College of Business Administration
Graduate Committee

Minutes: September 18, 2006, 9:00 am, Dean’s Conference Room

Members:
Present: Heather Honea, Ken Marino, Mehdi Salehizadeh, Chamu Sundaramurthy, Gene Whittenburg

Excused: Murray Jennex,

Item 1  New MBA Degree Programs
During its previous meeting, the Graduate Committee (GC) was presented with and discussed two new MBA programs being proposed by Dean Gail Naughton. With respect to the second program, namely the MBA in Global Entrepreneurship, a number of issues were raised as highlighted in GC’s Minutes of 9-5-06 already disseminated to the faculty and staff. In response to these issues, Gail, via Jim Lackritz, provided the committee with written statements addressing many of the areas of concern. In its latest meeting, GC focused on “Target Student Population,” along with calendar- and curriculum-related matters. Specifically, GC emphasized the following:

a) Gail has stated that the program expects to have “a strong group of foreign students from corporations outside the US that could represent a significant portion (25% or more) of the class.” The committee noted that as is the case with foreign students routinely admitted to our on-campus graduate business programs, a certain percentage come to us with 3-year undergraduate degrees and/or deficient GPAs, leading to their admission on the basis of so-called “Special Admits.” If some of the newly targeted foreign students for this proposed MBA program fall into this category, then their ultimate admission could negatively impact the number of special admits to our regular programs since there is a cap/limit imposed on such admits. This is an important issue which the CBA administration needs to address.

b) The proposed degree requires a one-year completion time. As it is currently configured, the course-sequence and calendar seem to present a rather major challenge to any prospective student. In particular, the program relies on back-to-back modules of 6-weeks of class instructions, starting with SDSU, and then moving on to Hong Kong, India, and UAE. No provisions have been made for the necessary international travel and relocation time; neither has there been any time framework set aside for foreign holidays (e.g., the Chinese New Year) and cultural events during which class instructions will have to be suspended. Moreover, family-related issues for many students are likely to impose additional challenges and complexities on the scheduling of classes. The committee urges the college planners to look into this critical aspect of the new program.
c) The committee feels very strong that steps need to be taken to ensure that SDSU’s academic role, especially in regards to the administering of BA 795 (the culminating experience), is maintained throughout the program. The degree is ultimately awarded by SDSU, and this as well as similar specialized programs are intended to further enhance our “brand.” Thus, GC would like to see the course-sequencing start and end with the SDSU campus, with our faculty completing the program by teaching the BA 795. Furthermore, GC notes that future “corporate partners” affiliated with such a program may differ from those currently involved. Therefore, the committee calls for a curriculum which is standardized (i.e., follows our regular MBA program), and yet offers content-flexibility closely matching the needs and desires of corporate partners, with the latter to be delivered in terms of analyses of cases, “side” trips, BA 795, etc.

d) To ensure the program’s success, GC strongly recommends that the preceding changes and suggestions be fully implemented. Insofar as the curriculum aspects of this new program are concerned, the Graduate Committee voted unanimously to endorse and recommend the Global Entrepreneurship MBA Program (pending the adoption of suggested modifications). Meanwhile, GC observed that there are additional aspects of this MBA degree which need to be fully examined by other CBA committees (including the International Programs Committee and the Steering Committee). Finally, the graduate committee uniformly thought that this type of program can benefit from the involvement of the GC at the earliest stage of development so that we can more effectively address curriculum issues specific to the delivery mode.

Adjournment: 10:55 am

Next meeting: Monday, September 25, 9:00 am (Room TBD)

Mehdi Salehizadeh
For the College Graduate Committee