OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW
MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Review Panel Report

June 2010

Panel Members:
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Walt Loveland, OSU Faculty, Chemistry—Internal Reviewer, Graduate Council
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Overall Recommendation:
The review panel generally supports the intention of the College of Business (COB) to expand the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program. We do believe, however, that the growth needs to be carefully thought out and managed. Specific recommendations related to the expansion, together with a few other recommendations resulting from the panel’s site visit, are included in the subsequent section.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations:
In general, the review panel was impressed with the quality of the COB’s self study and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the MBA program through the site visit. We found the college faculty, staff and students to be candid and responsive.

The MBA program focuses on entrepreneurship and innovation. The curriculum consists of 12 core courses, but is really defined by the integrated business project (IBP), which all constituents agreed was the core strength of the program. The IBP allows students to integrate their course material by creating a business plan for the commercialization of a technology developed by faculty members at Oregon State and business partners. The program mainly attracts students from the Willamette Valley area as well as several international students. Students appear to select the program because of its focus on entrepreneurship, its location, the ability to complete the program in one year, and the relatively low tuition.

The current MBA program is small compared to many competing programs across the country. The COB administration acknowledges the small size and desires to increase enrollment substantially in a short period of time. (There are currently approximately 90 students and the goal is to increase the size to approximately 250 students within 5 years. The leadership team suggested that doing so would make the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students in the COB more comparable to the ratio in the University as a whole. Even with the increase, the percentage would
be less than the current 15% value of the ratio of graduate students to total students at OSU. With 250 graduate students and 2500 undergraduate students, the COB would be at only 9%.)

The program faces some large challenges. The COB currently does not have any in-house career services staff. Instead, they rely on the OSU’s central career services to meet the needs of students. In contrast, top MBA programs have multiple in-house career services staff members who help to bring recruiters to campus and to prepare students to market themselves and interview effectively. On the other end of the process, the COB lacks scholarship funds to help attract highly qualified students to the program. Finally, the panel is concerned that the compensation package for faculty makes it difficult to attract and retain faculty. Salary compression was identified as a very large problem, with assistant professor salaries being similar to those of associate and full professors (professor/assistant) = 1.11.

Based on the strengths and challenges that we observed, together with the COB’s own plans for the future, we identified following recommendations. Most are related to the growth of the program, which is key to increasing revenue to support other initiatives. While generally supportive of growth plans, we believe that there are challenges associated with that growth that need to be considered carefully.

1. **Be careful of a “If we build it they will come” assumption.** The panel was concerned that growing the program might not really be the right thing to do if the COB has to “buy” that growth with scholarships. The IBP projects allow students to think carefully about whether or not there is a market for a particular technology. We encourage the COB to do the same to determine if the MBA product has a strong enough market demand to generate the anticipated growth.

2. **Increase revenue and then add capacity.** Related to the first recommendation, the panel believes that the order in which growth is achieved is important. We inferred from discussions that the current plan is to add new faculty and then to bring in the additional students. Securing funds from central administration for a large number of faculty may be difficult given the current economic climate. If the COB can accommodate demand with the current number of faculty, they should be able to increase revenue that can be used to fund the additional faculty lines.
   a. Increase tuition to raise revenue. Currently the cost of the program is very low relative to many other programs. Often it is the case that a higher tuition is seen as a signal of quality and can actually increase demand.
   b. Increase class sizes. The current class cap of 35 is very low compared to many MBA programs. Larger class sizes will allow for more students to move through the program with the same number of faculty. We recognize that doing so will increase grading burden for faculty, but believe that the additional resources make it worth it.

Obviously there is a danger in this strategy, i.e., increasing the number of students without a long term administrative commitment to faculty expansion could lead to an over-burdened faculty
3. **Approach the graduate council with a proposal to streamline the examination process.** Both students and faculty raised concern about the administrative “pain” associated with completing the IBP and the individual oral exam. That pain will grow significantly with the projected growth in student body. Reducing the required committee size for the IBP and removing the oral exam requirement for each student will facilitate making growth feasible.

