REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO IMPLEMENT A BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE PREPARED BY UW-EAU CLAIRE

ABSTRACT

The University of Wisconsin (UW)-Eau Claire proposes to establish a Bachelor of Business Administration [BBA] in Business Communication. A BBA in business communication would be the first of its kind in the UW-System and one of only a few nationally (e.g., Arizona State and Stephen F. Austin University). The BBA degree in business communication program will contribute directly to UW-Eau Claire's mission to offer rigorous, distinctive programming. Business communication courses routinely incorporate community-based projects or service-learning opportunities; therefore, the major will also help the university fulfill the goal of its Academic Master Plan to offer high-impact practices.

As College of Business enrollments increase, the business communication major would add to its array of offerings. The workplace demands the skill set in the business communication major, and UW-Eau Claire is well positioned to provide it. This program also lets UW-Eau Claire demonstrate its tradition of offering responsive, relevant, and distinguished degree programs. Students will take (1) 29 credits in the business core, (2) 17 credits of proficiency or support courses, (3) 16 required business communication credits, (4) 6 elective CoB credits, and (5) 9 elective credits in communication, art and design, English, or computer science. Students will earn the additional credits to reach the 120-credit minimum by taking other electives and 36 LE credits. Students pursuing this major have HIP opportunities via course-based community projects, independent and directed studies, and internships. Data gathered from the UW-Eau Claire data dashboard, College of Business enrollment trends, and two business communication programs at other universities indicate that student demand for a business communication program would be strong and be one that grows in the coming years.

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

University name University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Title of proposed academic degree program

Bachelor of Business Administration-Business Communication

Degree Designation(s)

Bachelor of Business Administration

Mode of Delivery

Single institution (UW-Eau Claire), course delivery will be primarily face-to-face with hybrid, high-flex, and online options.

Department or Functional Equivalent

Business Communication

College, School, or Functional Equivalent

College of Business

Proposed Date of Implementation

Fall 2023

Projected Enrollments and Graduates by Year Five

Table 1 represents enrollment and graduation projections for students entering the program over the next five years. New student enrollment is based on a conservative estimate of 15% of students who previously applied under either Business Pre-professional (aka Business Undecided) or Business Administration (BSAD), 15% of students who would historically discover the BCOM certificate after applying for a management or marketing degree but who would now pursue a BCOM major, and 6.3% of the BSAD and Business Undecided students who historically drop out of school. These are all typically students who know they want to be in Business but don't see a major aligning with their business-focused communication interests. By the end of Year 5, it is expected that 145 students will have enrolled in the program and 75 students will have graduated from the program. The average student retention rate is projected to be 82%, based on the 82% average retention rate in the College of Business. Continuing student numbers will continue to increase as students either discover the Business Communication major and convert to it or add it as a second major to another COB degree.

Students/Year	Year 1 (2023)	Year 2 (2024)	Year 3 (2025)	Year 4 (2026)	Year 5 (2027)
New Students	25	27	29	31	33
Continuing Students	8	21	33	44	54
Total Enrollment	33	48	62	75	87
Graduating Students	0	15	17	20	23

Table 1: Five-Year Academic Degree Program Enrollment Projections

Tuition Structure

For students enrolled in a BBA in Business Communication program, standard tuition and fee rates will apply. For the academic year FY23 the estimated rates: residential tuition and segregated fees total \$4,454.37 (including \$70 for textbook rental) per semester for a full-time student enrolled in 12-18 credits per semester or \$371.20 per credit. Of this amount, \$3,680.64 is attributable to tuition and \$773.73 is attributable to segregated fees. Nonresident tuition and segregated fees total \$8,810.58 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in 12-18 credits per semester or \$734.21 per credit. Of this amount, \$8,036.85 is attributable to tuition and \$773.73 is attributable to segregated fees.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Overview of the program

