



Tepper School of Business
William Larimer Mellon, Founder

Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890

Robert M. Dammon
Professor of Financial Economics
Dean

412.268.3696 (tel)
412.268.8163 (fax)
dammon@cmu.edu

www.tepper.cmu.edu

Professor R. Ravi
Tepper School of Business
Carnegie Mellon University

August 29, 2014

Dear Ravi:

I am writing to acknowledge your leadership in the conception and design of our new FlexMBA program that was launched in the Fall of 2013 at the Tepper School of Business.

You were crucial to the creation and innovative design of the FlexMBA (Hybrid) program and bringing it to fruition in a remarkably short period of time. In particular, you are responsible for the design and deployment of the program in less than a year since I appointed you as the head of the Future Delivery Committee, and tasked you with the charge of leading our entry into online education. During this period, you organized your committee to carry out the market research, investigate competitive programs and evaluate their models for online instruction. You led the extensive research and evaluation of available classroom technologies with the school's computing group, and decided on the appropriate ones for eventual adoption. You kept our faculty engaged and informed of the rapid changes and advantages of the new technologies with your effective presentations and demonstrations in faculty meetings. With these efforts and that of your committee, you were able to get faculty buy-in into offering this program by convincing them that it was important to invest in new ways of doing things. You also took the time to keep the school's business board of advisors informed in their visits to the school in the Spring and Fall of 2013 and answered their questions and concerns.

The result of your efforts is a truly unique model that combines online delivery with periodic in-class experiences at both the Pittsburgh campus and remote sites. The program is a 3-year long part-time MBA program that combines online instruction and group work with self-paced study material and on-campus Access Weekends. By design, it has the same requirements and faculty as the full-time and part-time MBA programs held in our Pittsburgh campus. No business school in the world currently offers a comparably innovative program. The ability to include a considerable amount of in-person teaching makes students willing to pay regular tuition for the experience, while the use of online methods and the "flipped classroom" model for much of the instruction allows students to participate remotely without disrupting their personal and professional lives. The program is off to an excellent start, with an entering class that is already at an economically viable scale, and we anticipate that it will grow significantly over the next few years. Given the constraints we face in terms of physical capacity in our Pittsburgh facilities, a program such as this is a particularly creative means of diversifying and supplementing our revenues while preserving the high norms and quality for which the school is known.

Once we decided to offer the program, you have been instrumental in orchestrating its successful launch. You made time in a research trip to California in the Spring of 2013 to host an information meeting for prospective students. You worked with our school's marketing team in their production of the publicity material and videos for launching the program, as well as in editing the information for the web content. Working with the university's Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, you organized a faculty course over the Spring 2013 semester to train the first batch of faculty who signed up to teach in the program to redesign their classes for the new delivery mode. By developing this in the new learning management system for the program, you ensured that it is available for future batches of faculty that come online to teach in the program, learning the system they will use as they learn the content. You took leadership of a faculty advisory committee for the program overseeing the transition from the design to deployment phase. With the help of the committee, you led the adaptation and delivery of the Basecamp orientation experience for the incoming FlexMBA (Hybrid) class including a new session that you helped design on online learning. In a spirit of leading by example, you also offered one of the first two classes in the new format that was very well received (the students gave you an instructor evaluation of 4.7/5).

Thank you for serving the school so effectively as the architect of our new FlexMBA (Hybrid) program, in this critical time of transition in the MBA education landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob".

Robert Dammon
Dean, Tepper School of Business
Carnegie Mellon University