4. **Be prepared to increase the support staff needed to accommodate the growth.**
   a. Provide resources to help students to write well. A good portion of the growth is anticipated to come from international students through the INTO program. Students reported that the program is very writing intensive, and students whose native language is not English often face large challenges with writing well. (We recognize that domestic students also have writing problems and that international students bring other advantages, so we are not suggesting that the INTO strategy is misguided.)
   b. Provide resources for dedicated career services. Given the difficulty of attracting recruiters to OSU, we recommend exploring the possibility of a regional solution to career services. Collaboration with other local programs may provide the scale necessary to attract recruiters.
   c. While more development staff may not be needed, additional scholarship funds appear to be necessary to compete with local competitors like Willamette.

5. **Be thoughtful about the mix of international to domestic students.** Part of the mission of a land grant institution is to serve the local community. Many in Corvallis and more generally in Oregon feel strongly that the COB should educate the citizens of Oregon.

6. **As part of the follow-up meeting, report on their strategic retreat.** In response to some of the panel’s questions, the COB Leadership Council noted the strategic retreat that will be taking place in summer 2010. Many of the initiatives that are likely to result from the retreat will impact the growth strategy and hence will be related to recommendations resulting from the Graduate Council Review.

7. **Consider revising the mission and vision statements to focus more on the students’ success.** The current statements seem to have an internal focus, whereas a focus on the students and alumni will likely resonate better with potential applicants and the local community. We recommend reviewing Stanford’s Graduate School of Business’s statements as a benchmark.

8. **Investigate ways of communicating information to students.** Students commented that communication was primarily by e-mail, was sometimes late (provided too little notice) and came from various parties. They would appreciate a more centralized and timely method for communicating program information.

9. **The COB should play a predominant role in achieving the University’s strategic plan.** Two of the strengths of the MBA program are entrepreneurship and sustainability. The program is also striving to increase the international focus. These foci are consistent with OSU’s “three Signature Areas of Distinction: Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems; Improving Human Health and Wellness; and Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress.” ([http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/strategicplan/](http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/strategicplan/))
Detailed Findings

The following subsections of the report give more detail on what led us to the recommendations in the previous section. As suggested by the Graduate Council, this section is organized around inputs, productivity and outcomes. It begins with a brief introduction and ends with a similarly brief conclusion.

Introduction

As described in the *Guidelines for the Review of Graduate Programs*, the purpose of the review of the MBA program is to “provide an opportunity … to reflect on the nature of their graduate instruction and develop approaches to enhancing program quality.” It “provides a mechanism for constructive change” and “an opportunity to review, to evaluate, and to plan in a deliberative and collegial setting.” The main objective of the panel was to understand the needs of the MBA program and offer constructive suggestions to the COB and OSU’s administration to improve the program.

The review process began with the COB preparing a self-study document, which the review panel used to gain initial insights about the MBA program and to formulate an initial list of questions and concerns to be explored during the site visit. Prior to the site visit, members of the review panel met on Sunday, May 23 to discuss the process and preliminary impressions of the program. The site visit occurred on Monday, May 24 and consisted of meetings with several constituents of the MBA program, in addition to a working lunch and a wrap-up meeting for the panel to discuss findings and recommendations. The process concluded with the preparation of this report.

Meetings were held with the COB Leadership Council, the Graduate Program Committee, graduate student representatives, MBA faculty representatives, MBA admissions staff and a few outside staff and faculty who have been involved with the IBP. COB Leadership Council participants were Ilene Kleinsorge (Dean), Carol Brown, Jack Drexler and Jim Coakley (Associate Deans) and Malcolm Lemay, Director of Operations. COB faculty members (including those on the Graduate Program Committee) who participated included David Baldrige, Rene Reitsma, Zhaoui Wu, Tom Dowling, John Turner, Roger Graham, Eric Larson, Ping-Hung Hsieh, Don Neubaum, V.T. Raja, and John R. Becker-Blease. A total of 8 students met with the panels, but we did not record their names. The MBA admissions staff who participated (in addition to Associate Dean Coakley) were Clara Horne and Kishani Kaliupahana. The non-COB faculty and staff who met with the panel were Brian Wall (Director, OSU research sponsors), Mark Leid (Pharmacy), Vince Remeho (Chemistry) and Alex Chang (Chemical Engineering).

