

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF VISITORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BOARD MEETING: February 9, 2007

COMMITTEE: Educational Policy

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of New Degree Program:
Master of Science in Commerce -
Financial Services/Marketing and
Management, to be offered by the
McIntire School of Commerce

BACKGROUND: The University of Virginia proposes to establish a new degree program, the Master of Science in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management, to be offered by the McIntire School of Commerce. The program would be a stand-alone fifth-year degree program with designated tracks (Financial Services or Marketing and Management) that develop specific commerce and functional competencies, international management skills, and macro-level business and cultural perspectives on the major commercial regions of the world.

In the 21st Century, the knowledge and skills needed by recent college graduates to engage in commerce are more extensive and challenging than at any time in history. Virtually all commerce is conducted on a global scale, and the McIntire School of Commerce is an established leader in undergraduate and graduate business education, widely recognized for educating and preparing outstanding students without previous business experience for global business careers. Recently, the School's undergraduate program was ranked second in the nation by *Business Week*, citing the School's real-world core curriculum and strengths in functional disciplines. The School also exposes its students to a variety of international business topics and courses and many opportunities to study abroad and to experience international business firsthand.

Multiple factors suggest significant demand for a graduate commerce degree with a global emphasis among non-Commerce University of Virginia students: (1) the strong interest and growth in international programs, (2) the strong demand for McIntire undergraduate and graduate programs, (3) the large number of students in the liberal arts and engineering at the University of Virginia

interested in management positions, (4) the growing demand for Commerce's McIntire Business Institute (MBI) program, and (5) the interest in a business minor and an international management minor throughout the University. There is growing interest in international programs and study abroad nationally among the large number of students graduating in the liberal arts across the country. And there is a trend toward M.S. degrees that can be completed in a single year, particularly among international students. These trends suggest a significant market outside the University for a one-year commerce degree targeted at recent graduates.

The University proposes to establish the Master of Science in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management to help fulfill the demand for well-trained leaders in global business. The program is consistent with the McIntire School's core capabilities and focus: it would provide a challenging and innovative educational experience, emphasizing the conduct and context of global business, to top-quality students for entry-level opportunities after graduation.

DISCUSSION: The proposed M.S. in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management Program consists of a three-term, 36 credit-hour curriculum beginning in August and finishing at the end of June. The program encompasses a solid education in business fundamentals and international business topics, as well as a study abroad "immersion" experience. It exposes students to the basic business disciplines through required prerequisite coursework, and an integrated core experience that emphasizes the impact of global forces and the conduct of global business. It also would give students the opportunity to specialize in one of two tracks focused on Financial Services or Marketing and Management.

The M.S. in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management Program is designed for recent graduates who majored in the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and engineering, who want a graduate business program that prepares them for entry-level positions in global commerce and provides a well-defined path for an international career in business. Although our initial target market is University of Virginia students, McIntire hopes to recruit students who are graduating from the best liberal arts and engineering schools in the country.

No graduate business program in Virginia is directly comparable to the proposed M.S. in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management. Existing M.S. programs focus exclusively on public policy, international affairs or economics. Of these, Virginia Commonwealth University offers the sole M.S. in Business program which provides concentrations in Global Marketing Management and Finance. Although similar to the proposed M.S. in Commerce, the VCU program differs in that it recommends an international experience but does not require one, and the finance concentration in the program is targeted to students with an undergraduate business degree.

Students with undergraduate business degrees would be ineligible for the McIntire program. Existing MBA programs in the Commonwealth are two-year programs, and, with one exception, all of them have work experience requirements for admission. The proposed M.S. in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management Program is a one-year program and requires no work experience. A few of the top national MBA programs (e.g., Stanford) admit a very small number of students with no work experience, but these students often hold advanced degrees in other disciplines or possess non-business experience.

Faculty in the M.S. in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management Program will consist primarily of professors with regular appointments in the McIntire School of Commerce. In some cases, adjunct or visiting professors may be used if they bring specific expertise. Faculty at foreign global partner institutions may be used during the third term, which requires an international immersion experience. A faculty member from the School will serve as the program director, consistent with the structure of other McIntire graduate programs. A faculty track coordinator from each of the specialty tracks (Financial Services, Marketing and Management) will assist the program director with the development of the track courses.

The M.S. in Commerce was approved by the Faculty Senate on January 30th, and it is anticipated that the program will be initiated formally in the Fall of 2007, pending approvals by the Board of Visitors and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

All new degrees must be approved by the Board of Visitors before they can be forwarded to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia for approval.

ACTION REQUIRED: Approval by the Educational Policy Committee and by the Board of Visitors

APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM: MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMMERCE - FINANCIAL SERVICES/MARKETING AND MANGEMENT IN THE MCINTIRE SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

RESOLVED that, subject to approval by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Master of Science in Commerce - Financial Services/Marketing and Management, be established in the McIntire School of Commerce.