

Program Review

Final Report

Bachelor of Business Administration

Submitted to
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Faculty of Business and Applied Studies

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A. Executive Summary

The School of Business developed a Self-Study and shared with three reviewers who formed the External Review Team. The reviewers virtually met with various people at North Island College for two days to explore and learn more about the challenges and successes of the Bachelor of Business Administration program.

The reviewers provided a total of 17 recommendations related to commitment to learners, program structures, the learning community, practices, and collective impact. These included recommendations regarding curriculum development, program goals, student engagement, Indigenization, and internationalization.

The School of Business has created this final report summarizing their self-study recommendations along with the recommendations from the External Review Team. This report accompanies an Action Plan report.

B. Background

In accordance with North Island College's Policy 3-11 and the Quality Assurance Process Audit specifics (QAPA), this Final Report synthesizes the BBA Self-Study conducted by the School of Business and the External Review Report.

The Self-Study was completed in February 2019 and submitted to the Dean of Business and Applied Studies, Diane Naugler. It included a brief history of the program, a description of the program's currency and relevance to labour market supply and demand, student demand and retention rates, an exploration of the strengths and opportunities in curriculum design and instruction, program resources, services and facilities. Survey data from current students, alumni and faculty were included to support the conclusions and recommendations of the Self-Study.

Due to the onset of the global pandemic, the External Review was postponed from Spring 2020 until November 9 and 10, 2020. The planned onsite visit was rescheduled to be a collection of online meetings using the web conferencing platform, Zoom. The External Review team consisted of Darrell Bethune, Dean of Business and University Studies, College of the Rockies and Erin Egeland, Accounting Professor, Vancouver Island University. The internal member of the review team was Karen Mason, Instructor, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Counsellor, North Island College.

The External Review Team, in fulfillment of its responsibilities, met with:

- Executive Vice-President Academic and Chief Operating Officer: Lisa Domae
- Dean, Faculty of Business and Applied Studies: Diane Naugler
- Program Review Chair: Norma Pelletier
- Department Chair: Ali Mayboudi

The External Review Team met with the following people involved in faculty supports:

- Manager, Centre for Applied Research, Technology & Innovation: Naomi Tabata
- Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation: Liesel Knaack
- Manager, Human Resources: Danean Gray
- Director, Information Technology: per Fetze Elgersma
- Manager, Institutional Research and Planning: Wes Skulmoski
- Director, Marketing and Communications: Alex Khan
- Manager, Operations, Office of Global Engagement: Jen Barth
- Assistant Registrar, Student Records Office: Heather Howie

The External Review Team met with the following people involved in supporting students:

- Associate Vice-President, Student Services and Registrar: Kathleen Kuhnert
- Coordinator, Library Services: Lynette Gallant
- Coordinator, Learning Commons (Peer Tutors, Math & Writing): Caitlin Hartnett
- Learning Specialist, Accessible Learning Services: Niki Baird
- Assistant Registrar, Enrolment Services and Advising: Sarah Deagle
- Educational Advisors: Angie Price and Brooke McIntosh
- Manager, Operations, Office of Global Engagement: Jen Barth
- Coordinator, Student Employment Services: Anita Budisa-Bonneau
- Manager, Student Life: Dean Martin
- Director, Student Affairs and PA Campus Administrator: Felicity Blaiklock
- Helpdesk Analyst, Student Tech Services: Tyler Dean

The External Review Team also met with faculty and students (both current and alumni).

This final report is based on the BBA Self-Study, the External Review Report, and the responses from the BBA Program faculty.

It is important to note that much has changed since the completion of the Self-Study and the External Review. The effects of the COVID pandemic have been felt across all post-secondary institutions. The following changes have occurred that will inform how the recommendations initially identified are interpreted and acted accordingly.

