

PROPOSAL FOR A FOUR-YEAR BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN
BUSINESS AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Prepared for President Scott Wyatt

Submitted by the Snow College Business Department
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INTRODUCTION

Business is the largest undergraduate major in the United States and is still growing.¹ This reality, along with the immense power of the business sector and its significance for local, regional, national, and global well-being, necessitates serious consideration of a four-year business program at Snow College. To serve a targeted niche market that also addresses local economic development, the Business Department submits this proposal for a **Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship**.

The vision for this degree includes training in traditional basic business education that can be applied in a variety of traditional career settings. What makes the program unique is its focus on entrepreneurship and economic development in a rural environment. This innovative approach will be attractive to students in Snow's service area but will also be attractive to students in other rural settings throughout the state and region. A student completing the degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship will leave Snow College with a solid foundation in basic business skills and also the tools they need to start their own business or apply entrepreneurship within an existing company.

PROPOSAL FULFILLMENT: STATEWIDE INITIATIVES, GOALS, PRIORITIES

The B.S. degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship fits well with statewide initiatives, goals, and priorities.

First, as shown in the diagram on the final page, this new degree allows students to build on skills and earn certificates of proficiency and completion as they progress in the program. This approach fits very well with **Governor Herbert's "66% by 2020" initiative**.² Students achieve as they progress, and by the time they finish they have the potential to earn multiple certificates and degrees. Additionally, because Snow College is the only USHE institution between Provo and Cedar City, the college is ideally located to serve a significant population of the state's rural citizens.

Second, Governor Herbert has identified the following three **priorities for Utah education**: Objective 1: Ensure our school children achieve reading proficiency by the end of 3rd Grade; Objective 2: Increase the number of High School students completing post-secondary courses; Objective 3: Align educational training to meet the workforce demands of the marketplace.³ The proposed program specifically addresses Objectives 2 and 3.

Third, the **white paper on Economic Development and Workforce Preparation** completed by members of the Strategic Planning Committee outlined multiple indicators of a need for increased business management skills in Utah.⁴ See the following research:

¹ Colby, Ehrlich, Sullivan, Dolle, *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education*, (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2011).

² "2020 Vision Comprehensive Action Plan, Developed by: Governor's Education Excellence Commission," <http://vision2020research.com/files/42250711.pdf>.

³ "An Educated Workforce is Critical for a Prosperous Economy," <http://www.utah.gov/governor/priorities/education.html>

⁴ Avery, Cox, Medley, *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION Snow College Strategic Plan White Paper*, <http://snow.edu/vision/images/ed.pdf>.

Occupations related to the following areas:	State of Utah (%)	State of Utah Total Openings (Growth and Replacement)	United States (%)
Business Management	25	36,540	14.6
Computer Science	30	33,980	21.6
Composites	21	4,310	10.5
Commercial Art	22.4	3,320	11.9
Nursing			
Registered Nurses	33	6,530	26
Licensed Practical Nurses	28	1,400	22

PROPOSAL FULFILLMENT: REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION NEEDS

First, the **Governor’s Rural Partnership Board** identifies two of its top priorities as 1) entrepreneurship education; 2) business resource centers.⁵ Creating the proposed program will address both priorities. Entrepreneurship training is a foundation for the program. The proposal also includes developing a Center for Entrepreneurship & Rural Development, which will serve as a business resource center. Formally and firmly establishing Snow College as a hub for rural development in Central Utah opens up doors to students and community members alike. This degree could provide the training necessary for rural residents to develop businesses that operate in a rural environment but export products/services outside of the county, state, region, and country.

Second, the new four-year program and accompanying center could allow students to participate in the **Technology Innovation & Commercialization Program** statewide initiative.⁶ This is a state funded grant program developed by the Utah Legislature in 1986 to help accelerate the process of taking university-developed cutting-edge technologies to market, thereby driving economic development and creating jobs for Utahns. Changes to the TCIP statute now permit grants to companies who license technology developed at Utah’s colleges and universities, including startups as well as existing companies who plan to create a new product or product line from the licensed technology. Certainly, the program fits with the TCIP initiative and could be very beneficial to students and to the community.

Third, **Outdoor Products and Recreation** has been identified as a statewide targeted industry.⁷ Targeted industries show growth potential. The Outdoor Leadership and Entrepreneurship program housed in the Business Department specifically seeks to fill needs in the targeted industry. The OLE program is already established; a certificate of proficiency exists now and is easily implemented into a track of the proposed four-year program.

