Interim Report
On
Progress in Addressing Issues and Recommendations
Of
The AACSB Accreditation Visitation Team

Further Results of Strategic Planning Initiatives

The major focus of the College's strategic planning initiatives has been the development of portfolio of high quality academic programs that can be efficiently and effectively delivered. The initial piece of that effort was the development of the "Centennial Plan," so titled to reflect the timing of its implementation during the College's centennial year—2005-2006. (See Attachment 1.)

The gist of the plan was the development of a series of interlocking programs. The main focus was to be a mandatory co-op program leading to the awarding of a BBA and an MS in a functional area of business after five years. (Co-op is currently an option in the BBA Program.) At the same time, the full-time MBA program was to be redesigned as a triple-option program—a twelve month MBA (our historic program), a fifteen month MBA with an internship, and a combined MBA/MS program with an internship in twenty-one months. (These combined degree programs would require the development of at least two MS options beyond the three we had in place—Accounting, Information Systems and Quantitative Analysis.) The part-time MBA program was to be redesigned to be consistent with the revised full-time program.

Because of the higher standards required by a combined BBA/MS program and our access mission, the plan also called for the development of a two-year BBA degree completion program to be offered on campus and in conjunction with two UC branches utilizing our developing videoconferencing capabilities.

The BSIM program was to be left in place, but reviewed and revised for a new emphasis and increased marketing.

After months of development, the initial Centennial plan was presented to the faculty at the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year at an all day retreat. (The faculty members were given copies of the proposal well in advance of the retreat.) After an all day retreat with extensive and intensive discussion of the plan, design teams were selected to work on the pieces of the plan. (See Attachment 2 the charges to the design teams and a summary of the process. *At the present time, only hard copies of these documents exist.)* A liaison committee was established to facilitate coordination between design teams because of the overlap of the programs under consideration. Committee recommendations were submitted to the faculty.

The committee working on the undergraduate piece of the proposed BBA/MS recommended against such a program, and the faculty approved the recommendation. All of the other pieces were supported by the relevant committees and approved by the faculty. As a result, the College now has a Triple-Option MBA Program, new MSBA concentrations in Finance and Marketing, and a BBA completion program call BBA-Extend. The Triple-Option is in its second year, with a slightly revised MBA curriculum. The BBA-Extend and the new MSBA concentrations are in their first year of existence.

The MSBA concentration in Marketing is available in both full and part time formats; the concentration in Finance is available only in a full-time format this year, but will be available in both full and part-time formats in 2006-2007.

The BBA-Extend Program is available to students in both full and part time versions at two sites—Raymond Walters College and Clermont College, two-year branches of UC. Each class is taught by a faculty member live at one site, videoconferencing with the other; the faculty member rotates live sites. A third part-time site in the College of Business will be added in the near future. (With the demise of Evening College, there has been no feeder program for a part-time upper level transfer program on campus. The College of Business is exploring taking over Pre-Business and creating such a vehicle.)

The MSBA concentration in Finance is an innovative program. The program is designed to prepare the student to sit for and pass the three-part Certified Financial Analyst exam. As such, it has a built-in assessment device—students must take Part I of the CFA exam as part of the program. The program in not limited to Part I level content; it covers the content of all three parts.

The mandatory co-op BBA/MS program failed to receive faculty approval because of concerns about potential enrollment drops, the ability of Professional Practice—the College in charge of the placement portion of cooperative education at UC—to provide a sufficient number of co-op jobs, and the possible impact of the new program on the highly successful Lindner Honors Plus Program. The College continues to explore a mandatory co-op option. Discussions currently focus on mandatory co-op for a newly created honors program, Business Scholars. (The Lindner Honors Plus Program is already a mandatory co-op program.)

Going beyond the Centennial Plan and the issues naturally arising from its consideration, the College of Business is currently engaged in the development of a joint bachelor's degree/MBA program with the College of Engineering. Initial discussions have begun with the College of Pharmacy regarding the development of an MBA/PharmD program. There are also initial discussions of a third off-campus MBA section in Milford, Ohio, at Park 50, a large high-tech office park. It would probably be modeled after our very successful section in Blue Ash, Ohio, perhaps sharing faculty resources through video conferencing. The other site is a Wright Patterson Air Force Base, where we offer a "lunch time" format of our part-time MBA Program.

