

March 23, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents  
FROM: David L. Buhler  
SUBJECT: Utah State University – Executive Master of Accounting (EMAcc)

Issue

Utah State University requests approval to offer an Executive Master of Accounting (EMAcc) program effective Summer Term, 2016. The program was approved by the institutional Board of Trustees January 8, 2016.

Background

Professionals who aspire to become Chief Financial Officers, Chief Accounting Officers, Controllers, etc. often lack the accounting knowledge and background necessary to function effectively in these positions. Through conversations with Utah State University's (USU) School of Accountancy (SOA) advisory board as well as other practicing professionals, the SOA has determined there is a demand for a master's-level accounting degree tailored to working professionals. While many master of accounting degrees exist (including one at Utah State University), the SOA has not been able to identify an existing program that tailors its offerings to working professionals who desire to advance their careers through an accounting-specific executive master's level program. Similar to executive MBA programs, the proposed EMAcc will build upon students' work experience by providing course content, scheduling options, and delivery modes tailored to the needs of working adults.

The EMAcc program includes a combination of in-class and on-line learning. It is designed for working professionals who have at least five years' work experience and who aspire to or have become managers within financial, accounting, or other related work environments. Students entering the program will be required to have earned a bachelor's degree, but a degree in accounting or other business discipline is not required.

The proposed program consists of 30 credit hours. Students will enter the program on a cohort basis and will receive instruction through a combination of on-line technologies and three intensive face-to-face sessions including two two-week sessions and one one-week session. The program will not follow the traditional semester schedule. Students will continuously complete program requirements until completion. The curriculum is pre-determined and does not include elective courses.

Due to the nature of the program's design and its delivery methods, working professionals from inside and outside the state of Utah are likely candidates for admission. Utah State University plans to advertise the program broadly.

Program tuition and fees are commensurate with costs of other executive business programs at the master's degree level. Program costs are set at \$48,000 tuition which includes standard USU tuition and Jon M. Huntsman School of Business differential tuition. Students will also be assessed an executive program fee of approximately \$25,200. The executive program fee will assist the SOA in covering costs relating to marketing, hotel rooms and conference space for participants and instructors, the cost of meals, instructor compensation and travel costs, and other program expenses. Tuition and fees are designed to cover all costs associated with the program so that students know going into the program the full costs required for degree completion.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services Occupational Explorer projected the Financial Managers occupational category (SOC Code 11.3031) in Utah to have 160 annual openings with median annual earnings of \$95,480. Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the Financial Managers occupational category with median annual income of \$115,320 and a projected 7% average annual job growth between 2014 and 2024. It is anticipated that individuals prepared at the master's level will earn above average wages due to their increased skill level and the added value they bring to the workforce.

#### Policy Issues

The proposed program has been developed through established institutional procedures and Board of Regents policy. Chief academic officers as well as faculty in related departments from the Utah System of Higher Education institutions have reviewed the proposal and have provided input. There are no additional policy issues that need to be addressed relative to approval of the program.

#### Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Board of Regents approve the Executive Master of Accounting (EMAcc).

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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/BKC  
Attachment

**Program Description – Full Template  
Utah State University  
Executive Master of Accounting Program**

**Section I: The Request**

Utah State University requests approval to offer an Executive Master of Accounting effective Summer, 2016. This program was approved by the institutional Board of Trustees on January 8, 2016.

**Section II: Program Description**

**Complete Program Description**

The Executive Master of Accounting (EMAcc) program includes a combination of in-class and online learning. The program is tailored to working professionals who have at least five years of work experience. Students matriculated in the EMAcc program must complete a pre-determined program of study consisting of 30 credit hours.

**Purpose of Degree**

Through conversations with the School of Accountancy (SOA) advisory board as well as other practicing professionals, the SOA has determined there is demand for a master's-level accounting degree tailored to working professionals. While many Master of Accounting degrees exist (including one at Utah State University), the SOA has not been able to identify a single program that tailors its offerings to executives who are seeking to advance their careers through obtaining accounting-specific education and training. This degree offering fits this identified need by tailoring the content as well as the format of the courses provided to working professionals.

**Institutional Readiness**

The SOA is prepared to initiate this program with no additional administrative structures. If the program is successful, it is anticipated that one additional administrative support staff member will be hired to support ongoing program needs. The proposed program will not impact the delivery of existing undergraduate or graduate courses.

