

External Review of the Florida Atlantic Marketing Department

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The Marketing Review Team received the internal study document in January, then visited the FAU campus on February 24. We also greatly benefitted from an orientation dinner on February 23 with Pat Doney and Eric Shaw, then a final briefing with Jim Gray before departing on February 25.

Based on our review the Marketing Department boasts an experienced faculty, representing a broad array of interests in marketing. Many remain active in research. We perceive creditable leadership and a climate of respect and cooperation. The catalog of marketing classes is long. A small doctoral program enjoys largely regional placement. Despite business cycle fits and starts, since the founding of FAU, the population of southeast Florida has increased and the university's enrollment and physical plant have grown.

On the "dark side" Marketing faces several challenges at the current time. Enrollment is down, commitment to the doctoral program is flagging, and morale is low. We see some connections between these factors and offer a number of directions for redress.

THE NUMBER OF MARKETING MAJORS HAS DECREASED BY OVER 50% IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

The faculty have hypothesized three fundamental causes: 1) comparative rigor in the marketing core class, MKTG 3021, 2) lack of marketing jobs, especially in a gloomy overall economy, and 3) share of market leakage attributable to misperceptions about other majors.

In reality 1) enrollment in business at FAU is increasing; 2) with its voice-of-the-customer role, potential to provide a sustainable competitive advantage to firms, and as a top training ground for CEOs, marketing has a compelling case for study, and 3) marketing continues to be popular in other institutions (e.g., GSU and UC).

Recommendations:

1. Harness the opportunity to recruit majors from the core class, MKTG 3023.

- a. Broaden the instructional goals of the course. Yes, Marketing's intellectual content is broad and complex, but the field also depends critical dispositions (e.g., customer focus, resourcefulness, humility) and skill sets (e.g., communication, teamwork, integrity).
 - b. Unleash new pedagogies. No doubt, the instructional efficiency and student mobility bring online instruction into the repertoire. But much can be done to enrich the hands-on, cooperative, and integrative nature of the field. Projects, competitions between recitation section, discussion boards, virtual teams, student-produced videos, executive interviews, and guest speakers can bring the class off the page and stage.
2. Other means to attract Marketing majors
- a. Identify and acknowledge top students in marketing.
 - b. Find and form Marketing Leaders
 - c. Update Internship Program
 - d. Invigorate the student AMA
 - e. Challenge the students to Do Something for their community (however defined)
 - f. Boost faculty-student interactions
 - i. Faculty involvement in (b) – (e)
 - ii. Social events
 - iii. Supervise undergraduate research or involve majors in faculty project
 - g. Inform students of the benefits of the Marketing major
 - i. Items (b) - (f) will help
 - ii. Give due regard for College advisors as intermediaries
 - iii. Provide information sessions to advisors
 - iv. Provide collateral material to advisors
 - v. Bring advisors into your events
 - vi. Bring successful alumni to speak to classes, judge competitions
 - vii. Provide a two-year picture of course offerings
 - viii. Share the above with 5th year students, offering help with degree completion
 - h. Keep the slate of Marketing courses fresh. Some missing pieces include Social Media Strategies, Marketing & Big Data; Green Marketing; Professional Selling across Cultures
 - i. Generate interest in the major with more visible links to the (hiring) marketing community
 - j. Evaluate the feasibility of Centers (for knowledge sharing, joint programs, projects, internships)

- i. A center in Services (or more focused: Health Care Service Delivery; Services to Baby Boomers)
 - ii. Reconsider a Center for Professional Selling & Sales Management
 - 1. The director plays a key leadership role among students, alumni, and business
 - 2. Among regional firms, several external champions must be identified
 - k. Execute an event to call out the marketing business community and begin to forge relationships. (e.g. Fundraiser, Awards banquet, Top speaker, Showcase for top students or alums)
- 3. Generate student credit hours from non-majors
 - a. Offer a Marketing Course for FAU's IFP options (e.g., Advertising & Society; Sales & Persuasion)
 - b. Develop a Marketing Minor
 - c. Develop a Minor in Professional Selling
 - d. Innovate with a Minors that weaves Hospitality & Marketing
 - e. Evaluate opportunities for graduate certificates in Marketing sub-disciplines (Integrated Communications, Marketing Research, Data-Driven Marketing)

