

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

NO.:BHE 26-25

BOARD DATE:October 1, 2025

**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Westfield State University** to award the **Master of Business Administration** 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 the BHE on 10/1/2025.

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

Contact: Richard Riccardi, Sc.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Westfield State University
Letter of Intent
Master of Business Administration**

DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

The Westfield State University (WSU) MBA Program is committed to cultivating visionary leaders with a unique blend of leadership, business analytics, and sustainability skills. Westfield State's mission is to empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and ethical mindset needed to excel in today's dynamic global business landscape.

The proposed degree program will:

- Foster a learning environment that encourages critical thinking, innovation, and collaboration. We encourage experiential learning opportunities, internships, and industry collaborations to provide our students with hands-on experiences that enhance their leadership and analytical capabilities
- Develop leaders who can navigate the complexities of the modern business world, making informed decisions that drive organizational success and contribute to societal and environmental well-being.

As an institution, Westfield State is dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives. Westfield State believes a diverse learning environment enriches the educational experience and prepares students to lead in a globalized world. Westfield State graduates individuals who can drive positive change, lead with integrity, and contribute meaningfully to improving businesses and society.

The proposed degree program will be offered in a flexible fully online format and is imbedded within accelerated 4+1 tracks. In addition, outside of the MBA degree, the curricular structure allows for the attainment of three certificates in Business Leadership, Global Sustainability for Business and Business Analytics.

The proposed Master of Business Administration program was approved by Westfield State's Board of Trustees on June 20, 2024. The LOI was circulated on May 29, 2025. No comments were received.

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

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

The proposed degree program can effectively address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement while also aligning with campus goals in the following ways:

Addressing Institutional Gaps: The proposed degree program will promote diversity and inclusion by recruiting a diverse group of students. Recruiting efforts will be designed to remove barriers and obstacles that hinder student success, especially those that may make it difficult for underrepresented students, including low-income students, first generation students, and students of color. The proposed degree program will be a more accessible and affordable education option for students who seek advanced education in business. Programming of guest speakers, panels and other opportunities for students to network with business professionals will focus on engaging diverse representatives to acknowledge the experience and knowledge of underrepresented students and to create and cultivate an inclusive environment.

Aligning with Campus Goals: The proposed degree will enhance the overall academic excellence of Westfield State University. It aligns with campus goals to offer high-quality, relevant, and competitive educational programs. The strategic plan insists that the university is responsive to the workforce needs in the Commonwealth and the proposed degree program delivers on the need for skilled finance professionals as one of the high demand areas identified in the Pioneer Valley Workforce Development Programs. It can support state initiatives to address sustainability concerns in business through the Business Sustainability Certificate while also providing strong educational programming to develop in emerging areas such as Business Analytics. MBA graduates with the Business Analytics Certificate will assist local and regional business organizations to become more efficient in their operations, build stronger consumer relationships, and improve business decision-making. Managers armed with the knowledge from business analytic insights can increase market share, boost profits, improve operational efficiency, and better meet customer demands. These benefits may be particularly critical to firms operating in the Advanced Manufacturing industry as they address challenges in rapidly changing and intensely competitive industry sectors as addressed in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint.

In summary, the proposed degree program at Westfield State University with Certificates in Business Leadership, Global Sustainability for Business and Business Analytics was designed to not only address institutional gaps in opportunity and achievement but also aligns with the strategic goals of the University. The proposed degree program can enhance diversity, accessibility, academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement, while also contributing to the development of a skilled business workforce.

Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion

Westfield State University has many supports and practices in place to ensure that students persist and complete the certifications and degrees offered by the MBA program including:

Program Design: The proposed degree program was designed to minimize barriers and obstacles to program completion. Admission requirements for students without an undergraduate business degree were simplified. To ensure that all students can quickly enter the program and begin MBA coursework without extensive foundational course requirements, an MBA Bootcamp was created using curricular resources from Coursera. Course prerequisites were minimized where possible to permit students to complete requirements regardless of the time of year they are admitted to the program. Few prerequisites make course sequencing much easier for students and permits more efficient completion of degree requirements. Designed as a stackable certificate program, the proposed degree program will appeal to students interested in completing a relevant Certificate program to advance to new positions or upgrade their skills for existing positions while also appealing to students who want to achieve the MBA degree.

The MBA Bootcamp includes:

MBA ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: A bachelor's degree in business or equivalent knowledge of basic financial accounting, financial management and microeconomics. Students without this background will be required to complete MBA Boot Camp.

MBA BOOTCAMP

Students without a bachelor's degree in business or equivalent knowledge may complete the following Coursera Courses to satisfy the MBA Admission Requirements. Successful completion of each course may be demonstrated by submitting the shareable certificate for each course.

