



Date: March 9, 2020

To: Cathy Sandeen, Chancellor

From: John Stalvey, Interim Provost *John R Stalvey*

Cc: Karen Markel, Dean, College of Business and Public Policy
Sandra Ehrlich, Associate Professor and Graduate Business Program Director
Terry Nelson, Associate Professor
Helena Wisniewski, Professor of Entrepreneurship, Management and Marketing Chair
Ed Forrest, Professor of Marketing and former Marketing and Management Chair
Janet Burton, CBPP Graduate Studies Program Coordinator
Susan Kalina, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Claudia Lampman, Vice Provost for Student Success

Re: **AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings –General Management MBA**

I have reviewed the dean's findings, the program's response to the dean's findings, and the completed Expedited Program Review Template for the General Management MBA.

Recommendations

My recommendation is to accept the decision and recommendations of the dean with the additional commentary that the program decrease the average number of semesters to degree to five and only offer the thirty-credit degree by removing the emphasis areas. The revision should be completed in AY21 for implementation in fall 2021. An interim progress report on all recommendations is due to the dean by March 1, 2021. The dean will submit a review along with the program's interim progress report to the provost by April 1, 2021. Unless otherwise noted at that time, a follow-up Program Review will be conducted in AY24.

Decision

Recommend Revision

AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

Date: February 28, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Program Review Committee Chair, Dr. Terry A. Nelson, Associate Professor, Management and Marketing Dept., former Graduate Program Director, UAA College of Business and Public Policy

Cc: Dr. Karen Markel, Dean, College of Business and Public Policy
University of Alaska Anchorage
Program Review Committee Members:

1. Helena Wisniewski, Professor of Entrepreneurship, CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
2. Ed Forrest, Professor of Management & former CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
3. Sandra Ehrlich-Mathiesen, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Business Programs, UAA
4. Janet Burton, CBPP Graduate Programs Coordinator, UAA

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean’s Recommendation

Program/s in this review: Master in Business Administration in General Business, (MBA)

Program response to dean’s findings:

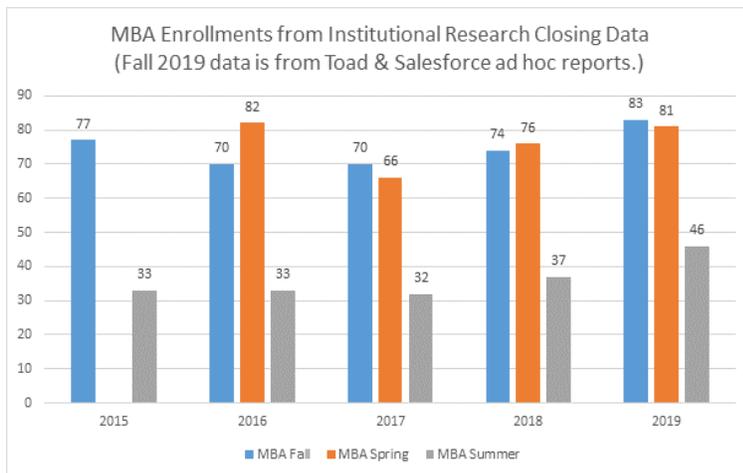
1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

The dean’s findings in this section require no response.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

The Dean stated, *“Overall, there has been a consistent decline in the number of students enrolled in the program. Despite offering a 30-credit degree option, there has not been increased interest in the MBA program.”*

Program Demand



AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

RESPONSE. The enrollment decline occurred prior to 2016 (see chart above). In 2017, the CBPP Graduate Program Strategy (GPS) committee proactively conducted an internal program review and made revisions that led to increases that the program is experiencing today. Fall enrollment increased from 70 students in 2017 to 83 (18.6%), spring (22.7%), and summer (44%). The revisions made by the GPS committee to the MBA program that stimulated growth were 1) changed the confusing GMAT x GPA formula admission requirement to a simple GPA 3.25, 2) suspended low enrolled emphasis areas (marketing and entrepreneurship), 3) discontinued the foundation courses requirement for potential MBA students with an undergraduate degree in business, 4) created a 30-credit MBA fast track degree which can be completed in 20 months, and 5) initiated a hybrid delivery in fall 2018.

The revisions to the MBA program also increased the number of applications approved for admissions (see charts below), while maintaining the quality of the students accepted in the program.

Summer Admissions		Fall Admissions		Spring Admissions	
Majors	Count of STUDENT_ID	Majors	Count of STUDENT_ID	Majors	Count of STUDENT_ID
MBA		MBA		MBA	
201302	6	201203	30	201301	16
201402	2	201303	11	201401	20
201502	3	201403	14	201501	13
201602	2	201503	18	201601	22
201702	2	201603	16	201701	10
201802	11	201703	22	201801	17
		201803	26		

Service to other UAA programs

The MBA program collaborates across the UAA campus with the College of Health, the Master of Public Administration Program, and the College of Engineering to provide emphases in Health Administration, Public Sector and Non-Profit Management, and Project Management. These collaborations strengthen not only the MBA, but also add credit hour production to the other UAA programs.

