# New Degree or Certificate Proposal Feasibility Study Template

**Feasibility Study for New Agribusiness Leadership Certificate**

**Executive Summary**

Scheduled for Fall 2024, the certificate program in Agribusiness Leadership is anticipated to commence with no initial startup costs as all courses are already available. The program's asynchronous delivery mode ensures flexibility for working professionals seeking to enhance their leadership skills and long-term career prospects in the agribusiness setting. However, future semesters may necessitate additional course sections and adjunct instructors to accommodate potential growth and demand beyond the anticipated launch.

**Description:**

The Agribusiness Leadership certificate targets individuals with existing degrees or professionals already active in the workforce. This program aims to engage a broader demographic, extending beyond UW, to support working individuals seeking to enhance their leadership capabilities. Many prospective students are not looking to pursue another degree but rather aspire to acquire these essential skills through an online, self-paced learning format. This asynchronous approach accommodates the diverse schedules of our non-traditional, employed student base.

**Table of Contents**

Overview and Description of Degree or Certificate, Purpose, Strategic Plan Overlay

Learning Outcomes

Curriculum Map and Program Structure

Course Descriptions

Assessment Plan

Degree Program Evaluation

New Resources Required

Substantive Change Determination

Executive Summary of Demand Statistics

**Feasibility Study Required Contents:**

**Overview and Description of Degree or Certificate, Purpose, Strategic Play Overlay**

The Agribusiness Leadership certificate aligns in part with the BAS in Organizational Leadership, sharing three of its courses, and three agribusiness courses. This certificate addresses a void in the educational preparation of our workforce by catering to individuals seeking a credential in an asynchronous learning environment as an alternative to pursuing an additional degree. Tailored to meet the needs of place-bound non-traditional students juggling work commitments, this certificate offers essential leadership skills essential for professional growth and improved long-term career prospects. The certificate would align with the strategic plan and president’s goals listed:

* Strategic Direction 1: Enhance academic, distance education, and advising programs to support student success and increased student enrollment with particular focus on recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.
* Strategic Direction 4: Prioritize and foster excellence in core areas of academics and research that are responsive to the needs of students, employers, and the State.

**Learning Outcomes**

AgBusn Leadership SLO (Student Learning Outcome) 1: Students will become better prepared to assume supervisory and other leadership roles within ag-related organizations.

AgBusn Leadership SLO 2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of agribusiness concepts and exhibit the qualities of a successful leader.

AgBusn Leadership SLO 3: Students will incorporate organization design, agribusiness marketing, management, and finance concepts to comprehensively assess and enhance the organization's performance.

AgBusn Leadership SLO 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate research data findings verbally and/or written within ag-related organizational structures.

**Curriculum Map and Program Structure – Certificate will be 12 credits in total.**

**Choose two of the three courses:**

AGEC 4050 - 3 credits

AGEC 4060 - 3 credits

AGEC 4500 - 3 credits

**Choose two of the three courses:**

ORGL 3100 – 3 credits

ORGL 4100 – 3 credits

ORGL 4960 – 3 credits

**Course Descriptions – All courses are asynchronous/online.**

| AGEC 4050, Agribusiness Marketing | Students develop a strategic marketing plan for an agricultural and food product. Content includes study of aspects of the global food industry influencing consumer demand; contemporary topics in food marketing and policy; agricultural supply marketing; marketing research methods; marketing profitability measures; pricing; new product information; branding; and industry competitive analysis. *\*AGEC or ECON 1020 Prerequisite* |
| --- | --- |
| AGEC 4060, Agribusiness Management | Applies quantitative, economic, financial, and managerial analysis to the agribusiness sector. *\*AGEC or ECON 1020 and MATH 1400 Prerequisite* |
| AGEC 4500,  Agricultural Finance | Principles of financial management; compounding and discounting; leverage and capital budgeting and alternatives in resource control. \*AGEC or ECON 1020 Prerequisite |
| ORGL 3100 – Innovation & Creativity | Students will acquire knowledge through a survey of leading theories of organizational change. Students will learn the core principles of each theory, which involves inspiring positive changes in those led. The leader is vested in the success of every single member involved in the process. Students will begin to understand how to empower an organization to create, plan, and innovate to achieve success and produce positive results within its structure. |
| ORGL 4100 – Diversity & Change | Students will develop an understanding of complex organizational concepts required to run a successful, diverse team, including a foundation of common legal and regulatory compliance. Students will learn how to relate and apply concepts including organizational structure, management theories, common elements of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, and topics in human resource management (hiring and termination processes, conflict resolution strategies, etc.). |
| ORGL 4960 - Internship | Students will be given an opportunity to complete a 42.5 hour agribusiness leadership project, either in their own place of employment or an internship location of their choosing, even in an online setting. This gives students practical experience in a leadership setting.  Required to complete academic assignments such as reflections journals, goal setting, project presentation, and final evaluation assignments in addition to their field-based responsibilities. |

**Assessment Plan**

Student learning outcomes will be assessed in each of the individual courses as outlined in the program curriculum map.

| Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) | AGEC 4050 | AGEC 4060 | AGEC 4500 | ORGL 3100 | ORGL  4100 | ORGL  4960 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Students will become better prepared to assume supervisory and other leadership roles within ag-related organizations. | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Students will demonstrate knowledge of agribusiness concepts and exhibit the qualities of a successful leader. |  | X | X | X | X | X |
| Students will incorporate organization design, agribusiness marketing, management, and finance concepts to comprehensively assess and enhance the organization's performance. |  |  | X |  | X | X |
| Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate research data findings verbally and/or written within ag-related organizational structures. | X | X | X | X | X | X |

**Degree Program Evaluation**

Annually, our students will be given an opportunity to complete a gap analysis survey. Each question on the survey has been designed around our student learning objectives. There is at least one question for each learning objective. In addition to these survey questions, demographic questions are asked to better understand the results. Course evaluations will also be used to determine the effectiveness of each individual course.