Fourth, a recently published **study by Utah State University** indicated that agriculture production and processing is 14.85 percent of Utah’s economy.⁸ Snow College’s Agribusiness and Farm/Ranch Business Management division, housed in the Business Department, is recognized as a premier resource of Utah farm and ranch business management data and information. The program has a long history of assisting

⁵ “GRP priorities,” <http://business.utah.gov/programs/rural/grpb/priorities/>.

⁶ “Technology Commercialization & Innovation Program” <http://business.utah.gov/programs/tcip/>.

⁷ “Outdoor Products and Recreation,” <http://business.utah.gov/industries/outdoor/>.

⁸ “The Economic Impact of Agriculture on the State of Utah” www.ag.utah.gov/documents/EconomicContributionOfAgriculture2011.pdf

agriculture businesses in developing business skills and providing valid farm and ranch management benchmarks. The division is positioned to become the center for Agribusiness and Agriculture Management and Entrepreneurship for rural Utah for all rural agriculture businesses and educational experiences for students of agribusiness.

Fifth, the **Economic Development Directors** for the six-county service area and the **Snow College Economic Development and Workforce Preparation Advisory Committee** have identified Business and Management, with an emphasis in entrepreneurship, as one of the area's top three bachelor degree needs in a recent memo to college leadership (citing *America's Best Performing Cities*). Their proposal included the following rationale: "To assist all businesses across all industries to have the business skills to expand to new markets and take advantage of emerging opportunities."

Sixth, the **Strategic Planning Committee's white paper on Economic Development and Workforce Preparation** characterized the importance of entrepreneurial education this way: "Entrepreneurial educational activities could provide an increase in funding, a growth in business ventures, a growth in sales and employment, an increase in graduate income, and an increase in graduates involved in high-tech firms. Every student at Snow College should have an engaging entrepreneurial experience or take an entrepreneurship class. Entrepreneurial skills that engender innovation are especially important in rural areas for the creation of new companies which will employ the region's workforce. In rural areas, we cannot just wait for someone else to create places for us to work." Establishing a program that emphasizes entrepreneurship is important for Snow College.

PROPOSAL FULFILLMENT: CONSISTENCY WITH AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE SNOW COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN, MISSION, AND CORE THEMES

The proposed degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship is very much in line with the college's strategic plan, mission, and core themes.

Strategic Plan

The proposed degree aligns with the **Strategic Plan** in the following ways:

Quality Instruction and Student Services

The Business Department recently implemented online course standards and requires use of Canvas for all business classes. The Business Department is developing and will continue to develop a strong advisory board to assist in maintaining quality and market need fulfillment.

Existing business programs are accredited by ACBSP (Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs), and the new program would be on track for accreditation. The new four-year program would assist in moving towards AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation. Ongoing, high-quality assessment is required for all outside accrediting bodies.

The proposed program is designed to support and integrate with other programs at Snow College. The department would build on existing measures such as "best practices" training in department meetings and ongoing faculty development.

One important component of the program is prioritizing the hiring of a DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) and/or Ph.D. faculty.

General Education

The department takes an aggressive approach to marketing the Associate of Science Business and encourages general education requirements within the practical application of business concepts.

The Business Department currently offers limited general education courses but has set proactive goals to submit proposals for courses (in Social Science, Oral Communication, and possibly other categories that may materialize).

The proposed program and accompanying center are interdisciplinary in nature and address crossover from and application to general education courses.

Two Year/Four Year

The Business Department is now working with service area high schools to create *strategic* concurrent enrollment partnerships that direct students on a pathway in business once high school is over.

Certificates of proficiency (19-21 credits) currently exist in the following areas: Agribusiness, OLE, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, and Music Technology.

The Associate of Science Business degree is a two-year program specially designed for business students who wish to transfer into a four-year program.

The new B.S. degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship would complement the existing certificates and degree already offered from the Business Department. In fact, using the “stackable credit idea” (as illustrated in the diagram), students have the option of achieving a certificate or degree after the first, second, and fourth years.

The Strategic Planning Committee’s white paper on Economic Development and Workforce Preparation agrees with the progressive achievement approach: “Four-year degrees in the economic development and workforce preparation programs should be an extension of two-year programs for the *stackable credentials* argument and/or tied to the economic development piece for higher skilled employee requirements.”

Economic Development and Workforce Preparation

The Strategic Planning Committee’s white paper on Economic Development and Workforce Preparation identifies the following short-term goals: Ensure programs are rich with interdisciplinary skills, including finance, communication, entrepreneurship, salesmanship, marketing, social media, and social skills; maintain and support current programs that fit into either the economic development and/or workforce preparation arguments; modify programs to more closely match industry needs or economic development opportunities. The proposed program addresses all of these short-term goals.

