

**Proposal to Change an Academic Program
Bachelor of Science in Business for Online Delivery
University of Minnesota, Crookston
December 20, 2005**

**Appendix I:
Additional Questions for Electronically Offered Degree Programs**

1. What is the evidence that the program is consistent with the role and mission of the unit, including its goals with regard to student access?

This proposal to change the existing Bachelor's degree in Business is consistent with the role and mission of the University of Minnesota, Crookston. The campus already provides the degree in a traditionally delivered format. Expansion to online delivery provides access to a more learners and, as such, contributes to the University's commitment to enrich "all people" through understanding, and share "knowledge through education for a diverse community."

The University of Minnesota, founded in the belief that all people are enriched by understanding, is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world.

- University of Minnesota Board of Regents (1994)

Online learning, because it is so well-suited to working people seeking to improve their knowledge and skills, is a particularly good fit with UMC's industry-influenced curriculum, career-oriented programs, and commitment to the land grant mission.

2. Does the program take the college or campus beyond its institutional boundaries, e.g., students to be served, geographic service area, locus of instruction, curriculum to be offered, or comparable formally stated definitions of institutional purpose?

This change does not expand the curriculum, it expands student access. To the extent that "institutional boundaries" are geographically defined, the change does indeed take the campus beyond such limits. The proposed change does not take the institution beyond the existing scope of its academic programming.

Specifically, with regard to:

- a) students to be served – Yes. The proposal expands access.
- b) geographic service area – Yes. The proposal eliminates geography as a factor in student access.
- c) locus of instruction – No. The program already exists at UMC.
- d) curriculum to be offered – No. The program already exists in traditional format.
- e) comparable formally stated definitions of institutional purpose – No. The existing traditional program and the proposed online program are consistent with stated mission and purposes.

3. Is the academic and administrative staffing structure appropriate (and fully qualified) to support the program?

Yes. UMC has a long reputation as a leader in teaching with technology. The campus has made (and continues to make) significant investment in technology infrastructure and applications. In addition, UMC faculty have the technological and pedagogical expertise necessary for student success in an online environment.

UMC's Instructional Technology Center (ITC) supports faculty in their use of technology for teaching and learning the classroom and in the online environment. The ITC works in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Digital Media Center.

UMC's Center for Adult Learning is structured to provide excellent services to online learners. The campus subscribes to the Higher Learning Commission's statement of "best practices" for online course delivery and student support services.

Capacity to deliver a high quality baccalaureate program online has been demonstrated by UMC's successful launch of the Bachelor of Applied Health degree, the University of Minnesota's first fully online bachelors degree..

4. How are students provided with adequate technical support for each educational technology hardware, software, and delivery system required in the program?

Day to day management of online programming resides in The Center for Adult Learning, an administrative unit within Academic Affairs at UMC. The Center is responsible for providing timely, high quality services to online students. Center staff provide such services directly or, as appropriate, serve as the primary access point for services offered by other units.

The Center for Adult Learning's student-centered philosophy recognizes that the needs and priorities of online learners frequently differ from those of their classroom-based peers. Though student satisfaction with online learning at UMC is high, the Center continues to collaborate with academic, administrative, and student services units to assure systems and protocols designed for traditional delivery provide comparable value in the online environment.

CAL provides accurate and timely information about the institution, its programs, courses, costs, and related policies on the distance education website and through student contact. CAL assists distance students with pre-advising and works closely with academic advisors throughout the admissions and registration process, including application, transcript evaluation, and program planning.

UMC's Office of Financial Aid provides online learners with information about aid policies and limitations, available scholarships and application procedures, and administration of financial aid and scholarship awards.

Working with our Twin Cities counterparts, UMC is moving quickly to automate admissions, financial aid and registrar's office functions wherever possible. Students,

whether online or on campus, increasingly prefer to access information and complete transactions on the Web. For example:

- Students can view and make payments to their student accounts online.
- Tuition statements are sent to all students via their student email account and processing payment is done electronically.
- Students access APAS reports electronically for review and planning.
- Library resources are linked electronically to the U of M system to make remote resources available to online students. The UMC library provides online tutorials for students needing library skills assistance and/or orientation.
- Online students can purchase textbooks from the UMC Bookstore online through a secure website.
- UMC policies are posted online. Should a policy complaint or dispute arise, online students can submit petitions for resolution via email.

The Center for Adult Learning has developed an online help request form for students to report any problems or questions with online courses and/or access. The service is available 24/7 and Center staff guarantee response within 24-48 hours, usually much less.

