

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
(Under Registration)

✦ **INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS
AND ACCREDITATION PLAN** ✦

Draft Report

20 May 2004

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 **PREFACE**

This *International Affiliations and Accreditation Plan Draft Report* is submitted in partial fulfillment of Item IV. Q. of the Contract between the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) and the Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) Founding Committee to facilitate the establishment of the PMU. This report was prepared by the TIEC Project Management Group and a team of two former presidents of TIEC-affiliated universities who have extensive experience with international affiliations and accreditation practices for international universities.

The *International Affiliations and Accreditation Plan* report is a key document for the leadership of the PMU as they initiate the new university. International affiliations and formal academic program accreditation require careful planning. Accreditation requires several years to achieve. As a management document, this report describes the issues that PMU leaders must address from the very beginning in order to develop productive affiliations with other universities and to achieve the desired recognition for the PMU that is provided through accreditation. As an operational document, it presents recommendations for deans and faculty members on steps that must be taken to achieve these two goals.

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20 May 2005

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
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Dammam, Saudi Arabia

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INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND ACCREDITATION PLAN

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An understanding of a culture or region of the world other than one's own is an important part of a modern education and a key to developing future leaders in an increasingly interdependent global society. For this reason, it is essential that the leadership of Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) make global studies an integral part of the university's mission. This is accomplished by providing opportunities for education through institutional affiliations that can provide study abroad, university exchange programs, and services for students and faculty in collaboration with international partners.

Since many collaborative efforts will require accreditation by an independent accrediting organization, it is equally important for the PMU to initiate, in the early stages of development, activities leading to the accreditation of certain professional programs. Accreditation serves to both evaluate and improve the quality of programs according to definitive standards and to provide a reliable process for their application in evaluating programs or institutions.

Section II of this report therefore addresses the role of international affiliations in achieving the PMU's educational objectives related to international studies and global understanding. Types of affiliation agreements are discussed and illustrated. Since affiliation, in many cases, will depend on accreditation, Section III of the report focuses on accreditation and the accreditation processes.

Each section contains a number of recommendations outlining the steps that the PMU should take to pursue affiliations and accreditation.

II. INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

A. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, our success as individuals and as professionals depends in large part on how well we understand other people, nations, cultures, and languages. It is imperative, therefore, that higher education institutions around the globe offer more international experiences, both on and off campus. Universities must focus, as part of their mission, on providing the international education students need to live and compete in the 21st century. An important part of the process is to develop partnerships with other universities around the globe. Such partnerships can enrich and expand the teaching, research, and service missions of the university. It can provide students and faculty an opportunity to broaden their educational experience by studying and working with individuals and within countries whose culture is one other than their own.

As a new university, the PMU can benefit substantially by developing partnerships that enhance its mission and programs. With the globalization of commerce and industry, the university should position itself to include an international dimension in its academic endeavors and strategic plans.

B. CREATING INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

1. Laying the Groundwork

The partnering process begins with the establishment of mutual interests between two institutions. This can occur for a variety of reasons including the commonality of institutional missions and programs or the desire for collaboration by individual faculty members or departments. Once the establishment of a partnership has been agreed upon, the link necessary to implement a shared program is an affiliation agreement. The agreement can include all institutional programs or it can address needs related to a specific college or department within the university.

Beyond a common ground of mission and programs, successful affiliations typically share a number of characteristics:

- Proposed affiliates must be institutions of unquestioned integrity and academic standing that will bring to the relationship educational experiences to enhance programs at the university and provide opportunities not available through on-campus programs alone.
- Affiliate institutions will usually be similar in size, scope of programs, and quality.

- In many instances, programs of interest for affiliation and exchange may be accredited by a professional accreditation organization. Examples would be the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Other factors the university should consider when establishing partnerships are the adequacy of facilities available to visiting faculty and students to ensure their success academically, socially, and culturally at the partner institution. The location and accessibility of the partner university also should be considered.

2. Entering Into Affiliations

An international affiliation is a formal or informal contract or agreement between one academic institution and another that provides for activities such as academic personnel exchanges, student exchanges, study abroad programs, collaborative research projects, or technical assistance. The PMU should enter into affiliation agreements only when the university leadership has determined that the benefits and contributions of such affiliations will substantially enrich and expand the teaching and research programs on the campus.

