

Master of Business Administration Program Review: Executive Summary 2024

Process

In May 2024, Dr. Lisa Phillips, Assistant Dean, initiated the first meeting with the Program Review Committee (PRC). The committee comprised internal reviewers, including adjunct faculty members Dr. Bradley Roh, Dr. Richard Sands, and Dr. Denise Greaves, and Victoria Bai from the Digital Solutions team. Full-time instructor, Dr. Frans Flores was hired and joined the committee in September. The PRC met monthly and finalized the MBA Program Review Self-Study Report on July 30, 2024. The next step was identifying two external reviewers to evaluate the program—external reviewers Dr. Emilsen Holguin and Dr. Eva Mika completed the External Reviewer Report and presented their findings to the PRC on August 21, 2024. The PRC met on September 4, 2024, to finalize the goals and implementation plans.

Summary

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program was offered as a new program in Fall 2018. The program was designed in anticipation of an increasing demand for a more skilled form of management that includes managing diverse, virtual teams, and the flow of information and knowledge. The goal of the program is to graduate students who are both strategy executors and leaders, who can manage effectively within this dynamic environment.

The MBA program review process included independent program evaluations by the Program Review Committee's internal and two external reviewers. The results of those evaluations are provided in the [MBA Internal Program Review Rubric to Assess Program Quality](#) and the [MBA External Program Review Rubric to Assess Quality](#).

Program Quality

Students

Strengths

LAPU students come from diverse backgrounds with different levels of preparation. The program prepares students by developing critical thinkers and problem solvers who can make long-term, sustainable, and strategic decisions based on data and current market trends.

Students take courses in accounting, finance, economics, and business and data analytics before taking more advanced courses in marketing, supply chain management, strategic management, and leadership.

The combination of critical thinking and quantitative reasoning, management, operations, and leadership skills prepares students for managerial positions across multiple industries.

The data indicates that more White and Asian students are likely to enroll in the MBA program compared to other LPU graduate programs. The percentage of Hispanic students enrolling in the MBA program is similar to the general LPU graduate student population, while all other ethnicities are less likely to enroll.

Curriculum and Learning Environment

Strengths

Los Angeles Pacific University's MBA program offers a comprehensive, affordable, and ethically grounded business education. Its curriculum is designed to equip students with both foundational business knowledge and the ability to address modern challenges. LPU's MBA program is uniquely positioned due to its strong integration of Christian values, which appeals to students seeking a faith-based educational environment. The program's focus on ethical leadership, combined with courses that address modern business challenges such as technology and innovation, provides a holistic approach to business education. Additionally, LPU's curriculum is designed to foster practical skills and critical thinking, preparing students to navigate complex business scenarios and make informed, ethical decisions. This blend of traditional and contemporary business education, grounded in Christian ethics, is a significant advantage for LPU.

Compared to other institutions, LPU stands out for its unique integration of ethics, affordability, and comprehensive curriculum, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for successful careers in business. A review of the MBA curriculum map indicated the breadth of the program to be adequate in addressing the PLOs, which include not only professional competencies but broader institutional learning outcomes.

External Stakeholder Input

A [meeting with external stakeholders](#) was held on July 23, 2024 to assess the alignment of the MBA program learning outcomes with relevant workplace skills. The external stakeholders identified essential workplace skills that they would look for in a potential MBA hire, including:

- Teamwork and collaboration
- Innovative, "outside of the box" thinking
- Problem solving
- Digital and AI literacy
- Accounting, budgeting, and financial management
- Good judgment and ethical decision-making
- Critical thinking
- Oral communication, business writing, and how to engage a digital audience
- Specific attitudes included passion, a strong-work ethic, and an inclination for lifelong learning

The program was perceived as providing a well-rounded combination of hard and soft skills that would

prepare graduates for success across multiple industries and workplace settings.

Comparison to Competitors' Programs

The [comparative analysis](#) for Los Angeles Pacific University's (LAPU) MBA program highlights its well-rounded and strategically designed curriculum aimed at equipping students with essential business skills and ethical leadership qualities.

Areas for Improvement

An evaluation of the alignment of the course learning outcomes with the program learning outcomes was recorded in the [MBA Program Review - Alignment of CLOs with PLOs - 2024](#). One discrepancy was identified. Current CLOs do not show alignment for PLO 3: Effectively communicate business concepts through oral and written forms utilizing 21st-century communication skills and tools. Oral and written communication should be “introduced” in ECON 530.

