DEVELOPING THE INFORMATION BASE FOR CURRICULUM REDESIGN

In parallel with developing the mission statement and specific objectives for the MBA program, the CRC identified three general areas of information needed for a comprehensive database to function as the foundation for development of the new curriculum: school divisions; competitor schools of business and management; and external constituencies. Subcommittees were constituted for each of these three areas. Data collection commenced in January 1990, shortly after subcommittee formation, and continued through much of 1990. A CRC report to the faculty containing the three subcommittee reports was issued in November 1990.

During the data-collection period, considerable discussion of the three subcommittees' progress occurred in the CRC. Because of its proximity to the required data, the School Divisions Subcommittee was first to complete a draft of its report, by end March 1990. The Competitor Schools Subcommittee collected data on competitor MBA programs in early 1990; this was supplemented by informal discussion with various competitor schools during the year. The External Constituencies Subcommittee did not complete its report until fall 1990, largely because it spent much of the spring and summer meeting with, and surveying, its core constituencies—students, alumni, recruiters and senior executives. This chapter presents the information-gathering efforts of the three subcommittees.

School Divisions Subcommittee

The School Divisions Subcommittee made a detailed assessment both of courses in the current core curriculum and those introductory courses identified, in early CRC discussions, as candidates for entering the core.¹ CRC members believed this was an important task inasmuch as individual members did not have specific detailed

¹ Professors Arzac, Donaldson and Kirk and student Andy Kapit.

knowledge of current core courses. The CRC was concerned that without detailed analysis, committee discussion of the current core curriculum might be on “straw men,” i.e., core courses members thought were offered, rather than those actually taught. The subcommittee was asked to develop not just a descriptive presentation, but to distill areas of overlap, omissions, connections and preliminary recommendations regarding possible changes in, additions to and/or deletions from the current core curriculum. The subcommittee report was extensively discussed in the CRC on a course-by-course basis in spring 1990.

Initial data from school divisions was collected by a questionnaire sent to the divisions as part of a broader data-gathering effort conducted by the SPC. This questionnaire asked relevant divisions to identify material that should be included in the core course(s) taught by its faculty and how this differed from current material. This phase was followed up by personal interviews with key faculty in the various divisions responsible for specific courses.

In addition to this subcommittee’s efforts, other perspectives were secured by the Competitor Schools and External Constituencies Subcommittees. Although this section of Chapter 7 focuses largely on the report of the School Divisions Subcommittee and discussion generated in the CRC, because the several data-gathering exercises proceeded in parallel, it incorporates some data secured by the other two subcommittees.

Current Core Courses

The School Divisions Subcommittee classified the eight core courses into five categories:

- The Role of Business in Society
- Economics
- Accounting
- Quantitative Methods
- Management

The subcommittee identified five of the eight courses—the two economics courses, *Business in a Changing Economy* and *Economics of the Firm*, Accounting and the two quantitative methods courses, *Statistical Analysis and Inference* and *Operations Research*—as providers of tools and concepts for use in other courses, rather than dealing with situations resembling managerial decision making. These tools and