



University of Washington Office of the President M4-30

March 2, 1990

Dean Robert S. Leventhal
School of Business Administration
DJ-10

Dear Bob:

Based upon the recommendation of its Subcommittee on Admissions and Programs, the Faculty Council on Academic Standards has recommended approval of the change in the admission requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. A copy of the change is attached.

I am writing to inform you that the School of Business Administration is authorized to implement these requirements for students applying to autumn quarter 1990.

Announcements of the policy should be incorporated in printed statements and made available in the Office of Admissions and the appropriate advising offices as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

William P. Gerberding
President

Enclosure

cc: Associate Dean Loyd C. Heath
Associate Professor Anne Loustau
Mr. Richard L. Simkins
Mr. W. W. Washburn
Assistant Professor Karen Zagona

BUS - 19891212



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

REQUEST TO CHANGE UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION OR DEGREE REQUIREMENTS
OR PROPOSAL FOR A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM

ADMISSIONS

SEE REVERSE FOR GUIDELINES

College/School

School of Business Administration

Department

Undergraduate Program

Date

12/12/89

Check Appropriate Box

CHANGE IN OR ☒ Admission Requirements ☐ Major Requirements For Degree
PROPOSAL FOR: ☐ New Program ☐ New Degree Requirements

Explanation of proposed changes for new programs and desired implementation date

(See attached proposal)

Existing Requirements
(Omit this section when proposing new programs)

(attached)

Proposed Requirements

(attached)

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Chair

Date

College Committee

Thomas Fiambruno

Date

12/12/89

Dean

John J. ...

Date

12/12/89

Faculty Council on Academic Standards

Date

University of Washington

School of Business Administration

Proposal for a New Undergraduate Admission Policy

To be eligible for admission to the School of Business Administration a student must (1) have completed 90 quarter credits distributed in a specified way among courses in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, English composition, pre-business, and electives, and (2) have at least a 2.5 GPA overall GPA and in all required pre-business courses.

The Business School currently has an enrollment ceiling of 1450 students. Demand for admission by eligible applicants far exceeds that ceiling. This memo is concerned with how to select from among eligible applicants those who will be offered admission. It does not deal with pre-business course requirements or minimum GPAs specified for those requirements.

Current Policy

Current admission policy is described in the *University Bulletin* (General Catalog) for 1988-1990 as follows:

Because eligible applicants exceed the space available, admission is competitive. The most-qualified applicants will be admitted on grade-point average alone, but most applicants will be ranked for admission after considering their GPAs and the following factors: (1) grading practices of the college(s) at which course work was completed, (2) difficulty of courses taken, (3) GPA in business courses relative to overall GPA, (4) number of withdrawals and incompletes on their transcripts and (5) the desired diversity of the student body.

Students who inquire about the undergraduate program in the Undergraduate Program Office are given a pamphlet titled *School of Business Administration Baccalaureate Program*. It describes admission policy as follows:

Since eligible applicants exceed the space available, acceptance is competitive. Students with the strongest GPAs (a cumulative GPA of 3.4 for all college-level work will usually be sufficient) will be accepted on the basis of GPA alone. Other applicants will be ranked with reference to the following factors: (1) GPA as adjusted to a common grading scale; (2) the level of difficulty of courses taken; (3) GPA in business administration courses; (4) the number of course withdrawals and incompletes; (5) the desired diversity of the student body; and (6) recent high GPA, i.e., a GPA of about 3.5 or above for the last 45 credits. (The GPA for admission usually falls between 3.0 and 3.4.)

Current Practice

Each year approximately 60% of the 1600 eligible students who apply for admission are admitted. Students who are denied admission sometimes reapply the following quarter but their desire to get on with their education along with the new University Satisfactory Progress rule which prevents them from registering if they have not identified a major after having earned 105 credits precludes them from reapplying quarter after quarter. With a few minor and limited exceptions, students who have not been admitted to the Business School cannot enroll in upper division business courses.

Most current admissions are handled in a mechanistic way. Underrepresented minorities are clearly given preference and those with a "recent high" overall GPA (see item 6 in the Business School pamphlet quoted above) are normally admitted, but nearly all others are ranked on the basis of their overall GPAs. A "cutoff" GPA is then determined which will bring current Business School enrollment up to the target of 1450 students and all those whose GPA is above that "cutoff" are admitted. The "cutoff" GPA has ranged from 3.0 to 3.25 in recent quarters.

One of the most controversial features of current admission practice is the adjustment to a common denominator of GPAs of students transferring from community colleges. This practice is based on an annual statistical study by the Registrar of grades earned by BA students in their first 45 credits after admission to the Business School. In the most recent of these studies (1988) it was found that on the average, the GPAs of community college transfer students dropped 0.28 during their first year in the Business School while those of native UW students remained unchanged. GPAs of applicants from community colleges are, therefore, adjusted downward in an effort to make them comparable to those of UW native students when ranking them for admission purposes. Actual adjustment factors used for different community colleges range from 0.1 to 0.6.

