

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 27-18

BOARD DATE: October 20, 2026

**APPLICATION OF THE URBAN COLLEGE OF BOSTON TO AWARD THE ASSOCIATE
OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of The Urban College of Boston to award the Associate of Science in Business Administration.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 10/20/2026.

Authority: M.G.L. c. 69, § 30 et seq., 610 CMR 2.00

Contact: Kristen Stone, Ed.D., Director for Academic & Veterans Affairs

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Urban College of Boston Associate of Science in Business Administration

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

The Urban College of Boston (UCB), a New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), private, non-profit institution of higher education located in Boston, MA, requests authorization to offer the Associate of Science in Business Administration.

UCB was founded in 1967 as the Urban College Program by Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD). In 1993, the Board of Higher Education (BHE or Board) authorized the College to grant the Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education, the Associate of Arts in Human Services Administration, and the Associate of Arts in General Studies. UCB enrolled its first college degree-seeking students in 1993 and in 2001, UCB received accreditation from NECHE, then known as the Higher Education Commission of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

In 2022, the Board approved the college's restated Articles of Incorporation, allowing the Supporting Organization "Impact.org," a non-profit affiliate of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), to become UCB's sole corporate member. As a result of this change in governance, UCB has not been operated by the same governing entity for the preceding six years and is therefore ineligible to use the Expedited External Review process to seek approval for the proposed program. See [AAC 14-35 2014 BHE Program Review Policy](#).¹ Accordingly, UCB's application was reviewed pursuant to the process established in 610 CMR 2.08, which requires Board action for approval of the proposed program.

INTENT AND MISSION

UCB is recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), and a Minority Serving Institution. The College's mission is to provide individualized, supportive, and multilingual education that prepares a diverse community of learners to pursue career advancement and transform their lives.

The proposed Associate of Science in Business Administration is designed to address a critical gap in UCB's current academic offerings and respond to the educational and workforce needs of

¹ Under the BHE's 2014 Program Review Policy (AAC 14-35), the Board delegated to the Commissioner authority to approve eligible new degree programs following review through the Notice of Intent and Expedited External Review processes. Because Urban College of Boston does not meet the eligibility criteria for review under these delegated processes, approval of the proposed A.S. in Business Administration requires action by the Board.

its students. Upon completion, students will be prepared for roles such as entry-level managers, junior marketing associates, office administrators, marketing assistants, and digital marketing associates. The proposed degree will also support students who are micro- or small- business owners by developing skills in areas such as budgeting, rate setting, marketing, and business operations to strengthen their management capabilities and income potential. In addition, the program will serve existing and emerging multilingual populations to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and cultural competencies needed to participate effectively in the Massachusetts business environment. While all courses in the program will be offered in English, select business courses will be taught in Spanish and Mandarin.

UCB employs a shared governance model that promotes collaborative decision-making in academic and curriculum matters. The College's Curriculum Committee includes representatives from adjunct and full-time faculty and staff, with the Vice President for Academic Affairs serving as a non-voting ex-officio member of the committee. The Committee reviews and acts upon curriculum proposals and approved curricular changes are communicated to the faculty. In addition, monthly faculty meetings are held throughout the academic year to discuss and address academic matters.

In December 2023, the Curriculum Committee approved a new 21-credit general business certificate and digital marketing certificate and subsequently explored the development of the Associate of Science in Business Administration. The proposed degree is structured to provide students with flexible, stackable pathways through which coursework completed toward a certificate may be applied toward the associate degree. This structure is intended to facilitate degree completion and expand students' pathways towards a baccalaureate degree program further expanding their competitiveness in the job market.

