

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE**    Academic Affairs

**NO.**    AAC 21-07

**COMMITTEE DATE:**    April 27, 2021

**BOARD DATE:**    May 4, 2021

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**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO  
AWARD THE ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GENERAL  
AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

**MOVED:**            The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Greenfield Community College** to award the **Associate in Science in Business Administration General** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree granting authority pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

**VOTED:**            Motion adopted by AAC 4/27/2021; adopted by BHE 5/4/2021.

Authority:            Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact:            Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**April 2021**  
**Greenfield Community College**  
**Letter of Intent**  
**Associate in Science in Business Administration General**

**DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM**

The proposed Associate in Science in Business Administration General (AS/BAG) program at Greenfield Community College (GCC) is expected to provide diverse course offerings and a multifaceted introduction to the business field. It is planned that students will explore accounting, marketing, and management. Consolidating popular courses from different programs into a single, foundational degree program will enable GCC to staff courses and support students in a structured and unified way. The proposed AS/BAG is designed to offer a broad selection of courses from which to define a relevant pathway toward transfer or employment. GCC intends that the proposed degree will provide an introduction into several areas of business administration, exposing students to topics in management, digital marketing, computer information systems, and economics. Doing so within a singular degree program is intended to provide flexibility to take courses in different areas without changing majors or earning excess credits while exploring an appropriate pathway in the business domain.

The proposed Associate in Science in Business Administration General was approved by the Greenfield Community College Board of Trustees on November 16, 2020. The LOI was circulated on January 25, 2021. No comments were received.

**A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals*

GCC reports that in recognizing COVID-19's impacts, efforts to effectively streamline opportunities and pathways which promote student success, adjustments were required to be congruent with demand. As a result, the total number of full-time faculty teaching in the Business Department, was reduced from four to three. The Business Department and Dean determined to combine low-enrolled degree programs into a singular A.S. in Business Administration General. In this way, GCC expects it will address the diverse college-going population in the region by offering a multidimensional degree. GCC anticipates that as the labor market restructures to accommodate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new associate degree in Business Administration General, with three tracks in computer information systems, digital marketing, and management, will serve students well and will be responsive to local and regional economic shifts. It is planned that the introductory content of the proposed program will lay the groundwork for employment and/or transfer to a baccalaureate programs in business.

*Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion*

Business program faculty, along with GCC's leadership and administration, are developing a guided pathways project, to be piloted in the Business Department beginning in Fall, 2021. GCC expects guided pathways programs, grounded in focused degree pathways and intrusive advising to increase retention and completion rates. The pilot program's evidence and best practices will inform the proposed program, and both are being intentionally designed and calibrated to serve one another. Relationship building through advising is expected to advance students' progress and success. Additionally, opportunities for experiential learning centered in entrepreneurial mindset will be included in the proposed program. The GCC Rural Innovation Center is designed to support entrepreneurs in the Franklin County area. Business students will have the ability to work with local artisans, crafters, and business innovators to learn how to

develop the kinds of soft skills and industry-specific abilities to be well-equipped to enter the field. It is further expected that these applied experiences will enable students to stay engaged and complete their coursework on time.

#### *Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers*

GCC has developed a Future of Work Committee that meets regularly. The committee is comprised of local business leaders and key faculty and staff from GCC. As the proposed student population for the proposed program will include transfer students and students interested in entering the workforce, GCC plans that the Future of Work Committee will serve as a principle advisory board for the department and the program. Course content will be informed by local and national trends in the field, and industry partnerships will be developed so that students have a direct link to local internships, entry-level positions, and networking opportunities. Additionally, the college has recently experienced a 200% increase in dual enrollment applications. GCC has multiple partnerships with local high schools that provide a robust pool of dual enrollment applicants. One such partnership that directly enrolls students in GCC's business programs is Northampton High School (NHS). Presently, NHS partners with GCC on an Innovation Pathways grant. As part of this grant opportunity, NHS students complete internships through the business programs at GCC and are assigned to a faculty advisor with whom they regularly meet. Also, students earn digital badges in business and entrepreneurial skills in collaboration with a local non-profit organization. GCC expects that these types of partnerships will extend the reach of the business program into the high schools, preparing students for entry into college with specialized experiences and introductory knowledge in the field.

