

NEW PROGRAM APPLICATION

Proposal for Master of Business Administration

Basic Program Information

1. Title of Program: Master of Business Administration
2. Type of Degree: MBA
3. Home Department: COBA/Graduate School
4. Program Developers: Brad Crisp, Mark Phillips, Andy Little, Jay Goin, and Jaime Goff
5. Description of Program: See Appendix A for catalog description.

I. OVERVIEW

A. Mission of the Program

The mission of the Master of Business Administration is to prepare business professionals for administrative roles that call on them to demonstrate ethical management and decision-making skills informed by principles of Christian vocation. This is accomplished through equipping business leaders to:

- Practice effective leadership of themselves, their teams, their organizations, and their external constituents;
- Lead organizational innovation efforts through effective integration of strategy with appropriate organizational processes and technologies;
- Engage in data-informed decision-making; and
- Make ethical decisions informed by values and goals that are consistent with relevant laws and Christian principles.

B. Goal

ACU's MBA program fills the need for a multidisciplinary management and leadership degree at the Master's level. Graduates will benefit in professional career tracks where a Master's degree is required or preferred. MBA holders are sought-after in a broad range of industries, and the credential is a significant career milestone. ACU has an opportunity to offer an MBA that will equip professionals for Christian service and leadership across major industries.

C. Outcomes

The MBA is organized around four Program Outcomes (POs) and supporting Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Several sources informed the creation of these outcomes: (1) the mission and vision of ACU; (2) benchmarking other MBA programs across the country;

and (3) the expertise of faculty in the College of Business Administration. Appendix B contains a curriculum map linking the SLOs to specific courses. The POs and SLOs for the MBA curriculum are as follows:

PO #1: Leadership: Graduates will practice effective leadership of themselves, their teams, their organizations, and their external constituents. They will:

- a. understand leadership processes and develop a personal leadership approach.
- b. recognize and work within elements of organizational culture.
- c. employ teams and cooperative efforts inside and outside organizations to achieve desired outcomes.

PO #2: Organizational Innovation: Graduates will lead organizational innovation efforts through effective integration of strategy with appropriate organizational processes and technologies. They will:

- a. effectively apply strategic tools to position their organizations for a changing marketplace.
- b. design and deploy organizational processes and technologies to improve organizational performance.

PO #3: Data Informed Decision-Making: Graduates will engage in data-informed decision-making. They will:

- a. utilize organizational practices and tools to collect, analyze, and use data to make decisions across a wide array of topics.
- b. report findings clearly and with appropriate recognition of the findings' limitations.

PO #4: Faith and Ethics: Graduates will make ethical decisions informed by values and goals that are consistent with relevant laws and Christian principles. They will:

- a. understand fundamental principles of business law in the United States.
- b. understand and apply their personal ethical framework to business decisions.
- c. reflect on their vocation in the context of their personal values and goals.

D. Description of Target Audience

This MBA program is designed with the working professional in mind. Adults now make up almost two-thirds of all graduate students, and ACU seeks to create relevant programs to meet the needs of this growing segment. Targeted students will be mid-career professionals in multiple industries, as the MBA has become a multi-disciplinary management and leadership degree. Undergraduate degree holders from disciplines other than business will need some leveling pre-requisite courses, which will be offered in a separate track.

E. Admission Requirements

- Application for admission with a nonrefundable processing fee.
- Official transcript delivered securely from the regionally accredited college or university that awarded the baccalaureate degree to the applicant.
- A 3.0 or better cumulative undergraduate GPA. Provisional admission may be given to students with a 2.5-2.99 cumulative undergraduate GPA, with full admission granted after successful completion of three courses with a 3.0 or higher GPA.
- Course prerequisites for admission to the program include basic accounting, economics and statistics.
- Acknowledgement of the Christian identity of the university and program.
- Current professional work experience for application of program knowledge. Acceptable past work experience can be considered.
- Resume or CV.

International applicants to the MBA will be required to complete the standard graduate application requirements for all international students applying to the Graduate School, including TOEFL scores and transcript assessment for degrees completed outside of the United States (http://www.acu.edu/graduate/prospective_students/international/index.html).

