Fisheries Excellence Committee which oversees the new degree. This degree is supported by a $5 million grant from the Rasmuson Foundation and $4 million in matching funds from UAF.

(ii) UAF approved a new Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) program named “Marine Ecosystem Sustainability” which has been funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) for $5 million. Dean Mark Herrmann and Economics faculty Dr. Joshua Greenberg are participating faculty on this grant. SOM now participates in two NSF IGERT programs; the other is “Resilience and Adaptation of Social-Ecological Systems: Global-Local Interactions in a Rapidly Changing North” which was renewed last year by NSF for another five years.

(iii) A new 5-year cooperative agreement with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was reached with the Cooperative Institute for Arctic Research (CIFAR), in which Dean Herrmann is a Fellow.

(B) Priority Update:

(i) Strategic Plan: As stated previously, our existing Strategic Plan (SP) (December 2006) was left unchanged from the previous year. The School was continuing to work towards its previous goals and there was a late appointment of the permanent Dean. The next Strategic Plan will be finalized in Fall 2008 and is likely to be substantially different. The top priorities for the School may include the following:

- Starting a Cooperative Education Program for UAF
- Expanding the MBA program spatially
- Participating in a Construction Management degree
- Expanding the Emergency Management degree