

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Reviewer:

School:

Department:

Email:

Date Reviewed:

Documents Reviewed: Proposal for Master of Science in Taxation at IUPUI

Summary of Proposal: The proposal is for a Master of Science in Taxation at IUPUI. This is a 30 credit hour degree program with two primary objectives: (i) prepare graduates for entry-level positions in public and private accounting firms in the area of taxation; and (ii) provide graduate-level education for tax professionals who desire to enhance their specialized tax knowledge. The program will be offered by existing staff and adjuncts at the Kelley School of Business in Indianapolis. The budget indicates that no new faculty or staff resources are required so that the only new funds needed are \$20,000 per year for increased advertising and promotional materials. This is minimal as the program is projected to generate \$81,000 of new credit hour income in the first year, rising to over \$400,000 per year by the fifth year. The Kelley School should be commended for developing a program that appears to meet a real need in the community and one which will, at the same time, generate a large surplus for the School...as it appears to essentially repackaging existing courses.

Response. We agree. This is a repackaging of existing courses.

- 1. Are the goals clear and achievable?** YES
- 2. Is the program academically sound?** YES
- 3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit?** APPARENTLY

No new faculty resources are requested in the proposal. "All tax courses proposed for the MST are currently either taught or approved to be taught. Electives come from courses currently being taught in the Kelley MBA and MSA programs." It appears from this that there are some courses that are approved but are not currently being offered. The proposal should indicate how these are to be staffed. If it is with adjuncts who are not currently teaching a tax course for the school, then the cost should be listed in the budget. If these

courses are to be taught by either adjuncts or faculty currently teaching other courses, the proposal should indicate what is being given up.

Response. If courses that are not currently being offered are offered, they will be taught by existing faculty or an adjunct with the proper expertise. Currently, there are three adjunct faculty that help deliver both graduate and undergraduate courses. No additional faculty are needed. The responsibilities for the various tax courses may be shifted among the courses but no additional faculty will be needed.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program? NO

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regarding this proposal...

1. This proposal appears to provide a credential that is valued in the marketplace and is, in fact, offered in many other urban areas. Because there is the possibility that the need for advanced training in taxation could be met with a Graduate Certificate, the proposal should address the distinction between the two and why it is better to offer the Master's degree. [I understand that the University of Missouri-St. Louis offers an 18 credit Graduate Certificate in Taxation that serves much the same purpose.]

Response. We believe that the desired credential is not a certificate but a degree. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants offered a professional certification, but it was not successful in part because it was not a degree. Our degree program would be 30 credit hours.

2. The proposal notes [Abstract, p. 2] that ‘...most in-residence MST programs are offered at schools in major metropolitan areas such as Indianapolis...’ A list of universities follows. I wonder if this argument could be strengthened, for consideration at the ICHE level or above, by turning it around. One could note that MST programs are common in cities along the eastern seaboard and in the west. There are fewer programs in Midwestern cities and Indianapolis could gain a competitive advantage by having this program offered here. In a visit to a website on MST programs, it appears there are MSTs in Akron, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit but not in Louisville, Columbus, Cleveland, or Toledo. Alternatively one could pitch it that in order to remain competitive with larger cities like Chicago, Detroit and St. Louis, Indianapolis needs to offer this kind of degree.

Response. This is an excellent suggestion. It is our understanding that the graduate tax program in Cincinnati is a new initiative. Ohio State does not have a tax program.

3. In the curriculum description [Abstract, p. 3?—numbered pages and better delineation of Sections would help.] it notes:

‘All tax courses proposed for the MST are currently either taught or approved to be taught. ..Accordingly, no new courses will be required to offer the MST.’

Perhaps the last sentence should be: ‘Accordingly, no new courses will need to be approved in order to offer the MST.’ See related comment below.

4. Under ‘Employment Possibilities’

The proposal notes that, “For ’06-’07 for Accounting recruiting (undergraduates and graduates), 28 firms recruited on campus for accounting majors, and the 28 firms conducted 411 interviews. Therefore, demand for accounting students is strong. Many of these positions were for tax positions.”

Response. The demand for accountants is extremely strong throughout the country. This is attributable in part to the enactment of Sarbanes Oxley and new reporting requirements imposed by the government. MSA enrollments have increased by 50% in 2007-2008. If the economy drifts into a recession, we would expect enrollments to increase even further. We can seek to find information suggested.

While this statement may be accurate and self-evident to Accounting or other Business faculty, there is little context for the outside reader. It is not clear how these totals relate to other specialties, or other years (Is the number of interviews increasing?), or how it relates to the total number seeking positions (Were existing majors who were searching for positions able to find one?). And, of course, the information is for interviews for accounting positions, some of which were tax.

It is difficult to get good figures for this section, but you might refer to national figures on the employment (rising?) of tax professionals.

Also, both here and in the student demand section later and/or the demand and employment factors section, you might make the point that MST degrees appear to be viable in smaller cities like Akron, Hartford, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee, and that larger cities like Boston can sustain three or more MST

programs. By analogy Indianapolis should be able to absorb the graduates of one such program.

Response. We agree. Miami has programs at Miami, Florida Atlantic, and Florida International. We believe that by creating the MST we will be able to add additional students to the existing classes that will enable us to build a sustainable program.

5. In the Assessment section, the proposal notes that “Assessment of for the MST program will follow the pattern used in the MSA program. The MSA program assessment process is shown below.”

What is shown is the set of goals for the MSA program and an assessment strategy for each goal.

Seeing this document makes me confident that the program will be able to develop a similar set of goals and assessment strategies for the MST program. But shouldn't these be in place at this point? It appears the program could quickly develop a set of goals and assessment strategies at this point based upon the MSA template. Shouldn't that be done before the proposal proceeds

Response. See newly developed assessment strategy.

6. If the proposal is correct, the MST program essentially fills up seats in existing courses offered for the MBA and MSA. But my recollection is that some MBA classes are booked to room capacity. Have the space needs been analyzed? The proposal should indicate whether additional room capacity is needed.

Response. The MST would help fill seats in the tax courses. There are seats available in the MBA electives in which MST students would have an interest. The number of nontax courses is limited to three electives, and we expect MST students to take tax courses and not MBA courses.