3. Formal and Informal Agreements

Affiliations typically are of two kinds: formal and informal.

Formal affiliations are those that include a commitment of university resources in support of the cooperative activities. Informal affiliations are direct collegial relationships among faculty, students, or administrators of the two institutions.

Informal affiliations can be extremely useful and should, like formal affiliations, be authorized by appropriate administrators at participating institutions. It is formal affiliations, however, that are the subject of this report, as this type of arrangement involves an investment of resources and contractual obligations. It is the formal affiliation that requires the most planning from the administration and that must be carefully aligned with the university's goals and mission.

4. Benefits to Faculty and Students

International linkages will be an important way for the PMU to establish academic and cultural relationships with institutions of higher education around the globe. Such affiliations will enhance and promote a multicultural quality of life on each campus, while providing opportunities for students and faculty to spend time abroad as an integral part of their academic experience. For these reasons, the university should pursue the development of affiliations with high quality universities around the world and promote arrangements for student and faculty exchange as part of the institutional mission. Since the PMU academic structure and curriculum are being modeled after American universities, initial affiliation agreements should be considered with universities in the United States.

C. TYPES OF INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATIONS

There are many varieties of formal agreements, but they generally fall into two categories:

1. Memorandum of Understanding

In a memorandum of understanding (MOU), institutions typically express an interest in fostering goodwill and furthering academic cooperation. While similar in some respects to program-specific agreements in that it does not involve financial obligations or specific targeted commitments, the MOU usually does involve a written statement of general cooperation across a range of disciplines. Memoranda of understanding often lead to more specific agreements in the future.

An example of a memorandum of understanding is shown in Appendix A.

2. Affiliation Agreement

The second type of agreement that may or may not be appended to a memorandum of understanding is an affiliation agreement related to a specific program. These are usually contractual agreements that specify commitments for collaboration, exchanges or special undertakings such as research, seminars, or clinics. The contracts entered into require careful consideration since they will define institutional commitments of resources and the acceptance of certain obligations. These agreements are most commonly used with a single partner institution, but they can, on occasion, involve a consortium of universities.

Several types of affiliation agreements exist, as follows:

a. Student Exchange / Study Abroad Agreements.

These agreements arise after detailed negotiation between two institutions. They generally provide for reciprocity in which more or less equal numbers of students are exchanged over a given time period. An additional provision will usually stipulate the academic qualifications required for the students accepted. In most circumstances, students will register and remain enrolled at their home institution during their study-abroad experience.

An example of a student exchange agreement is shown in Appendix B.

b. International Independent Student Exchange Program (ISEP).

The International Independent Student Exchange Program (ISEP) is an independent, non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia in the United States. Its purpose is to coordinate and facilitate the reciprocal exchange of students among member institutions of higher education in the United States and other countries. In this case, rather than establishing an agreement with a single university for exchange of students, an ISEP member institution in the United States can arrange for student exchanges with any of the approved institutions in other countries. Participation in ISEP is open to accredited institutions (United States regional accreditation) in the United States and in other countries that have been approved for membership.

At the present time ISEP has no member universities in Saudi Arabia or in other countries in the Middle East. At an appropriate time, the PMU should investigate the membership criteria and the possibility of becoming a member institution in ISEP. Information on the terms of participation in ISEP and a list of member institutions can be found at www.isep.org.

c. Credit Transfer Agreement

These agreements provide for the transfer for an agreed-upon number of credits for courses taken at a partner institution. Such agreements are subject to close scrutiny of the course content, faculty qualifications, and appropriate accreditation credentials. As a general rule, programs accredited by an official accrediting agency are able to affiliate only with programs that are similarly accredited.

d. Joint research agreements.

