

## **AACSB Conference Call Background and Questions**

### **From University of Maine**

#### **Situation description**

The University of Maine is accredited by AACSB for its business programs: a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master's in Business Administration offered through the Maine Business School, one of its five degree granting colleges. A plan is being explored to create a new Graduate School of Business which will offer the MBA. This new Graduate School of Business will draw faculty from the graduate faculty of both the Maine Business School in Orono and the School of Business at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. It will be separate from the Maine Business School and will be headed by another Dean who will report to the Provost of the University of Maine. The future Graduate School of Business will be a part of the University of Maine and will follow curriculum and faculty policies of the University of Maine. The Graduate School of Business will be located in Portland and will offer the MBA program live in both Portland and Orono and also online. This will be the only MBA program offered by the University of Maine, and the University of Southern Maine will not offer an MBA. After the planned restructuring, the Maine Business School will remain an undergraduate school.

#### **Questions for AACSB**

1. With two separate business schools, the Maine Business School offering an undergraduate degree in Orono, and the future Graduate School of Business offering the MBA in both Portland and Orono, how will the University be accredited by AACSB?
  - a. Option 1: accreditation will continue to be at the university level, for instance with a joint mission and strategic plan for the two business schools, but separate and parallel leaders, organizational structures, finances, faculty, staff, curricula, assurances of learning, etc., OR
  - b. Option 2: separate accreditations for the Maine Business School (undergraduate) and the Graduate School of Business as two separate single business academic units?
2. If Option 1 is recommended: who will AACSB expect to be the point person on accreditation for the University of Maine? The Provost? Or the two business deans (of the Maine Business School and the Graduate School of Business) together?
3. If Option 2 is recommended: should both schools apply for separate accreditations? Or can the University of Maine's existing accreditation be extended, with a revised mission for the Maine Business School to reflect that it would no longer offer a graduate degree, while the Graduate School of Business, as a new entity with different faculty, branding, external market perception, financial relationship with the University of Maine, and sufficient unit autonomy, would apply for a new and separate accreditation as a single business academic unit?

4. If one or both schools need to apply for separate accreditations as single business academic units, does either of them have to follow the process for initial accreditation, including eligibility application, assigned mentor, self-evaluation, 6 year process, etc.? Or can the University of Maine's existing accreditation be transformed into two separate accreditations at the single business academic unit level?
5. If a determination is made that the future Graduate School of Business needs to go through a 6 year process for initial accreditation, can the University of Maine's existing accreditation for the Maine Business School be extended for its undergraduate business degree only?
6. If the new Graduate School of Business is set up prior to 2019, should it be included in the next round of Continuous Improvement Review for the University of Maine which is scheduled for 2019? (The application for CIR was filed in June 2017 without discussion of this plan, as it has not been approved yet).

### **from University of Southern Maine**

#### **Framing Statement:**

The concept of the proposed program did not arise from either institution's normal continuous improvement processes. The degree of the proposed MBA is offered by one university (UMaine). It is not a joint degree under AACSB standards but might possibly qualify as a "partner" program. The faculty from another university (USM) will be appointed to the UMaine graduate school faculty and that faculty body will be responsible for normal governance issues EXCLUDING promotion, tenure, and peer evaluation. The business academic units at USM (School + two departments) do not operate within the institution offering the degree. The new graduate school of business at UMaine will have a Dean that reports to the UMaine Provost. There are no direct reporting lines to USM. The degree program will be publicized as a partnership offering with the Dean's office and staff residing primarily on the USM campus. The proposal calls for USM to suspend their existing MBA when admissions start to the UMaine MBA and explicitly forbids USM from offering any graduate business degrees.

#### **Questions:**

1. Does this qualify as a "substantive change event" for USM?
2. Does the proposed program fall under USM's scope of review?

#### ***Questions to ask if the program does not fall under USM's scope of review:***

1. How critical is it that USM re-evaluates the mission of the School of Business? If so, what are some key items that we might want to consider when reviewing our mission?
2. How critical is it that USM reconsider the peer and aspirant institutions they selected? If so, what are some key items that we might want to consider when reviewing our peer and aspirant schools?
3. What suggestions do you have for dealing with potentially diverging standards for Scholarly Academic between USM and the UMaine GSOB?

