

UW-Stevens Point: MBA program at UW-Stevens Point moves step closer to reality

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A master's in business administration (MBA) in applied learning and leadership may be offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point beginning in May 2019.

By focusing on applied leadership and decision-making, this MBA program is unlike others in the UW System, said Lyna Matesi, MBA director and assistant professor of management in the UW-Stevens Point School of Business and Economics.

The UW System Board of Regents approved the program June 8. It is one of several steps in the process, pending approval by the Higher Learning Commission, the accrediting body.

This differentiated MBA would include three courses in business and regional economic development in Wisconsin, consistent with UW-Stevens Point's strategic plan, a Partnership for Thriving Communities.

Surveys of the regional business community and prospective students indicated a need for an MBA program that is geographically convenient, focused on leadership and decision-making, and has classes offered in a hybrid format with both online and in-person content. Market research also identified a regional need for technical and people skills that include analytical decision-making and knowledge of accounting, communication, finance, management, marketing, project management and a broad understanding of regional economic drivers.

This would be a faster-paced program. Many business administration, accounting and international students want to pursue an MBA immediately after attaining their undergraduate degree, Matesi said. UW-Stevens Point would offer bachelor's and master's degrees in business as a combined five-year program, completing the MBA with full-time enrollment continuously over 12 months. A part-time MBA option will also be available over a 24-month period.

Alumni who said they were interested in pursuing an MBA to advance their careers have completed bachelor's degrees in business fields, natural resources and communications in the last two to eight years.

UW-Stevens Point earned accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) for its School of Business and Economics undergraduate program in spring 2017. Pursuing an MBA is the next step in continuously improving business offerings and complements the already strong AACSB-accredited program, said Kevin Neuman, head of the School of Business and Economics. Prospective undergraduate students and parents frequently ask if UW-Stevens Point offers an MBA program. UW-Stevens Point will pursue AACSB accreditation for the MBA program.

"Business education at UW-Stevens Point is far more than any single program, degree or campus," Neuman said. "The integration of UW-Stevens Point with UW-Marathon County and UW-Marshfield/Wood County brings the School of Business and Economics closer to students who want to pursue business careers but were not willing or able to travel to extend their education." The MBA program will be offered in Wausau.

School of Business and Economics faculty have been planning for an MBA since 2012. When fully implemented, the MBA program will generate enough tuition revenue to cover its costs. It will be staffed using currently available resources.

The MBA degree was developed with input from the School of Business and Economics Business Advisory Council, which includes influential business leaders and employers in the region. Business leaders support the proposed program.

Watch for more information on the UW-Stevens Point website, www.uwsp.edu, about MBA student information sessions in fall, pending final approvals. Please email sbemba@uwsp.edu with inquiries.