



Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

TITLE: Proposal to Eliminate by Phase Down Gies MBA Program Codes 10KS9875MBA, 10KS4064MBA

SPONSOR: Jeffrey Loewenstein, Professor of Business Administration and Associate Dean of Graduate Education, Gies College of Business, jloew@illinois.edu.

COLLEGE CONTACT: Jeffrey Loewenstein, Professor of Business Administration and Associate Dean of Graduate Education, Gies College of Business, jloew@illinois.edu.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Gies College of Business is proposing to eliminate, by phase down, program codes for some delivery modes used to attain an MBA degree. Over the decades, we have used a range of delivery modes to educate MBA students, starting and stopping them such that we stay innovative and relevant to the market. We are proposing to eliminate two program codes by phase down, with removal after the last students using them finish.

10KS9875MBA: FT MBA, phase down, estimated elimination December 2021

10KS4064MBA: PT MBA, phase down, estimated elimination December 2021

JUSTIFICATION: Gies College of Business spent about 18 months undergoing a faculty-led study of trends in graduate management education and their implications for our MBA program. We have held both formal and informal conversations with faculty, staff, alumni, and students to evaluate the mix of graduate programs that we offer. In reviewing the MBA program, we identified program codes associated with the MBA degree that soon will no longer be in use and so can be eliminated. The decision was the product of a long and robust governance process that included and went beyond what is called for in our College bylaws.

Background. Our decision making concerned our MBA program, which has been offered in a variety of modes over the years. We have used different modes to meet the needs of different kinds of students interested in pursuing an MBA degree. These modes currently include a full-time, residential two-year daytime mode (FT MBA), a part-time, residential two-year evening mode (PMBA), and a part-time, online two-year mode (iMBA). As noted in the academic catalog: “The Gies College of Business offers a degree program leading to the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) in 3 delivery modes.”

These different modes have substantial similarities, given that they are all routes to the same degree, as well as differences tailored to the particulars of their circumstances. The most substantial similarities across modes lie in an emphasis on developing students' capabilities to lead and manage organizations through a set of 11 courses delivered to all MBA students. These courses cover core themes of business leadership (strategic leadership and management, managerial economics and business analysis, value chain management, and financial management). These courses come from each faculty area within the college (Finance, Accountancy, Marketing, Strategy-Entrepreneurship-International Business, Organizational Behavior-Business Law, and Information Systems-Operations-Supply Chain-Analytics). These courses are centered around leadership, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills as they apply to managing today's companies. Students take all or nearly all their classes within Gies; a small number of FTMBA students choose to take elective courses in other units.

The most notable differences across modes lie in adjustments made for the mode's timing and particular student population. For example, we make considerable time in the FTMBA for action learning projects (e.g., short-term team consulting projects for a company), as these students are on average about 27 years old with about 4 years of work experience. We take much less time in the PMBA and iMBA on action learning projects, as these students are on average about 37 years old, have about a dozen years of work experience, and the vast majority are currently employed. FTMBA students are in residence full time, and so have the potential to take classes and participate in extracurricular activities offered on campus. As a result, the FTMBA program gives them time to do so. PMBA and iMBA students are part-time students, and so they are much less likely to participate in such classes and activities, although a small number can and do. FTMBA and PMBA students can (and in the case of PMBA students all do) take iMBA courses. Sometimes students currently in FTMBA and iMBA assist with classes as graders or course assistants. This typically occurs within the program, but in a few cases FTMBA students have worked on iMBA or PMBA courses. (Programs have great flexibility in obtaining support for their courses.) As these examples illustrate, each MBA program mode (iMBA, PMBA, FTMBA) needs some leeway to adapt to its particulars. Each offers some distinct courses and extracurricular activities, and each has somewhat distinct approaches to meeting its needs.

As a result of the similarities and differences in the different delivery modes for the Gies MBA, as well as bureaucratic needs, the iMBA, PMBA, and FTMBA have unique program codes, emphasize somewhat different information, and take somewhat different approaches. For example, the academic catalog listings for the programs' curricula look more different than similar. Absent deeper information about the content of the courses and the way the programs work, it could give the impression of there being little overlap rather than the actual large similarities just noted. Likewise, the presentation of how the programs assess learning outcomes gives an impression of greater differences than similarities. Yet the more detailed framework developed for the iMBA is largely an elaboration of the framework used by FTMBA and PMBA. As iMBA is more recently developed than FTMBA and PMBA, new practices around assessment were able to be built in from the beginning. Still, working effectively in and through teams, written and oral communication skills, problem solving and analytical skills, as well as leadership and innovation skills to develop and implement solutions have been consistent across the three modes. There is greater emphasis placed on developing initiative in the FTMBA and PMBA, whereas this is less pressing in the iMBA population.

