

April 17, 2024

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Anne D'Alleva, Ph.D.  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



RE: Master of Social Responsibility and Impact on Business in the School of Business

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Trustees approve the Master of Social Responsibility and Impact on Business in the School of Business.

**BACKGROUND:**

There is a growing demand from employers, consumers, investors, regulators, and other stakeholders to integrate socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable practices into business organizations, and individuals have shown and increased interest to work for, develop, and create socially responsible organizations and engage in socially responsible consumption. As of Fall 2023, over 500 jobs are posted on LinkedIn for full-time Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) professionals in Connecticut, and over 400 postings for environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) professionals. Across the business enterprise, individuals with skills to effectively consider social responsibility and impact as part of business decision-making are increasingly needed.

Upon completion of the M.S. Program in Social Responsibility and Impact on Business, students will be able to embed social responsibility in ethical business models, use the language of business to engage with stakeholders on social responsibility initiatives, implement practices that have a positive societal impact in business, deploy business strategies to promote environmental sustainability, navigate CSR regulations and gain experience in ESG reporting, respect and facilitate human rights as part of business operations, and drive global innovation in business for positive social change.

Based on the Department of Marketing's successful undergraduate concentration and minor in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business, there will be focused efforts to recruit students majoring in business, political science, economics, communications, and human rights. While there are costs associated with establishing this new program, year 1 net revenues are approximated at \$14,000, with years 2 through 5 revenues increasing from \$345,000 to ~\$1.04 million. Initial enrollment in Fall 2024 is expected at 10, growing to 60 by Fall 2027. This will be a fee-based program located on the Hartford campus.



## Request for New Academic Degree Program

### General Information

Name of degree program:	Social Responsibility & Impact in Business
Name of School/College	School of Business
Type of Proposal:	New
Type of Program:	Master of Science (M.S.)
Anticipated Term Initiation:	Fall 2024
Location:	Hartford
Program Payment Type:	Fee-based
Fee:	\$1,150 per credit
CIP Code:	52.9999

### Justification for the New Program

Today, we are witnessing two phenomena: 1) a growing demand from employers, consumers, investors, regulators, and other stakeholders to integrate socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable practices into business organizations, and 2) increased interest by individuals to work for, develop, and create socially responsible organizations and engage in socially responsible consumption. The Millennial and Gen Z generations (accounting for 43% of U.S., 49% of global populations) are particularly engaged with social responsibility and are a force for change for businesses and marketplaces (2022 Nasdaq). As of Fall 2023, over 500 jobs are posted on LinkedIn for full-time Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) professionals in Connecticut, and over 400 such postings for environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) professionals. Across the business enterprise, individuals with skills to effectively consider social responsibility and impact as part of business decision-making are increasingly needed.

To address these demands and capture a global trend, the Marketing and Business Law faculty in the Marketing Department, UConn School of Business, propose a 30-credit Master of Science in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business (MSSRIB) focused on environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The Marketing and Business Law faculty are well-poised to offer an MSSRIB. Our Business Law and Marketing faculty are globally recognized scholars who bring research and pedagogical expertise to address social responsibility and accountability of business. The curriculum integrates the Department's strengths with the School of Business experience delivering practical, experiential business education in partnership with the Connecticut business community. The curriculum combines a foundation in business fundamentals with specialized knowledge and skills in social responsibility, sustainability, human rights expectations and opportunities for businesses. The initial curriculum has a strong focus on marketing and business law (with elective courses also including accounting and operations and information management), and the expectation is that this curriculum may be extended to include other courses both inside and outside of the School of Business.



The MSSRIB is aligned with the School of Business strategic plan focus on community sustainability and business and society (<https://vision.business.uconn.edu/>), and UConn initiatives, including President's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (<https://csr.uconn.edu/>), The Office of Sustainability (<https://sustainability.uconn.edu/>), and the Business and Human Rights Initiative (<https://humanrights.uconn.edu/areas-of-focus/business/>).

