Creating and Sustaining Departmental Advisory Boards

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Departmental Advisory Boards are comprised of knowledgeable volunteers who provide advice, assistance, and resources to a program, major, or department.
Departmental Advisory Boards
Increase Engagement with Industry
Insights from ....

#1
UGA MIS Advisory Board

#2
Survey Data from UGA Board Members

#3
Survey Data from Board Coordinators
UGA MIS Advisory Board

- In operation since 1985
- 22 corporate and 100 total members
- Black and red level corporate members
- Welcome back social, fall and spring Board meetings, Top 10% Event, and recruiting dinner
- Scholarships for students
Survey Data from UGA Board Members

- Thirty-one corporate and 15 individual respondents
- Fifty-seven percent CIO, partner, or senior manager; 26% mid-level manager or professional; and 8% junior-level professional
- Attended an average of 3.3 events over the past 2 years
Survey Data from Board Coordinators

- Forty-two responses
- Ninety percent US, 10 % international
- Fifteen hundred to 55,000 students
- Fifty to 4,000 MIS/IS/CIS majors
What Are the Motivations for Creating a Board?

- To gain practitioner input on the curriculum (4.39)
- To gain advocates for the program (4.08)
- To promote interaction among students, faculty, and the business community (4.03)
- To help promote the program’s brand in the business community (4.03)
What Are the Motivations for Creating a Board?

- To enhance the program’s image (3.97)
- To gain access to practitioner expertise (3.79)
- To interact and network with practitioners (3.72)
- To meet and discuss existing and emerging issues (3.71)
- ……. 
- To obtain practitioner help in validating research (2.00)
What Are the Motivations for Serving on a Board?

- To give back to the MIS program (4.20)
- To help the MIS program (4.13)
- To develop and maintain personal relationships with faculty (4.09)
- To meet and discuss existing and emerging issues (4.00)
What Are the Motivations for Serving on a Board?

- To give back to the MIS field (3.98)
- To recruit students (3.89)
- To meet, interact and network with other Board members (3.83)
- To help my company’s brand (3.78)
- To influence the curriculum (3.61)
- ........
- To gain recognition and prestige from serving on the Board (2.00)
Advisory Boards Differ in Their Composition, Functioning, and Activities
Boards Differ in Size

Number of Board Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 to 25</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 to 40</td>
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<td>40+</td>
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</table>
Boards Differ in Composition
Who Sits at the Table?

- Individual (45%), corporate (26%), both (29%)
- Fifty-one percent have multiple members from the same firm
- Eighty-one percent include members from consulting firms and vendors
- Thirty-three percent have members from human resources
- Seventeen percent include students
“Find board members who are passionate about the university, the MIS program, and the board. Give the board and board members ownership for various programs and activities and hold them accountable for results. Team those board members with faculty and students.” A board coordinator
Continued Membership

- Some board members are appointed for a specific time period (e.g., 2 years)
- Seventy-four percent require attendance at board meetings
- Fifty-two percent require attendance at board-related events
Funding Board Activities

• Boards are not designed for profit
• Thirty-five percent of the boards have dues or required contributions
• Some boards do not charge dues because they only have low-cost board meetings
• Some boards obtain funding on an event-by-event basis -- scholarships, special events, or projects
• Boards that have dues have individual and/or corporate memberships
Black, Red and Individual Memberships at UGA

- There are black ($3K), red ($1K) and individual ($100) memberships
- There are specific benefits associated with each level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Individual Membership ($100)</th>
<th>Corporate Membership RED LEVEL ($1,000)</th>
<th>Corporate Membership BLACK LEVEL ($3,000)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at spring Advisory Board Meeting</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest speaking opportunities in classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consideration for MIS Alumni of the year award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition as RED level corporate member</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMIS recruiting dinner w/ 20% discount</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferential choice of dates for SMIS presentation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned faculty representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at fall CIO / Partners Council</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition as BLACK level corporate member</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMIS recruiting dinner for free (a $500 value)</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at fall ‘Top 10% event'</td>
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</tbody>
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Boards Differ in Their Activities

• Participate in board meetings (97%)
• Provide insight on the curriculum (95%)
• Speak to classes (89%)
• Help students get jobs (79%)
• Help promote the program (74%)
Boards Differ in Their Activities

• Help students develop professionally (74%)
• Provide scholarships (45%)
• Participate in research studies (32%)
• Fund research projects (16%)
MIS Advisory Board Meeting and Banquet
How Boards Operate

- Seventy-one percent meet once a term, 8% once a year, and 21% other
- Thirty-nine percent of the time the department head is the board coordinator, 27% a faculty member, 25% an industry person, 5% industry and academic co-chairs, and 5% other
How Boards Operate

- Seventy-four percent of the boards meet on campus, 24% on and off campus, and 2% off campus.
- Fifty percent of board meetings last 1-2 hours, 38% a morning or afternoon, 10% all day, and 3% longer than a day.
- Forty-eight percent have subcommittees take on specific tasks, 52% do not.
Most Frequently Mentioned Problems

- Finding a day when members can attend
- Low attendance at meetings
- Finding meaningful opportunities for engagement
- Creating interactive meetings
- Raising money for activities
- Getting students to attend events
Satisfaction

- Satisfaction of Board Members
- Board Effect on Reputation
- Has the Board met your expectations for creating it
- Meeting Member's Needs and Expectations
Let’s Consider Best Practices

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Best Practice #1: Charge Membership Dues

- Individuals and companies are comfortable with dues
- Dues are a better approach than event-by-event funding
- Dues may come out of the board member’s or HR’s budget
- It is important to be in the company’s budgetary cycle
Best Practice #2: Include students on the board

- Students are why board members serve
- Can help plan and run events
- Can take on special projects
- Can speak to various groups
- Can be the “face” of the program
- They are a joy to work with
Benefits for Students

• “Being on the board was one of the most fulfilling and fortunate opportunities I experienced at UGA”

• “I was able to further develop organization, communication, time management, and leadership skills when preparing for and taking part in events”

• “The board has given me great opportunities for employment as well as a better overall experience at UGA”
Best Practice #3: Use meeting time wisely

• Limit the number of items on the agenda and have issues that really matter
• Minimize the amount of time that faculty talk, and limit PowerPoint
• Keep board members actively engaged – breakout groups, panels, and group discussions
• Showcase the students on the board
Demosthenian Hall, Home of the Demosthenian Debate Society
Best Practice #4: Listen, understand, and act on the advice

• Board members may not always understand the B-School curriculum
• Once a decision is made, execute and follow up
• Important to keeping board members engaged and building a sense of ownership
• Give feedback constantly
Best Practice #5: Plan for continuity

• Have multiple faculty actively involved with the board
• Have multiple board members from the same company
• Multiple board members are also helpful when a board member cannot attend a meeting
What are your experiences with departmental advisory boards?
Contact me if you want the slides or a *BizEd*, November/December, 2015 article.

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Or leave me your business card