MEMORANDUM

To: Kate Lang, Chair
Department of History

From: Terrel L. Rhodes, Vice President
Association of American Colleges and Universities

RE: External Program Proposal Review

Date: March 15, 2011

Online Bachelor of Professional Studies Degree and Comprehensive Major in Organizational Leadership and Communication
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

The proposal makes a strong case for the need that the program can address and the potential populations of students who could benefit from the degree and major.

There appears to be sufficient student support for the degree and major.

The financial model seems to work if the enrollment projections materialize. Later in the proposal there is a statement that the enrollment projections are conservative; however an explanation of the enrollment model in conjunction with the financial model would strengthen the argument and ground it in the data, e.g. on what are the projections based? Since this is UW-Eau Claire’s first totally online program, exactly what are the projections based upon?

The biggest issue that requires further elaboration is assessment. Most measures cited are indirect measures of success. Direct measures are left to individual faculty. If the goals on page 6 are what the evaluation of the program will be based upon, then there is a need to clearly lay out how the assessment will be conducted; exactly what measures will be used; and what success or expected performance would look like.

There is a very nice job of scaffolding the core curriculum explanation and the linkages among the courses; however, the description needs to do the same for the remainder of the curriculum, especially since it will be offered by a variety of departments where faculty will not necessarily be in close proximity or contact with each other. Faculty need to meet much more frequently as a program faculty, especially as the program is being built and implemented. Regular departments don’t typically meet only
once a year and those departmental faculty members are located together and interacting on a much more regular basis.

It is not at all clear that the limited time of the Director can handle the advising delegated to the position. One option to help build faculty collaboration and a shared programmatic purpose and understanding, would be to involve the faculty from the beginning in advising students about the program.

The capstone projects require greater articulation. Since the core in particular builds toward the capstone, the program would benefit from articulating the essential skills and abilities needed to successfully complete the capstone so they can be embedded in the courses leading up to the capstone projects.