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## 1980 University Of North Dakota MBA Program Survey And Evaluation

Robert Sannerud

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1980 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA MBA PROGRAM

SURVEY AND EVALUATION

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Concordia College, 1977

An Independant Study

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Business Administration

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May  
1980

This Independant Study submitted by Robert Sannerud in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

Stuart A. Schulz  
(Chairman)

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It is with the deepest of regrets that my school years are over. The following people deserve recognition in regard to this Independent Study. Thanks go to Randy Newman -at the time a fellow GTA, now an instructor- for the idea of evaluating the UND MBA program. Without the idea there would not have been a study; Dr. Steve Scherling for supervising and advising me on methods to use and writing; Burt Oien for providing information, encouragement, and some good b.s. sessions; and most of all to my new wife for her support.

It is my highest hope that this MBA program will be continued. Accreditation of the MBA program should be the highest priority of the University of North Dakota. UND should seek to increase the graduate business faculty- in terms of size and quality- and do what they can to reduce faculty turnover within the graduate faculty of the MBA program.

Robert A. Sannerud MBA  
May 1, 1980

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The professional business program at the University of North Dakota is the only one in the state and, thus, is a valuable resource for North Dakota. The MBA degree prepares students to assume positions of responsibility in the business world and increasingly, in the non-profit sector of the economy. In a MBA program, the students learn how to identify opportunities, use resources, select and motivate people, make decisions, achieve objectives, and evaluate results.

The MBA graduate is a professional, managerial, and analytical person knowledgeable about economic, social and political forces and the major functions of business. He or she is capable of getting things done and advancing in a chosen career.

In the past 30 years, the growth of Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree programs has been rapid. In 1950 only six universities offered this advanced degree. In 1979, the number of schools offering the MBA had grown to 670--with 112 of this number overseas. In the spring of 1978 48,484 students completed MBA requirements.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Supply & Demand: Are There Too Many MBAs . . . Or Too Few," MBA Executive, January 1980, p. 11.

The MBA degree program at the University of North Dakota is just over three years old. Since it was instituted, a formal evaluation of the MBA program has not been conducted. In order for an MBA degree program to be successful, it must adequately serve the needs of its audience or market. To serve these needs, performance appraisals must be conducted to aid the program directors in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Without the aid of a formal evaluation, directing the program becomes a "by the seat of your pants" operation, which provides no real guidance in the determination of the needs of the programs audience or market. In the case of an MBA program, this audience or market is the program's students.

#### Objectives

It is the purpose of this study to provide the first formal evaluation of the University of North Dakota MBA degree program. The study will attempt to ascertain the overall strengths and weakness' of the program, from the point-of-view of past graduates and students that were enrolled in it.

These students have been asked to assess the MBA program overall, its curriculum, the value of their MBA education, salaries and geographic location. The views of the respondents are important in the College of Business and Public Administration's efforts to upgrade the quality of the program.

Two objectives have been set for this study. First, to aid the MBA Advisory Committee in identification of areas needing improvement in the MBA degree program. The first of these areas is foundation



courses. These are the functional and tool areas required for the MBA degree: marketing, finance, economics, management (behavior and quantitative analysis) and accounting. The second area is that of MBA program characteristics. This area deals with admission standards, course requirements, advising, grading procedures and other pertinent characteristics. The second objective is to identify the educational needs of MBA students, as related to their work and careers. This involves identifying the students undergraduate background, what department of the company they work in and their job duties, what industry their company is in, intercompany or intra-company job changes, and starting and current salary information.

#### Research Methodology

In order to facilitate achievement of the study objectives, four main sources of information were used. First, since the University of North Dakota is a land-grant university, relevant information was sought from other land-grant universities regarding their MBA degree programs and any evaluations they may have conducted. The schools contacted were: the University of Minnesota--Minneapolis campus; the University of Wisconsin--Madison campus; the University of South Dakota at Vermillion; and the University of Iowa at Iowa City. Through this information research, it was found that only one school--the University of Minnesota--had conducted a study that could serve as a useful framework for this evaluation. The other schools indicated that they had at no time ever conducted a formal evaluation of their graduate business administration programs.