The new Center for Entrepreneurship and Rural Development would be available for both students and community members, with special initiatives to focus on female entrepreneurs, support college programs, and give Snow students experience helping real businesses.

Entrepreneurship Seminars that exist now will continue, and they provide important insight for people wishing to start their own businesses. Additionally, the seminars are made available in online, face-to-face, and on demand to accommodate community members and students.

The new degree program would prepare students to create their own businesses, with a focus on *expanding the market* by generating dollars from outside the community through exporting, economic gardening, and technology. Technology components include e-commerce and web-based businesses – potentially in the high-tech sector in partnership with other programs around campus – that target customers from outside of the state, region, and country.

Some community partners have suggested that all programs at Snow College should contain an entrepreneurial element, which is the case with Snow’s first four-year degree, Commercial Music. If Snow College eventually houses multiple successful four-year programs, many or all with an entrepreneurship emphasis, students would logically take the same entrepreneurship classes, regardless of the major they are pursuing. **Snow College’s emphasis on entrepreneurship is a major reason to develop this program sooner, rather than later.** As cross-discipline students work together, exciting progress can happen for the local economy. Imagine a class where music, computer science, and business students together create a business plan for a company that produces software for the music industry!

The new degree program would also contain traditional business principles courses that can be applied in any setting.

Mission and Core Themes

The proposed degree aligns with the **Mission and Core Themes** in the following ways:

Tradition of Excellence

Existing Business Department programs, coupled with new initiatives and the new four-year degree would solidify and complete a tradition of excellence. A direction from high school through the bachelor’s program is an important pathway in completing educational goals. This direction allows a student to achieve at every level from high school through the college experience and on to employment.

Building on the existing Associate of Science Business degree maintains and extends the reputation and excellence of the program.

Culture of Innovation

Establishing a Center for Entrepreneurship & Rural Development is truly a *center for innovation*. Part of the mission for the center is providing an environment where innovation is encouraged and then transformed into a concrete business opportunity.

The whole idea of a business degree with a rural focus is innovative. More than any other school, we should be equipped to guide students to success in a rural environment.

The Business Department has a proven history of innovation through existing initiatives like the Business Travel Seminar, the Business Career Seminar, the pursuit of an online certificate, and Entrepreneurship Seminars.

Atmosphere of Engagement

The proposed degree naturally integrates engagement as students develop business ideas and work with real businesses to solve problems. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Rural Development will be an incubator-type of establishment where engagement is natural and necessary.

The department will continue to sponsor engagement opportunities through its travel seminar, student organizations, career seminars, and competitive events.

The program allows students to connect to the real world by study of current events, real application of concepts to real businesses, and an effort to personalize the experience for students.

Phase Development for Four-year Degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship

Build the program in three phases:

Phase 1:

- Partner w/other 4 year programs @ Snow
- Establish Center for Entrepreneurship & Rural Development
- GE courses in Business
- High head count
- Top quality classes

Phase 1: Develop Center for Entrepreneurship & Rural Development.

Establish a **partnership with the community and various departments** around campus. The Center houses Entrepreneurship, Agribusiness, and OLE projects. Execute a successful and popular certificate of proficiency in entrepreneurship. Increase Associate of Science Business graduates. Get approval for additional general education courses. Contribute to and partner with other campus programs (Music, etc.). Start search to recruit faculty with terminal degrees.

Phase 2:

- “Entrepreneur in residence”
- Develop upper-division courses
- Secure faculty with terminal degrees
- Look at higher accreditation

Phase 2: Establish continued foundation for four-year program.

Develop upper division courses. Throughout phases one and two recruit and foster an **entrepreneur in residence** to help run the center and direct activities. Faculty with terminal degrees are in place (emphasis areas: accounting, finance, economic development, entrepreneurship).

Phase 3:

- With buy-in from partners on campus and other institutions, implement 4-yr degree
- Continue hiring necessary faculty

Phase 3: Implement the B.S. in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship that is logical and relevant to our campus community and target market. The Center is in full operation, appropriate faculty are in place, AACSB accreditation is in full motion or attained.

Business Department

Four-year Bachelor of Science Degree in Business and Rural Entrepreneurship

- Upper-division classes
- Gen Ed
- Engagement opportunities

Associate of Science Business = Two-year Associate Degree

Certificate of Proficiency + Core = One-Year Certificate of Completion in Business

Technology

Agribusiness

Center for
Entrepreneurship &
Rural Development

Outdoor Leadership
& Entrepreneurship

Certificates of Proficiency (Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Music Technology, Agribusiness, Outdoor Leadership and Entrepreneurship)

Feeders:

- Internal Snow programs
- CEO partnership program with high schools
- Industry
- FBLA/DECA
- FFA