Course Title	Offered by University	Course Modules	Assignments	Hours to Complete
Financial Accounting Fundamentals	University of Virginia	1. Intro to Financial Accounting, Financial Statements, Balance Sheet 2. Intro to Recording Transactions, Income Statement, Revenue & Expense Transactions, Adjusting Entries 3. Statement of Cash Flows, Financial Statement Preparations 4. Analysis of Financial Statements, Annual Report	10	12 hours
Fundamentals of Finance	University of Pennsylvania	1. Intro & Net Present Value (NPV) 2. Fixed Income Valuation 3. Equity Valuation 4. NPV vs. Internal Rate of Return (IRR) 5. Additional Course Topics and Resources	4	7 hours
Microeconomics: The Power of Markets	University of Pennsylvania	1. The Concept of Scarcity 2. Specialization & trade 3. Supply and Demand 4. Understanding Markets; Elasticities, Market Surplus, Efficiency, and Equity 5. When Government Intervenes	18	15 hours

Alternatively, students without a bachelor's degree can complete the following WSU undergraduate courses:

ACCT 0104--Financial Accounting (3 credits)

ECON 0102—Microeconomics (3 credits)

FINC 0207—FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (prerequisites required ACCT 0104, ACCT 0105) (3 credits)

Academic Advising: Dedicated MBA advisors will work closely with students to develop personalized plans of study, track their progress, and provide guidance throughout their program. Academic advisors can help students navigate the curriculum, understand certificate and degree requirements, and make informed decisions regarding course selection.

Student Support Services: Westfield State has a range of student support services available to assist MBA students. These services include financial aid, writing assistance, career assistance, and technology. As a result of their NECHE accreditation study, increased support for graduate students has become an important goal. New initiatives may be forthcoming. Existing services and any new ones that are developed are designed to help students strengthen their academic skills and overcome challenges encountered in their programs.

Faculty Mentorship: Faculty members teaching in the proposed degree program will provide mentorship and guidance to students. They can offer academic and professional advice and support students in their research for the capstone project. Business professionals teaching in the proposed degree program will have extensive industry experience and can offer valuable insights into career paths, job market trends,

and industry specific skills to help students leverage their MBA education for career advancement. Faculty mentors also serve as role models for professionalism and ethical behavior, guiding students in developing the skills and attributes necessary for success in the business world.

Professional Development Opportunities: Workshops, seminars, and networking events may be offered to help students build their skills and knowledge beyond their classes. Students can engage with experts in the field to enhance their professional development and leadership abilities. Students will also work with business professionals when completing their Applied Integrative Project capstone project as outlined in the next section of this report.

Continuous Program Evaluation: As part of assessment initiatives, the proposed degree program will engage in ongoing evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its curriculum, teaching methods, and support structures. Soliciting feedback from students through surveys, focus groups, and evaluations will provide insights into students' experiences, satisfaction levels, and to identify areas for improvement. The university will also seek input from employers and industry professionals to ensure alignment of the curriculum with employer expectations and demands. The university will use this input to inform curriculum design, career services, and student support services to better meet the needs of employers and to enhance the employability of their graduates. Overall, these supports and practices work together to create an encouraging environment to help students maximize their learning experience and achieve their academic and professional goals.

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

The proposed degree program will form partnerships and alliances with the employer community to develop sponsorships for the Applied Integrative Project course in terms of consulting projects. The consulting projects are intended to provide students with an opportunity to conduct fieldwork to develop strategic recommendations for a real company. Sponsoring companies will provide funding, access and support for a team of students to gather information about a current strategic issue/problem and to formulate data-supported strategic recommendations. The team will present their recommendations (through presentations and written reports) to the company. Each consulting project will be supervised by a member of the Westfield MBA faculty who will work with the company to define the project specifications prior to the team's work. The faculty member will also review the completed project to ensure that the recommendations are appropriate.

Westfield State will also develop an advisory board for the proposed degree program. The advisory board will be asked to develop and refine the program in the following ways:

- Industry Insight and Trends: Board members bring their experience and insight from business to keep the program updated on industry trends, emerging technologies and changing market demands.
- Curriculum Review and Development: Board members provide feedback on the program/s curriculum to ensure it remains current, relevant and aligned with industry standards. They can help identify new Certificates for inclusion in the program or new courses within existing Certificates.
- Networking Opportunities: Board members can generate guest lectures, workshops, internships and job placements for students.
- Quality Assurance: Board members help ensure the quality of the education by reviewing program outcomes and student performance data to identify areas for improvement. They can provide constructive feedback to improve the program's effectiveness.
- Accreditation: Should Westfield State pursue accreditation for its business programs, board members can ensure the MBA program follows best practices and accreditation standards.

Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints

The proposed degree program was designed to prepare students for employment in the regional labor market as identified in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint as updated in 2024. The report identifies Advanced Manufacturing Occupational Groups and Cross-Industry Occupations as priorities for the region Westfield State serves. In Advanced Manufacturing, regional firms are considering re-purposing their factories to better meet current product demand. Students earning the Business Analytics Certificate as part of the proposed degree program would provide these firms with the analytical abilities to determine what types of products would be most successful going forward. Students earning the Global Sustainability Certificate could assist these businesses by recommending ways for firms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their manufacturing processes. Students earning the Business Leadership Certificate would be able to effectively manage the transformation of these firms.

Advanced Manufacturing employees with undergraduate degrees in engineering may choose to pursue an MBA so that they can move into project management and upper management positions in the industry. The focus of the proposed degree program on leadership, business analytics, and sustainability

can assist engineers to move from supervising equipment upgrades to managing the manufacturing facility. Pairing an MBA with an engineering degree can result in significant salary increases. Regional manufacturing organizations employing Westfield State MBA graduates should experience enhancements in the managerial, analytical, and sustainability skills of their employees. These improvements should improve the survival and transformation of these businesses.

Sustainability in the form of Climate & Clean Energy is one of the Healy-Driscoll administration's priorities. In the Governor's inaugural address, she emphasized the goal of making Massachusetts "a world leader in combating the climate crisis and driving our clean energy economy." Westfield State MBA graduates and Global Sustainability Certificate holders will be well equipped to assist Massachusetts businesses in improving their organization's sustainability practices.

The Pioneer Valley Blueprint also envisions finance and insurance as two other critical industries for the region. Big-data capabilities are becoming a critical need for insurance companies. The predictive analytics to understand consumer behavior, set prices, and save costs are key components in the study of business analytics. Detecting insurance fraud is another important application of big-data sets in the insurance industry. The Business Analytics certificate provided by the proposed degree program would prepare students with the skills necessary for developing insights from big-data. By employing MBA graduates with the Business Analytics Certificate, regional manufacturing organizations could improve their data-informed decision-making.

Data-driven decision making is also becoming important in the financial services industry. Finance professionals are using analytics to improve services to customers, recognize fraudulent purchases, monitor upcoming market trends, and reduce production costs. The proposed degree program will prepare graduates well for positions in the finance industry.

In addition to alignment with regional labor market priorities, the proposed degree program prepares students for in-demand career options identified in the 2024 market analysis study provided by Lightcast.

The market analysis study for the overall MBA program (including sustainability studies and business analytics) for the northeast region (including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont) showed that jobs for MBAs were expected to increase by 25% in the

years between 2021-2033. Median earnings for those positions in the northeast were 18% higher than for the nation. Annual job openings for MBAs were expected to reach 48,057. (Lightcast report is attached as Appendix 2)

The top ten occupations as ranked by the number of jobs and annual openings for MBAs in the region are shown in the table below:

Target Occupations for MBA Graduates in the Northeast Region			
Occupation	2021 Jobs	Annual Job Openings	Expected Growth (2021-2033)
Accountants and Auditors	50,304	5,129	+19.73%
General and Operations Managers	44,897	5,110	+26.06%
Management Analysts	36,947	4,151	+24.89%
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	26,119	3,571	+34.48%
Project Management Specialists	23,395	2,493	+29.64%
Financial Managers	22,436	2,406	+33.13%
Computer & Information Systems Managers	18,202	1,903	+33.83%
Human Resource Specialists	16,379	2,072	+32.87%
Business Operations Specialists	15,158	1,845	+27.65%
Managers, All Other	14,519	1,379	+18.02%

A total of 41 occupations targeting MBA graduates with business analytics and sustainability studies coursework were shown in the Lightcast report. The diverse occupations listed demonstrate the versatility of the WSU MBA program and the high market demand for individuals with this preparation.

The market analysis for occupations targeting MBA graduates with a focus on business analytics is summarized in the table:

Target Occupations for MBA Graduates in the Northeast Region with Business Analytics			
Occupation	2021 Jobs	Annual Openings	Expected Growth (2021-2033)
Management Analysts	39,350	4,084	+10.04%
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	29,004	3,448	+12.02%
Business Operations Specialists	16,119	3,803	+11.18%
Managers, All Other	15,126	1,349	+7.24%
Sales Representatives of Services except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	12,123	1,373	+8.31%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing Except Technical and Scientific Products	9,754	938	+2.85%
Data Scientists	8,437	929	+22.65%
Chief Executives	8,013	602	+2.98%
Sales Managers	7,904	692	+6.44%
Statisticians	1,899	203	+20.96%

Only four of the target occupations from the previous table are repeated in the list of occupations with a business analytics focus. The other seven target occupations are unique to the business analytics area. Growth rates in the occupations of Data Scientists and Statisticians reflect the rapid growth in data/business analytics. Good job opportunities should be attractive to prospective students.

When studying labor market demand for a graduate degree and sustainability focus, the top states for jobs included New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The top qualification for sustainability jobs in the northeast region was an MBA degree. The specialized skills in the job profiles evaluated by Lightcast included sustainability improvement, sustainability evaluation, leadership, analytics, and business skills. The design of the proposed degree program is highly consistent with employer stated needs for open positions. Students wishing to earn the MBA with the Sustainability Certificate will find employment opportunities within the northeast region.