Efficiency

The Dean stated, *“MBA program efficiency has been improved in the last academic year through schedule streamlining and increases in course caps by the Dean’s Office.”*

BA A636 Enrollment History

The following table details enrollments compared to class capacity.

Term	CRN	Class	Capacity	Enrolled	Percent Full
Fall 2020	71284	BA A636 801	34	0	0%
Fall 2019	70752	BA A636 801	34	32	94%
Fall 2018	70485	BA A636 601	24	23	96%
Spring 2018	30526	BA A636 001	30	10	33%
Fall 2017	70570	BA A636 601	34	14	41%
Spring 2017	30413	BA A636 001	30	14	47%
Fall 2016	70409	BA A636 601	34	15	46%
Spring 2016	30492	BA A636 001	30	8	27%
Fall 2015	70434	BA A636 601	34	10	29%
Spring 2015	30589	BA A636 001	30	14	47%

RESPONSE. In 2017, CBPP’s Interim Dean, Director of Graduate Programs, and Graduate Programs Coordinator mutually agreed to decrease offering some core courses twice an academic year to once a year to align with the decrease in enrollment. BA A636 *Financial Decision Making* is one of the courses. As you can see in the chart above, since taking the course offering to once a year, the course is experiencing growth that surpasses enrollment numbers in 2015 and 2016. In essence, the increase of the course caps is due to recent growth, not to decline.

Another approach to improve efficiency of the program was to discontinue low enrolled emphasis areas and to take advantage of other programs that could offer emphasis areas that did not cost CBPP additional human resources. For example, the Health Administration, Public Sector & Non-Profit Management, Global Supply Chain Management, and Project Management emphases provide support for these specific masters programs. The Business Intelligence & Business Analytics (BI & BA) and Leadership emphases are the only two areas supported by CBPP MBA faculty. Moreover, the enrollment for these areas demonstrates that a substantial number of the MBA students are interested in these areas. Of the 82 MBA students (fall 2019), 23 (28%) are obtaining the BI & BA emphasis and 16 (20%) are obtaining the leadership emphasis (see chart below). This equates to 351 (39 students x 9 credits) additional credits @ \$615 = \$216,075 incremental dollars that CBPP would not receive if only a 30-credit MBA was offered. Additionally, some of these courses serve as electives for the MBA students. Thus, performing a dual role in the program. Notably, 39 (48%) of the MBA students are matriculating in the 36-credit program. The Program Review Committee will continue to monitor enrollment numbers and adjust course sections accordingly.

Row Labels	Count of ID
Leadership	16
Business Intelligence & Business Analytics	23
30-Credit Basic MBA	27
Health Administration	4
Undetermined	9
Public Sector & Non-Profit	1
Global Supply Chain Management	1
36-credit General Management	1
Grand Total	82

Productivity

RESPONSE. Due to lower enrollments, student credit hours, seat count, and FTE students, numbers have dropped considerably in the seven-year period. In 2017, the SCH/FTEF, Enroll/FTEF, FTES/FTEF, class size, and class utilization dropped to the lowest point suggesting higher cost for teaching students. In contrast, the 2019 metrics improved considerably. Class size reached its second highest point in the seven-year period only .7 behind 2013 when the number of enrolled students was at its highest at 128. Class utilization increased in 2019 to over 65% after a low of 50.4% in 2017. Surprisingly, the Cost/SCH only increased from \$611 in 2015 to \$661 in 2019 a change of \$50. In contrast, Tui Rev/SCH increased from \$402 to \$583 during the same time frame. The difference between the COST/SCH and Tui/Rev/SCH went from \$209 in 2015 to \$78 in 2019 suggesting more tuition revenue is covering the cost of teaching. This may be related to reducing the number of sections offered per course in an academic year from two to one. This increased class size to 14.2, which is approximately five more students per section than in 2017. Overall, the MBA program is rebounding from its lowest numbers in 2017.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The Dean stated, *“The MBA program has the potential to be a flagship for business leadership*

AY20 Expedited Program Review – Optional Program Response to the Dean’s Findings Form

development for the region. However, this program has suffered from a lack of promotion and marketing, partnering with undergraduate programs at UAA and minimal community engagement. With a renewed attention on these efforts, there is great potential for the program to become profitable and a way to engage the community and students in applied projects.”