### **Are there similar programs in CT or elsewhere?**

Universities in and outside of the U.S. are beginning to address sustainability (environmental and social) demands by either offering specific courses or specializations. These programs have varying homes in the university system, including for example, environmental engineering, human rights, engineering, public policy, and business. With attention to social responsibility and impact in business, we are on the leading edge. MSSRIB, our proposed program, is differentiated from existing programs in several ways: 1) many programs (e.g., Columbia University Master of Science in Sustainable Management) focus almost exclusively on environmental sustainability. Our MSSRIB program is broader in scope, addressing not only environmental sustainability but also other societal concerns including diversity, equity and inclusion, labor rights, privacy, corporate governance, and business' responsibility for protecting human rights. 2) Many programs are offered by non-business departments (e.g., University of Pennsylvania: Executive Program in Social Impact Strategy). Our MSSRIB has a strong business focus, and the opportunity for undergraduate students in human rights, economics, engineering, as well as other majors to participate in the Accelerated MSSRIB, to acquire the necessary knowledge for a career in business while pursuing their passion for CSR, and 3) Many programs in the United States are advanced MBA or executive-level programs (e.g., Boston University/Brandeis Social Impact MBA; Yale University's Master's Degree in Global Business and Society). As a specialized Master program (vs. an MBA), our proposed program specifically targets early-career professionals and students who are looking for specialization early in their career, a cohort particularly interested in CSR.

### **What are the desired learning outcomes of the program?**

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of our MSSRIB, students will be able to: embed social responsibility in ethical business models, use the language of business to engage with stakeholders on social responsibility initiatives, implement practices that have a positive societal impact in business, deploy business strategies to promote environmental sustainability, navigate CSR regulations and gain experience in ESG reporting, respect and facilitate human rights as part of business operations, drive global innovation in business for positive social change.

### **Program Description**

This 30-credit MSSRIB program balances students' desires for flexibility, convenience, and community with a scalable model that integrates with existing graduate program staff and faculty resources to focus on environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of our MSSRIB, students will be able to:

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1. Embed social responsibility in ethical business models,
2. Use the language of business to engage with stakeholders on social responsibility initiatives,
3. Implement practices that have a positive societal impact in business,
4. Deploy business strategies to promote environmental sustainability,
5. Navigate CSR regulations and gain experience in ESG reporting,
6. Respect and facilitate human rights as part of business operations, and
7. Drive global innovation in business for positive social change.

Target Audience: The MSSRIB will be of interest to self-starters concerned about social responsibility and impact and seeking to equip themselves with the skills and knowledge to drive positive change through business, including: 1) UConn alumni and other college graduates throughout the Northeast and 2) Current UConn undergraduate students of all majors are an initial target of our Accelerated M.S. program option (which allows them to complete a maximum of 12 credits toward both their undergraduate degree and the MSSRIB degree).

Based on the Marketing Department's successful undergraduate concentration and minor in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business, we propose focused efforts to recruit students majoring in business, political science, economics, communications, and human rights.

MSSRIB Program Delivery: Program delivery begins with online coursework in August with Business Fundamentals for Social Impact (MKTG 5100). Subsequent required and elective coursework is offered in multiple modalities: in-person, hybrid (in-person and online asynchronous), online synchronous, online asynchronous, and online hybrid (a blend of synchronous and asynchronous delivery). Programming also includes in-person community-building experiences. Courses are available during Fall and Spring as well as Winter and Summer sessions.

MSSRIB Time-to-Completion: Students following the recommended course schedule can complete the program in 12 months. Students may extend their time in the program to fit with other life commitments. There are two paths to complete to this Master's degree: 1) MSSRIB for graduate students and 2) Accelerated MSSRIB available to only UConn undergraduates.

