

# Traditional Part-time MBA Program Handbook

## 2015-16



*Seidman Mission: The Seidman College of Business provides a rigorous learning environment, with a student focus, a regional commitment, and a global perspective.*

March 2016

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### **Memo/Introduction**

To: Seidman MBA Students  
From: Vivek Dalela, Chair, MBA Committee  
Date: March 2015  
Re: Traditional Part-Time MBA Handbook

On behalf of the Seidman College of Business faculty, administration, and staff, we welcome you to the MBA program. All of us look forward to getting to know you as you pursue the MBA. You will grow personally and professionally, and we are excited to share in your accomplishments.

This handbook will help you transition into the MBA program. The following pages contain information on our program, faculty, and students. They also contain information on opportunities for professional development, social experiences, particularly relevant policies, and University resources. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with Grand Valley's web page ([www.gvsu.edu](http://www.gvsu.edu)), as there is a wealth of information available to you. You will find the Graduate Studies page ([www.gvsu.edu/gs](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs)) and the MBA page ([www.gvsu.edu/mba](http://www.gvsu.edu/mba)) especially relevant.

This handbook is developed specifically for you and all MBA students, so please let us know if you find it lacking specific information that would be helpful. Other students will benefit from future revisions that may result from your suggestions. We also emphasize that the Graduate Business Office is here to serve you, and you should never hesitate to contact us with your questions.

## About the Seidman College of Business

### Accreditation

The Seidman College of Business is fully accredited by the AACSB – International (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business). AACSB is the premier business college accrediting body in the world ([www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)). Accreditation is awarded, after rigorous review and approval by an unbiased and knowledgeable accrediting body, to business schools that demonstrate excellence in mission, operations, faculty teaching and scholarship, programs, and other critical areas. AACSB accreditation ensures you and the business community that your business education is top quality.



### Seidman Core Values

The faculty of the Seidman College of Business is committed to the following seven core values in their teaching, research, and service:

Teaching Excellence  
Quality Scholarship  
Community Service  
Life-Long Learning  
Ethics and Integrity  
Diversity  
Collegiality

### Seidman Student Code of Honor

The following Code of Honor was developed by a group of graduate and undergraduate students and approved by the entire Seidman student body by secret ballot in 2011.

*The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. As such, the Seidman College of Business expects both faculty and students to honor these principles and, in so doing, to forge a lifelong commitment to ethical behavior.*

*To uphold and promote the highest standards of behavior in the academic and professional world, I hereby make the following pledge.*

*As a member of the Seidman College of Business, I shall*

- *Conduct myself with the highest level of integrity*
- *maintain accountability for my actions and encourage the same of others, and*
- *be open, fair, trustworthy and honest.*

*Additionally, I will strive for*

- *continuous self-improvement,*
- *intellectual engagement,*
- *global perspective, and*
- *advancement of sustainable business practices.*



*I shall not lie, cheat, steal, or plagiarize.*

*I recognize that compliance with this Student Code, established by Grand Valley State University business students, is the minimum standard that must be followed to maintain good standing as a member of the Seidman College of Business. As a member of this organization, I will strive to reach levels of excellence that will serve as benchmarks of ethics and performance in the academic and business communities.*

## **MBA Program**

### **Who Are We?**

The MBA program was Grand Valley's first graduate business program, launched in 1973 in response to the business community's interest, which remains a driving force today. The Seidman College and the MBA program have benefitted over the past nearly 40 years from a relationship with the same business community, which is now served by nearly 2500 Seidman MBA alumni.

The Seidman College of Business was accredited by AACSB – International in 1995. AACSB is the premier business college accrediting and is a validation of your degree. Accreditation through this organization requires a very rigorous review of all facets of the school and its programs, including, but not limited to, quality of curriculum, faculty, university and college support systems and resources, alumni, and students. It is important to us and to you, as it makes your degree more valuable.

