EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review
School of Management

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
Master of Science in Information Systems
December 2, 2018

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS
Professor Nancy Deng, California State University, Dominguez Hills;
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CAMPUS VISIT
February 5-6, 2018

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in USF's Business Analytics and Information Systems Department (which house the MSIS program), reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. They visited the San Jose Campus where MSIS is (currently) housed, as well as the San Francisco campuses (where MSIS might fruitfully move). Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the program's Self Study, and other university materials.

1. **How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**

   The committee did not provide an overall rating. They identified that "the MSIS program is on a positive path to demonstrating a strong and

revitalized professional degree with the potential of continuous growth and success."

2. **What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?**

Four general issues stand out.
   A. MSIS can grow quickly via a new full-time offering directed at international students (and welcoming domestic students).
   B. MSIS should seek accreditation from AACSB.
   C. Full-time faculty should be deployed to MSIS, which is currently taught by industry professionals.
   D. The 2017 re-configuration of the curriculum is best viewed as a "way station" not an ending point.

It would be challenging to address these issues with current resources.

3. **What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

The committee had a number of recommendations on many dimensions. They are listed below. Once the location of the program is sorted out, we will prepare an Action Plan to address the relevance, suitability, resource requirements, and prioritization of the recommendations. However, as noted below, we have made progress already on many recommendations.

   A. Program
   - **International**: Study how to admit international students, who are expressing strong interest. *(Underway – Full-Time Version)*
   - **Advisory Board**: Establish an industry advisory board. (*Done.*)
   - **Program objective**: Revisit the program mission statement to better differentiate from competitors.
   - **Accreditation**: Seek accreditation to enhance rigor and competitiveness.
   - **Evaluate structure***:* Evaluate the new unsequenced course model.
   - **Program marketing:** Seek an undergraduate feeder mechanism; Promote the program locally; Assess recruiting efforts.

B. Curriculum
- **Curriculum quality**: Continue reviews of course syllabi and handoffs to new instructors.
- **Curriculum design**: Evaluate whether certain courses have excessive content.
- **Elective courses**: Allow for crossover courses between programs.
- **Course delivery**: Consider online or hybrid courses.
- **Course syllabus template**: Establish a standard syllabus format.

C. Faculty
- **Faculty composition**: Bring in SA-qualified full-time faculty; Increase number of female faculty. *(Underway – Full-Time version.)*
- **Faculty teaching assignment**: Have junior full-time faculty teach graduate courses in their first few years. *(Underway – Full-Time version.)*
- **Faculty tenure and promotion**: Provide a formal faculty retention, tenure, and promotion policy for junior faculty to understand their review and tenure requirements. *(Evaluated – outside program scope.)*
- **Support for faculty research**: Increase funding to support junior, tenure-track faculty; Provide recognition and awards for research achievement. *(Evaluated – outside program scope.)*

D. Students
- **Student recognition**: Develop student recognition program. *(Underway – Student Chapter just launched.)*
- **Professional communities**: Connect students to professional communities and companies. *(Underway – Student Chapter just launched.)*
- **Alumni**: Connect students with alumni. *(Underway – Student Chapter just launched.)*
- **Assessment**: Perform assessment of the new program. *(Underway as "base business".)*
- **Student support**: Increase financial support and scholarships; Enhance career advising and job placement.

E. Location
- **Transition to Downtown Campus**: Implicit in the recommendations are moving the program to the Downtown campus, where (in contrast to San Jose) we have richer staff support (Graduate Student Affairs), university services support, full-time faculty offices, guest speakers, and community with students in other School of Management programs.

4. **In the opinion of the external review committee, is the program following the University's strategic initiatives?**

The committee did not specifically address the university's four strategic initiatives. Their comments did touch on two of them. The committee recommends that we pay special attention to diversity in faculty recruitment. We note that the BAIS department was able to hire its first female full-time faculty member last year, and this remains a priority and a challenge. The committee recommends that we investigate bringing in international students as a means to increase enrollment. We are working on this complex opportunity, and are on-track to admit international students to the San Jose campus-based program starting in Fall 2019.

