

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT TO BOARD OF REGENTS

Institution: Dakota State University

Department or School: Graduate School, College of Business and Information Systems

Program(s) Reviewed: MS in Information Assurance and Computer Security

Date of Review: March 3, 2014

Please identify the program reviewers and any external accrediting body:

Dr. Ray Vaughn, Vice President for Research, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

A. Describe the strengths and weaknesses identified by the reviewers.

Strengths identified by the reviewer included the 4+1 Graduate Program, which allows students to obtain a MS in 5 years. Our strong hands-on components of the program were also highlighted as a strength. This includes our Information Assurance (IA) virtual lab. Other strengths include very dedicated, hardworking and technically competent faculty, hands-on exercises for students integrated into all classes, strong distance learning participation, national credentials and a good assessment program.

Opportunities for improvement include the “extraordinary high teaching loads that the faculty are assigned, the lack of institutional support for research by the faculty, and an apparent below average salary structure.” In addition the reviewer also noted that there needs to be more assessment data collected on distance students’ graduation rates and persistence in DSU programs. Other weaknesses include structured distance learning modules that use more modern distance education approaches, a request to change the name to MS in Cyber Security, and faculty diversity was noted as female and minority populations are not represented equally in terms of faculty numbers.

B. Briefly summarize the review recommendations.

Overall the reviewer identifies the following areas for improvements:

- Need for teaching load reduction to accommodate research time
- Structure distance learning modules using more modern techniques rather than simply recording lectures and posting them on a web site.
- Assessment data should include graduation rates, persistence, and retention of distance students separate from on-campus students.
- Consider changing the name of the MSIA program to MS Cyber Security (a more current term)
- Consider forming a faculty committee to look at overlap/duplication between various IS/IA programs
- Faculty diversity appears to need improvement- female and minority populations are weak.
- Consider technology refreshment in IA laboratory

C. Indicate the present and continuing actions to be taken by the college or department to address the issues raised by the review. What outcomes are anticipated as a result of these actions?

There are a number of actions that the university is undertaking to address the issues raised by the review including:

- To handle the need to manage the faculty workload, the institution is hiring additional graduate faculty members coupled with actively managing the teaching workload for faculty teaching in graduate programs. Moreover, as part of an Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) project, the institution is embarking on a project that is aimed at optimizing faculty schedules to accommodate research time. We expect these initiatives will result in manageable teaching loads that will allow time for research activities.
- DSU has a number of resources to support the development of innovative distance delivery modules. This includes the Office of Extended Programs with in-house expertise in distance delivery, the College of Education with graduate faculty supporting its Master in Educational Technology, and a Professional Development institutional committee. The program will take proactive measures to ensure that its entire faculty leverages these resources to continue to provide innovative delivery modes for its courses.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness currently collects data on graduation rates. There is already an ongoing project to extend the data collection to include persistence and retention which can be further segmented by delivery mechanism.
- The program committee will have conversations regarding the reviewer's suggestion to change the name of the MSIA program to MS Cyber Security.
- Many of the MSIA program faculty are also members of other graduate programs' committees at DSU. This ensures that curriculum discussions in any one program do not result in duplications across programs. Moreover, DSU's Graduate Council oversees and approves all curriculum changes providing an added measure against duplication.
- The institution recognizes the issue of faculty diversity and every effort is taken to address this issue. Given the composition of the faculty in the computer science and related areas, the institution recognizes that this is a long-term endeavor.
- DSU continues to invest in its information technology infrastructure and the IA lab is no exception.

Submitted by: Ashley P. Adiradony

Reviewed by: Richard O. Pruitt
Interim Dean of the College of Business and Information Systems

Approved by: Judy L. Dittman
Vice President for Academic Affairs