Critically, the rigor of the courses is comparable across program modes. Most faculty involved in the iMBA program teach the same class in the FTMBA, the PMBA, or both. The average GPAs and program completion rates of the various modes are quite similar. The iMBA is more selective than the PMBA and FTMBA. Recent program exit surveys indicate that the iMBA program has notably higher student satisfaction than the FTMBA and PMBA.

Deliberation process. As our college has more than 150 faculty members, we do not have a history of holding all-college faculty meetings to engage in sustained discussion and analysis of complex issues. Instead, we rely on faculty committees for most decisions. Given the importance of the decisions we had to make about our MBA program, we chose to engage in a more involved process.

Our college process began in Spring 2018. A committee of six senior faculty, drawn from each department in the college, reviewed our full portfolio of graduate programs. The committee identified our MBA as being in need of consideration, as the different delivery modes for the degree were experiencing different conditions and likely futures. Three working groups of faculty and staff were charged with analyzing three possibilities for the residential mode (FTMBA) and the evening mode (PMBA): continuing the program mode using its current approach, reinventing the program mode, or suspending the program mode. Our college communicated with the Provost that we were undertaking this review and that all options were under consideration. The committees met regularly in Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019.

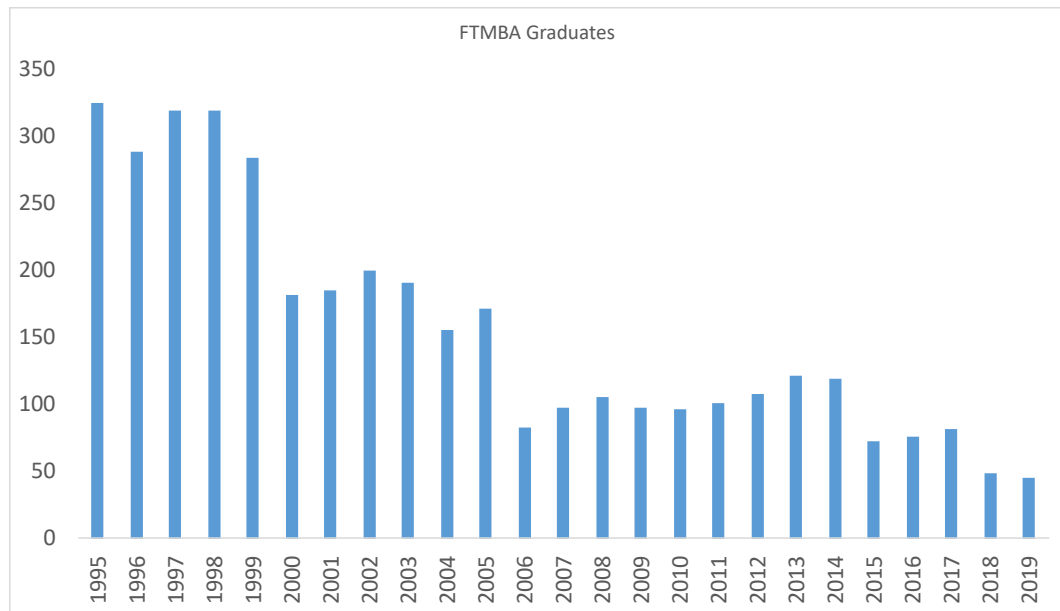
Discussions regarding the FTMBA and PMBA were also held across the college. Over the course of the process, one-on-one conversations took place with most of the faculty teaching in the FTMBA and PMBA programs. The Graduate Program Advisory Committee, the committee most involved in graduate student affairs at the college level, discussed the programs several times in the Fall of 2018 and Spring of 2019. In January and February 2019, meetings were held with the departmental advisory and executive committees of each department in the college as well as with the college's executive committee. In March and April 2019, four town hall meetings were held, open to all college faculty and staff, to discuss the three possibilities for the FTMBA and the PMBA. In April 2019, a meeting was held with the Dean's Business Council, a group of involved alumni. In early May 2019, meetings were held with current FTMBA and PMBA students. All of these discussions preceded and informed our formal decision making.

Taken together, this process resulted in a widely discussed and widely informed analysis of the three possibilities facing the FTMBA and the PMBA. In mid-May, we recognized that our analysis of the options yielded clear guidance regarding a recommended path to suspend the FTMBA and PMBA program modes after the students granted admission for Fall 2019 complete their degrees.

Core information. The conclusion to suspend the FTMBA and the PMBA was based on each one's specific history and opportunity. Still, the changes we see in our own programs are being seen by other colleges across the US. As is widely recognized, graduate business education in the United States has and continues to change dramatically.