II. FEASIBILITY STUDY AND DOCUMENTATION

A. Relation to ACU Mission and Key Emphasis

The mission of ACU is "to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world." In support of its mission, ACU is currently guided by the 21st Century Vision, consisting of four primary goals:

1. ACU will produce leaders who think critically, globally, and missionally.
2. ACU will build distinctive and innovative programs.
3. ACU will deliver a unique, Christ-centered experience that draws students into community.
4. ACU's Christian influence and educational reach will be expanded nationally and internationally.

A Master of Business Administration program will assist ACU in accomplishing each of the four goals of the 21st Century Vision. The first goal to produce leaders who think critically, globally, and missionally is the essence of the MBA program. Key program outcomes focus on graduates' ability to practice effective leadership and to make decisions informed by critical analysis of information as well as ethical considerations based on Christian principles. The MBA is distinctive and innovative because of its foundation in Christian vocation, as students will be required to reflect upon their own values and goals and the ways in which they are

enacted in their leadership roles. Additionally, the MBA program will be distinctive by allowing students to interact with high-profile Christian business leaders as part of the coursework, as well as through optional online and face-to-face experiences (e.g., a Leadership Summit experience for working professionals). The program will draw students into Christ-centered community as they share their personal values and goals for their leadership roles. Finally, the program is designed to be offered online, expanding ACU's reach and influence to a global audience.

B. Societal Need for Program

When assessing demand for leadership in today's business world, it is critical to consider our changing workplace. Business is now conducted in a wide range of places and time frames, driven by the availability of enabling technologies and social collaboration tools, as well as a changing culture and desire for more flexibility in work styles and workplaces. As such, the demand is understandably high for individuals who can successfully navigate these potential challenges and lead a group of employees in achieving successful outcomes for their companies. With technology continually advancing, demand also exists for those who can stay current with the latest breakthroughs, while simultaneously managing colleagues who can access work materials and interact from any location, at any time of day, with the simple click of a mouse or tap on a smartphone. In addition, a forecast shortage of skilled workers as the Baby Boomer generation retires will likely increase the demand for individuals with the knowledge base necessary to lead and train the next generation.

C. Employment Demand for Graduates from the Program

According to GMAT surveys published in May 2014, four out of five (80%) companies plan to hire an MBA graduate in 2014, up from 73% the previous year and 50% in 2009. These employer surveys state that MBA candidates bring "the ability to think outside the box," "have the leadership potential needed," and provide a "strategic focus, acumen, and proven ability to perform." The median base starting salary US employers expect to offer MBAs this year is \$95,000, as compared with \$50,000 for US bachelor's BBA graduates (Graduate Management Admissions Test Official Blog (mba.com), November 2014). 2013 surveys published by the Graduate Management Admission Council note that MBA grads posted a 95% employment rate, the highest since 2009 (Graduate Management Admissions Council's market report, November 2013). Companies that promote high ethical standards, including those with overtly Christian values, may find graduates of ACU's program to be significant promoters of their company culture.

D. Prospective Student Interest

Demand for MBA programs continues to grow, especially among mid-career professionals. In the last ten years, graduate business degrees conferred has grown from 119,725 to 191,571, with MBAs making up one-fourth of all US Master-level degrees awarded. Most of this growth has occurred in non-traditional, non-residential programs like the one proposed. Because ACU has not offered an MBA program for some time, we anticipate some pent-up demand among COBA graduates and others with ACU experience.

III. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

A. Existing Courses, Rotation and Frequency, and Correlation to Program Outcomes

New courses will be developed to support the online MBA. A curriculum map linking each course to SLOs is included in Appendix B. Appendix C contains a course carousel sequence.

B. New Courses and Correlation to Program Outcomes

The MBA will consist of 36 credit hours, nine of which are electives chosen by students to support their specific career goals and discipline. Tentative course names and descriptions for the core MBA courses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: MBA Course Titles & Descriptions

Course Title	Description
Leadership	An overview of how individuals manage and lead themselves and others. Topics include theoretical and practical models of leadership, ethical issues of leadership, and forms of influence. Students will develop and apply a personal leadership framework. First course for entering MBA students.
Foundations of Analytics	An introduction to the field of analytics, with emphasis on its application in organizations. Topics include data and information acquisition, analysis, and application; data visualization and reporting; technological and organizational practices to support evidence-based decision making; and legal, ethical, and privacy issues.

