

Background for MBA Proposal

Substance of proposed changes (applied to MBA overall, not just the online version)

- Eliminated program prerequisites to reduce barriers to program entry. This revision will allow students to graduate with 45 credits (the program standard), where the current curriculum results in nearly all students earning 47 credits to meet graduation requirements. More importantly, there will be less variance in the basic knowledge in these areas among new students – see next bullet point.
- Modified curriculum to incorporate prior prerequisite course content (Micro/Macro Economics, Managerial Accounting, Elementary Statistics) into 3 of the 10 core courses. These courses are going from 3 credits to 4 credits.
- Added two new elective courses to enable us to offer a concentration in Accounting designed for a general manager - current courses have several undergraduate accounting prerequisites and are taken by students working toward their CPA licenses.
- Adjusted admissions standards to accommodate applicants with less than a 3.0 GPA who have work experience, and provide the opportunity for provisional admission to applicants whose GPA for their bachelor's degree was less than 2.75. These admissions standards are in line with other online MBA programs. Provisionally admitted students will have to earn at least a B grade or higher in all first term courses to continue in the program.
 - Work experience will be checked and verified as needed. Applicants are required to list contact information (phone and email) for three (3) professional references.
 - Empirical data (2010 to 2017) on SOU MBA students showed no significant difference in the end-of-program average GPAs between those admitted to the program on a provisional basis vs. fully admitted students (See statistical results on Page 3.)
 - Note: Grad Council is considering revisions to the current institutional standard of 3.0 minimum GPA for admission; possible options include removing the institutional GPA requirement and replacing on by a program-by-program basis, or exempting the MBA program from the standard.

Impetus for proposed changes

- Our new agreement with Academic Partnerships (AP) to offer our degree online has resulted in a thorough examination of our curriculum and processes as we looked to remove potential barriers and ensure that our program offerings would be marketable in a broader context. That review resulted in the curricular changes we have proposed.
- The launching of the online MBA project started with a two-day deep dive into all of our current policies and practices related to application, registration, advising, and course development, from application for graduation. Based on best practices in delivering online graduate programs, AP made a series of suggestions that included recommendations for opening the door to additional motivated applicants who might not have earned a 3.0 in their bachelor's program. The admissions standards that we are proposing arose from our discussions with AP.

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Additional notes

- Ensuring Program Quality: AP will provide instructional design support to faculty teaching in the program and will review all courses according to "Quality Matters" nationally recognized assessment standards.

All MBA students will be held to current institutional standards of good academic standing:

- (1) Minimum 3.0 overall GPA, and
- (2) No credit for course grade earned that is less than a B-

All MBA students will be required to take the national Educational Testing Service (ETS) MBA major field test near the end of the program. This will allow us to compare the proficiency of:

- (1) SOU online students vs. SOU on-campus students,
- (2) SOU students vs. MBA students nationwide, and
- (3) SOU MBA program vs. other MBA programs across the nation.

- On-Line vs. Traditional MBA: While we do anticipate that a few on-ground students may elect to switch to the online program, we are confident that most local students will continue to value face-to-face interaction over the online experience. Our current thinking is that on-ground and online cohorts will remain completely separate programs due in part to the difficulty of managing expectations of students engaged in very different structures as well as the need to apply program-specific tuition and administrative policies to program participants.

The online MBA will be offered in an accelerated format using seven-week terms with five starts per year. Course content and expectations will be the same as their 10-week course counterparts.

Variations in term length and fewer hours required to qualify for financial aid are just two of the many policy and procedural differences that are driving this decision. The Office of the Registrar and Financial Office are working on the adjustments.

Background for MBA Proposal

Undergrad GPA Upon Admission versus GPA at MBA Graduation

- Data consist of 122 MBA graduates since 2010.
- Ten (10) of the 122, or 8.3% admitted into the program had admission GPA less than 3.0. All ten were conditionally admitted under either Donna or Mark as MBA coordinator. The two I admitted (Dee F. and Brandon S. are graduating this year and are therefore not included in the comparison.)

Data (outputs below) say:

- No significant difference (pvalue 0.134) in the end of MBA Program overall GPA between the two groups **Less than 3.0 GPA on admission (conditionally admitted)** versus **3.0 > GPA on admission (fully admitted)**
- Undergraduate GPA explains only about 12.2% of the variation in MBA GPA. **Not much!**

COMPARISON OF END OF PROGRAM GPA - Undergrad GPA < 3.0 versus Undergrad GPA > 3.0

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	LessThan3	3orHigerGPA
Mean GPA at End of Program	3.583	3.698482
Variance	0.104067778	0.049642
Observations	10	112
Pooled Variance	0.053723766	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	120	
t Stat	-1.50959589	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.066887588	
t Critical one-tail	1.657650899	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.133775176	
t Critical two-tail	1.979930405	

SUMMARY OUTPUT

Regression Statistics									
Multiple R	0.349943877								
R Square	12.25%								
Adjusted R Square	0.11514789								
Standard Error	0.219180348								
Observations	122								
ANOVA									
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F				
Regression	1	0.804479	0.804479	16.74602	0.0001				
Residual	120	5.764803	0.04804						
Total	121	6.569282							
	Coefficients	Standard Err	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%	
Intercept	2.871655758	0.20072	14.30677	1.05E-27	2.474244021	3.269067	2.474244	3.269067	
GPA	0.240357307	0.058736	4.09219	7.78E-05	0.124064858	0.35665	0.124065	0.35665	