International activity is often initiated by faculty for the purpose of cooperating on research projects that may or may not have an external sponsor. These projects may involve signed grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements under which the university undertakes a defined commitment according to specific terms and conditions and budgeted financial compensation. Research agreements can be negotiated and drawn up as required. Among other things, they must contain provisions for the course of the project and must stipulate the responsibilities of the parties for meeting costs. Also included should be a description of the need or desirability of the joint effort as well as qualifications of the participating faculty members. Other considerations are the location of the research activity, how publications will be authored, and a budget indicating source of funds. Additionally, parties will generally agree to the exchange of books, journals, and other official publications and research information generated by either of the parties in connection with the agreement.

e. Articulation agreements.

An articulation agreement is one that exists between institutions in support of a joint or double degree involving a cooperative academic program. These agreements describe in detail the responsibilities of each institution and the specific degree requirements and plan of study for students registered in the program. In most cases a single diploma is awarded jointly by the two universities. Other programs may award two diplomas, one from each participating institution. Articulation agreements are usually not implemented until the institutions have worked together in various exchange programs for a number of years. An example articulation agreement between Texas Tech University and the Technical University of Denmark is shown in Appendix C.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the PMU begin immediately to plan the process of establishing international collaboration. The first step in the process will be to identify potential partner institutions in the United States that have missions and priorities similar to the PMU. The initial goal will be to establish a memorandum of understanding with one or more of these universities. This broad agreement of cooperation will provide the basis for the establishment at a later date of more specific programs related to student and faculty exchange, research, and perhaps joint degrees.

D. CONSIDERATIONS AND CONTRACTS

1. Considerations in Creating Affiliations

When developing any agreement or contract for university cooperation, a number of logistical and cost issues must be considered. For example, agreements that include student or faculty visits must identify teaching and research obligations and outline carefully the procedures by which individuals are selected to participate. When travel between countries is involved, special attention must be given to the cost of transportation as well as other costs of participation.

Whether or not they become a part of the final agreement, there are several items which should always be considered for inclusion or, in some instances, specific exclusion. Examples are the following:

- Round trip international airfare
- In-country transportation
- Housing and dining
- Salaries, taxes, and fringe benefits
- Health insurance
- Passport and visa requirements and fees
- Immunizations
- Cost of accompanying dependents
- Moving expenses

Agreements to enable exchange of students also must address practical concerns such as tuition and fees, books and educational materials, academic credits, visitor status, and access to facilities and services.

2. Contractual Issues

It is necessary for contracts that establish cooperative agreements between or among institutions to include specific points so that all issues are clearly understood and agreed upon. Some items that must be included are the following:

a. Parties

The agreement must specifically and accurately name the university and university units involved in the agreement as well as naming the international partner. Names of individuals responsible for oversight of the program, as well as those with approval authority, must be provided for each institution as well.

b. Purpose

The contract should include a precise statement of the purpose of the agreement and a clause specifying the benefits, responsibilities, and obligations of both parties in the agreement.

c. Operation

A description of the specific projects or exchanges which are to be carried out under the agreement must be specified along with a general plan of operation.

d. Duration

The agreement must state a finite duration of the cooperative arrangement and provide for a review leading to renewal for an additional period of time. Also included should be a timetable for specific activities.

e. Costs

A detailed budget must be provided which includes both sources of funds and an itemized list of expenditures for each participating university. Examples of budgeted items are given in section D.1, Considerations in Creating Affiliations, of this report.

f. Limitations of financial commitment

Agreements must include a statement limiting the financial commitments of the university to available funding and to the specific contractual terms of the agreement.

g. Adherence to university policy

The agreement should make clear that neither institution may take any action contrary to established academic policy, procedures, and practices of the other institution.

h. Amendments

Agreements also must include procedures for amending the terms of the contract if the parties agree that such amendments should be made. This would usually follow a periodic review to decide if the program is meeting its goals and objectives, or if revisions are required.

i. Termination

Any agreement should include a clause that describes in detail the procedures necessary and the notice time required for either party to exit the agreement.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the PMU administration consider carefully the contractual issues involved in establishing international agreements. While all agreements will be similar in form and will address a number of common issues, there may be specific items related to PMU policies or the laws governing institutions in Saudi Arabia that must be included. These issues must be resolved before any agreement can be ratified.

E. TIMELINE FOR AFFILIATIONS

Whereas there are no specific restrictions on when or with whom affiliation agreements can be negotiated, certain practical issues must be considered. Initially, the university administration, working with the faculty, must establish policies and guidelines regarding the various types of international affiliations. In addition to this, consideration must be given to the accreditation of certain professional programs before the planning for collaborative efforts can proceed.

