

Notice of Intent: Business Communication, BBA

The name of the lead institution: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

The name of the proposed program: Bachelor of Business Administration–Business Communication

The institutional setting, mode of delivery, and institutional contact information: single institution (UW-Eau Claire), primarily face-to-face with some hybrid, high-flex, and online course options. Contact: Paula Lentz (ginderpj@uwec.edu), UW-Eau Claire, Academic Program Director, Business Communication.

The suggested CIP code: Business/Corporate Communications, Other: 52.0599

A description of the new program/anticipated program and learning outcomes: Students will take (1) 29 credits in the business core, (2) a 3-credit managerial accounting course, (3) 20 required business communication credits, (4) 3 elective CoB credits, and (5) 6 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.

Desired learning outcomes for the BBA-Business Communication are as follows:

- **Business Core:** Students will apply core business concepts.
- **Written Communication:** Students will write business documents (e.g., emails, memos, letters, reports, proposals, manuals, instructions) using standard business document formats and business rhetoric for print and online media.
- **Oral Communication:** Students will communicate effectively— individually and in teams—with multiple audiences and stakeholders in business presentations, meetings, roundtable discussions, interviews, and interpersonal settings.
- **Visual Communication:** Students will use visuals such as charts, graphs, dashboards, and infographics to communicate business-focused quantitative and qualitative data in written communication and oral presentations.
- **English grammar, mechanics, and punctuation:** (a) Students will follow standards for business-English grammar, mechanics, and punctuation in written and oral communication. (b) Students will create and apply style guides to business documents.
- **Technologies and Software:** Students will use technologies and software to create business documents and presentations, present data, and facilitate meetings. Technologies include Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite, social media platforms, and virtual communication applications (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, MS Teams).

Content and program level/relationship to other offerings: Students in this major will complete a program of study that integrates the following components.

- **Business Core:** Students in the BBA-Business Communication major—as all other business majors—will take the same business core and proficiency courses: Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Elementary Statistics, Managerial Accounting, Principles of Accounting, Information Systems in Business, Business Writing, Business Presentations, Diversity in the Workplace, Legal and Regulatory Environment, Principles of Finance, Principles of Marketing, Organizational Behavior, Operations Management, and Strategic Management in a Global Business Environment. The business core provides a unique contribution of this major via a reciprocal reinforcement of a) business communication in the business core and

- b) business practices and problems in the business communication courses.
- **Business Communication Courses:** Students will take the following business communication courses, all of which will be taught by business communication faculty and staff in the College of Business: Technology for Business Communication, Business English and Document Editing, Business Writing, Business Presentations, Advanced Business Writing, Advanced Business Presentations, Contemporary Issues in Business Communication (research and theory course), Workplace Relationships, Data Visualization & Communication, and Advanced Business Communication (capstone course).
 - **Electives:** Students will take an additional 3 credits of business electives and 6 credits of electives outside the College of Business in art and graphic design, organizational communication, mass communication, computer science, and/or technical writing.
 - **Additional Coursework:** To reach the 120 credits required for graduation, students will complete the Liberal Education course requirements and 39 credits of upper-division electives. This coursework will let students explore courses related to business communication or focus on graphic design; web design; organizational communication; or rhetorics of science, technology, and culture. Impacted departments were consulted. The department chairs in Computer Science, Art and Graphic Design, English, and Communication and Journalism (and with CJ faculty) are amenable to this requirement, appreciate the complementary knowledge/skill sets, and are able to accommodate business communication majors in their courses.

Existing or anticipated resources required to deliver the program: Resources for offering this major exist in the business core and the interdisciplinary electives across campus. The six faculty in the Business Communication Program will cover all upper-division business communication courses in the major. Additional adjunct staff will help cover the demand for the core BCOM 206-Business Writing and BCOM 207-Business Presentations courses. Teaching the online Undergraduate Alliance and MBA Consortium courses provides backfill money to hire adjuncts to meet that demand. The upper-division courses will be offered on a fall/spring rotating basis so that students can complete the degree in four years.

Information on other required approvals to offer the program beyond the BOR: None

Alignment with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing academic program array and a link to the UW institution's academic strategic plan: 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.

A rationale that clearly defines the need for the new program, including market and student demand in the context of local, regional, and systemwide programs: The AACSB 2016 Trends Report says business communication programs experienced a 50 percent 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;

¹ AACSB 2016 Trends Report, p. 12.

internal communication systems; and integrated functions in marketing, human resource, finance, sales, and research and development.² A review of job postings on [LinkedIn](#), [Glassdoor](#), [ZipRecruiter](#), and [Monster](#) 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 duplication: 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. These programs study how communication creates, enables, and constrains the process of organizing and communicating. They 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.

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 and written communication purely in the 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.

Members of the local and national business community offer their support. Amber Krakowski, 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, 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.”*

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.

² The MyHub Team (2017). “Internal Communications Jobs: What Internal Communications Specialists Can Offer Your Company,” *MyHub*, <https://www.myhubintranet.com/internal-communications-jobs/>