



Bentley College
Maintenance Review Visit Report
Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2005

I. Definition of Scope.

A. Bentley was founded in 1917 as a two-year school of accounting, located in downtown Boston. In 1961 it became a four-year school of accounting and finance. It emerged as a business college with a distinct campus in the early 1970s. The transformation to a business university constitutes the next phase of development. Bentley is focused on becoming for business what technological universities like Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Rochester Institute of Technology are for science and engineering: an institution committed to one segment of the market for higher education, striving to be broader and deeper than any comparable institution in that segment. Bentley College is somewhat unique in that it is a stand-alone business school with a large undergraduate program and a variety of masters programs. It is not part of a larger college or university.

B. List of degree programs included in the review and the number of program graduates in the most recent year:

Name of Degree Program	Graduates
Bachelor of Science Degree programs with majors in:	1002
○ Accountancy	121
○ Accounting Information Systems	8
○ Computer Information Systems	85
○ Corporate Finance and Accounting	78
○ Economics – Finance	72
○ Finance	240
○ Information Design and Corporate Communication	42
○ Management	146
○ Managerial Economics	13
○ Marketing	191
MBA: Cohort Option (full-time) and Flexible Option (full-time and part-time) both with concentrations in:	230
○ Accounting Systems	9
○ Business Data Analysis	2
○ Business Economics	3
○ Business Ethics	1
○ Change Management	4

○ E-Business	4
○ Entrepreneurial Studies	4
○ Finance	61
○ Financial Planning	2
○ International Business	7
○ Management	34
○ Management Information Systems	26
○ Management of Operations and Technology	14
○ Marketing	31
○ Taxation	3
Master of Science Degree Programs in:	274
○ Accountancy	24
○ Accounting Information Systems	5
○ Computer Information Systems	7
○ Finance	46
○ Global Financial Analysis	25
○ Human Factors in Information Design	18
○ Information Age Marketing	29
○ Information Technology	32
○ Financial Planning	15
○ Taxation	44

C. List of Comparison Groups

1. Comparable Peers:

Babson College
 Bryant College
 University of Denver
 DePaul University
 Georgia State University
 University of New Hampshire
 Northeastern University
 Pace University
 Suffolk University
 Syracuse University
 Villanova University

2. Aspirant Group:

Boston College
 The George Washington University
 Georgetown University
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
 Washington University in St. Louis

Susan M. Phillips, Dean (Member)
School of Business and Public Management
The George Washington University

Robert M. Brown
Head, Dept of Accounting and Information Systems
Pamplin College of Business
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

- F. Materials Reviewed: Cover Letter
Bentley College Strategic Plan
Maintenance Report Parts I and II
Maintenance Report Appendix A
PhD Proposal Overview
Faculty Profiles

II. Team Recommendation

The team recommendation reflects the opinion of the Peer Review Team only. It will be reviewed for concurrence or remanded to the team by the appropriate accreditation committee. The role of the accreditation committee is to ensure consistent application of the AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across peer review teams.

- A. *Extend Accreditation Maintenance*: The recommendation of the Peer Review Team is that the accreditation of the undergraduate and masters degree programs in business and accounting offered by Bentley College be extended for an additional six years with a Maintenance Review to occur in year five. Concurrence by the accreditation committee and ratification by the Board of Directors are required prior to the confirmation of the accreditation decision. Following ratification by the Board of Directors, the applicant will be notified. The applicant must wait for this official notification before making any public announcement. AACSB International provides a list of applicants achieving accreditation to its members and the public.

The peer review team finds that Bentley College has a truly distinctive mission focused on delivering extraordinary quality business education programs to its undergraduate and graduate students. The mission is supported by ample financial resources, high quality faculty and staff members and programs are delivered to a high quality student body selected in accordance with the standards of the school.

- B. Subsequent Review of Team Recommendation.

The accreditation committee will review this report, and any response from the applicant, at its next scheduled meeting. The Board of Directors will consider for ratification the team recommendations that have occurrence from the appropriate accreditation committee, as soon as possible after the accreditation committee concurrence.

III. Effective Practices:

- A. Bentley College has distinguished itself over the last several years through the integration of business and information technology. The team finds that this integration is both broad and deep. A much higher percentage than average of Bentley faculty members integrate technology into their courses. Faculty are supported by a strong IT team. Of particular note is the Academic Technology Center, focused on supporting both instructional and research IT use by the faculty. The team has extraordinary credentials and a strong service perspective. Also noteworthy are the specialized IT facilities and supporting pedagogical developments in Accounting, Human Factors, International Business, Marketing and the Trading Floor. The Trading Floor is the largest in an academic setting. The Human Factors and Marketing research facilities represent particularly distinctive capabilities at Bentley College and significantly enhance its research and teaching missions. Also unusual, is the utilization of these advanced technology facilities by the entire graduate and undergraduate population. The integration of IT and business is further supported by a strong interdisciplinary focus and commitment by the faculty, both in pedagogy and research. This focus is proving to be a powerful, long-term differentiator in the crowded New England business education market.

- B. Extraordinary commitment to and excellence in teaching. Class sizes are relatively small. Faculty members contribute significantly beyond traditional teaching materials and bring real-world examples into the classroom. Faculty members seem to be well regarded, both for their subject matter expertise and for their ability to motivate high levels of student scholarship and achievement. The system of providing primary and secondary evaluators for non-tenured faculty as they develop their careers at Bentley seems to result in an overall high standard of teaching excellence. The GB301 course provides opportunities to integrate complex business knowledge into unstructured business settings and provides a unique learning opportunity for undergraduate students. The amount of effort required by the faculty to identify real-world projects and provide intense coaching is impressive. Faculty members also seem to be extraordinarily committed to providing both academic and career advice.