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN THE LURCH

The Marketing faculty expressed mixed opinions ranging from building the program to dissolving the program. In our experience, faculty enthusiasm for PhD student formation tends to be a function of institutional priorities, faculty qualifications, and interest in seminars and mentoring -- which stems, in part, from career stage. Although Marketing is able to offer competitive PhD stipends, draw students from three continents, and exhibit much of the intellectual capital needed, the program currently faces serious challenges. Recent placements of graduates have been mostly local and faculty and student interest has been further sapped by institutional measures striking small classes, initiating strained joint ventures, and limiting options for analytical coursework. At our visit, departmental interest in the doctoral program seemed to be below critical mass. However, a doctoral program is a valuable feature of a Marketing department, and recruiting the most highly qualified tenure-line faculty would be difficult if the program were eliminated.

Recommendations:

1. Put the program on hold by halting PhD admissions for 3-5 years. This will allow the department and the College to reevaluate program goals, especially, regarding positioning as a general or specialized program, and the formulation of seminars to achieve those aims.
2. Incorporate the PhD program direction in harmony with center development and faculty hiring initiatives.

FACULTY ISSUES

The Marketing faculty is top heavy. The steep decline in majors has obviated hiring for capacity motives and – with only one departure in the period -- the most recent hire on the tenure track faculty came aboard in 1996. Of course, the lack of recent hires, in and of itself, has likely precipitated a decline in majors. Although research productivity is waning, faculty competence, dedication, and cooperation are creditable. Nevertheless, morale seems low. The dearth of students and new hires contribute significantly, but we also attribute a touch of the funk to faculty spread over 2 to 3 campuses, pending retirements in near future, and the Department Head stepping down in 3 years

Recommendations:

1. Build the case for faculty hires; don't presume automatic replacement at retirements
2. Link hiring to emergent themes in the department (e.g., Service Center, Professional Selling and Sales Management Center, Doctoral program thrust)
3. Establish enrollment momentum from:
 - a. Majors
 - b. Minors
 - c. Graduate Certificates
 - d. IFP
4. Consolidate the Marketing faculty on the Boca Raton campus
 - a. Maintain the student focus up and down the market area
 - b. Build solidarity and teamwork
 - c. Utilize fitting members of the *team* to deliver decentralized instruction.
5. Provide ample office space and common space at the Boca Raton campus.
 - a. Building faculty synergy
 - b. Building student exposure to the whole Marketing team

6. Marketing faculty must provide leadership for each initiative, especially to:
 - a. Plan for Department head successor to Jim Gray
 - b. Revise Core course
 - c. Launch and champion a Center
 - d. Rebirth the Doctoral program
 - e. Craft and shepherd proposals for Minors and Graduate Certificates

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our site visit, the internal review and our collective experiences, we have assembled an array of initiatives that can take the FAU Marketing department to the next level. Not every initiative can be embraced. Certainly, several involve strategic choices among illustrative options. Others will need to be adopted more critically to local circumstances. Successful implementation will depend upon broad faculty discussion and commitment, and administrative support. Here we recap the fundamental directions for the department:

1. Increase enrollment by winning majors and adding minors, certificate programs, and IFP courses where fitting. Marketing is a critical and exciting field that needs to be unleashed.
2. Make the Services center the foci of all future department initiatives
3. Put PhD admissions on hold while the program focus and resources are resolved.
4. Hire new tenure-line and instructional faculty synergistically
5. Consolidate into one campus.
6. Obtain administrative commitment to hire new faculty, reignite the services center, provide offices for all faculty at Boca campus, improve advising and placement services