**Departmental Faculty**

Department Faculty Category	Dpt Faculty Headcount – Prior to Program Implementation	Faculty Additions to Support Program	Dpt Faculty Headcount at Full Program Implementation
<b>With Doctoral Degrees</b> (Including MFA and other terminal degrees, as specified by the institution)			
Full-time Tenured	6	0	6
Full-time Non-Tenured	3	0	3
Part-time Tenured			
Part-time Non-Tenured			
<b>With Master's Degrees</b>			
Full-time Tenured			
Full-time Non-Tenured	2	0	2
Part-time Tenured			
Part-time Non-Tenured			
<b>With Bachelor's Degrees</b>			
Full-time Tenured			

Full-time Non-Tenured			
Part-time Tenured			
Part-time Non-Tenured			
<b>Other</b>			
Full-time Tenured			
Full-time Non-Tenured			
Part-time Tenured			
Part-time Non-Tenured			
<b>Total Headcount Faculty in the Department</b>			
Full-time Tenured	6	0	6
Full-time Non-Tenured	5	0	5
Part-time Tenured			
Part-time Non-Tenured			
<b>Total Department Faculty FTE (As reported in the most recent A-1/S-11 Institutional Cost Study for "prior to program implementation" and using the A-1/S-11 Cost Study Definition for the projected "at full program implementation.")</b>	16.37	X	17.37*

\* Note: The increase in department faculty FTE results from additional adjunct faculty teaching assignments and extra service provided by existing full-time faculty. It is not anticipated that additional full-time faculty will need to be hired to meet the teaching needs of this program.

### Staff

It is anticipated that one additional administrative assistant will be needed to assist with the logistics of the program. This administrative assistant will perform secretarial work and will be needed beginning with the first year of the program.

### Library and Information Resources

No additional library resources will be necessary beyond those already available at Utah State University.

### Admission Requirements

Proposed admission requirements are as follows:

- Applicant must have an undergraduate degree (not topic specific)
- Applicant must have five or more years of work experience
- Applicant must either have taken the following courses, or have work experience in the following areas sufficient to justify waiver of the course requirement:
  - Intermediate financial accounting
  - Tax
  - Auditing

### Student Advisement

Students will receive advising from the faculty member assigned to serve as the EMAcc program director as well as from the faculty members teaching the courses within the program.

### Justification for Graduation Standards and Number of Credits

The program requires 30 credit hours. This is consistent with Regent policy for programs at the master's degree level. Students must complete the required program courses with a minimum 3.0 GPA.

### External Review and Accreditation

Utah State University's SOA staff consulted with the SOA advisory board who helped establish the need for the proposed program. Additionally, the SOA and the Huntsman School of Business are both accredited by AACSB International. This program will become part of the AACSB International accreditation reviews scheduled for late 2017.

### Projected Program Enrollment and Graduates; Projected Departmental Faculty/Students

Data Category	Current – Prior to New Program Implementation	PROJ YR 1	PROJ YR 2	PROJ YR 3	PROJ YR 4	PROJ YR 5
<b>Data for Proposed Program</b>						
Number of Graduates in Proposed Program	X	0	20	20	20	20
Total # of Declared Majors in Proposed Program	X	20	20	20	20	20
<b>Departmental Data – For All Programs Within the Department</b>						
Total Department Faculty FTE ( <i>as reported in Faculty table above</i> )	16.37	17.37*	17.37	17.37	17.37	17.37
Total Department Student FTE ( <i>Based on Fall Third Week</i> )	296.27	296.27	316.27	316.27	316.27	316.27
Student FTE per Faculty FTE ( <i>ratio of Total Department Faculty FTE and Total Department Student FTE above</i> )	18.1	17.0	18.2	18.2	18.2	18.2
<b>Program accreditation-required ratio of Student FTE/Faculty FTE, if applicable: (Provide ratio here: _____ )</b>						

\* Note: The increase in department faculty FTE results from additional adjunct faculty teaching assignments and extra service provided by existing full-time faculty. No additional full-time faculty will be added to meet the teaching needs of this program.