Inputs

This subsection follows the Graduate Council’s recommended outline. Areas to be addressed include the fit of the mission of the program, the quality of students (including admissions selectivity), the level of financial support for students, the curriculum strength, the quality of personnel to achieve the program’s mission, the level and quality of the infrastructure and the quality of organizational support.
The fit of the mission of the program and its relationship to the mission of the college and the University

The College of Business along with the College of Engineering comprises the Division of Business and Engineering. The focus of this Division is a collaborative effort centered around “innovation” and the “commercialization of research results.” The formation of the Division is in its early stages and is not expected to occur until FY2011 or later. If completed, this Division will support the OSU Strategic Plan goal of “Promoting Economic Growth.”

The ongoing University effort on Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction is not expected to have any major impact on the College of Business. A possible 10% reduction in the COB budget for either FY11 or the following biennium would impact undergraduate education primarily although such a cut might be financed by delays in filling open positions (due to faculty retirement and/or departure).

Quality of students

One of the aims of the MBA program is to increase the number of students that apply and that are admitted. Specifically, the program would like to increase applications to 200 per year and achieve a recruitment goal of 60 additional students per year. A companion challenge to these goals will be to maintain the number of candidates of reasonably high quality. The self-study sets the standards that the program seeks in their applicants and students by expressing a desire to see the GPA of incoming students rise to 3.5 (up from the 3.3 five year average) and to achieve an increased average GMAT score of enrolled students of 600 (up from the 563 of matriculating students). The plan is to accomplish this by investigating restructuring of the scholarship program by attracting quality students and pursuing additional merit and need-based scholarship support to attract and retain high quality students. Recently, the program secured $200,000 from the Provost’s scholarship fund for both academic merit and diversity scholarships. The MBA program is also seeking private funding to establish a Minority Graduate Fellowship to support US minority students from within Oregon and out of state.

Admissions selectivity

During the 2004-2008 academic years 64% of the students enrolled in the MBA program were from Oregon and 24% of the students were international. In this same period, 56% of the students were Caucasian. A recruiting plan has been implemented this year in order to boost the number of students that are applying to the program from outside of Oregon and particularly from western states (Self Study, Appendix 5). The plan includes a strategy for increasing the diversity of MBA candidates by traveling to career and graduate school fairs in the Pacific Northwest and by contacting prospective candidates through diversity forums such as the California Forum for Diversity. Newly established relationships with the local chapters of the National Black MBA Association and the National Society of Hispanic MBAs should improve the opportunities to recruit from minority populations. The success of this recruiting plan as it is executed should be examined in the coming years.
The current students with whom the review panel visited stated several ways by which they were attracted to the program. Many of the students had prior degrees from OSU and the students viewed this as being beneficial because it allowed a seamless start to the program. Some students acknowledged that receiving assurance of a GTA or obtaining one of the Laurels Scholarships were enticements. That the program focuses on entrepreneurial development that would complement prior degrees obtained by the student or that would permit exposure to foreign countries (e.g., Asia/China) were also cited as reasons for affiliating with the program. At least one student admitted that they identified strongly with a single faculty member. Life in Corvallis was also noted to be an important consideration in selecting the OSU MBA program, perhaps a reflection of the program’s ability to draw students from the Willamette Valley.

**Level of financial support of students**

The COB seems to follow the “low tuition, low aid” model with respect to the MBA students. Most of the current students are in-state (Oregon) residents who pay tuition of about $15,000/year.

Of the approximately 90 MBA students in 2009, 13 received some sort of scholarship support while 17 of these students also received assistantships. Of the 17 students receiving some assistantship support, 10 received support from campus units outside of the COB. Of the seven students with assistantships from the COB, each was employed for less than a full GTA position. With budget reduction pending at OSU, the number of students supported by assistantships should decline.

For the most part the scholarships are awards from university-based programs (e.g., Laurels Tuition Support, Oregon Sports Lottery Scholarship, COB Brown/Hertich Scholarships) as opposed to programs funded from outside the university, which are apparently less common than in other graduate disciplines. For the academic year 2010-11, the COB was not successful in its Laurels Block Grant application and no funds were allocated to the COB.