## MSSRIB Curriculum:

Business fundamentals (required 9 credits): MKTG 5100. Business Fundamentals for Social Impact (new course), BLAW 5175. Business, Law, and Ethics in Modern Society, MKTG 5115. Marketing Management

Core knowledge (required 12 credits): BLAW 5253. Sustainability, Markets, and Society, BLAW 5254. Social Responsibility and Accountability in Business (new course), MKTG 5255. Global Issues in Marketing for Social Impact (new course), MKTG 5258. Marketing Strategies for Environmental and Social Impact (new course)

Electives (choice of 9 credits from the following): BLAW 5220. Employment Law in the Modern Organization, BLAW 5252. Business and Human Rights (new course), BLAW 5660. International Business Law, BLAW 5750. Ethics and Compliance in the Global Organization, BLAW 5790. Revolutionary Technologies and the Social Responsibility of Business (new course), MKTG 5251. Marketing and Digital Analytics, MKTG 5625. Marketing for Global Competitiveness, MKTG 5650. Strategic Brand Management, MKTG 5881. Internship in Social Responsibility and Impact in Business (new course), MKTG 5893 or BLAW 5893. Foreign Study (new courses), OPIM 5113. Distribution and Logistics, OPIM 5114. Sustainable Supply Chain Management: Strategies for Environmental and Social Responsibility (new course), ACCT 5530. Business Reporting of ESG (new course)

Application for MSSRIB for graduate students: Interested applicants with an undergraduate degree will apply to the Graduate School for the MSSRIB. See “Admission Requirements” below.

Accelerated MSSRIB. After completing 54 undergraduate credits, UConn undergraduate students can apply to the Accelerated Master of Science in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business Program through the online Pre-Graduate application through the Graduate School.

## **Proposed Graduate Catalogue Copy**

The Master of Science in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business (MSSRIB) is designed to meet the growing demand for professionals with skills to effectively consider social responsibility and impact as part of business decision-making. Graduates with this degree will be equipped to drive economic sustainability and engage in innovative and impactful business actions to address the environmental, social, and governance challenges of a global society. Students must complete 30 credits to fulfill degree requirements. Required and elective coursework is offered in multiple modalities: in-person, hybrid (in-person and online asynchronous), online synchronous, online asynchronous, and online hybrid (a blend of synchronous and asynchronous). The curriculum also requires in-person experiential learning engagement, such as community-building activities and workshops. The program can be completed on a full-time or part-time basis.

Required Courses (21 credits): MKTG 5100, BLAW 5175, MKTG 5115, BLAW 5253, BLAW 5254, MKTG 5255, and MKTG 5258.

Approved Electives (9 credits required): BLAW 5220, BLAW 5252, BLAW 5660, BLAW 5750, BLAW 5790, MKTG 5251, MKTG 5625, MKTG 5650, MKTG 5881, MKTG 5893 or BLAW 5893, OPIM 5113, OPIM 5114, ACCT 5530. Other electives may be chosen with the consent of the academic director.

Accelerated MSSRIB. After completing 54 undergraduate credits, UConn undergraduate students can apply to the Accelerated Master of Science in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business Program through the online Pre-Graduate application through the Graduate School.

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Students must then apply for admission to the M.S. for their +1 year. The M.S. program requires 30 graduate credits. Up to 12 credits of the required coursework (MKTG 5100, BLAW 5175, MKTG 5115, BLAW 5253, BLAW 5254, MKTG 5255, or MKTG 5258) can be taken while the student is an undergraduate and can be applied toward both the undergraduate and M.S. Plans of Study. Students who earn a B- or better in MKTG 3101/BADM 3750 may request a substitution for MKTG 5115.

## **Faculty Involvement**

Marketing and Business Law faculty (including adjuncts) are responsible for the required courses and MKTG and BLAW electives (<https://marketing.business.uconn.edu/> and <https://businesslaw.business.uconn.edu/>). As appropriate, faculty from other departments (e.g., OPIM and ACCT) will teach courses listed as electives.

## **Enrollment and graduate projections**

Student intake occurs once a year in August. Initial enrollment in Fall 2024 is expected at 10 (specifically targeting accelerated Master students), growing to 60 by Fall 2027.