### Section III: Need

#### Program Need

Through discussions with the SOA advisory board as well as others in the profession the SOA has learned that individuals who aspire to financial management positions within organizations often lack the technical accounting knowledge necessary to compete for and function at a high level in these positions. Many are limited in their ability to obtain promotions. Others who are promoted find that they are underqualified for their new responsibilities. In addition, due to the educational requirements imposed by state boards of accountancy many of these individuals are unqualified to sit for the CPA exam. The individuals in these financial management positions play key roles in the financial health of the organization and its stakeholders. With the increase of new regulations such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the Dodd-Frank Act of 2010, technical accounting knowledge has become essential for financial managers.

#### Labor Market Demand

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that employment of financial managers will increase by approximately 7% during the period from 2014 to 2024. The Utah Department of Workforce Services

Occupational Explorer projects the Financial Managers occupational category (SOC Code 11.3031) in Utah to have 160 annual openings with median annual earnings of \$95,480.

### **Student Demand**

Through conversations with executives at large corporations as well as with members of the SOA advisory board, the SOA believes the proposed program will have sufficient student demand to enable a viable offering. Through these conversations, the SOA believes large corporations will provide financial support to employees who will enroll in the program.

### **Similar Programs**

Some executive-level programs currently exist that would provide limited exposure to accounting curriculum (e.g. Executive MBA programs). However, the SOA is unaware of any current advanced degree programs that offer both the breadth and depth of accounting knowledge in a way that is as broadly accessible to aspiring financial executives as the program the SOA is proposing.

### **Collaboration with and Impact on Other USHE Institutions**

The proposed program has been developed through established institutional procedures and Board of Regents policy. Chief academic officers as well as faculty in related departments from the Utah System of Higher Education institutions have reviewed the proposal and have provided input.

While master's degrees in accounting exist at USU and the University of Utah, these programs are not designed to be executive master's degree offerings. The proposed EMAcc program will be offered in a format so that students can work full-time within and outside the state of Utah and complete all program requirements within a reasonable period of time.

### **Benefits**

The SOA believes that successful implementation of this program has several benefits to Utah State University, the Utah System of Higher Education more broadly, as well as to the national and local finance workforce. Specific benefits include name brand building, financial benefits, as well as a better-educated and a better-prepared professional workforce in the finance arena. The target market for this program is nationally oriented. As such, USU's brand will be extended beyond the state's boundaries through this program.

### **Consistency with Institutional Mission**

Utah State University is a "Doctorate-granting University" as defined in Regents' Policy R312. Regents' Policy R312-4.1 states, "The mission of a Doctorate-granting University is to discover, create, and transmit knowledge through education and training programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels through research and development and through service and extension programs associated with a major teaching and research university. Emphasis is placed on teaching, research, and service. The institution contributes to the quality of life and economic development at the local, state, and national levels." The proposed program reaches to local and national markets and serves to increase quality of life and economic development through graduate level work.

## **Section IV: Program and Student Assessment**

### **Program Assessment**

The SOA has identified three main categories for student learning in the EMAcc program: (1) business and accounting knowledge, (2) professional skills, (3) and values and attitudes. Within each of these three categories, key competencies have been identified and specific learning goals established. These learning goals are listed below:

## **Business and Accounting Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate technical knowledge of the following areas:

1. Professional standards, regulations, and best practices relating to the recording, presentation, and verification of accounting information
2. Internal controls, security, key business processes, and design and implementation of effective information management solutions
3. Organizational leadership
4. Corporate governance and fraud deterrence
5. Tax policy and compliance for enterprises
6. Global environment related to business, finance, and accounting
7. Understanding of the SEC including its structure, responsibilities, and registration and reporting requirements
8. Understanding of capital markets and the use of public information in ratio analysis, valuation, and accounting-based trading strategies

## **Professional Skills**

Students will demonstrate basic professional skills in the following areas:

1. Oral and written communication in the context and language of accounting and business
2. Develop, record, analyze, validate, communicate, and make professional judgments relative to financial and other types of information
3. Use of information technology and big data analysis and visualization techniques in decision making
4. Ability to work productively as a member or leader of a team
5. Ability to use resources such as professional standards, regulations, and other financial data to research accounting-related issues and apply their findings to various decision settings

## **Values and Attitudes**

Students will demonstrate dedication to the following professional values and attitudes needed for success in the accounting profession:

1. Value-based reasoning techniques under conditions of uncertainty to enhance personal objectivity, integrity, and ethical conduct
2. Motivation and commitment to continue learning throughout life to maintain professional knowledge and skills
3. Appreciation of diverse world-views resulting from a variety of geographical and cultural experiences

These learning goals will be assessed by faculty members who teach the courses using the master template developed by the SOA for embedded assessment.

