

ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ACCOUNTING

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of a joint Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Science in Accounting (MSA) degree, effective fall 2024.

Background

In today's dynamic and competitive business landscape, professionals are required to possess a diverse range of skills to succeed. The Joint MBA-MSA program offers a synergistic combination of business acumen and specialized accounting knowledge. This combination is crucial for individuals aiming to excel not only in their roles as financial experts but also as strategic leaders within organizations.

The current traditional/online MBA programs augment the core requirements by introducing three additional courses (total of nine courses, equating to 27 credits) and offer three elective business courses. However, under the current MBA program structure, students keen on pursuing the CPA exam, without an accounting background, are unable to fulfill the educational requirements mandated by the Michigan Accounting of CPAs (MICPA) (requiring a minimum of 24 accounting credits) as CPA candidates. To meet the CPA exam requirements, some MBA students either extend their enrollment beyond the MBA degree requirements or enroll in essential accounting courses through a post-bachelor certificate program from other institutions. By transferring MBA credits toward the MSA program, the proposed Joint MBA-MSA program provides a unique opportunity to simultaneously earn an MBA degree and satisfy the educational requirements established by the MICPA under the MSA program, requiring just one additional regular semester (and potentially a spring/summer semester).

As of January 30, 2023, there are 47 MBA students with a concentration in financial accounting and accounting information systems. Surveys conducted in the classroom (ACC 7100) indicate that approximately 60% of MBA students concentrating on accounting areas aspire to pursue the CPA exam. Furthermore, since January 2023, the accounting department has counseled over 15 MBA students regarding course selection to meet MICPA's accounting education requirements. In light of these considerations, we anticipate that the proposed Joint MBA/MSA program will attract a minimum 15 additional students in its inaugural year to the MSA program, followed by approximately 8 to 10 new students in each subsequent academic year following program adoption.

The Joint MBA-MSA program has been thoroughly reviewed with industry professionals, and there is a consensus that the program is not only needed but will well-received by prospective students. Within the state of Michigan, and more specifically Southeastern Michigan, only two universities offer similar programs - the University of Michigan (Flint) and Walsh College.

Program Description

The Joint MBA – MSA program offers students the opportunity to obtain two degrees with a minimum of 54 graduate credits by transferring 12 credits from MBA program, significant

reductions compared to the 66 graduate credits required for pursuing both degrees separately. The enhanced efficiency not only lowers the overall tuition costs but also accelerates the time needed to earn both degrees. The Joint MBA- MSA degree program is designed to equip future managers with essential accounting tools and techniques to make informed managerial decisions. Additionally, this program introduces new career prospects in accounting field for MBA students.

Admission Requirements

Two admission pathways are proposed for the program. Firstly, incoming MBA students can apply directly to the Joint MBA-MSA program, adhering to the same admission criteria as the standalone MBA and MSA programs. Secondly, MBA students currently concentrating in accounting areas within existing cohorts can opt to pursue the MSA degree as part of the Joint degree program alongside their MBA.

Curriculum Requirements

To earn both the MBA and MSA degrees, students must successfully complete a minimum of 54 total credits with satisfying required courses under both programs. Students lacking a sufficient accounting background may be required to complete additional foundation courses. A total of 12 credits from the below list may be applied to both programs: BA7000, ACC 7100, ACC 7115, ACC 7180, ACC 7145, ACC 7188. To earn the MSA degree, the students must take at least 18 credits from courses offered by the MSA program (including a capstone class of ACC 7998). The Joint degree program may confer diplomas either sequentially or simultaneously, depending on the student's preference and academic progress.

Graduation Requirements

Admitted students must complete the required courses for both programs in order to graduate. All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School policies and the regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. If students complete requirements for only one degree, then one degree will be awarded. Students may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis but must complete requirements within six years of admission.

Program Administration

The oversight of the Joint MBA-MSA program will be led by the Director of the Office of Graduate Programs, academic officers and the Chair of the Department of Accounting. The Accounting Department Chair will assume responsibility for daily program operations, administration, governance, and financial activities, as well as oversight and admission decisions. The Graduate Programs officer will be responsible for ensuring that each student in the program receives proper academic advising, with a particular focus on guidance upon entry into the program.

Budget and Resource Requirements

Each constituent degree program already exists independently. No additional courses or faculty will be required for the joint degree; all required and elective courses are already being offered regularly by their respective faculty.

Submitted by: Laurie Lauzon Clabo, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Accreditation

No separate accreditation is required.

Approvals

The proposal for the joint MBA-MSA degree has been approved by the Faculty and Chair of Accounting Department, the Graduate Education Policy Committee of the Mike Ilitch School of Business, the faculty of Mike Ilitch School of Business, the Deans of the Mike Ilitch School of Business, the Graduate Council, Dean of the Graduate School and the Provost.