

New Degree Program, Master of Science in Business "Stackable Certificates", MU Executive Summary

This proposal details how an **MS in Business** degree can be built around existing and new certificate programs, which can be combined or “stacked” in unique ways to fulfill degree requirements. The concept behind “**Stackable Certificates**” is somewhat new in higher education. The format of the MS in Business degree program, proposed herein by the **Trulaske College of Business (TCoB)** and with cooperation across campus and the UM System, will be unique within higher education. Specifically, we believe it will be the first university program in the nation to provide an avenue for students to combine business certificates, certificates offered jointly by business and another college (e.g., law, engineering), and/or certificates offered by other colleges at MU (e.g., engineering, law, CAFNR, medicine, A&S, etc.) or UM System business schools. In this regard, students can *customize* a degree which is either narrowly focused on business, or is truly *interdisciplinary* with a solid business foundation.

The basic framework for the degree involves **three components**: 1) a required set of *Core Business Foundations* courses offered by the TCoB, perhaps as a certificate, *and* 2) choice of a certificate offered by the TCoB, *and* 3) choice of another certificate offered by the TCoB, OR an approved certificate offered by another college on campus, OR an approved certificate offered by another business school in the UM System. Certificates incorporate a minimum of 12 credit hours of required and elective courses around a single focused theme, delivered at the master’s level using in-seat (on-campus), on-line, or hybrid format. Some of the certificates used to satisfy MS degree requirements already exist, others are currently in development, and others will be added over time to reflect student demand and faculty expertise. We are encouraging units within the TCoB to develop programs in on-line format to improve our ability to attract net new students, and particularly adult learners seeking a graduate degree.

This proposal focuses on the requested approval for the framework for the MS in Business degree. Unlike other stand-alone degree program proposals, where the curriculum is clearly established within a single disciplinary framework, the MS in Business (Stackable Certificates) degree allows for unique combinations of existing certificates. As a result, the curriculum, revenue, and cost basis for the program is not straightforward to delineate. However, given that the degree will be comprised of *existing* certificates, and will primarily leverage *existing* resources and infrastructure, the marginal cost to offer the degree will be small.

The landscape of higher education is evolving. Students are expecting easier access to education (e.g., online formats), more micro-credentialing or modular programs, and the ability to customize and choose interdisciplinary programs. The creation of the MS in Business degree will allow us to combine existing resources to evolve with the educational market and to meet these expectations. More generally, increasing our online and certificate-based options will help us **build capacity**, which will allow us to more easily offer programs to corporate partners and international students (e.g., 3 + 1 + 1 programs), and provide additional opportunities for students in existing programs such as our residential, two-year Crosby MBA). In fact, given the changing landscape graduate

education in business, the additional capacity represented by certificates aligned with the MS in Business degree, particularly those offered on-line, will potentially allow MBA students more options in the completion of their degree, thereby strengthening our existing Crosby MBA program through added flexibility. In summary, the MS in Business degree, and the Stackable Certificates approach more generally, will help us meet a number of specific strategic goals in the TCoB, MU, and the UM System. These include:

- 1) Increasing access to Missouri residents, corporate partners, and extending our global reach
- 2) Increasing our graduate degree completions, particularly for online students
- 3) Developing new modular and interdisciplinary programs