1. There has been a significant drop in the number of international students in the 2020-21 academic year due to ongoing travel restrictions (about 60% of IE headcount, which is almost equivalent to 30% of all headcounts.)
2. During the 2020-2021 school year and with the support of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation, all courses were offered digitally in two formats: synchronous and asynchronous.
3. North Island College policy now states that students need a minimum GPA of 2.00 to get their credentials.
4. There has been an increase in faculty workload due to transitioning to remote teaching, reducing the time available for course-specific professional development.
5. The Widening Our Doorways 10 Point Academic Plan was developed in the Fall of 2020 in response to the effects of the pandemic and to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving teaching and learning environment.
6. In April 2021, North Island College welcomed a new President, Dr. Lisa Domae, who has launched a new Build 2026 Strategic Plan that continues to be developed in consultation with and feedback from the community.
7. In June 2021, North Island College launched its first Indigenous plan called Working Together 2021-2026 to align with the BUILD 2026 plan.

C. Program Characteristics

The School of Business offers a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree with the option of one of three different majors: Accounting, General Management and Marketing. The three majors share a common first-year curriculum after which a student may apply for and, if they wish, exit with a Business Administration certificate. All first-year courses are available online to facilitate service to our remote locations on Vancouver Island and for working students.

All NIC's BBA majors require 120 credits, 30 of which must be completed at the upper level (300/400). All electives must be university transfer courses with specific criteria for each major. The BBA Accounting major requires 27 credits to be accounting-specific courses that, with an additional 27 credits of Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) pre-approved prerequisite non-accounting courses, allow students to enter directly into the CPA professional program. The BBA General Management and Marketing programs offer a bridging pathway to graduates of NIC's Tourism and Hospitality Management Diploma.

It should also be noted that the BBA is one of seven possible credential pathways open to students that include one certificate, three diplomas and three degrees. The program is also marketed to students as one they can start at NIC for the first two years of their study and complete at another institution without leading to a specific NIC credential. The 'BBA Program' in this report includes all possible pathways indicated here for brevity in expression.

The School of Business currently consists of twelve full-time and approximately three part-time faculty members (2021 spring). Courses are primarily offered at the Comox Valley campus and the Campbell River campus. Port Alberni and M̓ixalakwila campuses support online business courses and deliver a few business courses in class or through Interactive Television (ITV), a video-based conferencing environment.

D. Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Given the rapidly changing educational environment, the School of Business has expanded its offerings to include more remote and digital learning opportunities, broadening our ability to serve a wider cross-section of students. Any action items coming out of the Self-Study and External Review Report will need to consider these changes in the post-secondary landscape.

Strengths

At the time of writing the Self-Study, demand for BBA graduates on Vancouver Island was increasing. Domestic students have been attracted to NIC programs over other Island institutions due to transferability, cost and location. Students historically have remained at the College because of the attraction of small class sizes, excellent instruction and close community ties. Current students surveyed responded were mostly positively about their program, including responses about the quality of instruction. Alumni surveyed were overwhelmingly satisfied with the ability of the program to help them achieve their personal goals and prepare them for further study and employment. The School of Business has a strong team of committed faculty who strive to ensure a positive learning experience, and this was reflected in the feedback provided by those surveyed.

General Challenges

The BBA program must remain responsive to market demand, both in terms of student interest and the labour market requirements. The learning outcomes in the original Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) application for the program are not specific to each major. Therefore, they are too general to ensure that **each** BBA remains relevant and can grow with the changing nature of the business. The Self-Study highlighted the fact that faculty, students and employers are interested in additional BBA majors. A key issue will be the capacity to develop plans in this regard and effectively deliver results. Overall, current students, alumni and employers surveyed appear to be satisfied with the business program. Current students expressed the desire for more learning opportunities outside of the classroom and the chance to evaluate the courses in their program. Alumni also identified the need for more experiential learning opportunities along with more significant connections with potential employers.

Challenges that Fall Beyond the Scope of Program Review

Feedback from faculty noted concerns that, while falling beyond the remit of a Program Review, need to be discussed as part of program renewal and broader institutional planning. These included resources and capacity building within the department, facilities (e.g., physical building to provide coherence and sense of belonging for all in the School of Business), along with concerns around increasing workloads because of the pandemic.