The Seidman College consists of more than 80 full-time faculty members in five academic departments: Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, and Marketing. These individuals come from many different countries and backgrounds, providing a wide variety of knowledge about the business, international, and academic communities you will explore during your time as an MBA student.

The Graduate Business Office is located in Suite 1031 of the new L. William Seidman Center on Grand Valley's downtown Grand Rapids campus. There are three full-time staff members in the Graduate Business Office, an office dedicated to providing the best service to graduate students. Your classes are also held at the Seidman Center and, occasionally, in another building on the downtown campus.

### **Who Are You?**

You are among the best MBA students in the State of Michigan. With an average GMAT score of about 570 and average undergraduate GPA of about 3.4, you rank consistently in the top three of all part-time MBA programs in Michigan.

Your average age is about 30, and the range of ages in the MBA program spans well over 30 years. About one-third of you are women, and typically about five to seven percent of you have citizenship in another country. A large majority of you live and work in the West Michigan area and attend school part time while working full time. Your academic and professional backgrounds are diverse, from fine arts to business to engineering, and you have earned degrees at many colleges and universities, from Grand Valley State to the American University of Cairo.

A significant majority of you will complete the MBA, assuming you follow the trend set by previous classes.

### Goals/Objectives

The following learning objectives have been determined by Seidman faculty, and assessment of each occurs throughout the program in various required courses:

- Effective Business Communication
- Business Acumen and Strategic Decision Making
- Global and Inter-Cultural Competence
- Values Driven Leadership

### **Traditional Part-Time MBA Program Details**

The MBA is a generalist degree. The program requires at least 33 credit hours of courses, consisting primarily of required courses covering each functional area. Students with an academic background in a particular business discipline are exempted from the related core course and substitute an elective that adds value related to their career goals and interests. You will be provided a program plan at the time of admission which clearly identifies your requirements, including any area for which an elective will be substituted. The curriculum essentially has three parts: foundation, core, and electives.

### Foundation

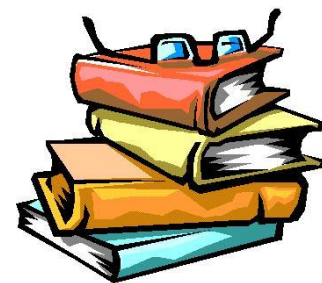
To ensure a quality curriculum, we require that every student have an academic business foundation on which to build. Thus, there are four prerequisite courses which must be completed by those students who have not completed comparable courses at the undergraduate level or in another graduate program. The prerequisites for the MBA program are accounting (ACC 511), statistics and mathematics of finance (FIN 520), legal environment (BUS 531), and economics (ECO 542). These courses are accelerated versions of undergraduate content in the respective areas. Some students will have completed all of these foundation courses, while others will have completed some or none.

Proficiency exams are available for students who have not taken course work in these areas but have other experiences that they feel may be equivalent. The exams are free and available in the Graduate Business Office most days 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. More information, including sample tests, is available at [www.gvsu.edu/mba](http://www.gvsu.edu/mba) under "MBA Background Studies."

### Core

Following are courses required of all MBA students unless otherwise noted on their program plan. As noted above, students with significant background in any area(s) substitute an elective for the course in the respective area(s):

- ACC 611, Contemporary Managerial Accounting
- BUS 610, MIS and Organizational Processes
- BUS 631, Leadership and Organizational Dynamics
- BUS 671, Global Competitiveness
- BUS 677, Business Ethical Problems and Perspectives
- BUS 681, Strategy
- ECO 641, Business Economics and Strategy
- FIN 621, Financial Policy for Managers
- MGT 660, Operations Management and Supply Chain
- MKT 651, Marketing Management



Each core course is 3 credits, except BUS 677, which is 1.5 credits.

