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# A Perspective on a Management Information Systems (MIS) Program Review

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 Abstract & Citation

## Abstract

This paper highlights relevant curriculum issues that were identified in a Management Information Systems (MIS) program review undertaken by a group of business faculty in a small regional university. The program review was initiated to improve job marketability of graduates and student enrollment. The review process is described as a collective effort in continuous improvement in program planning and assessment. A reference framework on the technical-business orientation of the program is applied. The framework explains the varying degree of emphasis in technical/business knowledge and skills in Information Technology (IT) and Information Systems (IS) programs. Outcomes associated with the program review process include new elective courses in MIS Internship/Co-Op and Supply Chain Management and increased emphasis in both technical and business skills in MIS courses. The initial focus of this program review was to identify critical job skills for MIS majors through IT professional job descriptions and IT job market statistics. These sources of information led to several viewpoints that the program should emphasize more the "T" for technical skills. The "I" for business knowledge and skills in IT was overlooked or largely ignored. Further literature review on MIS (or IS) program reviews and IT outsourcing job trends indicated that business skills, such as communications and collaborative work skills, are important, and business knowledge in integrative value chain processes is valued by employers. Project management and system integration knowledge and skills are also valued as more enterprise applications are being implemented in business organizations. With perfect information, curriculum design or redesign decisions could be highly rational and effective. Information about job placement rates for graduates, feedback from alumnus, inputs from employers and recruiters, and IT job trends are useful for aligning curriculum with the job market. For a new program, this information is either not available or limited. Adopting the

systems approach for decision analysis, student characteristics are examined as input to the program. A significant number of our incoming undergraduate business students have little or no background in IT, nor do they have a notable background in problem-solving and analytical skills. Therefore, a primary focus in developing technical programming skills is not expected to be an appropriate focus for this program. "Attractiveness" of the program to students is an enrollment issue that is also discussed during this process. To increase student enrollment to the program, the group identified IT certification program offering, student internship and co-op program, new courses, and recruitment strategies as important steps to follow through.

## Citation

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## Keywords

business skills. ; curriculum ; information systems ; information technology ; IT job trends ; IT-IS orientation ; job marketability ; Management Information Systems ; technical skills

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