The College's strategic planning emphasis has not limited to academic programs. The Centennial Plan also developed specific resource, marketing and development plans. In conjunction with the Office of the University Architect, the College of Business has developed a master plan for a remodeled and expanded College of Business building. In developing that plan the College considered future growth and a modified organizational structure. (Appendix 3 is a draft of that plan dated November 1, 2004)

The College of Business strategic planning process has to be flexible, because the College has had to adapt to a new UC strategic plan—UC|21 developed under the

leadership of a new President—Dr. Nancy Zimpher. That plan calls for a refocusing of UC as student centered, urban research university (Attachment 4 is a PDF version of Dr. Zimpher's report to the University of Cincinnati's Board of Trustees on progress toward achieving the goals of UC|21.)

In addition to a new University President the College of Business, after more than a year with an interim dean, now has a new dean who has been on board about two months. He is planning further refinement of the College's strategic plan.

Further Progress toward Improving the Learning Environment in Lindner Hall

The College of Business has taken several steps to improve the learning environment in Lindner Hall over the past three plus years. One of the problems with the learning environment was a lack of study areas within the College. We have taken several steps to remedy this. The first step, taken three years ago, was to create a quite study area for the undergraduate students by moving a third floor faculty lounge and installing work tables for students. Last year we converted a small computer lab into a dedicated lounge for our growing MS student population. (The MBA students already had such a lounge.)

Yet another step has been to upgrade the presentation facilities within our classrooms. With some support from a $1.5 million Cleveland Foundation grant for distance learning, the College of Business has been able to substantially upgrade the presentation and distance learning capabilities of our classrooms. (See Attachment 5 for a table showing classroom enhancements put into place.)

The biggest step in improving the learning environment is still on the drawing board. The basement of Lindner Hall has been occupied by the offices of a construction firm for several years. Sometime in 2006, those facilities will come under College of Business control. (The construction firm finished the basement to create their office space and is donating that space to UC after completing the extensive set of projects in which they were involved.) With a grant from SAP, America, the College will convert that space into a large laptop lounge with twelve adjoining team project rooms.

Even greater improvements in the learning environment are envisioned in the College of Business Building Master Plan in Appendix 3.

Another step affecting the learning environment has been our successful efforts to keep all College of Business classes within Lindner Hall. Many other colleges find their classes scattered across multiple buildings. We have managed to avoid this by carefully constructing and maintaining our master schedule. In addition to keeping the classes within Lindner Hall, we have standardized our schedules to make planning easier for students.

In addition to the creation of additional study space and the upgrading of classroom facilities, and keeping our classes in our building, the College has succeeded in getting limited food service in Lindner Hall for the first time beginning with Winter Quarter of 2006.

Further Improvement on Fundraising and Maintaining Partnerships with Alumni and Corporate Sponsors

Forging strong partnerships is a cornerstone of both the College and the University strategic plan. Our approach to expanding and deepening partnerships has been two-fold. First, we have sought to strategically involve key corporate partners in our academic programs. Project Fast Track offers a case in point. Project Fast Track is the title of our First Year Experience in which all CoB undergraduates enter the college in Learning Communities—taking linked courses with a group of 20-25 students. One of those courses is a two-quarter course sequence called Management Skills Practicum, an introductory course in which these student teams are each paired with a major Cincinnati business (17 firms in all, such as Procter and Gamble, Kroger, Federated, Delta, Cintas etc.). The student teams use their business as a living case study, meeting with their managers and often taking tours of one of their facilities.

Second, we have worked to identify key themes of our corporate partners and utilize their expertise with key College goals. For example, P&G places a considerable emphasis on leadership in their mission, and has helped fund the P&G Business Leadership Development Program for our Lindner Honors-PLUS and Business Scholar students. That program funds specific courses, related speaker series and leadership camps that utilize P&G personnel and funds as well as College faculty with leadership expertise. Similar programs have been launched with Cintas--one that focuses on professionalism—and with SAP, America—one that focuses on technology.

Third, this summer we worked closely with our lead partners to fund our centennial celebrations and its theme of partnerships. Funding from over 15 partners is enabling development of multimedia materials that will showcase these partnerships with the corporations providing classroom speakers, joining Fast Track, collaborating with students and faculty on projects, visiting their facilities during studies abroad, and hiring our students for co-op, internships and full-time. Our goal is to raise the visibility and value of such partnerships to ensure sustainability and fuel growth.

In addition to the initiatives listed above, the College of Business maintains a number of Centers devoted to interaction with the local and regional community. A brief list of the centers and their role is shown in Attachment 6.

With the arrival of a new Dean, the College of Business is embarking on an enhanced effort to build relationships with partners, alumni and corporate sponsors through an expanded development staff. That staff includes two full-time development professionals and an administrative support person.

