Department of Higher Education State of Colorado

Institutional Review

CONSULTANT(S) REVIEW OF PROPOSAL

Institute of Logistical Managment

Summary of Strengths & Weaknesses

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

The Institute of Logistical Management (ILM), founded in 1923, has many years of experience in providing a certificate program in logistics. ILM is proposing two graduate online programs, an MBA and an MSIT, to be administered from Colorado. Its accrediting agency, the Distance Training and Education Council, has suggested that it begin with the MBA degree with a concentration in logistics, and wait to add the others until the MBA is approved and operational for some time. ILM has decided to follow the suggestion.

MISSION/PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES/GOALS

Strengths:

• The mission statement is complete and contains both a vision statement and the process for measuring the college's attainment of its mission.

Weaknesses:

- The mission statements in the graduate catalog, in the Faculty Handbook, and in the February 1, 2013 letter to Heather Delange are all somewhat different.
- The mission does not contain "a brief description of the educational programs to be offered and their purposes, the students for which the programs are intended and the geographical or demographic area served by the institution and a description of how the institution relates to Colorado's broader higher education community," as required by Colorado regulations.

ACCREDITATION / AUTHORIZATIONS and APPROVALS

Strengths:

 ILM has been accredited since 2001 by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Weaknesses:

The DETC accreditation covers only the 12 courses in the certificate program, none
of which will be included in the new program.

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION / GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Strengths:

• The institution provided an organizational chart for its proposed Colorado campus. Positions were listed, but no staff names were provided, since none have been hired yet. The organizational chart is typical of those found at similar institutions.

Weaknesses:

 Since the institution has decided to limit its Colorado offering to only one MBA program with a concentration in logistics, it needs to provide an updated organizational chart that takes its limited initial offering into account.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Strengths:

ILM is aware of the need for electronic resources to support an online program.

Weaknesses:

- The resources proposed by ILM for the program are those available through LIRN. LIRN is not an online academic library; it is a cooperative that provides institutions with a number of databases at a low negotiated price. The proposal does not indicate which databases will be purchased. One important business database, ProQuest's ABI Inform, is available as an optional module. The more highly regarded one, EBSCO's Business Source Premier, is not. Any MBA program should provide both, as well as the Wall Street Journal. While information technology is covered to a slight degree in the business literature, there are no IT resources available through LIRN.
- Given that the proposed programs require the completion of a capstone/thesis at
 a graduate level, the suggested resources are inadequate. Moreover, there is no
 indication of a plan to provide students with materials not available through local
 resources (interlibrary loan or document delivery).

FACULTY

Strengths:

- The credentials of many of the listed graduate faculty are impressive.
- Faculty have input into the shaping of the curriculum.

Weaknesses:

• Five of the eleven identified graduate faculty do not hold terminal degrees, as required by DETC: Robert Schirmer (MBA), Leon Cohan (B.S.), Ken Ackerman (MBA), Frank Breslin (MBA) and Brent Primus (no data sheet). Unlike the MFA degree, the MBA degree is not considered a terminal degree, inasmuch as numerous colleges offer either a Ph.D. or DBA degree in business.

- The proposed teaching/advising/research load for the graduate faculty is not identified.
- The Faculty Handbook is missing important information, including FERPA requirements and an appeal process for faculty. Discussions of policies in the Handbook do not distinguish between adjunct and fulltime faculty.
- The faculty grievance policy appears to deal only with student grievances against the faculty. The student services coordinator and a student are inappropriate choices to hear a grievance on the part of a faculty member against the administration.
- It is not clear if faculty can participate in faculty committees remotely. If not, many remotely based faculty may be unable to participate.
- It is not clear if fulltime faculty members are also independent contractors. If they
 cannot accept outside employment without permission, the IRS may not consider
 them to be independent contractors.
- The Handbook specifies that every student assignment is to show evidence of correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. However, sprinkled throughout the Handbook and the Catalog are instances of incorrect capitalization and sentence structure.
- The organization chart does not show a fulltime faculty member responsible for the proposed program, particularly needed in the light of the reliance on part-time distance instructors.

STUDENTS SUPPORT SERVICES

Strengths:

 The founders state that they will add appropriate student support services as students enroll.

Weaknesses:

- While there is a listing of the ethical requirements for admission counselors, the number and purpose of admission counselors are not discussed.
- The catalog appears to also serve as the Student Handbook, but it does not discuss financial aid, academic advising, technical support, or career services.
- The catalog does not include the address for the Department of Higher Education, Degree Authorization Act Officer, for complaints.

DEGREES/ACADEMIC PROGRAMS/GENERAL EDUCATION

Strengths:

• The course syllabi submitted were comprehensive and well-written and should provide students with all the information they need to succeed in each course.

Weaknesses:

- Page 15 of the graduate catalog states that the MBA program "prepares students to fill business leadership roles as senior managers in large corporate environments." No documentation is provided to show that new MBA graduates are prepared to fill senior management roles.
- No graduate marketing course is required for the MBA in numerous of the concentrations. Thus, students can graduate with an MBA degree that includes no marketing education. This is not equivalent to similar MBA programs offered at other institutions.
- The MBA program with a concentration in logistics, which will be the only program of study offered initially, does not contain a single required logistics course.
- BUS720 International Economics states that students must have a "basic understanding of economic concepts." Yet, economics is not one of the undergraduate courses stated in the admissions requirements as needed for admission.
- Similarly, FIN720 Corporate Financial Modeling states that students should enter the course with Microsoft Excel skills; yet, this requirement is not listed in the admissions criteria.
- Only two graduate courses (PM710 Advanced Project Management and the capstone course) have any graduate prerequisites. Thus, students can take, for example, MIS720 Systems Analysis & Design before taking the introductory MIS700 Management Information Systems course. Or students can take MIS730 Corporate Computer Security before taking any other MIS courses. Thus, the system of prerequisites does not ensure proper qualifications of students in any class or provide an increasing level of difficulty as the student progresses.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES / ADMISSION POLICIES

Strengths:

- The catalog lists admissions requirements.
- A list of required ethical behaviors of student recruiters is in the catalog.
- Total cost of a degree is given. The cost of a degree is lower than other similar programs.