On July 22, 2024, the Urban College of Boston Board of Trustees approved the program curriculum for the A.S. in Business Administration. The program will be administered within the College's Academic Affairs division and within a newly developed Business Department.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

Admission

The proposed Associate of Science degree in Business Administration will follow the College's standard admissions policies and criteria. UCB is an open enrollment institution and makes admissions decisions on a rolling basis. Applicants must submit a complete college admissions application and required documentation, including a high school diploma, GED or HiSET; photo identification; and proof of citizenship or residency. Following submission of the application, students may also be required to complete an English placement assessment.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT: ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

	# of Students Year 1	# of Students Year 2	# of Students Year 3	# of Students Year 4
New Full Time	5	7	8	9
Continuing Full Time	0	3	8	10
New Part Time	25	33	35	38
Continuing Part Time	0	16	38	60
Totals	30	59	89	117

Program Curriculum (Attachment A)

The Associate of Science in Business Administration program consists of a total of 60-62 credits, including 33-34 credits in general education, 15-16 credits in required business courses, and 12 credits of elective courses. General education coursework includes college writing, communications, psychology, humanities, social and natural sciences, computer applications, and mathematics. Core business courses include Principles of Marketing, Principles of Management, Financial Accounting, Digital Marketing Strategies, and Customer Service and Customer Service Management. Students may select elective courses aligned with their interests and career goals, such as Introduction to Grant and Proposal Writing, Business Communication, Principles of Personal Finance, and Entrepreneurship. All courses are taught in English, with select business courses also offered in Spanish and Mandarin.

The curriculum provides students with a robust foundation in business principles while offering flexibility for working adults. The program will be delivered fully online including both asynchronous and synchronous components to ensure accessibility and engagement. There is also an optional internship course designed to be taken after students complete at least 30 credits. Students will apply their academic knowledge to real world problems and develop necessary professional competencies.

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Budget (Attachment B)

Tuition and fees for the program are as follows (full-time)

Tuition (24 credits x \$317 per credit)	\$7,608
Textbook costs*	\$250
Transportation (optional)*	\$352
Total Cost (per academic year):	\$8,210

Tuition and fees for the program are as follows: (part-time)

Tuition (12 credits x \$317 per credit):	\$3,804
Textbook costs*	\$250
Transportation (optional)**	\$352
Total Cost (per academic year):	\$4,406

**College encourages the use of Open Educational Resources (OER). When OER course materials are not available, UCB assumes a cost of \$250 per year.*

***For students who wish to access on campus services, assuming 4 MBTA rides/week with a daily \$11 unlimited travel pass, 32 days of travel assumed per year.*

Faculty

The Associate of Science in Business Administration will initially be supported by two individuals who will serve jointly as faculty of record and interim co-chairs of the Business Department, under the supervision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development. Together, they will provide academic and administrative oversight of the program, including responsibility for curriculum development and implementation, course sequencing, learning outcomes and assessment, instructional quality, faculty coordination, student success, and alignment with workforce and employer needs.

This interim co-chair structure will remain in place while the College completes its search for permanent leadership for the program. The College plans to begin the hiring process for the Business Department Chair position in early spring 2027, with the goal of appointing and onboarding a permanent, full-time Chair later that spring. Until the search is completed, the interim co-chairs will continue to provide faculty-of-record oversight and coordinated leadership to support program continuity and quality.

Instruction will be supported by three adjunct faculty in accounting, management, marketing, and related business disciplines. All faculty hold at least a master's degree in business or a related discipline, including those teaching in Spanish and Mandarin. UCB plans to hire three additional part-time faculty members to support the program, with the potential to increase instructional staffing as needed in response to student enrollment and program demand. Additionally, four full-time and four part-time faculty members will provide instruction in the general education courses required for the proposed A.S. in Business Administration program.

Full-time faculty typically teach five courses per semester and advise approximately 18 students. Faculty serving as Department Chair assume additional administrative and supervisory responsibilities, including the evaluation of adjunct faculty, and receive a teaching-load reduction of two courses per semester, or four courses per academic year, as well as a reduced advising load. Adjunct faculty are appointed on a term-by-term basis, typically for one or more semesters, and teach between one and three courses per term depending on course availability and the needs of the College. Adjunct faculty also provide specialized disciplinary expertise in areas not covered by the College's full-time faculty.