Business Law & Ethics	The application of legal and ethical principles in business contexts. Topics include US business law; causes of ethical and unethical behavior and decision-making; and vocation. Students will reflect on and clearly articulate a personal system of ethics and values and apply it in business situations.
Operations & Information Technology Management	The process of managing operations and information technology to achieve organizational goals. Topics include product and service delivery; systems to support business functions; ethical issues related to technological, data, and human resources; and techniques for effectively deploying these resources.
Accounting & Finance for Managers	Analysis and use of accounting and financial data by managers. Topics include cash flow optimization, budgeting, direct costing, profit centers, transfer pricing, raising and deploying capital, and return on investment. Students will become competent consumers of financial information to support managerial decision-making.
Organizational Behavior [MGMT 636]	The study of human behavior in organizations. Emphasizes practical techniques for understanding and guiding individual and group behavior. Topics include motivation, group dynamics, decision-making, leadership, power, and organizational culture. Human resource management, ethical, and international considerations are also addressed. [Above modifies the current course description: MGMT 636 Organizational Behavior (3-0-3), on demand. Individual, group, and organizational variables that inhibit or facilitate effective organizational functioning. Topics may include rewards, motivation, leadership, culture, decision-making, and ethics.]
Innovation	The role of innovation in an organization. Explores the process of designing and developing new products, work processes, and technologies to enhance organizational performance. Includes topics related to problem solving, design thinking, teamwork, and organizational change. Requires a field-based or case analysis project.

Managerial Decision-Making	The role of managers as decision-makers, with an emphasis on analysis and data-driven processes. Explores decision-making tools and techniques for managers, the appropriate use of managerial authority, coalition-building, ethical considerations, and making decisions with incomplete or questionable data.
Strategic Marketing	The role of marketing and strategy in achieving organizational objectives. Topics include segmenting markets, pricing, identifying market opportunities and niches, aligning values with strategy, cooperative and collaborative strategies, and identifying organizational competencies.

C. Degree Plan and Proposed Graduate Student Schedule

The degree plan for the MBA is shown below. With the exception of MGMT 636 Organizational Behavior, all courses will be new courses and will be developed by subject matter experts in partnership with instructional designers to implement best practices in online courses. The course carousel is included in Appendix C. All courses are 3 hours apiece. The total degree is 36 hours, plus any needed prerequisites.

- Prerequisites: accounting (e.g., ACCT 210), economics (e.g., ECON 260 or 261), and statistics (e.g., IS 322 or MATH 377).
- Core Courses (27 hours):
 - Leadership [entry course for all MBA students]
 - Foundations of Analytics
 - Business Law and Ethics
 - Operations and IT Management
 - Accounting and Finance for Managers
 - Organizational Behavior [MGMT 636]
 - Innovation
 - Managerial Decision-Making
 - Strategic Marketing
- Electives (9 hours): Students will select three courses which may be used toward optional concentrations or certificates in business and other fields, such as analytics, healthcare management, non-profit management, energy management or corporate communications.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS REQUIRED FROM ACU

A. Faculty Requirements and Availability and Impact on Current Loads

Similar to other online graduate programs offered by ACU, the MBA program will utilize a lead teacher-facilitator instructional model. Each course will be taught by a lead teacher, who will supervise up to four facilitators; facilitators are responsible for day-to-day interaction with students and assessment of student work. The model assumes a 15:1 student to facilitator ratio.

Lead teachers with a strong emphasis on mission fit and online teaching and learning experience will be hired to teach in the MBA program. All lead faculty, whether full-time or adjunct, will possess a Ph.D. or other appropriate terminal degree and will be credentialed according to SACSCOC and AACSB standards, including expectations for scholarship. Current ACU faculty with relevant expertise in specific content areas may be given the opportunity to contribute to the development and teaching of the curriculum but will not be expected to do so; additional instructors will be hired as needed to avoid overloading current faculty. MBA program-specific faculty will be responsible for teaching online graduate courses and participating in the design of online graduate course content. Faculty adjunct instructors will be hired on a course-by-course basis; some instructors may be offered full time online teaching appointments. The Graduate School and the Adams Center are collaborating on faculty orientation and development related to the university's mission for online faculty who do not reside in Abilene.