The second source of information was a literature search for information regarding MBA programs in general, MBA salary statistics, and the demand for MBAs by business firms. The Master in Business Administration magazine is a publication that addresses itself to the needs of MBA's, and provides information regarding MBA salaries and demand for MBA's. The MBA Executive is the newsletter of the Association of Master of Business Administration Executives. It also provides information on the topics of MBA salaries and MBA demand. The Wall Street Journal frequently publishes articles that provide interesting insights into problems faced by MBA's in finding jobs and qualities of various MBA degree programs. This is by no means an exhaustive listing of available information sources. Other sources were consulted, but the quality and consistency of material generated by these publications by far provided the greatest wealth of information.

The third source of information was personal interviews with people directly involved with the University of North Dakota's MBA program. The interviews were used to solicit advice regarding questions to be asked and topic areas for investigation that would be helpful for evaluating the MBA program. The diverse backgrounds of these people--psychology, organizational behavior, general management and accounting--provided for a broad spectrum of ideas and comments on areas perceived by them to be important. These ideas and comments were sorted through and the best ones were used in the mail survey of past University of North Dakota MBA degree program graduates and students.

The final and major source of information for this study was a mail survey questionnaire of past University of North Dakota MBA graduates and students. To develop the sample, the names of the graduates and past students in the MBA degree program were obtained from the Dean's Office in the College of Business and Public Administration. The sample consisted of nineteen graduates and nine non-graduates of the program, out of a total of twenty graduates and eleven non-graduates, for a total sample size of twenty-eight. Mailing addresses for those students surveyed were obtained from local telephone directories if their current place of residence was known, and from past University of North Dakota telephone directories if their current place of residence was not known. The three people that were not surveyed, were not surveyed because their current location was not known and there was no listing or address for them in past University of North Dakota telephone directories.

To develop the mail survey questions, published questionnaire and survey design literature was reviewed. Two questionnaires, previously used for similar evaluative studies, were used to develop the survey instrument for this study. The University of North Dakota Business Curriculum Survey of 1977 was used for its listings of major areas available at the University and for questions regarding general information and salaries. One question from the University of Minnesota's MBA Alumni Survey of 1978 was used because of the insightful nature of the information that it could provide. All other questions were developed from information gained from the aforementioned personal interviews.

Each student surveyed received a printed cover letter from the director of the University's MBA Program that explained why the study was being undertaken and that all responses would be anonymous for purposes of accuracy and frankness of responses. They also received a copy of the questionnaire to be filled out, and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Because of the small size of the sample, all responses were tabulated and analyzed by hand. In addition, because the size of the sample covers over 90 percent of the size of the relevant universe of potential samples, the results obtained are considered highly reliable and accurately reflect the opinions of the entire relevant universe.

#### Scope And Limitations

It should be noted that the students surveyed were either graduates of the University of North Dakota MBA degree program or had been students enrolled in that program and for some reason have elected to discontinue their studies. These students were surveyed because it was felt that past students would be best qualified to ascertain how good the program was and how well the program prepared them for their work and careers.

There were several audiences that were omitted in the course of developing this study. Private and state colleges with Master of Business Administration degree programs were not consulted, since they are governed and funded by essentially different regulations and regulatory bodies. Also, students and graduate faculty currently

involved in the program were not surveyed because they have communication channels immediately available to them, through the MBA Advisory Committee and the director of the MBA program. The aforementioned audiences were also omitted for the reason of limiting the scope of the study.

#### Organization

The basic purpose of this study is to focus on the two objectives set forth above. In accomplishing this end, the report is organized into three chapters. The Introduction is presented in Chapter I. In Chapter II, the methodology and evaluation results of the MBA Program Survey are presented. In Chapter III, discussion and recommendations are presented. Accordingly, this study will provide for identification of areas needing improvement in the University's MBA program, identify the needs of MBA's, as related to their work and careers, and if the program, in its entirety, should be continued or not.