The AACSB 2016 Trends Report says business communication programs experienced a 50% growth in the previous five years.¹ Likewise, careers in corporate communications are predicted to grow as organizations prioritize employee engagement; retention; change management; technology; internal communication systems; and integrated functions in marketing, human resource, finance, sales, and research and development.² A review of job postings on <u>LinkedIn</u>, <u>Glassdoor</u>, <u>ZipRecruiter</u>, and <u>Monster</u> reveals thousands job postings under the umbrella of corporate or internal communication specialists requiring extensive knowledge of both business *and* communication; students with degrees only in business or only in communication have half the skill set they need for these types of jobs. The 29-credit business-core, combined with the business context applied in all business communication courses, prepares students to start their careers as value-added assets. Graduates from other degree programs would have to learn business acumen on the job; business graduates, the communication acumen. The business communication major meets business employers' needs to fill positions with graduates who meet their specific communication and business needs.

Program requirements and curriculum General college and university requirements

UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education Core* (minimum)	
College of Business Proficiency* (ECON, MATH, MGRL ACCT)	
UW-Eau Claire Service Learning (30 hours)	

BCOM major requirements

COB Student Professional Development Program: 4 workshops (not for credit)	
Business Core (BUSCORE*) 2	29
BCOM Required Course Credits1	6
BCOM Elective Course Credits <u>1</u>	5
Sum (comprehensive major)	50

¹ AACSB 2016 Trends Report, p. 12.

Credits

*Some degree overlap may exist between UW-Eau Claire LE Core and COB Proficiency or BUSCORE requirements, depending on the individual student's plan of study.

Student learning outcomes and program objectives

Graduates of the BCOM program will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate mastery of the following student learning outcomes. Assessment results for these program outcomes are submitted to the university as part of the university assessment process. The BCOM program also participates in the LE Core S1 assessment.

- **Business Core:** Students apply knowledge of core business concepts through their written, oral, visual, and technology-mediated communication.
- Written Communication: Students will construct business documents (e.g., emails, memos, letters, reports, proposals, manuals, instructions) appropriate to audiences, multimodal contexts, and purposes using standard business document formats and business rhetoric.
- Oral Communication: Students will demonstrate effective oral communication in business contexts (e.g., individual presentations, meetings, seminars, roundtable discussions, interviews, interpersonal settings) appropriate to audiences and stakeholders using multiple modalities and business rhetoric.
- Visual Communication: Students will evaluate, create, and curate visuals (e.g., charts, graphs, dashboards, infographics) to effectively and efficiently communicate business data in multiple modalities
- English grammar, usage, mechanics, and punctuation: (a) Students will demonstrate proficiency in the rhetorical application of business-English grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. (b) Students will create and apply style guides to business documents.
- Technologies and Software: Students will critically engage with technologies and software such as productivity software (e.g., Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite), social media platforms, and virtual communication platforms (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, MS Teams) to communicate effectively in business contexts.

As mentioned above, graduates of the BCOM program are also assessed on their ability to demonstrate mastery of the following COB learning goals. Assessment results for these BBA program outcomes comprise part of the Association to Advance Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB) assurance of learning process.

- Written and Oral Communication: Students will be effective communicators
- Teamwork: Students will be effective team members
- Problem Solving: Students will be effective problem-solvers
- BBA Common Body of Knowledge: Students will demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge (represented by the BUSCORE)

Program requirements and curriculum

The BCOM program has no special admission criteria. There are no admission requirements, test scores, or prerequisites for entry into this program.

Table 2 illustrates the program curriculum for business communication major. The program requirements comprise (1) 29 credits in the business core, (2) a 3-credit managerial accounting course, (3) 16 required business communication credits, (4) 6 elective CoB credits, and (5) 9 elective credits in communication, art and design, English, or computer science. Students will earn the additional credits to reach the 120-credit minimum by taking other electives and 36 LE credits.