Facilitators will be Christian business professionals who meet minimum SACSCOC qualifications and will possess relevant work experience in the course subject matter. Most facilitators will be hired on a course-by-course basis. Orientation and training will also be required for facilitators, who will be supervised and evaluated by the lead teachers.

B. Staff Requirements and Impact on Current Loads

New staff will be hired in Dallas to recruit, enroll, support and retain students for all new online graduate programs, including this MBA program. Existing staff in Abilene will not be expected to contribute to these day-to-day operations. COBA staff may be involved periodically in helping with some of the optional learning experiences, such as a Leadership Summit hosted in Dallas for working professionals.

C. Impact on Existing Programs in Home Department and Other Departments

The new MBA program does not compete with existing graduate programs offered by COBA. The program may be of interest to students who currently enroll in other ACU programs such as Organizational Development, particularly among COBA undergraduate students who choose to enroll immediately in a graduate program after graduation. This program should

help COBA in the development of on-campus or hybrid graduate business program for undergraduate students who want to move directly into a graduate program. This could also aid recruiting efforts at the undergraduate level. No significant negative impacts are expected on current undergraduate programs as long as sufficient funding is provided to hire faculty to support this new program, and the commitment is maintained to satisfy all AACSB requirements in support of this program.

D. Administration and Leadership for the Program

The MBA is a program of ACU's Graduate School offered in conjunction with the College of Business Administration (COBA). An MBA Program Director will be hired and will reside in Dallas as the key program administrator and liaison to COBA; this individual will report to Graduate School academic leadership and the Dean of the College of Business Administration. This program will meet required SACSCOC and AACSB accreditation standards.

E. Library Requirements

The Graduate School and the Library are collaborating on the creation of a state-of-the-art Online Academic Resource Center that serves the particular needs of all non-located graduate students across programs. This center (or portal) will draw upon existing resources but also identify new resources particular to this student population. It is our intention to produce an online center that is excellent and exemplary as it meets the needs of online students. The Online Academic Resource Center can and will be featured for prospective students and faculty as a demonstration of the excellence of ACU's online graduate programs. In order to begin the research and design toward these ends, the Graduate School will set aside a start-up fund of \$20,000 in Year 0 (FY15) of the Graduate School's strategic initiative to grow new online programs.

In addition to the start-up fund, the Graduate School and the Library propose a model where each online program will fund the Online Academic Resource Center. The Graduate School and the Library will collect and review data annually on student usage of online academic resources so that together they might adjust these models to best serve online graduate students.

F. Equipment, Classroom Space, and Office Space Requirements

All courses will be delivered in the online format, so there will be no impact on classroom space. Students and faculty will need access to an effective learning management system, such as Canvas. Some staff and faculty will need office space and computers in Dallas.

G. Recruiting and Scholarship Plans

Recruiting will be done by ACU's enrollment team in Dallas. This MBA program will not offer scholarships.

H. Impact on Revenue of the University

The pre-launch course development costs are estimated at \$120,000. We anticipate the program recouping its ongoing costs at an enrollment of approximately eighty-six (86) students, which will come fifteen (15) months after program launch. At an enrollment of 100 students, the program will contribute net revenue of approximately \$20,000 per month and at enrollment of 200, it will contribute more than \$60,000 net revenue per month.

V. ASSESSMENT PLANS

A. Outcomes Assessment Measures for Each Program Outcome

All academic programs at ACU are required to conduct an annual outcomes assessment review and report those findings to their dean. Following the requirements of SACSCOC 3.3.1.1, these reports include mission statements, student and program learning outcomes, operational outcomes, assessment measures with targeted goals, posting of analyzed data, and how the program will use these data for continuous quality improvement. These reports are housed in ACU's TaskStream software. The evaluation of the MBA will be a cooperative work between the faculty, overseen by the program director, and reporting to the deans of the Graduate School and COBA. See Appendix B for a curriculum map that details student learning outcomes. Data will be collected through courses in which current students are enrolled as well as annual surveys completed by alumni and employers to measure satisfaction. COBA has a robust learning outcome assessment process in place as part of its AACSB accreditation, and will help implement a similar process for the new MBA.

