



Date: February 14, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Kenrick Mock, Interim Dean, College of Engineering

Cc: LuAnn Piccard, Associate Professor & Department Chair, Program Committee Chair  
Roger Hull, Term Assistant Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

**Program/s in this review:** Project Management (MS)

**Specialized accrediting agency:** Project Management Institute General Accreditation Council (PMI GAC)

**Campuses where the program is delivered:** UAA

**Members of the program review committee:**

- LuAnn Piccard, Associate Professor & Department Chair, Program Committee Chair, UAA
- Roger Hull, Term Assistant Professor, UAA

#### Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

The program meets UAA's mission to support workforce development in the high demand job field of project management. While the PM program is in the College of Engineering, graduates can and do work in a variety of fields from Engineering to IT to Healthcare. PM students have applied their skills internally, for example, PM students have managed projects for student clubs such as UAA Robotics or the Rocketry club. The advisory board is active and the chair of the PM department is a leader in the profession as a member of the PMI Board of Directors. The PM program also has a new minor, which has been heralded by local industry as highly relevant to the engineering disciplines, and teaches the ESM course that is required by most undergraduate engineering programs.

#### Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

Industry demand is high inside Alaska and globally with demand projected to grow.

The most glaring statistic is the number of majors, which has trended down from a high of 73 in 2016 to 31 majors in 2019. The reasons for the downturn are laid out in the report and include a number of concomitant factors (downgrade in certain sectors, location in the University Center, supertuition issues, elimination of the ESM program, among others). Prior to the enrollment drop in the last few years, the program was quite strong with steady enrollment and tuition revenue that exceeded costs.

For several years the program has exceeded instructional capacity; with only two faculty members, overloads were used to cover the curriculum. Due to the budget pressure, overloads were not offered in summer 2019 and AY20 and the program responded by changing the number and frequency of course offerings, meeting budget challenges while still satisfying program requirements at some cost of convenience to students. These constraints will likely remain until the fiscal picture improves.

Class size is small as expected for a standalone graduate program, and exacerbated by the decline in enrollment.

#### Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The program has been continuously accredited by PMI-GAC since 2007 and the PM program is considered a leader in Project Management assessment. By multiple measures, the program is of high quality with PM students and graduates contributing to the PM needs of many companies and organizations. Furthermore, PM graduates are now placed in senior positions in many organizations and PM students have won several awards, including highly competitive PMI awards. The program is also offered online and adheres to the Quality Matters standards.

#### Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

The MSPM at UAA is unique in the state. In addition, the program has the expertise to offer professional short courses that can generate additional revenue. The fact that the curriculum was designed for hybrid distance/face-to-face delivery means that there are already numerous opportunities for delivery outside of Anchorage.

#### Commendations and Recommendations

The faculty are commended for delivering a quality program with an extremely small number of faculty. The program is focused on increasing enrollment and efforts are beginning to bear fruit, as PM was the only engineering program to increase enrollment in spring 2020. A few initiatives that appear to be highly promising include:

- Growth and advertising of the PM Minor is allowing the department to reach an undergraduate audience for the first time
- Creation of a Fast-Track option with other engineering disciplines, Construction Management, and Applied Technologies Leadership will make the program more visible to a targeted audience of students who are likely to find the MSPM attractive
- Expanding interdisciplinary concentrations is allowing the department to make its unique offerings available to MBA students and also generate additional SCH

The program has strong prospects for growth and revenue generation that are relatively unique to PM.

**Decision: Continued Review**

I recommend continuing review for the program to determine within two years if the initiatives result in increased enrollment.