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that a timeline be established within the first two years to guide the development of international exchange activities. An example of such a schedule is as follows:

- Within the first two years, a list of potential exchange partners should be provided.
- Within the third and fourth years, memoranda of understanding with one or more institutions should be established. Also, the groundwork for accreditation should be carried out during this period. For programs that require no accreditation, exchange could begin on a limited basis.
- At the end of the fourth year, after the first class has graduated, evaluation for substantial equivalency status for ABET can begin. (See III. D., Accreditation of Engineering and IT Programs, below.)
- After two classes have graduated, programs in business can be considered for accreditation by AACSB. (See III. E., Accreditation of Business Programs, below.)
- Upon accreditation of these professional programs, discussions of affiliation can be established with institutions in the United States that have been similarly accredited.

It is recommended that the PMU work at a realistic, but accelerated pace, to receive the appropriate accreditation of professional programs so that the establishment of international affiliations can proceed unimpeded.

F. CONCLUSION

This section of the report has described the many ways that individuals and units of the PMU and foreign academic institutions can cooperate. Most successful programs are driven by common academic interests between one department or college and a counterpart at a foreign university.

In some instances, cooperation may require accreditation. The next section of the report describes the process of accreditation and the requirements for becoming an accredited institution or program.

III. ACCREDITATION

A. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

Accreditation is an external review process whose purpose is to assess the qualitative characteristics of either a university as a whole, or to assess specific programs offered by the university. Accreditation provides a mechanism to measure the overall educational experience of a student in reference to a set of standards and criteria that pertain consistently to all other universities that have undergone an accreditation assessment. Accreditation not only evaluates quality assurance, but it is intended to stimulate quality improvement. The accreditation process may be applied to other organizations and institutions that offer educational programs such as museums and hospitals. Seeking accreditation is voluntary but lack of accreditation can have negative consequences.

B. ACCREDITATION IN THE U.S.

The United States system of accreditation operates at two levels: 1) at the institutional level whereby the entire university is undergoing a review of its operations and activities, and 2) at the program level where a specific discipline is being reviewed. At the program level, separate accreditation standards and criteria are developed for the specific discipline being evaluated for accreditation.

1. Source of Authority

In the United States, both institutional-level as well as discipline-specific accreditation are carried out by private, nonprofit organizations designed just for this purpose. The accreditation system is not a direct responsibility of governmental agencies either by the federal or state governments.

However, the accrediting organizations seek recognition by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) [www.ed.gov/admin/finaid/accred/index.html] or the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) [www.chea.org] in order to assure institutions and the public that the accrediting organizations are capable of conducting appropriate accreditation evaluations. Both the USDE and CHEA examine the effectiveness of an accreditation organization using a set of standards established for this purpose.

2. Institutional Accreditation

At the institutional level, the accreditation process is developed and administered by organizations created by a collective group of universities structured by geographical region. In the U.S., there are six regional accreditation organizations that conduct the accreditation process for the universities within their region. Each regional accreditation organization develops the mechanism and processes for accreditation evaluation as well as the standards and criteria to be used for determining the accreditation status.

A considerable amount of commonality exists among the regional accrediting organizations, but the criteria and standards need not be identical. All accreditation reviews involve these common elements:

- **Standards:** The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards of performance and evaluation criteria.
- **Self-Study:** The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency. It also provides an opportunity for the institution or program to describe its objectives, its various activities, and level of progress it has attained.
- **Peer Review:** The actual evaluation of the institution or program is conducted by faculty, administrators, and others such as practicing professionals who have knowledge of the criteria and the program characteristics.
- **On-site Evaluation:** A team of knowledgeable reviewers, selected by the accrediting agency, visits the institution or program in order to establish an independent assessment of the program quality through interviews, review of documents, and visual observations.
- **Action and Publication:** Upon being satisfied that the applicant meets its standards, the accrediting agency makes a final judgment of the situation based on the recommendations of the review team and other documentation. The accrediting agency will list the status of the institution or program in an official publication with other similarly accredited or pre-accredited institutions or programs. Accreditation is given for a fixed length of time.