Table 2: BBA in Business Communication Program Curriculum Liberal education experiences required for graduation: at least 36 credits

Liberal education experiences required for graduation: at leas	t 36 credits
Knowledge Outcome 1 (Natural Sciences)	2 experiences
Knowledge Outcome 2 (Social Sciences)	2 experiences
Knowledge Outcome 3 (Humanities)	2 experiences
Knowledge Outcome 4 (Fine Arts)	1 experience
Skills Outcome 1 (Written and Oral Communication)	2 experiences
Skills Outcome 2 (Mathematics)	1 experience
Skills Outcome 3 (Creativity)	1 experience
Responsibility Outcome 1 (Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity)	2 experiences
Responsibility Outcome 2 (Global Perspectives)	1 experience
Responsibility Outcome 3 (Civic and Environmental)	1 experience
Integration Outcome (Integration)	2 experiences
Service-Learning	30 hours
Proficiency or support courses: 17 credits	
ECON 103: Principles of Microeconomics	3 credits
ECON 104: Principles of Macroeconomics	3 credits
MATH 109: Algebra for Calculus	4 credits
MATH 246: Elementary Statistics	4 credits
ACCT 214: Managerial Accounting	3 credits
Academic degree program or major course requirements:	
<i>The BUSCORE:</i> 29 credits	
ACCT 201: Introduction to Accounting	3 credits
BCOM 206: Business Writing	2 credits
BCOM 207: Business Presentations	2 credits
IS 240: Information Systems in Business	3 credits
BSAD 300: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Workplace	1 credit
BSAD 305: Legal and Regulatory Environment	3 credits
FIN 320: Principles of Finance	3 credits
MKTG 330: Principles of Marketing	3 credits

MGMT 340: Organizational Behavior MGMT 341: Operations Management MGMT 449: Strategic Management in Global Bus Env	3 credits 3 credits 3 credits
Additional Required BCOM Core Courses: 16 credits	
, BCOM 200: Business English and Document Editing	2 credits
BCOM 201: Technology for Business Communication	2 credits
BCOM 306: Advanced Business Writing	2 credits
BCOM 307: Advanced Business Presentations	2 credits
BCOM 308: Contemporary Issues in Business	2 credits
Communication	
BCOM 309: Business Communication in Workplace	2 credits
Relationships	
BCOM 401: Data Visualization & Communication	2 credits
BCOM 405: Advanced Business Communication	2 credits
Electives (from MGMT, MKTG, BSAD, , BCOM, IS, ART, CJ, CS, and	15 credits
ENGL)	
Additional credits to reach 120 for the BBA degree	varies
Total Credits	120 credits

Assessment of outcomes and objectives

As indicated above in the Student Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives section, the BBA in BCOM program will participate in both university and AACSB accreditation. The BCOM program will participate in all established university assessment processes, including a routinely updated assessment plan, and annual reports of assessment activities aligned with AACSB accreditation cycle.

For program (major) assessment purposes, the program will gather data on program outcomes, discuss results, identify changes that can be made to enhance learning, and report those activities in an annual program assessment report. The program assessment plan will be reviewed by the University Assessment Committee. Annual reports will also be reviewed by the committee on a rotating basis. Because of the shared BUSCORE courses, assessment of outcomes for this program will build upon and benefit from the similar assessment of established programs in the College of Business.

Similarly, for AACSB assessment purposes, a representative sample of BCOM students will contribute assessment data for the COB learning goals/outcomes. The COB Assurance of Learning Committee will review the assessment data and make recommendations to the COB Curriculum Committee and the relevant program curriculum committees. The program curriculum committees will then discuss results and identify changes that can be made to enhance learning across the college curriculum.

Diversity

The BCOM program, as part of the College of Business and UW-Eau Claire campus, is fully committed to advancing campus objectives related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Eight percent (29 of 379; 8%) of the students enrolled in the Advanced Business Communication certificate over the most recent five-year period (2017-2021) were students of color. Marketing efforts for this proposed major program will align with the college-wide efforts to recruit students of color.

Currently, the BCOM program supports a better comprehension and understanding of diversity through the content and pedagogy. Heavily embedded within the framework of the program is modeling and teaching best practices related to communicating a work environment that promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion and to be champions of inclusive communication in any environment. A significant component of this program involves studying the use of language in both a grammatical and applied context; using language that respects the diversity of those in the classroom, community, and workplace; and teaching students to promote an environment where everyone can feel valued and welcomed.

