UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

ROBERT H. SMITH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

To: First Year Students, Part-Time MBA Program

From: Tunay I. Tunca, Faculty Coordinator for *BUSI 630: Data, Models and Decisions*

Re: HBS Spreadsheet Modeling Pre-Skills Course

Date: September 20, 2016

BUSI 630: Data, Models and Decisions (or DMD) is one of your required courses for Spring 2017. This critically important course covers analytical tools and models for managerial decisions that are used extensively in managerial practice as well as in other subsequent courses in the Smith MBA curriculum. As a part of DMD, you are required to take an online course from Harvard Business Publishing Spreadsheet Modeling (or *SM*).

SM covers basic and advanced topics in spreadsheet analysis and modeling skills that prepares you for DMD. ***Your performance in SM accounts for 5% of your grade for DMD***. The deadline for taking *SM*'s Final Exam is 6:00 PM on **Sunday, January 29, 2017**.

The rest of this memo explains SM in further detail and includes instructions for taking this course.

What is *SM*?

Spreadsheet Modeling is an online course covering fundamental spreadsheet skills. Topics in this course include:

- The Excel Environment
- Working with Data: Basic Techniques
- Cells and Ranges
- Increasing Spreadsheet Readability
- Cell Formatting; Conditional Formatting
- Excel Formulas
- Relative and absolute addressing
- Named cell ranges; Referencing by names
- Hierarchy of Mathematical Operations
- Creating, Formatting and Customizing Charts

How does the Smith School Use *SM*?

Most of our entering MBA students have basic familiarity with Excel spreadsheets. The DMD core course requires the use of fundamental spreadsheet skills such as some of those listed above. The focus in DMD is not on software issues, but instead, on the analytical aspects of modeling the business decision and the managerial implications. *SM* offers a way for all students to familiarize themselves with the spreadsheet software features that will be used and built upon in DMD.

Taking *SM*

- **Study Time Required**

  Go through the various units making sure that you constructively use the active learning method that is the basis of these online courses. Your faculty instructor for DMD will be able to monitor your progress through the various parts of the course.

  → Harvard Business Publishing estimates that advanced Excel users will take 6 to 8 hours to complete *Spreadsheet Modeling*, while beginning users will take 10 to 12 hours. In our experience, **most students will likely need 10 hours or more**.

  You are urged to register for *SM* and begin studying the course material *as soon as possible*. **Past experience indicates that many students significantly underestimate the time and effort needed to complete these courses.**

- **Performance and Due Date**

  SM has a Final Exam. Your performance in *SM*'s Final Exam accounts for **5%** of your grade for DMD.

  The deadline for taking *SM*'s Final Exam is 6:00 PM on **Sunday, January 29, 2017**.

  You will have only one chance to take the Final Exam in *SM*.

- **Academic Integrity**

  You will be taking HBS Spreadsheet Modeling and the course Data, Models, and Decisions, under the University of Maryland's *Code of Academic Integrity* (see http://www.shc.umd.edu/ for details). **Any violation of this code, such as receiving help from another individual in taking a Test, will result in an automatic "XF" on your transcript** with the notation "failure due to academic dishonesty".

- **For Technical Help**
  Please call the Harvard Business Publishing Technical Support Group at 800-810-8858 (outside U.S. and Canada, call 617-783-7700); or email techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu.

Instructions for Purchasing Harvard Business School Publishing's Online Courses

HBSP's online courses are to be purchased online using your credit card.

- Turn off all pop-up blockers
- Click on the **appropriate link below** for your cohort's course section
    - Baltimore Evening (BA01): http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/55085178
    - DC Evening (DC01): http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/55081123
    - DC Evening (DC02): http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/55083917
    - DC Weekend (DC06): http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/55085787
    - Shady Grove Evening (GS01): http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/55082293

- Click on "Register Now" if applicable, or "Login Now" with your existing account
- Under Coursepack View, click on "Purchase Coursepack"
- You will be prompted for payment information.

Payment: Individually by student directly to HBSP. You will receive the Smith discounted price of $45.00 for the course.

HBSP online courses are internet-based and cannot be accessed off-line. You can use different computers to access the course as long as each computer satisfies the following requirements:

- Computer with minimum 1024x768 screen resolution.
- High speed internet connection (DSL / cable modem quality.)
- Windows 2000, XP, Vista, 7 / Macintosh OS 10.x operating systems.
- Firefox 3.6+ / Safari 4+ / Chrome web browsers with JavaScript and cookies enabled. (Note: Internet Explorer is not recommended for students using Online Courses or Tutorials. Please use one of the other supported browsers instead.)
- Microsoft Excel 2010 or later is required for the Spreadsheet Modeling Online Course.