E. Self-Study Recommendations

The Self-Study includes recommendations based on the review of the program, feedback from students, faculty and various stakeholders, as indicated above. These recommendations recognize the need for the program to review curriculum design, learning outcomes, course delivery and design and consider how the program can capitalize on current strengths and address identified challenges. While some aspects of the following recommendations may fall beyond the scope of a program review (e.g., faculty appointments), these points are essential details that can form part of discussion and advocacy work for longer-term planning that includes broader institutional planning.

As outlined above, much has changed since writing the Self-Study recommendations. The strategic vision created in current programs has evolved and no longer reflects the new reality. It is acknowledged that change is needed to ensure programs are relevant and responsive, specifically that there is a need to broaden delivery methods and strengthen pathways available to students.

The following were the recommendations listed in the BBA Self-Study.

Commitment to Learners

Focus: This area focuses on the program's commitment to student learning by reflecting on the underlying values and philosophy of the program. This includes the alignment of program commitments with the needs and expectations of students, the institution and the broader discipline, industry, or profession.

1. Engage faculty expertise in developing BBA specific learning objectives to allow for a forward-looking approach to curriculum development.

Program Structures

Focus: This area focuses on the roots and design of the program, as well as how and why the program has evolved over time highlighting key milestones, developments, and accomplishments as it relates to the student learning experience. This includes the evolution itself, as well as the mechanisms in place for identifying and responding to emerging needs and changing realities.

1. Develop major-specific learning outcomes and ensure alignment between learning outcomes and assessment, taking into consideration student and employer needs.
2. Review all programs for redundancies and gaps. Also review admission requirements.
3. Form a program advisory committee to benefit from industry/stakeholder guidance and determine which, if any, new credentials are needed.
4. Change the NIC School of Business policy of having every regular full-time instructor teach in the intersession every second year.
5. Increase the chair release to 75%.
6. Assign a dedicated administrative person for chair/faculty (possibly for all three "NIC School of Management" departments) in one visible location close to the chairs of the departments.

Learning Community

Focus: This area focuses on the program as a learning community. This includes interactions and relationships between and among faculty and students within the program, as well as engagement with broader communities (e.g., institutional, regional, discipline, industry, or profession specific relationships).

1. Explore the feasibility of a course/instructor survey tool for instructors to have continuous feedback from students on what is and what is not working in their courses.
2. Amalgamate the Business, Tourism, and Offices Administration departments under the one roof called the “NIC School of Management.”
3. Open the buildings/classrooms at night for students.
4. Establish an Immigrant Welcome Center on campus.
5. Increase advising for international students regarding cost of living, cost/time needed for courses, cultural issues, etc.

Practices

Focus: This area focuses on teaching and learning practices, including assessment and evaluation methods and the alignment of these approaches to supportive practices. This includes the methods or approaches members of the department engage in to fulfil the stated commitments while engaging in reflective practice.

1. Offer in-house professional development to improve crucial aspects of courses including a) use of technology to enhance learning; b) testing that accurately assesses what students are learning; and c) curriculum relevancy to entry-level experience. The in-house professional development should be focused on sharing, communication, and coordination amongst faculty.

Collective Impact

Focus: This area focuses on the accomplishments and contributions of faculty and students from the program. This includes learning experiences, opportunities and outcomes related to the program. This also includes mechanisms in place to help faculty and students reflect upon and recognize accomplishments.

1. Direct marketing resources at high schools, the NIC website, and activities that entice personal visits to the College.
2. Conduct a market survey for either a Human Resources or Financial Services (or other) BBA major, documenting the offerings of competitors, considering the impact of program changes and additions to existing majors etc.

F. Summary of Key Findings from the External Reviewers

The External Review Team commended faculty and staff for successfully supporting the BBA program in becoming a highly valued program, which has met the expectations of students and employers and the challenges of growing into a mature and stable program.

As we advance, the reviewers identified the challenge of completing a program analysis that can drive targeted improvements in the current offerings and build consensus on future growth. A central question recognized by program faculty, the dean and the Executive Vice-President Academic relates to how growth targets, program directions and a shared vision will be developed.

Key findings of the External Reviewer Team included recommendations relating to curriculum mapping, program planning, promoting campus life and activities for students, celebrating faculty and support service contributions, providing more opportunities for increasing intercultural competency and the importance of articulating values and philosophies related to Indigenization.

