

# **Annual Maintenance Report: 2007-2008**

**Review of 2007-2008 Academic Year  
University of Cincinnati  
College of Business  
Will McIntosh, Dean**

## **I. Progress Update**

### **Overview**

The University of Cincinnati (UC) College of Business (CoB) has continued to strengthen program improvement and quality assurance practices in alignment with AACSB accreditation standards. Undergraduate enrollment increased by approximately 14.4 percent year over year from 2,296 to 2,627. The College welcomed a large freshmen class of 414 during the autumn of 2007. The average ACT composite score of the entering freshmen class remained steady at 24 for the Autumn of 2007.

Graduate student head count increased year over year from 521 to 541. The full-time MBA cohort average GMAT score decreased by 23 points from 596 to 573 for the Autumn 2007 entering class.

### **Strategic Planning**

The College made significant progress on elements of our strategic plan during the 2007-2008 academic year. At the undergraduate level we implemented a new curriculum structure.

Additionally, we increased undergraduate student support with the addition of one academic advisor and one career services advisor to the staff. The 2007-2008 academic year was one of major progress for the College's honors programs. The Business Scholars program received a commitment of financial support from a friend of the College and was renamed the Marvin P. Kolodzik Business Scholars program. Dr. Marianne Lewis, management, was named the Academic Director of the program and has begun the process of building students in the program into a community of scholars through group activities and projects. The program has 140 students enrolled and will continue to accept transfer students throughout the year.

Continued efforts to improve and expand space for the College of Business have advanced this year as the College obtained architectural drawings and cost estimates to pursue a "Center for Centers" for the College. Such a building would house units such as the Career Services Center to support students and College research centers such as the Center for Entrepreneurship Education and Research, the Goering Center for Family and Private Business and the Economics Center for Education and Research. Next steps in this process will be secure donor funding commitments and vetting architectural plans.

Space inside Lindner Hall is also benefiting from concentrated efforts of the Strategic Plan. Full-time MBA students were welcomed by a completely renovated classroom this fall. New carpets, new chairs, updated décor, laptop support and enhanced video conferencing tools were all part of the renovation. The space will provide students with a more comfortable and better equipped learning environment.

Funding has also been pursued for a renovation of the buildings' large auditorium. This space is used heavily for core undergraduate courses and sustains major foot traffic. An initial donor is in place and the College will pursue architectural plans to work within this budget. A target date for the renovation has been set for the summer quarter of 2010.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the strategic plan being put into place at the College level is the pursuit of completing accumulated one-time and permanent budget cuts placed on the College by the University. The College successfully completed 50 percent of these cuts this academic year and has set a plan into motion that will successfully wipe these debts off the books in the 2008-2009 academic year.

### **Undergraduate Curriculum Revision**

Another major piece of the College's Strategic Plan was put into place during the 2007-2008 academic year. The College adopted a curriculum structure that transformed the focus/integral system to a major/minor system. Undergraduate BBA students will now have the opportunity to major in one of nine disciplines – accounting, business administration, entrepreneurship, finance, information systems, international business, marketing, operations management and real estate. This shift to a major-based curriculum design allows our students to gain more depth in their discipline and develop skills in their area of specialization. The new major in business administration was designed specifically to cater to the College's evening student audience, particularly targeting students already in the workplace that are returning for a degree that will help them advance in their career.

To satisfy the needs of other UC students, the curriculum revision also incorporates six minors available to students outside the College: entrepreneurship, finance, international business, information systems, marketing and real estate. Minor requirements mirror those of the majors, but rather than taking all of the business core courses, non-College of Business students only take the prerequisites for the classes they choose to take for the minor. Students outside the College who already have earned a bachelor's degree can earn a certificate in the same areas as the minors (with the exception of international business) by meeting the same requirements as an undergraduate student pursuing a minor.

The new curriculum also offers concentrations to all – inside and outside of the College – students. A concentration involves 12 to 16 credit hours in a specific discipline, allowing College of Business students to add a second area of expertise without having to take more credit hours than required for graduation. The concentration requirements usually consist of those three to four classes that are required courses for the major, although there are some options for electives within the concentrations. Students outside the College must also take any prerequisites for their concentration courses.

