The University of Southwestern Louisiana has begun taking its master of business administration program into a new direction, and in the fall will implement a first-ever daytime course schedule.

"The university has decided to make some major changes in the College of Business Administration, and we've begun by revamping the MBA program," said Dr. Jan Duggar, acting dean of the college. "We think these changes will further strengthen the college and will make our master's program much more attractive to prospective graduate students."

In addition to the new daytime courses, the changes being implemented by USL are:

- The appointment of Dr. James Lumpkin as the new MBA program director. Lumpkin, a marketing expert, is USL's Gene Brauns Distinguished Professor in Business Administration (see related story).
- The introduction of Total Quality Management concepts into the master's program, as well as into undergraduate curricula and all aspects of the college.
- A graduate intern program through which MBA students can get on-the-job training with a variety of businesses in Acadiana.
- The creation of daytime MBA classes. In the past, USL's MBA courses were taught only in the evening to allow working professionals access to the program.

While the night classes will continue, Lumpkin said, the new daytime classes will be offered to those students who wish to attend the university as full-time graduate students. Students who enter the day program with a business degree will be able to...

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We're delighted Dr. Lumpkin has agreed to undertake the responsibilities of MBA program director," Duggar said. "We think he'll do an excellent job in overseeing the changes we envision for the master's program."

Lumpkin said the most significant change for students will be the creation of daytime MBA classes. In the past, USL's MBA courses were taught only in the evenings to allow working professionals access to the program.

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earn an MBA in one year, Lumpkin said. Students without an undergraduate business degree will need to take about a year's worth of foundation courses before taking the master's classes.

"We think we'll find that many students who will want to take a year off from work and take advantage of our new full-time program," Lumpkin said. "In a year's time, they'll emerge from the university armed with their master's degree and ready for professional challenges."

To better prepare both graduate and undergraduate students for today's business environment, the College of Business is introducing the concepts and themes of Total Quality Management into all phases of its programs.

Total Quality Management was developed from the work of Edward Demming in the 1950s and has been used in many countries overseas, particularly Japan, to compete successfully in the global market, Duggar said. Many companies in the U.S. are now adopting the TQM system, which emphasizes continual quality improvement at all levels of business and industry.

"Establishing TQM in the college and the graduate program will provide our graduates with the latest concepts in business management," Lumpkin said. "Our graduates will be able to apply what they learn in the classroom as they move into positions with management responsibility. They'll be able to fit right in with major companies, many of which have already adopted TQM or are considering it. And while they're in graduate school, many of USL's MBA students in the full-time program will be able to work as interns with area businesses, if all goes according to plan," Lumpkin said.

"We're contacting businesses right now to see if they would be interested in sponsoring a graduate student intern," Lumpkin said. "We think it's an excellent way for both the student and the business to benefit."

Lumpkin said any area business interested in hiring a USL business graduate intern should call the dean's office or his office at (318) 231-5882. He said the arrangement will prove mutually beneficial.

"The student, of course, gets the opportunity to practice what he or she learns through course work," he said, "while the business can take advantage of having a top quality intern eager to learn and work."

"These interns will be the best the university has to offer. Graduate students are more mature and closer to realizing their professional aspirations," Lumpkin said. "The businesses will be able to take advantage of the fact that these students already have earned their bachelor's degrees and have proven they can do the work."

Lumpkin said the graduate intern will be required to work 20 hours per week in exchange for salary and tuition. Full-time MBA students will be required to take 12 hours in the fall and spring and nine hours in the summer.

The university hopes to increase its MBA enrollment from about 120 students to double that number in two years, Lumpkin said.

"We think these are exciting changes taking place in the College of Business Administration," Duggar said. "In a few years, our MBA program will be of the highest quality possible, and we think it will help lead the rest of the college's programs toward greater improvements and excellence."

"We think students interested in pursuing a graduate or undergraduate business degree at USL will be very impressed with what they find taking place over the next few years," Duggar said.