- C. Focus on building an inclusive community. Bentley students at both the undergraduate and graduate level felt a strong involvement in the Bentley

community. They expressed deep satisfaction in both the diversity and the cohesiveness of the community. The community is one of great personal respect. The professional treatment of students by the faculty, particularly at the undergraduate level, seems to contribute significantly to this environment. Another critical dimension is the longstanding Bentley commitment to integrity and business ethics. Undergraduate students were also happy with the rich campus life with many clubs, sports, service projects and other activities available. They also feel that the relative size of Bentley and the small class sizes contribute to the strong sense of community.

- D. Continuous review of programs. Bentley offers far more degrees and programs than other institutions of its size. These programs are, however, supported by ongoing reviews of the programs, their current relevance and their effectiveness. Significant effort has been expended in the last few years to formalize the assessment processes.
- E. Strong, supportive student and college services. The career placement and corporate relations operation seems to be particularly effective, both relative to results achieved and student responsiveness. Students were articulate and grateful about the high quality of support provided to them beginning in the freshman year through the seminars and continuing through the internship experience and placement upon graduation. Student advisement was also viewed as being easily available and the personal involvement of faculty in the process was viewed as very positive.

BENTLEY COLLEGE

MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION VISIT CONSULTATIVE REPORT

Date of Review: February 1, 2005

Peer Review Team Members:

Howard Frank, Dean (Chair)
Robert H. Smith School of Business
University of Maryland

Robert M. Keith, Director (Vice Chair)
School of Accountancy
College of Business Administration
University of South Florida

Lee G. Caldwell, Executive Vice President Academics (Member)
Dixie State College of Utah

Susan M. Phillips, Dean (Member)
School of Business and Public Management
The George Washington University

Robert M. Brown
Head, Dept of Accounting and Information Systems
Pamplin College of Business
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

The following items are offered in the spirit of consultative suggestions for improvement. They are **not** related to AACSB International accreditation standards or the accreditation recommendation.

PhD program plans. Bentley College is currently in the early planning stage for implementing a PhD program. The two primary motivations for offering a PhD program appear to be enhancement of Bentley's national/international reputation and the desire of the faculty to work with PhD students. Faculty often mentioned developing a program in the range of 50-60 PhD students. The peer review team offers the following thoughts relative to the consideration and implementation of a PhD program.

1. Realistic expectations and facilitation of PhD placement. There continues to be strong demand for PhD graduates in business. However, the placement of PhD graduates at top tier research institutions is difficult for institutions without an

established reputation in PhD programs. Bentley should prepare a list of potential institutions for potential placement of Bentley PhD graduates and conduct some research to determine willingness of the institutions to recruit at Bentley. In the early days of the PhD program, placements will largely be determined by the research reputation of the principal faculty members and the quality of the research done by the PhD student. Over a ten or twenty year period, the type of institution targeted may change dramatically as the research reputation of Bentley and Bentley doctoral students continues to improve. Care should be taken to ensure that early PhD graduates are prepared to make meaningful intellectual contributions that truly enhance the developing research reputation of Bentley. Another possibility Bentley could consider would be a professionally focused doctoral program designed to prepare scholars for significant contributions to industry/business practice. This focus would be particularly well suited to a number of Bentley interdisciplinary areas.

2. Program size. The peer review team has some concerns about the contemplated size of the PhD program. The main criterion mentioned for determining program size was the desire to have a large enough student cohort. To place the program size into perspective, the contemplated program size would make it one of the larger doctoral programs in the country and of a size to compete with a number of large, R1 institutions. PhD programs are, by nature, expensive and custom. The team suggests that Bentley contemplate a much smaller, carefully targeted PhD program would likely be more successful and less costly. Here are some examples of representative PhD program sizes for the Academic Year 2003/04:

Maryland	111
Berkeley	89
Michigan	104
UNC	64
USC	62
Duke	74
Virginia- Darden	15
Georgetown	--

3. Faculty sufficiency. AACSB criteria for intellectual contributions of PhD involved faculty are significantly different from those involved at the undergraduate and masters level. At the present time, recent (five year) intellectual contributions of the faculty to top tier academic journals is somewhat limited. Moreover, given the interdisciplinary focus of many Bentley faculty members, opportunities to publish in top-tier, discipline specific academic journals may be somewhat limited.
4. Research focus. At the PhD level, the expectation is that faculty intellectual contributions will be largely focused at contributions to theory. At the masters level, the focus is contributions to practice and at the undergraduate level the focus is contributions to pedagogy. The peer review team certainly recognizes the significance of the current Bentley commitment to improving the quantity of intellectual contributions by the faculty, but feels more granularity in the focus of

faculty development would lead to better “break-through” results. Perhaps a better balance between career tracks and institutional mission would allow Bentley to move forward on the PhD program more aggressively without undermining its traditional excellence in undergraduate and masters level programs. Today, approximately 45% of the faculty is focused on the research track. Further inquiry into the criteria applied to determining success in the track did not produce a clear understanding about the nature of intellectual contributions expected of those in the research track. The vagueness is not inappropriate when measured against Bentley’s current mission of delivering undergraduate and masters level education. It is problematic when measured against a potential mission change incorporating PhD level education. There could also be some concerns about degradation of institutional quality when the institutional mission remains 85% pedagogical.

The relatively large number of specialized masters programs also give the peer review team some concerns about program efficiency. There may be some programs that marginally viable which could dilute placement efforts and or Bentley’s overall brand and reputation in the market. It appears that many of these programs have historic roots and may have not been subjected to careful scrutiny outside of discipline specific areas.