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DEI

REACHING OUT FOR CHANGE

EMBA Programs and their schools pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion as top priority. PAGE 2



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The Executive MBA Council fosters excellence and innovation worldwide in Executive MBA Programs. The council has more than 200 member colleges and universities worldwide, which offer more than 300 programs in 25 countries.

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DEI REACHING OUT FOR CHANGE

EMBA PROGRAMS AND THEIR SCHOOLS PURSUE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AS TOP PRIORITY

EMBA Programs and their schools are investing in a wide variety of DEI initiatives. What do those look like? How are they working? From the meaning of DEI to recruitment strategies to efforts that enhance understanding and inclusion, EMBA Programs in this story share their experiences and efforts.

DEI BALANCE

Considering the whole journey

STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

When describing diversity, equity, and inclusion, Karol Vieker likes to quote leading diversity and inclusion expert Verna Meyers: “Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance.”

And Vieker, diversity, equity, and inclusion manager for the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE), adds, “And then equity is being on the planning committee.”

While recruitment of diverse populations and an inclusive environment often represent the first steps in a DEI journey, the equity piece goes to the heart of the matter, says Vieker.

Participating on the planning committee requires a seat at the table and a voice to move change from the inside, but at the highest decision-making levels, most organizations lack those diverse voices, she says.

SSE looks at diversity through all those lenses. In EMBA Programs, SSE works to balance diversity, inclusion, and equity through its collaborative approach in the classroom, says Karin Wiström, director of the SSE MBA.

“For me, I think the value is bringing in as many different perspectives as possible into the room,” says Wiström. “When recruiting to the SSE MBA, we don’t talk so explicitly about DEI, but what we emphasize is the importance of bringing many diverse perspectives into the program. Then we also want to create this open and sharing learning climate where everybody will learn from one another.”

“If we approach each other with a much bigger dose of humility and compassion regardless of the content, then we’re going to come so much further.”

KAROL VIEKER, STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

SSE developed a gender equality strategy to help attract more women to business education. Efforts to increase women in the SSE MBA include offering extra attention to potential female students, connecting them with female alumni, and sharing female perspectives in marketing materials. Messaging focuses on what the program can do for women who are interested in business.

“We have been pretty successful with recruitment,” says Wiström, with women comprising 40 percent of entering classes pre-pandemic. During the pandemic, numbers dropped, but are now back at the same level and the program will continue efforts to reach a 50 percent split in student gender.

The lack of female faculty stands as one challenge to that aim and the same problem higher education overall faces, says Vieker. As part of its gender strategy, SSE plans to increase the number of female faculty members, but with many business schools competing for a small pool of top female faculty, it will not be easy.

Vieker also works with faculty to integrate DEI in their curriculum, understanding the time pressures on them and the focus for faculty in academia on publishing. For example, she developed a one-page tip list on 10 easy ways to make your classroom more inclusive, which includes reviewing course materials for diversity and tracking talking time in class.

“There is no easy fix,” she says. “There’s no magic solution or silver bullet. It’s all about the continuation of discussing and educating and learning more from each other.”

Not wanting to rest on laurels, Wiström looks at both the numbers and student feedback. Did they learn new perspectives? Did they find the atmosphere friendly? Was everyone’s voice being heard? “Student feedback confirms that we are doing a lot of things right, but there’s always so much more to do.”

Even in tiny ways, actions can make a difference, especially when all contribute.

“Everyone can do something,” says Vieker. “It’s often a thousand of those small things that lead to really, really big change. If we approach each other with a much bigger dose of humility and compassion regardless of the content, then we’re going to come so much further.”