The External Review Team also noted that while some of the recommendations identified in the Self-Study were beyond the scope of program review, they could be important matters for local discussion.

G. Program Response to External Reviewers' Recommendations

This section outlines each of the recommendations from the External Review Team per the categories used throughout the Self-Study document. After each recommendation the School of Business provides its response.

Commitment to Learners

Focus: This area focuses on the program's commitment to student learning by reflecting on the underlying values and philosophy of the program. This includes the alignment of program commitments with the needs and expectations of students, the institution, and the broader discipline, industry, or profession.

Recommendation 1

* Through curriculum mapping, update the program goals and learning outcomes of the BBA program.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. Curriculum mapping requires initial consultations with program stakeholders, including but not limited to Program Advisory Committee, alumni, NIC advisors and recruiters to inform a broader scope of work exploration by faculty on curriculum development. We should review all programs for redundancies and gaps. Also, review admission, course, and completion requirements. These activities will provide a solid foundation for later program development decisions.

Recommendation 2

* Engage faculty in articulating the values and philosophy of the BBA program.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. This recommendation will be undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 3

* Embody program values and philosophy in approach to Indigenization of curriculum and commitment to intercultural teaching and learning.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. As highlighted in the External Review Report, the School can build on existing initiatives within the department as a starting point. It is recognized that further discussion is also needed with Elders in Residence, the Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and Indigenous Education Council, along with the Director of Aboriginal Education and the Indigenous Education Facilitator. Any Action Items coming out of this recommendation will be based on college-wide (Build 2026, Widening Our Doorways) indigenization policies/plans.

The School of Business welcomes the opportunity to be part of this college-wide initiative and will work with Elders to identify the need for modifications to the business program to further welcome students from our First Nations communities.

Program Structures

Focus: This area focuses on the roots and design of the program, as well as how, and why, the program has evolved over time highlighting key milestones, developments, and accomplishments as it relates to the student learning experience. This includes the evolution itself, as well as the mechanisms in place for identifying and responding to emerging needs and changing realities.

Recommendation 4

* Review Year 1 and Year 2 course sequencing and program learning outcomes with attention to statistics, accounting, organizational behavior, and entrepreneurship.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. Business faculty should review all offered courses in this sense. The focus should expand to the whole programming and identify the needs of current learners (whatever pathway they are following) as the future labour force.

Recommendation 5

* Establish a program advisory committee for the School of Business that can provide expert feedback on the needs of graduates, particularly in management and marketing.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. This recommendation aligns with the Build 2026 Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 6

* Establish explicit program goals for the BBA, including retention targets, that can guide new course development and sustainable delivery.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. It is aligned with recommendation 1. Explicit program goals for each credential offered need to be established with the support of Institutional Research and Planning regarding referencing recent and relevant data associated with each program.

Learning Community

Focus: This area focuses on the program as a learning community. This includes interactions and relationships between and among faculty and students within the program, as well as engagement with broader communities (e.g., institutional, regional, discipline, industry, or profession specific relationships).

Recommendation 7

* Move forward with faculty evaluations.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. While a separate “faculty evaluation” process is outlined by the Collective Agreement, we wish to engage in formative student feedback about our programming, courses and learning experiences via a “Student Learning Experience Survey” in development from the Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation.

Our currency as educators is intertwined with our professional development. Within the boundaries of our Collective Agreement and the department’s support, we look forward to faculty development to remain responsive to the needs of our community.

Recommendation 8

* Promote campus life and activities that meet the needs of the BBA student demographic.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. Faculty will share and promote these with their students when such campus life and activities are made available through Student Services and other campus-wide initiatives. The School of Business is also finalizing a new initiative called the “School of Business Forum” as part of the response to this recommendation. Students will benefit from the expertise of the business professionals and industry leaders who will attend as guest speakers in courses and department-wide initiatives.

Recommendation 9

* Celebrate the learning community of faculty members and support services in program reviews and elsewhere.