Retention Results from Improved Faculty Support

The College of Business has made significant efforts to improve faculty retention. The College has increased summer research funding over the past several years. It has also increased the use of field service faculty in order to reduce the teaching loads of selected tenure-track faculty. In addition the number of doctoral students has been increased to provide additional research assistance. The College provides incentives for faculty to write research proposals for external funding.

Factoring out death and retirements, the College has an overall retention rate of over ninety percent. The faculty turnover that does occur is primarily among junior faculty, particularly those struggling to meet promotion and tenure standards, which are fairly rigorous. In an effort to mitigate this turnover problem, such faculty members are supported in a number of ways. First, they are given reduced teaching loads. Second, they received summer research stipends. Third, each new faculty member is enrolled in a mentoring program with two mentors—a senior person from his/her department and a recently tenured faculty member from another department.

Results of Continued Improvement of the Outcomes Assessment Process to Insure Continuous Improvement of All Academic Programs

At the undergraduate level, the College of Business of Business has traditionally relied on the evaluation of student performance in concentration capstone courses as its primary assessment vehicle. Since our students have two concentrations—a focus concentration in a functional area and an integral concentration which adds either breadth or additional depth—this means that they have two capstone experiences.

In the past few years we have added to our assessment process discussions with employers, both those hiring our students upon graduation and those employing them in co-op positions. (In the latter area, the College of Business has worked closely with Professional Practice in implementing a major grant for improving the usefulness of extensive employer feedback.) These discussions have added a business world perspective to the academic one of the capstone courses. They have also resulted in closer scrutiny of what our curriculum contain.

As part of a University push toward increased assessment in the area of General Education, the College of Business has developed a set of rubrics used in the focus capstone course to assess the effectiveness of that component of our curriculum. (See the rubrics in Attachment 7.) These were used for the first time in Spring Quarter 2005. The next logical step would be to develop such rubrics for the business content of the curriculum within the concentration capstones. This step has been delayed because of the impending University requirement that we have an overall capstone for the College as part of university-wide initiative called UC||21. As this UC|21 capstone is developed, the College will develop the assessment vehicle to go along with it.

In our MBA program the assessment has been through the evaluation of performance of a required capstone experience in which the students are required to apply what they have learned to real world problems. Such a vehicle continues to be used in the part-time MBA program. Full-time students are required to successfully complete the Comprehensive Hands-on Integrative Management Experience (CHIME), a common ongoing cross-functional business project that will be inter-woven throughout the first three quarters of the curriculum. The goal of the CHIME is to provide students (a) perspective on the role of functional tools in general management problem solving, (b) hands-on experience at applying functional course material to the solution of a real-world cross-functional business problem, (c) experience at organizing, leading, managing, and working in teams, and (d) a common anchor throughout the program that facilitates coordination across courses and faculty. The final output of the CHIME will satisfy the university's requirement for a "capstone" experience. In addition, all full-time students are required to compete in a case competition where the finals are judged by invited business professionals who provide feedback to the students regarding their performance and to the faculty regarding how well the program has prepared the students.

Further Results of Terminating the Bachelor of Science in Applied Business degree by the College of Evening and Continuing Education

Admissions to the Bachelor of Science in Applied Business degree were closed in 2002. Because of the part-time nature of the program "legacy students" were initially given until 2006 to complete the degree requirements under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences. (Under a university-wide reorganization, the College of Evening and Continuing Education, which was the home of the BSAB program, and University College—a two-year college on the main campus—were eliminated and the degree programs housed in those two colleges were transferred to the College of Applied Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, or the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services.)

The College of Arts and Sciences, which received the BSBA program, requested and the University granted an extension of the deadline for full closure of the Bachelor of Science in Applied Business from 2006 to 2008. The reason for the extension is a relatively large number of legacy students who could not meet the 2006 deadline. The transition of the Bachelor of Science in Applied Business from the College of Evening and Continuing Education to the College of Arts and Sciences was far from smooth. Students were left in limbo about what they needed to do to continue on in the BSAB program. As a result, many fell behind on any already slow graduation schedule. The problems have been addressed, but the students have been unable to catch-up; hence, the need for the delay in the final termination of the BSAB program. The College of Business has been assured that there will be no additional extensions for legacy students.

Attachment 1

Centennial Plan

See separate document.

Attachment 2

Centennial Plan Design Team Charges and Coordination

See separate document.

Attachment 3

Lindner Hall Remodeling and Expansion Plan

Only a hard copy is available.

Attachment 4

UC|21 Report

See separate document.

Attachment 5

Enhancement of Distance Learning and Presentation Facilities

See separate document.

Attachment 6

College of Business Centers

See separate document.

Attachment 7

College of Business General Education Assessment Rubrics

See separate document.