## CHAPTER II

### EVALUATION

#### Methodology

A questionnaire survey methodology was adopted to evaluate the University of North Dakota's Master of Business Administration degree program. The questionnaire was developed in order to solicit information from past students and graduates of the program.

The questionnaire design consisted of:

- Part 1. Questions 1 through 3 collected information regarding where the students obtained their undergraduate degree; their undergraduate major; if they graduated or not from the University of North Dakota MBA program; and if they didn't graduate from the MBA program, why.
- Part 2. Questions 4 through 7 asked the students and graduates to evaluate the MBA program quantitatively. Question 8 and 9 collected data regarding strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improving the MBA program.
- Part 3. Questions 10 through 12 collected information regarding if the MBA degree was required for their initial employment assignment; and how helpful the courses taken as a part of their MBA studies were in their initial and present job situation.
- Part 4. Questions 13 through 17 dealt with what the students initial job title was, their initial duties; whether or not they were still employed in their initial position; if they were not employed in their initial position, to list the positions held, dates held and employer (if different from their initial job); list the duties of their present position; and finally, what department of the company they are presently assigned to. Questions 18 through 21 collected in-

formation about whether they would have started at a lesser position with or without an MBA degree; whether job experience in the company or having an MBA degree would have provided more opportunities for promotion; and what their salary range was when they started their initial job and what their salary range is in their present job.

- Part 5. Questions 22 through 25 collected information about the size of the organization the past students and graduates worked for; where it is located; whether it primarily does business on an international, national, regional, state or local level; and their company's primary line of business.

### Results

Twenty-eight questionnaires were mailed to past students and graduates. A follow-up reminder two weeks later resulted in fourteen responses for a 50 percent return ratio. Of the fourteen respondents, ten had received their undergraduate degree from the University of North Dakota, two had received their undergraduate degree from the University of Montana, one received their undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota and one had received their degree from North Dakota State University.

Table 1 shows the undergraduate majors of the respondents. Nine of the 14 respondents had majors that were business related. The other five respondents had majors in the natural sciences or engineering.

When asked whether or not they graduated from the University of North Dakota's MBA degree program, 10 of the 14 respondents indicated that they had graduated from the University of North Dakota's MBA program. Of these 10 respondents, 8 had obtained their undergraduate degree from the University of North Dakota and 2 indicated they ob-

TABLE 1

## UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

MAJOR AREA	NUMBER INDICATED
General Business Administration	3
Personnel Management	1
Banking	1
Marketing	2
Economics (general)	1
Retail Merchandising	<u>1</u>
Subtotal	9
Other:	
Technical Communications	1
Chemical Engineering	1
Biology	1
Industrial Technology	1
Psychology	<u>1</u>
Subtotal	5
Total	14

Source: Question 2 of the 1980 UND MBA program Survey.

tained it elsewhere. Four of the 14 respondents indicated that they had not graduated from the University of North Dakota MBA program. Of these 4 respondents, 2 had obtained their undergraduate degree at the University of North Dakota and 2 indicated that they obtained their undergraduate degree elsewhere.

When asked to indicate why they didn't graduate, two indicated that they transferred to another school because of job requirements, one quit because of a job transfer and one didn't finish their



Independent Study.

The results for question 4 (a through k) were averaged for each subject area. The students were asked to evaluate the MBA degree curriculum areas quantitatively on the basis of the following system: 0=F; 1=D; 2=C; 3=B; 4=A. The mean averages of the various areas and the underlying number of responses used to calculate the mean average in the respective areas are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

## CURRICULUM AREA EVALUATION

AREA	RESPONSES	$\bar{x}$
4a. Accounting	14	3.34
b. Economics	12	2.63
c. Marketing	12	2.31
d. Policy Formulation and Administration	13	2.58
e. Organizational Theory and Behavior	12	2.63
f. Quantative Analysis	12	2.34
g. Research Seminar	10	1.35
h. Finance	13	2.52
i. Production Management	13	2.66
j. Independent Study	11	2.53
k. Electives	12	3.15

Source: Question 4 (a through k) 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

The number of the responses for some areas do not add up to the number of total responses. This is because some of the respondents did not complete the MBA program at the University of North Dakota

and, thus, did not take all the required classes. The number of responses for electives is less than the total number of respondents for the same reason. The electives are grouped together because of their homogeneous nature. They all dealt with readings courses in Management and Marketing, Finance, and Economics.

