

Higher Learning Commission  
**Self-Study Questionnaire/Report for Non-Instructional Units**

Non-Instructional Unit: Business Outreach Services

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Debra Malewicki

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).

The Business Outreach Services office at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater acts as a gateway to the resources of the university for the business community. Business Outreach oversees the Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (market research) and the Small Business Development Center (counseling and training) as well as helps coordinate services of other business assistance programs, including the MCS Consortium (IT collaborations), the Global Business Resource Center (international market research and market development), and the Irvin L. Young Entrepreneurship program (youth entrepreneurship education). BOS primarily serves businesses in southeastern Wisconsin, but also plays a role in statewide and national research, economic development and business education efforts.

The basic purpose of the outreach function of the MCS program is to solve business problems for external clients related to their information technology area. This is done under the auspices of the MCS Business Partnership Consortium and usually involves the analysis/research, design, development, implementation and/or support for computer information systems for these clients. This is accomplished by student project teams managed by faculty.

Beginning in 2003, the MCS outreach function expanded its role by helping client companies solve multi-disciplinary business problems, not restricted to just information technology. This was done by forming student/faculty teams from throughout the College of Business and Economics, bringing to bear whatever expertise was required to address the full range of client business issues.

2. Who is/are the constituency/ies you serve, and approximately how many of each constituency do you serve annually? (e.g., students, academic departments, classified staff, etc.)
  - Business clients 1200
  - Students 35
  - External regional business partners sponsoring project teams: one to four per year
  - MCS Business Partnership Consortium member companies - six
  - Students who form the project teams: four to eight per year
  - Academic departments who sponsor project teams: one to three per year
  - Individual faculty who manage project teams: one to four per year
3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

**Human Resources**

Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of employees (including student help) and their skills) relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other

programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs).

5 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Our professional staff positions must compete with skills also demanded in the private sector, but our salaries do not keep pace and offering pay for performance is difficult. Under these conditions, turnover is to be expected, but HR policies are extremely inflexible and make the hiring process a lengthy, grueling and inefficient use of existing staff resources that does nothing to serve our clients. Overall, with extensive training and careful selection, students are fine, but finding high performance students is an ongoing challenge.

Each year MCS has been able to adequately staff their needs for faculty project managers and student project teams.

### Physical Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the physical resources (e.g., office and storage space, supporting technology, other equipment) allocated to the unit relative to the unit’s ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs).

6 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Currently, our programs are in different buildings and the main office at BOS is in a retrofitted dorm that has student organization offices dispersed among staff and student offices. Programs in different buildings make collaboration and opportunity sharing difficult. However, we have been able to keep pace with program growth by expanding into additional rooms in the building and adding computers and network/phone jacks.

The physical resources (office, equipment, etc.) MCS has available as an academic department is adequate for this outreach need. In particular, a classroom has been remodeled to include an area for student development teams to work.

### Fiscal Resources

While recognizing that every unit would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the general adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the unit to serve its constituencies and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs).

7 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Our programs have many opportunities to generate revenue and grants, and we generally serve a constituency with an “ability to pay,” so with the additional support we get from campus, our fiscal resources are generally adequate. Additional funding would make it

possible to focus more on providing the students with higher levels of experiential opportunities and allow for better professional staff salaries. MCS projects are all self-supporting, so no additional fiscal resources are required.

4. In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your unit since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit). (e.g., re-organized, key staff changes, change in purposes, etc.)

Business Outreach Services was formed in 2003, primarily from putting the Innovation Center and the Small Business Development Center under one director. As the university became increasingly committed to economic development, it became important for businesses to have easy access to the university through a “gateway” office. Budget constraints also implied that having only one director would be more cost-effective.

The MCS outreach function did not exist in 1996. The MCS Business Partnership Consortium was formed in 1999. And the expanded function to include other business departments began in 2003.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.

See above for BOS. The MCS Consortium was formed in 1999 in recognition of the fact that state support was no longer sufficient to maintain the quality and excellence of the MCS program. External support in the form of hardware/software, faculty development opportunities and technical support were required for the program to respond to the rapid rate of change in the computer field and adequately prepare students for the expressed IT needs of regional organizations. A small, carefully selected, focused group of partnership companies agreed to invest a total of \$100,000 annually in the MCS program and guide the choice of new technologies to pursue in exchange for the joint exploration of selected technology issues and projects.

