

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

To: The UVM Faculty Senate
From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair
Date: April 5, 2018
Re: Approval of a proposal for a new Certificate of Graduate Study in Sustainable Enterprise submitted by the Grossman School of Business in conjunction with the Graduate College

At its meeting on April 5, 2018, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a proposal for a new Certificate of Graduate Study in Sustainable Enterprise, submitted by the Grossman School of Business (GSB) in conjunction with the Graduate College. Barbara Arel, Associate Dean of GSB, will oversee program development until a director is appointed from faculty involved in the program. If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, the program will be offered beginning January 2019.

Program Description and Rationale

Sustainable enterprises are enterprises that earn profits and have minimal negative impact on the environment and/or society. The Certificate of Graduate Study in Sustainable Enterprise (CGS-SE) is designed to help students to develop business knowledge and an understanding of how enterprises stay competitive by incorporating social, environmental, and economic concerns into their strategy. The proposed certificate offers a means of educating graduate students from diverse backgrounds on how enterprises can be both profitable and responsible.

The proposers anticipate that the focus on sustainable enterprise will draw students from a wide variety of organizations including small and large businesses, non-governmental organizations, governmental organizations, multinational corporations and start-ups. This contrasts sharply with programs that limit their focus on sustainability to a specific type of organization. Additionally, the certificate is offered entirely online, which will allow the program to recruit students from a broad audience. While the proposed certificate is aimed at helping students develop business acumen and a strong understanding of how enterprises operate it also integrates sustainable enterprise issues into each course in the curriculum. This integrated approach will match the curriculum model used in the Sustainable Innovation MBA (SI-MBA), which has received positive national recognition.

Justification and Evidence for Demand

The need for socially and environmentally conscious enterprises has grown substantially in response to various environmental crises and recognition of questionable business practices. A recent survey, by McKinsey & Company, more than 40% of executives indicated their companies seek to align sustainability with their overall business goals, mission, or values, an increase of approximately 10% over the past five years.

Enterprises need a new generation of business leaders who can manage business while creating social, environmental and economic value. The newly proposed CGS-SE is expected to draw students who are seasoned working professionals from small and large businesses, government organizations, and start-ups. Additionally, the proposed certificate may attract recent college graduates looking for additional experience in the area of sustainable enterprise prior to entering the workforce. According to a 2015 survey conducted by UVM's Office of the Vice President for Research, roughly 4,000 UVM students expressed interest in entrepreneurial activity. This certificate will also help UVM in its efforts to create an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem hub that can improve innovation in Vermont.

The proposers cite an article from the Chronicle of Higher Education which demonstrates an increasing demand for online professional graduate programs, which will appeal to working adults who are interested in upgrading their skillsets, and explains how these programs will play an important role in the future of higher education. As a complement to the highly ranked SI-MBA offered by GSB, the proposed certificate will make high-impact professional development available to a much wider audience than a traditional on-site program. The proposed CGS-SE will also leverage UVM's national reputation as a leader in sustainability.

Relationship to Existing Programs

As noted previously, the proposed CGS-SE complements the Sustainable Innovation MBA (SI-MBA), an intensive, on-site, and focused Masters that prepares individuals to institute sustainable innovation technologies and practices within existing and new ventures. Students interested in the integrated focus on sustainable enterprise concepts offered by the SI-MBA but do not want to pursue a graduate degree or cannot afford to spend a year on campus in Vermont.

Sufficient overlap exists between current GSB programs and the CGS-SE to yield synergies, particularly in faculty expertise and brand recognition. Both the SI-MBA and the proposed online certificate program will utilize GSB faculty with expertise on sustainability across a wide range of organizational functions. The newly proposed CGS-SE allows this expertise to be leveraged to a broader audience, one which, for a variety of reasons, would be unlikely to complete the one-year, full-time onsite Masters program.

The proposed CGS-SE will benefit the existing Master of Accountancy (MAcc) program by offering graduate-level courses that can be used as electives in the MAcc program. Students in the MS in Engineering Management and MS in Public Administration programs also will benefit from required and elective certificates courses that may be used towards their degree.

The Gund Institute for Environment offers a Certificate of Graduate Studies in Ecological Economics, which is an on-campus problem-based certificate focused on the relationship between ecological and economic systems. The specific applied focus of the Ecological Economics certificate differentiates it from the proposed CGS-SE, which will examine the impact of enterprises on not only environmental but also social challenges facing the world. Additionally, the CGS-SE provides an online option.

A Master of Professional Studies in Leadership for Sustainability from the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources was recently approved by the Board of Trustees, and formerly existed as a concentration option within the MS in Natural Resources. This two-year program does not intersect enterprise with sustainability, therefore there little to no overlap between this program and the proposed CGS-SE.

Nationally, there are a significant number of graduate certificate courses that touch on the broad topic of sustainability, but few online certificate programs offered by reputable universities on the topic of sustainable enterprise. As an example, the proposers indicate that University of Wisconsin, Madison offers a similar online certificate program on sustainable enterprise, however the UW program is composed of undergraduate level courses sourced from their Bachelor of Science program. While other universities do offer programs in sustainable enterprise, they are either exclusively on-site programs and/or require the pursuit of a degree rather than a certificate.