The past students and graduates were asked in question 5 to describe some overall elements of the MBA program according to their actual experience with them and how they might fit into an ideal program. As can be seen in Table 3, the biggest discrepancy involves the courses with undergraduates dimension, with the general feeling that the ideal program would have few classes with undergraduates.

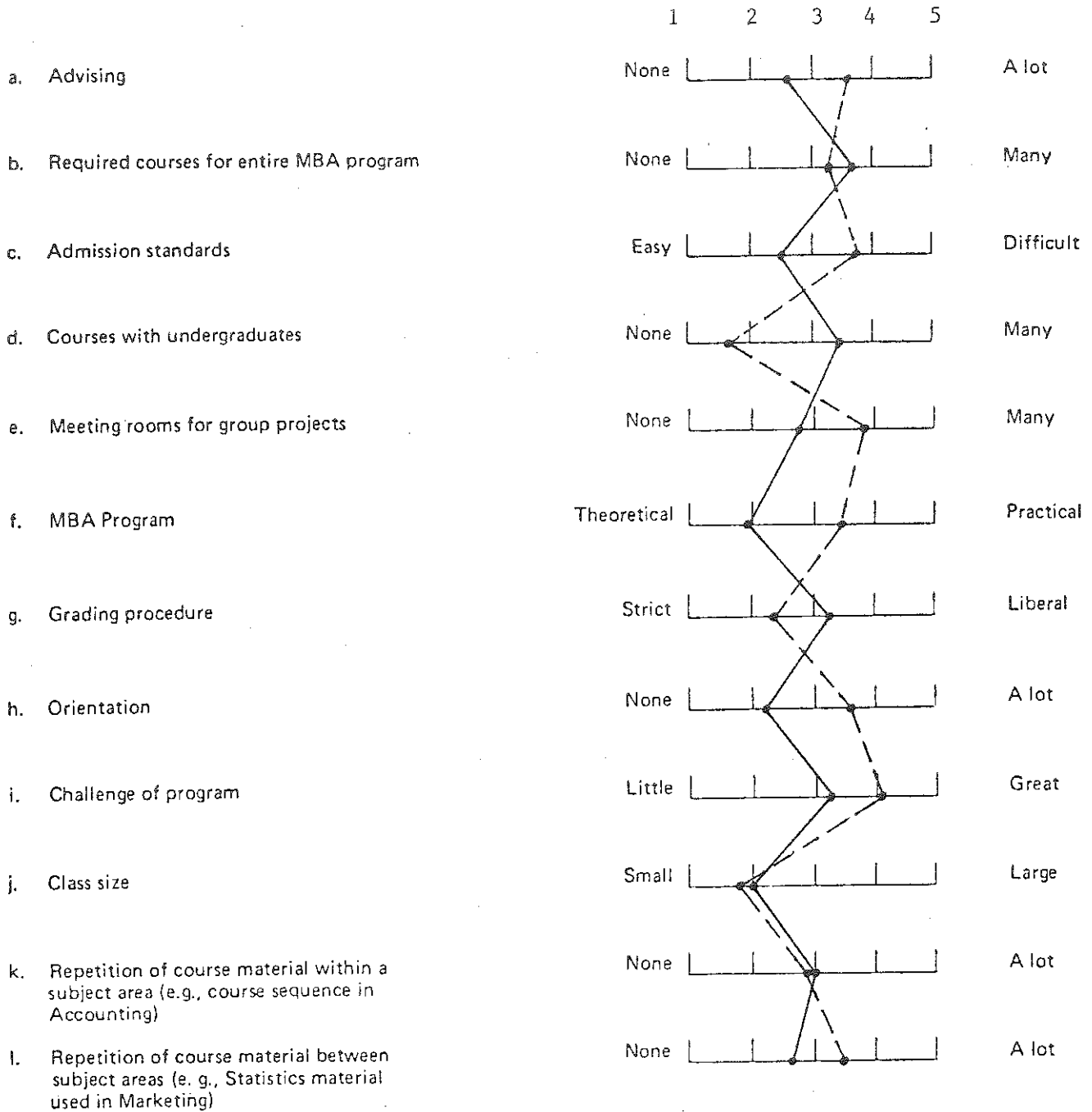
The past students and graduates also registered quite a few other discrepancies between the actual and ideal program. The biggest concerns were a more practically oriented program, more orientation, more difficult admission standards, more meeting rooms for group projects and a more challenging program.