It will be difficult to recruit and retain high quality domestic students with the current level of student support, especially if, as this panel recommends, the MBA tuition is increased.

**Curriculum Strength**

The MBA curriculum is focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. It is also built around the IBP. Students with an undergraduate degree in something other than business are required to take a set of “foundation” courses, which are undergraduate courses in the main functional areas of business (finance, operations, accounting, marketing and management) in addition to skills classes in math and economics. After completing the foundation classes, these students join those with business undergraduate degrees in the “core” MBA courses. The core classes help to provide context for the IBP and students apply the material that they are learning in the classes to their projects. They also provide a more in-depth look at the major functional areas in business. The IBP is a hands-on learning experience over 3 quarters where students create a business plan for a
technology that has been developed at the University. As mentioned, the students apply material that they learn in their classes to their project, giving them a strong experiential education.

The external reviewer on the committee (Professor Wardell) was surprised to see that the foundations classes were undergraduate classes. While it was a concern for him individually, he recognizes that there is a wide variety of ways to provide students with a foundation for more advanced courses. In particular, the MBA curriculum was very recently reviewed by the College’s accrediting body (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, or AACSB) and was found to meet standards to be accredited. The AACSB guidelines assure a level of consistency and quality across business schools while at the same time providing flexibility for programs to differentiate themselves. Accreditation suggests that the curriculum is strong and is preparing students for careers in business.

In discussions with all constituents who participated in the program, it became apparent that the IBP defines the MBA at OSU and is considered a major strength of the program. It is an experiential program that focuses on entrepreneurship and innovation, all advertised strengths of the MBA at OSU. In general, students found the IBP to be a very useful and worthwhile opportunity. They also recognized that the coursework was very beneficial and some indicated that for them, it was more conducive to their learning than the projects.

The students also noted that the program was extremely writing intensive. While some of them complained about the quantity, it is the opinion of the committee that the writing requirements very well could be giving OSU graduates an advantage as they seek careers. In at least some committee members’ experiences, most employers complain about the writing of graduates from business programs. OSU graduates are likely better writers that graduates of many other programs and hence at an advantage (assuming that they can sell their writing abilities to recruiters). Because of the writing intensity, students expressed concerns about plans to bring more international students to the program. The faculty and admissions staff at the College also admitted that it represents a challenge. While the students noted that writing was an issue for the international students, they also acknowledged that international students bring diversity to the teams and allow students to learn from each other. Moreover, they acknowledged that in many cases native English speakers also struggle with writing. Students recommended that the COB involve the writing center more heavily in the program, perhaps acting as writing consultants for the projects.

Because of the central role of the IBP, it is worth noting a few other concerns that were raised about the projects. First, participants from different groups believe that the administration (usually termed “bureaucracy” by participants) was cumbersome and detracted from the experience. In particular, the need for a 3-person committee was seen to be excessive and a process hindrance to the project. Second, some student participants felt that not all students should be required to do the IBP. These students recommended that applicants should be evaluated before the program begins to decide
whether they should do the IBP or not. According to the student participants, the decision would be primarily based on the applicant’s desire to be an entrepreneur in the future. Students not participating in the IPB could then take more courses, allowing them to specialize in a particular area of emphasis. They also wondered if a 2-year program would be more beneficial, because it would allow more specialization. There was a perception held by some students that the program is a “mile wide and an inch deep.” Other suggested improvements to the IBP were a stronger emphasis on the finance component (venture capital) and the possibility of stronger involvement of alumni as mentors.

In conclusion, the curriculum easily meets the needs of the students and the faculty and should be appealing to recruiters. The IBP is a strength of the program and is valued by all constituents. Based on discussions related to the curriculum, the panel recommends the following (given at the beginning of the report but repeated here for emphasis).

- **Approach the graduate council with a proposal to streamline the examination process.** Both students and faculty raised concern about the administrative “pain” associated with completing the IBP and the individual oral exam. That pain will grow significantly with the projected growth in student body. Reducing the required committee size for the IBP and removing the oral exam requirement for each student will facilitate making growth feasible.
- **Be prepared to increase the support staff needed to accommodate the growth.**
  - Provide resources to help students to write well. A good portion of the growth is anticipated to come from international students through the INTO program. Students reported that the program is very writing intensive, and students whose native language is not English often face large challenges with writing well. (We recognize that domestic students also have writing problems and that international students bring other advantages, so we are not suggesting that the INTO strategy is misguided.)
- **Be thoughtful about the mix of international to domestic students.** Part of the mission of a land grant institution is to serve the local community. Many in Corvallis and more generally in Oregon feel strongly that the COB should educate the citizens of Oregon.