Furthermore, the BCOM program fosters greater appreciation of diversity through its promotion of internships and other experiential learning opportunities. Most BCOM majors will find themselves learning to work effectively with multiple types of diversity through internships or through class-related projects that require them to work with a variety of industries in our community.

The proposed BBA-BCOM program will follow all university and legal policies for recruiting faculty, seek out advertisement outlets which have higher diverse visibility, and conduct selection training prior to the selection process to ensure a fair and equitable selection process is followed.

The College of Business is an active member of the PhD Project, an organization that supports Black, LatinX and Native American individuals through their business doctorates and throughout their careers.

Collaborative nature of the program

While the Business Communication Program currently provides two courses in the UW Undergraduate Business Alliance online program, we do not anticipate any other collaborative plans such as partnerships or consortium arrangements that will be made with other UW universities or organizations specifically for the BBA-BCOM major. The program would be open to collaborations with other UW universities provided the goals and expectations of the collaborations align with the AACSB accreditation standards that the College of Business must maintain.

Projected time to degree

The program is completed within a traditional four-year timeframe. The degree program consists of 120 credits required for graduation, including 60 credits within the major. Of the 60 credits in the major, 15 credits are electives thus providing scheduling flexibility. In addition, students may have anywhere from 7 to 24 non-specified credits of coursework outside the major in reaching the total 120 credits required for graduation, based on the amount of overlap among LE Core, COB Proficiencies, and the BUSCORE.

Program review

Because the College of Business is externally accredited by AACSB, the five-year AACSB review process substitutes for the standard seven-year program review process applied to most other programs on campus. The AACSB review involves a thorough evaluation of the currency and relevance of the college curriculum, effectiveness of assurance of learning (AOL) processes, faculty qualifications, and student engagement. The AACSB report is shared with the Academic Policies Committee (APC) in the year following the external AACSB review. APC then conducts an abbreviated internal review based on the AACSB report.

Accreditation

As noted above, the BCOM program will be housed in the College of Business which maintains AACSB accreditation. AACSB accreditation extends to all programs housed within the College of Business, as well as the BBA option for the Economics major.

JUSTIFICATION

Rationale and relation to mission

The Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Business Communication will contribute directly to the mission of the UW System by offering a major that is the first of its kind in the UW-System and one of only a few nationally (e.g., Arizona State, St. Thomas University, Central Michigan, and Stephen F. Austin University).

The BCOM major's unique mix of course work that combines academic rigor and scholarly inquiry with an applied focus on communication in the context of the business and commerce, supports the UW-System's mission "to develop human resources, to discover and disseminate knowledge, to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society by developing in students heightened intellectual, cultural, and humane sensitivities, scientific, professional and technological expertise, and a sense of purpose."

The major's use of both classroom instruction and community-based projects is also supportive of the UW System's mission statement that "we offer methods of instruction, research, extended training, and public service designed to educate people and improve the human condition. Basic to every purpose of the UW System is the search for truth."

The BBA degree in business communication program will contribute directly to UW-Eau Claire's mission by contributing to its array of rigorous, distinctive programming and by developing students' academic and applied knowledge of business and workplace skills.

UW-Eau Claire's mission specifically states that "we foster in one another creativity, critical insight, empathy, and intellectual courage, the hallmarks of a transformative liberal education and the foundation for active citizenship and lifelong inquiry. We fulfill our mission through a pervasive university commitment to provide:

- Rigorous, intentional and experiential undergraduate liberal education for life and livelihood;
- Strong, distinctive professional and graduate programs that build on and strengthen our proud tradition of liberal education;
- Multicultural and international learning experiences for a diverse world;
- Exemplary student-faculty research and scholarship that enhance teaching and learning;
- An inclusive campus community that challenges students to develop their intellectual, personal, cultural, and social competencies;
- Educational opportunities responsive to the needs of our communities, state, region and beyond; and
- Academic leadership in transforming liberal education."