***Questions to ask if the program does fall under USM's scope of review:***

1. What recommendations do you have for reporting the deployment of faculty?  
Do you have any examples?
2. Do you know of any examples of a joint/partner program where the partner never awards the degree yet uses the program in their accreditation review?
3. Should both institutions revisit their missions and attempt to improve mission alignment?
4. Should both institutions re-evaluate their peer and aspirant schools?
5. Should both institutions have some shared peer and aspirant schools?

**Finishing questions:**

1. What key issues might this raise for USM's next accreditation review?
2. What other advice do you have for USM as they prepare for their next visit that is specific to this event?

AACSB Conference Call  
7-10-2017

In attendance

USM:

James Sulieman, School of Business  
Jo Williams, Dean, College of Management & Human Services  
Jeanine Uzzi, Provost  
Robert Heizer, School of Business  
John Voyer, School of Business  
Jane Kuentz, Associate Dean, College of Management & Human Services

UMaine:

Ivan Manev, Dean Maine Business School  
Nic Erhardt, Associate Dean Maine Business School  
Jeff Hecker, Provost  
Robin Delcourt, Special Assistant to the Provost

AACSB:

Rachel Dixon-Zudar, Manage, Accreditation Services  
Suzanne Mintz, Senior Director, Accreditation Services

UMS:

Robert Neely, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Notes

Provost Hecker opened the call by providing an overview of the goals of the meeting and checked that all participants had received prepared questions. Referring to the background information provided, he asked Rachel and/or Suzanne if they had clarifying questions.

Suzanne asked about the impetus for this change. Provost Hecker noted that it did not come from either campus. Rather, the UMS developed this initiative working closely with private foundation. The parameters of the gift included:

- Housed in a graduate center to be developed in Portland
- UMaine degree program
- Graduate School of Business separate from undergraduate programs and headed by a dean
- Dean will report to UMaine Provost

Provost Hecker suggested running through the submitted questions starting with those developed by UMaine. (The text of the questions is in blue, with the answers in black font.)

**From University of Maine**

## Questions for AACSB

1. With two separate business schools, the Maine Business School offering an undergraduate degree in Orono, and the future Graduate School of Business offering the MBA in both Portland and Orono, how will the University be accredited by AACSB?

a. Option 1: accreditation will continue to be at the university level, for instance with a joint mission and strategic plan for the two business schools, but separate and parallel leaders, organizational structures, finances, faculty, staff, curricula, assurances of learning, etc., OR

ANSWER: Rachel noted that the accreditation can be at the institutional level with two units (Graduate School of Business and Undergraduate program) reporting under one accreditation. She recommended this approach.

Suzanne also recommended the institutional level accreditation approach. She raised the question of how similar the missions will be of the Graduate School of Business and the UMaine undergraduate program. The less similar they are, the more complicated to have under one accreditation. Ivan indicated that the missions will need to be revisited with an eye on at least (but not limited to): 1) Faculty overlapping, 2) Financial separation, 3) Separate Deans, etc.

Suzanne noted that at this point in time it is appropriate to develop the new structure assuming that the accreditation will be at the institutional level; UMaine would not be the first school to do this. Ivan indicated that it would be good to have models to work with as the specifics are being developed.

**ACTION:** Suzanne noted that they will follow up with a list of examples, not all of which are in the US.

A concern was raised about the implications of the language included in the MOU between UMS and the private funding agency. Specifically, the concern is that the Graduate School of Business will develop so that a small number of faculty will be assigned 100% to the graduate program and will do most of the teaching in the program. If the program develops this way the unit will be independent (i.e., few, if any, overlapping faculty). It was acknowledged that there is still work to be done before the plan is finalized. Please see additional discussion on determination of faculty size on page 4.

b. Option 2: separate accreditations for the Maine Business School (undergraduate) and the Graduate School of Business as two separate single business academic units?

2. If Option 1 is recommended: who will AACSB expect to be the point person on accreditation for the University of Maine? The Provost? Or the two business deans (of the Maine Business School and the Graduate School of Business) together?

