

**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** December 11, 2013

**FROM:** Robert A. Boudreau  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Bachelor of Management – General Management, Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Bachelor of Management - General Management at its November 15, 2013 meeting.

The Program Review Committee for this review was comprised of Brad Olson (Program Review Coordinator), Mary Runte, Robbin Derry, Y.J. Bao, and Jim Wishloff. The review produced four documents:<sup>1</sup>

1. *General Management Quality Assurance Review* (received May 21, 2013) – Self Study Report, developed by the B.Mgt. General Management Self Study Committee.
2. *University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Management: The External Review Report, General Management Major* (received July 30, 2013) – External Review Report by Robert W. Sexty (Memorial University) and Daphne G. Taras (University of Saskatchewan), based on their site visit of June 13-14, 2013.
3. *General Management Major, Quality Assurance Review: Response to External Reviewers' Recommendations* (received October 1, 2013) – response of the Self Study Committee to the external review.
4. *Quality Assurance, Faculty of Management, General Management Major, Response of the Dean, November 7, 2013* (received November 7, 2013) – response to the review, written by Robert Ellis, Dean of the Faculty of Management.

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<sup>1</sup> All documents are available upon request.

## ***Self Study***

In the Self Study Report, the B.Mgt. – General Management Self Study Committee summarized the strengths of the General Management major:

- The program has good coverage of corporate social responsibility, ethical awareness, international management, and diversity management.
- The program has four unique features: (1) students can easily transfer credits to earn a full degree in about two years; (2) it is pan-Alberta, offered at the Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton campuses; (3) there is a strong emphasis on social responsibility and ethics; and (4) class sizes are small.
- The program is the only degree of its type in Alberta that confers a B.Mgt. credential. Other Alberta universities confer undergraduate degrees in business or commerce.
- Opportunities like co-op placements and theory into practice programs broaden student horizons.
- The trading room is a teaching resource that is unique in western Canada.
- The Library has a librarian who is well versed in management literature. A Management faculty member works closely with this librarian to select relevant acquisitions.

The Self Study Report noted several issues and concerns:

- General Management students take bigger picture courses, not functional courses such as accounting, finance, human resources, and marketing.
- Should the General Management major seek accreditation from national programs like the Canadian Institute of Management?
- Enrolments in the General Management major have declined from a peak of 628 in 2007 to a low of 397 in 2012. One of the main causes of this decline is likely a former college acquiring degree-granting status and offering Bachelor of Business Administration degrees.

## ***External Review***

In their External Review Report, professors Sexty and Taras noted that the General Management program “is of sufficient quality and breadth that it meets general standards in business schools.”

The specific program strengths noted by the External Review Report include:

- The major is consistent with the principles of liberal education.
- The curriculum includes topics of current interest and new developments in management education.

The reports recommendations for improving the General Management area are:

1. Make a greater effort to communicate the philosophy and distinctiveness of the major. Market the major more aggressively.
2. Consider moving the General Management area to the Strategy area. If this is not appropriate, then designate a leader or champion for the General Management area. A

champion could ensure the General Management major is coherent, well-communicated, and continues to evolve.

3. Offer career advice and workshops in the final year of the program as well as earlier. This can help graduates more effectively market their skills in the workplace.
4. Consider enhancing the major through a capstone experience. This could be done through a section of a core course, an existing General Management major course, or by establishing several capstones.
5. Explore the possibility of allowing General Management majors to complete requirements for the Canadian Institute of Management's Project Manager (P.Mgr.) designation.
6. Think about offering scholarships or prizes for General Management majors.