Individual attention for students with learning differences, physical challenges, and counseling needs is provided through personal referral to appropriate Student Support Services personnel. CAL is currently working with Student Services to improve access to and efficiency in tutoring, career counseling and placement services

5. How were appropriate learning outcomes established? How does the program design involve the demonstration of such skills as analysis, comprehension, communication and effective research?

Program learning outcomes for the online degree were established by faculty in the same way as would be the case for any degree or certificate program. The outcomes of this program are no different than those expected from traditional face to face delivery. This is a fundamental expectation of the Higher Learning Commission to which UMC fully subscribes.

The degree has a liberal education core of 45 credits, a core business curriculum of 63 credits, and 12 open electives. A total of 120 credits are required for graduation. All are consistent with campus-wide standards. The Bachelor of Science in Business degree (site-based) has been approved at all academic and administrative levels at UMC, by the Office of the Provost, and by the Board of Regents.

The faculty of the University of Minnesota, Crookston is committed to a philosophy of continuous improvement in student learning, regardless of delivery mode. Policies and procedures for faculty input and academic oversight for online courses and programs are the same as or comparable to those for site-based instruction.

6. What provisions for instructor-student and student-student interaction are included in the program/course design and the course syllabus? How is appropriate interaction assured?

Academic departments assure and oversee the quality and integrity of online degree programs, just as they do for classroom based learning. UMC offers extensive training for faculty who teach online. In the coming year, UMC will allocate a percentage of online tuition to the Center for Adult Learning for reinvestment in faculty-led course and program development.

Expectations of students and resources for their success, including faculty responsibilities and contact information, are identified in course syllabi and in program information. While the frequency and mode of faculty-student interaction may differ between courses and between faculty, learning outcomes do not.

UMC adheres to the Higher Learning Commission's "Best Practices for an Electronically Offered Degree." Tips for promoting interaction are available for instructors. In addition, all online learners are given information about the successful online learning environment: <http://www.umcrookston.edu/cal/distanceEd/SF/ForYou.htm> and <http://www.umcrookston.edu/cal/learn/HorticultureApprenticeship/tipsforsuccess.htm>

7. What support services, including orientation and training, are available to those responsible for preparing courses or programs to be offered electronically? What support services are available to those faculty members responsible for working directly with students?

The Instructional Technology Center has provided UMC faculty appropriate technology training and support for 10 years. The Center's mission is to assist faculty in the integration of technology into their teaching. In addition, UMC's web development and computer help desk staff, along with the Center for Adult Learning personnel, provide on-demand technical support for faculty and students.

Extensive faculty development opportunities have been and will continue to be supported by (1) internally funded "mini-grants," (2) the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and (3) other grants such as the U's Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) grants.

Center for Adult Learning staff will, upon request, assist faculty with elements of design, interactivity, navigational ease, learning assessment and other features that can add value to the online experience.

8. How do potential students learn about the electronically offered program?

The Center for Adult Learning is responsible for marketing and promotion. Prospective students learn about online programs through web "hits," personal visits to places of work and other venues by CAL personnel, word of mouth from satisfied students already learning online, promotional activity (including personal visits to workplaces) targeted to specific audiences, and the other marketing and recruiting activities typical of most colleges and universities.

9. What criteria are used to determine the student's eligibility for admission to the program?

Admission criteria for online courses and programs are no different than for their classroom based counterparts. Though online courses can provide a useful and convenient scheduling option for on-campus, they do not represent the primary market.

Online students tend to be older than average, already in the work force, and often with previous college experience. Transfer students are admitted after careful evaluation of official transcripts from all previous post-secondary institutions. This process is the same as that for traditional students applying for admission.

10. How are the following services provided to distance-learning students: information about the college, program, courses, and costs; pre-registration advising; admission application, placement, enrollment and registration; and financial aid?

Most online students prefer to communicate, transact business, and access services electronically. Assistance and access to services is also available by telephone and by personal visit for those who prefer that mode.

UMC provides online students all necessary services. Most are available electronically, either web-based or e-mail based. In addition, the Enterprise System Project and the One Stop Student Services Center provide a wide range of online interactive self-service options, and UMC eagerly anticipates the rollout of new web services (Grad Planner, for example) as they become available.

The Center for Adult Learning maintains a website devoted to online learning with a complete directory of student resources (<http://cal.umcrookston.edu/distanceEd/>) With regard to funding online student services, UMC is adopting a budget model for the Center for Adult Learning that will direct dollars drawn from online tuition to assure the availability, continuity and overall excellence in online student services.

The currently available online degree, Bachelor of Applied Health, has demonstrated UMC's capacity to satisfactorily deliver student support services in all areas noted in the above question.