TOP DOWN, BOTTOM UP

Touching all aspects of EMBA with DEI

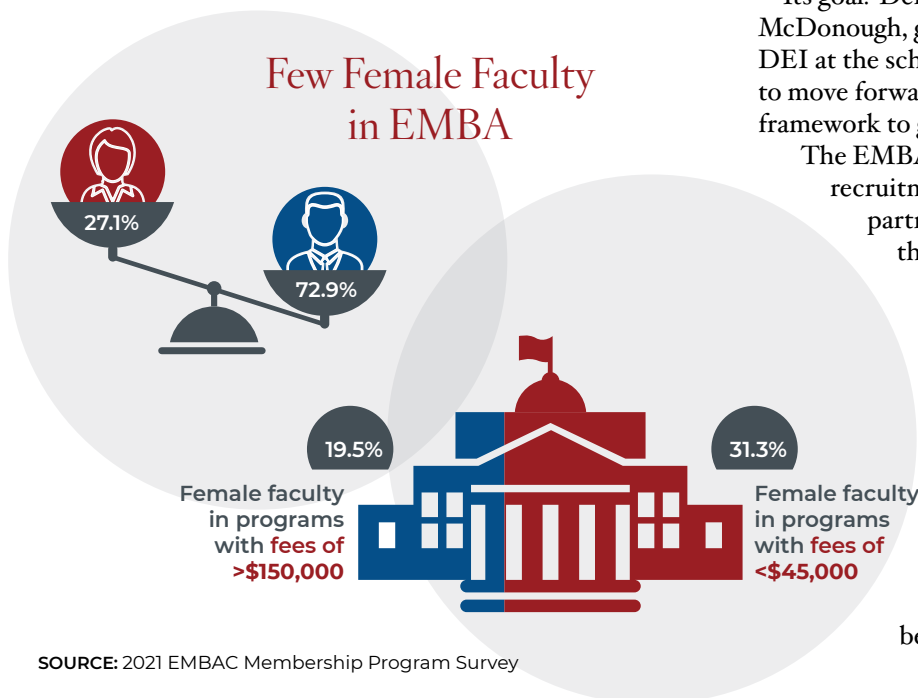
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

In October 2020, Paul Almeida, dean of the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business, convened a Standing Committee on DEI, which included faculty, students, and staff.

Its goal? Define what DEI means at Georgetown McDonough, gather data and report on the state of DEI at the school, and develop recommendations to move forward. They did just that, setting a framework to guide the school’s DEI efforts.

The EMBA Program set DEI as a key recruitment goal and added diversity and partnership recruitment responsibilities to the EMBA director’s job responsibilities, says Nita Swinsick, assistant dean of recruitment and admissions for executive and specialized degree programs at McDonough.

“We’ve tried to be deliberate and thoughtful about including DEI in both our recruitment and admissions practices,” says Swinsick. “We believe creating an equitable, accessible, and inclusive community in diversity is important because it leads to new learning



SOURCE: 2021 EMBAC Membership Program Survey



opportunities, improves understanding, and furthers our mission of creating a fairer and more just world.”

On the recruitment side, the program features alumni and current students from different backgrounds in marketing materials and makes available diversity class profile data. “We also are purposeful in the connections we make between prospective students and alumni and current students and have hosted events tailored for different diversity and identity groups.”

On the outreach side, the school has increased its partnerships with diversity organizations and created new scholarships. On the admissions side, the program added an optional diversity essay in the application, which gives prospective students the opportunity to share their personal background. The McDonough team also has completed an admissions-focused implicit bias training.

The work has proven successful: “We’ve seen an increase in representation from underrepresented minorities and female students in our EMBA class over the last few years,” says Swinsick. “Our current class composition includes 40 percent underrepresented minorities and 44 percent female students.”

Once in the program, students take two core sessions focused on understanding and exploring what DEI means for leaders and for organizations. After requesting and receiving student feedback, the career services team organized a session with alumni in DEI roles who shared their insights with students about their responsibilities, their organizational efforts, and their work.

With its commitment to the DEI journey, the school will continue to enhance its diversity recruiting efforts, growing partnerships with diversity organizations, elevating engagement of alumni and current students in recruitment, expanding scholarship opportunities, and improving pipelines for student recruitment.

