TO: Tih-Fen Ting  
Chair, Campus Senate  

FROM: Sharron LaFollette  
Chair, Graduate Council  

DATE: January 24, 2011  

RE: Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship

The Management Department has requested to establish a 12-hour graduate certificate program in Entrepreneurship that could potentially be delivered in a face-to-face, online, or blended format, although the current plan is to focus primarily upon delivering the certificate completely online. The Graduate Council (GC) believes that this certificate will be a welcome addition to the university and give the department a distinctive niche in marketing both the certificate and the graduate degrees in the College of Business and Management.

GC carefully reviewed and discussed this proposal on October 25, 2010. GC subsequently met with Dr. Ranjan Karri from the Management Department and Associate Dean Dyanne J. Ferk on November 15 to discuss the proposal further. GC congratulates the Management Department for its coordinated attempt at improving elective cohesiveness for the College. The proposed Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship, in conjunction with the Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management, will form a structured elective curriculum that will eliminate the current mix of Management graduate electives in favor of the cluster of electives based on the two certificates (Human Resource Management and Entrepreneurship). The Entrepreneurship Certificate curriculum is well-defined, and the individual courses are well-integrated into that curriculum.

The academic legitimacy for entrepreneurship curriculum is established, and the proposed certificate clearly follows global market initiatives for this type of curriculum. For corporate entrepreneurship, employees need to have documentable skills. Establishing the Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship will give UIS a marketing approach to attract students interested in specialized study through electives organized around entrepreneurship. Few other business programs offer such curricula. Interest in the curriculum has been demonstrated through Fall 2010 enrollment in a topics course, BUS 550: Topics of Organizational Behavior, devoted to entrepreneurship. The potential student demand for the certificate seems sufficient to support the proposal. The certificate is designed to appeal to a number of constituencies, including Management, Accounting, and Management Information Systems. All modes of delivery will work, but the department is particularly interested in better utilization of faculty resources through online delivery, especially for Peoria students. GC believes that the Management Department has demonstrated there will be a demand for the certificate as a stand-alone piece or as part of a larger degree program.
The core certificate course, BUS 501: Business Perspectives, is currently offered every fall and spring semester. The department is prepared to offer an additional section if enough demand exists. The department plans to offer all of the courses in the certificate within a one-year time frame (including the summer semester), so students could complete requirements in a relatively short time, which is in keeping with the purposes of certificate programs. The Management Department appears to have given careful thought to the issue of the resources needed to support the certificate. With the phasing out of the current olio of electives, the department believes it has sufficient faculty to offer both the Entrepreneur and Human Resource Management Certificates after filling the currently advertised faculty position. The department will have a year to test the demand for the courses before it formally markets the certificate. The department plans to roll out the curriculum beginning in Fall 2012.