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 San Fernando Valley 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.
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
- 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.
MBA Graduates See Compensation Increases and Job Promotions

Late last year, the Executive MBA Council (EMBAC) shared results of the 2019 EMBAC Student Exit Survey which revealed that Executive MBA (EMBA) graduates received a 13.5% increase in compensation—combined, both salary and bonuses—after program completion. The average salary and bonus package at program start for students in the 2019 survey was $205,608. By the end of the program, the average salary and bonus package rose to $232,663. In addition, 40% of students who completed the survey received a promotion during the program. This continues to prove the value of investing in an EMBA program.

“As changes in technology continue to reshape society, businesses and individuals will look to higher education programs to gain the skills needed to stay competitive in the age of digitalization and globalization,” said Michael Desiderio, executive director of EMBAC. “When you couple the idea of a promotion and prospective salary increases with new skills taught to EMBA graduates, it is clear to see why both students and companies are seeing value in these programs.”

Completing an EMBA program remains one of the most beneficial investments an individual can make to advance their professional career. As the top skills needed among the global workforce continues to change, the need for professionals proficient in these skills will be at an all-time high. EMBA programs equip professionals with the skills needed to stand out amongst competition, making them more desirable in these rapidly changing industries.

EMBA programs provide students with development tools and an opportunity to refine a wide variety of leadership skills, such as critical and strategic thinking, teambuilding, understanding of new technologies and other immediately applicable proficiencies. Results from the 2019 Exit Survey show that 53% of graduates reported an increase in responsibilities while going through the program. And after leaving the program, graduates said the coursework helped improve their strategic thinking, decision-making and leadership skills, among others. Those who complete the program also have better insight into economic factors impacting businesses today, as well as accounting and financial acuity.

EMBAC is the association of business schools that offers EMBA programs throughout the world, which currently includes more than 200 colleges and universities that administer 300 plus programs in more than 30 countries worldwide. The survey included 2,390 graduates of primarily U.S. EMBA programs, was conducted by Percept Research and fielded from programs between July 1, 2018, and Aug. 15, 2019.

The Executive MBA Council (EMBAC) is a non-profit association of universities and colleges that offer Executive MBA programs. EMBAC’s vision is to be the preeminent global voice of the Executive MBA industry. The Council supports its members in fostering excellence and innovation in Executive MBA programs worldwide by providing outstanding educational and networking opportunities for professionals who deliver Executive MBA programs. EMBAC’s mission is to advance the cause of EMBA programs by providing necessary thought leadership, serving as a facilitator of best practice sharing and knowledge dissemination, and fostering a community among high-quality programs.

To learn more about the Council and its members, visit www.embac.org, for the member site; prospective students should visit executivemba.org, or call (714) 628-7334 for more information.

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SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION
Experts Anticipate a New Era in Business Education

Last year, AACSB International (AACSB), the world’s largest global business education network, launched a new face for the future of business education through the rollout of a new brand identity.

The effort culminates a more than two-year transformational journey that was driven by the organization’s new mission and vision as well as market input from key stakeholders—students, the business community, employees, and a global membership network—and accelerated by major organizational milestones, including the appointment of a new CEO, the celebration of AACSB’s centennial, and the announcement of an industry-wide vision for business education.

“The world is changing at a tremendous rate, and it is our job as educators to lead and shape that change,” said Thomas R. Robinson, president and CEO of AACSB. “The industry identified this imperative through the launch of the Collective Vision, and since then, momentum has been building. AACSB knew more was needed to unify the industry and demonstrate the value, relevancy, and impact of business education—and to have a voice globally and locally in the regions we serve.”

Over its 100-year history, AACSB has consistently evolved to champion high-quality business education. Through a new strategy and identity, AACSB is expanding on its legacy in business education. Through a new strategy and identity, AACSB is expanding on its legacy in business education. Through new ways of thinking and doing, AACSB connects the business industry with educators to help shape the future of business education, co-create knowledge, and work together to address the needs of business and society. The AACSB Bridge Program connects senior business executives to classrooms as trained faculty, providing students worldwide with access to industry insights and practices.

Inspired by a new mission focused on engagement, innovation, and impact, and a bold new vision, AACSB will continue to refine its global portfolio of services while inviting leading educators and business innovators to become part of the movement through its Business Education Alliance. Examples include:

- Fostering engagement with educators and industry: Through its Business Practice Council and Co-Lab conference, AACSB connects the business industry with educators to help shape the future of business education, co-create knowledge, and work together to address the needs of business and society. The AACSB Bridge Program connects senior business executives to classrooms as trained faculty, providing students worldwide with access to industry insights and practices.
- Fostering engagement with educators and industry: Accelerating innovation through new ways of thinking and doing, ensuring success of business and future business leaders: Across global events such as ICAM 2017, the AACSB Dean’s Conference, topic-focused seminars, and through BizEd magazine, industry leaders share best practices and diverse perspectives. AACSB’s annual Innovations That Inspire challenge showcases the creativity and resourcefulness of business schools around the world.
- Amplifying impact, demonstrating how business schools serve as a force for good: Through the Influential Leaders challenge, AACSB recognizes alumni of accredited schools who use their knowledge and skills in unique and impactful ways and, in doing so, underscore the critical role that business education plays in society. The Best Business Schools website provides resources to help prospective students research, select, and apply to the best business program to help them achieve their career aspirations.

“Today business schools are educating students for a world that doesn’t yet exist, and for demands not yet known,” said Robinson. “As long as we as an industry are committed to transforming ourselves, together we can prepare the leaders of today and tomorrow for whatever lies ahead.”

Information for this article was provided by the AACSB. Learn more at AACSB.edu.

With the hardships and difficulties brought on by COVID-19 to our local business community, the David Nazarian College of Business & Economics is here to provide help and support through free consulting services.*

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How Executive Education Benefits the Bottom Line for Employers

By SARAH CLARK

Measuring the return on investment for big-ticket purchases has been and always will be 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.

The San Fernando Valley Business Journal provides extensive coverage of the education industry through custom supplements, industry Lists and annual guides. These editions will be used as informative resource guides for mid-career executives seeking continued education opportunities. Use these targeted issues to highlight your institution, programs offered, upcoming information sessions, and enrollment deadlines!

For more information contact Khaled Abdelwahed at 818.316.3124 or kabelwahed@sfvj.com