Georgetown McDonough’s systematic top-down and bottom-up approach to DEI touches all aspects of EMBA—from recruitment to the student experience to the impact on students.

“From a recruitment perspective, I view DEI as increasing the diversity of the class,” says Swinsick. “Within the program and school, we view DEI as creating an equitable and inclusive community and culture where all students regardless of background feel heard, valued, and respected.

“From a curriculum and student experience perspective, we ensure our students are equipped with the training and perspectives necessary to be aware of their bias so they can manage it and create inclusive environments not just in the classroom but also outside the classroom and in their workplaces.”

INDUSTRY DEPTH

Targeting representation from a vast array of industries

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Agriculture. Aerospace. Construction. Consumer Products. Energy. Financial Services. Government. Health Care. IT. Manufacturing. Non-profit organizations. Pharma.

The EMBA Program at Purdue University makes a point of attracting students from a variety of industries. In fact, with this focus, the program rose to top a list of 70 U.S.-based EMBA Programs recognized for industry diversity.

“When we look at the cohort, we do believe the wider the diversity, whether that means diversity from gender, race, or industry, the more educational that cohort can become, the broader the spectrum they have for views on learning becomes,” says Brian Grimes, associate director of recruiting at Purdue University’s Krannert Executive Education Programs.

Knowing the competition for top talent diversity, the Krannert marketing team concentrates on broad reach, visual representation of diversity in marketing materials, word of mouth, and alumni referrals. They also tap into Purdue’s strong reputation in engineering.

“We like to believe that engineers are needed in every aspect of business,” says Grimes. Purdue’s engineering alumni offers a healthy bank of both potential EMBA students and referrals from many industries. The program also draws potential students from Krannert’s custom programs for companies and professional development programs.

To take a deeper dive into the industry pool, Krannert often uses grassroots approaches. For example, if the program wants more students from the energy sector, it will look to marketing and outreach in Texas. Five years ago, the program did not enjoy a strong foothold in pharma, but now it does because it recruited one student from pharma, which led to another and then more.

“We do need to be very vulnerable in the work we do with diversity, equity, and inclusion, because if not, we will not be authentic and impactful.”

MARCELLE LALIBERTÉ, HEC PARIS

Marketing involves strategic and coordinated online and personal approaches. Krannert routinely sends current students and alumni information that they can post about the program on LinkedIn. Social media ads may target key groups. On the personal front, when Grimes meets with alumni, he often asks them to bring along colleagues, which can spark interest.

“It’s a multipronged approach in the end, anywhere from marketing to my boots-on-the-ground position,” says Grimes.

Along with four other universities—Marian University, Indiana University, University of Notre Dame, and Butler University—Krannert also is participating in another unique avenue that melds education and recruiting. The brainchild of Leon Jackson, PhD, from Marian, the Diversity and Leadership Program brings MBA education to underrepresented populations, primarily African Americans and females.

Students spend two-to-three days on each campus, studying different subject matter. Purdue delivers the leadership portion with the same faculty member who teaches in the EMBA Program. In July, the third cohort began with 40 students out of 400 candidates. Corporate grants financially support the students’ participation.

A win for all, students benefit from a taste of the MBA curriculum, and the participating schools also sometimes find students who are interested in pursuing more. For Purdue, the program has attracted some potential students.

Whether in industry, gender, race, or geography, Purdue will continue recruiting to ensure students who represent diversity on many levels.

“The power of our program is the people,” says Grimes. “We always look at our program as being a collaborative approach to an MBA. The more diverse that collaborative approach is, the more that is learned.”

SCHOOL WORK

Seeing through a holistic lens

HEC PARIS

During one of the DiversiTalks sessions at HEC Paris, consultant Filippo Gafaro offered his testimonial to the professional challenges of living with HIV/AIDS. “I kept it hidden for years out of a sense of shame.”

