

New Degree in BS Project Management  
College of Professional Studies  
Preliminary Proposal  
August 24, 2018

The College of Professional Studies (CPS) is proposing an undergraduate degree in project management intended to equip working professionals and entry-level students for success as project management professionals. The increasingly important role of project managers is becoming clear as companies orient more of their work in a projectized fashion. This has been made evident through the creation of industry certifications, such as the Project Management Professional (PMP®) and the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®) credential by the Project Management Institute. PMI's Job Growth and Talent Gap, 2017 – 2027, notes that on an annual basis, there will be the demand to fill 2.2 million new project management oriented jobs worldwide per year through 2027. The BS in Project Management program will provide learners the tools, techniques, and interdisciplinary skills necessary to work successfully in any environment. This program seeks to bring together, and train, students in those skills that are most critical to their success: Project management processes and tools, financial analysis, strategic and leadership skills, and communication skills and strategies.

Program Mission - The Bachelor of Science in Project Management in the College of Professional Studies provides students opportunities to apply project management processes, foundational knowledge, and the technical, professional, and strategic expertise necessary to lead projects successfully from inception to completion. With emphasis on experiential learning, the program provides dynamic opportunities for learners with varying degrees of work experience to practice their knowledge within each course and beyond the classroom while implementing traditional and innovative project management concepts to real-life and complex projects.

#### Unique Aspects

The proposed degree program is distinguished from others by:

- Focusing on a specific, but widespread field that exists within a variety of industries
- Northeastern faculty experts, who have extensive and proven experience in project, program, and portfolio management
- Courses that focus on providing the technical, professional, and strategic skills necessary for successfully managing real-life complex projects.
- Courses that are offered in a variety of formats and flexible structure
- Integrated Experiential Learning that provides dynamic opportunities for learners with varying degrees of work experience to practice their knowledge within each course and beyond the classroom
- Extensible core aligned to industry specific areas, enabling learners to broaden and perfect their knowledge in multiple disciplines and capacities within the project management profession

Envisioned students are:

- Professionals working to transition to a career in project management
- Working project managers who need additional skills or credentials to advance within their organization
- Project coordinators and project leads aspiring to build on their existing knowledge to deliver value at a higher level within the organization

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- Project team members who wish to develop a stronger understanding of how to develop their leadership & managing capabilities
- Functional and technical professional who need to lead or participate in project related activities within their organization

**University Vision:** Our vision is to be a university that expands the meaning and impact of our engagement in the world using our knowledge and resources as positive forces for change in both our local communities and our global society.

This vision will be realized by offering students a transformative experience, grounded in experiential education that ignites their passion for learning while opening for them the endless possibilities around them. We will assist our students in becoming engaged citizens of the world, confident and resourceful people who realize that their knowledge and action can have positive consequences for their own lives and for the lives of others.

This vision will be realized through interdisciplinary scholarship and translational research by which we will dynamically participate in addressing problems in our urban environment, in our region and across the globe. Northeastern strives to translate fundamental research into applications that will contribute to economic development and enhance societal well-being. Our collaborative approach will encompass partners in government and industry, and artists, innovators and scholars both inside and outside our community.

We strive to create a vibrant and diverse community, characterized by collaboration, creativity, an unwavering commitment to excellence and an equally unwavering commitment to exhibiting respect for one other. We aspire to be a model for what our society can be.

University Mission:

- Educate students for a life of fulfillment and accomplishment
- Create and translate knowledge to meet global and societal needs

**CPS Mission:** The College of Professional Studies is committed to providing career-focused educational programs that are designed to accommodate the complex lives of motivated learners. Offered in a variety of innovative formats, our courses are taught by accomplished scholars and practitioners who have real-world experience. The result is an educational experience founded on proven scholarship, strengthened with practical application, and sustained by academic excellence.

In addition, the BS in Project Management program supports the University and CPS missions by:

- Expanding the educational options offered by the College of Professional Studies; and
- Demonstrating Northeastern's ability to respond to the growing demands of the workforce.

**Total Semester Hours and Delivery Format**

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- A minimum of 120 credits and a GPA of 3.0 would be required for degree completion.
- Courses will initially be offered online. On-ground courses may be offered when demand justifies on-ground sections.
- Courses will be scheduled to allow students to take from one to four courses per semester. Students with a minimum of 24 transfer credits upon admission will have the potential to complete the program within three years
- Program is slated to begin Fall 2019

**Opportunity & Evidence for Program Demand:**

The Project Management Institute's (PMI) Job Growth and Talent Gap report states that employers will need to fill nearly 2.2 million project-oriented roles each year through 2027 across project-intensive industries: manufacturing; construction; information services; finance; professional services; utilities; and healthcare. The catalysts for the gap include a dramatic increase in the number of jobs requiring project-oriented skills, attrition rates, and a significant uptick in demand for project talent in rapidly developing economies (e.g., India, China). Additionally, PMI published research results relating to the skills needed for professionals to be successful throughout their career as a project management professional. One of the key results was the publishing of the Talent Triangle, which encompasses technical project management skills, leadership related skills, and strategic and business acumen and skills. Most training tends to focus on the technical area of project management with less attention historically given to the leadership and strategic areas, but companies recognize the need for project professionals with these skills. CPS's BS in Project Management aligns to the Talent Triangle approach.

Adding the BS in Project Management program will allow CPS to provide students with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to enter entry level jobs in organizations as a: project manager; associate project manager; PM assistant; project administrator; project coordinator; PMO specialist; and project controller. In addition, the program will also provide working project manager professionals an avenue to complete their educational goals through degree completion and advance within their chosen field.