Facilities, Library and Technology

UCB's main campus is located at 2 Boylston Street in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 1st and 2nd floors of a building known as the China Trade Center. The College's administrative offices, student support services, and meeting rooms are located on the 2nd floor of this building, including Enrollment Services, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, Student Services, the Business Office, Advancement, the Student Lounge, and the Learning Resource Center. Classrooms are on the 1st and 2nd floors. All classrooms and meeting rooms are equipped with an instructor station and standard educational technology.

UCB prioritizes the use of open educational resources for its courses and provides students with access to library and research resources, including Gale research databases provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and the Massachusetts Library System, as well as resources available through the Boston Public Library. The College utilizes Brightspace as its learning management system, which will also support the delivery of the proposed program.

No additional costs are anticipated for facilities, space, or equipment for this online program.

Learning Resource Center (LRC)

The Learning Resource Center provides individual and group tutoring in English and mathematics, language support in Spanish and Mandarin, technology assistance, study skills workshops, and placement testing. Services are available both in-person by appointment and remotely. The College is also developing a revised, inclusive mathematics placement process that will allow students either to complete a placement assessment to determine the appropriate course level or enroll in a mathematics preparation course before progressing to a college-level mathematics course aligned with their academic goals.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Upon completion of the program, graduates of the Associate of Science in Business Administration will be able to:

- Apply foundational knowledge of management, marketing, business ethics, technology, and accounting to solve common problems within business settings.
- Utilize quantitative and qualitative reasoning, critical skills, and computational skills to make informed decisions.
- Engage in reflective processes of information discovery, articulate the value of information and its cycle of development, and conduct discipline-specific research using appropriate technology.
- Identify current issues, trends, and policies that affect businesses and industry at the macro level and at the micro level, including for small, immigrant, women, and minority-led enterprises.
- Communicate effectively in written and oral forms appropriate in business settings.
- Distinguish between entrepreneurial ideas and viable opportunities and identify the resources to start a venture and implement a plan for a successful launch.
- Examine the diversity of human experience to develop civic and intercultural knowledge and competence.

Assessment Process

The College has implemented a comprehensive, continuous assessment framework to strengthen academic quality and educational effectiveness. Faculty assesses at least one program-specific learning outcome annually, while every academic program undergoes a comprehensive review on a four-year cycle. Assessment findings are used to guide curriculum improvements, faculty development, and resource allocation. To support these efforts, the College is establishing annual funding for assessment experts and compensation for faculty involved in assessment and program review activities. In addition, UCB has created an Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Committee to oversee assessment processes, monitor progress, and report findings to institutional leadership.

The assessment process is further supported through membership in the New England Educational Assessment Network (NEEAN), anticipated input from an external advisory board, and systematic tracking of key student success metrics, including retention, completion, graduation, and transfer rates. The College also maintains a comprehensive five-year assessment plan to document and evaluate ongoing assessment activities. Together, these measures create a structured, evidence-based process for continuous improvement that ensures academic programs remain effective, responsive to student needs, and aligned with industry expectations.

EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The institution's application was reviewed pursuant to 610 CMR 2.06 and 2.08 by a Visiting Committee comprised of Maria Antobello, MBA, ALM, Ed.D., Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs; Anne Marie Pasquale, JD, Dean of Business and Management, Emmanuel College; and Kara Stevens, CPA, DPS, MBA, Chair of Undergraduate Campus-Based Business Programs and Director of Graduate Accounting Programs, Bay Path University.

Department staff supported the committee and provided contact with UCB to facilitate the review process.

The Committee was charged with reviewing the application and documents provided by the institution and conducted a virtual site visit on December 1-3, 2025, with additional materials provided by UCB. As part of its virtual visit, the Committee spoke directly with the UCB's President, the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development, Chief Fiscal Officer, Interim Business Department Chair, Library Director, Director of IT, staff from admissions, financial aid, registrar, student services and advising staff, and members of the faculty.