In September 2021, all students signed off on the school’s Charter of Respect and Community Life, which reflected the work of stakeholders and spells out values, a commitment to promoting awareness of those values, responsible behaviors and actions, and overall guidance for students.

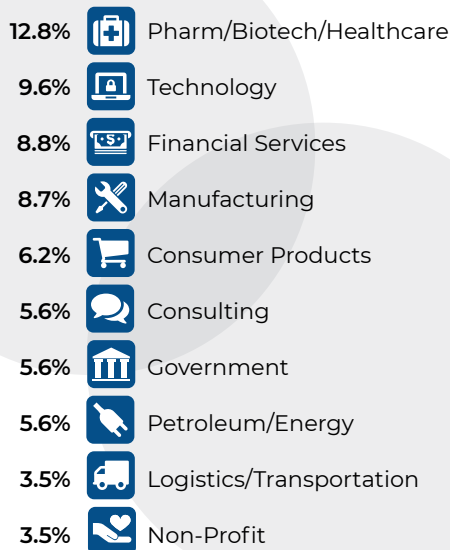
For this year’s graduation, students wrote a statement to explain how they plan to continue engaging with their communities and supporting diversity awareness.

From the DiversiTalks sessions to the Charter of Respect and Community Life and the student statements, HEC Paris looks to launch conversations, nurture an environment of understanding and acceptance, and partner with others to expand impact.

As the school’s first chief diversity officer, Marcelle Laliberté helps guide the school’s diversity work. She previously served as head of academic affairs for master’s programs, later architected a student affairs division, and was the inaugural dean of students. She also participates in the school’s Diversity Committee, which began in 2018.

“I have always been a big proponent of diversity, equity, and inclusion,” says Laliberté, who assumed

Top 10 Industries of EMBA Students



SOURCE: 2021 EMBAC Membership Program Survey

her new role in 2021. “It’s the right thing to do. It’s equal and fair treatment for all.”

Liberté approaches the efforts through a holistic lens that involves recognizing impact on individuals, examining organizational culture, and understanding the political and legal frameworks in which the school operates. Much of the work circles back to conversations that help lead participants to what she calls the “ah-ha” moments, where they move from a normal defensive response to a focus on listening and understanding.

“I have to say when I see someone say I didn’t see it that way, or ask questions, or when you can tell people are not comfortable and they are leaning in and being open, that to me is a big first step.”

Leaders may find it challenging to be open and vulnerable, she says, but openness can make a huge difference.

“We do need to be very vulnerable in the work we do with diversity, equity, and inclusion, because if not, we will not be authentic and impactful,” she says.

Two pilot projects also reflect the school’s desire to make larger connections in support of moving diversity forward. One involves bringing together higher education, industry, and government representatives for a diversity lab partnership. The other focuses on collaboration among higher education institutions.

The journey requires patience and persistence. “It doesn’t get done overnight,” she says. “It takes a long time. It’s work that we do with repercussions that are going to be seen a lot further down the road than tomorrow.”

LIVED EXPERIENCES

Incorporating intergenerational and international perspectives

CEIBS

In China, a country that has undergone tremendous change during the last 40 years, an intergenerational perspective in the classroom takes on even more meaning.

“I don’t think there is any other country that has gone through such large and major changes,” says Bala Ramasamy, associate dean and program director of the Global EMBA Program at CEIBS. From reliance on technology to fundamental shifts in the economy to global outreach, these changes impacted the lives of the school’s prospective student pool.

“The kind of changes that have taken place are so dramatic that this intergenerational diversity has become more important,” says Ramasamy. “If you are able to have the younger and older students—



CEIBS strives for intergenerational and international diversity in its Global EMBA Program.

someone who is 30 and someone who is past 50—you get both the historical point of view and at the same time a sense of the future.”

In his economics class, for example, older students share their experiences with the economic reform of the late 1970s, while younger students only know of the time from textbooks. “You actually see that history alive in the classroom when you have intergenerational diversity.”

