

# **Final Assessment Report**

Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Review

## **MBA**

<u>Date of Review:</u>	April 23 and 24, 2012
<u>Review Team Members:</u>	Ms. Catherine Bishop, RBC Insurance Dr. Peggy Cunningham, Dalhousie University Dr. Brent Gallupe, Queen's University Dr. John Weaver, McMaster University

### Summary:

The Review Team found many strengths of the MBA Program at the DeGroot School of Business including quality of students, the academic rigor of the program, the co-op option, the program's Code of Ethics, and the strong support for the program from alumni, staff and faculty. The program has some unique areas of specialization that are clearly an attractive draw for students (e.g., the Health Services Management option). However, the team found a number of areas where the program can be strengthened. The review team identified opportunities around Governance, updated and strengthened curriculum, and community building. They specifically identified the need for more empowerment of the program leadership and further identified the need for increased program flexibility in the first year in order to better prepare students for success in their desired discipline. The reviewers also recommended that the program focus on the specializations where the faculty has a significant core competence and ability to distinguish itself, and where there is significant enrollment for the specialization both in terms of student demand and employer demand. Such focus will enable a clearer brand promise and value proposition. The team also identified the need to refresh some of the content and provide more opportunities for experiential learning. Finally, the review team recommended that the program further develop sense of community at the Ron Joyce Centre for students, staff and faculty by building a more integrated learning community.

The Reviewers offered some insightful suggestions for improvements to the program, which are listed below.

On the whole, the Program and Faculty of Business are in agreement with the recommendations by the Reviewers and they are aligned in their plans for the implementation. The Acting Dean of the Faculty of Business highlighted that he is in an acting position so the responsibility for leading the process to implement any changes to the MBA program will fall to his successor and to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

The Quality Assurance Committee noted the strengths of the program and also identified a number of areas that need reinforcing. The DeGroot School of Business now has a new administrative structure and a new Dean will be in office in January 2013. Given these substantial changes to the administrative

unit, the QAC forsees a unique opportunity for the review, discussion and implementation of the recommendations of the review team. In light of the magnitude of the potential changes to the MBA program the QAC recommends an additional review be conducted within 4 years.

Recommendation	Implementation Plan
Governance of program needs to be changed with the Director and Program Committee more empowered to ensure success of program	Changes in governance giving more authority and control over resources to the program administrators have come into effect as of July 2012. Additionally the new position of Associate Dean (Graduate Studies and Research) to whom the Director of MBA Program would report, and Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs and Accreditation) have been established with more authority and control over resources as they relate to the MBA program.
Increased program flexibility for the first term and first year	The program is exploring combining two mandatory first year courses. This would free up one spot in the first term for students to select from one of four areas (marketing, finance health services management or business communication) This flexibility would better prepare students for co-op work terms.
Increased program focus on the specializations where faculty has a significant core competence and ability to distinguish itself	The School of Business is in the process of developing specialized Master's programs in select business fields and once developed, consideration would be given to eliminating those specializations from MBA program on a case by case basis. One such program, the Master's in Finance, will commence in September 2013. Other specialized Master's programs may follow.
Refresh courses and provide more opportunities for experiential learning. Modernization of the curriculum to include courses such as corporate social responsibility and ethics, sustainability, global governance and institutions.	It is accepted that these and other such emerging themes need to be incorporated in the MBA curriculum. The program will undertake a thorough benchmarking exercise against the curriculum in leading business schools and the general business management literature as part of curriculum reform.
Develop a more integrated learning community at the Ron Joyce Centre	The program (and the School of Business) will ensure its goal is in alignment with President Deane's Letter to the McMaster Community: <i>Forward with Integrity</i> and remain so with any future action plan.