## MISSION & PLANNING

5. In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.

Typically, our programs largely engage in many small projects. The Innovation Center does about 200 market research projects each year, with about 25 in process at any given time. The SBDC counsels about 100 clients each year and offers training to about 850. Training topics include marketing, business planning, financial management and product commercialization. This year we are also conducting a youth entrepreneurship course, which includes an actual business start-up, for at risk high school students in Beloit and will be holding a Youth Entrepreneurship camp for middle schoolers. Wisconsin's economy continues to be highly dependent upon our strong manufacturing base, but over 80,000 manufacturing jobs in Wisconsin have been lost over the last decade. In an effort to make Wisconsin manufacturing companies more competitive, several projects focused on improving innovation and efficiency in existing companies. A project with the Delphi Company reduced one routine's processing time from two hours to ten minutes. Effective web sites were created by student interns for two other companies. Twelve small and medium-sized manufacturing companies were assisted with new product and market development and customer assessments. Manufacturing companies that engage in new product development are much more profitable than those that do not, and early-stage market assessments of products have proven to be strongly correlated with success.

Other efforts to increase innovation and successful new product development among manufacturers included the pilot of the Idealink project. JohnsonDiversey was the first sponsor of this "rewards for ideas" program that focused on company problems. Over 400 ideas were submitted by UWW faculty, staff and students using a web-based system. JD was extremely impressed with the caliber of ideas and is pursuing development. A related project still underway involves profiling innovative

large companies in Wisconsin with a reputation of supporting entrepreneurial spin-off ventures. The profile publication is expected to create awareness of these win-win scenarios and encourage our large company base to be more supportive of entrepreneurial companies, given their greater efficiencies in producing innovations.

Vibrant entrepreneurial networks are a critical element of an entrepreneurial climate. UWW's IT department took the lead on an interdisciplinary project to stimulate the growth and effectiveness of elnnovate, an entrepreneurial network of IT companies in the greater Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin area, by providing a marketing plan, a potential economic impact assessment, and a greatly enhanced web site. The highly interactive Web site includes features such as the ability to post/download documents, discussion forums, streaming IT news, a directory of regional IT and biotechnical firms, and subscription to information categories. The elnnovate project is being leveraged as the model for a budding statewide IT network, eXcelerate Wisconsin.

In another "network" project, a peer learning group that uses a well-tested facilitation structure was begun in Waukesha for growth-oriented companies. Additional groups are planned for 2005.

One of Wisconsin's future sources of economic growth is expected to center on building our strengths in developing IT companies. Eight software companies were assisted with product and market research to assess demand and develop marketing strategies for new software products.

This year the Consortium is sponsoring three projects. Two involve the economic and technical feasibility of companies migrating from expensive, proprietary software products to relatively inexpensive, open source software products. A third project involves building a Web based data collection front end onto an existing system for a client.

6. Below are five "core values" the University identifies as central to its purposes and operation. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your unit receiving more points).

Core Value	Importance (100 points)
Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding	10
Development of the individual	10
Personal and professional integrity	10
Commitment to serve	50
Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives	20
<b>Total=</b>	<b>100 points</b>

7. Each and every academic and non-academic unit engages in planning for the future. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables listed below, with those variables playing the larger role in your unit's planning efforts receiving more points)

Planning Variables	Importance (100 points)
The mission of the university or the unit	40
Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes	5
Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit & Review feedback)	5
Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)	5
Campus trends (e.g., changes in university-initiated needs and demands)	3
Technology trends (e.g., technology developments that affect delivery of service)	5
Professional trends (e.g., changes evident at other universities/colleges)	5
Available human resources (e.g., # of employees, talents, etc.) within the unit	20

Available financial resources (e.g., budget, available and accessible \$)	10
Available physical resources (e.g., space, existing technology, etc.)	2
Other:	
<b>Total=</b>	<b>100 points</b>

8. Does your unit have a mission statement?  
 Yes  No

If you answered “yes,” please list the mission statement here. or, if your mission statement can be accessed on the web, please list the URL here.

Some subunits have mission statements. WISC helps clients make more profitable product and market development decisions. The SBDC facilitates economic growth through entrepreneurial education. URL: Academics. [uww.edu/business/innovate](http://uww.edu/business/innovate)

The MCS Business partnership Consortium has adopted the following vision statement:

“A close partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater’s (UW-W) Management Computer Systems (MCS) program and a selected, focused group of regional companies that mutually benefits both parties by:

... improving the quality of the skilled labor pool in the region by keeping the MCS curriculum current and viable

... providing mutual learning opportunities through research, project work, networking and the exchange of information.”

If you answered “yes,” please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your unit’s planning and/or decision-making.

Our units are driven by producing client satisfaction and economic impact at the business unit level. The mission statements are “client centered” and stated in terms of user benefits, which we believe drives all of our activities.

Every spring, the Consortium builds its plans and budgets for the next academic year. All its activities are tied back to this “vision” statement.

**OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE**

9. What are the major or measurable objectives of the unit?

Client satisfaction, economic impact by client, revenue and grant dollars generated, revenue generated per hour of staff time, report turnaround time, number of client work hours, number of technical and industry resources “convened” for the sake of our clients, student skill development.