The curriculum redesign also increased the academic standards for students wishing to enter the College of Business. Under the old standards, entering freshmen only needed to maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. to continue in the College. Transfer students, on the other hand, were required to have a 2.5 G.P.A. to enter the College. The curriculum redesign brought more equality to these two groups. Freshmen still can be admitted to the College without a 2.5, but will now enter as pre-majors and must earn admission to their major the same way transfer students must earn admission into the College. (The exception is students in the Carl H. Lindner Honors-PLUS and Marvin P. Kolodzik Business Scholars programs, who are admitted directly to their desired major.)

A variety of experiences, including First Year Experience, Business Pathways courses and business core courses, introduce students to the different majors available. If they have not done so already, students declare a specific pre-major at the start of their sophomore year. They then co-op in their chosen area and apply for admission to the major, typically at the end of the sophomore year. A student must complete 75 degree-applicable credit hours and earn a 2.5 G.P.A. in business courses to be admitted to their selected major.

The curriculum revision also allowed the College to migrate courses from a three credit hour structure to a four credit hour structure. This change allows greater coverage of course material and added topics to courses. The new structure also poises the College to easily transition from a quarter to semester system when the University makes that transition. Overall, the revisions to the undergraduate curriculum allow the College to provide more depth of specialization to students, better job candidates to employers and opportunities for a wide range of students to enroll in College of Business courses and programs.

### **Admissions Changes**

The majority of the College's enrollment growth can be attributed to growth in undergraduate enrollment, despite admissions criteria changes. The University of Cincinnati increased admissions standards to require that incoming students be in the top 70 percent of their graduating class (up 5 percent) and have a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.6 or higher (up from 2.5). The College of Business successfully recruited a larger, high-achieving freshmen class.

### **Faculty Recruiting**

The College added two, full-time, tenure-track faculty members to the roster this fall. Dr. Hui Guo, Finance and Dr. Dong-Gil Ko both joined the College as Assistant Professors.

### **Program Goals and Outcomes Assessment**

Further assessment of undergraduate programs led to the closure of the BBA Extend program formerly offered by the College. The program will continue to offer courses through 2008-2009 to allow students at the UC branch campuses the opportunity to complete their degree program.

Analysis of enrollment at the graduate level led to the closure of several graduate degree programs including the Master of Science program in Finance and the Master of Science program in Tax. Additionally, the part-time MBA program at our satellite location in Blue Ash was closed and the Spring cohort of the Uptown campus MBA program was eliminated. These changes will allow the College to decrease the number of course sections offered and better utilize tenure-track faculty members to meet course coverage needs throughout the College. We expect to see a decrease in graduate enrollment in the coming year due to these closures.

## **II. Priority Update**

### **Faculty Development**

Increased efforts to support faculty teaching and research were enhanced by the funding of three endowed chair positions within the College. The Marjorie A. & Norwood C. Geis Chair in Accounting will be used to support the search for a department head of the CoB Department of Accounting. Additionally, funds from donors have been committed for two new chairs in Finance. The creation of these chairs will be finalized over the next year and recruiting will begin to fill the positions.

In order to better track and maintain faculty vita and research records, the College has subscribed to electronic data collecting services from Digital Measures. The company provides online database hosting and is a useful tool for managing faculty data related to AACSB reporting. To further support the implementation of this system, the College hired Robin Brinkman as the Assistant Director of Business Affairs. Ms. Brinkman will manage data collection and input, as well as using the data to populate College-wide reports.

### **Student Recruiting**

The College is currently negotiating with University administration the possibility of offering a metropolitan tuition rate for residents of Northern Kentucky and Southeastern Indiana. Many UC alumni from these areas note an interest in sending their children to UC, but are concerned with high out-of-state tuition rates. If successful in implementing such a rate, the College will focus marketing efforts on recruiting high-achieving students from these areas to complement our two honors programs, as well as general population students. We anticipate a slow increase in students from these areas, but how long-term marketing and recruiting efforts can turn these geographical areas into ones for admission growth in the College of Business.

### **Graduate Programs**

The College continues down the path of creating a new MBA curriculum that better leverages College and University strengths to offer students a unique MBA opportunity. A team of faculty and staff are continuing to vet ideas and curriculum plans to develop a successful program outline. The 2008-2009 academic year will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the College's MBA program. We will plan a series of events designed to reconnect and engage MBA alumni with the College.