The proposed BBA-Business Communication degree supports all facets of the mission statement. Its combination of a business degree with a concentration in businessspecific communication skills offers a rigorous curriculum that combines education and experiential training written, oral, visual, and technology-mediated communication. As mentioned, the fact that some of the courses in the major (e.g., the Advanced Business Writing course) offer community-based experiences supports the mission of the university to provide opportunities for experiential learning and high-impact practices. All features of the curriculum in the proposed BBA-Business Communication major foster not just the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also the problem-solving, analytical thinking, critical thinking, decision-making, and creativity required for success in the workforce, the community, and in students' personal lives. Furthermore, the proposed course of study in the BBA-Business Communication major is inherently positioned to and committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion; the program wants its students not only to understand what these principles are but to live them wherever they go and to be innovators in helping their organizations create equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace cultures.

The proposed program at UW-Eau Claire supports major themes in the university's Strategic Plan. These major themes in UW-Eau Claire's strategic plan are

- 1. To achieve national distinction in health and wellbeing; leadership in equity, diversity, and inclusion; and integrated undergraduate research and creative activity in all disciplines.
- 2. To support our strengths, which include an exemplary education, nationally distinctive partnerships, and sustainable campuses

In implementing the strategic plan, UW-Eau Claire has established four guidepost goals that a BBA-Business communication major is positioned to help achieve:

- **100% of our students will participate in high-impact practices (HIPS).** The current Advanced Business Communication Certificate offers community-based course work, internships, and opportunities for faculty-student research collaboration. Offering a BBA-Business Communication would only increase our ability to offer HIP opportunities to a wider array of students in a greater number of course offerings.
- **90% of students will be retained to year two.** As mentioned above and in the budget narrative, we are going to attract plus retain those business students who would have otherwise dropped out of the university because they were unable to find a major that aligned with their combined interests in business and communication.
- **50% students will graduate in four years.** Students could complete a BBA-Business communication degree in four years by taking 15 credits each fall and spring semester.
- **20% students of color and eliminate the opportunity gap.** The BBA-Business Communication program would enthusiastically participate in College of Business and university-wide initiatives to attract students of color and eliminate the opportunity gap.

Members of the local and national business community offer their support. Amber Krakowski, who is based in the Twin Cities as a global account manager, Hewlett Packard Enterprise writes, *"I am thrilled to hear the UW-Eau Claire College of Business is considering a Business Communication major. As a member of the BCOM Advisory Council, this is something I've recommended several times, because the needs in business-related fields are changing. By expanding this coursework to a major, the College of Business will better position itself to stay relevant with changing trends and reach a wider net of individuals looking for post-secondary education."*

Kelley Simon, Technical Writer II, Royal Credit Union, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, says, "I have worked in the financial industry as a technical writer for 21 years, and while my English degree prepared me to succeed as a writer, it did not give me an understanding of business practices. I believe you will find that this degree is very popular because when you tie a thorough understanding of business and communication together, you are graduating a student that can apply those skills across multiple industries and career paths."

University program array

No program similar to business communication exists within the UW-Eau Claire program array. The program contains a unique combination of broad principles of business via the BUSCORE requirement, coupled with specific courses exposing students to current best practices and critical thinking skills to advance the field of business communication in its multiple modalities: written, oral, visual, and technology-mediated. UW-Eau Claire offers majors in organizational communication and integrated strategic communication as well as a major in rhetorics of science, technology, and culture (which focuses primarily on written communication). While these programs study rhetorically grounded frameworks for how communication creates, enables, and constrains the process of organizing and communicating, they do not emerge from a foundation of business theory and practice. None of these programs are business degrees. They do, however, offer a rich elective array that would provide a complementary skill set, theoretical foundation, and support for students in the BBA-BCOM major.

Other programs in the University of Wisconsin System

The business communication degree does not duplicate any degree program in the UW-System. UW-Eau Claire, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Green Bay, and UW-Stevens Point offer majors in organizational communication; UW-Stout, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-La Crosse offer majors in professional communication. As mentioned, these programs do not emerge from a foundation of business theory and practice—they focus on the broad field of communication and a general skill set. None of these programs are business degrees. In fact, when the BCOM Notice of Intent was distributed to the other UW-System campuses, the university received only support and no concerns about adding this major at UW-Eau Claire.