MBA students will be made aware of career opportunities through Westfield State University's Career Center in the form of career development advising, job fairs, and professional networking events. Virtual professional development opportunities also be offered through webinars. MBA students will be encouraged to take advantage of professional networking opportunities through the WSU Alumni Association to learn more about career options.

Duplication

In developing the proposed degree program, Westfield State began by studying the MBA offerings of other institutions within the region. The comparative analysis of regional MBA programs is summarized in **Appendix 1** of this report. The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis:

- Although the number of credits required for MBA programs at regional universities varied from a high of 48 credits (Clark University, Framingham State University) to 30 credits (Bay Path, Bentley, Central Connecticut, Fitchburg, MCLA), the trend is for fewer credits. The proposed degree program is 30 credits.
- MBA degrees have typically been generalist degrees in advanced business. The current trend seems to be to offer specialties or concentrations in the MBA. Several programs had concentrations in Business Analytics while no programs offered a concentration in Sustainability. The proposed degree program offers a Certificate in Business Analytics OR a Certificate in Global Sustainability for Business. The proposed degree program also offers a Certificate in Business Leadership (required of all MBA students). The proposed degree program is on trend with the emphasis on Business Analytics but has no competitors in the Global Sustainability for Business space. Some programs offer individual courses in business sustainability, but no concentration. There is only one other program offering a concentration in Leadership (Western New England University). The design of the proposed degree program is distinctive and unique in the region.
- The delivery format for MBA programs has shifted to embrace online course delivery. Many of the programs studied offer both in-person and online programs. The proposed degree program has been developed as a 100% online program to provide students with the flexibility they need as working adults. Recent studies have shown strong student preferences for online courses in MBA programs.
- Tuition and fees for the MBA differ widely, ranging from \$58,650 (Bentley University) to a low of \$13,080 (Fitchburg State University). At the current graduate tuition rates for Westfield State University, the full cost of the proposed degree program would be \$12,930 for the full degree and \$10,344 for the 4+1 track, among the lowest cost of the 17 regional universities studied.

In short, the proposed degree program is designed to distinguish it from other MBA programs in the region. The proposed degree program is differentiated by its unique curriculum emphasis, specialized concentrations, experiential learning opportunities, affordability, and flexibility and accessibility. These qualities will serve to attract students who wish to differentiate themselves in a competitive employment market.

The proposed degree program is a stackable certificate program where students complete a Business Leadership Certificate and choose between a Business Analytics Certificate, or a Global Sustainability Certificate. The proposed degree program is an online, 30-credit graduate program, offering the quick completion and flexible delivery students desire. The certificates in the proposed degree program were chosen to align with skills employers say are important now and will continue to be in the next five years such as leadership, data analysis & interpretation, decision-making processes, strategy.

The proposed degree program was also designed to meet the need of today's MBA students in that it provides pathways for part-time education, quicker goal attainment, and flexibility via online asynchronous delivery).

Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The proposed degree program has been designed to incorporate many high impact practices (HIPs) to improve the student learning experience. HIPs to be incorporated include:

- Capstone Courses and Projects: Students will have three options for completing the capstone project: 1) Consulting Project (described in the response to question 3 above), 2) a Strategic Analysis Project incorporating similar analysis to the Consulting Project but utilizing secondary sources rather than primary sources such as in-person interviews and company tours, and 3) Study Abroad Projects which involves combining academic learning with cultural immersion and practical exposure to global business environments. In all three options, students will develop a strong understanding of business environments including economic, political, legal, and socio-culture factors that impact business operations. Students will also develop strategic-thinking skills by examining how businesses formulate and execute business strategies, conducting market research, and evaluating the competitive landscape.

These projects will allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world business challenges in different contexts.

- Collaborative Assignments and Projects: Collaborative assignments and projects will prepare students for teamwork in the workplace by simulating real-world scenarios where students must work together to achieve common goals. Students will develop teamwork skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration.
- Diversity/Global Learning: MBA programs typically attract students from diverse backgrounds, different industries, cultures, and academic disciplines. Collaborative assignments will provide opportunities for students to leverage this diversity and learn from each other's unique perspectives, experiences, and expertise. The Study Abroad Capstone option will help develop students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability by immersing them in a different cultural context.
- Case Analysis: Case studies allow students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world business situations, helping them to develop a deeper understanding of how theoretical concepts translate into practical decision-making. Students must critically analyze complex business problems, identify relevant information, and propose solutions or strategies. This process cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are critical components for business leaders.
- Experiential Learning Opportunities: Many MBA courses will virtually utilize software data provided by the WSU Finance/Data Analytics Lab so that students can have access to cutting-edge analytical tools (such as statistical and data visualization software) and live (and historical) financial data feeds. In finance courses, students will be able to develop stock portfolios and see how they perform when market conditions are simulated. Statistical software will permit identification of patterns in large data sets so that students can drive insights into business activities when developing strategic recommendations. The capstone project courses provide opportunities for students to gain insight into real-world business challenges.