### Electives

The MBA includes at least 4.5 credits of electives that give students the opportunity to enhance their study in one or more areas of interest. Students with business majors substitute an elective for the core course related to their major(s), increasing their electives by 3 credits and sometimes 6 credits (for students with a double business major). All students complete at least 33 credits of 600-level course work. Elective courses are available in a range of topics such as enterprise resource planning software, financial derivatives, and the healthcare industry. Seidman also arranges elective courses for intensive study abroad or in Washington, D.C.

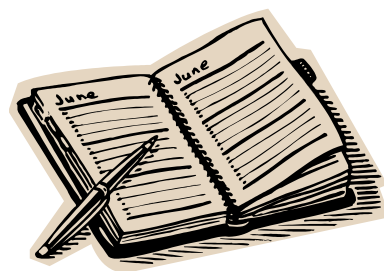
### Emphases

While the MBA is a general business degree, some students find it beneficial to choose a series of courses that provide them substantial depth in a specific area. Series of specific courses in the following areas are available as optional emphases: Finance, Health Sector Management, International Business, Management of Innovation & Technology, and Sustainable Enterprise. For most students, completing an official emphasis requires additional credits/courses. It is important to note that emphases are entirely optional, and that, while Seidman has five "official" emphases, students certainly may select a series of electives in any area of interest to develop an interest/expertise. Only the above noted "official" emphases are noted on students' transcripts.

### Planning Your Schedule

It is important to note that all core courses are offered every semester – fall, winter, and spring/summer – with rare exception. During the fall and winter semesters, each course meets one evening/week for 3 hours. Occasionally, core courses are offered on Saturdays and also on the Holland campus.

Spring/summer semester consists of two 6-week sessions, and courses generally meet either Monday and Wednesday evenings or Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Each core course is offered one of the two sessions.



Elective courses, on the other hand, are offered on a rotation as a function of both their demand and the availability of faculty with appropriate expertise. Typically, one elective in each functional area is offered fall and winter semesters, so there are a number of choices. However, only one elective is offered each of the summer semester sessions due to less demand during that semester. When an elective of interest becomes available, take it – it may not be available again soon, whereas core courses are regularly available.

Often, elective courses have prerequisites from among the core courses. Therefore, as you plan, be sure to complete any core course that is a prerequisite in the area in which you may be interested in taking an elective.

The traditional MBA program courses are scheduled to accommodate working professionals who attend school part time (evenings and Saturdays). About 10% of the students, however, attend full time due to visa requirements or because they are not fully employed. The extensive core offered over just four evenings and Saturday can cause scheduling challenges for full-time students. They are

especially advised to meet with the Graduate Programs Director for scheduling advice very early in their studies.

## **Opportunities**

### Washington Campus Program

The Seidman College is a founding member of The Washington Campus Program in Washington, D.C. The Washington Campus was launched by E. William Seidman over 30 years ago, and the Seidman College has participated in the program every year. The list of participating schools is noteworthy: Arizona State University, Colorado State University, Emory University, Georgetown University, Grand Valley State University, Howard University, Indiana University, Northeastern University, The Ohio State University, Purdue University, Rice University, Texas A & M, University of California – Berkeley, University of New Mexico, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The University of Michigan, and The University of Texas at Austin.



BUS 698, The Washington Campus, is a 3-credit elective available to MBA students who choose to spend one intensive week (either over spring break in March or in May), with MBA students from other member schools, in D.C. studying the relationship between business and government from Washington insiders. For more information, see [www.washcampus.edu](http://www.washcampus.edu) or email [bajemac@gvsu.edu](mailto:bajemac@gvsu.edu) and request a flyer on The Washington Campus. There has never been a Seidman MBA student who attended this program and did not highly recommend it. Many think it should be a requirement of the MBA Program; and, in fact, for at least one of the member schools, it is.

### Graduate Assistantships

The Seidman College appoints a number of graduate assistants each semester. Most assist faculty in their research, although others assist undergraduate students in the Seidman Undergraduate Advising Office or in the Writing Center, while some work in the Dean's office on publications, marketing, and events. Full-time MBA students who are interested in serving in any of these capacities may apply through the Graduate Business Office. Compensation includes a tuition stipend for 9 graduate credits and \$4000 each semester (fall and winter). Assistantships are competitive.

