

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
ORGANIZATION, INFORMATION, & LEARNING SCIENCES
PROGRAM

Response to External Team Report and Action Plan

FALL 2009 – SPRING 2018

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Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences Program

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The OILS program faculty members would like to express our sincere appreciation to the external review team for all their hard work on our review. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the Program Review Team: Karen Watkins of University of Georgia, Michael Spector of the North Texas University, and Tim Castillo of our very own University of New Mexico. We realize that they spent many hours trying to understand the faculty, our students, other stakeholders, and our mission – and how we can improve that mission. For these members of our extraordinary review team, we realize that your efforts truly were a labor of love for the profession and we are extremely grateful for all you have done for us.

In our following paragraphs, we provide our response to the written report by Program Review Team dated October 15, 2018. Excerpts taken from the Program Review Team are highlighted in italics. Responses by OILS program faculty members are provided.

Student Learning Goals and Outcomes

Concern 1. Outdated web information and student handbooks that are not up to date which creates communication problems both to students and to the campus

The faculty agree that some of the web information are outdated and student handbooks (in all three levels) are needed. As a result, we reviewed the OILS website and updated the information, including the current PhD admission requirements, the current PhD policies and requirements, clarifications of the MA admission requirements, and the two-year course plan. In addition, we plan to develop Students Handbook in the next few years.

To do:

- Develop Students Handbooks (Undergraduate, MA, and PhD)

Concern 2. It was especially confusing to see the long list of skills on the website describing what the program is [see APR p. 12 and Figure 1A1 on p. 29]. It is unclear from these descriptions what succinct aspirations the program is preparing people for at each degree level. Students specifically asked for a list of the types of jobs they could apply for upon graduation and particularly in terms of the five concentrations at the Master's level but also in terms of the undergraduate degree.

The faculty agree that the OILS program needs a more succinct representation of our program that highlights the interdisciplinary nature of our program, shows the overlapping skills of the program, connect faculty skill sets, and potential job opportunities. OILS faculty will review our curriculum, the list of skill sets, and potential jobs so that a clear and succinct story of OILS can be communicated.

To do:

- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets.

Teaching and Learning Curriculum

Concern 3. *It seemed a bit odd that the title of the degree at the baccalaureate level and the new MOP degree are different: B.S. degree in Instructional Technology & Training and a Master's in the managed online program in Learning Officers vs the M. A. and Ph.D. in OILS. The title of the baccalaureate probably best fits the curriculum, but it seems challenging for a small group of faculty to meet the curriculum demands of a diffuse set of degrees. The curriculum needs streamlining and concentrations need to maintain consistency with disciplinary standards.*

The OILS faculty agree that our degrees, especially, the B.S. and M.A. degrees should be consistent with the industry needs. As a result, we established an industry advisory board in 2014-2015, and the industry advisory board requested the new concentrations in order to allow the degree to show the expertise of our students. However, we see that it is possible to reduce the number of concentrations. We will continue to review the enrollment data as well as working with the industry advisory board to evaluate the needs of the concentrations.

To do:

- Revise the B.S. curriculum based on industry needs
- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets.
- Review concentration enrollment data and evaluate if we should reduce to 4 concentrations

Concern 4. *The program frequently mentions that it is an interdisciplinary program yet the program operates more like a multidisciplinary curriculum with separate tracks for the subfields of current and former faculty. These issues are areas of opportunity.*

Again, the faculty agree that the OILS program needs a more succinct representation of our program that highlight the interdisciplinary nature of our program, shows the overlapping skills of the program, connect faculty skill sets, and potential job opportunities. OILS faculty will review our curriculum, the list of skill sets, and potential jobs so that a clear and succinct story of OILS can be communicated. In addition, OILS faculty will identify relevant experiences and interdisciplinary skills within our courses.