The Need for Change

Current Admission to the Business School relies too heavily on overall GPA. While overall GPA is probably the best *single* predictor of success in the Business School and should be an important element in any new admissions policy, a policy based on overall GPA combined with other predictors would not only result in improved selection, but would also be perceived as more just, fair, and equitable by applicants and therefore result in less controversy.

Each quarter counselors in the Undergraduate Program Office have to face students denied admission, often because their GPA was only .01 below the magic "cutoff." While there will always be close calls under any system, the current policy is particularly difficult to defend for several reasons. First, it is well known that many attributes such as leadership qualities and interpersonal and communication skills are important to success in business and are highly valued by employers, yet these attributes are not even *considered* in our current admission policy. Second, although our current practice of adjusting community college GPAs is based on an annual statistical study of the performance of community college transfers and native UW students that study is, at best, a blunt, crude and imperfect tool yet it is used for making extremely fine distinctions. The overall impression the current policy conveys and the thing that really sticks in the craw of a rejected student is that the Business School has looked at them only as a number with two decimal places; it has refused to consider any of their accomplishments other than GPA when it is well known that other attributes are at least as important as grades for success in the business world.

Proposal for a New Admissions Policy

This summary consists of three sections:

1. Statement of the admission policy for the Undergraduate School of Business, as it would appear in the University *General Catalog* and other BA publications and handouts.
2. Detailed explanation of the four key factors upon which students will be evaluated.
3. Plan for administering the new admissions policy.

Statement of Policy

Since eligible applicants exceed the space available, acceptance is competitive. Admission will be based on evaluation of four factors: (1) overall scholastic record; (2) grades in pre-business (accounting, statistics, and law) and economics courses; (3) written communications skills; and (4) evidence of leadership skills, community activities, and the promise of achievement in a business or professional career. In addition, the School of Business is committed to the University's affirmative action policy. Consideration will therefore be given in the admissions process to creating ethnic diversity.

Explanation of the Key Factors for Admission

Applicants will be evaluated on the four factors listed above, which are listed in descending order of importance. Serious deficiencies in any of the first three areas will usually result in denial of admission. The factors will be evaluated as follows:

- (1) **Overall scholastic record:** Based on (a) the candidate's grade point average for all college credits (including UW and transfer), (b) the number of withdrawals and incompletes on the record, (c) the trend in grades, (d) the rigor of courses, (e) academic honors and awards, and (f) any explanation the applicant may offer as to why the record may not accurately reflect his or her academic ability. (With the exception of (e), all of these areas are already taken into account in certain cases, such as petitions or reviews for trends in grades or rigor.)
- (2) **Grades in selected courses:** Based on 18 pre-business credits required of all applicants (three quarters of accounting, one quarter of statistics, and one quarter of introduction to law) plus 10 credits of economics.
- (3) **Written communications skills:** Based on grades received in composition courses and evaluation of the skills demonstrated in a required written essay. (Students are required to have completed one introductory college composition course by the time of their admission to the Business School.)
- (4) **Leadership skills, community activities, and the promise of achievement in a business or professional career:** Based on evaluation of extracurricular activities, leadership positions held, and

the applicant's own assessment of strengths as detailed in the written application essay.

Plan for Administering New Admissions Policy

In addition to demographic information and transcripts, students will be required to provide the following items on their application to the School of Business Administration:

1. A list of distinctions, honors, and awards for academic achievement or community service.
2. A list of extracurricular college and community activities, including positions held if applicable.
3. An essay of approximately 500 words. Suggested question:

Assume that you have an opportunity to meet the undergraduate program admissions committee. Describe yourself to the committee, elaborating on five reasons why you should be admitted. This is your chance to explain anything you believe is relevant but is not asked in the application.

Applicants will be asked to sign a statement which certifies that they are the sole author of the essay.

Process: Academic counselors will review each application for completion of all application materials, fulfillment of all prerequisite courses, and determination of grade point average. Although the essay and lists of accomplishments and activities of each applicant will be examined, it is expected that students with the strongest grades will be admitted primarily on the basis of their academic record with only a cursory review of their essays and lists of activities. As noted above, however, serious writing deficiencies may disqualify an applicant.

Similarly, students with the *lowest* GPAs will be denied primarily on the basis of their academic record. Exceptions to this are qualified underrepresented minority applicants and students flagged for strong positive trends in grades or rigor of coursework.

The remaining applicants will be reviewed by a team of three academic counselors based on the four factors listed above. Those judged admissible from this first review will be admitted directly. Those denied by the first review will be reviewed by a senior review committee consisting of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, the Director of the Undergraduate Program, and a faculty representative from the Undergraduate Program Committee. Thus, students in this group who are denied admission based on a holistic review of the four factors described above would receive a second review of their record. This will eliminate the need for petitions, with the exception of those students denied admission because of University error or other circumstances beyond their control.

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