

# Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Data Analytics (MS), 2025- 2026

**Date:** March 9, 2026

**In Attendance:** Interim Provost Robin Fox; Dean Paul Ambrose (Business & Econ); Dean Graduate Studies Matt Vick; Assistant Dean of Online Education and Technology Andy Ciganek; Department Chair Choton Basu; Program Coordinator Alana Platt; faculty and staff in the Data Analytics program Behrooz Davazdahemami, Onochie Fan-Osuala, and Miaoyi Zeng; Program Review Team Chair Christine Neddenriep; Assessment Representative Katy Casey

## Overview of review team evaluation, program comments:

- a) The review team noted a lack of sufficient contextual detail regarding the program's mission, goals, and outcomes, which limited their ability to evaluate the program in a way that accurately reflects the efforts and intentions of its leadership. We hope to learn more about the program's vision during the discussion of the items below and recommended actions.

## Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

### 1 – Please share key strengths of the program including unique advantages compared to other programs offered in data analytics. What sets this program apart from others?

- a) The program noted key strengths being the program accessibility (i.e., “flat” curriculum) and focus on applied/practical learning (i.e., “learn and use). They feel both aspects provide a competitive advantage. They also noted the accessibility and quality of faculty instruction as well as ongoing efforts to respond to student feedback, which includes creating more structured pathways for students who are looking for a more prescriptive path.

### 2 – In what ways is the Data Analytics (MS) program structurally organized to support key administrative functions such as assessment, strategic planning, and tracking post-graduation outcomes? What improvements could be made to enhance the program's capacity for data-informed decision-making and long-term planning?

- a) The program's current flat curricular structure allows students to begin with any course, which has led to all program-level assessment being centralized in the capstone. This structure makes it difficult to collect consistent assessment data from other courses because students follow highly individualized course pathways. To strengthen administrative support for assessment and long-term planning, the program is in the process of establishing a designated set of core courses that will create more consistent points of measurement and a clearer curricular sequence.

- b) During the discussion, the review team shared resources, including the assessment plan template, that can be used to build a more comprehensive and sustainable assessment plan. The emphasis is on articulating students' knowledge and skills developed throughout the program (as described in the five program learning outcomes) to ensure all program learning outcomes are meaningfully assessed. The program's responsiveness to feedback and willingness to realign curriculum and processes indicates a strong foundation for continued improvement.
- c) To strengthen the program's capacity for data-informed decision-making and long-term planning, several areas for improvement emerged during the discussion. Because the field of data analytics evolves rapidly—and the program's interdepartmental model requires ongoing coordination—the program faces challenges in consistently tracking technical content embedded in partner-department courses. The recently developed curricular “compact” is an important step toward establishing shared expectations for course content, but continued refinement and monitoring of these cross-college courses will help ensure alignment with current industry standards.
- d) Student feedback also indicates that the high level of choice within the curriculum can make it difficult for students to identify a clear pathway through the program. Developing structured emphases (e.g., applied AI for business, data science in economics, marketing analytics, general IT) will support both enrollment growth and clearer academic planning. These pathways may also assist with internal program planning by helping faculty anticipate demand for specific content areas and expertise.
- e) A significant opportunity for improvement lies in strengthening the tracking of post-graduation outcomes. The program is currently exploring ways to leverage LinkedIn searches and to reconfigure its advisory board structure to better support analytics- and supply-chain-focused employer engagement. Establishing a more systematic and recurring process for monitoring alumni employment would provide valuable evidence for program evaluation, marketing, and strategic planning.
- f) Overall, the review team described the program as highly responsive to student needs and industry developments. By formalizing processes for curricular coordination, student pathway clarity, and alumni outcome tracking, the program can deepen its capacity to use data proactively in shaping long-term goals and decisions.

### 3 – The review team was interested in learning more about how the program balances technical skills and business acumen considering AI and other advancements.

- a) The program emphasized that its goal is to develop graduates who can effectively bridge the gap between technical analytics work and real-world business decision-making. While students gain essential technical competencies—including data analysis, visualization, and applied analytical methods, the curriculum is intentionally not designed to produce narrowly specialized data scientists or database engineers. Instead, the program focuses on helping students understand business contexts, communicate with non-technical stakeholders, and translate complex analytical outputs into actionable insights.
- b) Faculty noted that, especially considering rapid advances in AI, the program prioritizes teaching students to make human-centered judgments that AI cannot replicate. This includes interpreting results, evaluating tradeoffs, understanding organizational needs, and advising leaders on data-informed decisions. All technological tools and methods used in the program are framed within their relevance to business strategy and decision-making. In this way, the program maintains a balance between technical skill development and the cultivation of broader business acumen, preparing students to serve as effective translators between technical teams and decision makers.

4 – Can you share how the program utilizes student feedback, enrollment trends, and/or assessment data to inform decisions about course offerings and to identify appropriate staffing needs—both in terms of quantity of faculty and faculty expertise? In what ways can these data sources be better leveraged to ensure the program remains responsive to evolving industry demands and student expectations

- a) The program uses student feedback, enrollment patterns, and faculty expertise to guide decisions about course offerings and staffing. Enrollment has remained steady over the past three years, and faculty assignments are determined by aligning instructors' qualifications with course needs while working within existing staffing limits. Each spring, the faculty meet to review program needs, discuss course content, and address issues such as course overlap or emerging student concerns. While these practices help the program remain responsive, the team noted that student feedback, trend data, and assessment results could be leveraged more systematically to anticipate future staffing needs, track demand for specific content areas, and support long-term planning aligned with industry developments and student expectations.

## Recommended Actions:

### Recommended Action #1

Establish clearly defined short- and long-term program goals, objectives, and timelines that align with and support ongoing program advancement.

### Recommended Action #2

Develop department mission statement (or adopt the one currently in place) that clearly articulates the purpose and value of the program.

### Recommended Action #3

Use the provided assessment plan template to ensure all elements are addressed. Specifically, all program SLOs should include a report of findings and associated actions.

### Recommended Action #4

Detail how the curriculum has been updated to equip students with the complex technical skills required in the changing professional landscape.

## Recommended Result:

Continuation with minor concerns

## Next Self-Study and/or Progress Report Due Dates:

1 - Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on May 1, 2032, and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2032

2 - A progress report will be due October 1, 2028, to the Dean, and November 1, 2028, to the Assessment Office

*For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: [assessment@uww.edu](mailto:assessment@uww.edu).*