RESPONSE. In 2018, the MBA program was awarded \$130,000 from the Chancellor’s workforce funds to support converting the program to hybrid. The decision to transition to the hybrid format was based on four focus groups’ (students (2 groups), alumni, and community) feedback. The funds were used to pay for faculty training, faculty converting their courses, technology needs, and marketing. With input from the Dean in 2018, a deadline of fall 2019 to fully implement the hybrid format with core courses was determined. All courses with the exception ACCT 650 were converted by the deadline. The hybrid MBA is ready to market once the Dean moves forward with the remaining course. There should be remaining workforce funds to market the hybrid program.

With support from CBPP leadership to complete the implementation of the revisions for the program put forth by the GPS committee in 2017, and in conjunction with marketing and partnering efforts, the MBA program can become the flagship for business leadership development.

4. Program Duplication/Distinctiveness

Duplication:

The Dean stated, *“There is a completely online MBA program offered at UAF.”*

	 College of Business and Public Policy UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE	 College of Business and Public Policy UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE	
	New MBA Option		
Institution name	University of Alaska Anchorage	University of Alaska Anchorage	University of Alaska Fairbanks
School Name	College of Business & Public Policy	College of Business & Public Policy	School of Management
Degree	MBA	MBA	MBA
Program Format	MBA, Part Time	MBA, Part Time	Online
Program Length	20 months	2 years	less than 2 years
Program Name	Evening MBA	Evening MBA	MBA,
Program Location	Anchorage, AK	Anchorage, AK	Fairbanks, AK
Accreditation	The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)	AACSB	AACSB
Areas of Study or emphasis	General Management	Leadership, Business Intelligence, Public Administration, Healthcare Admin, Supply Chain	General Management, STEM
Joint Degrees Offered	No	No	No
Delivery Format	Hybrid (50/50)	Hybrid (50/50)	Online
Total Credit Required	30 credits - (10 courses) 7- core; 2 electives; capstone course - no thesis	36 credits - (12 courses) 7 core; 3 emphasis courses, 1 elective, capstone course - no thesis	30 credits - (10 courses) 4- core; 3 emphasis courses; 2 electives; capstone course, no thesis
Foundation courses	For non-business undergraduate students. Must take three full semester courses	For non-business undergraduate students. Must take three full semester courses	Seven online, self-study, pre-MBA modules take the place of full prerequisite courses
GMAT Score	GMAT required for GPA < 3.25	GMAT required for GPA < 3.25	GMAT required for GPA < 2.75
Delivery Schedule	Monday - Thursday	Monday - Thursday	N/A

RESPONSE. Yes, UAF offers an online MBA program. Yet, when compared one on one (see chart above), the rigor in UAA’s MBA program offers a superior student experience. In addition, the hybrid format fulfills the specific needs of UAA students. Furthermore, CBPP MBA students have voiced during a focus group session (2017) that they do not want a totally online MBA program. Of note, students stated it does not allow the social exchange experience that they enjoy with their classmates, instructors, and guest speakers.

Unlike the UAF’s MBA, the UAA MBA offers emphasis in two key areas (business analytics and

leadership) that are key to Alaska’s workforce. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that most of Alaska’s industries will have modest growth in 2020. While a general MBA will provide students with skills to become effective leaders in these industries, the emphasis areas will provide our students the additional differentiation they need to excel further.

The CBPP MBA is in a unique position as the sole provider of a business intelligence and business analytics emphasis in the state of Alaska. Although Alaska Pacific University offers a Strategic Leadership MBA, CBPP’s leadership emphasis is the only AACSB-accredited program. The BA BI and Leadership emphasis areas provide CBPP with a distinct competitive advantage. An opportunity exists to professionally market the distinctness of the MBA program to attract additional students.

5. Commendations and Recommendations

The Dean stated, *“In order to compete in the intense competitive market of MBA programs, the program should remove all emphasis areas and move to only offering a 30-credit option. A MBA program emphasis does not appear on a student’s transcript and students can still take numerous courses of elective credit to specialize in a desired area. The College does not have the resources to commit to offering these emphases areas given the low number of students currently in the program and scarce faculty resources.”*

RESPONSE. As outlined above, the emphasis areas differentiate the UAA MBA. An MBA program emphasis *does* appear on the student’s transcript and it is *highly valued* by our students. Only minimal additional faculty resources are devoted to the two CBPP-supported emphases. Comparing the 36-credit MBA with an emphasis to the 30-credit MBA, the additional 6 credits over a 2-year program cycle equate to 3 credits per academic year per emphasis. Qualified faculty recruited to support graduate-level specialty areas are an asset to the college as a whole, since they can also teach undergraduate or stacked courses.