Attracting high-quality students: Northeastern is well poised to capture high quality students for this program given a few factors about the University and existing programs.

- CPS' current Master of Science in Project Management program has been certified through PMI®'s Global Accreditation Center (GAC), which only certifies those programs that have meet very rigorous academic requirements.
- With nearly 700 U.S. Universities or colleges offering either a certificate or Masters degree in either Project Management or a closely related discipline, Northeastern is one of approximately 26 programs that have earned this accreditation.
- CPS' scholar practitioner faculty model has proven to be a very effective tool at attracting high quality applicants and providing excellence in course design and delivery.

**Competitive Landscape:**

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The following is a summary of the Market Evaluation for a B.S. in Project Management by the Office of Strategic Research & Analytics.

Summary - Student interest level in project management bachelor's degrees is relatively small based on conferral data (less than 900 completions in 2016) but is growing much faster than average. Certifications such as the PMP appears to be much more valued in the marketplace relative to a degree in project management. However, the strong job market for project management professionals coupled with the broad application of project management skillsets across many in-demand professions suggests the proposed degree would offer a sustainable new option for CPS. CPS should also consider offering project management specializations across its UG portfolio in areas such as analytics, management, and IT.

There is limited competition both at national and regional levels. Wentworth Institute of Technology's B.S. in Project Management presents the strongest competition for CPS, but its lack of GAC accreditation provides a differentiation opportunity. CPS could also compete strongly by showcasing the range of experiential learning options.

## **Key Findings**

### **Professional Demand**

- The job market for project management is strong; In the United States, the number of project managers is estimated to increase by 31% into the next decade – from 6.7 million in 2017 to 8.8 million in 2027. This is much faster than the 10% employment growth across all occupations nationwide anticipated over that time period
- Notably, individuals can qualify to work in project manager roles without a degree in project management and many are employed without one. Only 12% of 10,937 U.S. project managers surveyed reported having a degree in project management. Additionally, there appears to be a lack of salary premium for project management degrees, which may limit student interest in CPS' proposed degree. The PMP Certification is more commonly pursued by project management professionals and offers a larger salary premium on average.
- Project management was the third most commonly requested specialized skill across all bachelor's level job postings in the last year. While the skill project management is most frequently sought after in project management job postings, it is in high-demand in other positions such as software developer, business analyst, and marketing manager.
- Should a graduate of the CPS' proposed program opt not to pursue a project management career, he/she would still be equipped with an in-demand skillset which could be applied to other growth fields.
- Over the last year, there were ~274,000 job postings in the U.S. for project management occupations ("Project Manager" and "IT Project Manager"). Of these postings, ~160,000 (or 90%) required and/or preferred bachelor's level credentials.
- Northeastern's campus sites are all among the top 25 hiring regions with "very high" concentrations of employers seeking project management professionals. The proposed

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B.S. in Project Management would likely offer a viable market opportunity in each one of these metro areas.

- The top skills in demand among bachelor's-level project management job postings are Budgeting, Scheduling, and Teamwork. Scrum and Scrum Master are also increasingly important to hiring employers. Northeastern should ensure these are incorporating within its curriculum.

#### Student Demand

- The number of bachelor's degree conferrals in project management is relatively small but growing very fast suggesting an emerging market opportunity. The number of bachelor's conferrals has grown by 154% over the last five years, from 347 in 2012 to 880 in 2016. This is much faster than the average growth rate of 11% across all bachelor's degree fields during this time period.
- While Google search trends exhibit stable demand at the master's level for project management degrees, relative interest in bachelor's project management degrees has remained consistently low and flat. This points to an established market at the master's level for project management degrees, but an underdeveloped market remains for project management degrees at the bachelor's level.

#### Competitive Landscape

- With only 28 providers conferring degrees in project management in 2016, there is currently a low level of competition with room for new entrants. The level of online competition is relatively intense though with 18 of the 28 providers offering flexible online delivery format options.
- Both nationally and regionally, there is a limited number of adult-focused project management bachelor's programs that would compete with CPS' proposed offering. The Charlotte and Bay Area markets, in particular, would be relatively wide open due to the lack of project management bachelor's programs tailored to the adult learner from schools with strong brands.
  - In the Boston region, Wentworth Institute of Technology' B.S. in Project Management, which is offered part-time with both on-campus and online options, appears to be Northeastern's only potential local competition with a full PM degree. Wentworth appears to be successful in the market with an estimated 79 conferrals in 2017; this signals a promising opportunity for CPS. Wentworth does not have GAC accreditation which would be a point of differentiation for CPS.
  - In the Seattle region, City University of Seattle's 100% online B.S. in Project Management would likely be Northeastern's only potential local competition in Seattle at the bachelor's level. CityU Seattle is not GAC accredited.

There are no expected impacts on other Northeastern programs.

Currently, the full-time faculty to teach within this program is already employed by the College of Professional Studies. The courses will be developed by both full time and part-time faculty under the oversight and coordination of the Faculty Lead for the program. The persons assigned

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to this project have had previous experience designing online coursework for the College, and we will work closely with our instructional designers and make use of the many available resources from CATLR in ensuring that the courses are well-developed. This will ensure that those teachings the courses have input into the design, while balancing the need for consistency of outcomes and design for the student's experience.

There are no expected impacts on other Northeastern programs. For example, the current faculty (full time & adjunct) possesses the capacity to phase in the required courses for the program. Additional, part-time faculty may be added as necessary, but this is not expected within the first year of offering the new program.

Space: No office space will be requested.

Library resources: No additional resources will be requested

ix. What new revenue or benefits such as reputation or access to new sources of external funding will be generated?

N/A at this time. The pro-forma statement is in process.