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New Off-Site Location, Professional MBA (SACSCOC Response)

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

December 12, 2016

Dr. Mary Lewnes Albrecht
Associate Vice Provost
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
527 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, TN 37996-0152

Dear Dr. Albrecht:

Thank you for your letter of June 22, 2016, transmitting a prospectus for an off-campus site where the approved Professional M.B.A. degree program will be offered effective fall 2017.

The possible location of the site as listed in materials submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is identified as the Cool Springs Life Science Center, 389 Nichol Mill Lane, Franklin, TN 37067. However, the site is listed as "work in progress" and "under lease negotiation," and there are other options being considered in the Brentwood/Cool Springs/Franklin areas. Thus it is not clear where the site will actually be located. **Please provide the complete address of the actual location of the off-campus site.**

The offering of the program at an off-campus location is consistent with the mission of the University. Materials were submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission but no evidence of approval was provided. **Please provide evidence that all necessary approvals for the site have been secured.** The Nashville area has been selected for the offering of the program since the city has a high percentage job growth in business and careers and in tech employment opportunities and a need exists for the program. Further, the area has a large number of young professionals with between two and seven years of work experience who would be interested in the master's degree program.

The integrated curriculum requires fifteen semester hours of course work for a total of forty-five semester hours over the span of the sixteen month program. The program will be offered through weekend class meetings combined with on-line academic and group work. Students will also participate in two week-long residency sessions. Components of the course will include forty Saturday meetings, twenty-one synchronous distance learning sessions, a kickoff residency week, and a final residency week.

Evaluation of the program offered at the site is described as being "similar to the AASCB and UT assessment currently used by the Knoxville Professional M.B.A." Specifics of the process were not described. Four areas of evaluation at Knoxville were listed but how those "areas" are evaluated and assessed was not described. Assignments and course grades listed as assessment measures are not generally considered viable means of assessment of student learning outcomes. **Please provide a description of how the student learning outcomes for the program offered at the off-campus site will be assessed and how the effectiveness of the off-campus site will be assessed.**

A faculty roster was provided documenting appropriate qualifications of faculty members. **Please indicate whether these faculty members who apparently teach at the Knoxville campus will also teach at the off-campus site.** The narrative indicates that the institution "will hire a program director and program coordinator to direct day-to-day operations." **Please provide evidence that the program director and program coordinator positions have been filled.** Current College of Business graduate programs staff will provide admissions and career management activities.



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The prospectus notes that “no on-site library resources will be available.” However no specific information was provided concerning how students at the off-campus site will be able to access resources or will be provided adequate assistance. No specific information was provided concerning discipline-specific resources which will be available to students enrolled in courses at the site. Further, no specific information was provided concerning provision of technology support for students at the site. **Please provide specific information concerning adequate and accessible learning resources and technology support for students at the off-campus site.**

A description of physical facilities was not provided since no site has actually been determined. The narrative states that should the site currently under consideration be selected, “some IT structure” will be required. **Please describe adequate physical facilities including IT structure for offering the degree program.**

Projected revenues and expenses were provided. Financial support for the program to be offered at the off-campus site appears adequate.

The University has two off-campus sites, one in Tullahoma at the University of Tennessee Space Institute and one in Nashville where the Master of Science in Social Work is offered. **Because the University has fewer than three approved off-campus sites currently, when this site is approved, a substantive change committee will be authorized to visit the site.**

We defer action concerning the off-campus site where the Professional M.B.A. degree program will be offered pending review of the above requested information.

Please consult Appendix B: The Substantive Change Prospectus in the policy entitled *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions* located on our website at www.sacscoc.org and ensure that all information requested for a prospectus is provided.

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah L. Armstrong".

Sarah L. Armstrong, Ph.D.
Director of Substantive Change

SLA/ABC:efk

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Jimmy G. Cheek, Chancellor
Dr. Steven M. Sheeley