### **III. Assurance of Learning**

#### **Undergraduate Programs**

The UC CoB participates in the annual assessment of student performance over the general education core contained in bachelor's degree programs. This assessment involves direct assessment at the student level over four dimensions: Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Knowledge Integration and Social Responsibility. Rubrics are measured over a five point scale with a value of five associated with excellence.

Assessment is performed in the capstone courses of each discipline within the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree, plus the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management (BSIM) degree. Data was collected this year from Accounting, Marketing and Operations Management. Altogether, 268 students were assessed. Ratings clustered around 3.7 and differed little over the four dimensions.

Professional Practice (Co-op) obtains employer assessments for each student that participates in the program at two points: entry and exit. For those students that exited co-op during 2006-2008, the average assessment score when entering was 4.37 and it rose to 4.68 upon exit. Significant performance gains were observed in use of technology, speaking, listening and career planning.

#### **Graduate Programs**

Assessment at the graduate level varies by degree program, but ultimately is assessed during a culmination capstone project, thesis or dissertation.

The MS Accounting Program uses the course entitled Strategic Cost Management (22 ACCT 882) to assess students. This course includes oral presentations by teams of students involving current topics in management accounting, written critiques of recent readings and cases in management accounting, and a formal paper written by individual students on a current topic in management. This course must be completed with a passing grade to graduate from the MS Accounting Program. Thirty-five students completed the capstone course and paper successfully during the 2007-2008 academic year.

MS Information Systems students must complete an industry experience component near the end of their program that shows mastery of the skills and concepts of the program. This component can be completed through any of the following three options. First, students can work on a research project under the supervision of an IS faculty. This might be the preferred way for someone who wants to later pursue a PhD, so far no students have followed this option. Second, part-time students can work on a project that is related to his/her current work under the supervision of an IS faculty. Examples of this approach would be the development of a SharePoint portal for the organization, modeling of the processes for an organizational function, or the development of new systems for the company. Those are projects that go beyond the regular workload of the part-time student. Finally, students may pursue a co-op with firms such as SAP, Citigroup, Convergys, itelligence, and dunnhumby, among many others. In that option, full-time students work for six months to obtain work experience in exceptional companies.

Many of the coop placements eventually lead to full-time positions for students. The coop option is completed by the majority of our full time students. In all cases, students have to present the outcomes of their industry experience in a seminar. The evaluation of these students take in consideration the richness of the experience, their performance in the firm (via direct informal feedback from the employers) or in the research project, and their seminar presentation. In 2007-2008, 29 full-time students successfully completed the coop option.

The new MS Marketing degree requires that students complete a six month Integrated Capstone Learning experience, a critical pedagogical differentiator of the program. Students complete a 400-hour, individually-based strategic marketing consultation project for local businesses and non-profit organizations. During the context of this 20-week experience, external partners provide four “rounds” of individual level feedback for students. This year, 17 students successfully completed their consulting projects.

The MS Quantitative Analysis program completed the first round of assessment of students graduating from this new program through the creation of a research project by each student. The research Project is required for all students. The purpose is to ensure that graduates can carry out successful research on a QA topic, write a paper describing that research and its results, and give an open, professional oral presentation/defense of the project. Projects consist of new work and use a broad spectrum of research paradigms including but not limited to theoretical research, applied research, case studies, data collection and analyses. Nine students successfully completed this process in 2006-2007.

After considerable student feedback and faculty discussion, the College terminated CHIME for the 2007-2008 academic year. The yearlong format and prolonged period of team gestation and project discovery did not mesh well with the intense and urgent character of the curriculum. In its place we allowed students to provide a capstone akin to the company analysis in the part-time program, but encouraged students to propose an integrative project within their interest area, executed with faculty member approval in a project-driven elective or area-specific individual study class. In addition, the College elected to participate in the inaugural ACG Cup, a challenging M&A case competition in 2008 sponsored by Cincinnati’s chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth; students were allowed to use this as a capstone experience. All told, 47 students met the capstone requirements in 07-08, with 40% using the ACG Cup.

The doctoral program assesses student performance annually. Satisfactory progress in the development of research skills and discipline knowledge are required for continuation in the program.

In addition to annual performance reviews, doctoral students are subject to comprehensive exams and dissertation defenses in the latter portion of their academic program. Seven students completed and passed comprehensive exams during the year. Additionally, eight students successfully defended their dissertation.