In addition to intergenerational diversity, the Global EMBA Program also strives for international diversity and attracts both students who work for multinationals and students from Chinese multinationals, who made up 30 percent of the last intake. Students from multinationals want to understand how Chinese companies work and Chinese companies want to understand how multinational companies work. “That desire to know what’s happening on the other side certainly makes this international program interesting,” says Ramasamy.

While the pandemic has made recruiting more difficult for the global program, Ramasamy hopes to see more students from Southeast and Central Asia, India, and Africa. “I really want to see that diversity, not just in terms of whether they are white, yellow, or black, but in terms of the various countries they come from.”

The classroom offers a safe place for students to understand others with different perspectives and narratives. During orientation, Ramasamy sets the stage for an open environment by telling students no matter their title, they are all students and equals in the classroom.

Malaysian by nationality, Indian by ethnicity, Ramasamy sees diversity as a basic reality, because the world is diverse. That also means different cultures view diversity in different ways. Bridging the gaps that can happen when people don’t understand one another requires application of a fundamental value.



MBS students (Mannheimers For Life) take part in local Pride Parade.

“To me, it’s about respecting each other. As a business school, I feel that’s one of those values that we need to share and teach our students. If the virtue of respect becomes ingrained within the program, within the school, I think that is what you probably need. Because if we truly respect each other, it doesn’t matter who we are. I think that’s when diversity comes natural to you.”

LIMITLESS DIVERSITY

Giving voice to the diversity in all of us

MANNHEIM BUSINESS SCHOOL

At the Mannheim Business School (MBS), the Diversity@MBS event series reinforces the proposition for participants that diversity isn’t other people—diversity is everyone.

“In the Diversity@MBS series, we want to give voice to different groups,” says Sven Stromann, career development and diversity manager at MBS. The series kicked off this year with Black@MBS, which presented the experiences of three different black participants and alumni.

Next, the series takes a detour from a traditional view of diversity by featuring Dads@MBS, discussing dads and business, childcare, and division of labor at home, for example. Ideas for other sessions cover a wide range of topics from Asian@MBS to Veterans@MBS to First-Time Academics@MBS to Athletes@MBS.

“What we’re trying to do at Mannheim Business School is make sure diversity is not limited to gender, not limited to whatever minority you might be part of, but diversity is actually every single one of us,” says Stromann. “We want people in the MBS network slowly—it’s not a matter of one day to the next—but slowly realize I have diversity in me. I’m a part of diversity.”

Mannheim also reinforces diversity through its multi-competence teams (MCTs), which it assembles with diversity criteria in mind. “They learn within their teams to appreciate the contributions of others and that everyone approaches topics differently,” he says.

“Students value their experience in MCTs,” says Bettina Meltzer, MBS marketing & communications and diversity manager. “When you ask alumni about their most memorable experience in the program, they often point to working in the MCTs,” she says.

Stromann and Meltzer collaborate on diversity initiatives within the school, which also offers students a Diversity Club with two communities, the Woman in Business Community and the Pride@MBS Community for LGBT+ and Straight Allies. The communities help promote networking among students and invited speakers.

Much of the diversity initiative involves what Stromann terms a push strategy, with MBS organizing events, bringing in speakers, or ensuring safe spaces for conversations. Sometimes the opposite pull strategy happens, such as when an MBA class told administrators they wanted a diversity workshop.

“Understanding the multifaceted complexities of diversity, EMBAC is moving forward to help institutions of higher learning to feel more confident in their approaches to diversity.”

KAREN HENRY, XAVIER UNIVERSITY

As a result, MBS developed an inclusion champions workshop, which received great feedback from class members.

MBS will continue to add to its diversity portfolio of activities and encourage the pull strategy as well.

“That’s what keeps us going, when we see these pull moments, when people are coming to us and needing or wanting something, when we see we are actually doing something that impacts people’s lives,” says Stromann.

