

MBA Committee Meeting Minutes
Warrington College of Business Administration
Friday, 2/11/11
2PM
HGS338

Members attending: Deb Mitra (chair), Selcuk Erenguc, Joel Houston, Sandy Berg, Virginia Maurer, Deb Garvin, Kenny Cheng, Alex Sevilla

Also attending: Brian Ray, Gwendolyn Lee, Tawnya Means, Kara Cupoli & Christine Wilson

I. Approval of Fall 2010 meeting minutes

- Edit on page 1, last paragraph, Dr. Maurer quote.

II. Curriculum Items

Adam Gross' petition to substitute Integrated Technology Ventures for MAN6537 was approved by the committee.

Dr. Maurer motioned to approve all Marketing courses towards MBA degree and marketing concentration. Dr. Mitra asked the group if this was a one-time approval, and the committee agreed to approve on a one-time basis.

Securities Trading (FIN6585) was approved, and the following FIN 6930 courses were approved on a one-time basis: Emerging Markets I & II, Advanced Derivatives, Asset Allocation & Investment Strategy, Capitalism, Derivatives Pricing, Investment Finance, Securities Trading, and Mergers & Acquisitions. Real Estate Development (REE 6930) was approved on a one-time basis.

III. MBA Grading Policy draft memo

Alex requested feedback from the committee on the memo distributed. He also wanted to ensure the tone was appropriate. Dr. Selcuk asked if the issue was loose grading, or level of rigor? Dr. Maurer noted the full-time students felt the curriculum was unchallenging, as explained during a discussion between her and a group of students. Alex agreed that this sentiment was historically expressed by students and is the driving force for this initiative, but the original goal was to increase content rigor, not shift grading scale to accommodate. Dr. Berg was disappointed to hear that about courses, and suggested using the term "challenge" versus "rigor" to describe intent.

Dr. Houston noted that he has noticed MBA's are performing better and better (and at times could probably even trade out of certain Finance courses), but other business graduate students have a more challenging time in comparison. Alex asked if we should be more stringent when encouraging the faculty, and Selcuk suggested using student statements in reasoning behind initiative. Dr. Mitra asked if these issues were felt in both elective and core courses, and Alex explained they were but the issue with elective courses was more complicated due to mixed fields. Findings and results should be showcased and eventually incorporated into elective course structure. Alex will revise memo, send to Dr. Mitra, and it will then be shared with the committee for electronic discussion and approval. Once approved, it will be sent to faculty. Dr. Erenguc asked if the overall grading policy goal (3.5 maximum mean GPA) was met, and Alex responded that it was. Dr. Erenguc then asked if MBA core courses were comprised of only MBA students, and Alex replied they were.

Kara shared the MSM grade data, as requested by the committee at the last meeting. Dr. Maurer pointed out the vast differences in Business Law course grades through the various times of years. Dr. Houston noted the MBA students were getting stronger, and poised the issue of teaching the same course two different ways, depending upon student audience. He also noted that the MSM program advertises their degree as being comparable to an MBA, yet they simultaneously encourage faculty to be more lenient when grading. Alex noted that these extreme curves are what removes the divide between exceptional/non-exceptional, and caution should be taken when marketing an MSM degree as an MBA, considering the lack of work experience requirements. Dr. Erenguc said we cannot offer two different sets of criteria for the same course, and the biggest issue lies in elective courses; there is currently not enough demand for these courses for them to be MBA-only.

Dr. Houston mentioned the issue of waiving experienced students out of core courses, and Dr. Berg pointed out that this ultimately decreases cohort cohesiveness, which is important. Alex noted that it is not advertised, but possible. The main concern is altering their core experience; since this is typically the most positive experience of the program, we wouldn't want to degrade it. Dr. Maurer also pointed out that waiving out of courses affects group/teams aspect. Dr. Erenguc suggested that once number of concentrations offered is reduced, MBA-only electives may be more of a possibility. Alex agreed, noting that reducing number of concentrations from 21 to four or five could be very beneficial in many ways. This discussion will be tabled for the next meeting agenda.