The conclusion we reached about the FTMBA is that it is no longer central to the college's mission. Here at Gies, our undergraduate program is thriving, our specialized M.S. programs are the dominant offering for low-experience students launching their careers, and the online MBA is the dominant offering for experienced professionals looking to advance their careers. We see strong interest from high-quality students for these programs.

In contrast, interest in the FTMBA has dropped dramatically. The numbers of program graduates by year, shown below, has dropped over 80% from its peak, and we have experienced similar trends in the numbers of potential students sending us test scores, completing applications, and enrolling in the program.



Our peak enrollment was 639 students in 1998 (it is a two-year program, so enrollment is about double the number of graduates per year). We are now at 99 students. While 99 students may be substantive for some kinds of programs, it is not for FTMBA programs. The median number of students in the top 50 US FTMBA programs is 314. Significant numbers of students are critical because FTMBA programs offer extensive activities beyond the classroom and cater to students with diverse interests (some focus on marketing, others finance, and so forth). We need to offer about 35 courses a year for the program. We need to run a variety of trips, case competitions, company engagements, and related experiences to provide the program experience students expect. Extensive group work also requires having a sufficient number of students such that they can continue to work intensively with new people over the course of the program. The FTMBA also requires extensive marketing, recruiting, and scholarship offers to attract the quality of candidate we require. As a result, in the last five years as our FTMBA enrollments dropped from 200 to 100 students, our program expenditures stayed steady and scholarships tripled in our efforts to maintain the quality of the student body and improve the program experience. Even so, despite our extensive efforts to improve the FTMBA, its ranking has fallen steadily and is now barely inside the Top 50.

We examined the possibility of investing the resources to try to raise the program's profile and enrollment, and found it not to be worthwhile. Already, the FTMBA is a significant strain on college resources. As a result, the FTMBA is absorbing resources of all kinds that are holding back the college from other pursuits and so hampering the college from being able to deliver on its mission as effectively as it should. While the FTMBA students are active within the college and occasionally elsewhere on campus, our other 4000 residential Gies students are also active on campus, and resources committed to the FTMBA could be redirected to support those other students and thereby support their college and campus contributions. We note in particular the rise of management master's students who are increasingly engaging across campus.

Our experience is part of a broader trend across the US. While FTMBA programs are still central to some colleges, they no longer dominate graduate business education. Nationally, enrollment in FTMBA programs is down approximately 20% from its peak. FTMBA programs now comprise only about 15% of all graduate management programs. The long-term trend, noted in the 2018 GMAC Application Trends Survey Report, is for students to opt for shorter (12-15 month) specialized M.S. programs (now about 45% of graduate management education) or shorter, part-time, or online MBA programs (now about 40% of graduate management education). As a result, the US FTMBA market is widely expected to consolidate. Domestic enrollments are down outside of the top 15 US FTMBA programs. International interest is shrinking for all US FTMBA programs due to the rise of competitive programs in Europe, Canada, and Asia Pacific. The resulting competition for FTMBA students has led to increased spending on scholarships and student services, further reducing the economic viability of these programs. Several universities, Wake Forest and University of Iowa among them, have closed their FTMBA programs. It is expected that many schools will exit this market in the years ahead, with some higher education experts and leaders predicting that more than half of all FTMBA programs worldwide will close within the next decade.

As the FTMBA is no longer a central offering in the college, as our ability to provide a high-quality program attracting high-quality students grew less certain, and as long-term trends imply a continuation rather than a change in trends, we concluded that college resources could be better directed elsewhere.

Turning to the PMBA, it is no longer playing its intended role for the college. Historically, the Illinois PMBA's strategic role was to help local working professionals advance in their careers while remaining in their jobs, thereby supporting organizational leaders in Central Illinois. However, the number of students in Central Illinois looking for a part-time residential mode is shrinking, as online modes become more available. More working professionals in Central Illinois now choose the online mode (iMBA) over the residential mode (PMBA). Thus, the goal of serving working professionals in our region that was central to the launching of the PMBA is being met by another offering.

Interest in the PMBA has dropped. While the enrollment numbers are comparable to what they have been since 2012, to attain those numbers we now enroll students twice a year instead of once and we have nearly doubled program expenditures. The program ranking has dropped outside the top 50. And perhaps of most note, to meet student requests for scheduling flexibility and more elective courses, we have made it a hybrid program by introducing some online courses. In effect, the program is turning into an online mode, and so consolidating the PMBA into our online mode (the iMBA) is sensible.

Larger trends in US graduate business education support this conclusion. PMBA programs thrive in large metropolitan areas. Local population and program enrollments are correlated about $r = .70$. Online programs are growing in popularity as the technology develops, as more working professionals become used to working and learning using technology, and as online MBA programs proliferate.

As the PMBA is no longer the most desired mode for the student population it sought to serve, as the resources required to run it are notable, and as long-term trends imply a continuation rather than a change in trends, we concluded that college resources could be better directed elsewhere.