The MBA program attracts a generationally diverse, largely Hispanic female population. Many MBA students are currently employed. However, those who are starting or changing careers may benefit from career counseling and mentorship programs that assist them in matching their passions and skills to specific careers. Students may also need coaching in identifying and leveraging employer contacts and networking to make additional connections.

Student Learning and Success

The aggregated course pass rate data from 2018-2023 shows a 90.9% pass rate. The course pass rate for female students (90.4%), who comprised 56% of the total student course count, was equivalent to the overall average of 90.8%, while the course pass rate for male students (91.4%), who comprised 44% of the total student course count, was slightly above the overall average of 90.8%. Overall, the program enrolls more females than males, and the females and males have similar pass rates.

Graduation Rates

1. Females (43.5%) appear to have a lower graduation rate than males (50%).
2. The ethnic groups, including Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (100%) Black or African American (43.5%), and Hispanics of Any Race (51.8%) appear to have higher graduation rates than the Asian (29.2%) and White (40%) groups.
3. The age brackets of 24 and under (50%), 30-34 (50%), 35-39 (53.3%), and 50-64 (50%) appear to have higher graduation rates than the age brackets of 25-29 (48%) and 40-49 (35.3%).

Three of the five (60%) PLOs passed the established standard (i.e., a satisfactory level equates to an 80% pass rate). As part of the annual PLO assessment process, strategies that have been implemented to improve PLO performance outcomes are noted in the annual assessment reports.

Faculty

Strengths

[Faculty academic and professional qualifications](#) include 88% holding doctorate degrees and 12% holding master degrees. The table “Faculty By Terminal Degree” indicates that terminally degreed instructors have taught 85% of all credits. Historically, the program has used 23 faculty who have earned doctoral degrees and three who have earned master’s degrees.

Survey results measure teaching effectiveness and engagement by evaluating answers to six questions in the [end-of-course surveys](#): The results – average answer – indicate each question exceeded the internal university goal of achieving a score of at least 4.0. Specifically, “My instructor used the grading criteria (rubrics) as a basis for evaluating my work” averaged 4.61. “My instructor's interactions made the course material interesting and relevant” averaged 4.52. “My instructor's feedback helped promote active learning averaged 4.55. “My instructor responded to my requests for assistance within one business day” averaged 4.56. “My instructor provided feedback on assignments within 5 business days averaged” 4.63. “My instructor demonstrated respect for the students” averaged 4.76. These results indicate teaching effectiveness and engagement is occurring at a university-acceptable level.

Areas for Improvement

[Faculty scholarship](#) is highlighted in a regular newsletter sent out to faculty titled, *Inside the Academy*. Examples of Boyer’s Model of scholarship have also been shared with the faculty. Full-time faculty are required to demonstrate scholarship in order to advance from assistant professor to associate professor and associate professor to full professor.

Program Viability and Sustainability

Strengths

Program Demand

The MBA enrollment totals for LAPU from 2018 to 2024 reflect both significant growth and subsequent decline. Starting with a modest enrollment of 22 students in 2018, the program experienced a substantial increase, reaching 244 students by 2020, representing a remarkable growth rate of 436.4% from 2018 to 2019 and 106.8% from 2019 to 2020.

Market demand

[The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) data reflects the market demand for students with an MBA degree. The occupations most in demand are management, including financial managers, management analysts, and operations managers. Human resource specialists, financial advisors, and accountants are also included in the top occupations for those with a business degree. The typical degree for an entry-level position is a bachelor’s degree in business. LAPU students are well prepared to obtain any in-demand career. The

program provides them with advanced analytical skills and conceptual knowledge to succeed in more specialized roles or general management positions.

Areas for Improvement

From 2021 onwards, the program saw a decline, with a noticeable decrease of 6.0% in 2022, further dropping by 19.7% in 2023, and a sharp decline of 25.9% in 2024, bringing the total enrollment down to 157 students. This trend is not unique to the MBA program. The overall graduate program enrollment at LAPU shows a parallel trend. The total enrollment peaked at 2,336 students in 2018 but started declining each subsequent year. From 2019 onwards, the graduate program saw a 17.1% decrease, continuing to drop by 19.7% in 2020, and further down by 7.8% in 2021. By 2022, the enrollment reduced by 16.5%, and this downward trend continued with an 8.3% decrease in 2023. The steepest decline occurred in 2024, with a significant drop of 26.9%, resulting in a total enrollment of 803 students. This data indicates a consistent pattern of declining enrollment across both the MBA and overall graduate programs at LAPU.