B. Program Assessment Measures

See Appendix B for a curriculum map that details student learning outcomes. Specific means of measuring student learning outcomes in new courses have not yet been identified. Measures and competency and ideal targets will be developed as new courses are developed. The MBA Program Director will oversee the process of measuring POs and SLOs. Data will be collected through courses in which current students are enrolled as well as annual surveys completed by alumni and employers to measure satisfaction.

VI. TIMELINE FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Estimated dates for major milestones to achieve a fall 2015 launch:

- Sept – Jan MBA program exploration
- Feb Prepare program proposal
- Feb COBA faculty presentation and discussion
- Feb Program proposal to COBA faculty for consideration and feedback
- Feb COBA faculty feedback meeting
- Feb Finalized program proposal to COBA faculty for vote
- Mar Program proposal to Graduate Council
- Mar Program proposal presented at Faculty Meeting
- Mar Faculty vote initiated
- Mar Prepare SACS prospectus
- Apr Anticipated faculty approval
- Apr Submit SACS prospectus
- Apr Begin creation of first four courses
- May Begin marketing and recruiting for MBA (per SACS policy[1])
- Jul SACS approval (no later than)
- Aug 24 First MBA term

VII. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Letters of support from the following parties have been included:

- COBA Dean – Dr. Rick Lytle
- Library – Dr. Mark McCallon
- Adams Center – Dr. Berlin Fang

VIII. APPROVALS

A. Department Chair: Attach review comments of 200-300 words. (see proposal)

Circle one: Strongly support Forward w/ no recommendation Do NOT support

[Signature]
Department Chair

2/3/15
Date

B. College Dean: Attach review comments of 200-300 words.

Circle one: Strongly support Forward w/ no recommendation Do NOT support

[Signature]
College Dean

3/3/15
Date

C. College Academic Council Action: (required for all programs)

Approved ☒ Denied ☐

[Signature]
College Dean or Director

3-3-15
Date

D. Graduate Council Action: (for graduate level programs)

Approved ☐ Denied ☐

Dean of Graduate School

Date

E. University Undergraduate Academic Council Action: (for undergraduate level programs)

Approved ☐ Denied ☐

Associate Provost

Date

F. University Budget Committee Action: (required for all degrees)

Approved ☐ Denied ☐

UBC Chair

Date

G. University Planning Committee Action: (required for all degrees)

Approved ____ Denied ____

UPC Chair

Date

H. Provost Action: (required for all programs)

Approved ____ Denied ____

Provost

Date

I. President of the University Action: (required for all programs)

Approved ____ Denied ____

President

Date

APPENDIX A: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Master of Business Administration

Program Director: TBD

Office Phone:

Email:

Faculty

TBD

Introduction

The mission of the Master of Business Administration is to prepare business professionals for administrative roles that call on them to demonstrate ethical management and decision-making skills informed by principles of Christian vocation. This is accomplished through equipping business leaders to:

- Practice effective leadership of themselves, their teams, their organizations, and their external constituents;
- Lead organizational innovation efforts through effective integration of strategy with appropriate organizational processes and technologies;
- Engage in data-informed decision-making; and
- Make ethical decisions informed by values and goals that are consistent with relevant laws and Christian principles.

Admission Requirements

- Application for admission with a nonrefundable processing fee.
- Official transcripts in a registrar's sealed and stamped/signed envelope from the regionally accredited colleges or universities that awarded the baccalaureate degree to the applicant.
- A 3.0 or better cumulative undergraduate GPA. Provisional admission may be given to students with a 2.5-2.99 cumulative undergraduate GPA, who would then be fully admitted to the program after the successful completion of three courses with a 3.0 GPA.
- Course prerequisites for admission to the program include basic statistics, basic financial accounting, and economics.
- Acknowledgement regarding Christian identity of the university/program - Is what is in the handbook sufficient? Can we create a statement of behavioral expectations in an online course? Short statement of faith/expectation? What is the alignment with undergrad admissions on this point?

- Current professional work experience for application of program knowledge. Acceptable past work experience can be considered.
- Resume or CV.

International applicants to the MBA will be required to complete the standard graduate application requirements for all international students applying to the Graduate School, including TOEFL scores and transcript assessment for degrees completed outside of the United States (http://www.acu.edu/graduate/prospective_students/international/index.html).