5. **In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?**

The committee did not address this question.

6. **What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee's recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?**

We are excited at the prospect of aggressively growing MSIS enrollments.

<u>Prompt Response</u>
We moved quickly to act upon the review committee's recommendations. These include the following actions in Fall 2018:

- Appointed the first full-time faculty program co-director
- Established the program's first advisory board
- Established first student chapter of the Association for Information Systems, which will be a vehicle for student recognition and alumni engagement.
- We have more we want to do now, as described below.

New Full-Time Offering to Start Fall 2019

Working during the summer and fall of 2018, we created a new full-time version of the STEM-listed MSIS program that will be attractive to international and domestic students, and which will be partly taught by full-time faculty. This version relies primarily on evening courses for the Part-Time version, plus a few daytime classes taught by full-time faculty.

This opens two new pools of students. First is overseas students, who have been seeking admission for years. Second is visa-holders already resident in the region whose visa does not permit them to work. We kicked off the full-time recruiting and admissions process in November 2018 for a pilot group of 7-10 full-time students to matriculate in Fall 2019. We are already in conversation with many interested prospects. If the full-time pilot is successful we can grow it rapidly for Fall 2020.

Require Immediate Transition from San Jose to Downtown Campus

Given the transition that is facing the San Jose Campus, we should not launch a Full-Time program there at this time. The San Jose office space, although technically a Campus, is marginal at best for Full-Time students. Given the long-term unlikelihood of having dedicated full-time space, it would be foolish to invest in a full-time program there.

The best thing for the MSIS program is to act immediately to 1) relocate the Fall 2019 Part-Time MSIS intake to the Downtown Campus, and 2) to offer a new full-time version of MSIS Downtown. We would then teach out the San Jose students. This transition must be done immediately because the recruiting conversations are closely tied to location. This is simply a change of location, with no change to curriculum, learning goals, faculty, etc.

Resource Constraints – Short Term

This new full-time program will tap out the Business Analytics and Information Systems Department's faculty resources, as well as the very limited available staff resources. (The BAIS department just launched a minor for CAS students, and is focusing on a new major for BSBA students.) The program co-directors and departmental faculty will have their hands full keeping the program running, while responding to the emergent needs of full-time students. Realistically, there will be very limited capacity for the many other exciting suggestions made by the committee. However, the move to San Francisco will be helpful in this regard because of greater access to full-time faculty, and greater access to School of Management GSA support.

Resource Constraints – Next Level

Long-term, the Office of the Provost can support the recommendation to strengthen the program, including to bring MSIS under the AACSB accreditation umbrella, by providing two new full-time faculty positions, plus a half-time program assistant, plus enhanced program support funds (for company visits and other co-curricular activities for full-time and part-time students). These resources will be essential for achieving accreditation; for allowing full-time faculty to teach in MSIS (currently, the full-time Scholarly Academic faculty must be deployed to the existing AACSB programs); for sustaining a sizable full-time student population; and equally important for providing faculty sufficiency for the many excellent recommendations by the committee.

7. **What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers' report?**

The reviewers articulate a vision of a larger, more competitive, more mainstream program. However, the MSIS has in recent years been run with little investment and almost no deployment of full-time faculty. There is a serious misalignment between legacy resourcing, and the resources necessary to achieve the vision.

We are "ready to launch" to admit full-time students, both international and domestic, for Fall 2019 matriculation. Because this is a STEM program,

it is particularly attractive to foreign students, including local residents on visas that do not allow them to work. However, it is critically important that we resolve the location issue promptly and decisively.

Fundamentally, much of the tech industry has moved north to San Francisco, and we would be wise to follow. We should go now.

Please note that no Action Plan can be prepared until we obtain confirmation from the University for transitioning the program from San Jose to Downtown.