- **Monitoring:** The accrediting organization provides ongoing monitoring and oversight of each accredited institution or program to verify that it continues to meet the agency's standards and to examine substantive changes and quality improvements.
- **Reevaluation:** The accrediting organization periodically reevaluates each institution or program for continued recognition of its accreditation status.

3. **Program Accreditation**

Discipline-specific or program accreditation is generally conducted by the profession involved.

In engineering and information technology, 27 of the various engineering and IT professional societies have developed an accreditation system through the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

For business-related programs, two organizations provide accreditation. These are the Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International), and the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Since accreditation is a voluntary process, the program administrators can choose which type of accreditation they wish to pursue, if any.

For interior design programs, the accrediting organization is the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER). This organization restricts its accreditation activities to the U.S. and Canada.

All professional program accreditation systems have common elements that are very similar to the factors used for institutional accreditation. These are:

- A self-study to be completed prior to evaluation
- Submission of the supporting data required
- An on-site visit by a review team of knowledgeable evaluators
- Preparation of a report on the program by the reviewers
- A due-process component providing the institution or program with an opportunity to correct any factual errors in the initial draft report
- A final report that is submitted to the accreditation organization
- Action by the accreditation organization on the accreditation status of the program. This action could require the institution or program to submit more information at a later date or be revisited after a time less than the full accreditation term.
- The institution is given the final report.

C. INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

At the institutional level, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, one of the six regional accrediting agencies in the U.S., accredits universities in the Middle East sector of the world. The accreditation process would be the same as that used for a university in the U.S., and the steps are those outlined in section III. B.2., Institutional Accreditation. The universities in the Middle East that currently are accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education are:

- The American University in Cairo, Egypt
- The American University of Beirut, Lebanon
- The American University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

1. Further Information

Information on the accreditation criteria and process for the Middle States Commission can be obtained from:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Telephone: 267-284-5000

Fax: 215-662-5501

Website: www.msche.org

A number of publications that are useful for the accreditation process may be downloaded from the association's Web site at <http://www.msche.org/publications.asp>

These publications include:

Eligibility Requirements and Standards of Accreditation

Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education

Eligibility Requirements and Standards of Accreditation, 2002

Manuals on Accreditation Protocols

Candidacy for Accreditation

Handbook for application and candidates for accreditation.
2002

Creating Meaningful and Analytical Charge Questions to Guide Self-Study

Detailed questions for institutions to consider as they address selected standards for accreditation during the self-study process

Designs for Excellence: Handbook for Institutional Self-Study

A manual to help institutions prepare for the decennial self-study experience

Handbook for Collaborative Reviews

Processes for Reviews by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and Other Accreditors, Agencies, and Organizations. The handbook is available for purchase.

Handbook for Conducting and Hosting an Evaluation Visit

A manual for team Chairs, for evaluators on visiting teams, and for institutions being evaluated after the decennial self-study report is submitted

Handbook for Periodic Review Reports

A manual for institutions preparing their interim reports in the fifth year after decennial re-accreditation and for PRR reviewers

Guidelines for Institutional Improvement

Advancing Student Learning

Highlights and a summary of the handbook, *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources*, 2004.

Assessment Plans: Best Practices

Selected examples of outcomes assessment plans and other resources

Creating Meaningful and Analytical Charge Questions to Guide Self-Study

Detailed questions for institutions to consider as they address selected standards for accreditation during the self-study process, 2004.

Developing Research and Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum

The handbook is available for purchase, 2003.

Developing Research and Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum

Executive summary of the handbook. 2003

Distance Learning Programs

Interregional Guidelines for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs

Regional Accreditation and Student Learning

Principles for Good Practice, Prepared by the Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions

Regional Accreditation and Student Learning

Selected Bibliography, Prepared by the Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions

Student Learning Assessment

The handbook, Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources (2003, 108 pgs) is available for purchase.

Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

Policies, Guidelines, Procedures, and Best Practices

Seventh Edition (2005) (pdf). Note: 2005 Dues and Fees, Updated 2/22/05

2. Recommendations

Accreditation by a U.S. regional accreditation organization such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools is not a necessary condition for attaining Substantial Equivalency (see Section III. D.2 2. ABET and International Programs, below) status for engineering and information technology programs or for accreditation of business and accounting programs at international universities. It is recommended that the PMU become familiar with the standards and criteria uses by MSA for guidance purposes, but that the university concentrates its initial efforts on program-specific accreditation of its degree programs.

D. ACCREDITATION OF ENGINEERING AND IT PROGRAMS

1. Programs Accredited by ABET

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), founded in 1932 as the Engineers Council for Professional Development, is the only organization in the U.S that accredits:

- Engineering programs
- Engineering technology programs
- Computer-related areas such as computer science, computer engineering, information systems, software engineering and similar titles
- Applied science programs such as industrial management, safety, surveying, health physics and industrial hygiene

The institution can chose which programs it wishes to have reviewed for accreditation, and not all must be examined at the same time. ABET is recognized by both USED and CHEA, and currently accredits some 2,700 programs at over 550 colleges and universities in the U.S.

ABET has mutual recognition agreements with seven other countries, thus establishing a broad system of program accreditation. The countries that have their engineering accreditation systems recognized by ABET are:

- Australia
- Canada
- Hong Kong
- Ireland
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- United Kingdom

2. **ABET and International Programs**

ABET does not specifically accredit international programs. However, it has a process known as “Substantial Equivalency” whereby ABET evaluates and recognizes international programs in engineering, engineering technology, and computing. The Substantial Equivalency designation means that the program has been judged to meet the general standards expected of a similar program in the U.S., and that the graduates of such a program have the knowledge and skills that are equivalent to graduates of an accredited U.S. program. The Substantial Equivalency process is designed to acknowledge that many countries do not have the same educational systems at the primary and secondary levels as the U.S., and thus, this process allows for recognizing such differences.

For programs that have not undergone a Substantial Equivalency review, ABET will provide a consultant who is a highly experienced program reviewer to examine the characteristics of the program. The consultant will study the nature of the program and compare the program to the criteria used for U.S. accreditation. The consultant will make suggestions relative to how well the program appears to meet the criteria used in a Substantial Equivalency formal review. The consultant will usually spend from three to five days on the campus discussing the program with the administration, interviewing faculty and students, reviewing course materials and examining facilities, especially laboratories and support facilities such as computer systems and the library. The consultant will provide the university a report of findings and a list of suggestions for improvement.

ABET will not consider evaluating a program for Substantial Equivalency without at least one graduating class having completed the curriculum. One issue the reviewer would examine is whether the graduates actually do take the prescribed curriculum and what exceptions are made, if any. Thus, it is essential for at least one graduating class to have completed the degree requirements in order to make this assessment. Substantial Equivalency, if granted, will be for a set term not to exceed six years.

3. ABET in Saudi Arabia

The following universities in Saudi Arabia have Substantial Equivalency status with ABET.

- King Abdulaziz University (12 programs)
- King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (15 programs)

4. Obtaining Information from ABET

For institutions that would like to begin the process of having one or more of their engineering, engineering technology, computer-related, or applied science programs reviewed for possible designation as Substantially Equivalent, the ABET headquarters should be contacted to begin the process. Information on ABET can be obtained from:

ABET, Inc.
111 Market Place, Suite 1050
Baltimore, MD 21202, USA

Telephone: 410-347-7700
Fax: 410-625-2238
Email: accreditation@abet.org
Website: www.abet.org

Complete documents concerning ABET accreditation are available for download at the following site:

http://www.abet.org/info_prgs.html

Documents available at this site include:

- Request for evaluation
- Fee schedules
- Accreditation Policy and Procedure Manual
- Instructions to Institutions
- Effective Reporting Techniques
- Preparing the self study report
- Questionnaires
- Case studies

5. Recommendations

The PMU should construct all its engineering and information technology programs to meet the criteria and conditions that would permit them the opportunity to seek Substantial Equivalency status with ABET.

Each program will need to have graduates from the program before ABET will consider conducting a formal assessment for Substantial Equivalency. Thus, each degree program will have to be in existence for at least four years in order to qualify.