Overall, the proposed degree program is innovative in its design as a stackable certificate program that leads to a graduate degree and will use significant digital and experiential learning components to provide students with a learning experience that will prepare them for success in the complex and dynamic field of business.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

The proposed degree program is a priority and supports Westfield State University's approved strategic plan in multiple ways, aligning with the institution's mission as a public University offering accessible quality graduate programs.

The proposed degree program contributes to WSU's commitment to providing accessible quality graduate programs. The design of the proposed degree program prioritizes affordability, flexibility, diversity, inclusivity, student support, academic excellence, experiential learning, and career development so that students achieve their academic and professional goals.

The proposed degree program enhances student engagement and success by creating an interactive learning environment, fostering peer learning and collaboration, providing access to industry experts and career development resources, offering personalized academic support, providing experiential learning opportunities, and focusing on leadership development. These elements will collectively contribute to the holistic growth and professional success of our students.

The proposed degree program contributes to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region. The proposed degree program will cultivate business leaders, entrepreneurs, and managers with the skills and knowledge to drive economic growth. Graduates will contribute to innovation, productivity, and competitiveness in industries from finance and technology to healthcare and manufacturing. By fostering an inclusive learning environment, the proposed degree program will prepare students to lead diverse teams and organizations, promote equity and social justice, and contribute to a more inclusive society. As a hub for networking, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among students, alumni, faculty, and industry professionals, the MBA students and graduates will make connections that facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and resources that foster a vibrant community within the region.

The proposed degree program aligns with Westfield State University's mission of developing responsible leaders and engaged citizens. The MBA Business Leadership Certificate (required of all MBAs) focuses on the development of students' leadership skills and prepares students to be ethical and socially responsible leaders. Students will use self-assessment tools, and feedback from peers and mentors, to identify their personal strengths, weaknesses, and leadership goals. They will then develop a personalized leadership development plan with action steps for ongoing growth and improvement. The courses in the Leadership Certificate provides students with opportunities to develop values of social responsibility, ethical practice, and community engagement, preparing graduates to be active contributors to society and engaged citizens in the northeast region.

In summary, the proposed degree program at Westfield State University is a priority that supports the institution's mission by providing accessible quality programs, promoting student engagement and success, contributing to economic and social growth, and developing responsible leaders and citizens. The proposed degree program aligns with the University's commitment to education, community engagement, and the overall well-being of the northeast region.

Goals and Objectives (Form B)

The overall goals and learning objectives of the proposed degree program revolve around equipping students with the knowledge, skills and capabilities needed to succeed as effective leaders in the dynamic business environment. Students completing the proposed degree program should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in areas such as business management, accounting, finance, marketing, and strategic planning.
- Develop critical thinking, decision-making, leadership and communication skills to drive organizational success and contribute to societal well-being.
- Thrive in a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives.
- Develop the ethical mindset needed to lead with integrity in today's dynamic global business landscape.
- Integrate knowledge and formulate strategies to contribute meaningfully to improving businesses and society.

Details of the assessment of these goals are provided in Form B.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Projections (Form C)

Form C provides conservative estimates for enrollment of full and part-time MBA enrollments for the first five years of the program and certificate enrollments for the same period. (Westfield State will file the necessary forms for approval of the three certificates (Business Leadership, Business Analytics, and Global Sustainability for Business after the proposed degree program is approved). Westfield State anticipates that most students will enroll in the proposed degree program as part of the 4+1 degree pathway where they can complete the MBA in one full-time year, along with part-time students needing the full degree.

While management, marketing, finance and accounting represent the largest undergraduate major at Westfield State, the proforma statement in Form D. is based on a conservative estimate. The proposed degree program is profitable from the first year with modest enrollment growth.

Focus groups with senior business students at Westfield State indicated a strong interest in the design of the MBA program and its certificates. Several students expressed interest in the Business Analytics certificate since Westfield State currently offers few undergraduate courses in this area. Students interested in sustainability issues thought the Global Sustainability for Business Certificate would be beneficial for students receiving undergraduate degrees in Regional Planning or Environmental Science. Westfield State hopes to attract many MBA and certificate students from the Westfield State undergraduate programs.

Westfield State anticipates modest impact on enrollment in other graduate programs offered by the university. Students in other graduate programs such as the Master of Public Administration, the Master

of Science in Accounting, or the Health Innovation and Leadership degree (under development in Nursing) may wish to enroll in MBA courses that are complimentary to their degree programs.