6. Decision

The Dean stated, *“Given that the program is not profitable and productivity could be increased, the program should be reviewed to examine if continued college resource allocation is appropriate.”*

RESPONSE. We agree. The MBA will seek to improve profitability and productivity. The MBA faculty engages in a continual effort to adapt to changing market conditions and to enhance the value and appeal of the program. However, the program review committee disagrees with the assessment that removing all emphasis areas would be an improvement. Only by maintaining a distinctive character and reputation for quality will the MBA program continue to compete successfully with increasing online competition.

According to the UAA Catalog, “Graduate education is an integral part of the University of Alaska Anchorage...” The MBA is an integral part of UAA and the College of Business and Public Policy. The Dean has reviewed the MBA from a strict budget perspective. Yet, successful graduate programs, like the UAA MBA, enhance UAA’s reputation and provide additional value to CBPP. Although these are tumultuous times, it is not the right time to make decisions based on dollars alone. Therefore, the MBA Program Review Committee recommends the following:

- Commit, market, and recruit students based on the unique MBA hybrid format
- Maintain the BA & BI and Leadership emphases to continue to differentiate the UAA MBA
- Continue to monitor the revisions made from the 2017 program review



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Karen Markel, Dean, College of Business and Public Policy

Cc: Dr. Sandra Ehrlich, Associate Professor and Graduate Business Program Director
Dr. Terry Nelson, Associate Professor
Dr. Helena Wisniewski, Professor of Entrepreneurship, CBPP Management and Marketing Chair
Dr. Ed Forrest, Professor of Marketing and former Marketing and Management Chair
Janet Burton, CBPP Graduate Studies Program Coordinator

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review:

Masters of Business Administration in General Business

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):

AACSB

Campuses where the program is delivered:

UAA

Members of the program review committee:

- Terry A. Nelson, Associate Professor & former Graduate Program Director, UAA
- Helena Wisniewski, Professor of Entrepreneurship, CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
- Ed Forrest, Professor of Management & former CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
- Sandra Ehrlich-Mathiesen, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Business Programs, UAA
- Janet Burton, CBPP Graduate Programs Coordinator, UAA

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

The primary objective of the program is to provide students with perspectives and skills to prepare them for increasingly significant managerial and leadership roles. The MBA general degree consists of 30 credit hours; 21 of those credits represent seven core courses. An MBA with an emphasis consisting of 36 credit hours is also offered.

To meet industry needs, the MBA program emphasis areas have evolved from one to six. In addition to business emphasis areas in Leadership, Global Supply Chain Management, and Business Intelligence & Business Analytics, the MBA program has emphasis areas supported by the College of Health (Health Administration), Master of Public Administration Program (Public Sector and Non-Profit Emphasis), and the College of Engineering (Project Management; effective fall 2020).

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

Overall, there has been a consistent decline in the number of students enrolled in the program. Despite offering a 30-credit degree option, there has not been increased interest in the MBA program. MBA program efficiency has been improved in the last academic year through schedule streamlining and increases in course caps by the Dean's Office.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The MBA program has the potential to be a flagship for business leadership development for the region. However, this program has suffered from a lack of promotion and marketing, partnering with undergraduate programs at UAA and minimal community engagement. With a renewed attention on these efforts, there is great potential for the program to become profitable and a way to engage the community and students in applied projects. Currently, the University does not offer any support for graduate student recruitment nor program promotion so the College will have to develop its own program to support these efforts.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

There is a completely online MBA program offered at UAF. Due to the size of the CBPP and range of faculty expertise, emphases and courses, the MBA has the ability to provide expertise in the state for those in leadership positions. The (inter-)national marketplace is saturated with MBA programs and the CBPP must determine if it can offer this program to attract the necessary number of students.

5. Commendations and Recommendations

During the past few years the University has invested resources to move a number of courses in the program to a hybrid format of 2 weeks in class and 2 weeks online. At the time of this review, there has not been a College commitment to offer the MBA program completely in this format which could be attractive to students wanting a more flexible format but the benefits of networking and student/faculty engagement provided by time in-class. I recommend that the College determine the overall delivery of the MBA program (hybrid or face-to-face) and market the program as such. It is unclear if the 2 week on/off format is appropriate to attract students or if other delivery options would be more appealing to students (e.g. executive, flipped).

In order to compete in the intense competitive market of MBA programs, the program should remove all emphasis areas and move to only offering a 30-credit option. A MBA program emphasis does not appear on a student's transcript and students can still take numerous courses of elective credit to specialize in a desired area. The College does not have the resources to commit to offering these emphases areas given the low number of students currently in the program and scarce faculty resources.

Course scheduling should be developed for a 2-year schedule for better student planning and rotation. Course caps should be increased to 30 students/course which would support increased efficiency and return on investment.

