April 29, 2024

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair  
   Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair  
       CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposed Degree Program: Undergraduate Major in Business Analytics

The CHASS Faculty Executive Committee reviewed the proposal for a new undergraduate major in Business Analytics at the UCR School of Business (SOB). We have a number of concerns that we would like the authors of the proposal to address.

First of all, we would like to have more information on the justification for the proposed creation of this new major. The proposal argues that Business Analytics is an important field, but does not explain why a major would be preferable over the existing concentration beyond the fact that other business schools in the area and the country offer Business Analytics majors (page 1). This question is rendered even more pertinent by the proposal’s expectation of “low enrollment in the program” (page 5). If there is indeed only low student demand for the proposed major, what other factors speak for the transformation of the concentration into a major and why would a new major be preferable over the modification (if desired) of the concentration?

The proposal identifies the main difference of the proposed new major to the existing Data Science major (BCOE and CNAS) as being in the “focus on business applications” (page 2). We would like to have more information on how the authors of the proposal see the interactions/overlaps/coordination between these programs at UCR. Additionally, we would like to learn more about how the new major will achieve STEM certification (as stated on page 1).

The proposal outlines the increased quantitative focus of the proposed new major, but does not address in more detail how the curriculum for Business Analytics would differ from the existing major in Business Administration (BSAD). Our review of the proposed Business Analytics major and the existing BSAD major with a focus on Business Analytics revealed some differences in lower division course requirements that did not seem to suggest a “quantitative focus”, as it removed the requirement that students take ECON 2 (Introduction to
Macroeconomics) but required students to take BUS 98 (Personal Branding and Professional Development). It seems the quantitative rigor that would be introduced by this major being proposed in the SOB is through upper division courses in Math, Computer Science, and Statistics that are offered outside SOB, in CNAS and BCOE. Are there plans for the creation in SOB of new courses, labs, or other educational programming for the proposed major?

On page 2, the proposal outlines the route for students “discover[ing] that they do not have the quantitative training to succeed in the BS in Business Analytics major” as switching into the existing major in Business Administration or switching to the Bachelor of Arts in Economics in CHASS. Here, we would like to see more consideration on how the School of Business could make sure that students do indeed acquire sufficient quantitative training and how – on both administrative and educational levels – the transition of students from one program to another would work in practice.

Finally, we would also like to know to what extent this proposal is connected to the multiple previous unsuccessful attempts of the School of Business to establish an undergraduate business major that is independent of CHASS. While the anticipated enrollment suggested in the proposal is low, might the proposed Business Analytics major compete with the BSAD major for undergraduate applications for admission, and ultimately enrollment? The current proposal is incomplete in discussing such implications of the proposed major.