A business communication degree would be the only business degree in the UW System that specializes in business workplace communication. It would provide a unique academic space for students to study oral, written, visual, and technology-mediated communication purely in a corporate and commercial context. Business communication focuses on the creation of business messages required for businesses to operate successfully. It includes both strategic and transactional communication that all businesspeople use.

Need as suggested by current student demand

Historical data to support new-student enrollment was obtained from the university's Institutional Research office and online dashboards. In Year 1, we estimate 25 new students, as described. Thirteen (13) students represent 15% of students who apply as business administration or business undecided. These students typically know they want to be in business but don't see a major aligning with their business-focused communication

interests. Six (6) students represent 15% of the management and marketing majors who are currently pursuing a BCOM certificate but who would select a BCOM major instead, if that option was on their e-application. Another 6 students that this program will attract and retain represent the 6.3% of students from BSAD and business undecided who drop out of school. The total of 25 new students aligns with new-student enrollment at two institutions with business communication programs: St. Thomas University in Minnesota and Stephen F. Austin University in Texas. Their new-student enrollment is 15-25 students per year, respectively. The college anticipates a steady growth of 27, 29, 31, and 33 students per year over the next four years. Additionally, based on demand for the BCOM certificate, students discovering the BCOM major and either converting to it or adding it as a second program of study will help provide exposure to the program, thereby bolstering future demand.

Need as suggested by market demand

Students who pursue the proposed BBA-Business Communication have many career options that are in demand. One popular career path is that of the internal communications specialist (also referred to as "communication manager" or communication specialist"). A review of job postings on LinkedIn, Glassdoor, ZipRecruiter, and Monster reveals thousands job postings under the title of internal communication specialists that require extensive knowledge of both business *and* communication, as the primary job of the internal communications specialist is to coordinate, create, and disseminate communication among an organization's employees within and across the functional areas in the organization (e.g., marketing, accounting, finance, manufacturing/operations, the c-suite, shareholders); they may also engage in external communication with customers, vendors, and other stakeholders.

The average salary for an internal communications specialist in the United States is \$72,000/year; \$57,908, in Wisconsin. However, the salary is industry-dependent, with those who work in fields such as finance or manufacturing averaging \$84,066 per year and \$77,334, respectively, and those in the hospitality industry averaging \$56,303.² The demand for internal communications specialists is expected to grow by 6% (17,600 new jobs) between 2018 and 2028.³ Likewise, positions in this field are predicted to grow as organizations prioritize employee engagement; retention; change management; technology; internal communication systems; and integrated functions in marketing, human resource, finance, sales, and research and development⁴. Careers in related fields, for which a student earning a BBA-BCOM would be qualified, such as corporate communications (e.g., public relations, technical communication) are predicted to grow

² Zippia. "Average Internal Communication Specialist Salary." Zippia, 18 Aug. 2021,

https://www.zippia.com/internal-communications-specialist-jobs/salary/ (accessed 21 Jan 2022).

³ Zippia. "How to Become an Internal Communications Specialist." *Zippia*, 18 Aug.

²⁰²¹https://www.zippia.com/internal-communications-specialist-jobs/ (accessed 21 Jan 2022).

⁴ The MyHub Team ."Internal Communications Jobs: What Internal Communications Specialists Can Offer Your Company." (2017) *MyHub*, <u>https://www.myhubintranet.com/internal-communications-jobs/</u> (accessed 8 July 2021).

14% between now and 2030.⁵ In addition, because the BBA-BCOM is a business degree, students could also seek general management positions, which are expected to grow 9% from 2020–2030.⁶

As College of Business enrollments increase, the business communication major would add to its array of offerings. The workplace demands the skill set in the business communication major, and UW-Eau Claire is well positioned to provide it. This program also lets UW-Eau Claire demonstrate its tradition of offering responsive, relevant, and distinguished degree programs.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Media and communication occupations." *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/home.htm (accessed 21 Jan. 2022).

⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Management occupations." *Occupational Outlook Handbook.*

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/home.htm (accessed 21 Jan.

^{2022).}https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/home.htm.