## **Expected Standards of Performance**

To graduate students must complete the required set of 10 courses (30 credit hours) with a minimum 3.0 GPA. The SOA will request written feedback via student course evaluations in order to improve courses and teaching.

## **Section V: Finance**

Department Budget

Three-Year Budget Projection							
Departmental Data	Current Departmental Budget – Prior to New Program Implementation	Departmental Budget					
		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
		Addition to Budget	Total Budget	Addition to Budget	Total Budget	Addition to Budget	Total Budget
<b>Personnel Expense</b>							
Salaries and Wages	1,920,035	200,000	2,120,035		2,120,035		2,120,035
Benefits	999,328	86,001	1,085,329		1,085,329		1,085,329
<b>Total Personnel Expense</b>	<b>\$2,919,363</b>	<b>\$286,001</b>	<b>\$3,205,364</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$3,205,364</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$3,205,364</b>
<b>Non-Personnel Expense</b>							
Travel							
Capital							
Library							
Current Expense	52,005	218,003	270,008		270,008		270,008
Total Non-Personnel Expense							
<b>Total Expense (Personnel + Current)</b>	<b>\$2,971,368</b>	<b>\$504,004</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>
<b>Departmental Funding</b>							
Appropriated Fund	2,971,368		2,971,368		2,971,368		2,971,368
Other:							
Special Legislative Appropriation							
Grants and Contracts							
Special Fees / Differential Tuition		504,004	504,004	504,004	504,004	504,004	504,004
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,971,368</b>	<b>504,004</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>	<b>\$504,004</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>	<b>\$504,004</b>	<b>\$3,475,372</b>
<b>Difference</b>							
Revenue-Expense	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Departmental Instructional Cost / Student Credit Hour* (as reported in	\$460	\$	\$460	\$	\$460	\$	\$460

<i>institutional Cost Study for "current" and using the same Cost Study Definition for "projected")</i>							
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\* Projected Instructional Cost/Student Credit Hour data contained in this chart are to be used in the Third-Year Follow-Up Report and Cyclical Reviews required by R411.

### Funding Sources

All necessary funds will come from Huntsman School of Business resources. It is anticipated that the program will be self-sustaining after the initial start-up investment. The total cost per student will be \$48,000 for the entire program which includes standard USU tuition and Jon M. Huntsman School of Business differential tuition at pre-approved amounts as well as an executive program fee of approximately \$25,200 per student. The executive program fee assists the SOA in covering costs relating to marketing, hotel and conference room space for participants and instructors, the cost of meals included in program fees, instructor compensation and travel costs, and other miscellaneous expenses.

### Reallocation

No reallocation of existing funds will be necessary.

### Impact on Existing Budgets

It is not anticipated that the budgetary needs of this program will impact other programs. Program costs will be covered by revenue collected from program tuition and fees.

## Section VI: Program Curriculum

### All Program Courses (with New Courses in Bold)

Course Prefix and Number	Title	Credit Hours
Required Courses		
ACCT 6100	Financial Reporting and the SEC	3
ACCT 6101	Advanced Strategic Cost Management	3
ACCT 6102	Research and Valuation	3
ACCT 6103	Accounting Information and the Capital Markets	3
ACCT 6104	Big Data and Systems Analytics for Financial Executives	3
ACCT 6105	Taxes: Planning and Strategy	3
ACCT 6106	International Business, Finance, and Accounting	3
ACCT 6107	Corporate Governance	3
ACCT 6108	Leadership for Financial Executives	3
ACCT 6109	Financial Strategy	3
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>30</b>
Elective Courses		
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>0</b>
Track/Options (if applicable)		

Course Prefix and Number	Title	Credit Hours
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Number of Credits</b>	<b>30</b>

### Program Schedule

Below is the anticipated schedule for the EMAcc program. Note that this program is being tailored to executives who (1) typically are busy and unavailable for courses spread over full university semesters, and (2) enjoy a significant amount of work experience upon which the SOA can build. As such, this program does not follow the traditional semester system. In addition, each course will be a combination of an out-of-class component and an intensive in-class session and will be built around a cohort group of students.