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Major Code: MBA

Requirements for the Master of Business Administration are:

- Prerequisites: accounting (e.g., ACCT 210), economics (e.g., ECON 260 or 261), and statistics (e.g., IS 322 or MATH 377).
- Core Courses (27 hours):
 - Leadership [entry course for all MBA students]
 - Foundations of Analytics
 - Business Law and Ethics
 - Operations and IT Management
 - Accounting and Finance for Managers
 - Organizational Behavior [MGMT 636]
 - Innovation
 - Managerial Decision-Making
 - Strategic Marketing
- Electives (9 hours): Students will select three courses which may be used toward optional concentrations or certificates in business and other fields, such as analytics, healthcare management, non-profit management, energy management or corporate communications.

APPENDIX B: CURRICULUM MAP

Student Learning Outcomes	Courses
Program Outcome #1: Effective Leadership	
SLO #1.1: Students will understand leadership processes and develop a personal leadership approach.	Leadership Organizational Behavior Business Law and Ethics
SLO #1.2: Students will recognize and work within elements of organizational culture.	Leadership Organizational Behavior Innovation
SLO #1.3: Students will employ teams and cooperative efforts inside and outside organizations to achieve desired outcomes.	Leadership Organizational Behavior Strategic Marketing Innovation
Program Outcome #2: Organizational Innovation	
SLO #2.1: Students will effectively apply strategic tools to develop to position their organizations for a changing marketplace.	Strategic Marketing Managerial Decision Making Innovation
SLO #2.2: Students will design and deploy organizational processes and technologies to improve organizational performance.	Operations & IT Mgmt Strategic Marketing Managerial Decision Making Innovation
Program Outcome #3: Data Informed Decision-Making	
SLO #3.1: Students will utilize organizational practices and tools to collect, analyze, interpret, and use data to make decisions across a wide array of topics.	Foundations of Analytics Operations & IT Mgmt Accounting & Finance Managerial Decision Making
SLO #3.2: Students will report findings clearly and with appropriate recognition of the findings' limitations.	Foundations of Analytics Operations & IT Mgmt Accounting & Finance Managerial Decision Making

Program Outcome #4: Faith and Ethics	
SLO #4.1: Students will understand fundamental principles of business law in the United States.	Business Law & Ethics
SLO #4.2: Students will understand and apply their personal ethical framework to business decisions.	Leadership Business Law & Ethics Managerial Decision Making
SLO #4.3: Students will reflect on their vocation in the context of their personal values and goals.	Leadership Business Law & Ethics

APPENDIX C: COURSE CAROUSEL

A sample course carousel is available in Google Docs at the link below (please cut and paste the URL below into your browser if the link does not work in the PDF):

<http://goo.gl/ZLLqrQ>

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

College of Business Administration

140 Mabey Business Building, ACU Box 29300, Abilene, Texas 79699-9300

325-674-2245 • Fax 325-674-2564



March 3, 2015

Memorandum

To: College of Business Administration Academic Council & Graduate School Academic Council

From: Richard S. Lytle, Ph.D., Dean College of Business Administration (COBA)

Subject: Letter of Support for Online MBA New Program Application

Please accept this memo as my letter of support for the Online MBA new program application. The College of Business Administration, Office of the Dean, and the faculty of the College of Business Administration have been in conversation about an MBA since August 2014. During the 2014 Fall semester numerous conversations about the possibility of an online MBA occurred across campus with Drs. Robert Rhodes and Stephen Johnson, and Mr. Jay Goin. On January 14, 2015 intensive conversations regarding the development and deployment of an online MBA to be launched in August 2015 commenced with Drs. Rhodes and Johnson. Thus, I commissioned a team led by Drs. Brad Crisp and Mark Phillips to work toward the development and launch of an online MBA program based in Dallas, Texas.

During the last few months COBA has engaged in a variety of conversations with internal business faculty, external business faculty, industry consultants, the COBA Dean's Advisory Council, other deans from business schools accredited by AACSB (the top accrediting body for business schools in the world), and a variety of other constituents. Additionally, some fairly extensive benchmarking was conducted along with a relatively summative review of graduation data in graduate programs of higher education across the United States (U.S.). Each of these activities created a fairly complicated web of information from which to glean conclusions.