#### *Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints*

GCC reports that as of September 2020, the number of unemployed individuals in the Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties region, totals over 50K; and that the highest number of unemployed individuals is the group of those without a high school degree (Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, p. 4). During the height of the pandemic in April and May 2020, Franklin County saw a 443% increase in the number of unemployment claims over last year in the Accommodation and Food Services sector with an additional 126% increase in Transportation and Warehousing (Franklin Regional Council of Governments, p. 22). Lastly, there was a 649% increase in claims in the Food Preparation and Serving sector. Throughout these high unemployment sectors, those impacted were already the most vulnerable members of the population, earning the lowest wages (p. 22). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and high unemployment in the low-wage sector of the regional economy, there is a large portion of the population that will require additional credentials and skills to effectively reenter the labor market. The proposed business program is planned to be an opportune pathway to reskill and reenter the economy with college credentials. The Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint identifies finance and insurance, professional services, and health care and social assistance as priority and critical industries necessary for the economic health of the area (p. 33). The proposed business program at GCC is expected to be broad enough to capture significant numbers of students and facilitate the opportunity for a successful return to the community, stimulating economic growth in a range of professions.

The proposed program is further planned to be deeply integrated with GCC's Workforce Development programs, which is currently developing a diverse series of courses ranging from leadership to applied manufacturing to personal finance that will be offered in short, high-intensity modules online to help reskill the regional population

quickly. These programs will be offered as certifications linked directly to industry but will also offer potential students an opportunity to engage with the college through workforce development to determine whether a degree pathway is appropriate. As both standalone courses and on-ramps to credit-bearing programs, workforce development courses in business will be taught by the same faculty who are designing this proposed business program. This integration will provide critical on-ramps to the business program and will help interested individuals earn their degrees as well as key industry certifications.

### *Duplication*

GCC has two significant peer institutions in the state, Holyoke Community College (HCC) and Berkshire Community College (BCC). The Business Department at HCC is structured similarly to the current model at GCC. HCC has a Business Administration Transfer program with a number of focused majors like Marketing and Accounting and also has a Business Administration option that is structured similarly to the one proposed herein. Significantly, GCC is developing the proposed program within a larger context and institutional framework, which is aimed at developing robust guided pathways options across the college. Rather than offering students a range of specific business majors, GCC will focus on streamlining resources and talent to ensure that a heterogeneous student population is afforded a strong foundation in business administration so that students may enter the labor market or transfer to a four-year college.

BCC offers something similar to what will be offered at GCC, with two business majors, a transfer major and a career-focused major, that is structured like the proposed program. BCC's required courses include accounting, computer information systems, and a series of business electives. The major difference between the programs is that GCC has more

required courses in business, accounting, economics, and computer information systems with the rationale that this will generate well-prepared graduates.

### *Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning*

The program includes courses that have digital, experiential and competency-based approaches. Accounting, business, computer information systems, economic, management and marketing classes require either projects or presentations that mirror professional presentations. All the core courses have been offered online where various digital instructional tools are used to engage students (meeting, live presentations, video, audio, podcast development, and more. In the full proposal GCC included multiple examples of the wide range of approaches to learning and assessment for each course.

## **B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION**

### *Priority Rationale and Support of Strategic Plan and Overall Mission of Institution*

GCC asserts that it is poised to prepare for a reimagined purpose in the next decade. As the traditional college-age population in the region experiences continual decline, GCC is reimagining institutional priorities to support a diverse student body with complex needs and interests. GCC is working on flexibly adapting to a culture in transformation and the proposed Business Administration General program is designed to be aligned with and in direct response to changes on campus and in support of the larger community.

A long list of associate programs that no longer best serve GCC's current population, additionally a strict budget and small faculty preclude GCC from being able to offer multiple degrees in the Business Department. Instead, attracting older adults who are

looking to GCC to upskill, reskill or make a career move, is the more actionable goal in developing the proposed program. A foundational degree that can be used for re-entry into the workforce or applied toward a bachelor's degree fits well into GCC plans and priorities and aligns with community needs. It further underscores the capacity of faculty to focus their attention on advising and teaching, both of which show significant evidence of increasing student retention and completion rates.

