November 30, 2006

Dr. Joan Carson
Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness

Dr. Fenwick Huss
Dean, Robinson College of Business

Re: Chair’s Overview of Health Administration’s APR Self-Study Report

Attached is the Self-Study Report conducted by the Institute of Health Administration as part of the Academic Program Review process (see CD which includes the complete report with all tables, appendices, and other information as specified in the APR template). The Institute’s APR Committee has worked diligently over the past year to evaluate the Institute and assess future opportunities. The strategic goals and objectives set forth in the document are the culmination of deliberations by the Institute’s Advisory Board, Alumni Board, and IHA core and joint faculty over the years since the previous APR. I have carefully reviewed these findings and stress the urgent need to provide the additional faculty and staff requested as soon as possible, so that the Institute can achieve even higher levels of excellence. The brief overview of the self-study follows.

**Quality, accreditation, and ranking.** IHA is widely recognized for its flagship MBA/MHA program and is nationally ranked (7th MBA part-time and 27th HA nationally, U.S. News & World Report, 2006). IHA was awarded a 7 years accreditation in 1999, and a comparable result is expected from this month’s site visit by the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME). IHA is a full graduate member of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration and is part of the Robinson College of Business, accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The Institute is the only health management program in Georgia with these accreditations and memberships. The Institute is approved by more states (8) for in-state tuition than any other graduate health administration program by the Academic Common Market of the 16 state Southern Regional Education Board.

**Research.** The Institute conducts extensive extramurally-funded research and our faculty members have served as principal or co-investigators on several large projects since the previous academic program review. Many of these address vital health services research and policy issues for the State of Georgia, federal government, and other entities which influence rural and urban health strategies. IHA faculty members have published in top Health Administration journals and are active in national research and academic associations.
**Service.** Faculty members participate on national academic and accrediting bodies, and serve in leadership roles with several national and local organizations. Faculty members provide assistance and serve on several State of Georgia legislative and executive branch committees such as the General Assembly's Task Force on Health Insurance Options for Small Businesses and Uninsured Workers, the Healthcare Coverage Project funded by State Planning Grant, and as Chair of the State of Georgia Medicaid Administration Board.

**Excellent students and alumni.** Excellent quality students have been attracted to IHA at a steady rate, with undergraduate degrees from well-known universities reflecting state, regional, and national geographical scope. The placement rate of graduates approaches 100 percent in organizations throughout the healthcare sector. Graduate IHA alumni number over 1,000 and are in executive management positions throughout the U.S., the Southeast, and Georgia (e.g., Chair-elect of the American Hospital Association, Chicago, IL; CEO of Catholic Health Initiatives, Denver, CO; CEO of Eastern Maine Health System, Bangor, ME; CEO of Omidyar (eBay’s $ multi-billion foundation), Redwood City, CA; President, Central Group, HCA, Nashville, TN; Chair, Board of Trustees of Georgia Hospital Association, Atlanta, GA).

**Progress.** The Institute has accomplished much since the previous APR including a marked increase in extramurally-funded and scholarly research, endowments, joint faculty appointments, improvement in curriculum and format, joint and collaborative degrees, student diversity, increased student caliber, and improved communication with students, alumni, other HA programs, and industry.

**Strategic goals and objectives.** After extensive faculty deliberations, discussion with the Advisory Board of the Institute, and a recent CAHME accreditation site visit, four new strategic goals in addition to those currently pursued are to: 1) reduce reliance on part-time instructors; 2) implement new curricular areas such as health informatics at the graduate and undergraduate levels and a PMBA/health management for working professionals; 3) increase IHA funded research and peer-reviewed publications; 4) reactivate the HA doctoral program.

**Resource adequacy.** To its credit, the Institute has achieved this level of excellence in education, research, and service with an extremely small number of dedicated faculty and staff and with a limited amount of state funding. Two senior faculty retired and one was promoted to Associate V.P. of Research in late 2004 during an especially tight budget time. While the increase in IHA funded research has mitigated some of the impact of low funding, current faculty and staff are stretched to the limit. Thus, additional faculty and staff are needed to address current and future opportunities as justified in this self-study.

Sincerely,

Andrew T. Sumner, Sc.D.
Director, Associate Professor and Joe Taylor Chair of Health Administration