CHANGING WORLD

Bringing DEI to a place of diversity

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Florida International University (FIU) and diversity go hand in hand, thanks in large part to its diverse student population.

“We are predominately a minority-serving institution,” says Angel Burgos, executive director of FIU’s Executive MBA—Miami. Hispanics represent close to 65 percent of the student body, and African Americans another 12 percent.

“There’s no doubt we think of ourselves as a diverse area, one that embraces diversity and inclusion naturally,” says Burgos. Robust minority representation, though, doesn’t eliminate the need for DEI work.

“We tend to automatically think of ourselves as inclusive and diverse, because we are in many ways,” he says. “However, there is nuance to DEI work. We benefit from exploring those complexities.”

To that end, FIU developed an equity action initiative, taking a close look at diversity in its hiring, promotion, and tenure practices, enhancing its African American studies department, organizing groups to discuss social justice, conducting a climate survey of faculty and staff, and hiring a chief diversity officer among the main actions.

“We have done, I think, an extraordinary job in terms of hiring and bringing diversity into the hiring process even before these initiatives were starting to take off because it was always important for us,” says Burgos.

The next key consideration involves incorporating DEI into the curriculum, he says. FIU is creating a microcredential in DEI, both at the undergraduate

level and for executive education, including EMBA students. Executive education microcredential topics examine discriminatory practices, corporate policy and implementation, and diversity practices.

“The microcredentials are a great way of getting at this as quickly as possible and making sure it is front of mind for our students,” he says.

In the EMBA Program, the marketing class covers diversity initiatives, including discussions about bringing diversity practices into student workplaces. But much work remains to incorporate diversity on the curriculum side, and much work remains to increase the number of underrepresented people in the C-suite, he says. DEI efforts are not likely to fade away.

“The reality is the world is changing, and the make-up of the U.S. will be vastly different in 20 years.

We are going to have more diverse students, a more diverse workforce, and I think for that reason, DEI will continue to be a point of discussion.”

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Finding the path to diversity discussions

XAVIER UNIVERSITY

One afternoon, a stranger approached Karen Henry with a question about the use of oxtail. The two didn’t necessarily appear to share much in common, but, as it turned out, oxtail brought them together.

For Henry, the encounter reinforced the importance of respecting others, even when differences may seem significant. At a fundamental level, the work to advance diversity in organizations depends on respect.

“The short of it for me is that it’s valuing others and it’s also including others without leading with stereotypes—I assumed my now friend, Julia, knew nothing about oxtails, and I proceeded to tell her, ‘I’m sure you know nothing about that food, as oxtails are typically categorized as a Soul food staple,’” says Henry, director of the Executive MBA Program at Xavier University’s Williams College of Business. “It’s understanding what others can bring to the table.”

One of the barriers to moving diversity forward in higher education, like other industries, involves people's lack of confidence in approaching the issue of diversity.

"There is a common apprehension to the discussion because we don't feel confident and we lack the training that I think is so necessary for engaging others on the topic," she says.

The EMBAC Inclusion & Diversity Committee (see page 22) offers a place for programs to look at training and other strategies for engaging in a dialogue that promotes understanding. As a committee member, Henry appreciates the sharing that takes place. Henry also contributed to the cause as a concurrent speaker at this year's EMBAC conference, leading an interactive session on Stereotype Threat, the ways it precludes us from connecting and the issues that stereotyping raises.

"I don't think anybody has the answer, but we are all working together to find some similarities and commonalities," says Henry. "Understanding the multifaceted complexities of diversity, EMBAC is moving forward to help institutions of higher

learning to feel more confident in their approaches to diversity."

The Williams College of Business continues to make progress in the area of recruiting diverse student populations. Its EMBA Program has surpassed the industry standard for female enrollment in 2021 with 51 percent compared to the 28 percent industry standard. In addition, the college also just hired its own diversity officer, who will work within the college and with other diversity officers at other Xavier colleges.