To do:

- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets. The figure should articulate how OILS as both an interdisciplinary faculty support multiple disciplines
- Identify specific experiences and communicate specific experiences that are interdisciplinary in courses
- Identify interdisciplinary skill sets that students get at each level (example: clear, jargon-free communication) - perhaps as an "interdisciplinary core"

Concern 5. *The theoretical foundations could include a core course in OILS – an integrative course that, like the current course [OILS 440- survey of human resource development and instructional technology], could reflect the integration of organization, information, and learning sciences.*

The OILS faculty agree that it is important to integrate the courses that reflect the core of Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences. We suggest that one way to integrate the B.S./M.A. curriculum is to create a reusable case, scenario type activity in which the same problem is used across undergrad classes from different points of view, with an assignment that scaffolds students to understand how these are the same/different within the curriculum

To do:

- Create a reusable case, scenario type activity in which the same problem is used across undergrad classes from different points of view, with an assignment that scaffolds students to understand how these are the same/different within the curriculum

Concern 6. Similarly, at the PhD level, a more advanced version of this course – the foundations of organization, information, and learning sciences could again integrate these disciplinary foci and help students see the way they fit together and what kinds of dissertation studies might follow from this marriage of disciplines.

The OILS faculty agree that it is important to integrate the courses that reflect the core of Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences. We suggest that one way to integrate the PhD curriculum is to consider courses in which the same problem is discussed by each faculty member from their point of view (the constructs, theory, methods), with assignments that scaffold students to understand how these are the same/different

To do:

- Consider courses in which the same problem is discussed by each faculty member from their point of view (the constructs, theory, methods), with assignments that scaffold students to understand how these are the same/different

Concern 7. With the retirement of key faculty, the move to the College of UL & LS, and the addition of new faculty with differing expertise, the time is ripe to revisit the concentrations in the masters [Adult Education & Professional Development; Organization Development and Human Resource Development; Instructional Design & Technology, eLearning; and Learning Officer]. With 6.4 faculty, three of whom affiliate with human resource and organization development and three of whom affiliate with instructional technology and learning sciences, it seems reasonable to consolidate these foci into two streams. Courses currently reflect prior emphases and maintain separate specializations which is useful for deeper skill development but might also be more integrated at the doctoral level. Many courses run with low enrollment and this consolidation of foci and integration has the potential both to reduce course proliferation and ensure stronger enrollment in all courses.

The OILS faculty agree that it is important to continue reviewing and revising our curriculum as we change (because of faculty attrition and retirement). We should also articulate the unique strength of the OILS program such as instructional design, human resource development and program evaluation to different departments on campus. Some of the courses had low enrollment in the past. As a result, we plan to closely monitor the enrollment of individual courses and offer the right number of courses in the future according to the demand.

To do:

- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets.
- Articulate our UNIQUE strengths on campus
- Review enrollments in courses and concentrations

Concern 8. Finally, faculty have concerns about the quality of some of the work produced at the doctoral level. Given the large number of UNM employees and practitioners in the doctoral program, two tracks, with one a more scholar practitioner focus and another a scholarly research track, might allow the faculty to set appropriate standards of rigor for each focus.

The OILS faculty agree that we should provide a relevant degree to our doctoral students. We specifically designed our program for the students we have, knowing that they are generally working full time and interested in advancing in their careers. As a result, the coursework often focuses on research to practice. To understand student's perception towards a new practitioner track, we invited a few students who had a practitioner focus (with different research interests, different ethnic background, different years) to discuss their perception towards the current curriculum in Spring 2019. All of the students in the focus group expressed that they were satisfied with the current curriculum and felt that the current curriculum was catered to both researchers and practitioners.

However, we agree that there are rooms to improve our doctoral program to provide stronger values for students with different career goals.

To do:

- Explore creating a Chief Learning Officer (CLO) track (by working with Anderson School of Management) as a practitioner track; this track will provide great values to the students who are interested in theory to practice while maintaining rigor.
- Explore a more practitioner focus dissertation (e.g. white paper as one conceptual article; action research papers using Boyer's scholarship of application, which should include broader/worldly impacts)

Concern 9. Some options others use for a predominantly part-time doctoral cohort include an annual doctoral student review with definite steps to take if a student is not on track [red-line students at the 5 year mark who have not advanced to candidacy; offer doctoral support courses that support doctoral students and keep them enrolled past core courses [i.e. the critique of the literature, the dissertation proposal, academic writing for the discipline, research practicum, etc.]; require continuous enrollment of at least 3 credits; etc.].