## **Program Evaluation**

MSSRIB will be evaluated routinely and at regular intervals under the AACSB accreditation process. Internally, the program will be evaluated in the following ways: 1) course content, classroom instruction, administration and grading will be evaluated using Student Evaluation of Teaching surveys and other university approved procedures, 2) course content, rigor, and overall implementation will be evaluated for each course by the department head and academic director, both working in close conjunction with the instructor(s), and 3) alums and managers at hiring companies.

## **Program Administration**

MSSRIB is housed primarily within the Marketing Department in the School of Business. An academic director and a program manager will administer the program with support from MSSRIB Task Force. At launch, School of Business, including specialized Masters and Marketing and Communication staff, will support critical initiatives around recruitment, admissions, and logistics. Additional support staff is recommended for hire in Spring 2024. Academic director, program manager, faculty teaching in the program, and School of Business staff in undergraduate and Master's programs will serve as advisors to students.

## **Funding and Financial Resources Needed**

A preliminary budget for support covers start-up costs for Spring 2024 as well as budgeted costs beginning Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25, i.e., the period ending on June 30, 2025).

- Program manager. To coordinate the recruitment, educational progress, and placement of students. Salary plus fringe benefits for FY25 is \$ 20,000. Spring Start-up 2024 is estimated at \$10,000.
- Academic director. This full-time faculty member with research or teaching credentials in CSR and impact will provide oversight of the academic curriculum working with the



Program Manager related to student progress and placement of students. Beginning FY 25, supplemental compensation and replacement instruction is estimated at \$ 36,000. Spring Start-up 2024 is estimated at \$16,000.

- Program personnel support. At launch and in subsequent years, we expect support from the undergraduate and Master program staff in student application processing, related centralized logistics, and career counseling. Beginning in FY 2025, costs are estimated at \$23,500. Spring Start-up 2024 is estimated at \$8,200.
- Start-up and ongoing advertising budget (MARCOM). Recruiting and promotion: \$15,000 per year starting in FY 2025. Spring Start-up 2024 is estimated at \$0.
- Recruitment, industry engagement, and program development and travel (Program Manager/Academic Director). \$10,000 per year beginning FY25. Spring Start-up 2024 is estimated at \$2,500.
- Program costs (info-sessions, alumni, speakers, graduation). FY25 estimate: \$10,000; FY26 estimate: \$15,000; FY27: estimate \$20,000.
- Start-up costs for Spring 2024 are estimated at approximately \$36,700, and initial funding will be derived from University School of Business resources.
- Year 1 (FY25) net revenues are approximated at \$14,000, with Years 2 through 5 revenues increasing from \$345,000 to ~\$1.04 million.

## **Consultation with Other Potentially Affected Units**

Consultations within University of Connecticut focused on two focal programs (focused on human rights and sustainability, respectively) that address related topics to the M.S. in Social Responsibility & Impact in Business: Human Rights offers a M.A. and 4+1 Accelerated M.A. and Graduate Certificate, the Department of Natural Resources & the Environment offers Master of Energy and Environmental Management and a Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Environmental Planning and Management. Both Kathy Libal (Director, Human Rights Institute) and Jason Vokoun (Department Head of Natural Resources and the Environment) are supportive of the proposed MSSRIB and look forward to the possibility of working together in the future.

## **Who can apply to this program?**

Internal applicants (current UConn students enrolled in another UConn degree or certificate program), External applicants (individuals who are not currently UConn students)

## **Admission Requirements**

Admission to the program is expected to be competitive.

Minimum requirements include:

- Completed application for admission.
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities at which the applicant has completed course or degree work.

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- An undergraduate degree (B.S. or B.A.) from a 4-year program at an accredited American university or college, or comparable degree from a university outside of the U.S.
- A minimum undergraduate grade-point averages (GPA) of 3.0 for either all 4 years or for the last 2 years.
- Foreign National applicants must meet the English Proficiency requirement for admission set by the Graduate School.

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## **Term(s) to which students will be admitted**

Fall

## **Program Director Name**

Gerlinde Berger-Walliser, Associate Professor, Business Law