6. Decision

Revision: Program is required to address specific issues and to undergo another review within the next two academic years. Given that the program is not profitable and productivity could be increased, the program should be reviewed to examine if continued college resource allocation is appropriate. Depending on the level of changes, curricular revision may require approval by BOR and NWCCU.

Submission date: February 13, 2020

Program/s in this review: Master in Business Management (MBA) General Management

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

- Terry A. Nelson, Associate Professor & former Graduate Program Director, UAA
- Helena Wisniewski, Professor of Entrepreneurship, CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
- Ed Forrest, Professor of Management & former CBPP Management & Marketing Chair, UAA
- Sandra Ehrlich-Mathiesen, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Business Programs, UAA
- Janet Burton, CBPP Graduate Programs Coordinator, UAA

1. **Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role**

- **Relevancy of the program/s;**

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) has a rich, 45-year history at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). The primary objective is to provide students with perspectives and skills to prepare them for increasingly significant managerial and leadership roles. This objective aligns with the College of Business and Public Policy's (CBPP) mission, which is to prepare *students for leadership at the frontiers of a changing world*. The MBA general degree consists of 30 credit hours; 21 of those credits represent seven core courses. An MBA with an emphasis consisting of 36 credit hours is also offered.

- **Any role the program plays in supporting other academic programs;**

To meet industry needs, the MBA program emphasis areas have evolved from one to six. In addition to business emphasis areas in Leadership, Global Supply Chain Management, and Business Intelligence & Business Analytics, the MBA program has emphasis areas supported by the College of Health (Health Administration), Master of Public Administration Program (Public Sector and Non-Profit Emphasis), and the College of Engineering (Project Management; effective fall 2020).

- **Specific workforce development and employment opportunities relevant to the program;**

The CBPP MBA supports Alaska's workforce needs. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects most of Alaska's industries will have modest growth in 2020. While a general MBA will provide students with skills to become effective leaders in these industries, the emphasis areas will provide students the additional differentiation they need to excel further.

In addition to the industrial forecast from the Alaska Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) detailed *Jobs Intelligence* report provides additional granular insight on how an MBA from CBPP can support Anchorage's workforce needs.

In the AEDC Real-Time Jobs Intelligence Report Q3 2019, 411 ad postings listed a master's degree as a minimum education requirement. Moreover, four of the top 10 educational programs in online ads were business programs (i.e., Accounting, Business, Business Administration, Finance).

The most popular CBPP MBA emphasis is Business Intelligence & Business Analytics (BI & BA). In the Real-Time Jobs Intelligence Report Q2 2019, 14 ads were listed for business intelligence analysts, yet, only two of the ads were closed. Moreover, the median duration (number of days ads are active online) was 120

days—the fifth longest period in the 100-occupation list. This suggests there is a shortage of individuals skilled in this area. To our knowledge, the MBA BI & BA emphasis is the only masters-level face-to-face curriculum offered in the state of Alaska. Alaska Pacific University currently offers one master-level business analytics course. Therefore, CBPP's BI & BA emphasis holds a competitive advantage in this area.

Considering the following *Top 10 sought after soft-skills* listed (e.g., communication, team player, leadership, management, interpersonal relationship, etc.) in AEDC's Real-Time Jobs Intelligence Report Q3 2019, the MBA leadership emphasis provides students an opportunity to learn and/or enhance these skills.

- **Partnerships and sources of extramural support and funding for the program;**

The business analytics courses and a new artificial intelligence course led to a productive partnership with McKinley Capital Management, LLC. Rob Gillam, CEO, has comprised an analytical team of traditional financial analysts and computer scientists from the U.S., the world, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska Anchorage.

In addition, McKinley Capital Management, LLC, and the University of Alaska partnered and created the Lab for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. The lab focuses on applying data analytics and AI in the finance industry.

Northrim Bank donated \$25,000 to the leadership initiative in 2013. Moreover, Northrim donated \$34,000 to support the Tom Case Leadership Fellows and Clark Middle School Tom Case Leadership Fellows Junior program for the past three years. In 2019, Northrim donated \$12,000; \$5,000 was earmarked for CBPP's new Business Plan competition.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend)

From 2013 to 2019, the number of MBA degrees awarded decreased by 58% from 54 to 26. During the same period, enrollment dropped approximately 41% from 128 to 76 students. There may be multiple reasons for the seven-year decline, including: the slowed Alaskan economy; lack of marketing and a strong brand; difficult admission process; low student perception of the program; high enrollment barriers; non-innovation curriculum; inflexible course delivery method; heightened online competition; and enhanced tuition (20%). However, another way to look at enrollment data is by semester.