ANSWER: There is only one person that is a “voting member” per AACSB policy. There are many ways to set this up, whether it be the Provost, or the Graduate School of Business Dean, or someone else. There are other various roles that can be implemented to ensure that others are involved, thereby increasing communication. Rachel and Suzanne are willing to talk through different models. To be clear, there would be one vote for USM (UG program) and one vote for UMaine (both graduate and undergraduate programs under this one vote).

3. If Option 2 is recommended: should both schools apply for separate accreditations? Or can the University of Maine’s existing accreditation be extended, with a revised mission for the Maine Business School to reflect that it would no longer offer a graduate degree, while the Graduate School of Business, as a new entity with different faculty, branding, external market perception, financial relationship with the University of Maine, and sufficient unit autonomy, would apply for a new and separate accreditation as a single business academic unit?

N/A under one accreditation.

4. If one or both schools need to apply for separate accreditations as single business academic units, does either of them have to follow the process for initial accreditation, including eligibility application, assigned mentor, self-evaluation, 6 year process, etc.? Or can the University of Maine’s existing accreditation be transformed into two separate accreditations at the single business academic unit level?

N/A under one accreditation.

5. If a determination is made that the future Graduate School of Business needs to go through a 6 year process for initial accreditation, can the University of Maine’s existing accreditation for the Maine Business School be extended for its undergraduate business degree only?

N/A under one accreditation.

6. If the new Graduate School of Business is set up prior to 2019, should it be included in the next round of Continuous Improvement Review for the University of Maine which is scheduled for 2019? (The application for CIR was filed in June 2017 without discussion of this plan, as it has not been approved yet).

ANSWER: No need to amend the CIR application. New information need to be included in the CIR report. Provide an update on progress to date.

Ivan noted the timeline is aggressive. If this plan goes forward within one year, does it need to be reported? Yes, AACSB should be kept informed as progress is made the organizational structure and program take shape. Suzanne indicated that it may be that the UMaine visit will include visits to both Portland and Orono. She would support leaving it up to the chair of the review team to decide.

Suzanne noted that AACSB accreditation is mission driven. How a school deals with the mission, through its adherence to the standards, impacts accreditation decisions. Faculty qualifications are an example.

Provost Hecker asked what will be the best way to maintain communication with AACSB as we develop, the organization structure, and the relevant policies so that we avoid the “all hell breaking loose” scenario (i.e., learning that a decision we made jeopardizes accreditation of one or both institutions). Suzanne indicated that both USM and UMaine will need to submit Substantive Change requests to the CIR Committee. There are guidelines for what to include. The next meeting is Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, so they will need to receive the Substantive Change requests by December to get on the agenda. This allows full disclosure so there are no surprises. Ivan noted that this should happen before the change is carried out.

Nic asked for clarification on why Rachel and Suzanne recommended accreditation at the institutional level that will be an umbrella for both the graduate and undergraduate programs. They offered the following reasons:

- Branding – do not anticipate a high level of differentiation between the graduate and undergraduate programs with respect to mission.
- Faculty sharing – between undergraduate and graduate programs
- Both UMaine degree

Suggestion to go onto AACSB website and look at application to proceed as a unit. The case does not appear to be strong enough for separate accreditations at this point.

## **from University of Southern Maine**

### **Questions:**

3. Does this qualify as a "substantive change event" for USM? Yes
4. Does the proposed program fall under USM's scope of review? Not under USM's review. In the CIR report, USM should talk about the changes and faculty involvement.

Question raised about the implications for USM accreditation of USM faculty teaching in load in the Graduate School of Business? A determination would have to be made about the portion of the faculty members' work load assigned to USM's undergraduate program and the Graduate School of Business. USM would count the portion assigned to the undergraduate program for accreditation purposes. For example, a faculty member who teaches a single course in the graduate program, might be counted as .80 FTE for purposes of USM accreditation.

### ***Questions to ask if the program does not fall under USM's scope of review:***

4. How critical is it that USM re-evaluates the mission of the School of Business? If so, what are some key items that we might want to consider when reviewing our mission? USM should reevaluate due to being undergraduate only moving forward.