The MCS Consortium has adopted the following set of objectives and guiding principles:

Objectives

- Improve the skills and competencies of graduates and faculty relative to upcoming business needs
- Align curriculum to business needs by introducing new technologies in a timely manner
- Assist member companies with their recruiting activities
- Support external academic resources for joint exploration of selected technology issues and project participation
- Provide a neutral focal point for cross-industry exchange of technical knowledge, skills, research and project results

Guiding Principles

- Active participation by all resources
- Equal representation
- Focus
- Education, not training

Sustainability

10. What outcome measures (i.e., data, information) provide evidence that your unit's objectives are being met?

Surveys are conducted for the first two; both initial rounds and follow ups are sent. Most other measures, along with impact and satisfaction, are monitored in quarterly "Critical Indicators" reports. Student skills are assessed through regular performance reviews for exit interviews and reports, and alumni surveys.

- (1) The annual Consortium budget; i.e. the companies' total investment in the MCS program has ranged from a low of \$89,000 to a high of \$108,000.
- (2) Membership in the Consortium is carefully controlled; companies must be specifically invited to join. Nonetheless, membership has risen from the original three core companies to six.
- (3) The number of advanced technology projects sponsored by the Consortium has risen from one annually to three
- (4) Of the three advanced technologies investigated through Consortium projects and activities (application servers, web services, open source software). One is currently in place in the curriculum (application servers), one will be taught in the curriculum beginning Fall 2005 (web services) and various open source software packages are under review for a variety of courses.

11. Related to question #10, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)

Yes  No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

- Survey summaries
- Critical Indicators reports
- Student and staff performance reviews
- The Consortium publishes annual reports containing reports of activities, budgets and plans for the next year. These reports are available for 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003.

12. In a paragraph or two, describe specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding questions. Please be specific.

Instructors have been rehired or not based on seminar participant reviews. More focus on competitive sections of the research reports and the selection of workshop topics in the annual Ideas to Profits conference on campus are a result of client input. Student training and guidance and internal process monitoring tools have improved as a result if a desire to improve turnaround time for research reports.

- (1)The MCS Consortium's vision statement was revised in 2005
- (2) The Consortium's original committee structure was disbanded in 2004
- (3) Additional companies have accepted invitations to join the Consortium

13. Please provide a list of services, if any, that your unit provides for constituencies that are external to the university.

- Market research on new products, customer or distributor assessments, strategic partner searches (domestic and international), and international market potential
- Training sessions for small businesses and product developers
- Small business counseling on finance, marketing, HR, international marketing, and other business concerns
- Business plan development
- Youth education in entrepreneurship including the Pathways project and Youth Entrepreneurship Camp,
- Idealink project to help companies find new product ideas
- Peer learning groups (see prior section) for growth oriented entrepreneurs
- Advocates for entrepreneurship; presentations on importance of entrepreneurship and networks; Judges and mentors for Governor's Business Plan Contest
- Advanced technology projects carried out by student teams under faculty direction for Consortium companies or clients external to the Consortium
- Multi-discipline business projects covering any or all of the areas of expertise within the College of Business and Economics, again carried out by student teams under faculty direction for requesting clients.
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14. Please list any partnerships your unit has developed with the community (external to the campus, at the local, national, or global-level).

- Most of our work relies on partnerships: examples include The Institute for Entrepreneurship, Forward Janesville, Wisconsin Technology Council, Waukesha Chamber of Commerce, WiSys Technology Foundation, Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce. Over 20 private sector companies contributed sponsorships and student scholarships for the last Ideas to Profits conference. The JohnsonDiversey company sponsored the first Idealink contest. The MCS Business Partnership Consortium is described in Question 4.
- Relationship with eInnovate, a non-profit group dedicated to the IT economic development of the state of Wisconsin as described in Question 5.

**STUDENT LEARNING** (COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOUR UNIT HAS AS PART OF ITS MISSION OR PURPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS)

15. If your unit serves students as its primary constituency, does the unit have learning or development-related objectives relevant to its work with students? That is, does your unit expect that students will acquire certain knowledge or skill sets as a direct result of working with your unit or its programming?

Yes

No

If "yes," please list these outcomes/objectives.

- Students who participate in the various sponsored projects will learn an advanced technology not currently taught in the MCS curriculum. However, the particulars will vary from project to project and there is no common, specific knowledge or skill set that all students are expected to acquire.
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16. Does the unit use data/information to evaluate the extent to which these learning or development-related objectives are, or are not being met?

Yes

No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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17. What specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in question #15? Please be specific.

