**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2015-16**

**Department:** Accounting / Economics (ACC/ECO)

**Date of Review:** February 25, 2016

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Chad Atkinson, Manager, Research, Analytics and Reporting

Matt Cole, CPA, Owner, Matthew Cole, CPA LLC

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Nate Goodrich, Assistant Professor, Civil Architectural Technology

Jim Greenspan, Chair, Accountancy, Raj Soin College of Business, Wright State

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Laura Hinkebein, Advising Manager, Academic Advising

Jeanine Kincheloe, Assistant Professor, Design

Terry Larson, Assistant Professor, Dental Health Sciences

Jan Mains, Professor/Chair, Nursing

Matt Massie, Manager, Student and Community Engagement

Keri Nunn-Ellison, Division Assessment Coordinator, Health Sciences

Shari Rethman, Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication, and Social Sciences

**Department Members Present:**

Sue Merrell Daley, Dean, Business and Public Services

Rick Andrews, Professor/Chair, Accounting and Economics

**Department Members Present**:

Donna Chadwick

Ribhi Daoud

Ken “Chip” Hodges

Robert Menafee

Jackie Meyers

Jeff Vance

**Commendations**:

* The Review Team was impressed by the spirit of teamwork and camaraderie that was evident among faculty in the department. The faculty are a cohesive unit that is united in working together toward the common goal of meeting the educational needs of its students. The department gives every appearance of having the kind of inter-relationships that allow faculty to be forthright with each other, without letting differences of opinion hinder the functioning of the department or lessen the strength of the relationships between its members. This department is a model of a well-functioning department whose members operate in an environment of cooperation and collaboration towards a common goal.
* In addition, the composition of the faculty is such that even with a relatively small number of faculty, there is a wide breadth of expertise across subfields of Accounting and Economics. The department has managed to assemble a set of faculty optimally positioned to meet the various curricular needs of the students it serves.
* This spirit of collaboration was clearly visible in the self-study document. The self-study that was developed was a model of inter-departmental collaboration, and the involvement of all faculty in its preparation was the embodiment of how the process is supposed to work in terms of inter-departmental engagement. It is the thought of the Review Team that the self-study and the collaborative process that produced it can both be held up as a model for other departments to follow who are undergoing Program Review.
* The department has an outstanding commitment to the success of its students. In fact, it is fair to say it has a commitment to the success of all students - when students express an interest in a career in accounting, department personnel counsel with students and will often advise them into the division's transfer program rather than their own department's program if they determine that best serves the needs and goals of the student. This department truly has a passion for helping students succeed. They recognize and respond to the needs of their students - ensuring that required courses are available during both day and night, staffing an open lab to give their students the extra help they need to successfully complete their courses, and engaging in other student-oriented activities indicative of their drive to do all they can to help students succeed. It is clear that the department views its activities and efforts through the lens of "what is best for the student".
* One important aspect of this drive to help students succeed is the outstanding job this department does in finding internships for its students. While not discussed at length in the meeting with the Review Team, this practice has a strong positive impact on the development of their students and their opportunities to find full-time employment.
* Not only did the department do a superb job of using data in the self-study to support the narrative, they presented that data in a manner that was straightforward and easy to understand. The charts and graphs included in the self-study made it easy to connect the data to the point that was being made in the narrative. It is a remarkable thing to find a department so dedicated to the use of data - it is even more remarkable to find a department that is so adept at the presentation of that data in an easily understandable and reader-friendly manner.