The OILS faculty agree that additional structure in the doctoral program may help part-time doctoral students. As a result, we suggest that we will explore how to implement some of the suggestions such as redoing midpoint meeting at the 5th year mark, and continuous enrollment of at least 3 credits.

To do:

- Explore redoing midpoint meeting for students not advanced to candidacy in 5 years
- Remind students they can enroll in OILS 604, other methods courses, or directed readings course to get a little more structure

- Explore requiring continuous enrollment of at least 3 credits; students must file paperwork.

Teaching and Learning Continuous Improvement

Concern 10. Assessment methods and measurements for students at all levels are clear, although they could be more prominently displayed and available on the OILS website.

The OILS faculty agree that assessment methods and measurements for students can be more prominently displayed and available. The assessment methods and measurements for students will be included in the Student Handbooks and will be displayed in the OILS website.

To do:

- Develop Student Handbooks for all three levels (B.S., M.A., and PhD)
- Display student Handbooks on the OILS website.

Concern 11. Students are being tracked continuously as they make progress towards their degrees though there are some concerns at the doctoral level about time to degree.

Although we tracked student progress in various ways, a single database that tracks student progress does not exist. OILS will develop a centralized database to keep track of student progress and provide stronger advisement.

To do:

- A database will be developed to keep track of the progress towards their degrees

Concern 12. It is not clear how programs will evolve in the future as there probably needs to be some focusing and further integration across the various disciplinary perspectives now in programs

To do:

- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets.

Concern 13. Assessment data were not previously available with UNM databases which indicates a concern that program results may not be widely known with UNM. To achieve the potential of a nationally prominent program, OILS may need to first achieve prominence within UNM for the support needed to reach that level.

The OILS faculty agree that it is important to achieve prominence within UNM and the State of New Mexico. Dr. Vanessa Svihla recently received an appointment as a Special Assistant to the Dean of Engineering for Learning Sciences. Dr. Svihla was also recognized at the New Mexico State Legislature for her dedication to support faculty and help prepare students for real-life challenges in their future career.

OILS also has been working with other programs such as Museum Studies, Geography, and Exercise Science to expand our reach to other UNM units. The potential collaboration with the Anderson School of Management will be another effort to gain prominence within UNM.

To promote the OILS program to the advising community, OILS held an open house in Spring 2019. The advising community saw the success of the event and invited our advisor to hold another talk regarding how we planned the event.

Concern 14. The committee did not have evidence of assessment results and how they were being used to improve programs, although some of those interviewed indicated that this was happening. As a result, the committee rated criteria 3e and 3f as not met, although these two criteria could be met with some effort to communicate results and use results to monitor and improve programs.

2017-2018 Program Assessment Report and Program Maturity Report were submitted to the UNM Program Assessment Office. The OILS faculty has revised new student learning objectives in the MA assessment. The new students learning objectives will be evaluated in the 2018-2019 Program Assessment Report. In addition, the CARC team will present the assessment cycle at the faculty meeting.

To do:

- Incorporate the new student learning objectives in the MA program assessment.
- Having the CARC group presenting the assessment cycle.

Students

Concern 15. *Of particular note was the long time to graduation at the doctoral level. The long graduation rate is due in part to (a) students working full-time and taking courses part-time, (b) the diverse interests and backgrounds of students with many being the first in their family to pursue doctoral degrees, and (c) the program culture of serving the interests of the university and state in terms of recruiting and accepting non-traditional students. However, the doctoral program should set a goal of shortening the time to graduate to below 7 years without sacrificing the quality of the doctoral program. The committee believes this might be accomplished by having two tracks within the doctoral program - one for those aiming to pursue academic and research careers and one for those aiming to pursue careers in professional practice. While research methods are important for both tracks, the types of research pertinent to each track is somewhat different. All doctoral students should be able to understand and analyze the findings of a variety of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies. Having competence with just one methodology should be related to a student's intended professional career, which might mean emphasizing program evaluation (e.g., fidelity of implementation and impact studies) or action research for some. and in-depth design-based qualitative and quantitative research studies and randomized control trials for others.*

We agree that we should set a goal for time to graduate for the PhD program to 7 years. The reduced credit hour requirement (from 78 to 60 credit hours with no prerequisite) that we started in Fall 2016 was the first step. Because of the change, the majority of the students who graduated in the past 3 years were graduated within 7 years. However, one of the goals of the OILS program is to serve part-time adult students. Because of their personal and/or professional needs, a few students may need to slow down on their progress. As a result, they

may need more time to graduate. We will develop a student database so that the program can keep track of the progress towards PhD students' degree completion.