## SELF-EVALUATION

### Strengths

18. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your unit do very well? What good things do people say about your unit? How has your unit aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your unit "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

1. Specific Strength: Client satisfaction rates for research, counseling and training seminars are consistently in the high 90's from a percentage standpoint.

- Supporting Evidence: As noted earlier, we do extensive initial and follow-up surveys to assess client satisfaction and service value. Summaries are reviewed quarterly and shared with all staff members.
2. Specific Strength: Students develop real world business skills and garner experiences working with business clients that put them at a competitive advantage when interviewing for jobs and in performing their first job.
    - Supporting Evidence: As part of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we did an extensive survey of past alums, and the vast majority responded positively to a relevant survey question. An Innovation Center alum won the first Governor's Business Plan Contest in 2004.
  3. Specific Strength: Staff has innovative ideas on offering education to business using a variety of vehicles.
    - Supporting Evidence: Idealink, an "open market innovation" project, was a web-based rewards for ideas initiative sponsored by JohnsonDiversey. Over 400 ideas were submitted by UWW students, staff, and faculty, and the sponsor plans to develop some of the winners. Our SBDC was one of the first in Wisconsin to offer PeerSpectives, a peer-based learning vehicle for growth oriented entrepreneurs. The Innovation Center is one of the only programs of its kind in the U.S.: staff are frequently invited to speak at national conferences.
  4. Specific Strength: The strong, active interest in the MCS program by the Consortium companies
    - Supporting Evidence: The very existence of the Consortium itself; the time, effort and investment the Consortium companies make in supporting the annual budget and advanced technology projects as well as planning and hosting Consortium activities.
  5. Specific Strength: Dedicated faculty willing to participate in Consortium activities and manage the student projects
    - Supporting Evidence: Faculty regularly attend monthly Consortium meetings, volunteer to manage the student projects (they do receive a stipend, but these projects do not count toward their teaching load), and integrate the new technologies and research investigated in the projects into their courses and the overall MCS curriculum.
  6. Specific Strength: Eager, energetic and academically capable students who are willing to devote the time and energy to learn a new technology and work on an advanced research or systems development project along with their regular studies.
    - Supporting Evidence: Every year when students are recruited for these projects, at least twice as many students apply as there are slots available. The students do receive pay and credit for their participation.

### Concerns

19. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be

improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a unit, avoid doing, even though we know it's important?

After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your unit has already begun, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: Although the Innovation Center does regular Impact surveys, we have difficulty gathering this data because of changes in address and the slow nature of product development. The SBDC's impact is measured at the state level; they have a relatively poor survey response and they do not want to break this information out by specific center.
  - Supporting Evidence: Lack of data, as noted above.
  - Recommended Actions: We are currently negotiating with the State SBDC office to do the Impact study for all SBDCs in Wisconsin. We could then break out our own data.
2. Specific Concern: Our offices rely heavily on highly skilled student help to deliver services cost-effectively to our clients. Student help is transitional, of course, so a constant challenge is the creation of effective and efficient training methods to bring students up to speed quickly.
  - Supporting Evidence: Students tend to have the basic knowledge required by their junior year, then require 3 to 4 months to be able to work reasonably independently.
  - Recommended Actions: More training materials are being created that allow for a "distance learning" format, which would not require as much of an investment of face to face staff time.
3. Specific Concern: In spite of the fact it has historically been more of a byproduct than part of our specific mission to provide learning experiences for students, our Alumni survey of a few years ago made us realize that the work here significantly supports student development. Although that survey, our performance reviews, our exit interviews and self-assessment memos are specifically targeted to learning measurement, we have just begun many of these and they are "disconnected" from broader university measures. We also have no "pre-work" measurement tool to use for pre/post comparisons.
  - Supporting Evidence: See above.
  - Recommended Actions: Gain a better understanding of the tools used university-wide to assess learning and incorporate some of those metrics in both pre- and post measurement tools.

Concerns from MCS Consortium:

4. Specific Concern: To date, these Consortium activities have not resulted in any professional publications by the faculty.

- Supporting Evidence: No papers or conference presentations have been generated
  - Recommended Actions: Investigate venues where this type of professional activity can be reported.
5. Specific Concern: The multi-disciplinary project model was successfully piloted in 2003-2004 using student/faculty teams from MCS, marketing and economics funded by a federal grant. Now that the college is certain it has the capability to handle such projects, there seems to be no avenue for solicitation of similar projects.
- Supporting Evidence: There have been no clients for similar projects.
  - Recommended Actions: A marketing plan for bringing this project capability to a broad audience should be developed, funded and implemented perhaps including a Consortium web site
6. Specific Concern: Consortium projects and research are not being leveraged into additional funding opportunities
- Supporting Evidence: The only income derived is from the Consortium itself
  - Recommended Actions: Investigate possible grant and foundation proposals that could be based on the research and project results described here.
  -