



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.