Curriculum

Completion of the proposed CGS-SE will require 15 credits in the field of sustainable enterprise. This includes four required foundational courses, one required capstone course, and one elective course (see table below). Three courses will be offered each semester, with the Capstone offered every semester, to allow students to complete the certificate in a timely fashion. Students can enroll in any course, except the Capstone, at any time during the program. The capstone course can be taken following completion of the other coursework, or in conjunction with a student's final course. This curricular structure and cores offering timing will make it possible for students to start the program in the fall, spring or summer, and to complete the program in one year if desired.

Required Courses		
BSAD 363	Accounting and Reporting for Sustainable Enterprise Activities	3 credits
BSAD 305	Sustainable Marketing	3 credits
BSAD 340	Green Operations and Supply Chains	3 credits
BSAD 396	Leading Sustainable Enterprise (Capstone)	3 credits
<i>One course from the list below:</i>		
BSAD 308	<i>Finance for Sustainable Enterprise</i>	3 credits
BSAD 338	<i>Integrating Sustainability in New Business Models</i> (new)	3 credits
BSAD 335	<i>Entrepreneurial Family Businesses</i> (new)	3 credits

In communication with Jane Kolondinsky, Chair of the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the proposers indicated a willingness to include relevant CDAE courses in the list of possible electives should they ever be offered online.

Admission Requirements and Process

All students wishing to enroll in the certificate program must apply through the Graduate College with subsequent applicant review by the GSB Graduate Studies Committee. The program will be selective in admissions to ensure that students will thrive in graduate business courses.

The CGS-SE can be earned as a stand-alone certificate for students already holding a Bachelor degree from an accredited college or university but not matriculated in any other UVM graduate program. Students must apply to the CGS-SE before any courses are taken as they will need 15 graded credits as a graduate student in the program to obtain the CGS. The CGS-SE can also be taken by current UVM graduate students in conjunction with their existing graduate degrees. For UVM graduate students, the courses applied to the certificate can also be applied to the student's primary degree if appropriate. Students already enrolled in a masters or doctoral program at UVM will need to apply no later than prior to completion of the final 6 credits in

the certificate program. All credits must be completed at UVM within a five-year period. A minimum GPA of 3.00 must be achieved for successful completion of the proposed CGS-SE.

Anticipated Enrollment and Impact on Current Programs

The proposers anticipate that CGS-SE enrollments will start in the range of 15 to 20 students, with incrementally increasing enrollment up to approximated 90 by year four or five. Students will be recruited through a national marketing effort as well as through digital marketing efforts supported by Continuing and Distance Education. No impact on existing programs was indicated by the proposers. As noted previously, the proposed CGS-SE provides an alternative option for students who cannot or do not wish to enroll in the more intensive and onsite programs with similar focus offered by UVM.

Advising

Advising will performed by faculty members affiliated with the program and led by a Graduate Certificate program coordinator in the Grossman School of Business. Faculty will advise students based on their interests, needs, and academic backgrounds. For matriculated graduate students, the student's primary advisor will also be consulted regarding the most appropriate courses.

Assessment Plan

The proposed CGS-SE will be included in the Association of Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation comprehensive assessment plan for GSB programs along with the SI-MBA, BSBA, and MAcc programs. This is a continuous improvement process driven by the faculty. Each year the GSB Assurance of Learning committee will select direct and indirect measures of learning objectives for the program which will be evaluated and analyzed for feedback into curriculum reform.

Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget

The Associate Dean of GSB will oversee program development, but a program director will be appointed from faculty involved in the program soon after implementation. Administrative support will come from restructuring of present staff assignments or the addition of a new staff position. A full budget was included in the proposal with projections for the first five years. The Dean of GSB will determine whether to continue the program if the CGS-SE is not self-sustainable and revenue-generating as projected.

Evidence of Support

Letters of support were included in the proposal from:

- Cindy Forehand, Dean of the Graduate College
- Sanjay Sharma, Dean of the Grossman School of Business
- Luis Garcia, Dean of the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences
- Patricia Prelock, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Scott Thomas, Dean of the College of Education and Social Services (now former Dean)
- Nancy Mathews, Dean of the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources

Summary

Businesses are increasingly striving to align sustainability with their overall business goals. The newly proposed Certificate of Graduate Studies in Sustainable enterprise offers an opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds training in the important framework of learning how enterprises can be both profitable and responsible. As an online Graduate Certificate program, the newly proposed CGS in Sustainable Enterprise will allow UVM to draw new students that are not interested in pursuing a graduate degree and/or are not able to enroll in an on-site program. Additionally, UVM graduate students in related fields can use the proposed CGS-SE to complement and extend their studies. The proposed program also builds upon the Grossman School of Business's reputation in sustainability. Thus, it is a valuable addition to the current graduate certificate options at UVM.