Past students and graduates felt that three areas of the program were comparable to the ideal program. They wanted a little less repetition of course material within a subject area, a little smaller class size, and less required courses for the entire MBA program. They also felt that a slightly stricter grading policy would be more desirable.

Questions 6 and 7 dealt with the perceived adequacy of the MBA education to oral and written communication. For each question, the results were averaged. These results and the number of responses

TABLE 3

HOW PAST STUDENTS AND GRADUATES COMPARE THE PROGRAM THEY TOOK TO AN IDEAL MBA PROGRAM



Source: Question 5, 1980  
UND MBA Program Survey

"Program They Took" —————  
"Ideal Program" .....  
Legend: Solid line for "Program They Took", Dotted line for "Ideal Program".

are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

ADEQUACY OF MBA EDUCATION IN THE AREAS OF  
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION\*

QUESTION NUMBER AND AREA	RESPONSES	$\bar{x}$
6. Oral Communication	14	2.68
7. Written Communication	14	2.90

\*Scale Range: Very Inadequate = 1; Inadequate = 2;  
Adequate = 3; Very Adequate = 4.

Source: Questions 6 and 7. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

The area of oral communication was felt to be less than adequate, with ratings ranging from 1.7 (very inadequate) to 3.3 (adequate). The area of written communication was also felt to be inadequate, but not as inadequate as oral communication. The ratings for written communication adequacy ranged from 1.8 (very inadequate) to 3.9 (adequate).

In questions 8 and 8a, the students were asked if they felt there were any courses lacking from the University's MBA curriculum--whether business related or not--that would have been beneficial to them. Of the 14 respondents, 7 signified yes there were, 7 responded either no or they didn't know. For those responding yes to these questions, a summary of courses that were indicated in question 8a can be found in Exhibit I.

Of the courses indicated, Finance was mentioned 4 times, Management Internal Communications was mentioned 3 times and Computer Programming was mentioned 2 times.

EXHIBIT IRESPONSES TO QUESTION 8a

---

What courses would have beneficial to you, whether business related or not?

Assertiveness Training, Business Law, Calculus, Computer Programming, Decision Making, Business Economics, Business Ethics, Finance, Management Internal Communications, Management Public Relations, and Taxation.

---

Question 9 dealt with what can be done to upgrade the MBA program to make the University of North Dakota's MBA graduates more competitive in the job market and on the jobs. The comments received on this question were very constructive, indicating that the respondents felt that the program is a good one, but at the same time needs some revision. A summary of the comments, arranged in order of frequency mentioned, and the number of times mentioned can be found in exhibit II. Because some respondents indicated more than one way to improve the program, the total number of responses obtained is greater than the total number of respondents.

When the past students and graduates were asked if their initial employment assignment required the MBA degree, 6 of the 14 respondents replied 'yes' and 8 of the 14 respondents replied 'no'. Of the 6 responding 'yes', 5 had graduated with their MBA degree and one had not graduated from any MBA degree program. Of the 8 responding 'no' to question 10, 5 had graduated with their MBA degree, and 3 had not graduated from any MBA degree program.

The responses to questions 11 and 12 measured how helpful the courses taken as part of the MBA studies were to the students in

EXHIBIT II

## RESPONSES TO QUESTION 9

---

What UND can do to upgrade its MBA Program and to make its MBA graduates more competitive in the job market and on the job?