**Substantive Change Determination**

Higher Learning Commission (HLC), UW’s regional accrediting agency, must approve all substantive changes to UW’s offering. HLC considers substantive change as the addition of a program (degree or certificate/credential level) not previously included in the institution’s accreditation, usually judged to be a program that is a significant departure from normal offerings, the addition of a program with 50%+ new coursework required, or the addition or change to an existing program which will be delivered 50%+ through alternative (hybrid, online) delivery. Substantive change may also be defined as a new program which does not meet the above guidelines, but which requires a significant amount of financial investment to be made. Please contact the HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer (currently Steve Barrett, [steveb@uwyo.edu](mailto:steveb@uwyo.edu)) to make this determination.

**New Resources Required**

Describe new resources required, including:

* Faculty and instructional staffing - We currently have a new faculty lecturer position that will teach three of our ORGL courses per year and three AGEC courses. As additional sections are required due to increased course enrollment, we will have highly qualified adjunct instructors who are in leadership roles teaching additional course sections.
* Program administration and staff support – The BAS director and department chair for the department of Agricultural and Applied Economics will oversee the certificate. Additional staffing support will be necessary as the program grows.
* Technology – Since all our programs and courses are already online, we have the existing technology we need to be successful.
* Library and digital resources – Same as technology.
* Marketing – We are currently working with the UW advising team and the Office of Online and Continuing Education on all our fully online programs at the university. The new certificate will be marketed through this effort as well as marketing efforts that our UW Casper team has, such as brochures, social media, visiting classrooms, other institutions, and businesses.

**Executive Summary of Demand Statistics\***

With the addition of our Agribusiness Leadership certificate program in an online asynchronous format, we anticipate an expanded market scope, encompassing more students on a national scale. Our current Organizational Leadership program enrolls an average of 100 students per academic year, with approximately 88% being in-state. There is a lot of room for national-level marketability and growth. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, post-secondary certificate holders earn up to 20% more than without a certificate and are in high demand with the increase in the workforce credential requirements. Also, certificates can be earned in six months to a year, decreasing costs for students. The sustained high demand for this program, exemplified by its top ranking in Gray Associate’s Data, prompted us to consider introducing a certificate program in leadership. This strategic move aims to grant access to leadership courses, offering individuals with a bachelor's degree or relevant work experience an opportunity to earn an Agribusiness Leadership certificate, thus equipping them with vital skills in this domain.

Market and student demand statistics, inclusive of peer comparisons regarding enrollment size, completions, and trajectory (growth or decline) of similar programs, provide compelling insights:

* The fully online nature of the certificate broadens its market reach. Nationally, online degree completions surged from 242,403 in 2019 to 272,767 in 2021, marking a 12.52% increase over three years. Regionally, the growth was notable, increasing from 36,294 in 2019 to 43,390 in 2021, a 19.53% rise. Moreover, national online certificate completions witnessed a substantial upsurge from 72,770 in 2019 to 97,006 in 2021, indicating a 33.28% increase. Regionally, the completion numbers soared from 3,703 in 2019 to 5,534 in 2021, a significant 49.5% increase.
* Specifically, business-related online certificate completions experienced a noteworthy 14.98% increase nationally and 17.728% regionally. Regionally, online certificate completions with ag-related focus increased from none in 2019 to 34 in 2021. There is a market opportunity with the limited online ag-focused offerings.

Analyzing the CIP Code 52.0213 for Organizational Leadership revealed substantial growth: a 26.858% increase in online bachelor’s programs nationally and a striking 71.428% completion rate regionally. Notably, certificate completions in this area showcased an 89.01% regional increase, emphasizing the abundance of business career opportunities within this code and its ongoing growth.

Analyzing the Ag Business Operations CIP Code 01.0102, it revealed a 65.789% increase in online bachelor completions and a 3.56% decline in overall bachelor completions. The Ag Business Operations CIP Code 01.0102 revealed a 16.666% increase in online undergraduate certificate completions and a 19.387% decline in overall undergraduate certificate completions. Both validate the demand for online degree and certificate completions.

Employment trends and projections, aligning with the core competencies of the degree or certificate, remain robust:

* Over the past three years, business-related fields have exhibited consistent employment strength.
* The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts a robust 10-year growth for business-related fields, particularly in Organizational Leadership, at both the bachelor and undergraduate certificate levels.
* The Organizational Management employment market remains largely unsaturated, offering abundant employment prospects.
* Agribusiness employment is in constant demand regionally and is a need in Wyoming. Agriculture is the third largest industry in the state.

Post-completion trends and considerations:

* Certificates, when integrated or coordinated with undergraduate or graduate degrees, can be advantageous.
* Stackable certificates that collectively contribute to a degree hold significant value for future enrollments and align with our growth plan.
* Certificates serve as an expedited enrollment avenue, acting as a stepping stone for students aspiring to pursue a bachelor’s degree in the future.

The average salary for agribusiness and organizational leadership (calculated as a mean between the two) is $77,000 annually.

(All data referenced from Gray Associates data.)