From Fall 2017 to Fall 2019, enrollment increased by 18.6%. In that time frame, spring enrollment increased by almost 23% and summer enrollment increased almost 40%. Although the number of degrees awarded and enrollment decreased over the seven-year period (2013-2019), there was an uptick of the enrollment numbers from 2017 to 2019. Since students complete the MBA degree in approximately 2 ½ years, there should be an increase in the number of degrees awarded starting some time in 2020.

In 2018, CBPP created a 30-credit MBA degree which may decrease the number of credits per degree (37.9) in 2020 and thereafter. This number may be less negatively influenced since an MBA with an emphasis requires 36 credits.

Due to lower enrollments, student credit hours, seat count, and FTE students, numbers have dropped considerably in the seven-year period. In 2017, the class size and class utilization dropped to the lowest point suggesting higher cost for teaching students. In contrast, the 2019 metrics improved considerably. Class size reached its second highest point in the seven-year period .7 behind 2013 when the number of

enrolled students was at its highest at 128. Class utilization increased in 2019 to over 65% after a low of 50.4% in 2017.

Surprisingly, the cost per student credit hour increased from \$611 in 2015 to \$661 in 2019; a change of \$50. In contrast, tuition revenue per student credit hour increased from \$402 to \$583 during the same time frame. The differential between the cost per student credit hour and tuition revenue per student credit hour ranged from \$209 in 2015 to \$78 in 2019. This suggests additional tuition revenue is covering the cost of teaching. This may be related to reducing the number of courses in an academic year from two to one. Previously, most MBA courses were offered twice an academic year. When enrollment decreased, a decision was made to offer some courses only once an academic year. This decision increased class size to 14.2 –approximately five more students per class than in 2017. If enrollment continues to increase, there may be a shift back to twice a year offerings of courses.

Overall, the MBA program is rebounding from its lowest numbers in 2017. The recovery may be partially due to major changes to the program that were implemented from 2018 to the present. These changes will be detailed in the next section.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

Since its inception 45 years ago, the MBA program has evolved from a degree with a single emphasis area to six emphasis areas to meet Alaska’s workforce needs. After conducting a focus group session in 2017 with 23 of the 73 students in the MBA program to determine what they seek in an MBA program, their feedback led to changes to admission criteria, core and capstone courses, innovative courses, and delivery method that consequently improved the quality of the program and promoted student success.

- [Specialized accreditation process and status](#)

The CBPP AACSB accreditation review is in March 2020. AACSB accreditation is synonymous with the highest standards of excellence for business schools and is the largest and most recognized specialized accreditation worldwide.

- [Currency of the curriculum & Innovative program design](#)

ADMISSION CRITERIA: In 2018, the MBA program underwent major changes based on feedback from students and alumni focus groups. Students stated criteria were confusing and outdated. For example, the formula that required students to take the GMAT for admission would only necessitate a GMAT score of 450 if students had a 3.25 GPA. This led to waiving the GMAT for students with a GPA of 3.25. This was already being offered to students who had obtained their undergraduate degree at UAA.

Another change was to view applicants holistically. For example, what is the student’s current status? Did the student receive a BA with a GPA slightly less than 3.25? Does the applicant hold a leadership position in their organization and community? Is this potential candidate ready for the challenge and rigor of an MBA? The policy of allowing students with a GPA of 3.25 for upper-level courses when their overall GPA was less than 3.25 was re-instated. These changes increased the number of applications approved for admissions. Note that while applications were approved, not all applicants registered.

Another criterion was if students had taken finance, accounting, and economics undergraduate courses over five years ago with a passing or failing grade, they had to retake the courses. This added 1.5 semesters to their MBA academic career and an additional \$5,000+. Ironically, no UAA master-level programs required this criterion but CBPP. The criterion was discontinued in 2018.

CORE & CAPSTONE COURSES: Additional revisions included adding economics to the core, migrating the BA A655 Strategic Management course from the core to the capstone, and moving BA A686 Management Simulation to the core. The BA A613 Applied Leadership course was moved from the core to an elective for the Leadership Emphasis making room for ECON A625 Economics & Public Administration. The decision to make Strategic Management the capstone rather than retaining the Management Simulation course was based on the number and level of the prerequisites required for BA A655 and what other MBA programs offered as a capstone course.

DELIVERY METHOD: Students voiced their desire to have more flexible course delivery. In response, the MBA transitioned to a hybrid program starting in fall 2018. With the exception of Accounting A650, all MBA core courses are delivered in the hybrid format. The Accounting Department is projected to have the course converted to a hybrid by spring 2020.

The hybrid is a cyclical schedule with two-weeks of face-to-face class sessions followed by two weeks of online asynchronous class assignments. All MBA hybrid courses follow the same schedule. This innovative delivery design supports students' desire for more balance between work, home, and school. Three focus groups (students, alumni, and individuals not associated with UAA) were presented with the hybrid concept and all agreed that the format would bring value to the program.