<u>COMMENTS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF TIMES MENTIONED</u>
Implement an internship program	6
Better instructors	4
More computer training	3
Attain Accreditation	1
Drop independant study requirement	1
No combined classes (Graduates with undergraduates)	1
Make classes tougher	1
Market the program	1
More instructors with business experience	1
More finance courses	1
Require calculus	1
Stress decision making	1
More personnel management	1
Define the MBA programs' objectives	1
Tighten admissions standards	1

---

their initial and present job situation. The responses for each question were averaged and are shown in Table 5.

The courses taken as part of the students MBA studies were rated as somewhat helpful in their initial job situation. In their present job situation, the students again rated the courses taken as part of their MBA studies as somewhat helpful, but more helpful than in their initial job situation.

In Part 4 of the questionnaire, the students were asked to summarize their work careers. They were asked to supply information about their initial job and their duties in their initial job, if they had changed jobs, and if they had changed jobs, what their sub-

TABLE 5

HELPPFULNESS OF COURSES TAKEN AS A PART OF  
THE MBA STUDIES\*

QUESTION NUMBER AND AREA	RESPONSES	$\bar{x}$
11. In <u>Initial</u> job situation	14	2.56
12. In <u>present</u> job situation	14	2.76

\*Scale Range: Not Very Helpful = 1; Somewhat Helpful = 2; Helpful = 3; Very Helpful = 4.

Source: Questions 11 and 12. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

sequent jobs and the associated job duties were, up to and including their current job and its duties, and to what department of the company they are currently assigned.

Of the 14 respondents, 8 are still employed in their initial job position. That is, they have not changed employers nor have they been promoted up the corporate ladder. Six of the respondents stated that they were not still employed in their initial position. Of these six, all of them had received promotions from their initial employer. None of those six had changed employers.

The positions the fourteen respondents hold are in a variety of organizations such as banks, utilities, military service, manufacturing concerns, health care and planning organizations, and universities. Table 6 shows the departments of the organization to which the respondents are currently assigned and the number of respondents in each of the departments.

TABLE 6

DEPARTMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION IN WHICH  
PRESENTLY ASSIGNED

DEPARTMENT	NUMBER ASSIGNED
General Administration	3
Finance	2
Sales/Distribution	1
Personnel	1
Production	0
Accounting	0
Other:	
Teaching	4
Engineering	2
Community Development	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	14

Source: Question 17. 1980 UND MBA Program Study.

In question 18, the students were asked if they would have started at a lesser position (status-wise and salary-wise) at their initial place of employment if they had not had their MBA degree. Of the 14 respondents, 8 indicated that they would have, 5 replied that they would not have, and one did not know or was not sure. One person, in response to this question also stated that he would not have been considered for his position if he had not held an MBA degree.

Question 19 dealt with the question of opportunities for promotion. The past students and graduates were asked to assume that



they had started at a lesser position, without an MBA degree, at their initial place of employment. Then, based on this assumption they were to indicate whether job experience in the company (one and one-half to two years) or having an MBA degree would have provided more opportunities for promotion. Eight of the respondents indicated that job experience in the company would have provided more opportunities for promotion than having an MBA degree. Six of the respondents indicated that having an MBA degree would have provided more opportunities for promotion than job experience in the company. Thus, according to 57 percent of the respondents, work or job experience is more valuable than an MBA degree in that it provides more opportunities for promotion.

The results of the questions dealing with initial starting salary and present salary can be found in Table 7. The responses for each question were divided between those students who graduated with their MBA and those students who had been in the program but had not graduated. A mean salary was calculated for both graduates and non-graduates in the areas of initial starting salary and present salary.