Gies, like all colleges on campus, takes our land grant mission here at the University of Illinois seriously, and, as the graduate college puts it, we believe we are “charged by our state to enhance the lives of citizens in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world.” The iMBA program is serving over three times the number of Illinois residents as the FTMBA and PMBA. It also enrolls vastly more students across the US and around the world. In total, it serves about 3000 students and exit surveys upon graduation indicate that about 95% are satisfied or very satisfied with the program. As we are just in our fourth year running the program, we have room for further improvement. Already though, the iMBA has made high-quality graduate business education more accessible than we have ever been able to make it, and perhaps more so than it has ever been.

When we proposed to launch the iMBA in Spring 2015, we did so with the intention and expectation of continuing the other modes of our MBA: the Chicago EMBA, PMBA, and FTMBA. However, circumstances have changed in numerous ways over the past four years that no longer made that approach the best way forward for our college. First, in 2016/17, in the midst of a state budget crisis, we concluded that we could no longer afford to provide a large financial subsidy to our small Chicago EMBA, especially in the hyper-competitive and expensive Chicago market in which we were competing against two Top Five business schools (Kellogg and Booth). Continuing to underwrite large losses would have threatened our ability to fulfill our more central obligations. Second, we expected the PMBA and iMBA populations to remain distinct, but they did not. As we noted, the PMBA population is shifting to prefer the iMBA. Third, the changes in the FTMBA market have moved more quickly and strongly than we anticipated. Set against these challenges with the EMBA, PMBA, and FTMBA, we have experienced increased needs in our thriving undergraduate, specialized masters, and iMBA programs.

The iMBA program, together with our suite of high-quality and highly ranked M.S. programs in fields such as Accountancy, Finance, and Technology Management and our world-renowned undergraduate program, allow Gies to provide truly outstanding business education offerings fit to what students are seeking. By redirecting our time, energy, and efforts away from supporting declining FTMBA and PMBA markets, we can increase our investment in growing markets where we have a dominant position that we can leverage to enhance the reputation of the University of Illinois and Gies College of Business.

Decision and implementation process. With this information pulled together in mid-May, we felt that the best way forward for the college was clear. We then determined that the most pressing concern was our ethical obligation to inform incoming students of our plans. We had made offers to attend the FTMBA and PMBA to a set of incoming

students, and we felt it would not be appropriate for them to make a decision about whether to enroll without knowing they would be the last students entering these program modes. We believed we needed to provide them the opportunity to make a decision about whether to enroll in the fall cohort with this information before they finalized their commitments to us and while they could still make alternative arrangements (e.g., accept another school's offer). Final deadlines for accepting offers are typically in May and June. Thus, in mid-May we chose to move quickly out of our concern for incoming students—a speed that was feasible because of the many preceding months of engaging college faculty, staff, alumni, students, and other stakeholders.

We were also mindful that all our communications in April and early May with a large and varied group of people had generated some uncertainty. That uncertainty was understandable. We felt that as we could now resolve it, doing so quickly was preferable.

In mid-May, we engaged in formal committee discussions and secret ballot voting with, following our college's bylaws, the three relevant college committees, the Graduate Program Faculty Advisory Committee, the Gies College Educational Policy Committee, and the Gies College Executive Committee. The first two are, somewhat like the Senate EPC, formed by putting forward proposed lists of faculty members, which are then voted on by the college faculty. The third consists of members who are individually elected by the college faculty. Each committee had been made aware of and had an opportunity to discuss the review of the FTMBA and PMBA earlier in the process. We presented and discussed the proposal to suspend the FTMBA and suspend the PMBA with these Gies College Committees: i) the Graduate Program Faculty Advisory Committee (5/20/19); ii) the Gies College Educational Policy Committee (5/21/19); and iii) the Gies College Executive Committee (5/21/19). All three of these Gies College faculty governance committees, involving a total of 22 faculty members, voted by written ballot to affirm this forward-looking decision. In total, 20 of the 22 members voted in favor, none opposed, and two abstained.

Also in mid-May, we had further communications with campus leaders. We communicated with the dean of the graduate college, the provost, and other senior administrators on campus. All of this was before any announcements were made.

On Friday May 24, we communicated with current students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the broader public. We also provided a notification to the incoming chair of the Senate Educational Policy Committee. Our understanding is that information provided to the Senate EPC is public. Thus our view was that providing notification to Senate EPC needed to be coordinated closely with our public communication efforts. Our intention was to provide notice to all campus affiliated groups (Gies students, alumni, faculty, and staff as well as Senate EPC) before the general public, and for our announcements to be the first notifications our stakeholders received. However, the story leaked a few hours earlier than our announcements were allowed to be distributed.