The Visiting Committee reviewed course descriptions, syllabi, required readings, student learning outcomes, program maps, elective and general education requirements, assessment measures, and other elements of the proposed program. The Committee also evaluated the institution's capacity to offer and support the program, including its faculty, facilities and equipment, financial resources, organizational structure, and leadership. Pursuant to 610 CMR 2.08(3), the review was guided by the standards currently utilized by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), supplemented by the criteria set forth in 610 CMR 2.08(3)(b) through (g). These criteria address mission and purpose; planning and evaluation; organization and governance; academic program; students; teaching, learning, and scholarship; institutional resources; educational effectiveness; and integrity, transparency, and public disclosure.

Overall, the Visiting Committee found that the proposed program is consistent with UCB's mission and strategic priorities and is supported by an engaged leadership team and qualified faculty and professional staff. The Committee also noted the College's commitment to student success and to developing programs that support career-oriented learners.

The Committee made several recommendations to strengthen the proposed program, including further articulating program learning goals and their alignment with specific business administration career pathways; more clearly defining and integrating internships and other experiential learning opportunities, including expectations for supervision and assessment; and ensuring that experiential learning opportunities are appropriately designed for the program's fully online format or, where in-person experiences are included, clearly establishing how they will be supported and evaluated. The Committee also recommended that UCB develop and document a sustainable approach to multilingual course delivery, including sufficient multilingual faculty capacity; ensure that academic and student support services are adequately funded and scalable as new programs are introduced; and make institutional publications and required public disclosures related to the program available in Spanish and Mandarin.

The institution responded thoroughly and substantively to the Visiting Committee's findings and recommendations. In response to the recommendation to more clearly articulate learning goals with specific business pathways, UCB created three occupational tracks:

- **Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship** with learning goals of: business planning, financial literacy, regulatory compliance, and entrepreneurial decision-making;

- **Office and Administrative Management** with learning goals of: ethical decision-making, stakeholder communication, program coordination, and community engagement; and
- **Non-profit and Community Organization management** with learning goals of: ethical decision-making, stakeholder communication, program coordination, and community engagement.

To more formally define and integrate internships and experiential learning within the curriculum, UCB has created BUS 295, Business Practicum, which will include a 120-hour internship requirement. The practicum will include explicit learning outcomes, formal supervision protocols, structured student logs, a site supervisor evaluation rubric, and midterm and final assessments aligned with program learning outcomes. Applied learning will also be incorporated throughout the curriculum through case studies, project-based learning, and case-based reflection.

To ensure that experiential learning is compatible with the program's fully online format, BUS 295 is being designed to accommodate students with varied professional backgrounds and allow approved experiential learning to occur in a range of settings, including students' current workplaces, community-based and nonprofit organizations, small businesses, entrepreneurial projects, and other business-related settings aligned with course outcomes. The practicum will include documented site agreements, academic supervision by the Program Chair, online submission of learning logs and reflective assignments, site supervisor evaluations, and student self-assessments.

In response to the recommendation to develop a sustainable approach to multilingual course delivery, UCB plans to offer introductory gateway courses in Spanish and Mandarin, while upper-level courses will be taught in English to support students' development of English-language proficiency. Faculty teaching in Spanish or Mandarin will be required to demonstrate both proficiency in the language of instruction and appropriate subject-matter expertise. UCB will establish a minimum enrollment threshold of eight students for courses offered in Spanish or Mandarin. When enrollment does not meet this threshold, the College may use alternative approaches, including cross-language hybrid instruction with supplemental materials in the target language, directed study, and additional academic support through the Learning Center.

Finally, in response to the Committee's recommendation regarding multilingual publications and public disclosures, UCB is working to enhance the accessibility of its website by implementing a Weglot translation layer to provide content in Spanish and Mandarin.

After reviewing the institution's response, staff determined that the institution responded substantively to the committee's recommendations and meets the standards in 610 CMR 2.08 required for Board approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Notice for public comment was posted on the Department's website on July 7, 2026, and the public comment period ended on July 28, 2026. The Department received one comment in opposition to approval of proposed program citing concerns regarding the College's faculty resources, program leadership, instructional capacity, and faculty involvement in curriculum development. The Department shared these concerns with UCB leadership and requested additional information and updated documentation addressing the College's capacity to support the proposed program.