Regarding methodological skills development for students who are more interested in practice, one suggestion is to include action research as one of the choices for doctoral students. OILS faculty argue that design-based research is similar to action research, so we think the action research needs are covered by the design-based research course. And, we agree that the doctoral level program evaluation course should be able to count towards either methods or concentration.

To do:

- A database will be developed to keep track of the progress towards PhD students' degree completion.
- Continue monitoring how annual review and the reduced credit hours are designed to achieve this goal + trigger a committee hearing to re-assess potential for progress (similar to mid-point hearing)
- Flex the existing doctoral level Evaluation course as a methods course or concentration course

***Concern 16.** Many doctoral students are currently employed at UNM. The program has plans to implement a new program involving Learning Officers which implies national outreach. The program also has interest in strengthening international outreach. Such interests are worth pursuing and need to be focused on specific target audiences with specific short- and long-term outcomes established going forward. One reasonable goal would be to have a doctoral student population that was less than 50% UNM employees. Such goals will help the program achieve its potential for national prominence by recruiting a population more clearly aligned with the program's mission.*

Currently, our PhD program has 42 students and 17 of them are currently employed at UNM (about 40% of them are UNM employees, and some were not UNM employees until they started their degree). However, we agree that it is important to expand our recruitment efforts.

To do:

- Explore connections with National Labs
- Update OILS website to include current funding opportunities in order to strengthen national and international recruitment effort
- Explore marketing efforts

***Concern 17.** Another shortcoming pertains to the unique location of OILS within the Library College – namely, the availability of student support services (e.g., grievance procedures, online support, grant submission support, dissertation writing, etc.). The committee believes a shared services model might be implemented to address this shortcoming.*

The OILS faculty agree that we may not be able to provide some services to our students efficiently and effectively. Utilizing shared services is a great idea. As a result, we have already

reached out for UNM support including Graduate Student Resource Center for dissertation support, Center for Academic Support for writing support, Extended Learning for online support, Dean of Students for grievance support, etc.).

Faculty

***Concern 18.** Given the many interests of faculty and areas covered in the program, integrating those interests and curricula so that all faculty contribute is a challenge going forward. If all existing areas continue to remain part of program integrative efforts, then additional expertise in areas such as adult education and learning science (broadly conceived) might need to be acquired.*

The OILS faculty agree with the importance of the effort to define the OILS program as an interdisciplinary program. A clear focus will guide the development of OILS future (e.g. what additional expertise are needed).

To do:

- Faculty will develop a succinct graphical representation of the OILS program that shows overlapping skills for each program and connects to faculty skillsets. The figure should articulate how OILS as an interdisciplinary faculty support multiple disciplines

***Concern 19.** Given the new focus on learning sciences- with its theoretical underpinnings in neuroscience, cognitive science, instructional design, data analytics, anthropology, linguistics, computer science, psychology, and education which have formed the foundation of the discipline and its focus on design, learning, and research with advanced technical proficiencies in areas such as simulation modeling, robotics, game development, video production, museum display, etc.; current faculty span only a portion of these areas of expertise. Perhaps faculty from other disciplines would affiliate as some do now to offer additional depth in this robust area. In any case, it seems important to pause and consider what expertise would continue to deepen this focus beyond instructional technology and design.*

We agree that recruiting affiliated faculty can be one way to build a stronger interdisciplinary program. As a result, we supported a targeted hire proposal by the Department of Computer Science in Spring 2019. The new faculty member will be affiliated with OILS as a secondary appointment starting Fall 2019. We will continue to recruit other UNM faculty from other programs as secondary faculty to extend OILS disciplinary reach.