Starting Monday May 27, we had individual discussions with each student admitted to the FTMBA and PMBA. We worked through their individual situations and reiterated our commitment to deliver the program experience we had promised earlier in the recruiting process. We granted them an extension until July 1 to make their decisions. We shifted responsibilities in the college to increase staff support to these programs at this critical

time, and we have maintained the high level of resource expenditures and program activities consistent with our promises.

Also starting Monday May 27, we began talking with students and units currently involved in a joint degree with the FTMBA. The joint degree option is available for any master's or doctoral degree candidate on campus. Students need to be admitted to each program (e.g., to the law school's JD program and the FTMBA), they need to complete three semesters in a row of the FTMBA program, and then 12 credits of the FTMBA are waived. We have averaged 10 students a year jointly enrolled in the FTMBA and another campus degree program. We communicated with the campus units from which 80% of the students in the joint degree program have been drawn in the last five cohorts (and 100% of those with new students enrolling in Fall 2019): Labor and Employment Relations, Architecture, College of Law, College of Engineering (in particular, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering), and the School of Chemical Sciences. We informed them of the decision. We informed them that we were contacting each student admitted or currently enrolled in a joint degree program with FTMBA. We assured each admitted and enrolled student of our commitment to providing them the experience we promised and the opportunity to complete their MBA degree as they intended.

In the Fall of 2019, we met with each of these units on campus with a significant history of joint degree participation to discuss the specifics of other options for future students. We have heard particular interest in our one-year management program (if their students have relatively little work experience) and in our iMBA program (if they have notable work experience). In addition, we are engaged in discussions about whether and how to adapt the joint degree option to work with the iMBA. If that is a sensible and workable option, we will take the necessary steps to provide it and make it known to these and other units on campus. Letters of acknowledgement from the units are attached.

Since the announcement, which has been covered in an array of local, national, and international publications, we have had extensive opportunities to talk to students, faculty, alumni, peers, and others about our actions. Understandably, some current students and alumni were disappointed. An online petition to reconsider the matter gathered about 1250 signatures, although as the platform is open to the public it is not clear who the signatories were. Our efforts have been focused on current students, alumni, faculty, and peers. In our conversations with a large number of these colleagues, the great majority appreciated the decision and considered it the right thing to do for the college's future. Perhaps of most importance though, in the course of holding conversations with alumni about the decision, nearly all the negative reactions appeared rooted in a desire to express positive feelings about the value of the FTMBA. We were grateful to hear them and agreed. Then, once we conveyed to them the information noted earlier about the FTMBA, PMBA, and iMBA trends as well as changes in the broader US graduate business education market, nearly all alumni understood that we had made a forward-looking decision.

Action steps. The decision-making process results in program codes to phase down and eliminate. No new students will be admitted under these codes. As a result, no new joint degree students will be admitted using the approach linked with the FTMBA program code. The academic catalog will need to be updated to remove information tied to these program codes and the linked joint degree option.

10KS9875MBA: FT MBA
10KS4064MBA: PT MBA

The approximately 200 current students (split about evenly between the two program codes) are currently being offered courses, extracurricular activities, and staff support consistent with what was offered in the recent past and consistent with what we communicated to them upon their admission and enrollment. These commitments will continue through to the students completing the program, which we expect to occur in 2021.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:

1) Resources

- a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

This decision is financially accretive to the Gies College in the long-run because the FT MBA and PMBA programs both represent a net financial loss for the College. Although the negative financial contribution of these programs is not the primary reason for our decision, we will be better off financially as a result of this decision. Any short-term transition costs will be internally financed by Gies using our cash reserves.

- b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?

This decision will free up resources rather than create new demands. Classes taught only for FT MBA and PMBA will no longer need to be taught. Administrative efforts for these programs will no longer be needed. The freed-up resources will be used to further invest in our M.S. programs, our online iMBA, and our undergraduate program, all of which are expanding.

- c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.

Not applicable.

- d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program.

This is a College-wide proposal, endorsed by the Dean and three elected faculty governance committees in the College. No new resources are required and the financial arrangements are positive for the College.

2) Resource Implications

- a. Please address the impact on faculty resources including the changes in numbers of faculty, class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios, etc.

This decision will modestly reduce the significant teaching pressure currently on Gies faculty. Our College has, by far, the highest student-faculty ratio on campus, at over 58-to-1. Many of our faculty are teaching on an overload basis in order to staff all of our programs. Suspending these programs, both of which have sub-optimal class sizes, will allow us to reduce the excess burden on our faculty. This will mainly be realized through a reduction in the use of “Teaching-in-Excess” contracts for existing faculty.

- b. Please address the impact on course enrollment in other units and provide an explanation of discussions with representatives of those units.