5. How critical is it that USM reconsider the peer and aspirant institutions they selected? If so, what are some key items that we might want to consider when reviewing our peer and aspirant schools? USM should look at peer/aspirant schools. Some may change, but some may not. It merits reviewing.  
**ACTION** – Rachel will send a list of undergraduate-only accredited institutions.
6. What suggestions do you have for dealing with potentially diverging standards for Scholarly Academic between USM and the UMaine GSOB? If USM becomes undergraduate-only, Scholarly Academic definitions between the two universities might diverge further than they are at this point in time. Faculty will need to meet the UMaine Scholarly Academic standard to teach at the Graduate School of Business.

*Questions to ask if the program does fall under USM's scope of review:*

6. What recommendations do you have for reporting the deployment of faculty? Do you have any examples? Include in review, since it impacts your school/faculty. There is a section of the CIR report that asks about changes.
7. Do you know of any examples of a joint/partner program where the partner never awards the degree yet uses the program in their accreditation review?
8. Should both institutions revisit their missions and attempt to improve mission alignment?
9. Should both institutions re-evaluate their peer and aspirant schools?
10. Should both institutions have some shared peer and aspirant schools?

**Finishing questions:**

3. What key issues might this raise for USM's next accreditation review?
4. What other advice do you have for USM as they prepare for their next visit that is specific to this event?

Rachel and Suzanne noted that they are happy to meet/call again as the plan is more fully developed. Suzanne wanted to give one note of caution: when under one accreditation, if one unit has problems, it impacts the other unit. For UMaine, this means that problems with the graduate program would impact accreditation of the undergraduate program and visa-versa.

AACSB Conference Call Follow-up Emails

Good afternoon Jeff,

I hope this note finds you well and having a great day. I just wanted to follow up with you since our conference call, and see if there is any additional information you may need from me or any questions I can answer. I am happy to help if I can. Have a great day.

Regards,

Rachel  
Rachel Dixon-Zudar  
Manager, Accreditation Services

**From:** Jeffrey Hecker [mailto:[hecker@maine.edu](mailto:hecker@maine.edu)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 5, 2017 9:33 AM  
**To:** Rachel Dixon-Zudar <[rachel.dixonzudar@aacsb.edu](mailto:rachel.dixonzudar@aacsb.edu)>  
**Cc:** Jeannine Diddle Uzzi <[jeannine.uzzi@maine.edu](mailto:jeannine.uzzi@maine.edu)>; [Suzanne.Mintz@aacsb.edu](mailto:Suzanne.Mintz@aacsb.edu)

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**Jeffrey Hecker** <[hecker@maine.edu](mailto:hecker@maine.edu)>

Jul  
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to Rachel

Rachel,

Thanks for the note. No questions right now but I'm sure we will have more as we progress.

In the mean time, I have attached the notes from the conference call we had earlier this month. Please look this over and please let me know if you think the summary is missing anything important or if I've misrepresented anything.

Thanks

Jeff

Attachments area



**Rachel Dixon-Zudar**

Aug  
4

to me

Dear Jeff,

This summary matches my notes; thank you for sending it. As mentioned on the call, there are some similar examples of schools with two separate/distinct schools under one accreditation. Although these are all outside of the United States, they are good examples. To note, they are not all divided along the lines of undergraduate programs and graduate programs.

- 🏢 The University of Melbourne Faculty of Business and Economics **and** Melbourne Business School (MBA)
- 🏢 University of Antwerp Faculty of Economics (UG, masters, and PhD) **and** Antwerp Management School (only graduate programs)
- 🏢 Putra Business School (MBA program) **and** University Putra Malaysia Faculty of Economics and Management
- 🏢 Tilburg University TIAS School for Business and Society(masters and PhD programs) **and** Tilburg University Tilburg School of Economics and Management (undergraduate and masters programs)
- 🏢 University of Porto School of Economics and Management **and** Porto Business School

If you have any questions, please let me know. Have a great weekend!

Regards,

Rachel  
Rachel Dixon-Zudar  
Manager, Accreditation Services

**From:** Jeffrey Hecker [mailto:[hecker@maine.edu](mailto:hecker@maine.edu)]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 31, 2017 4:26 PM  
**To:** Rachel Dixon-Zudar <[rachel.dixonzudar@aacsb.edu](mailto:rachel.dixonzudar@aacsb.edu)>

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**Jeffrey Hecker** <[hecker@maine.edu](mailto:hecker@maine.edu)>

Aug  
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to Rachel

Thank you very much Rachel.

This is very helpful. Have a good weekend