Henry joined the EMBA Program at Williams two years ago and has seen the college continue to enhance its diversity in staff and faculty hires, which helps in attracting more minorities and women.

"I think actively recruiting in the domain for diversity, equity, and inclusion and working with EMBAC to design programs for institutions to recruit more minorities and women pretty much says we value more than a framework in diversity, but that are we are willing to move the needle from theory to practice and preparation to help build lasting relationships."

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PIONEERING PROGRAMS

New EMBA models are helping remove access barriers, attract the traditionally underrepresented, and bring forward new ways to consider business.

WOMEN-ONLY

Developing a program designed to meet the needs of women

BRENAU UNIVERSITY

After one student gave birth during the first Executive Women's MBA cohort at Brenau University, she just didn't see how she would be able to finish the program. When she shared her feelings with Juli Clay, Clay said just bring the baby with you.

For the rest of the program, her fellow students helped her take care of the baby and supported her. For Clay, it served as evidence of the investment in a program that Brenau designed to meet the needs of women.

"We've been able to see the environment that we have created do exactly what we hoped it would do," says Clay, assistant vice president for executive programs.

In January 2020, Brenau debuted the first EMBA Program for women only in the country. Founded as a women's college 145 years ago, Brenau still maintains a women's college within a now comprehensive co-educational university.



In 2020, Brenau University launched the first EMBA Program for women only in the country. Its inaugural cohort gathered for a photo at the program's first pre-pandemic residency in New York.

“We’ve always had a mission to educate and empower women that is at the heart and soul and core of who are as an institution,” says Clay. As part of its strategic planning, Brenau identified an opportunity to help advance women in business by investing in an Executive MBA that addressed the barriers women face in pursuing an MBA.

The program considered several key obstacles for women: time away from family or the workplace, varying tuition rates, and a host of smaller logistical concerns about meeting program admission requirements, preparing to return to school, and registering, among other issues, which taken together, can prove challenging to overcome, says Clay. Even formats of one weekend a month don’t work for some women who can’t leave their families that often.

“We knew that we had to look at a different model,” says Clay. To reduce

the challenges of juggling so many responsibilities, the program offers one class at a time online and spaces three in-person residencies 10 months apart, enough time for participants to make plans at home and work. Brenau designed the program at the lower end of tuition, which includes all expenses and no surprise costs, and works with organizations on sponsorships and fellowships for students.

The curriculum distinguishes itself in several ways. First, women comprise 80 percent of the program’s faculty. “That’s been really important for our students, and our students have responded well to that.” When possible, course content takes a feminine perspective, whether through female protagonists in case studies, successful businesswomen as speakers, or the application of a feminine approach to an area of study, such as mediation.

Students also complete a program-long project that requires them to talk to their employers early in the program. “Women sometimes assume their work will speak for itself,” says Clay. They may wait to be recognized instead of clearly presenting their value in a way that puts them on the leadership’s radar. The program also invites employers to the final project presentation.

“We’re really trying to help women empower themselves to be successful long after the program ends for them.”

Students appreciate the program’s holistic approach, with residencies also covering topics such as stress and anxiety, fitness, nutrition, and financial planning.

As cohorts and students form a tight bond, they create a network of successful women they can tap going forward, which ultimately helps level the playing field among leadership ranks.

A PLACE THAT UNDERSTANDS



When Melinda McLeod entered the Executive Women’s MBA (EWMBA) Program at Brenau University, she didn’t realize the difference it would make for her.

“I had no idea this would be so impactful,” says McLeod, assistant controller at Doctors Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. McLeod had good experiences with male bosses, who

encouraged her, but the program offered some new and important perspectives.

“What I was not prepared for was how supportive women can be of each other and to each other. We have our own set of unique challenges in the workplace. Besides tackling those issues in the curriculum, I was encouraged and educated much more in our conversations outside of the classroom on how to navigate situations that I would eventually deal with.”