A student survey conducted in six of the hybrid courses resulted in the overall score of 3.81 on a Likert scale from 1-not satisfied to 5-very satisfied. The courses' scores below 3.83 were due to students wanting increased engagement during online weeks. Some of the students were full time, nonworking students. Therefore, the flexibility of the MBA program did not make a difference with them.

The Chancellor's workforce funds supported the hybrid transition with \$130,000.

INNOVATIVE COURSES: An Artificial Intelligence (AI) BA A690 selected topics course was added to the MBA curriculum in spring 2019 as a stacked course. Ten students, 6 graduate and 4 undergraduate, registered for the course. The course registration tripled this semester with a total of 30 students, 25 graduate and 5 undergraduate. While business schools have done well with developing programs focused on data analytics, programs built around AI are rare. CBPP is one of the few programs to have an AI course. CBPP is in the process of making this a permanent course.

Starting in 2015, the BA A628 Executive Leadership course was restructured to be more experiential. Now student groups are responsible for welcoming and hosting the leaders and facilitating the class sessions. Feedback from students in the focus group led to introducing Alaska-based case studies in the course. Northrim, SteamDot, UA System, and FedEx video case studies were created specifically for the course. The leaders of some of the organizations came to the class to discuss the outcomes of the case with the students.

- [Availability and indications of quality of distance offerings](#)

MBA faculty received Quality Matters training, accessibility training, and one-on-one course design support from the Academic Innovation & eLearning (AI&e) unit to support the hybrid conversion.

- [Program Student Learning Outcomes assessment: Describe your key findings, actions taken to improve student learning, and evidence that these actions are working.](#)

In preparation for the upcoming visit from AACSB in March 2020, the MBA program has closed 89% of its loops. The MBA assessment was included in the report to the AACSB team. The key findings and actions taken are in the report.

In addition, the program implemented three key changes in 2020 based on past assessment results:

1. BA A632 – Revised a class assignment to align with the rubric for SLO 6(6.1). The previous assessment resulted in 75% of students met or exceeded; 25% somewhat or did not meet. After the class assignment was revised, 87.5% met expect; 12.5% somewhat met in fall 2018.
2. BA A655 – Faculty added missing instructions to the assignment. The artifacts are currently under review.
3. BA A610 was remapped to different SLOs because the artifacts did not align with the initially selected SLOs.

- **How well the program is doing on Student Success and what it is doing to facilitate it.**

The MBA program has adopted the following Association of America Colleges & Universities AAC&U High-Impact Practices to facilitate student success:

1. ePortfolios

- BA A632 *Leadership & Organizational Behavior* (fall 2016) – Students created leadership ePortfolios and were partnered with a business leader in Anchorage who provided them with feedback on their ePortfolios. The unexpected results: two students were offered job interviews, one student was offered the opportunity to co-author a technical report, and one student was offered mentorship beyond the semester.
- BA A655 *Strategic Management Seminar* (2016) student groups used an ePortfolio to document the creation of a fictitious company.

2. Diversity/Global Learning

- BA A632 *Leading in the Multicultural Organizations* requires students to attend a cultural event that is not associated with their culture. Another assignment requires students to interview someone from another culture.

3. Capstone Courses and Projects

- BA A655 *Capstone* requires student groups to complete research papers at the end of the semester.
- BA A656 *Management Project* and BA A698 *MBA Individual Research* are capstone options students can select if they choose not to take BA A655. BA A656 requires students to select a local organization and identify issues and make recommendations. BA A698 requires students to write a theoretical or empirical paper.

4. Collaborative Assignments and Projects

- Team-based projects are assigned in BA A632, BA A628, BA A671, BA A655, and BA A686.
 - BA A686 *Management Simulation* student teams have placed in the top five in numerous categories from 2001–2019. The business management simulation includes over 500 business schools and leading corporations worldwide competing against each for top honors.
 - BA A671 *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* recently a team of students submitted a patent filing.

Scholarly collaborations

- Two students—Wozniak and Chepurko—have produced papers with faculty in peer-reviewed journals:
 1. Nelson, T.A. & Wozniak, S. (2017) ePortfolios: Creating rich partnerships between employers, students, and academia. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Forum and News
 2. Chepurko, J., Dayanandan, A.; Donker, H., & Nofsinger, J. (2018). Are socially responsible firms less likely to restate earnings? Global Finance Journal, Volume 38, Pages 97-109

Extracurricular – The *Tom Case Leadership Fellows Program* is a co-curricular mentoring program for graduate and senior-level undergraduate students who are committed to leadership and personal and professional development. CBPP pairs students with local business leaders. This program is in its seventh year.

