Pacific Lutheran University
School of Business
Master of Science in Marketing Research Proposal

Why proposed Master of Science in Marketing Research at Pacific Lutheran University?
The School of Business proposes a new Master of Science in Marketing Research (MSMR) degree beginning Fall 2015. This degree will prepare graduates for careers as marketing research analysts, “big data” analysts, brand managers, account executives and marketing scientists at advertising agencies, marketing research firms, corporations, non-profits and governmental agencies. This degree will also prepare students for doctoral work in a variety of fields.

The curriculum was developed on the inputs from several critical sources. In addition to being aligned with the Core Body of Knowledge from the Marketing Research Association and standards of the American Marketing Association, the curriculum incorporates input from marketing executives at a number of major corporations and smaller businesses. Additionally, program maps were completed for similar programs nationwide and the output from this analysis shaped the curriculum.

The target populations are both new undergraduates from business and non-business areas and research professionals seeking highly demanded skills in data analytics. In particular, this degree will be very appealing to professionals seeking additional advanced business research training and skills in the extremely highly demanded area of “big data” analytics. This degree will be of particular interest to students with business degrees particularly those with a concentration in marketing or management. Additionally, the program will appeal to students from computer science/information technology degrees, economics, psychology and communication.

We expect that most of our students will be primarily from the Pacific Northwest. Consistent with other programs at PLU, we would also expect interest from California, Southwestern regions of the US, Asia, and Scandinavia. It is important to note, the demand for MSMR programs greatly outstrips supply nationwide (as much as 9 to 1 for some existing programs), and therefore, it is expected that demand for the program may draw from a wider population nationally and internationally.

Three factors led to the development of the proposal:

1. The President’s initiative to support the financial strength of the institution, which includes a key component of developing carefully selected, mission consistent graduate programs.

2. Industry demand for employees with strong marketing research and analytics skills. Industry professionals have communicated a serious shortage of candidates with demanded skills in marketing research. This demand is national, but there is an extreme demand on the west coast due to a lack of industry-relevant MSMR or MMR programs in the western half of the US. The closest program is at Nebraska-Lincoln (this has a cross-disciplinary approach with Business, Sociology and Psychology). Data indicate that there is a strong market opportunity for Masters level graduates with such education (currently, based on positions currently posted to Monster.com, there are about 2190 open positions, with salaries in excess of $100,000, for marketing research professionals in the states of Washington, Oregon and California – 890 are in the State of Washington).
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3. The School of Business currently has strong expertise in research and methodology. Existing PLU faculty in Marketing and Management are well-qualified to deliver the course work necessary to deliver this program.

The proposed MSMR program at PLU will be intensive, quantitatively rich, rigorous, and will expand critical thinking skills.

This proposal supports our Mission
The School of Business provides a supportive learning experience that challenges each student to (a) acquire relevant business skills, (b) apply them to create sustainable value, and (c) prepare for a purposeful life of achievement, inquiry, integrity, leadership, and service. We are especially committed to scholarship, innovation, and a global perspective.

PLU’s mission speaks to educating students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care – for other people, for the communities, and for the earth.

PLU 2020 Affirming Our Commitments, Shaping Our Future is the long range plan of the University. The plan defines the mission, shapes the aspirations and frames the progress of Pacific Lutheran University. It calls to provide students with challenging academic experiences and with the resources necessary to serve the mission.

The proposed Master of Science in Marketing Research has been developed specifically to provide students with highly demanded and relevant business skills. Additionally, the program prepares students to engage in thoughtful marketing research inquiry within an ethical context. Marketing research professionals provide analytical insight and inform decisions to achieve the goals of profit and non-profit organizations.

About the MSMR program
The MSMR program is designed to be fulltime and requires 38 semester hours, with no courses that may be waived, over ten months: Fall Semester, January Term, Spring Semester, and Summer Term I. The program is designed to be a cohort program, which will maximize enrollment in each of the offered classes. Because of the cohort, fulltime model used to create this program, the courses can be offered during day, but could also be offered during times when there are few constraints on classroom availability. The courses are both marketing and research focused. Marketing and Management faculty in the School of Business are academically prepared to teach the courses in the program.

Proposed program tuition for the PLU MS in Marketing Research is projected to be $38,000. The program will require a full academic year and also four summer credits. This program will generate per student revenue in excess of the $10,000 project revenue for graduate students in the President’s box model. At an ideal cohort group of 20 students, per student net revenue will be greater than $25,000 per student. The annual breakeven is slightly less than 8 students.