**Quality of personnel and adequacy to achieve mission and goals**

The COB has 35 tenured/tenure-track faculty. Not all of those faculty members participate in the MBA program, however. Within the MBA curriculum, just over half of the classes are taught by tenured/tenure-track faculty members. Professionally qualified faculty teach the remaining courses. (The self-study defines “professionally qualified.”) As mentioned in the previous section, the curriculum and program were reviewed by the AACSB and the college was accredited, indicating that instructors are qualified to teach in the program. We have no reason to question the AACSB and concur that the quality of the faculty is sufficiently high to contribute to the mission and goals of the college and program.

Although the existing faculty are of high enough quality, the panel concurs with the college that the number of faculty is lacking and that additional faculty will allow the program to achieve its goals.
The IBP is a high touch project that requires many resources. While it is not a complete time sink for the faculty, growing the size of the faculty will allow the college to meet its goal in growing the student body without reducing the quality of the program.

The current faculty felt that they will be able to attract new faculty to the program for a few reasons. While the teaching load is somewhat higher than at other business schools (tenured faculty teach 6 courses per year and untenured teach 5), the majority of the faculty are able to cover their classes in two quarters, allowing up to six months for research. In addition, research faculty received funding to attend at least one conference per year. They also felt like the location of the University was a big draw. Moreover, they agreed that there is a high degree of collaboration and collegiality, making it an appealing place to work. There was general agreement that Dean Kleinsorge had created a very nice environment for faculty to work.

The panel also concluded that the admissions staff were helping to achieve the goals of the program, although their numbers were small, especially given the desire to grow the program, which will require traveling to neighboring states and reaching out to international students through OSU’s INTO program. While the staff members themselves appeared to have high quality, they and others who were interviewed expressed the concern that the scholarship offerings were insufficient to allow the program to grow adequately.

The most pronounced deficiency in terms of meeting the goals of the school was the lack of a local career services presence. The college relies on central career services, who serves the undergraduate population more fully than the graduate. One member of the panel also noted that the central career services appeared to be downsizing, sharing their physical space with student grievance bodies. A career services presence is central to the mission of any MBA program because the quality of the program in most instances is evaluated and judged by employers.

The students with whom we spoke also expressed concern about career services offerings. While they felt that the COB works well with central career services, including having Tuesday evening sessions that provide some networking, there were clear deficiencies. The students specifically mentioned that they would like to see more support from the COB. They also lamented that central career services doesn’t differentiate job opportunities between needs for undergraduates and MBA. In some cases, graduating students arrived at an interview arranged by central career services only to find that they were overqualified and the employer was targeting undergraduates.

Based on our discussions regarding personnel, we recommend the following (again repeated from the beginning of the report).

- Increase revenue and then add capacity. Related to the first recommendation, the panel believes that the order in which growth is achieved is important. We inferred from discussions that the current plan is to add new faculty and then to bring in the additional
students. Securing funds from central administration for a large number of faculty may be difficult given the current economic climate. If the COB can accommodate demand with the current number of faculty, they should be able to increase revenue that can be used to fund the additional faculty lines.

- Increase tuition to raise revenue. Currently the cost of the program is very low relative to many other programs. Often it is the case that a higher tuition is seen as a signal of quality and can actually increase demand.
- Increase class sizes. The current class cap of 35 is very low compared to many MBA programs. Larger class sizes will allow for more students to move through the program with the same number of faculty. We recognize that doing so will increase grading burden for faculty, but believe that the additional resources make it worth it.

- **Be prepared to increase the support staff needed to accommodate the growth.**
  - Provide resources for dedicated career services. Given the difficulty of attracting recruiters to OSU, we recommend exploring the possibility of a regional solution to career services. Collaboration with other local programs may provide the scale necessary to attract recruiters.
  - While more development staff may not be needed, additional scholarship funds appear to be necessary to compete with local competitors like Willamette.