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

The existing business faculty have expressed interest in teaching in the proposed degree program. Faculty are interested in working with advanced students and see the MBA courses as welcome changes of pace in their teaching. Westfield State anticipates that many of these faculty will teach an MBA class as an addition to their traditional four/four workload. Few faculty will teach an MBA course as part of their day workload. This will permit Westfield State to offer the proposed degree program without adding additional faculty members. Additional adjuncts may be needed to teach specialized courses within the program. The proforma budget in Form D was built to reflect the teaching of many courses in the program by Day program faculty at the DCGE salary rate. Only two adjunct faculty were included in the budget. As the program becomes profitable, Westfield State may wish to use some of the profits to hire additional faculty to serve the MBA program.

As a 100% online program, no additional classroom or office space will be required for the proposed degree program and Certificates. Faculty will utilize Westfield State's learning management system (LMS) to provide online content for students. The proposed degree program will fund one subscription to the Bloomberg Management database. The online business lab will be an important aspect through the degree program and will include other databases through the library that are either free or already accessible.

The budget includes a part-time staff member to serve as the program's administrative assistant. The administrative assistant will report to the Program Area Chair. The Program Area Chair (PAC) will serve as the director for the MBA program and associated Certificates. The PAC may appoint other faculty members to serve as Program Advisors. Both the PAC and Program Advisors will be compensated at the typical rate for all graduate programs at Westfield State.

The budget includes approximately \$16,000/year in funding for marketing and professional travel. These areas will be critical to the startup and maintenance of the program. These funds will be used to promote

the program (online and in print), to host recruiting events (virtually and in person), and to recruit students through visits to businesses in the region.

Westfield State has also included a modest budget of \$500/yr to host professional development workshops, guest speakers, and webinars. These events will enhance the student experience in the program by providing opportunities for students to interact with experts and specialists.

The complete budget is provided as Form D. Even with the conservative enrollment projections and the inclusion of existing faculty as instructors (at a higher cost than adjuncts), the proposed degree program is profitable from the first year.

STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Master of Business Administration** program submitted by **Westfield State University**. 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 A: Curriculum Outline

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = 15)		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
Business Leadership Certificate (required for all MBA candidates)		
MBA XXXX	Business Leadership Development	1.5
MBA XXXX	Emotional Intelligence for Leaders	1.5
MBA XXXX	Value Creation	1.5
MBA XXXX	Accounting for Business Decisions	1.5
MBA XXXX	Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility	1.5
MBA XXXX MBA XXXX	Negotiations OR Special Topics for Leaders	1.5
MBA XXXX	Marketing Leadership	3.0
MBA XXXX	Strategic Management	1.5
MBA XXXX	Applied Integrative Project	1.5
Business Analytics Certificate (Option #1 for MBA completion)		
MBA XXXX	Data-Driven Decision Making	1.5
MBA XXXX	Statistics for Business Analytics	1.5
MBA XXXX	Marketing Analytics	3.0
MBA XXXX	Data Visualization for Business Decisions	3.0
MBA XXXX	Applied Business Analytics	3.0
Global Sustainability for Business Certificate (Option #2 for MBA completion)		
MBA XXXX	Organizational Change for Sustainability	1.5
MBA XXXX	Sustainability Reporting & Analysis	1.5
MBA XXXX	Responsible Global Leadership	3.0
MBA XXXX	Sustainable Business Practices	3.0
MBA XXXX	Special Topics in Sustainability	3.0
	Sub-total # Core Credits Required	27
Elective Course Choices (Total courses required = 3 credits) (attach list of choices if needed)		
Variable	Students may take any of the above courses not included in either the Business Leadership Certificate or the chosen certificate for completion of the degree.	3
MBA XXXX	Special Topics for Leaders (May be repeated for credit provided that the topic to be covered is different)	1.5
MBA XXXX	Negotiations (May be taken as an elective if not selected for completion of the Business Leadership Certificate)	1.5

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ELECTIVES		
Students may choose as an elective any MBA course not required in their chosen Certificates		
ACCT 0628	Fraud Examination (Elective)	3
ACCT 0630	Foundations in Ethics: Applications in Business & the CPA Profession (Elective)	3
ACCT 0631	Municipal & Fund Accounting (Elective)	3
MGMT 0632	Business Law for Accountants (Elective)	3
ACCT 0642	Managing Professionals in Client Service Organizations (Elective)	3
PADM 0600	Foundations of Public Administration (Elective)	3
PADM 0638	Introduction to Healthcare Systems (Elective)	3
PADM 0640	The Regional Economy of New England (Elective)	3
	Sub-total # Elective Credits Required	3
Curriculum Summary		
Total number of courses required for the degree		15
Total credit hours required for degree		30
Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements: A bachelor's degree in business or equivalent knowledge of basic financial accounting, financial management, and microeconomics. Students without this background will be required to complete MBA Boot Camp.		



