Minutes of the International Business Committee’s Meeting of September 27, 2006.

The CBA-IB Committee met from 10-11 AM on Wednesday September 27. Committee members present were Kamal Haddad, Victoria Krivogorsky, Fred Raafat and Massoud Saghafi. Saghafi was unanimously elected as the chair of the committee for the 2006-07 academic year.

In response to its request for further information, the committee received and reviewed elaborations on the “Global Entrepreneurship” MBA (GEMBA) from the Dean’s Office. The meeting was allocated to further discussion of GEMBA. The following summarizes the discussions that occurred during the committee’s meeting.

The committee agrees in principle with the idea of building international programs based on CBA’s strengths. The committee also supports efforts to establish graduate programs with academically strong partners such as IIM and the CUHK (main campus) as well as with AUB. The committee however is still uncertain regarding the planning and preparation for this program.

1. The Committee still has reservations regarding student recruitment plans for GEMBA. The target market is not well defined, there is no firm commitment from partners (corporate or academic) in providing students to the program and CBA has no internal marketing study, which would indicate the level of support in such an ambitious program, if it were offered by SDSU.

2. The teaching schedule and its logistics are not well thought through for example, four 12-weeks teaching periods leaves only four weeks for students to move around the world from one location to another, visit family and/or office, return home for national or religious holidays and prepare for the subsequent segments of the program. Perhaps a ten-week program could be considered as an alternative. Other teaching-related logistical issues such as students housing, transportation and related issues need further consideration.

3. The committee is still uncertain on the governance issue. Even though the “external programs” office is in charge of the worldwide management of the program, faculty will be selected by chairs rather than by the “external programs” committee and the curriculum will be developed by the graduate office. The role and responsibility of each “foreign” partner (CHUK, AUB and IIM) in program development and management is also unclear.

4. The committee is encouraged by the Dean’s commitment to involve and give priority to CBA faculty for teaching courses in the program. However, it is unclear (a) if there is interest among CBA faculty to teach in this program, and (b) how faculty can take weeks off from their SDSU assignments to teach in the international locations of the program. The committee discussed the possibility of identifying the interested faculty prior to start of the program and alternative teaching models (e.g. Taiwan, EMBA) for the GEMBA program.

5. Although the committee understands the difficulty in estimating the financials of the program with any degree of accuracy, estimated start-up costs, new faculty-staff recruitment expenses, facilities and equipment costs, instructional expenses including foreign faculty costs, should be provided in more details. In short, CBA should be able to assess the financial viability of the program before committing to such an international undertaking.
In summary, the IB Committee reiterates its support for GEMBA but requires further details to assess the viability the program for CBA. Given the still unresolved issues regarding GEMBA, no formal votes were taken on the program. The committee will meet again to discuss the program after receiving a revised proposal for GEMBA.