LOS ANGELES PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership (BSOL) 2020 Program Review:
Executive Summary

Process

The Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership (BSOL) program is one of the first Bachelor's degree programs offered at Azusa Pacific University - University College / Los Angeles Pacific University (UC/LAPU), having been offered since 2014.

A Program Review Committee (PRC) comprised of academic administrators, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and two external reviewers was appointed in June 2020 to conduct a comprehensive program review. Following guidelines provided by the WASC Senior Colleges and Universities Commission (WSCUC), the program review examined program quality and program viability and sustainability.

The PRC's review of the BSOL program was based on analyses of student enrollment information; program purpose and design; annual learning results for the program; similar programs offered by competitors; student retention, completion, and graduation rates; student survey results; faculty information and feedback; market trends; and institutional resource allocated to the program. A competitive analysis of similar online undergraduate organizational leadership programs was conducted. The institutions were selected based on geographic location, appearances on foregoing "best" and "most affordable" lists, emergence in the online BSOL marketplace, and (in many cases) the integration of a Christian worldview.

Once the PRC completed an initial review of the program, two external reviewers were invited to conduct their own review of the program and provide additional feedback which was summarized in the External Review Report. The outcome of this process was then synthesized in a 17-page BSOL Program Review 2020 Report A summary of findings and recommendations are presented below.

Findings

Competitive Analysis
The marketplace for online bachelor's degree programs in organizational leadership in the U.S. is highly competitive. More than 150 such programs at accredited institutions currently exist, giving prospective students many choices. For adults in LAPU's region, this means having the convenience of online programs both at universities within driving distance or across the country, with equal ease of access. Fourteen institutions that offer an online undergraduate degree in organizational leadership were examined, and are identified in the larger BSOL Program Review Report. Among those 14 institutions are Arizona State, Ashford, Brandman, California Baptist University, Concordia, and University of La Verne. Two of the consistently top-ten ranked competitive programs—the University of La Verne (#7 in 2020) and California Baptist University (#8 in 2020)—are a commute away from LAPU. Yet all programs are similarly accessible to prospective students, and data strongly suggests that Millennials and Gen Z students will continue to expand the ranks of virtual learners in higher education in the coming years.

Unit cost (and thus overall program cost) had some noticeable variances. The highest cost per unit of the institutions in this analysis was $685 (University of La Verne, for their Accelerated Adult Learners program; the cost was higher for standard attendance); the lowest was $370 (National University). LAPU was at $450, which is competitive; the average cost of the 14 competitive programs was $492 per unit.

Generally speaking, the core courses required in each of the programs were similar, with nearly each degree requiring classes in ethics, theory and practice of leadership, and communications. Some recurrent titles not currently offered at LAPU included finance, economics, leading teams, team building, conflict resolution and negotiation, and global leadership. However, LAPU's course in leading disruptive innovation was favorably unique among the programs analyzed, and our diversity in the workplace intimated a sensitivity to ongoing critical issues in business and culture.

In sum, the LAPU BSOL program is competitive with the analyzed programs at the present time. However, there is evidence that the top programs—in particular, perennially top-ranked Arizona State University—are engaged in an evolution of the degree program that is not just attracting large numbers of students, but that is redefining the approach to the degree itself. This includes a noticeable shift in the core class offerings to highly-flexible courses that can quickly adapt to real-world situations virtually in real-time, presenting students with exceptional opportunities to learn and apply their learning as the headlines are happening. In addition, another consistently top program, Western Kentucky University, only specifies half of their required core courses, then allows students to choose the balance of their units from a wide array of electives to customize their degree according to their own personal interests and career objectives. If LAPU desires to move nearer the leading innovative edge of organizational leadership and claim a greater share of students in the online degree marketplace, it would seem wise to consider the direction of these top programs as we plan our future steps.

Outcomes

The BSOL program went through a full revision to include the change of the Program Learning Objectives in 2016. The rationale for the full revision was based on the move from Azusa Pacific University to Azusa Pacific University College. During this transition, the curriculum was transitioned to a fully online curriculum in order to more closely align with other degree programs offered at Azusa Pacific University College. Since the BSOL program was fully revised in 2016, the first year of PLO assessment occurred in 2017.

In the 2017 annual program learning outcome (PLO) assessment process, the assessors review PLO 5, "Develop a strategic plan to assess internal/external market pressures and propose a strategy that honors people, the organization, and the external environment." PLO 5 was met with 100% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. There was unanimous agreement that the PLO is aligned to the CLO and also the assignment rubric. There was also agreement that the PLO rubric was properly aligned to the assignment instructions and a good representation of whether or not the students were

meeting PLO 5. The results confirm that the most recent revisions to the BSOL 410 course in the spring of 2017 are on track and meet our expectations for alignment and assessment practices.

