MxCC Management Information Systems Program Self-Study
Peer Review Meeting Notes

Dates Held: March 3, 2017

Attendees:

- **Sandra Eddy –** Chairperson CIS & Business Applications, Naugatuck Valley Community College
- **Susan Barzotinni –** Professor of Management Information Systems/Technology, Manchester Community College
- **Pablo Soto,** MIS Graduate 2016, current Management Information Systems student at CCSU; Information Systems Support Coordinator, IQ Telcom
- **James Brainerd**, current MIS Student at MxCC, employee of Liberty Bank
- **Louis Sapia**, Associate Professor, CIT & MIS at MxCC
- **Donna Hylton**, Professor/Program Coordinator of CIT & MIS

Meeting started at 2:35

Introduction
The meeting began with introductions and a review of the agenda. Donna informed the group that program review is a requirement of NEASC and the peer review evaluation is a formal part of the process.

Following the introductions, Donna led the participants through a detailed review of the program report and the supporting documentation that was provided. The enrollment numbers for the MIS program were discussed. Compared to the recently revised CIT program which has an enrollment of 60 students, the MIS degree is relatively small with an enrollment of 15. Manchester Community College also offers a degree in MIS, and Susan B??? explained that their enrollment is also low with only 20 students. Naugatuck Valley Community College does not offer an MIS degree, but rather a Computer Information Systems (CIS) degree.

All areas of the report were discussed. Highlights are noted below:

Recruitment Efforts

- **Tech Fest Event** –technology showcase hosted by Computer Club for area high schools to promote computer-related programs at Middlesex Community College. Donna explained that we will again be hosting Tech Fest this spring, funded by CCP.

Retention Efforts

- **Technology Center** – operated by the Computer Club provides an environment in which students can serve, learn, and share. Donna explained that the Center now

hires student workers who work on computer repair, special projects, and SQL Serve.

- **Lynda.Com –** online training that is being used by students to learn the latest technology.
- **Computer Club –** harnesses interest in computer technology

Program Instruction

- There was some discussion about the use of online resources to supplement the computer application courses. Naugatuck Valley and Manchester use the Pearson's MyITLab product and are pleased with the improvements they have made. Donna explained that she used MyITLab years ago, but the product interface was problematic; she now uses Cengage. All campuses employ similar techniques of integrating consistent content in their Blackboard course sites and companion resources.
- Louis Sapia discussed his new course that is focused on teaching Business Intelligence and Data Analytic skills. He explained that the course will be offered as a special topic this summer.

Completion and Graduation Rates

Internships and External Partnerships

- Donna reviewed the list of internship sites and external partners. James works at Liberty Bank and Donna explained how a student intern was placed there this semester to work on a SharePoint project. James is a aware of the partnership between Liberty Bank and this program.
- When asked about how students found internships, Donna explained that there are essentially three placement methods:
    1. Donna places students at a partner site with which she has developed an active relationship
    2. The student may find a site of their own, providing it meets the requirements for IT-related work
    3. The student may use their current job, if they are employed in the IT field.

Articulation Agreements

- Donna explained that new articulation agreements with Post University's Computer Information Systems degree for both MIS and CIT were signed on March 1st.

Advising

- Susan B explained that she advises students to take the courses that align to CCSU's admission requirements for the School of Business. That means taking two semesters of economics. Pablo Soto, who transferred to CCSU, said that while his credits did transfer to the MIS program, he did not meet the admission requirements and had to take a few

extra courses. The suggestion was made to add another economics course to our degree and seek to meet the admission requirements.

- Sandra Eddy uses Sign-Up Genius for scheduling advising appointments. It is a free online tool and it is used very effectively at NVCC. She highly recommended it.

Curricular modifications

- The TAP MIS pathway was briefly discussed. Since the initial meeting at Manchester Community College of four-year and two-year colleges, there has been no further discussion about a pathway for MIS.
- The VB.Net was replaced by C# in the CIT degree and Donna explained that it will also change in the MIS program.
- Donna talked about the new Middlesex Accelerated Program (MAP) and shared her vision to consider putting MIS in this format. Pablo and James both liked the idea of having an accelerated degree program, but cautioned us to consider keeping programming classes on campus. They thought that a weekend offering of those types of courses would be more appropriate.
    - James asked why we did not offer Sunday class; he thought that would be very attractive especially since his company has Saturday hours. Sundays are completely free.
    - Sandra explained the NVCC offers Saturday, Sunday, and 6:30 a.m. classes.

Student feedback

- Student survey results were reviewed.

Success stories

- Donna shared the story of Michael Cirillo who was hired by Microsoft Corporation as an example of a success story. Michael leveraged the skills learned at his Liberty Bank internship to land a job at Microsoft in Spain.
- Pablo Soto, who was not mentioned in the report, said that he too was a success story because he was able to use his internship to gain a full-time position as an Information Systems Support Coordinator at IQ Telcom, an IT firm. Donna will include Pablo's story in the MIS report.

Strengths and Challenges

- There was quite a bit of discussion about the name of the degree and the lack of recognition among the non-IT population. The Management Information Systems may

be too dated to have any appeal to today's generation. James shared a story about his teenager not knowing what MIS is about.

- Donna shared similar experiences when seeking to promote the degrees (IS and MIS) at local high schools.
- Everyone agreed that the MIS degree could benefit from a rebranding, similar to what was recently done to transform the old Information Systems (IS) degree into the Computer Information Technology (CIT).
- The degree was developed as a transfer degree, but its future with respect to the TAP Pathway is uncertain. The students were asked whether they would prefer a transfer or career-focused degree. Both stated that they would prefer a transfer degree that offered a strong technical foundation that led to entry level employment in technology management. Even when students transfer, they may also need to work along the way.
- Donna shared her concerned about the lack of women and minorities in the MIS program and sees this as a challenge that must be addressed. She is also concerned about the difficulty in finding programming internships.
- The review team was given a tour of the Technology Center.

The Peer Team Recommendations are summarized below:

1. Rebrand the MIS degree to make it more appealing to the general population. The term Management Information Systems (MIS) does not have good name recognition.
2. Consider making the degree career-focused to offer students more marketable technical skills instead of the limited courses in programming.
3. As you consider a MAP option for the degree:
    a. Take a look at Charter Oak's program to see how courses will align and what they are offering during the first two years.
    b. Explore the weekend option for technical classes
    c. Offer the internship class over the summer
4. A course in social engineering would be beneficial and may serve other programs. It could be uses as a social phenomenon elect instead of sociology.
5. SharePoint is very popular, but does not require an entire course. Include a module on SharePoint in the Introduction to MIS course.
6. Include a database course in the MIS curriculum – data is a big part of the business/technology landscape and may prove more useful than programming.
7. Consider eliminating the second semester of accounting to free up space in the degree for technology.
8. Psychology should also be considered as a social phenomenon course.
9. Excel would be a useful addition because of how widely it is used in business.
10. Give students exposure to other platforms, not just Microsoft.
11. Take a closer look at the Technical Writing course; it may not be useful and could be substituted for another course.
12. Consider project management; especially if it can be used by other majors, such as business. Otherwise, enrollment may prove to be challenging.

13. Consider using the Sign-Up Genius online signup for scheduling advising appointments.
14. Include a second semester of economics to meet the admission requirements at CCSU. Look at other courses that are required for the School of Business to make sure that they too are included.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15