Summer I (Two-Week Intensive Session)	Winter (One-Week Intensive Session)	Summer II (Two-Week Intensive Session)
ACCT 6100 <i>Financial Reporting and the SEC</i> (3 credit hours)	ACCT 6105 <i>Taxes: Planning and Strategy</i> (3 credit hours)	ACCT 6101 <i>Advanced Strategic Cost Management</i> (3 credit hours)
ACCT 6103 <i>Accounting Information and the Capital Markets</i> (3 credit hours)	ACCT 6106 <i>International Business, Finance, and Accounting</i> (3 credit hours)	ACCT 6102 <i>Research and Valuation</i> (3 credit hours)
ACCT 6107 <i>Corporate Governance</i> (3 credit hours)		ACCT 6104 <i>Big Data and Systems Analytics for Financial Executives</i> (3 credit hours)
ACCT 6108 <i>Leadership for Financial Executives</i> (3 credit hours)		ACCT 6109 <i>Financial Strategy</i> (3 credit hours)

### Section VII: Faculty

It is anticipated that the following current faculty will provide support for the program:

Larry Walther, PhD, CPA is serving as co-department head and EY Professor in the School of Accountancy. Professor Walther has been on faculty at Utah State University for seven years. Prior to joining USU, Professor Walther served as department head at the University of Texas at Arlington. In addition to his role as a professor, Dr. Walther has owned businesses and has served as a consultant and/or director to various public and non-public companies. He has taught a variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is anticipated that Dr. Walther will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses. He will also assist in identifying talented adjunct faculty as well as highly-respected individuals in the profession to assist with the teaching of the EMAcc courses.

Chris Skousen, PhD is serving as co-department head of the School of Accountancy. He has been on the faculty at USU for eight years. Prior to joining the faculty of USU, Dr. Skousen served on the faculty of the University of Texas at Arlington. He has taught a variety of both undergraduate and graduate accounting courses. He has also filled a variety of administrative assignments including serving on the USU budget and faculty welfare committee, serving on the faculty senate, and serving on the Huntsman School's curriculum committee. Dr. Skousen will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses.

Jeffrey T. Doyle, PhD, CPA is a Full Professor in the School of Accountancy. Dr. Doyle has been on faculty at USU for nine years. Prior to joining the USU faculty, Dr. Doyle served as Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University for one year and served on the faculty at the University of Utah for three years. He has published widely and has received awards for both research and teaching. Dr. Doyle also spent a year serving as Research Fellow at the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) where he advised the U.S. accounting standard setter regarding academic research relevant to their deliberations. Dr. Doyle will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses.

E. Vance Grange, PhD is an Associate Professor in the School of Accountancy and has been on faculty since 1983. He has served as the Director of Taxation Programs and the Director of Personal Financial Planning Programs for the School of Accountancy. He has taught a variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Grange will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses.

Richard Jensen, PhD, CPA is a Full Professor in the School of Accountancy and has been on faculty since 1987. Dr. Jensen has served in a variety of capacities in the SOA including Department Head and Director of Graduate Programs. He has taught a variety of courses in accounting at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Jensen will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses.

Nathaniel Stephens, PhD, CPA is an Associate Professor of Accountancy will serve as program director. Professor Stephens has been on faculty at Utah State University for seven years and has taught a variety of accounting courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He has also filled administrative assignments both in the School of Accountancy and the Huntsman School of Business HSB. Most closely related to this program is his leadership of the School of Accountancy's effort to implement effective assurance of learning processes in compliance with accreditation standards.

Richard Price, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Accountancy and will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses. Professor Price has been on faculty at Utah State University for three years and has taught accounting courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Prior to joining USU, Professor Price taught in the graduate business program at Rice University. Professor Price has served in a variety of service and administrative assignments, including implementing a faculty mentoring program for students here at USU.

Chad A. Simon, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Accountancy and will provide oversight services to one or more EMAcc courses. Professor Simon has been on faculty at Utah State University for three years and has taught accounting courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Prior to joining USU, Professor Simon served on the faculty of UNLV. Professor Simon has served in a variety of service and administrative assignments, including overseeing the Quigley Ambassadors; a group of students who reach out to recruit students into the accounting program.