The PMU should designate one or more administrators or faculty members to become well acquainted with the ABET criteria for engineering and information technology programs. ABET conducts workshops and training sessions for institutions to become familiar with current ABET process and procedures. The PMU should contact ABET to determine when such programs are being held.

As the time nears for the first graduating class in each program, the PMU should request from ABET the services of a consultant to examine the program and provide an independent assessment as to how well the program meets ABET Substantial Equivalency criteria.

E. ACCREDITATION OF BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Two organizations in the U.S. accredit business programs. They are AACSB International (The Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and ACBSP (The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs). AACSB also has a separate accreditation process for accounting programs. Both AACSB and ACBSP are recognized by both the USDE and CHEA.

1. AACSB International (The Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)

AACSB International has been accrediting business programs since 1919. As of January, 2005, a total of 494 institutions hold AACSB accreditation including 166 that have both business and accounting accreditation. Sixty-nine institutions outside of the U.S. hold AACSB accreditation.

Most of the prominent business schools in the U.S. have AACSB accreditation. It is designed for those institutions that have research interests and programs. AACSB does not accredit institutions that award collegiate degrees at the associate level only (commonly two-year programs) and does not review associate level degrees at any institution.

a. Accreditation for both undergraduate and graduate programs

Unless specifically excluded by AACSB, all programs offered by the institution will be reviewed for accreditation in which at least 25% of the teaching of undergraduate programs or 50% or more of the teaching of graduate programs is in traditional business programs.

AACSB does not permit institutions to choose only certain programs to be reviewed for accreditation. It requires all programs to be reviewed that fit the above criteria. Degree programs offered by distance education would also be required to be reviewed.

Another condition of eligibility for AACSB accreditation is that, “a majority of business graduates shall be from programs that have produced graduates during at least two years.” This means that new programs must have at least two consecutive years of graduates to be considered for accreditation.

b. The AACSB Process

The AACSB accreditation process incorporates an advisor who assists the university in preparing the materials for evaluation by the peer review team. This individual works with both the university and the review team to assure that the right materials are produced and that an accurate evaluation of the program is made.

c. AACSB in Saudi Arabia

The following university in Saudi Arabia is accredited by AACSB for its business programs.

King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals

d. Obtaining Information from AACSB

Further information on AACSB accreditation can be obtained from:

AACSB International
777 South Harbour Blvd., Suite 750
Tampa, FL 33602-5729

Telephone: 813-769-6500
Fax: 813-769-6559
Website: www.aacsb.edu

Information on accreditation standards is available for download in PDF format at the following site:

<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/standards.asp>

Information on the accreditation process is posted at the following site:

<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/standards.asp>

Documents for the accreditation process in PDF format can be downloaded at the following site:

<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/standards.asp>

Accreditation guidelines in PDF format can be downloaded at the following site:

<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/process/accreditation-guidelines.asp>

2. ACBSP (The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs)

ACBSP was founded in 1988 for the purpose of providing an accreditation process for colleges and universities whose primary purpose was teaching and education with much less emphasis than AACSB on research and scholarly activities. ACBSP will accredit both two-year and four-year institutions, and thus will accredit associate degree programs as well as bachelors and masters degrees. Currently, about 150 two-year institutions and 145 four-year institutions have their business programs accredited by ACBSP.

a. The ACBSP Process for New Programs

ACBSP has a candidacy process which is designed to aid new programs in the preparation of application for accreditation. It involves a mentor assigned to the university by ACBSP who helps the institution with understanding the accreditation process and how the criteria are applied. The candidacy process can extend from a few months to several years depending on the level of development of the business programs.

b. The ACBSP Process for Existing Programs

Programs must have been in existence at least two years to be considered for accreditation. Accreditation, if granted, extends up to 10 years depending on the circumstances found during the evaluation process.

c. ACBSP in Saudi Arabia

ACBSP has an International Council which is responsible for the management of the accreditation process for universities beyond the U.S. Currently, no programs in Saudi Arabia are accredited by ACBSP. The closest accredited programs are associated with the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates.

d. Obtaining Information from AACSB

More information on the ACBSP accreditation system can be obtained from:

Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs
7007 College Blvd., Suite 420
Overland Park, KS 66211

