One of the topics on many of our readers’ minds is education. They want to explore the benefits of an advanced degree for themselves or their employees. They want to know about the latest trends in MBAs and what is being studied. And they want to know what higher education institutions are doing to stand apart from the competition.

This special supplement to the Los Angeles Business Journal takes a look at some of the top executive education programs in the region, sharing what each is offering as ways of taking local professionals to the next level of excellence, while we also take a look at some of the trends affecting the education landscape and how these local schools are preparing professionals to withstand and overcome challenges and unforeseen circumstances such as the global pandemic.
Making a Difference Amid a Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Iran in February, Javad Fadardi was there. A professor in Claremont Graduate University’s (CGU) School of Community & Global Health, Fadardi was conducting research at the country’s Ferdowsi University of Mashad. Rather than lock himself away in his apartment, Fadardi did the opposite. He volunteered on the front lines, serving on an Iranian national committee for mental health issues, a national hotline to help those directly and indirectly affected by the disease, and developing an app to teach smartphone users habits to avoid contracting the disease. Fadardi’s decision to take action and serve the community around him became the inaugural story in “CGU Heroes,” an ongoing series of stories about how many CGU faculty, alumni, and students are finding ways to use their professional training and make a difference during the pandemic.

Whether it’s making face masks and other PPEs, helping young schoolchildren cope with the transition to online learning, or managing the demand for ventilation at Loma Linda University Medical Center and beyond, the stories of “CGU Heroes” are a reminder of CGU’s nearly 100-year-old tradition of service and social impact. But these stories aren’t just for the CGU community alone; they offer lessons for everyone. Need something to inspire you? Read more about CGU Heroes at cgu.edu/cgu-heroes.

Ignite solutions: explore CGU

Crime, Punishment, and Data Science

Under Professor Greg DeAngelo’s leadership, the Computational Justice Lab at CGU is using data science tools to help local prosecutors and improve the outcomes and impact of judicial actions. “There is a difference between the way laws are written and how they’re applied,” explains DeAngelo. The lab is pioneering a new way to address those differences, he says, and will “lead to more effective responses to the needs of the criminal justice system.”

To read more about Greg and other CGU success stories, go to cgu.edu/ignite

Claremont Graduate University

#carrytheflame

GREG DEANGELO
Associate Professor of Economic Sciences and Director of the Computational Justice Lab
Alumni Satisfaction Survey Reflects University of La Verne as a Worthwhile Investment

The University of La Verne is among the best universities in the country for alumni satisfaction, according to a new research study. The study, published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Consumer Affairs, ranks the university at No. 1 in California and No. 11 nationally, just below Harvard and ahead of institutions such as Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and University of Southern California.

"This study supports what we have long known, which is that an education from the University of La Verne is an investment in your future," University of La Verne President Devorah Lieberman said. "There is no stronger evidence of that than our alumni, who graduate satisfied and go on to have meaningful and successful lives."

The study, titled “Assessing The Validity of Consumer Ratings for Higher Education,” was published by Jonathan Rothwell, senior economist at Gallup, and was based on data gathered by the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. It analyzed responses from nearly 146,000 alumni from 496 institutions in the United States on how strongly they agreed to statements regarding their education, such as:

• You received a high-quality education
• You would recommend the educational path you took to other people
• You would not be where you are today without your degree
• You learned important skills during college courses that you use in your day-to-day life
• The coursework you took is directly relevant to what you do at work
• Your educational experiences make you an attractive candidate to employers
• Your education was worth the cost
• If you had to do it all over again, you would attend the same institution

The study posited that one of the most effective ways of evaluating a university is to ask people who attended it about their experience, an area that is often overlooked in conventional college rankings. It also aimed to test the assumption that higher education institutions with hefty price tags correlate with a higher-quality education.

“This survey gives a voice to alumni in a way that is not typically captured," said Kimberly Grant, assistant vice president of alumni engagement at the University of La Verne. "Our alumni have tremendous insight into the University of La Verne experience, and we are delighted that they are able to share it to help future students choose the college or university that is best for them.”

The University of La Verne has more than 85,000 alumni worldwide who hold meaningful careers in nearly every field and sector. They can be found in each state of the union and in 66 countries.

The University of La Verne continues to support them long after they graduate. This year, the university has hosted virtual networking seminars, Q&A sessions with industry leaders, and social events.

The university is now accepting applications for undergraduate and graduate programs in business, education, and other fields, including dedicated programs for adult learners.

Founded in 1891 and located 35 miles east of Los Angeles, the University of La Verne is a private, nonprofit, comprehensive institution founded on four core values: lifelong learning, ethical reasoning, civic and community engagement, and diversity and inclusivity. The university serves nearly 8,000 students at its historic La Verne location as well as across seven regional campuses and online. Learn more at go.laverne.edu.

#1 in California for Alumni Satisfaction

and 11th in the nation next to Princeton, Yale, and Harvard.