### Seidman Graduate Student Advisory Board (GSAB)

A board of graduate business students, including MBA, MSA, and MST, meets once each month with Dean Lawson, Associate Dean Sundaram, and Claudia Bajema where they serve as liaisons between students and administration and contribute to a variety projects. Projects sometimes are recommended by the administration but are often suggested by board members. Board members serve as hosts at events when they are able to attend, and bring their ideas as well as those of their fellow students to the attention of the administration.

Each semester the board recruits new members to replace those board members who graduate. Interested students should contact either Koleta Moore ([moorekol@gvsu.edu](mailto:moorekol@gvsu.edu)) or current board members (names and bios appear under "other information" on the Grad Business Info Center (Blackboard) or at [www.gvsu.edu/business](http://www.gvsu.edu/business) under the Graduate Student link.



### Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The GSA, a member of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students, is open to all graduate students at GVSU. The association hosts a social hour (or two) in the University Club Room before Wednesday evening classes each week and collaborates with a number of other university organizations to provide events that are meaningful to graduate students. More information can be found at [www.gvsu.edu/gs](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs).

### PACES

Managed by the Office of Graduate Studies and sponsored by the GSA, PACES is co-curricular professional development for graduate students which focuses on helping graduate students develop skills associated with **P**rofessionalism, **A**dvancement, **C**ommunication, **E**ngagement, and **S**uccess. More information can be found at [www.gvsu.edu/paces](http://www.gvsu.edu/paces).



### Alumni Breakfast Series

The Seidman College and the Seidman Alumni Association offer a breakfast series featuring complimentary breakfasts and addresses by area business leaders on topics that are of special interest. These breakfast programs are offered approximately every six weeks. Watch your Blackboard (Graduate Business Info Center) for information. The breakfasts generally convene at 7:30, followed by an 8:00 address with Q&A following. Programs conclude by 9:00. The Breakfast Series is one way that Seidman provides you exposure to leadership in the community and keeps you informed about the West Michigan economy.

## **Watch For**

### Registration, Payment, and Refund Deadlines.

Registration begins the middle of March for the following summer, fall and winter semesters. Students may register any time between mid-March and the beginning of a semester and may change their registration on the same schedule. It is advantageous to register as early as possible to ensure that you are able to register for your first choice each semester.

Generally, tuition is due two weeks before the semester begins, with 100% refund for classes dropped during the first week of the semester and 75% refund for those dropped during the following two weeks. Check the web page Academic Calendar for exact dates. The annual class schedule and university calendar are both available at [www.gvsu.edu/schedule](http://www.gvsu.edu/schedule). These online documents provide information on the schedule of courses, dates for payment and refunds, and many other details that you will find helpful as you plan your program.



Grand Valley has fair and well-published refund deadlines. Those deadlines are also rigidly enforced. However, if you find yourself in extenuating circumstances, such as a health problem that makes it impossible to continue with your class(es), there is a process by which you may request a tuition refund. The "Tuition Refund Appeal" form is on the web page under Registrar and Forms Library.

### Blackboard

Blackboard is a platform that connects you to faculty and administration. Most faculty members use it to post their syllabi, enhance their courses, and make important announcements. You may use it to facilitate discussion among your team members in a particular course. The Graduate Office uses it to post relevant announcements and information. It is important that you are familiar with this tool. For information, enter "blackboard" in the search box on the web page.

Commencement/Graduation Commencement is held twice each year: April after winter semester exams and December just before fall semester exams. Students who complete their programs during the summer semester may participate in either the April Commencement prior to their last semester or the December Commencement following their program completion. Regardless which Commencement you attend (or if you do not attend at all), your diploma will arrive about six weeks after you officially complete the MBA, assuming you submit the appropriate form in time.