* Generally departments undergoing Program Review receive a recommendation to improve their assessment efforts - the Accounting department instead merits high commendations for the assessment work the department is already doing. Not only is it clear that General Education assessment is ongoing, the department has several years' of trend data for each General Education outcome. Clearly the department takes General Education seriously, and goes to great lengths to document student mastery of its outcomes. Similarly, the department does a marvelous job of documenting student mastery of program outcomes, and is able to provide several years' worth of data indicating how well students are achieving these outcomes. The Review Team was very, very impressed by the assessment work the department is doing, which is probably facilitated in no small measure by some of the common assignments and activities between different sections of the same course that the department utilizes.
* The department has made innovative steps to increase completion of students, both for students in its own program and in other programs. The ACC 1100 course that was developed as a substitute for ACC 1210 in programs where a less rigorous course in Accounting is appropriate is an excellent example of interdepartmental collaboration and responding to the needs of other departments in the college. The pioneering work utilizing a hybrid model that the department has done is highly commendable, and it is further commendable that the department has the data that allows it to understand the kind of students who benefit from a hybrid approach, and those who perhaps don't to the same extent.
* In demonstrating external evidence of program quality, the department took the unusual step of surveying other departments to find out how well they were meeting their needs. This was an impressive indication that the department seeks feedback on how well it is meeting the needs of other departments, and sets an excellent example for other departments to follow.
* It should be noted that the faculty go the extra mile in maintaining currency in their knowledge of their field. Each of the faculty maintain their CPA status, even though it is not a requirement for employment, displaying a strong dedication to remaining active and current in their discipline.
* The department took the Program Review process very seriously as an opportunity for continuous improvement. When it received the comments from the Program Review team, not only did the department meet to discuss the comments prior to the meeting with the Review Team, they also took the unprecedented step of preparing a written response to those comments. Moreover, at the end of the meeting with the Review Team the department chair provided a list of things the department felt should be part of the recommendations from the Review Team. This list was so insightful and well thought-out that these suggestions form the majority of the Review Team recommendations provided later in this document. The level of self-reflection displayed in this recommendations speaks well of the department's ability to recognize areas of opportunity for improvement and develop strategies to move in that direction. They showed a remarkable willingness to change and an openness to constructive suggestions as a result of the things that emerged during the Program Review process, which speaks to their commitment to continuous improvement.
* A word that came to mind in the Review Team discussions after the meeting with the department was service. This is a department that is committed to serving many stakeholders. It serves both students who seek the AAS programs it offers and the students it directs to other programs that better meet their needs. It serves other departments who rely on its ACC 1100 and 1210 offerings as part of their curricula. It serves students who already have a higher level degree who are seeking to enhance their job skills and marketability. It serves both traditional students who can attend during the day and non-traditional students who must attend at night. Faculty in the department volunteer their time to serve in the open lab, offering extra help to students who take the initiative to seek it. Without question, service is part of the culture of the department, and this deserves high praise from the rest of the college.