According to Table 7, the students that graduated with an MBA received higher initial starting salaries than did those who were enrolled in the MBA program but did not graduate. The MBA graduates presently continue to earn more per year than do non-graduates of the MBA program. In this study the initial difference between MBA graduates and non-graduates was approximately \$100 per year. This difference has increased to \$250 per year at the present time.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF MBA GRADUATE AND NON-GRADUATE  
INITIAL STARTING AND PRESENT SALARIES

	<u>MBA GRADUATES</u>	<u>NON-GRADUATES</u>
Initial Mean Starting Salary	\$15,100 per year	\$15,000 per year
Range:		
Low	\$10,000-\$11,999 per year	\$10,000-\$11,999 per year
High	\$20,000 or over per year	\$16,000-\$17,999 per year
Present Mean Salary	\$18,500 per year	\$18,250 per year
Range:		
Low	\$12,000-\$13,999 per year	\$12,000-\$13,999 per year
High	\$26,000 or over per year	\$26,000 or over per year

Source: Questions 20 and 21. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

There is a large discrepancy between what University of North Dakota MBA graduates initially earn and what MBAs from other MBA schools earn initially. Half of the MBA graduates in 1979 earned starting salaries over \$20,500 and the mean salary was \$21,300.<sup>1</sup> Thus, compared to 1979 MBA graduates from across the nation, the University of North Dakota MBA earns on the average \$6,200 less per year than his or her fellow MBAs.

<sup>1</sup>"AMBA Survey: Banking, Accounting Dominate '79 Hiring; Consulting Offers MBAs Top Dollar," MBA Executive, January 1980, p. 3.

The results of question 22 dealt with the approximate number of employees--both managerial and non-managerial employees--in the organization for which the students work. Of the fourteen respondents, seven, or 50 percent are employed by organizations that employ 751 or more people in both managerial and non-managerial occupations. The results of question 22 can be seen in Table 8.

TABLE 8

## SIZE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION

SIZE OF ORGANIZATION NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
1-25	3
26-50	1
51-100	1
101-250	2
251-350	0
351-500	0
501-750	0
751-1000	3
1001-2000	0
2001-3000	0
3001-4000	0
4001-5000	0
5001 and over	4

Source: Question 22. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

In the next question on the questionnaire, the past students and graduates were asked what city and state they currently work in. Of

the fourteen respondents, 71 percent currently reside and work in North Dakota, 14 percent reside and work in Minnesota, and 7 percent reside and work in Washington and New York respectively. The breakdown of locations by city and state can be seen in Table 9. From the breakdown of the data, it can be seen that a large majority of the past students and graduates of the University of North Dakota MBA program continue to work and reside in North Dakota.

In question 24 of the survey questionnaire, the graduates and past students were asked to indicate the main level on which their organization conducts business. The levels are: International (two or more countries); National (six or more states); Regional (3-5 states); Statewide; and Local. The results of this question can be seen in Table 10.

The final question of the 1980 University of North Dakota MBA Program Survey questionnaire asked the past students and graduates what type or line of business best describes their companies activity. Out of fourteen responses, the types of business activity indicated and the number of respondents identifying the type of activity are as follows: Education (4); Banking (2); Manufacturing (2); Military (2); Construction, Utilities, Transportation and Consulting, one each.

TABLE 9

LOCATIONS OF GRADUATES AND NON-GRADUATES  
BY CITY AND STATE

STATE	CITY	NUMBER OF GRADUATES AND NON-GRADUATES WORKING THERE	
		STATE	CITY
North Dakota		10	
	Grand Forks		5
	Bismarck		3
	Fargo		1
	Gwinner		1
Minnesota		2	
	Minneapolis		1
	St. Paul		1
Washington		1	
	Seattle		1
New York		1	
	New York		1
	TOTALS	14	14

Source: Question 23. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

TABLE 10

PRIMARY LEVEL AT WHICH RESPONDENTS  
ORGANIZATIONS CONDUCT BUSINESS

LEVEL	NUMBER INDICATING THAT LEVEL
International	3
National	2
Regional	3
Statewide	4
Local	2

Source: Question 24. 1980 UND MBA Program Survey.

## CHAPTER III

### DISCUSSION

Overall, the respondents felt that the MBA program they participated in was a good one, however, there is always room for improvement. Since the respondents are practitioners in the field of business administration, most of their comments and ratings had a quite practical slant.

