

February 27, 2004

When the university asked me to write this supporting letter, I **immediately knew** my answer without any hesitation – yes! The online MBA program at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater has been nothing short of a unique learning experience delivered in a **real-world** professional setting. Students taking online courses at UW-Whitewater get an early glimpse of what to expect once they **graduate** and enter the **management** ranks of the professional workforce. I know **this** because like these other students, I too experienced these same feelings from the first day of classes during my first online semester. Throughout the online program, the personal rewards have been continuous and I would never hesitate to recommend this program to family, friends, or colleagues.

Personally, for me, deciding to go back to school for my MBA was an **easy decision** to make. In my current position at the time, a Registered Investment Principal at a financial services firm, my career had almost peaked and further advancement was unlikely **without** first acquiring some additional training. Therefore, continuing my education was **important** to me if I wanted to continue to climb the corporate ladder. However, while the **decision** to go back to school was easy, the timing could not have been worse. During this time, in addition to maintaining existing global operations and managing my client's investment assets, the firm was in the process of preparing for an upcoming big merger. As a manager, this move would have a **large** impact on my schedule. After, looking at the class schedule from the local university, I knew that it would be difficult for me to make the standard 6:00 pm start time for traditional classes **inside the** classroom. For me, meeting this expectation was not **feasible** on a **consistent** basis and **missing** classes was an option I have never chose at any time throughout my academic life.

In **addition** to the time conflict with the local university, I also wanted my degree from a more widely recognized institution. I applied to the University of Florida for online classes but they did not offer a total online program. I even applied and was accepted to Cambridge University but putting my career on hold and traveling internationally to pursue an education was not **feasible** at that time – neither was putting my career on hold. After some additional research, I found my pot of gold – the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. From **the beginning**, the link between UW-Whitewater and myself was a perfect fit. Here, I **could obtain** my MBA completely online from an accredited university that was well known, at a comparable cost, fitting my schedule, and without having to travel and put my career on hold.

Jumping forward, after being accepted, the time had come to officially enter the program and begin classes. Now, I must admit that in the **beginning**, I **had** my concerns with taking online classes from an out of state university. This type of **framework** meant little (if any) face time with professors and other classmates. In addition, what about those questions that require last second responses? I knew **these** were all issues that I would have to face and overcome.

Today, I can look back and confidently say that my goal will soon be accomplished and without regret. The time and resources that I have invested in furthering my education at UW-Whitewater have already begun to pay off. I am more confident and educated in my career and now have opened the door to many more opportunities that before, without a MBA, would not be available to me. The courses went smoother than I ever expected and the miles between us, has never created any problems. The entire university staff and administration, from the support desk, to the back offices, to the professors, and to the higher administration, have all far exceeded my expectations. Although I have never faced any of these individuals and been formally introduced, I feel like as we draw closer to completing a major project – just like in a real business setting – we have known each other for a much longer time. I also know this is something that could not have been accomplished without the support and rapid responses from the university and it's entire staff. Thank you UW-Whitewater and all that you represent for helping take me one step further in my career.

Sincerely,  
Charles F. Neal  
Financial Advisor