**Recommendations for Action**:

It should be noted that the majority of the recommendations from the Review Team in this Program Review originated from self-recommendations generated proactively by the department itself and shared at the conclusion of the meeting. The Review Team was very impressed at the insight and self-awareness the department displayed in preparing and sharing these recommendations.

* The quality of this Program Review was such that this self-study should serve as a model of a well-done self-study that other departments can emulate. The chair and faculty of the department should be willing and available to serve as mentors in helping other departments develop their own self-studies and to prepare for the meeting with the Review Team.
* The department noted that they had developed a review test for ACC 1210 that their students find extremely helpful, and suggested that they could develop a similar review test for ACC 1100 and 1220. The Review Team encourages the department to develop and implement these review tests for the other courses.
* The department noted the success of the hybrid format in the ECO courses, and suggested expanding that format to ACC 1210. The Review Team agreed that this is an excellent suggestion worth pursuing.
* The department offers three paths for those students interested in Accounting - referring students whose goals are best accomplished through higher degree attainment to the division's transfer program, offering CPA education for those who already possess s bachelor's degree, and then offering the AAS degree to those students whose career goals are best served by the associate degree. Each brings distinct marketing challenges - when the transfer degree is appropriate, how can students best be routed in that direction? How can the advantages of the AAS degree be marketed to area employers so that they are aware of the opportunities and benefits and become more likely to hire program graduates? How can more bachelor and master degree holding students become aware of the CPA opportunities that the department offers, which for the most part are not currently mentioned in the college academic catalog or other promotional materials? The department is strongly encouraged to develop strategies to address these marketing needs, particularly in regards to the latter two. These strategies will need to be developed within the parameters of existing marketing resources.
* The department offers a course that provides training in Quickbooks, which meets a high demand need in the field, but it may not be readily apparent to potential students that the course provides this software training. The department should explore ways of promoting the Quickbooks training that is provided in this course, whether that is best accomplished through a change in the course name, promotion through local organizations, or other approaches. It would appear that this is an opportunity for enrollment growth that the department should take advantage of.
* The department noted that challenge of sending students to Tutoring Services only to find that tutoring is not available for its courses. The faculty already go above and beyond in staffing the department's open lab, and it is not reasonable to expect that additional faculty time could be devoted to tutoring students. The department is encouraged to explore devoting resources to development of a Master Tutor position to fill this need. The department is encouraged to explore its options in this regard and develop a proposal to be submitted to the Provost. This proposal should include approaches to meet the needs of not only the Dayton Campus, but the Courseview Campus and Learning Centers as well.

**Overall Assessment of Department’s Progress and Goals**:

This is a department that distinguishes itself with its passion and commitment to meeting the needs of the students it serves, even when meeting those needs means directing those students to other programs. It goes the extra mile in helping students succeed - providing open labs, maintaining currency in the field, and making other "above and beyond" efforts on behalf of its students.

It is a department that is able to deploy experts in a wide array of subfields within the discipline, whose diversity in both expertise and opinion proves to be no barrier to having a collaborative, collegial, cooperative, safe environment where faculty feel free to share disparate opinions without negative impact on the department's superb espirit de corp. This spirit of engagement and common purpose was an essential component of the extremely high quality self-study that the department produced, and serves as an example for other departments to follow.

Finally, the department evidences a remarkable capacity for accepting change in the spirit of continuous improvement. It provided several examples of innovative approaches implemented to help more students succeed, and throughout the Program Review process displayed not just a willingness, but an eagerness to use it as a chance to uncover opportunities for improvement so it can better serve its stakeholders.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to accomplish its Goals, if any**:

* There is a strong need for a Master Tutor, and while the Review Team has recommended that the department explore the issue and develop a proposal, it is not clear that adequate resources are available on an institutional level to support a number of departments deploying Master Tutors. This may warrant discussion at a higher level.
* The department noted technology challenges with some of its software on PCs in the classrooms it uses - this is likely not the only department facing similar software challenges. Existing IT support may work for the software needs of a number of Sinclair's departments, but there are doubtless other departments that face challenges like this department does.
* Marketing is a common discussion point when discussing institutional barriers with departments. In this particular case, there is a CPA opportunity for returning bachelor's students that is not widely known about, and the institution needs to increase its efforts in providing marketing resources for this and other similar opportunities.
* This is a department experiencing an increase demand for its graduates - it is not clear, however, whether that increased demand will continue. Research, Analytics, and Reporting makes occupational data available to departments - it may be that departments need additional guidance in utilizing this data for future planning.
* The department experiences the challenge of having data that indicates what their students need, but curricular and budgetary constraints inhibit their ability to use that data. It may be that different departments working together may be able to generate new approaches to using data within existing constraints if they were provided some kind of forum for discussion, exploration, and cross-pollination of ideas. The CTL may be able to provide an avenue for such discussion.
* Succession planning is a challenge for many departments. There exists the possibility of retirements in the department before the next five year Program Review - given the excellent mix of faculty expertise that the department currently possesses and the excellent collaboration found among its members, the department will need to be intentional and thoughtful with its future hires to maintain the current departmental climate. This is a challenge ta to most departments face at some point, and many departments may benefit from some guidance in this regard.