IV. Assurance of Learning

Dr. Lee presented her proposed plan for assessment of AoL: In the capstone course, a TA will be handling the grading. This ISOM doctoral student is expected to be knowledgeable in business courses, and will be equipped to grade both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The grading period will consist of time between questions being asked and material delivered. There will be a two hour period during final exam week to collect data. It is a small window, but essentially the only time possible. Questions will still be based on Samsung case, which will be distributed to students in course packet at the beginning of module. Not too much information will be supplied on how to prepare for the assessment. Will discuss in course on 4/21 so case is fresh, and hopefully discussion will benefit students. Sole objective of assessment is to be open and transparent through data collection.

Dr. Maurer asked if the goal was for students to implement ideas learned in core to apply across specific case content, and Dr. Berg clarified that AoL is to ensure students are able to apply information learned in core courses, and determine the areas in which they are performing well. Dr. Maurer said she could identify legal issues within Samsung case, but she is not teaching the material in core Law class, since case would be classified as International Law. Dr. Ray pointed out that AoL was a way for the college to strategically plan and determine quality of faculty. The group then discussed how AoL focuses on material taught in core courses and assessment questions are shared with AACSB. The AACSB wants institutions to have a process in place, and some form of assessment to measure performance. They also check to see if process is systematic, faculty driven, and sustainable. Dr. Ray pointed out that the AoL enables programs to realize levels of achievement across various disciplines (i.e.: MBA's may spend more time on public speaking than other programs, therefore adjustments can be made once results are received). Tawnya also noted that the AACSB does not expect higher scores the second time around due to evolving curriculum. In fact, scores may be lower in the event course rigor increases after first assessment. Additionally, not all objectives need to be assessed every time; we could measure two objectives the first time, and measure two entirely different objectives the second. She then went on to say that AACSB was simply looking to see we have a process in place and that key stakeholders are involved in the conversation about what to do with the assessment data once received.

Dr. Maurer asked how many assessment questions she should provide (since some examples had two, and others had 15), and in what format. Dr. Lee responded that the TA will review answer key with individual faculty members and will be charged with thoroughly knowing questions, any possible answers, and how to work all problems. Turnitin will be used in order to maintain honor code. Dr. Mitra pointed out that Turnitin could not be used for multiple choice questions. Participation points will be given, but no grade. Dr. Houston then suggested simplifying the process big time, to keep students engaged. Dr. Lee reminded the committee that content can be improved with time. Dr. Ray agreed that linking questions to case helps and looks good to AACSB committee. Alex pointed out that the more related the questions are to the case, the more likely students will be engaged and put forth maximum effort. He also mentioned the issue of a lack of scoring system, and students doing their bare minimum to pass. Tawnya pointed out that it may backfire to tell students assessment strengthens program; students may not want program rigor to increase. Dr. Ray said it was not a failure to receive assessment data that isn't usable, just means it will be improved upon next time. Dr. Mitra noted that multiple choice questions don't go well with the case, and Dr. Lee explained that as long as it was in context, it will work. Dr. Houston then confirmed that questions should be straightforward and simple and doable by 75% of students, and the group agreed. Dr. Lee said students would have access to their notes, book, and computers during the assessment. Dr. Garvin asked if supplemental material to accompany questions was okay, and Dr. Lee said it was. Timeline for submitting assessment questions to Dr. Lee is mid-March.

V. Draft Proposal of Curriculum Design Project

Alex provided the committee with a brief timeline of the project, including benchmarking visits to other programs. He asked for suggestions for other programs that excel in various ways. Dr. Garvin noted that a tax course included in the curriculum would be beneficial. Dr. Berg asked if language courses could be realistic in a two year program, and Alex explained he was considering third party to provide language teaching. Dr. Maurer asked if any programs had a language requirement, and Alex said Thunderbird did. Dr. Berg suggesting utilizing connections of international students to make program more global. Dr. Maurer added that some programs send first year students to foreign countries to work. Dr. Berg noted that many programs on campus could be taken up a level by MBA's, and they could potentially benefit from their attention.

Dr. Erenguc asked if concentration tracks would be discussed, and Alex replied they would be discussed at a later date. Dr. Maurer wondered if once concentrations were decreased if there would be room for students to take interesting electives, and Alex explained it would ultimately be up to students to decide on electives. She then asked if this would change recruiting, and Alex replied it would. Explained the "jack of all trade" stance is not helping, and it would be nice to offer more in-depth coverage of fewer areas. Dr. Mitra asked how it would affect business school faculty, and suggested building upon technological innovation. Dr. Maurer advised against doing away with strengths (marketing, finance, etc).

Meeting Adjourned (minutes – Christine Wilson)