There is very little overlap of course enrollment between FTMBA, PMBA, and other programs, and thus the impact on other units, if any, will be *de minimis*.

As noted, there is a history of about 10 students a year participating in the FTMBA as part of a joint degree with another campus program. All current and admitted students are unaffected. We have and continue to communicate with units with students in the program and strong histories of having such students. We are working with the Graduate College on alternative strategies for honoring any implicit commitment to existing non-Gies students who may not have yet applied to our MBA program by using the iMBA or one of our existing MS programs as an alternative route to earning a graduate business degree. We are committed to ensuring that any such arrangements are financially neutral for other units on campus. Naturally if a route requires further governance steps, we will proceed accordingly.

- c. Please address the impact on the University Library

Given the small size of these programs, the impact on the University Library is *de minimus*. Indeed, it will slightly reduce the demands on our library system due to having a small decrease in the number of students.

- d. Please address the impact on technology and space (e.g. computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.)

This change will reduce the demand on technology and space, allowing us to redirect these resources to other programs.

For new degree programs only: **Not applicable because this is not a new degree program**

- 3) Briefly describe how this program will support the University’s mission, focus, and/or current priorities. Include specific objectives and measurable outcomes that demonstrate the program’s consistency with and centrality to that mission.

- 4) Please provide an analysis of the market demand for this degree program. What market indicators are driving this proposal? What type of employment outlook should these graduates expect? What resources will be provided to assist students with job placement?
- 5) If this is a proposed graduate program, please discuss the programs intended use of waivers. If the program is dependent on waivers, how will the unit compensate for lost tuition revenue?


DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: On Friday, May 24, 2019, we announced our intention to suspend enrollment in these programs subject to university approvals. Our estimate is that the program codes will be no longer in use by December, 2021.

STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

Standard language that these programs are no longer accepting applications.

CLEARANCES: (Clearances should include signatures and dates of approval. **These signatures must appear on a separate sheet.** If multiple departments or colleges are sponsoring the proposal, please add the appropriate signature lines below.)


Signatures:



Unit Representative:

5/23/2019, revised 8/30/2019, revised 2/10/2020

Date:



College Representative:

5/23/2019, revised 8/30/2019, revised 2/10/2020

Date:

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

School of Labor and Employment Relations

Labor and Employment Relations Building, MC-504
504 East Armory Avenue
Champaign, IL 61820-6297



December 10, 2019

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program.

At that time, and in subsequent conversations, we have been assured that Gies would provide the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in or about to begin the MBA program as joint degree students. Our understanding is that Gies has been delivering on that promise.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our programs as well as a program at Gies.

We value our history of working together on behalf of Illinois students and look forward to continuing it into the future.

Sincerely,



Fritz Drasgow

Dean and Professor

University of Illinois | School of Labor & Employment Relations

504 East Armory Avenue, MC-504, Champaign, IL 61820

217-333-1481 | fdrasgow@illinois.edu | ler.illinois.edu



COLLEGE OF LAW

504 East Pennsylvania Avenue
Champaign, IL 61820

Vikram David Amar
Dean
Iwan Foundation Professor of Law

December 10, 2019

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program.

At that time, and in subsequent conversations, we have been assured that Gies would provide the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in or about to begin the MBA program as joint degree students. Our understanding is that Gies has been delivering on that promise.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our programs as well as a program at Gies.

We value our history of working together on behalf of Illinois students and look forward to continuing it into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vikram David Amar', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Vikram David Amar
Dean
Iwan Foundation Professor of Law

December 10, 2019

Prof. Jeffrey R. Brown
Josef & Margot Lakonishok Professor and Dean
Gies College of Business

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program.

At that time, and in subsequent conversations, we have been assured that Gies would provide the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in or about to begin the MBA program as joint degree students. Our understanding is that Gies has been delivering on that promise.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our programs as well as a program at Gies.

We value our history of working together on behalf of Illinois students and look forward to continuing it into the future.

Sincerely,



Rashid Bashir, Ph.D.
Dean College of Engineering
Grainger Distinguished Chair in Engineering
Professor of Bioengineering



SCHOOL OF CHEMICAL SCIENCES

Office of the Director
106 Noyes Laboratory, D-5, MC-712
505 S. Mathews Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801

December 10, 2019

Jeffrey Brown
Dean and Josef and Margot Lakonishok Professor of Business
Gies College of Business Administration
brownjr@illinois.edu

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program.

At that time, and in subsequent conversations, we have been assured that Gies would provide the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in or about to begin the MBA program as joint degree students. Our understanding is that Gies has been delivering on that promise.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our programs as well as a program at Gies.

We value our history of working together on behalf of Illinois students and look forward to continuing it into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jonathan V. Sweedler'.