A diploma card must be submitted to notify the Registrar's office that you are planning to graduate and to trigger an official audit of your records. This form also notifies the Records Office to include you in the upcoming Commencement program. The form is available on the web page under "Registrar" and, then, "Forms." You may also email the Graduate Business Office, and a staff member will take the information and submit the form for you.

It is important that you submit the card early in the semester that you are graduating. If, however, you would like to participate in April Commencement but will not graduate until August, you must submit the form before March 1 and indicate that you are submitting it for an August graduation (not April). The Records office will know to include you in the April Commencement program and to send you information about Commencement and then to process your audit for August.



Regardless whether you participate in any Commencement, you must submit the diploma card to notify the Registrar that you are graduating, which triggers an official audit and helps ensure that you receive your diploma in a timely manner.

## **Policies**

### University Policies

All GVSU policies apply to all GVSU students, although many of the colleges have additional policies that are applicable to only their students. University policies can be found in the

current online catalog [www.gvsu.edu/catalog](http://www.gvsu.edu/catalog). Be sure to scroll through the policies to those specific to graduate programs. You will find reference to these policies in the Graduate Student Guidebook available at [www.gvsu.edu/gs](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs).

#### Graduate Studies Policies

The Office of Graduate Studies web page also includes policies and practices that are applicable to all graduate students, and you are encouraged to review that information as well. That office publishes a Graduate Student Handbook that includes a wealth of information for graduate students in all programs. It can be accessed from the Graduate Studies web page [www.gvsu.edu/gs](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs).

#### Seidman College Policies

Policies specific to Seidman graduate programs are found in the online catalog, some under "The Seidman College of Business" section and others under the "MBA" Program section. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the Graduate Business Office with their questions.

### **Tuition and Financial Aid**

Tuition is established by the University's Board of Trustees and is generally determined for all three semesters of the fiscal year. Tuition rates are readily accessible. The quickest way to locate them is simply entering "tuition" in the search box in the upper right hand corner of the GV web page. Graduate business tuition for 2014-15 is \$589/credit for Michigan residents and \$779/credit for non-residents. Tuition for 2015-16 will be set by the Board in July 2015.

Tuition for the semester is due before that semester begins, although the university offers payment plans. Financial Aid is also available, primarily as loans. Students are encouraged to visit the Financial Aid web page or to contact the Financial Aid Office. To be considered for financial aid, a student must submit the FAFSA form. More information about the form and how to submit is on the Financial Aid web page.



The university also offers payment plans, where students pay a portion of their tuition when tuition is due as the semester is about to start and then payments each of the next few months. One of the most popular plans among MBA students is the "Company Deferment Plan", which is available to students who receive tuition reimbursement from their employers. To qualify, the student completes a promissory note and provides the university verification from their employer of their eligibility for tuition reimbursement.

There are a few scholarships awarded to graduate business students each year, although they are generally not large. Students with no corporate or other support are given preference. A list of the scholarships and the applications are available online at [www.gvsu.edu/business/scholarships](http://www.gvsu.edu/business/scholarships). A limited number of highly competitive Graduate Assistantships are available to students who are enrolled as full-time students and do not have other employment. Information is available in the Graduate Business Office.

## **University Resources**

The Graduate Studies Office publishes a Graduate Student Guidebook each year which includes information on many university resources. You are advised to go to [www.gvsu.edu/gs](http://www.gvsu.edu/gs) and refer to the booklet.

One resource that deserves special attention is The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, which provides writing consultants to assist you with all aspects of your writing. The office, located in 101B DeVos, has drop-in hours and appointments. There is no fee for services. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this resource. There are few things that will differentiate you more in the work place than your communications skills.

## **When In Doubt**

If you did not find what you need in this document, or if you simply need some advice or assistance, contact the Graduate Business Office at 616-331-7400.



L. William Seidman Center opened May 2013.