Another priority for GCC is to increase enrollments using a digital classroom presence. All the courses that are part of the proposed program have been taught in online format. Although many of the courses were already fitted to be delivered in a distance format, COVID-19 accelerated the development of additional in-person classes.

### **C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION**

#### *Enrollment Projections (Form C, Appendices)*

GCC anticipates that there will be an enrollment balance between part-time and full-time enrollments in the program.

#### *Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution (Form D, Appendices)*

GCC reports that the reach for the proposed program will be much broader than just the population of Franklin County, and that its on-line capacity will extend to the North Quabbin region, an area of Western Massachusetts that has been particularly negatively impacted by deindustrialization and the rise of automation in the workforce. In an area where public transportation is limited and postsecondary options are far away, online options are expected to enable individuals to pursue a degree remotely. The proposed



program is planned to respond to individuals who are looking for ways to improve their employability and to help reconfigure the marketplace in the Quabbin region.

#### **STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Associate in Science in Business Administration General** submitted by **Greenfield Community College**. Staff validate that the **LOI** includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

**Form A1 (LOI) Curriculum: AS in Business Administration General**

<b>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 11)</b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
ACC 151	Concepts in Financial Accounting I	3
BUS 111	Introduction to Business	3
BUS 116	E-Commerce	3
BUS 203/BUS 155/BUS 209	Human Resources Management <i>OR</i> Business Law <i>OR</i> Principles of Marketing	3
BUS 224	Business Communications	3
ECO 101/102	Macroeconomics <i>OR</i> Microeconomics	3
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
CIS 140	Microcomputer Software Tools I	3
ENG 112/114/116	English Composition II	3
MAT 114	Introduction to Statistics	4
	Behavioral or Social Science Gen Ed Course	3
	<b>Sub Total Required Credits</b>	34
<b>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 10) (attach list of choices if needed)</b>		
	See Attached for Degree Audit & Course Option Sheet	
	<b>Sub Total Elective Credits</b>	26
<b>Distribution of General Education Requirements</b>		<b># of Gen Ed Credits</b>
Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		6
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		4
Social Sciences		3
<b>Sub Total General Education Credits</b>		13
<b>Curriculum Summary</b>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		21
Total credit hours required for degree		60-63
<b>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</b>		

**Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for Achievement</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Provide flexible opportunities for students to gain foundational knowledge in Business Administration	Increase enrollment over five years	Develop comprehensive marketing campaign and outreach program	Spring 21
Develop clear partnerships with local industry	Link students to jobs and internships through these partnerships	GCC has established a Future of Work Advisory Board which will be integral to meeting this goal. Industry leaders from Franklin County will meet and determine the best opportunities for students to enhance regional economic development	Fall 21
Increase the percentage of students who transfer in-state	Increase the number of students who transfer to in state institutions from the BIT department by 5%	Provide direct connection in class to GCC's Transfer Advisor and develop articulation partnerships with state colleges	Spring 22

**Form C: LOI Program Enrollment**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
New Full-Time	10	15	20	25	30
Continuing Full-Time	0	10	15	20	25
New Part-Time	10	15	20	25	25
Continuing Part-Time	0	10	15	20	25
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>105</b>

**Form D: LOI Program Budget**

<b>One Time/ Start Up Costs</b>		<b>Annual Enrollment</b>				
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
	<b>Cost Categories</b>					
	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	79,230	169,580	175,140	271,050	279,390
	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	24,000	24,000	25,000	25,000	26,000
	Staff					
	General Administrative Costs	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions					
	Facilities/Space/Equip ment					

	Field & Clinical Resources					
	Marketing					
	Total	\$105,430	\$195,780	\$202,340	\$298,250	\$307,590
<b>One Time/Start-Up Support</b>			<b>Annual Income</b>			
	<b>Revenue Sources</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
	Grants					
	Tuition	12,480	31,200	43,680	56,160	66,330
	Fees	98,920	250,900	356,300	464,580	555,960
	Departmental					
	Reallocated Funds					
	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$111,400	\$282,100	\$399,980	\$520,740	\$622,260