Guest Lectures – Several courses bring in local and national speakers. In the AI course, telepresence robots are used by remote speakers.

- **Student support**

Academic advising in the MBA program has a three-tiered structure:

1. Typically, the first point of contact is the College of Business and Public Policy, Graduate Programs Coordinator, Janet Burton for pre-application advising.
2. The Director of Graduate Programs, Dr. Sandra Ehrlich, provides a holistic view of the degree and career opportunities.
3. MBA Graduate faculty, work directly with the students to ensure success throughout the program.

4. Program Duplication and Distinctiveness

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), School of Management (SOM) offers an online 30-credit MBA degree program that includes the choice of an emphasis in General Management or STEM. The CBPP MBA offers a 30-credit general MBA with six emphasis areas. The CBPP MBA offers a 30-credit general MBA with six emphasis areas. The CBPP MBA with an emphasis is a 36-credit degree.

There are several distinct differences between UAA and UAF's MBA programs:

- **Delivery format**—UAF MBA program is totally online. UAA MBA program just transitioned to a hybrid model based on student feedback. UAA students were adamant about not wanting a totally online MBA program.
- **Number of emphasis areas**—UAF offers one specialized emphasis area – STEM. UAA offers six specialized emphasis areas with three of the areas from different master programs across the campus.
- **Industry relevance**—UAA MBA program offers more courses designed to meet the needs of today's business leaders, i.e., leadership, business intelligence & analytics, and artificial intelligence.

Duplication of the MBA program is needed in the UA system. UAA students desire more in-person social engagement, which UAF's online program does not offer. While UAA students desire social engagement, they voiced a need for a more flexible academic schedule. Thus, the hybrid offers 53% face-to-face and 47% online asynchronous classes.

While some course sharing may be possible between UAA and UAF, the admission process for UAA is more robust. For example, potential UAF students can take seven \$100 modules that suffice for their foundation courses. Years ago, CBPP faculty reviewed these modules and decided they did not provide enough information for students to be successful in CBPP's quantitative courses. There are three CBPP foundation courses. Each is one semester in length.

For students seeking a totally online program, CBPP recommends UAF. In cases where CBPP students need a course that is not being offered at UAA to complete their degree, students may petition to take that course from UAF.

5. Summary Analysis

In 2018, 73% of U.S. MBA programs experienced a notable decline in applications, yet the number of CBPP MBA applications increased. As previously stated, there may be multiple reasons for CBPP's MBA enrollment decline prior to 2018.

Several of the reasons (e.g., enrollment barriers, more innovative courses, flexible delivery method) have been or are being addressed. In response, the impact has been positive. The future for the MBA program at UAA CBPP is positive and has been strengthened with the recent changes to the program, e.g., hybrid program, AI course, and Business Intelligence & Business Analytic and Leadership emphases. The program must be nimble and responsive to the needs of the students and Alaska's workforce while continuing to support the changes that are in place.

Hybrid Format. The hybrid format implemented in 2018 has greatly appealed to MBA students who voiced their desire for flexible instruction in 2017. With the exception of ACCT 650, all core MBA courses are delivered in the hybrid format. In a recent survey conducted by Eduvantis for CBPP, the importance of an online component is important to students.

Unique Delivery. CBPP's unique delivery of a hybrid schedule where all courses follow a 2-week face-to-face; 2 week online asynchronous format has the potential to appeal to new market segments (e.g., slope workers, busy professionals). The next step is to promote the program effectively.

Innovative Courses. In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, John Hopkins is re-inventing its MBA. It determined employers want a focus on technology complemented with soft skills such as leadership. Their program requires students to take a course on artificial intelligence. Considering this, CBPP is already on the leading edge of this shift in MBA programs. In addition to courses, modules on climate change, artificial intelligence, and block chain are being introduced in courses.

An artificial intelligence course was introduced in the MBA program a year ago. The Business Intelligence & Business Analytics and Leadership emphases are the most sought after by our students. In addition, in the Eduvantis study, our students and others voiced their desire for the combination of soft and technical skills—which the CBPP MBA delivers.

Therefore, a unique opportunity exists for CBPP to differentiate its MBA from competitors—especially with innovation and delivery. A committee has been assembled to conduct primary research to identify local industry's data analytical needs to ensure the right course content will be offered to meet the Anchorage's workforce needs.

This exposure can improve CBPP's reputation and provide opportunities to share the innovation occurring within the MBA program. To strengthen the program, CBPP will continue to collaborate with other masters-level programs on campus. The ultimate goal would be to offer an emphasis in business to complement such programs as project management, nursing, etc.

Moving forward, the CBPP MBA program is positioning itself as the local producer of technical managers and innovative leaders vital for survival in Alaska and the global business marketplace.