Telephone: 913-339-9356

Fax: 913-339-6226

Website: www.acbsp.org

Information on outcomes-based assessment (including downloadable documents in PDF format) is posted at the following site:

http://www.acbsp.org/index.php?mo=st&op=ld&sid=s1_020acc&stpg=225

Documents in PDF format on topics including accreditation process, cost, and standards for baccalaureate and graduate programs can be downloaded at the following site:

http://www.acbsp.org/index.php?mo=st&op=ld&sid=s1_020acc&stpg=23

Downloadable documents in PDF format regarding site visits by evaluators can be downloaded at the following site:

http://www.acbsp.org/index.php?mo=st&op=ld&sid=s1_020acc&stpg=247

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the PMU prepare to seek accreditation of its business-related program from AACSB-International. Such accreditation will position the PMU with the major business colleges in the U.S. and provides the opportunity for PMU students to have courses taken at PMU transfer to major U.S. universities. This would be especially helpful for PMU graduates who seek admission to U.S. university graduate programs.

To qualify for AACSB accreditation, the faculty members of College of Business Administration will need to have research programs that result in publication of significant results in appropriate journals, and other evidence of scholarly activities.

If the PMU does not intend to have research as a part of its business-related programs, then the recommendation would be for the PMU to seek accreditation through ACBSP.

To simplify the accreditation process, it is recommended that the PMU College of Business Administration modify its degree offerings to have a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree with majors in Business Administration, Finance, and Management Information Systems rather than a separate degree in each of the above fields. The purpose of this recommendation is that only one review team would be required for examining the accreditation of the single B.S. degree, whereas a separate review team is required by AACSB if separate degrees are offered. This recommendation will greatly reduce the time and effort required by the PMU to have these programs evaluated and should not change the nature of the programs themselves. The different majors can be established at different times and need not all be initiated simultaneously.

The Executive MBA program will be evaluated concurrently with the B.S. degree programs since AACSB requires accreditation review for all programs with 50% or more of graduate teaching in traditional business programs.

The B.S. degree in Accounting will be reviewed separately from those in other areas of business administration.

AACSB requires two graduating classes to have occurred before a new program will be considered for accreditation. It is recommended, however, that the PMU designate one or more administrators or faculty to become familiar with AACSB process and procedures as the programs are being generated. This is to make sure that these graduates will have the course work and other educational experiences necessary for an accredited program.

F. ACCREDITATION OF INTERIOR DESIGN PROGRAMS

The Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) was established in 1970 to develop standards and a process for accreditation of interior design programs. FIDER limits its accreditation activities to the U.S. and Canada. No other U.S. interior design accreditation organization exists. Information related to FIDER accreditation can be obtained from:

Foundation for Interior Design Education Research
146 Monroe Center NW, Suite 1318
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2822

Telephone: 616-458-0400
Fax: 616-458-0460
Website: www.fider.org

A brief description of the FIDER accreditation process is posted at the following site:
<http://www.fider.org/accreditation.htm>

1. Recommendations

Although FIDER does not accredit programs beyond the U.S. and Canada, it is recommended that the PMU administration and faculty associated with the interior design program become familiar with the criteria and conditions used by FIDER for accreditation, and that they use these characteristics to guide the development of the PMU program. This will position the university to seek FIDER accreditation if in the future FIDER establishes an international accreditation system.

IV. SUMMARY

The international education community is more closely linked today than ever before. There are essentially two reasons this has occurred. The first is related to need. The other is related to ease of access.

With respect to need, it has become essential in today's world that students are exposed to international business, economics, technology, and culture, and it is expected that this need will only increase with time. The other factor is the availability and ease of communication resulting from the establishment of the Internet. This environment has provided easy access among universities around the globe and among professional colleagues who staff these institutions.

By establishing global institutional affiliations, the PMU can become an integral part of the international community of institutions of higher education by participating in cooperative programs of teaching and research and exchanging both faculty and students in the process.

By pursuing accreditation for its professional programs, the university can ensure its students of an education that prepares them to meet global professional standards. It also can facilitate its institutional affiliations, since many of these collaborations are dependent upon appropriate program accreditation.