**Level and quality of infrastructure**
The College of Business is housed in Bexell Hall, an approximately 80-year old building, which has been remarkably well maintained and renovated. The College has recently announced plans for constructing a new $50M building which will more than double the space available for the COB. The building is to be ready for occupancy in 2014. The College features several large computer facilities where state-of-the-art computers are made available for student use. The College supports auxiliary costs associated with printing in these facilities. While commons areas for the MBA students seem to be somewhat limited it is expected that the new building will alleviate this issue. All in all, the physical infrastructure of the MBA program is very nice and better than that of many other OSU programs.

**Quality of organizational support**
The COB attempts to support the efforts of its faculty by structuring their appointments to be 45% scholarship, 45% teaching and 10% service. Many of the faculty choose to teach their entire load in two quarters, allowing six months of uninterrupted time for scholarly activity. There is some support for summer salaries of some of the faculty along with support for professional travel.
Productivity

Level and quality of student performance
The data that we were provided relative to student performance were non-completion rate and IBP summaries. The college reports that, “on average 13 percent of the students who start the program do not finish due to varying reasons that include work and personal commitments, employment opportunities in other parts of the country or a mismatch between student expectations and program design.” The 13% “dropout” rate appears high and is a concern. (At the University of Utah, the number is below 5%). We recognize that some factors are out of the COB’s control, but they can have strong influence on the “mismatch between student expectations and program design.” First, they can be careful in their advertising and admissions materials to help potential students understand the curriculum, the IBP and the time commitments. Second, they should take to heart the student recommendation mentioned in the “Curriculum strength” subsection by evaluating students before the program begins to decide whether they should do the IBP or not.

The success of the IBP is a good indicator of student performance. By all accounts the projects are very successful. They are a benefit to the researchers whose technology is being commercialized, they are a great benefit to the students’ learning and they have the potential to bring in money to the University as commercialized technologies become viable in the marketplace. While it is possible that the “clients” with whom we spoke may have represented a biased sample, our discussions with them indicated that students work hard, produce a quality report and make quality recommendations.

Level and quality of faculty performance
Professional accreditation bodies have determined that the MBA faculty meets the expected standard for faculty competence. There is, however, some concern about this performance. OSU has set goals of having its departments, programs and faculty be in the top tier of land grant institutions. In the national rankings of Business Week, the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal, Forbes and U.S, News and World Report, the OSU MBA program is a bottom tier, un-ranked program. The COB cites the Aspen Institute for Business Education rankings of business schools that have innovative full time MBA programs that integrate social and environmental stewardship into their curriculum and scholarly research. In this survey, OSU’s MBA program ranks 87th of the top 100 programs (147 programs participated).

There is an internal metric about faculty performance where there is some confusion. It was reported by a faculty group to the review team that only about ½ of the faculty hired as assistant professors achieve promotion and tenure at OSU. In some areas, the success rate was reported to be much lower. Dean Kleinsorge reports a very different situation with 94% of assistant professors being promoted in the P&T process. The magnitude of this dichotomy seems unusual.
Scholarly productivity of the faculty seems to be low, especially if they have 20 hours/week (reported by at least one faculty member) for this activity. The publication rate of the tenure track faculty appears to be < 1 paper/year in peer-reviewed journals with some publications appearing in second or third tier journals. The review team recognizes that timelines and other factors related to publishing in top business journals are somewhat different than in other disciplines. For example, the review times for top journals in business are extraordinarily high (at least 4 months for a first review, and typically the time from 1st submission to acceptance is at least one year), which makes it difficult to publish in those outlets frequently. For the most part, however, COB faculty are publishing in lower tier journals, where it should be easier to generate higher numbers. While we did not ask explicitly, it is possible that COB faculty are first submitting at the top-tier outlets, having their papers rejected (after a long review process) and then going to the lower-tier journals.

Viability of scholarly community within which the students can interact
The nature of an MBA program is such that it is not common for students to be participating with business faculty in their own research programs. While it happens in some programs to varying degrees, it is not something that would be expected. On the other hand, the students are very engaged with faculty outside the COB through the IBP. They learn about cutting-edge research that faculty members in the sciences and engineering are conducting to such an extent that they are able to explore the possible market for the technologies. While they are not directly involved in creating the knowledge, they become intimately familiar with the research and benefit therefrom.