Business, Mathematics,
Computing, & Sustainability

Proposed MBA

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE (Required for all MBA Candidates)				TOTAL CREDITS
Business Leadership Development (1.5 credits)	Value Creation (1.5 credits)	Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility (1.5 credits)	Marketing Leadership (3 credits)	12
Emotional Intelligence for Leaders (1.5 credits)	Accounting for Business Decisions (1.5 credits)	Choose one: • Negotiation • Special Topics for Leaders		

BUSINESS ANALYTICS				TOTAL CREDITS
Data-Driven Decision Making (1.5 credits)	Marketing Analytics (3 credits)	Data Visualization for Business Decisions (3 credits)	Applied Business Analytics (3 credits)	12
Statistics for Business Analytics (1.5 credits)				

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR BUSINESS				TOTAL CREDITS
Organizational Change for Sustainability (1.5 credits)	Responsible Global Leadership (3 credits)	Sustainable Business Practices (3 Credits)	Special Topics in Sustainability (3 credits)	12
Sustainability Reporting & Analysis (1.5 credits)				

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED FOR MBA		TOTAL CREDITS	PATHWAYS TO WSU MBA
Elective (3 credits) Choose 3 credits from courses above or MSA courses or PADM courses	Capstone Course Strategic Management (1.5 credits) Applied Integrative Project: (1.5 credits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting project • Strategic analysis project • Study Abroad 	6	<p>2 Certificates + 2 Courses = MBA 24 credits + 6 credits = 30 credits</p> <p>Accelerated 4+1 Path begins during undergraduate senior year</p> <p>LEADERSHIP + BUSINESS ANALYTICS + ELECTIVE + CAPSTONE = MBA</p> <p>LEADERSHIP + GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY + ELECTIVE + CAPSTONE = MBA</p>

MBA Admission Requirements: A bachelor's degree in business or equivalent knowledge of basic financial accounting, financial management and microeconomics. Students without this background will be required to complete MBA Boot Camp.

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
Demonstrate advanced knowledge in areas such as business management, accounting, finance, marketing, and strategic planning.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the courses in the Business Leadership Certificate	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for each functional business area are included in the relevant courses along with appropriate assignments and activities.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Develop critical thinking, decision- making, leadership and communication skills to drive organizational success and contribute to societal and environmental well-being.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the Business Leadership Certificate Successful completion (B+ or better) of Applied Business Analytics or Sustainable Business Practices courses	Faculty will ensure that course topics, assignments, and activities introduce and reinforce skills in critical thinking, decision-making, leadership and communication.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Thrive in a diverse and inclusive community where individuals from different backgrounds can exchange ideas and perspectives.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of Business Leadership Development and Emotional Intelligence	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice are addressed in the Business Leadership Development and Emotional Intelligence courses.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
Develop the ethical mindset needed to lead with integrity in today's dynamic global business landscape.	Successful completion (B+ or better) of the Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility course	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for ethical decision making and corporate social responsibility are incorporated in the relevant courses.	Data to be collected and analyzed annually

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
Integrate knowledge and formulate strategies contribute meaningfully to	Successful completion (B+ or better) of Strategic Management	Faculty will ensure that key topics, models and tools for strategy formulation are	Data to be collected and analyzed annually
improving businesses and society.	course and Applied Integrative Project course Responsible Global Leadership or Applied Business Analytics courses	incorporated in relevant courses and are applied in integrative course projects.	

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
New Full-Time	14	14	15	15	16
New Part-Time	10	11	12	13	14
Continuing Part-Time	0	10	11	12	13
MBA Full-Time	14	14	15	15	16
MBA Part-Time	10	21	23	25	27
MBA Totals	24	35	38	40	43

Printing and Publishing

Westfield State University
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Fully Online Program

		Inputs	Planning FY26	Year 1 FY27	Year 2 FY28	Year 3 FY29	Year 4 FY30	Year 5 FY31	
	Subscription- Bloomberg	\$ -	-	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	
	Travel (Clinical, In-State, Conferenc	\$ -	-	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	4,000	
	Recruitment	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Entry Fees	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	General Administrative Costs	\$ -	-	500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	
	Other	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Other	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Admin Expenses (EE)			14,000	48,650	51,200	52,700	54,200	55,200	
		Per Student							
	Lab and Classroom Supplies	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Lab Start-up Costs	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Clothing and Footwear	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Cleaning Supplies	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Library	\$ -	-	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	
	Teaching & AV Materials	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Medical and Surgical Supplies	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Health and Safety Supplies	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Recreation Supplies	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Other 1	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Other 2	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Consultant Services (HH)			-	-	-	-	-	-	
		Budget							
	Food Services - On Campus	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Food Services - Off Campus	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Laundry Services	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Athletics Officials	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Cleaners/Janitors	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Security Services	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Temp Help Services	\$ -	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Information Technology Expenses (UU)			-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Operating Expenses			\$ 14,000	\$ 49,650	\$ 52,200	\$ 53,700	\$ 55,200	\$ 56,200	
Total Direct Expenses			\$ 14,000	\$ 183,880	\$ 191,896	\$ 197,481	\$ 204,188	\$ 209,552	
Contribution Margin = Net Revenue - Direct Expenses			(14,000)	20,036	88,447	112,500	125,387	151,789	
Indirect Expenses									
Fall SCH (15/FT)			-	-	-	-	-	-	
Spring SCH (15FT)			-	-	-	-	-	-	
Summer SCH			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total SCH			-	-	-	-	-	-	