We reached several. First, in terms of numbers of graduates each year, the MBA market remains the largest graduate school market in the U.S. Second, the U.S. MBA market is heavily saturated. Third, it is among the most competitive. Fourth, at present there are 66 known AACSB online MBA programs in the U.S. Fifth, a distinctive online MBA with a distinctive value proposition is needed to "break into" this saturated market. Sixth, significant resources are needed to develop, launch, sustain, and market this program with success. Seventh, to do this will not be easy.

However, as a college, we conclude this strategic course of action is necessary to help preserve our position as a university and to further develop our program/product mix in alignment with the significant market shift witnessed since the global recession of 2008. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity for COBA to extend its faith-based reach of excellence into the adult learner/adult worker graduate business market outside of Abilene for the first time in its history. With excellence as a foundational pillar, a mission-aligned faculty and curriculum,

appropriate resources, significant targeted marketing, well defined organizational structure, and a strong leadership team, we believe an ACU online MBA can compete well with many programs in existence today.

The online MBA application before you, envisions a fully AACSB accredited 36-credit hour program of study, nine of which are chosen by students to support their specific career and discipline goals. Distinctive features of the program include an introductory leadership course, framing leadership within a Christian World View. Additional feature courses include those on innovation, data informed decision making, and faith and ethics. The degree is fully online and courses are structured in a seven week format. The model uses content experts to design courses along with accredited faculty to oversee course content and delivery and oversight of course facilitators as necessary.

Memorandum of Understanding Between Library and Graduate School For Online Graduate Programs (03/02/2015)

The intention of the Graduate School and the Library is to collaborate on the creation of a state-of-the-art Online Academic Resource Center that serves the particular needs of all non-located graduate students across programs. Led and managed by the ACU Library in collaboration with the Graduate School, this center (or portal) will draw upon existing resources and identify new resources particular to this student population. It is our intention to produce an online center that is excellent and exemplary as it meets the needs of online students. The Online Academic Resource Center can and will be featured for prospective students and faculty as a demonstration of the excellence of ACU's library and online graduate programs. In order to begin the research and design toward these ends, the Graduate School will set aside a start-up fund of \$20,000 in Year 0 (FY15) of the Graduate School's strategic initiative to grow new online programs. In addition to the start-up fund, each online program will fund the Online Academic Resource Center. This funding will come in the form of a usage fee of \$50.00 per student per course enrolled. The Graduate School and the Library will collect and review data annually on student usage of online academic resources so that together they might adjust these models to best serve online graduate students.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 2, 2015
TO: Dr. Jaime Goff
CC: Dr. Rick Lytle, Dr. Brad Crisp, Dr. Mark Phillips, Dr. Andy Little
FROM: Dr. Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Information Services
RE: Program Proposal for Online Masters in Business Administration

The Library requirements section of the MBA Program Proposal states that in each online program will fund the Online Academic Resource Center, a collaboration between the Library and the Graduate School. After discussions with the Graduate School in response to the MBA Program Proposal, funding for the Library's academic information resources available through the Academic Resource Center will come in the form of a usage fee of \$50.00 per MBA student per course enrolled each term. The Graduate School and the Library will annually review this agreement in order to best support the excellence of the MBA program.

With the agreement of the ACU Graduate School and the Dean of the College of Business Administration to these terms, the Library can adequately support the proposed program. Please let Dr. John Weaver, Dean of Library Services and Educational Technology know if you have any questions about the funding model or contact me if you need any additional information regarding current library resources for the program.

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Abilene, Texas 79699 • www.acu.edu • 325-674-2000



March 2, 2015

To: ACU Graduate Council

Re: MBA Program Proposal

The Adams Center had reviewed the proposal. We affirm the importance of the learning outcomes and assessment as described in the proposal. We also affirm the stated concern for faculty load and pedagogy. We have discussed Instructional Design and Faculty Development/Orientation needs with the Graduate School, and have offered our currently developed resources in support of the new and/or external academic support services that the Graduate School will provide. We understand that the Graduate School will contract for instructional design services and will offer our assistance to that team as appropriate. Similarly, our online resources for faculty development and enrichment can support online faculty outside of Abilene, and we will assist the Graduate School in their efforts to scale these resources to a broader variety of faculty and students. We look forward to supporting the online MBA insofar as our current resources and services will allow.

Sincerely yours,