Jonathan V. Sweedler
James R. Eiszner Family Endowed Chair in Chemistry
Director, School of Chemical Sciences

Cc: Martin Gruebele, Head of Department of Chemistry
Paul J. A. Kenis, Head of Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering



DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Newmark Civil Engineering Laboratory
205 N. Mathews Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801

December 11, 2019

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering) was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program. Since that time we have been advising interested CEE graduate students that this joint degree program was not available.

At that time, and through subsequent conversations with our students and Gies faculty/staff, we know that Gies has been providing the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled or about to begin the joint degree program between CEE and MBA.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies faculty and staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our CEE graduate program in conjunction with existing and new programs that may be offered by Gies.

We look forward to continuing to work together on behalf of Illinois students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffery R. Roesler". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jeff Roesler, Ph.D., P.E.
Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
CEE Associate Head and Director of Graduate Studies and Research
Associate Director of ATREL (<http://www.ict.illinois.edu/>)

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
205 N. Mathews MC-250
Urbana, IL 61801
217-265-0218



COLLEGE OF FINE & APPLIED ARTS

Office of the Dean
100 Architecture Building
608 East Lorado Taft Drive
Champaign, IL 61820

January 3, 2020

Dear Dean Brown,

As you know, a small number of our Architecture students over the years have taken advantage of the opportunity to earn a joint-degree in Business while here in our residential professional Masters program in Architecture. In May 2019, you let us know that the Gies College would no longer afford this opportunity, given the planned cessation of a residential full-time MBA program.

Given the low number of our students who have taken advantage of this opportunity, your notice gave us ample time to prepare, so we experienced no negative consequences of this change. We have also greatly appreciated our ongoing collaborations with Gies to ensure our students get access to your faculty's expertise. Our understanding is that no students have experienced gaps through this change, and that Gies remains open to meeting new needs in creative ways.

The door to collaborating with Gies toward our students' best interests always feels open, and we look forward to future collaborations. Thank you for your work in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Kevin Hamilton
Dean and Professor

February 14, 2020

Dean Jeffrey Brown
Gies College of Business
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dean Brown:

As the University of Illinois Senate considers the Gies College's decision to end the residential MBA and PMBA programs, I write to express the strong and unanimous support of the Dean's Business Council (DBC) for this move. While it is a bold action on the part of the College, more importantly, it is the responsible thing to do.

For many decades, the DBC has served as the primary alumni advisory board to Deans of the Gies College of Business. With approximately fifty members representing alumni from various Gies graduate and undergraduate business programs - including the MBA program - we have always brought a well-informed, independent perspective. The advisory function of the DBC is one of the key responsibilities that makes it distinct from the Gies Business Alumni Association (GBAA), on which I also serve. The GBAA is primarily focused on alumni engagement and while important to the College, it does not advise the College on matters of policy or operations.

As the primary alumni advisory body, the DBC fully supports Gies College of Business' decision to suspend enrollment in the full-time residential and part-time MBA programs. While we recognize change can be difficult, we understand the landscape of higher education and the needs of business professionals are changing rapidly. Business schools must change too or else they risk being paralyzed by inaction. The launch of the iMBA program in 2016 is a perfect example of how change can happen and how business schools must adapt. When the iMBA was proposed, the DBC asked a lot of important and critical questions, but understood the need to change and supported that decision as well. The success of the iMBA highlights the ongoing value of DBC input. We are proud of the series of forward-looking and innovative strategies being pursued by Gies.

We appreciate how leadership at Gies Business, including yourself, were diligent in openly communicating with the DBC regarding changes to the MBA offering. In 2018, your team presented to the DBC their ongoing deliberations regarding your strategy for graduate education. Then in our April 2019 meeting of the DBC, your team came back to the group to solicit and listen to our input about the future of the MBA degree. After hearing the input from the DBC, the group appreciated being consulted again prior to announcing your decision in May 2019. The conference call you held with the executive committee of the DBC allowed the group to ask more questions, after which we voted *unanimously* to support this decision.

We are proud of the College's leadership for taking this bold action in a responsible and transparent manner. We look forward to continuing to support Gies College of Business and the University of Illinois.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal tail extending to the right.

Cedric D. Thurman
Chair, Dean's Business Council

Moorhouse, Linda

From: Loewenstein, Jeffrey
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2020 5:00 PM
To: Moorhouse, Linda
Subject: Re: EP.20.10 revision for upload
Attachments: MBA Joint Degree Request for Letters.docx

Categories: Important

Linda,

In case it's useful to know, the email request that went to unit leaders is below, and the sample letter is attached.

Best,

Jeff

Dear [unit leader],

I am writing to request a letter of acknowledgment that we informed your unit in May 2019 of our decision to suspend enrollment in our on-campus, residential MBA program. A sample letter is attached, although you should feel free to alter it any way you wish.