Professional viability of graduates
To the best of their ability, the MBA program has tracked the progress of its graduates though this is a difficult task to perform. Information is collected from former students that contact the COB and also from the OSU Foundation records. Graduates of the MBA program were surveyed in March 2010 (see Final Report – Close to the Customer Project). Of the 127 surveys sent 47 responses were received. Over 90% of the alumni that responded were employed either full-time or part-time. MBA students have found positions in a number of organizations in the Pacific Northwest as listed in the Self-Study (pg. 88).

Satisfaction of students and graduates
In general, respondents to the alumni survey noted above were favorable when asked questions related to the value of the MBA program and its contribution to their success. The strongest affirmation of the MBA program showed 80% of the respondents agreeing that the program expanded their career options and 78% of the respondents agreed that the program increased their earning potential. However, survey responses noted that OSU MBA graduates rate the value of their investment in the program below the national median score. The COB believes this low rating to be due to a lack of dedicated career services for students while they are pursuing the MBA degree. Notably absent from the survey were any questions related to the central themes of the MBA, namely the goal of instilling concepts related to innovation and entrepreneurship in the students. Respondents to the survey had the following suggestions:
• Add areas of focus to the program and provide MBA students with more support.
• Provide more professional development activities.
• Provide online opportunities for social networking.

The committee met with approximately 10 students during the review. Comments from these students that represent areas where the program might strive to improve or where the program might be sensitive to student concerns are listed as follows:

• Improve the flow of communication; information regarding presentation requirements or guest speakers seems to be slow in arriving to the students; e-mail is the main form of communication now and perhaps other means need to be considered.
• For those interested in entrepreneurship the IBP is great. However, the COB may want to assess students who want to be entrepreneurs vs. those that would prefer a traditional MBA path; the IBP is good but may be difficult to implement if one has traditional interests in business.
• Some concern was expressed regarding the English quality of incoming students, especially those arriving through the INTO program. The College should have a way of coping with this perhaps by offering more mentoring in writing.
• Flexibility is innate to entrepreneurship but the students sometimes feel locked into an assignment. Consider ways to provide the flexibility for a program that aims to encourage innovation and open thinking.
• For 2-year students, consider additional programs such as investment programs, opportunity to sit on boards, or internships.
• Include more practical learning.
• The career center on campus is the main source of help for finding jobs after their degrees. Can the COB develop something specific to COB graduates?

Rankings/ratings
The COB does not make overt attempts to be ranked in the most visible rankings (e.g., Business Week, US News & World Report). For example, one part of those rankings that is very important is the average score on the standardized GMAT entrance exam. The COB does not require all students to take the exam, including those who probably have the potential to score high. In particular, they do not require the exam of students with previous master’s degrees. Many of those students have degrees from the sciences, engineering and other technology degrees that often score very well on the GMAT. We have also mentioned the lack of a career services presence within the college, which results in placement numbers being far below those that would merit a high ranking.

The one ranking that is important to the college at this point is the Beyond Grey Pinstripes survey and alternative ranking of business schools provided by the Aspen Institute. In 2009, OSU’s MBA program ranked 87th in the world on that survey. In our judgment, the Aspen ranking is appropriate for the COB because its mission is to “spotlight innovative full-time MBA programs that are integrating issues of social and environmental stewardship into curricula and research.”
**Conclusion**
The MBA program at OSU’s College of Business has several strengths that it can continue to build on. The predominant strength is the Integrated Business Project, which serves the students, the faculty across campus and the community. It is entrepreneurial in nature and allows students to differentiate themselves by creating a business plan for innovative technologies and by improving their writing skills.

The program also faces many challenges, many of which are exacerbated by constrained resources. The COB hopes to expand the size of the program, which will require more resources. The panel feels that a growth strategy is an appropriate one, but will require careful planning and implementation as described in our recommendations. We encourage the leadership team to use the planned retreat to consider our recommendations carefully and to determine the best avenues for program growth that don’t sacrifice quality.