Program costs include an additional marketing faculty member, program management, and marketing/promotion. Past experience has informed our proposal for this program to start in Fall 2015. Startup costs would be incurred beginning in Summer/Fall 2014 and would consist of a fulltime administrator, plus costs to recruit students and develop relationships with employers for projects for the initial cohort as well as potential jobs. The search for a fulltime tenure track faculty member in Marketing will be conducted in 2014-15 with a start date in September 2015. The start of the new program is best served with a new faculty member onboard as tenure-track rather than a visitor. There should be limited
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need to rely on additional part-time faculty because the former Dean is trained in Marketing and currently teaches part-time and the new Dean is trained in Marketing Research. Even so, the program proposal has accounted for the additional FTE to be fully covered by the program budget. We propose that the Academic Program Investment Fund assist in the program startup funding, to be repaid from program revenues. A modest student goal of 14 for the first year of the program will generate enough revenue to be self-supporting, to repay the Academic Program Investment Fund fully within the first year of program operation and to provide additional revenue to PLU. This model was successful with the MSF. Again, we have learned much from the MSF launch and have a successful template.

Ethical standards are an important aspect of this proposed marketing research program and will be integrated into each course. Students will specifically learn the standards for ethical marketing research expected of each marketing professional. Codes of ethical conduct will draw from the practice expectations of professional marketing associations.

The MS in Marketing Research will undergo periodic program reviews as stipulated by PLU policy. It will also be reviewed under the School’s AACSB International Accreditation. The next AACSB review is Spring 2017. The program will file an annual fiscal assessment with the Office of the Provost, as is the case with all PLU graduate programs.

Employability of students is a consideration for a new graduate degree. Marketing researchers are well compensated and in extremely high demand. For example:

1. In 2013 CNN Money Magazine ranked Marketing Research Analyst as the 11th best job in America, with a median salary of $68,300.

2. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the job outlook for Marketing Research Analysts is strong with a projected rate of change of 41% from 2010 to 2020 (average growth rate for all occupations is 14%) with national average annual job openings of 19,180 and 730 annually in Washington.


This program design meets the professional competence expectations of the Marketing Research Association Core Body of Knowledge (MRCBOK©).

“The Marketing Research Core Body of Knowledge (MRCBOK©) represents the fundamental principles and essential skills that compose the marketing research process. MRCBOK© was created in response to educational needs expressed by the marketing research community.”

- Marketing Basics and its Interface with Research
- Planning the Research Process
- Research Design
- Sampling
- Data Collection Methods
- Measurement Instruments
- Data Collection Skills
- Data Analysis
- Communicating Research Results
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- Research Management
- Web Survey Research and Data Delivery Methods
- International Research
  (see http://www.marketingresearch.org/career-guide)

Prerequisites
- Bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution by time of matriculation
- Statistics competence
- GMAT or GRE
- Test evidence of English language proficiency for ESL students (such as TOEFL)

Market Positioning
The Master of Science in Marketing Research degree is less common than general MBA or master’s degrees in marketing. Graduates will have a specific skill set that is in demand from both profit and non-profit organizations.

Target Markets
- New and recent bachelor’s graduates in the region without professional experience.
- Professionals seeking enhancement of their skills and able to enroll in a fulltime program.
- Scandinavian students desiring a “5th year” marketing degree and/or seeking a study away experience.
- International students seeking a U.S. degree with specific skills.
- Sponsored students such as those eligible for military benefits.

Mini-Advisory Board
The MS in Marketing Research program will have a small advisory board that is represented at the School’s Executive Advisory Board. This group will help with student recruitment and placement; enhance industry integration (e.g., research projects, classroom speakers, internship sponsors, scholarships); and provide input to the curriculum.

Support for the MSMR program
This proposal was presented at a School of Business faculty meeting on December 13, 2013. The proposal received approval from the School of Business faculty.

This proposal was discussed in detail at the January 24, 2014 School of Business Executive Advisory Board. A motion to endorse this program was made and seconded. The motion was adopted unanimously.

This proposal was also discussed at the February 3, 2014 PLU Graduate Council meeting. Valuable feedback was provided regarding structure of the proposal and the outreach to regional employers.