### ***Program Response***

For their Program Response, the Self Study Committee accepted the External Reviewers' recommendations, and provided ideas for implementing them (numbering is not matched to the numbering of the External Review Report recommendations):

1. Make the Policy and Strategy area the home base for the General Management major and develop additional courses for General Management students.
2. Define and articulate the philosophy and distinctiveness of the major, but keep the broadness and flexibility that appeal to students. Consider alternative ways of ensuring the major's distinctiveness, such as a General Management club, scholarships for General Management majors, and helping majors participate in business case competitions.
3. Improve the reputation of the General Management major by engaging with alumni and local businesses. Possible forms of engagement include: direct marketing; inviting representatives from local and regional organizations as speakers, case presentation evaluators, and symposium participants; and host receptions for majors, recent graduates, and alumni.
4. Improve career advising: organize regular career development workshops in which graduates meet with current students; work with the co-op program to understand employer needs; form a volunteer jobs advisory group; coordinate career development seminars with northern campus managers; encourage the alumni association to co-sponsor workshops and seminars; integrate General Management career services into the Faculty and university's career assistance programs; and regularly evaluate career seminars, workshops, and services.
5. Develop awards for top General Management students on each campus. (Implementing a capstone General Management course is difficult, as all area courses are open to all B.Mgt. majors.)

## **Dean's Response**

In his response, Robert Ellis summarized the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the General Management area:

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- Strengths:**
1. The General Management major is flexible and efficient, allowing students to pursue their own unique paths in management education.
  2. The major appeals to students on the Calgary and Edmonton campuses. These students are often individuals who are already progressing in a career and are looking for courses to fulfill their unique career needs.
  3. The major is offered on all three campuses and graduates are valued by industry and very successful in their careers.
  4. Core courses emphasize ethics and social responsibility.
  5. Most graduates are satisfied with the quality of teaching and the education experience. Most are also employed in related jobs and would recommend the program and the U of L to others.
  6. Student advising and co-op opportunities are excellent.
  7. The flexibility of the major attracts students. The major's efficient use of resources is beneficial to the Faculty of Management.
  8. Facilities are of a high standard that offer a state-of-the-art learning environment.
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- Weaknesses:**
1. The number of graduates from the Post-Diploma B.Mgt. program has declined.
  2. No one area has responsibility for the General Management major, so it lacks oversight and a champion.
  3. General Management students are assumed to be "shadowing" other Management majors to avoid more difficult courses. Other assumptions are that students are less capable and are uncertain about their career paths.
  4. The assumptions in number three above are false, however. The most popular courses taken by General Management majors provide a broad range of knowledge and skills.
  5. The quality of the General Management educational experience is not equivalent across the three campuses.
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- Opportunities:**
1. There are several opportunities to enhance the General Management major: enhance oversight of the major; expand course offerings so they include both broad organizational perspectives and skill acquisition; and providing clusters of courses around common themes.
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- Threats:**
1. Increasing competition from postsecondary institutions that have been given degree-granting status.
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The Dean's Response offered some further commentary on recommendations from the External Review Report:

<b>External Review Report recommendation:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>
<i>Consider moving the General Management area to the Strategy area. If this is not appropriate, designate a leader or champion for the General Management area.</i>	The recommendation is excellent, and the Strategy area is willing to be the champion and steward of the major.
<i>Improve career guidance and development, especially in the final year.</i>	An excellent recommendation. Several current and future initiatives address this recommendation: The Management Student Professional Development Program was launched in Fall 2012. This initiative aims to help students understand their own interests and skills and the opportunities and expectations of industry. In 2014, Management will launch an Alumni Mentoring Program to guide students' career decisions. General Management students will be encouraged to engage in co-op opportunities, which will help students in exploring career paths. Career and Employment Services will provide guidance to General Management students through career workshops and counselling.
<i>Define and articulate the philosophy and distinctiveness of the major.</i>	The Strategy area will articulate a philosophy for the General Management major. The Faculty will seek opportunities for General Management student to participate in case competitions, and will facilitate the formation of a General Management student club.
<i>Consider enhancing the major through a capstone experience.</i>	Though conceptually the idea has merit, the suggestions for a capstone experience do not appear feasible. The current capstone course in Management Policy and Strategy will be maintained.
<i>Explore the possibility of allowing General Management majors to complete requirements for the Canadian Institute of Management's P.Mgr. designation.</i>	Management will investigate the Professional Manager designation, and will also look at designations offered by the Supply Chain Management Institute and the Project Management Institute.

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*Think about offering scholarships or prizes for  
General Management majors.*

Management's Capital Campaign will raise funds  
for scholarships or prizes for General  
Management students.

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The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the B.Mgt. – General Management academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

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Robert A. Boudreau

Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)