January 10, 2013

Members of the UEPC Committee
Saint Mary’s College of California

Dear Colleagues,

We are submitting our proposal, which was unanimously approved by the accounting faculty and the members of the SEBA Undergraduate Programs Committee, to make our experimental course on Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) a permanent course (elective) in the Accounting Program. This course will be open to all students meeting the appropriate prerequisites required for this course, which are ACCTG 168 (Tax Accounting) and ACCTG 1 (Financial Accounting).

The Registrar has already reserved ACCTG 178 number for this course once it is approved. In addition, a comprehensive Library Report prepared by Sharon Radcliff is attached. A letter of support from Zhan Li, the Dean of our School, is attached as well.

This course is well aligned with the mission and the Lasallian principles of both Saint Mary’s College (...its awareness of the consequences of economic and social injustice and its commitment to the poor. Its members learn to live "their responsibility to share their goods and their service with those who are in need, a responsibility based on the union of all men and women in the world today and on a clear understanding of the meaning of Christianity") and the mission of the School of Economics and Business Administration (...we prepare our graduates to be professionally skilled, culturally aware, socially responsible and ethically principled...).

In addition, this is an experiential learning course, which we believe fulfills the “Engaging the World” area, specifically, the “Community Engagement” learning goal (...students examine and reflect on what it means to be a citizen in a local community..), of the revised Saint Mary’s Core Curriculum. Once the UEPC has approved the course, we will submit the course to the Core Curriculum Committee to satisfy the “community engagement” requirement.

This course has been taught on an experimental basis multiple times and has been fully enrolled (average of 25 students per course offering) continuously receiving students’ positive feedback and strong support from the community partner. Students are given the opportunity to gain practical experience, applying the concepts and tools learned in the classroom, by preparing tax returns for low income families in the Oakland area on pro bono basis.

We believe that this course will strengthen our curriculum and further enhance our students understanding of Lasallian principles.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

Greg Merrill, Chair of the Accounting Department
School of Economics and Business Administration