

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo Information Technology, M.S.

The 2015-2016 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Information Technology-M.S. program concluded with a culmination meeting on September 30, 2016.

The following people attended the meeting: Anil Puri (Provost), Pamella Oliver (AVPAP), Bhushan Kapoor (Chair), Morteza Rahmatian (Dean, MCBE), Jenny Zhang (Associate Dean, MCBE), and Su Swarat (Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness).

During the meeting, the Provost congratulated the Information Technology-M.S. program for its continuing success. Specifically, the program was commended for the significant progress it has made since the last PPR. Commendations include:

- Online program is ranked #1 in California and #6 nationally by U.S. News & World Reports.
- Program maintains a high standard for admission, ensuring quality of students entering program.
- Program retention and graduation rates are higher than the University average.
- External advisory boards help ensure the program is responsive to industry and student needs.
- Curriculum is current within IT industry and new curricular/course areas added as needed.
- Student progress in the courses was closely assessed, and feedback was provided for improvements.
- Capstone course provides students with an opportunity to develop a cumulative project utilizing the knowledge they acquire from the courses in the program.
- Faculty members are enthusiastic, and possess expertise in pedagogy and methodology unique to online teaching.
- Faculty members are provided with digital devices to enhance instruction.
- Program uses best practices in requiring a proctor to authenticate the individuals taking the examination.
- Students are very satisfied with the program as evidenced by interviews and survey results.
- Department survey showed 30% increase in MSIT students' salary after graduation.
- The Department and College leadership are open-minded and work closely with the faculty together for a shared mission.
- Data Science concentration is opening in Fall 2017.

The major recommendations and concerns raised through the PPR process were discussed. Suggestions on how to address them were provided:

1. Consider enrollment growth through outreach activities, including outreach efforts by the Industry Advisory Board.
 - o The AVPAP inquired whether the students primarily come from local areas. The Chair responded that even though most of the students are local, there are several from out of state. The program has strategies in place to accommodate students who are not local (e.g. allowing students to skype in).
 - o The Chair commented that there are no international students currently in the program because of the program's part-time status. The Associated Dean

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- indicated that overseas students who are interested in “big data” could also enroll in the program since it is an online program. This is one way to increase enrollment.
- The Associate Dean stated that since many of the students are IT professionals from CSU campuses, more targeted recruitment efforts could be aimed at this population.
 - When asked about the goal for enrollment growth, the Chair stated that ideally each of the two concentrations would enroll 25 students per cohort (i.e. per year). Currently, without the Data Science concentration in place, there are 27 students enrolled for the Fall 2016 cohort. The program is confident to reach the enrollment goal, can accommodate the expected number of students (i.e. 50 for both concentrations), and is proud of its high graduation rate – 80% of the students graduate in 1.5 years (the expected length of the program).
2. Consider ways to increase the low score in U.S. News & World Reports Student Services and Technology ranking category.
- The AVPAP inquired about the relative low score for the “student services and technology” ranking category.
 - The Chair commented that the low score is largely resulted from the ratio of IT staff and students at the university, which is beyond the control of the program. The Chair also indicated that the program might have left some questions unanswered about students services in the last round of survey from U.S. News & World Reports, and will be sure to answer all questions in the next round.
 - The Provost suggested that for the next round of reporting, the program could emphasize the level of IT support to the program specifically, and broaden the definition of IT staff to harvest all relevant IT support on campus.
3. Provide additional non-technical options in electives for students already with technical background to diversify their learning experience.
- The Chair commented that it is impractical to create more electives given the current enrollment. However, students have the option of taking electives from other departments and programs.
 - The Associate Dean echoed the same statement, and suggested that there are sufficient options for the students.
4. A formal emphasis on having a certain percentage of the assignments that require collaboration may be helpful.
- The Chair presented data on the amount of group work required in each course, which suggested that the requirement is sufficient. Most of the courses require 40% or more of collaborative work.
 - The AVPAP and the Associate Dean both voiced the need to give control to the faculty, and let the faculty determine the extent to which group work is embedded in the course.

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5. Data Science concentration was scheduled to start in Fall 2016, but now is starting in Fall 2017.
 - The AVPAP asked for the reasons for the delay, and whether the Office of Academic Programs could have helped.
 - The Chair indicated that the approval process at the President's level was delayed. The Provost offered to help accelerate the process in the future if similar circumstances arise.

6. The extent of curriculum overlap between the two concentrations needs to be examined.
 - The Chair stated that currently students in the program take 3 common courses. They take the same 2 courses in the first semester, and use the semester to determine their concentration.
 - The AVPAP reminded the program of EO 1071, which requires that different concentrations need to have 51% or more in common in order to be listed under the same degree. The program is recommended to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, and re-align the curriculum of the 2 concentrations.

7. The current exam proctoring protocol adds a significant amount of work to the faculty.
 - The Associate Dean commented that while the existing exam proctoring protocol is effective, the coordination of multiple testing centers is very stressful for faculty.
 - The AVPAP and the Provost recommended the university to investigate this issue, and to see if it is possible to establish a centralized coordination service on campus.

The Provost concluded the meeting by commending the program again for its significant contribution to the university. In addition to continuing the excellent work, the program is recommended to consider the sustainability of the program, particularly in terms of leadership continuity.