In response, UCB confirmed that two current employees of the College will serve as interim co-chairs and joint faculty of the record for the Business Department, under the supervision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development. Together, they will provide academic and administrative oversight of the program, including responsibility for curriculum development and implementation, course sequencing, learning outcomes and assessment, instructional quality, faculty coordination, student success, and alignment with workforce and employer needs. UCB also provided an updated faculty form identifying the interim co-chairs and the adjunct faculty supporting the program. The College further outlined its plan to recruit a permanent full-time Business Department Chair, with the position expected to be reposted in early spring 2027, with the goal of appointing and onboarding a permanent, full-time Chair later that spring. The interim leadership structure will remain in place until a permanent appointment is finalized to ensure continuity of academic oversight and program implementation.

Upon review of the College's response and supplemental materials, the Department determined that the concerns raised during the public comment period were sufficiently addressed to advance the proposal.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

After a thorough evaluation of all documentation submitted, staff is satisfied that the proposal of The Urban College of Boston to award the Associate of Science in Business Administration meets the Board of Higher Education requirements for NECHE-accredited institutions outlined in 610 CMR 2.08 in the Degree-Granting Regulations for Independent Institutions of Higher Education, and staff recommends that the Board approve the application by The Urban College of Boston to award this degree.

ATTACHMENT A: Curriculum Outlines**Associate of Science in Business Administration**

<i>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 5)</i>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
MGT101	Principles of Management	3
MKT101	Principles of Marketing	3
ACC101	Financial Accounting	3 or 4
MKT200	Digital Media Marketing	3
MGT140	Customer Service and Customer Service Management	3
	<i>Sub Total Required Credits</i>	15
<i>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 4) (attach list of choices if needed)</i>		
	Program Elective A	3
	Program Elective A	3
	Program Elective B	3
	Program Elective B	3
	List of choices: <i>Program Elective A:</i> FIN 120 Principles of Personal Finance ACC*** Managerial Accounting ECN*** Macroeconomics <i>Program Elective B:</i> BUS 150 Entrepreneurship BUS 210 Business Law COM 230 Business Communications MGT 200 Small Business Management MGT 201 Principles of Project Management MKT 150 Social Media Marketing BUS 140 Introduction to Grant and Proposal Writing BUS 220 Sustainability in Business BUS 231 Business Internship	
	<i>Sub Total Elective Credits</i>	12

General Education Courses (Total # courses required = 11)		
Indicate Distribution of General Education Requirements Below		# of Credits
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		15
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		9-10
Social Sciences		9
Sub Total General Education Credits		33-34
Curriculum Summary		
Total number of courses required for the degree	20	
Total credit hours required for degree	60-62	
Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:		

ATTACHMENT B: Budget

			<i>Annual Expenses Per Year of Enrollment</i>			
Cost Categories	Pre-enrollment year 1, if applicable	Pre enrollment year 2, if applicable	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Full-Time Faculty & Program Chair (Salary)	-	-	\$40,000	\$82,400	\$84,872	\$87,418
Part-Time Faculty (Salary)	-	6,800	38,522	46,892	70,590	91,842
Staff (Salary)	5,040	-	10,000	60,000	61,800	63,654
Fringe (inclusive of all staff, faculty, etc.)	386	521	13,347	33,207	35,908	38,449
General Administrative Costs	-	200	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	-	500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Facilities/Space/Equipment	-	NA	-	-	-	-
Field & Clinical Resources	-	NA	-	-	-	-
Marketing	-	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500	13,500
Other (Specify) : Course development & translations	6,000	24,000	7,200	7,200	7,200	-
Subtotal	\$11,426	\$45,521	\$130,569	\$251,199	\$281,870	\$302,863

			<i>(Per Year of Enrollment)</i>			
Revenue Sources	Pre-enrollment year 1, if applicable	Pre enrollment year 2, if applicable	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Tuition	-	\$45,648	\$133,140	\$262,476	\$399,420	\$517,344
Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	-	\$45,648	\$133,140	\$262,476	\$399,420	\$517,344
Total Profit/Loss	-\$11,426	\$127	\$2,571	\$11,277	\$117,550	\$214,481