The other PLO assessed during the 2017 annual learning outcome (PLO) assessment process was PLO 6, "Appraise one's understanding of strengths, learning styles, and temperament to assess organizational employee needs." The PLO was met with 91% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. There was unanimous agreement that the PLO is aligned to the CLO and also the assignment rubric. There was also agreement that the PLO rubric was properly aligned to the assignment instructions and a good representation of whether or not the students were meeting PLO 6.

In the 2018 annual learning outcome (PLO) assessment, the assessors reviewed PLO 1, "Formulate a response to an ethical dilemma based on one's understanding of ethical and worldview theories." The PLO was met with 97% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. There was unanimous agreement that the PLO was aligned to the CLO and the assignment rubric. There was, however, a suggestion to align the PLO more closely with the discipline of organizational leadership. Concerns were raised about how a student could potentially complete this assignment without applying it to an organizational setting.

The other PLO assessed during the 2018 annual learning outcome process was PLO 7, "Design a diversity strategic plan that identifies cultural barriers that limits inclusion and diversity and promotes change to foster organizational diversity and inclusivity in an organizational setting." The PLO was met with 100% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. There was unanimous agreement that the PLO is aligned to the CLO and also the assignment rubric. There was also agreement that the PLO rubric was properly aligned to the assignment instructions and a good representation of whether or not the students were meeting PLO 7.

In the 2019 annual learning outcome (PLO) assessment process, the assessors reviewed PLO 2, "Integrate principles of Christian faith and learning into a variety of subject matters." The PLO was met with 93.75% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. Despite the fact that the PLO passed, the assessors recommended that the assignment and rubric in BSOL 413 be changed in order to focus more on the analysis of the integration of the Christian worldview perspective in a more objective way. It was suggested that the assignment be narrow enough to address LAPU's Christian principles while also being broad enough to integrate students who do not share the Christian worldview perspective.

The other PLO assessed during the 2019 annual learning outcome process was PLO 3, "Demonstrate the fundamentals of effective oral and written interpersonal and business communication." The PLO was met with 90.91% of the artifacts being rated with a passing score. According to the rubric, average is satisfactory. As a result, the accessors argued that some of the items may have passed that do not necessarily meet faculty expectations.

While both oral and written interpersonal communication are listed in the PLO, written interpersonal communication was the only area that was assessed. There was not an oral communication assignment to assess for this PLO. It is recommended that the assignment in the BSOL 308 course be amended to include an oral presentation. Although the passing rates were high, faculty remain concerned about the students' writing in the program. One strategy would be to include an iterative approach to writing in specific foundational courses where students receive continuous feedback on targeted writing assignments.

Retention and graduation rates
The one-year retention rate for the BSOL program is 61%, which is higher than the average LAPU bachelor's-level program. The four-year graduation rate for the 2015-16 cohort was 64.8% and the three-year graduation rate for the 2016-17 cohort was 59.1%, both of which are higher than typical LAPU bachelor's-level programs. These higher than normal retention and graduation rates are likely attributable to the facts that (1) many BSOL students enrolled at LAPU after beginning their studies at APU; and (2) the BSOL program is more transfer-friendly than many other LAPU bachelor's programs.

Since inception of University College/Los Angeles Pacific University, 531 students have graduated from the BSOL program. The race and ethnicity of graduates is similar to the composition of students enrolled in the program except for a somewhat lower percentage of Hispanic graduates and higher percentage of White graduates: Hisapanic - 40.5%; White - 31.3%; Black or African American - 16.4%; Asians - 3.6%. However, given that the average student transfers 77 credits into the program and, therefore, will not likely complete the program in less than two years; and that the ethnic mix has been changing over the life of the program, an adjusted comparison may be warranted. The graduation rates per ethnicity/race are much closer to the enrollment ethnicity/race from inception through 2018 Spring semester. Using this metric the enrollment vs graduation rates are as follows: Hispanic (41.7% vs. 40.5%), White (29.2% vs. 31.3%), Black or African-American (16.1% vs. 16.4%), Asian (5.0% vs. 3.6%), all others (8.0% vs. 8.3%). Based on this analysis, the graduation rates are very reflective of the overall enrollment in the program.

Using the same logic, the enrollment rates compared to graduation rates from inception through the 2018 Spring semester show that women have not been quite as successful as men, although the difference between enrollment and graduation rates is less than two percent. Women comprised 53.6 percent of all enrollments during the period and 51.8 percent of graduations to date, whereas men comprised 46.4 percent of all enrollments and 48.4 percent of graduations.