Allocation of Resources

Faculty

Strengths

The program relies primarily on adjunct instructors and one full-time instructor to teach courses; most have terminal degrees and significant industry experience. There are currently twenty-five active instructors teaching in the program which includes one full-time and six core adjunct faculty. Significant effort has been directed toward aligning instructors' backgrounds with the specific course content and increasing the ethnic and gender diversity of faculty. For example, the Economics instructors hold a Doctorate, the Business Law instructors hold JD degrees, and core faculty hold DBAs or PhDs in Business. In addition, instructors also have significant industry and corporate experience at the executive and middle management levels. The large number of instructors (26) and their ethnic diversity are strengths of the program.

Resources

The student support, including staff, IT resources, facilities, and financial resources align with the program goals.

Conclusion/Final Comments

The curriculum, practices, process, and resources align with the program goals. The program and course learning outcomes are aligned with the exception of PLO 3 which is addressed in the recommendations below. The MBA PLOs align with the university's Institutional Outcomes, General Education Outcomes, and WSCUC Core Competencies.

There are a few disparities in retention rates among ethnic groups. The ethnic groups, including Asian (65.2%) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (57.7%), and Black or African American (56.9%), have higher retention rates than the American Indian or Alaska Native (50%) and White (48%) groups.

Additionally, course pass rates among the five ethnic groups (69.2% of total student course counts in the MBA), which include Hispanics of any race (96.1%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (97.3%), Race and Ethnically unknown (97.3%), two or more races (100%), and White (91.8%) achieved higher than the overall average of 90.8%; while Black or African American (87.7%), and Asian (78.8%) fell below the overall average (30.8% of total student course counts in the MBA). Adult students entering an MBA program may need academic leveling courses for accounting and finance prior to enrollment. A contract with Peregrine Academics was established for this purpose. However, the enrollment department has never directed students to complete these courses.

Recommendations, Future Goals, and Planning for Improvement

Recommendations

Internal:

1. Develop assessments that encourage students to critically think about and apply a Christian worldview.
2. Revise the curriculum to address the industry demand for digital literacy and the ethical use of AI.
3. Develop a systematic process for collecting information from alumni to determine how well the program prepared the students for careers or advanced study.
4. Oral and written communication skills are assessed in PLO 3. Create separate PLOs oral and written communication skills.
5. Update curriculum to align with current business and management trends. Apply a continuous improvement approach to maintain program currency.

External:

1. **Update Curriculum and Learning Outcomes:**
 - Revise the curriculum to incorporate emerging business trends and industry-specific topics. Clearly outline how Christian values are integrated into decision-making and leadership to enhance the program's unique value proposition. Prioritize updating courses that have not been revised and that emphasize practical skills versus theory.
2. **Enhance Feedback Mechanisms with Key Stakeholders:**
 - Strengthen feedback loops with alumni and employers to identify and address gaps in communication skills and worldview application. Use benchmarking against leading

institutions to guide improvements and validate program effectiveness.

3. Recruit and Develop Faculty:

- Attract diverse faculty with direct industry experience for specialized courses and provide incentives for adjunct faculty to engage in scholarly activities. Implement peer mentoring and collaborative learning opportunities to support faculty development.

4. Address Enrollment Challenges:

- Align the program with current market demands and explore niche markets, including Christian corporations and associations. Develop targeted enrollment strategies and forge partnerships to boost program appeal and attract potential students.

5. Improve Resource Utilization:

- Increase awareness of and access to tutoring services among students. Regularly review staff workloads and faculty teaching loads to ensure effective support and maintain high instructional standards.

6. Update Program Assessment Timeline and Process

- Update curriculum mapping to include WSCUC's core competencies to ILOs; ILOs to PLOs; PLOs to CLOs. Establish more frequent assessment schedules to include priorities on any PLOs that have been rated as failed and any PLOs that were not represented evenly across coursework and multiple and balanced developmental points through the curriculum.

Goals and Improvement Plans

The Program Review Committee evaluated internal and external program assessment rubrics and recommendations and identified goals that are critical for improving the curriculum to achieve program learning outcomes.

Improvement Plans include:

1. Revise BUSN 600 and related assessments for PLO 5 to encourage students to critically think about and apply a Christian worldview by the end of the academic year 2026-27.
2. Revise ISYS 560 to align with industry demand for the ethical use of generative AI technologies by the end of the academic year 2026-27.
3. Add a sixth PLO to separately address oral and written communication skills. Review courses and identify assignments that will assess PLOs 3 and 6 for Oral and Written Communication. Complete any revisions by the end of the academic year, 2026-2027.
4. Develop a systematic process for collecting information from alumni in MBA 690 Capstone to determine how well the program prepared the students for careers or advanced study.