

August 30, 2006

To: Suzanne Ortega  
University of Washington  
Vice Provost and Dean, The Graduate School

Melissa A. Austin  
Associate Dean for Academic Programs

From: Shahrokh Saudagaran  
Dean and Professor, Milgard School of Business  
University of Washington, Tacoma

Re: Response to the Graduate School Review Committee Report

We take this opportunity to thank the members of the Review Committee and the Graduate School staff for their time and effort on our behalf. We appreciate their thorough and thoughtful review as well as their helpful feedback.

The Review Committee's Report was received on June 1, 2006 and was subsequently forwarded to faculty, staff, and executive committee members of our Business Advisory Board. All of these groups had the opportunity to provide input into our Program Review document before it was submitted to the Graduate School.

The faculty had an all-day retreat to discuss and respond to the Review Committee's report. The entire staff also met to discuss and respond to the report. We also have received comments from Business Advisory Board members. Save for the corrections stated below, the Review Committee's Report appeared accurate.

We will comment as needed on each section of the report. Therefore, lack of comment regarding a particular section means we are in agreement with the content as contained in the report.

**Executive Summary (p. 2-4)**

We concur with the recommendations made by the Review Committee and will speak to specific concerns later in our response. We agree that "Building research culture without sacrificing academic student centered program quality teaching excellence" will be a major challenge in the years ahead. The faculty discussed this and agreed to work on a strategic vision for the School that deals with this tension. It will also be stressed in the feedback and mentoring of the junior faculty. We will start this process in Autumn 2006.

We thank the review committee for their many positive statements regarding the strengths of MSB.

**Faculty** (p. 4-8)

During the 2005-06 academic year, we actually had 18 full-time faculty, including 3 senior lecturers. Typically we have 5 to 6 adjuncts teaching approximately 25 courses.

*Ranking of School relative to Peer Institution* (p. 5)

The faculty plans to undertake a study to identify peer institutions as part of our strategic planning exercise.

*Productivity* (p. 5)

The faculty will initiate a research forum beginning in the Autumn 2006. We believe that we now have a sufficient number of faculty members to support such a program. Faculty of both UWS and UWB will be invited and we will continue to encourage MSB faculty to attend seminars at those campuses as well.

*Promotion and Tenure* (p. 7)

The statistical data presented in this section are factually incorrect. In the past five years, six individuals (not seven as stated in the report) have gone up for tenure and promotion. Only one has been denied, two have been promoted, one chose to become a senior lecturer prior to completing the process, one chose to resign, and one was given a one-year extension. We are puzzled as to why the committee selected the last five years when all of the tenure cases at MSB have taken place over the last six years and all under the same guidelines. The two cases in 2000, the previous year, were both successful.

Excluding the extension case, the MSB has a denial rate of 14 % and not the 70 % mentioned in the report.

It was also asserted “that one individual left knowing he would not receive tenure.” It is impossible to know whether that is true or not since that individual is no longer at UWT. Moreover, even if that were his/her perception, since the person left voluntarily before applying for tenure we will never know whether that perception was correct.

While there are differences of opinion amongst senior MSB faculty with regards to research output and quality, as there is in most academic departments, that difference does not fall along disciplinary lines or length of service. In only one tenure and promotion decision has a vote been anything other than unanimous.

The senior faculty has worked hard to convey the tenure and promotion expectations and apply the criteria as consistency as possible. They are committed to continuing that as the department grows.

*Recommendations* (p. 8)

We agree with the recommendations and have already begun incorporating some into our program.

We are puzzled by the recommendation that “Senior lectures should receive unambiguous multi-year terms of employment” since they already do and have for several years.

**MBA Program** (p. 9-10)

The CFA track is the Chartered Financial Analyst track (not ‘Certified’ as reported). The eight students who took the exam in June were undergraduates. The first set of MBA students that opt for the CFA track will be eligible to take the exam in June 2007.

**Undergraduate Program** (p. 10-12)

We were very pleased to hear that the undergraduate students were overall very pleased with the program. We are also aware of the “minor complaints” expressed. In regard to electives, we have been somewhat a victim of our own success. With the rapid rise in the number of students this has required that we offer more sections of core classes to keep the class size down, an important characteristic of our program. Unfortunately this has reduced the number of electives we can offer.

As for Excel, we are increasing the number of classes that use Excel every year. It is now an integral part of the Quantitative Reasoning class (a core class). Dr. Parker recently introduced numerous Excel exercises into her Cost Accounting (TACCT 311) course as has Dr. Davalos in his Introduction to Information Technology (TBUS 330) core offering. In response to concerns by employers, Dr. Davalos developed a course Financial Models with Visual Basic for Applications and Excel (TIS 420).

*Impact of Change to four year campus* (p. 11)

We will fully participate in the lower division general curriculum offerings to the extent that resources allow and it makes academic sense. We are going to offer a full slate of courses that are prerequisites for the business program. This includes accounting, economics, statistics, and law; all of these classes will be available to the entire student population on campus.

*Recommendations* (p. 12)

While tracing the careers of our graduates is a long-term goal, it will not be possible to do so until there are more resources for staffing.

The number of concentrations was reduced two years ago in response to lower student interest and to be more efficient in our hiring practice. We felt it was possible to more

easily obtain sufficient depth in four concentration areas (Accounting, Finance, Management, and Marketing).

#### **Staff (p. 12-13)**

We are pleased that the staff was uniformly praised as we believe the professionalism of our staff is one of the single most important reasons for the success of the program.

We fully support the recommendation that the university provide more funds for staffing. As our FTE numbers have risen dramatically over the last several years there has not been a commensurate increase in staff support. We are now at the point that current staffing resources cannot support any further growth without a serious risk of a decline in the quality of service we provide our students.

#### **Department Culture and Climate (p. 13-14)**

More faculty meetings are planned for the upcoming academic year. In addition to our monthly one-hour faculty meeting an additional three-hour meeting is scheduled for each term. The three-hour meetings will allow us to deal with more general strategic issues.

#### **Role within University and Community (p. 14-16)**

The Business Advisory Board has been rejuvenated under Dean Saudagaran's leadership and plays an active role in our program. Our close relationship with the local business community is one of our great strengths and every effort will be made to see that this relationship continues to grow.

We remain willing to offer a Business Minor and have had a faculty taskforce examine its feasibility and the resources required to provide a quality program. Our conclusion was similar to the Graduate Review Committee's in that it would take incremental resources since we currently do not have the resources to offer a Business Minor without seriously jeopardizing other aspects of our program.

The Dean expressed a commitment at the Faculty Retreat to explore with UWS cooperative ventures in advertising and marketing.

#### **Conclusion (p. 16)**

Again, we thank the Review Team for its thoroughness and for listening to and hearing us. We take its feedback and recommendations seriously and will continue to do whatever possible to maintain our excellence. We take great pride in our program and will continue to work to serve all of our constituents as best we can with the resources available to us.