Preparedness for advanced study and/or careers
As noted above, an alumni survey was sent to 542 BSOL alumni from the past five years to which 96 alumni (17.7%) responded during July 2020. The survey included questions about employment and the relevance of the BSOL program to their careers. The following observations demonstrate that the BSOL program has prepared students well for careers and further study:

- 78.1% reported being employed full-time, 7.3% were employed part-time, 5.2% were self-employed, and 6.3% reported not being employed and not seeking employment. Only 3.1% reported being unemployed and seeking employment (and this in the midst of a pandemic).
- 60.4% reported that the BSOL program had helped them advance their career or start a new one while the remainder were evenly split (19.8% each) between responses of NO and N/A.
- 57.3% reported being currently employed in the field of their studies.
- 51% reported that they had already or planned to enroll in a graduate degree program, 22.9% reported they were uncertain, and 26% reported they had no such plans.

Recommendations, Future Goals, and Planning for Improvement

Recommendations

1. **Curricular distinctiveness between the BSOL and BBA.** This identity clarification issue emerged as a key theme and an essential element facing the course content of the BSOL program. The local and national curricular and competitive analysis conveyed there should be careful thought given to the key distinctives of the BSOL program, clearly distinguishing it from the BBA program. This distinctiveness would provide clarity to the degree, promoting the market relevance of the BSOL program.

   Recommendation: Review all courses for currency and relevance. Deleting some courses in favor of more leadership-oriented courses is likely required. Other courses will require a varying degree of content revisions and updates. Specific recommendations follow:

- Add focused content on Christian faith and worldview; organizational behavior; knowledge management; diversity, equity, and inclusion; types of intelligence including emotional intelligence, cultural & social intelligence, spiritual intelligence; systems thinking and management; differences between leadership and management; remotely leading and managing organizations, virtual teams, and virtual teambuilding; and other areas to be determined.
- Four courses are related to the "BSOL research project." These courses, identified by their new (2020) Course ID, are ORGS320 (Intro to Research Methodology), ORGS410 (Data-Driven Decision Making I), ORGS411 (Data-Driven Decision Making II), and ORGS430 (Intro to Data Analysis). A discussion is currently ongoing regarding the future scope of and need for these courses, specific to evidence-based decision-making vs. research.
- Establish relationships with industry to obtain and sustain currency and relevance.
- Create an LAPU-wide approach that emphasizes the unique distinctives and value of the BSOL Program from other management and leadership Programs.

2. **Reconsideration of program name**. In light of the aforementioned issues (need to conduct varying degrees of course revisions; curricular distinctives between the BSOL and the BBA; market relevance; external partnership pursuits, etc.) it would be an ideal time to consider changing the name of the degree itself. Brand recognition and appeal are critical aspects to any leadership program, as universities with large advertising budgets (e.g., Arizona State University, Southern New Hampshire University, California Baptist University) are penetrating the markets in Los Angeles, and LAPU is essentially relaunching itself at the local, state, national, and perhaps international markets.

   Recommendation: Change the program name to Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership (BAOL). Utilize a theme of inclusive leadership as a way to brand and differentiate the program internally and in the external marketplace.

3. **Revise PLO/CLO Map.**

Recommendation: The existing BSOL PLO/CLO map is out of sync, and this map will be critical for the redesign of this undergraduate degree. Proper identification of each mastery assignment is clearly needed. Without a comprehensive PLO/CLO map any redesign of this degree would be hampered. PLOs should be revised and a proper curriculum map developed. Create a new PLO (from PLO 3) that separates oral communication and written communication. Course learning outcomes should also be re-evaluated for possible revision.

Future goals

As a result of this program review process the following goals have been established:

1. Clarify the new BAOL program design, identifying the features and common themes that will permeate the program, as well as a revised list of courses and curriculum map. This needs to be done in view of the launch of the MAOL program, which is seen as being an enrollment beneficiary of graduating BAOL students.
2. Establish a priority list and schedule to refresh or replace all of the program requisites and major requirement courses in the program by the end of FY 2021.
3. Ensure that LAPU program standards are incorporated into all BAOL courses as part of the revision process.
4. Strategically redesign fundamental courses to incorporate an iterative approach to undergraduate writing and APA compliance. One paper, referred to as either the Applied Summary Paper (ASP) or signature assignment, will be utilized throughout each course with continuous and salient feedback provided to the students.

Improvement plans

In order to achieve these goals, the following steps have been taken:

● Dr. Lisa Phillips (PhD in Business) has been appointed as Assistant Dean for all business and leadership programs. Dr. Phillips led the MLOS and BBA curriculum revision processes [i.e., leading the process to clarify program design, identifying and appointing Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), etc.] that culminated in the new MAOL program.
● Establish a BAOL Curriculum Development Budget for the revision of existing courses. Allocation of funding, with appropriate fiscal year scheduling, is warranted. FY 2021 Curriculum Development Budget should include funding for new BAOL courses that are added as a result of recommended curricular changes.
● A *Credit Hour Policy* will guide the design of learning activities in the revised/new BAOL courses.
● The Learning Design and Engagement department in collaboration with the Assistant Deans has established an institutional workflow process for the revision of courses that ensures all of the LAPU standards are adequately addressed in the curriculum revision process.