Weaknesses:

- Admissions requirements in the graduate catalog state that a student "should" have prior academic work in the major business disciplines or five years of relevant demonstrated professional experiences.
- Page 8 of the graduate catalog lists the disciplines that students should have completed for admission—either through undergraduate course work or through work experience. Basic knowledge of economics is not included.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Strengths:

 The New Jersey campus currently submits an annual assessment plan and outcomes to its accrediting agency.

Weaknesses:

- It is not clear in the catalog if students are responsible for finding a proctor or if the institution is.
- The appeal process as described in the catalog does not state to whom the student is to direct the appeal.
- The catalog does not state to whom a student is to address a request to withhold disclosure.
- There was no indication of whose responsibility institutional assessment might be.
- The assessment plan as submitted rates its student satisfaction highly, even though it is based on less than a 15% response rate to its surveys.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL PLAN

Strengths:

• A 3-year financial plan was presented.

Weaknesses:

- The financial plan includes only \$5000 for marketing to yield 100 students for the first year. This may be insufficient.
- No admissions counselors are budgeted for the first year.
- The financial materials provided were the result of an accounting review, rather than an audit. Typically institutions that receive federal funding, including student loans, require an audit rather than a review.
- There was no needs assessment. The founders have not indicated a need for their program. In a time when enrollments at for-profit schools are dropping, the founders have not indicated where they will draw prospective students.

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are binding items in the Consultants' Report. During the program review process, the review team members noted changes that they believe are necessary to bring the institution into compliance with the CCHE Degree Authorization Act. A written response to each of the recommendations is required.

- Develop one mission statement that is consistent across all institutional publications.
 This mission should contain "a brief description of the educational programs to be offered and their purposes, the students for which the programs are intended and the geographical or demographic area served by the institution and a description of how the institution relates to Colorado's broader higher education community."
- 2. Submit an organizational chart that will be in effect at the time the institution commences operations in Colorado.
- Include as a required part of the curriculum for the MBA degree with a logistics concentration at least one or two logistics courses—such as Supply Chain Management, Logistics Systems Management, or Distribution and Materials Management.
- 4. Following state approval, provide documentation that DETC has approved the new master's program. This documentation must be provided before classes begin.
- 5. In order that the proposed curriculum match that of other recognized schools, these changes should be made:
 - a. Require a graduate marketing course in the MBA in all concentrations.
 - As part of the admissions requirements, require that students have a basic knowledge of economics—either through undergraduate course work or through documented work experience.
 - c. Review graduate course prerequisites (presently, only two courses have any graduate prerequisites) to ensure proper qualifications of students in any class and to provide an increasing level of difficulty as the student progresses.
- 6. On page 7 of the graduate catalog, under Admissions Requirements, change "students should have prior academic work" to "students must have prior academic work."
- 7. On page 15 of the catalog, either provide documentation that the MBA program prepares new MBA graduates for "senior" management roles—or delete the statement.
- 8. Either delete "Microsoft Excel skills" as a prerequisite for FIN720 Corporate Financial Modeling—or add it to the admissions requirements.

- 9. In the catalog, clarify whose responsibility it is to find a proctor (p. 12), to whom a student should address an appeal (p. 13), and to whom a student is to address a request to withhold disclosure (p. 15).
- 10. Create a student handbook with information on financial aid, technical support, academic advising, and career services, or add this information to the catalog.
- 11. In the Faculty Handbook, provide a description of the grievance policy for faculty.
- 12. Identify the exact library databases that the Institute will be purchasing and indicate how they will be made available through the learning management system.
- 13. Indicate who will be responsible for selecting online library resources, seeing that they are organized, and preparing instructions for their use.
- 14. Before the beginning of the first semester, submit to the Department of Higher Education a list of faculty and their credentials.
- 15. At the end of the first year of classes, submit to the Department of Higher Education the student services provided and the names and credentials of those hired to provide them.
- 16. At the end of the first year of classes, submit to the Department of Higher Education a financial report, indicating expenses and income for the year.

INSTITUTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions are non-binding items in the Consultants' Report. During the program review process, the review team members noted changes that they believe would enhance or improve the institution or the program. The team's suggestions are presented below. Although these suggested changes are not necessary to bring the program into compliance with the CCHE Degree Authorization Act, the institution is encouraged to discuss the suggestions with relevant stakeholders and implement them where appropriate. A written response to the suggestions is not required.

- 1. Edit institutional publications to ensure that they are written with correct capitalization and sentence structure.
- 2. Identify the teaching/advising/research loads for full-time and part-time faculty members.
- 3. Investigate the need for a full audit should the institution accept federal funding.
- 4. Investigate ways to ensure a higher rate of response on student surveys.
- Clarify in the Faculty Handbook which policies apply to all faculty and which apply only to fulltime. If policies apply to adjunct faculty, then it should be so stated.
- **6.** Clarify in the Faculty Handbook whether or not faculty members are able to participate remotely in faculty meetings.

Consultants:

Mignon Adams, MSLS Professor Emeritus of Information Science University of the Sciences in Philadelphia

Scot Ober, Ph.D. Former Professor Ball State University