Response: The School of Business members agree with the concept of recognition of faculty and support services’ achievements. They will promote both faculty and college successes on the college website and social media accounts.

Recommendation 10

* Promote engagement opportunities with Student Life, Student Housing, BBA Alumni Association.

Response: The School of Business members recognize this as an important recommendation that connects with recommendation 8. More specifically, the department needs a School of Business Alumni Association rather than only one for the BBA program. While adequate resources are not currently available, the members acknowledge the importance of reaching out to previous students, since many individuals in hiring positions have taken courses at this level. The department will explore avenues for facilitating this.

Practices

Focus: This area focuses on teaching and learning practices, including assessment and evaluation methods and the alignment of these approaches to supportive practices. This includes the methods or approaches members of the department engage in to fulfil the stated commitments while engaging in reflective practice.

Recommendation 11

* Provide opportunities to increase the intercultural competencies of students, staff, and faculty.

Response: The School of Business agrees with this recommendation and will engage in intercultural teaching and learning activities in the upcoming years. Workshops on intercultural understanding (in its broadest sense) offered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation in consultation with OGE and Indigenous education.

Recommendation 12

* Teach group dynamics and effective participation in group project activities earlier in the program.

Response: The School of Business members agree that common foundational competencies in group work participation and related evaluation are fundamental for student learning. It will be important to examine ways to build core competencies in this area throughout the program and possibly as an upfront boot camp type of session.

This recommendation is part of the broader and more fulsome conversation that needs to happen to ensure students are fully prepared to engage in their courses. It could include a School of Business-specific preparation course covering aspects such as integrity and academic honesty, teamwork, case studies, math and English skills.

Recommendation 13

* Consider a mandatory college-approved computing device policy in the BBA program, coupled with strong support from the Teaching and Learning Centre for course design that develops digital competencies.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation in terms of strongly encouraging (rather than making mandatory at this point) students to invest in appropriate device(s) that will set them up for success in their program of study and their future career. The department will seek further information from students, student financial advisors, and relevant departments, including Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation, to formulate language that ensures students see the relevance and need for ensuring their digital competencies include moving beyond interacting using phones.

Recommendation 14

* Articulate the values and philosophy of the program related to Indigenization of curriculum.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation and feels it aligns nicely with recommendation 3. They will undertake discussion and activities around formulating a mission statement, values and philosophy of the program aligned with other work on curriculum mapping and program learning outcomes.

Collective Impact

Focus: This area focuses on the accomplishments and contributions of faculty and students from the program. This includes learning experiences, opportunities, and outcomes related to the program. This also includes mechanisms in place to help faculty and students reflect upon and recognize accomplishments.

Recommendation 15

* Develop metrics to report on and celebrate regional impact of the BBA program.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation and will explore avenues for collecting appropriate data. One possibility beyond data available through Institutional Research and Planning is through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, which annually implements the BC Student Outcomes Survey (https://bcstats.shinyapps.io/so_data_viewer/).

Recommendation 16

* Collect profiles of graduates and their accomplishments.

Response: The School of Business members recognize this is an important recommendation and will consider more formal procedures for keeping some profiles and success stories of alumni. Consideration could be given to creating a LinkedIn group. There is no institution-wide alumni association. However, students retain their NIC email addresses, and the College does retain on file the personal email addresses of alumni.

Recommendation 17

* Consult with the future advisory committee on the impact of the BBA program.

Response: The School of Business members agree with this recommendation. A working group should develop the terms of reference for such an advisory committee.

H. Summary

The impact of this self-study on faculty has been extensive. For many years faculty have been working in mini silos, working hard to improve courses, student experiences and the quality of the credentials that our courses are a part of, basically on their own.

As a result of the self-study process, the faculty of the NIC School of Business have come together to form a single force determined to rethink, revalue, and recreate our credentials.

The seventeen recommendations from the external reviewers not only support those presented in the School of Business self-study but challenged the faculty to celebrate not only the success of our students but the faculty and the work they do to enrich the lives of those students.

The accompanying Action Plan document outlines the actions and next steps the School of Business will take for both the BBA and Post-Degree Diploma programs.