Westfield State University
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Fully Online Program

Inputs		Planning FY26	Year 1 FY27	Year 2 FY28	Year 3 FY29	Year 4 FY30	Year 5 FY31	
Indirect Cost/SCH		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Indirect Expenses		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Fund Transfers (per student)		-	-	-	-	-	-	
Contingency (% of revenue)	5%	-	10,196	14,017	15,499	16,479	18,067	
Contingency/Transfers/other expenses		\$ -	\$ 10,196	\$ 14,017	\$ 15,499	\$ 16,479	\$ 18,067	
Grand Total Expenses		\$ 14,000	\$ 194,076	\$ 205,913	\$ 212,980	\$ 220,667	\$ 227,619	
Total Surplus/(Deficit)		\$ (14,000)	\$ 9,840	\$ 74,429	\$ 97,001	\$ 108,908	\$ 133,722	
Cumulative Net Surplus /(Deficit)				\$ 70,270	\$ 167,271	\$ 276,179	\$ 409,901	

Discussion Point:

Programmatic Reinvestment - labs, other
or 5% Contribution
No capital requirement
\$431 per SCH

Appendix 1

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MBA PROGRAMS IN REGION

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Westfield State University Westfield, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$12,930	Stackable Certificate Program with Certificates in Business Leadership, Business Analytics, Sustainability
Adelphi University Garden City, NY Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$53,640	General MBA, Healthcare Management
American International College (AIC) Springfield, MA Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$24,450	Traditional MBA curriculum
Assumption University Worcester, MA MBA Full-Time Management MBA in Healthcare Management MA in Organizational Leadership	36	In-Person for Full-Time Online for Part-Time	\$29,412	Concentrations: Business Analytics, Entrepreneurial Studies, Finance, Healthcare Management,
Bay Path University Longmeadow, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$25,650	Management, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Finance, Healthcare Management
Bentley University Waltham, MA Master in Business Analytics	30	In-Person	\$58,650	Managerial Statistics, Data Management & System Modeling, Time Series Analysis, Data Mining

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Bridgewater State University Bridgewater, MA Master of Business Administration	30	In-Person & Online	\$15,067	Business Intelligence/ Analytics, Global Management Managing People and Organizations
Central Connecticut State University New Britain, CT Master of Business Administration	30	In-Person	\$25,140	Tracks in Business Analytics, Accounting, Finance, General Management, Supply Chain Management, Management, Marketing
Clark University Worcester, MA Master of Business Administration MBA in Accounting MBA in Finance	48	Online	\$42,900	Information Systems for Analytics, Responsible Management in a Global Economy, Data Driven Decision Making
College of Our Lady of the Elms Chicopee, MA Master of Business Administration	36	In-Person and Online	\$35,676	Accounting MBA, Financial Planning MBA, Healthcare Leadership MBA, Management MBA
Fitchburg State University Fitchburg, MA Master of Business Administration	30	Online	\$13,080	Accounting, Business Analytics Management, Healthcare Management, Human Resources Management
Framingham State University Framingham, MA Master of Business Administration	48	In-Person & Online	\$18,300	Concentration in Management or Biotechnology Operations
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) North Adams, MA Master in Business Administration	30	Hybrid & Online	\$15,510	Competing in Global Economies and Markets, Managing and Leading, Sustainability and Social Responsibility

Institution & Location Program Name	Total Credits	Delivery Format	Cost to Attend	Sample Curriculum
Salem State University Salem, MA Master of Business Administration	36	In-Person & Online	\$20,326	Accounting Analysis for Decision Making, Legal and Ethical Environment, Financial Decision Making and Value Creation
University of Connecticut Hartford and Stamford, CT Master of Business Administration	42	In-Person & Online	\$46,200	Business Analytics, Business Ethics & Compliance, Finance, General Business, Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management
University of Hartford Hartford, CT Master of Business Administration	36	Online	\$30,096	Business Analytics, Entrepreneurial Studies, Finance, Healthcare Management
University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, MA Master of Business Administration MS in Accounting MS in Business Analytics MS in Sports Management Master of Finance	45	In-Person & Online	\$42,132	Business Analytics, Healthcare Administration, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Sports Management
Western New England University Springfield, MA Master of Business Administration	38	Online asynchronous & remote synchronous	\$36,000	Leadership, Accounting for Decision Makers, Organizational Behavior, Decision Modeling for Analytics