As background, the Senate Educational Policy Committee (EPC) has requested documentation that we informed units on campus with whom we had joint degree programs of our decision. As a technical matter, our offering of an MBA as a joint degree with other graduate degrees on campus was enabled by a single policy that we put forth many years ago and which applies across the campus, so we do not have any specific agreement with your unit. Nonetheless, in order to be responsive to the EPC request, we are reaching out to the small number of units on campus that have had at least one joint degree student with our MBA in the past six years. Your unit is among those.

To be clear, you need not take a position in this letter on the MBA decision itself. Rather, we are simply asking for a letter acknowledging that we informed you and have been working with your team to treat all existing students fairly and to work through potential future options for other joint degree offerings.

Provost Cangelaris is supportive of this request.

If you could send us a signed letter on your unit's letterhead prior to the holiday break, I would be grateful.

Thank you.

Jeffrey R. Brown
Josef & Margot Lakonishok Professor and Dean
260 Wohlers Hall | 1206 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820
217-333-3322 | brownjr@illinois.edu

December 10, 2019

Dear Dean Brown,

I am writing to confirm that our unit was notified in May 2019 that the full-time MBA joint degree program was no longer going to be offered because of the Gies College's decision to stop enrolling students in your residential full-time MBA program.

At that time, and in subsequent conversations, we have been assured that Gies would provide the expected faculty, curriculum, career advising, and experiential learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in or about to begin the MBA program as joint degree students. Our understanding is that Gies has been delivering on that promise.

Since May, we have had additional conversations with Gies staff to discuss the options available to future students interested in our programs as well as a program at Gies.

We value our history of working together on behalf of Illinois students and look forward to continuing it into the future.

Sincerely,

Summary Notes for EP.20.10

The Educational Policy Committee specifically notes that the path of EP 20.10 is highly irregular. Shared governance was notified that the residential and part-time MBA programs were to be discontinued only after public announcements were made by the Gies College of Business in the Spring of 2019. EP was then made aware of an online petition urging reconsideration, which garnered 1,200 signatures. After consideration, in October of 2019, EP voted to request a formal proposal from Gies. A proposal was transmitted, and discussions with Gies ensued. In the course of these discussions, Gies explained that its late spring 2019 announcement was made to ensure transparency and fairness to those students who had applied and been accepted to the programs. The many questions and concerns EP members raised about EP 20.10 have been systematically and carefully answered by Gies. These included inquiries about outreach to stakeholders, and Gies' investigation of additional challenges, including the accommodation of students with disabilities in the online learning program. At the request of EP, Gies revised the original proposal, incorporating documentation from units in the Joint MBA programs and support from business alumni who serve on the Dean's Council in the Gies College of Business. EP specifically notes that the Gies College of Business has made key administrators repeatedly available to respond to questions about this proposal, its genesis, its development, and its substance. Based upon this information, albeit belatedly provided out of standard protocol and procedure, EP is now prepared to address this proposal.

EP notes that, given the media coverage, subsequent actions by the College of Business, and the long delay in the Gies College of Business's responses to this committee, this proposal represents the documentation of studies and decisions made by Gies. Had this proposal been presented in a timely fashion, it could have been appropriately approved without the need for the extraordinary measures that its belated submission required.

The Educational Policy Committee recommends approval of this proposal. We, however, particularly lament the choices that precluded participation of all stakeholders (including a wide representation of current MBA students and program alumni) and lament the lost opportunity to provide a timely review of this proposed program closure and provide input with respect to its transition to an online-only platform.

EP would like to highlight four counsels germane to EP 20.10, which may also pertain to future proposals:

1. The approval of EP 20.10 is not meant to set a precedent for protocol on future program revisions or eliminations. Announcing program changes without involving those in shared governance led to proceedings that were burdensome and difficult for both EP and Gies College of Business. Academic units should strive to adhere to regular procedure in presenting proposals.
2. Colleges are advised that they may seek advice from a subset of EP concerning sensitive changes, such as major program revisions, and should contact the Chair of the Committee should such changes be considered. The Open Meetings Act would permit informal meetings with the EP chair and subcommittee chairs to consider matters that would need to be addressed in a proposal but are deemed too sensitive to discuss publicly. While EP cannot control the agenda deadlines for the Senate and Board of Trustees, it will work on proposals whenever they become available, and not conclude or terminate discussions merely due to timing issues.
3. Those units desiring to eliminate or alter programs should keep the implications of these changes on all affected units and stakeholders in and outside of college in the forefront of discussions. As a public institution, our mandate does not permit deviations from these considerations.
4. The levels of accountability, transparency, and involvement expected of a public university are high. We remind campus units that strict secrecy in decision making is often inappropriate and may be illegal.