To do:

- Recruit UNM faculty from other programs as secondary faculty to extend OILS disciplinary reach

***Concern 20.** Active involvement in multiple professional associations is also needed to achieve national prominence as a unique, interdisciplinary program.*

OILS Faculty members agree on the importance of the faculty participation at the major professional associations. As a result, we target the following professional associations that the OILS faculty members have already actively participate in:

- The American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT)
- The International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS)
- The Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD)

Resources and Planning

Concern 21. The one concern that was uncovered was in securing new funding to hire a new staff position in the program. This staff position would be to support the undergraduate program coordinator and aid in academic advisement at the graduate level

The hiring process started in Fall 2018 and a new staff, Miguel Cortez, was hired in December 2018.

Facilities

Concern 22. The one recommendation would be to reconsider the graduate scholar space. The current venue lacks natural light and potentially could be moved to another space to better support the activity of the graduate students.

We agree that additional space will be valuable for OILS to support graduate scholars. We will continuously work with the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences to explore graduate scholar space

To do:

- Continuously working with the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences to explore graduate scholar space

Peer Comparisons

Concern 23. OILS divided the self-assessment comparison report into two groups of programs: (a) HRD and OL, and (b) ISD & IT. It is curious that those two categories were selected which does not align very well with the three areas associated with OILS at a high level – Organization, Information and Learning Science. One might assume that the ‘O’ in OILS led the self-study team to the HRD/OL group of programs and that ‘ILS’ led the self-study team to the ISD/IT group of programs. If so, then other questions might arise, such as how learning science of the learning sciences maps how organization maps onto human resource development and organizational learning. This initial observation relates to prior remarks in our response that to some outsiders it could appear that OILS is trying to do too much with too little resources and expertise. On the other hand, what is really strong about OILS and what could and should have been emphasized is the effort to integrate these various efforts rather than create silos which has been the predominant approach at many other places, including the comparison programs cited in the self-assessment report.

We agree that one of the unique strengths of OILS is the integrated effort between learning sciences and HRD. However, since very few programs in the United States are similar to OILS, we divided the OILS Program into two for the purpose of peer comparisons in the self-study

report. The goal of OILS is to build an integrated interdisciplinary program that spans the field of learning sciences and HRD.

***Concern 24.** All of the peer programs cited have a 2-2 teaching load as they are at major research institutions. OILS is also at a research university but the teaching load is nominally 3-2.*

The OILS faculty agree that the teaching load of OILS program is heavier than the teaching load of peer institutions. Therefore, we accept the suggestion of the external review committee and will implement a 2-2 teaching load starting in Fall 2019. In addition, we plan to create and implement a teaching load policy which can guide how teaching loads are allocated.

To do:

- Create and implement a teaching load policy to begin articulating how teaching loads are allocated.
- A 2-2 teaching load was proposed and approved in Spring 2019. The new teaching load will be implemented in Fall 2019.

***Concern 25.** All of the programs cited have larger full-time faculty even though the scope of those comparison programs is not as broad as the scope of OILS as suggested in the previous paragraph.*

Although our small yet broad and collegial faculty is agile and creative, we agree that a few more full-time faculty will be helpful to maintain the quality of education of each program as we grow.

***Concern 26.** When looking through the data and based on the review committee's direct knowledge of most of the comparison programs, they might more properly be characterized as aspirational programs. If the comparison programs were considered as aspirational programs, then additional questions and concerns arise. First, which scope and focus to become more like one or two of those programs? Second, should OILS narrow its scope and focus to become more like one or two of those programs. In response to the review committee's consideration of such questions, the conclusion we arrived at was that OILS is genuinely unique in many important ways.*

The OILS faculty agree that we are genuinely unique in many important ways. We argue that some of those programs should look to OILS as aspirational. Most Learning Sciences programs are retooled Instructional Technology or Educational Psychology programs. This tends to hold those programs back.

***Concern 27.** OILS has a number of freedoms that are not typically available in a College of Education, including (a) the freedom to focus on both formal and informal learning, (b) the freedom to focus on learning, instruction and performance both inside and outside K-12 settings, (c) the freedom to pursue collaborations that are not common in a college of education, and so on. Thus OILS is unique due in part to its location.*

As a faculty, we also recognize this and already take advantage of this observation.