University of La Verne

For more information, visit go.laverne.edu
Across the field of higher education, interdisciplinary is a buzzword heard often. But for students in the Master of Studies in Law (MSL) program at the USC Gould School of Law, interdisciplinary has plenty of meaning. Uniquely designed to accommodate students’ work schedules, the MSL degree offers non-lawyer business professionals—who come from various backgrounds and hold a variety of roles—a broad education on the fundamental concepts of law, helping each of them to better understand the range of complex legal matters which they encounter on a daily basis, from contracts and compliance, to finance and mediation, to cybersecurity and intellectual property.

The MSL curriculum covers an array of interdisciplinary topics, infusing students’ career experiences with added expertise in legal and regulatory frameworks, which they apply to their work and ultimately improve their organizations. In addition, students have the opportunity to tailor their educational experiences by specializing in an industry-specific area that is relevant to their career and individual goals.

**BENEFITS OF THE MSL PROGRAM**

Offered through USC’s Gould School of Law, ranked among the top 20 law schools nationwide, the MSL degree is specially designed for non-lawyer professionals interested in understanding legal issues related to their fields.

Students have the convenience of completing the degree 100% online, and the flexibility to study part-time—making the MSL an ideal format to balance the demands of working professionals. No LSAT or GRE test is required; no prior law degree is required either. In addition, generous scholarships are available and considered for all applicants.

The benefits extend far beyond the classroom. Graduates of the MSL program gain access to the global Trojan Family network, which includes connections to more than 14,000 USC Gould alumni.

According to one MSL student, broadcast news anchor Nick Ciletti (MSL Class of 2022): “I love that USC offers the MSL program entirely online, and it’s really convenient for my sometimes-unpredictable schedule — you never know when breaking news will happen. I also really appreciate the one-on-one attention my advisers and professors are able to provide us and that’s something that sets USC and Gould apart.”

**COURSES TO EXPAND YOUR EXPERTISE**

Students select from a range of courses that best fit their career-focused interests, including:

- Business Organizations
- Contract Drafting and Strategy
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Entertainment Law and Industry
- Intellectual Property – Copyright
- Corporate Governance
- Financial Institution Regulation
- Employment Dispute Resolution
- Human Resource Compliance
- Health Care Compliance
- Cybersecurity
- Information Management and Risk

**SPECIALIZED CONCENTRATIONS**

MSL students can customize their educational experiences by pursuing field-specific certificates, which can be completed at no additional cost.

- Certificate programs include:
  - Business Law
  - Compliance
  - Entertainment Law and Industry
  - Financial Compliance
  - Human Resources Law and Compliance
  - Privacy Law and Cybersecurity
  - Health Care Compliance

These certificate programs—which may be earned in as few as three semesters online—help students maximize their impact within their organizations and ultimately improve productivity as well as bottom-line contributions.

**For more information about the MSL degree, visit bit.ly/usclaw2020.**
How Executive Education Benefits the Bottom Line for Employers

By SARAH CLARK

Measuring the return on investment for big-ticket purchases has always been important to efficient organizations, but in the wake of the recession, hunkered-down companies have become that much more insistent that dollars be wisely spent. While skills-based training benefits can be tracked and measured, quantifying the return on big-picture, strategic learning is as challenging as ever. Executive education is about learning new tools, frameworks, ways to think about the business and the global economy. That’s not something you can test at the end of a chapter.

Even if one suspects that a program may have helped ready a senior executive for the next big task, it’s nearly impossible to trace a direct line. When CEOs look at ROI of executive education, it is probably best to use the analogy of the strategic radar screen. Every CEO has a list of big, strategic issues and challenges he or she would like to tackle in the next three, six or eighteen months. When the CEO sends someone for training, he or she is looking for the school to help ready that person to address a particular issue on the radar screen. So the question is, three months later, six months later, is it clear that the employee was prepared to deal with that issue or not? Increasingly, companies that send executives to open enrollment programs are sending them with very specific goals, challenges they are expected to solve while they’re away. In the past it was: “Broaden their perspectives, give them new knowledge, best practices, tools to use in the field.” Now it’s much more: “Do all that, but also get something done while you’re here that’s going to impact our P&L, or our bottom line this fiscal year.”

Executives arrive at education programs with several significant business challenges their companies need to address. When they leave, they are expected to bring back keen insights, new thought leadership and, most importantly, solutions to those problems. For open enrollment, the more focused the company’s objectives for the executive, the easier it is to measure results. In custom corporate programs, metrics for evaluating return can be embedded upfront.

One area in which companies have had a relatively easy time justifying education spend is in succession planning, whether it’s preparing a candidate for the CEO office or readying a middle manager for a C-suite role.

Regardless of what industry a company is in, however, when an employee returns to an organization after being sent to learn a set of skills, the company benefits from that employee’s enhanced knowledge as well as the morale boost and gratitude an employee has after participating in such a course. Sarah Clark is a freelance writer.