The first objective of this study was to identify improvements that could be made in the University of North Dakota's MBA degree program. From the questions relating to this objective, the following major views and comments emerged:

1. implement an internship program
2. hire better instructors and more instructors with business experience
3. require more computer training
4. most felt that the MBA program should be better-organized, more practical in orientation and more challenging with fewer courses with undergraduates
5. all curriculum areas were rated as average, except for Accounting which was rated above average.

These major views indicate that the University of North Dakota, the College of Business and Public Administration, and the MBA Advisory Committee may need to step back and take another look at where the MBA program is going. This is not to say that the efforts of these groups are misguided. On the contrary, these views and comments are guide-

lines for use by these groups in setting objectives, policies and implementation of strategies for improvement of the University's MBA degree program. For further comments and ratings that were not viewed as being of major import, the reader is directed to the main body of this study.

The second objective of this study was to identify the educational and work related needs of MBA students. The respondents felt that the courses taken as part of their MBA studies were only somewhat helpful in their job situations. This could be the result of the effort put forth by them in pursuing their MBA studies or it could be the result of the perceived theoretical orientation of the MBA program. If the somewhat helpful rating is the result of the latter explanation, the rating could be raised to the level of helpful to very helpful by changing the orientation of the program to one that is more practical in nature.

The respondents also felt that their MBA education was generally inadequate in the areas of oral and written communication. In a survey published by the College of Business Administration at the University of Minnesota, chief executive officers and corporate recruiters expressed the opinion that business students and MBA students in particular are lacking adequate communication skills. This supports the respondents assertion that their communications skills are inadequate. Whether development of communications skills is the responsibility of the school or the individual is a point that needs to be resolved. The general trend in this area is for the schools to

take the initiative in requiring its students to obtain good communications skills.<sup>1</sup>

### Recommendations

The difficulty of measuring the success of educational programs has long been recognized. The attempt made here was to survey the attitudes, feelings and reactions of the past students and graduates towards the University of North Dakota MBA program. The data collected leaves the impression that the program is a good one overall, but in some areas it could stand some improvement. Since both graduates and non-graduates of the program were surveyed, one can be reasonably sure that the impression of "good overall" is valid. Because this is the first evaluation of this program, it is difficult to state how effective the MBA program has been in preparing its students to assume positions of responsibility in the business world. To accomplish this, a program to monitor the students' progress and development is suggested. A program should also be set up to provide for regular monitoring of how well the MBA program meets the needs of its students, as well as continued evaluation of MBA program areas in need of improvement. In this manner, a statistical result could be established for comparison purposes, so that the MBA program director and the MBA Advisory Committee can chart the progress of the MBA program at the University of North Dakota.

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<sup>1</sup>"Employers prioritize utilization of words to impact quality; translation: Business schools, firms increase emphasis on good-writing courses," Wall Street Journal, 5 November 1979, p. 23.



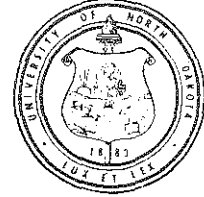
APPENDIX A

1980 UND MBA PROGRAM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

AND COVER LETTER

# The University of North Dakota

GRAND FORKS 58201



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

Dear Friend,

We are conducting a study of the MBA program at UND and we need your help! As part of the study, we are sending questionnaires to all individuals that have been in the program.

Since situations are different, and since we want the results of the study to be as accurate as possible, we cannot overemphasize the importance of receiving your completed questionnaire. Most of these questions can be answered with a check in the appropriate blank. If you find a question about which you would like to elaborate, please feel free to write in your comments.

To facilitate the accuracy and frankness of answers to these questions, all responses will be confidential. You will notice a code number on your questionnaires. This code number will be used only to facilitate our follow-up techniques and to prevent you from receiving bothersome reminder letters. At no time will questionnaires be identified by respondent.

We appreciate your time and cooperation and look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire in the next two weeks.

Sincerely,

M. Burton Oien  
Director, MBA Program

Robert A. Sannerud  
Research Assistant

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