McLeod already had plenty on her plate. The mom of two middle schoolers (and two dogs), she worked more than full time as she rapidly advanced in her company, commuted two hours a day, had a side business, took care of her grandmother, taught Sunday school, and the list continues.

“Brenau’s online format made it possible for me to complete my degree and still actively participate in all my other activities. It was the least disruptive path for me, and that was very important.”

The program helped McLeod understand different points of view, making her a better leader. It also helped her voice her thoughts when during a diversity and inclusion call, her boss commented that the reason more women and people of color weren’t in leadership was because they weren’t applying for the job. She immediately asked what they were going to do to change that situation, which opened the conversation. “There’s no way I would have spoken up before this program.”

Her time in the program also helped her advance in her career. “I can definitely say that completing the EWMBA gave me the push I needed to be better and do better work,” she says.

“I actually ended up pivoting over to finance to gain the experience I need to move into a controller role and eventually a CFO role in my company. Without the program, I would not have considered that I could do that. I wouldn’t have had a good understanding of the path to get there. And I would not have advocated for myself to make that happen.”

McLeod also gained a lifelong group of friends who have taken trips together since graduation and stay current on professional and personal developments. “We are so important to each other now. I cannot imagine my life without them, and I cannot foresee a future without them in it.”

“The feedback has been absolutely phenomenal,” says Clay. “Students tell us, we didn’t know how much we needed the program until we had it and we didn’t know how special it would be to be in a cohort of other women until we were.”

IBL-EMBA

Incorporating an indigenous world view

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Alexia McKinnon entered the second cohort of the Indigenous Business Leadership Executive MBA (IBL-EMBA) at Simon Fraser University’s Beedie School of Business. In her corporate law course alone, she learned case law and much more from the indigenous legal scholar who taught the class.

“He taught us indigenous sources of law that I don’t think any of us thought or considered at that time,” says McKinnon. “What does it look like when we look to legal context and cases from an indigenous law perspective? It means culture, ceremony, protocol, language, relationship to the natural world, dispute resolutions from our own community, deliberative decision making.”

Her experience in the IBL-EMBA helped her see her world in a new, powerful light.

“Never ever did I think the wisdom and knowledge that I hold as an indigenous person was applicable in a legal context. And once I understood that, the landscape completely shifted, and it’s almost as fundamental as a paradigm shift.”

Now as director of Indigenous Programs at the Beedie School, McKinnon helps lead the next chapters of the 10-year-old program with that shift in mind.

“It’s not just to build EMBA’s,” she says. “It’s to build indigenous leaders who are committed to transforming and shaping the system so that it’s inclusive of indigenous world view and deliberative on creating indigenous economies.”



Born from a vision to include indigenous leaders at the corporate decision-making table, the IBL-EMBA draws on indigenous faculty, elders, and knowledge keepers.

In 2012, Beedie launched a pilot program, born from a vision to include indigenous leaders at the corporate decision-making table. Demand for the program has grown: Originally offered every two years, it now admits a cohort each year and will reach 147 alumni this fall with 40 students enrolled for next year.

Accredited by EQUIS and AACSB International, the program offers the familiar academic rigor of EMBA Programs. It also distinguishes itself in many ways: 70 percent of the faculty are indigenous, all program teaching assistants are indigenous, and the program invites elders and knowledge keepers into the classroom to support the students.

“We respect the wisdom students bring, and then the MBA space is really a place for students to weave the two worlds together and to create new systems, processes, and structures that work for their own communities and their organizations,” says McKinnon.

“Another concept that is different, and I think really sets us apart from business schools, is we view education as healing,” she says. Part of a truth and reconciliation process, the Canadian Call to Action #92 invites corporations and businesses to work in better relationship with indigenous peoples. “As a business school, we’ve really taken this on, not only to focus first and foremost on our indigenous community, but also those who work with us.”

In other groundbreaking efforts, faculty are pioneering new areas of study. One of the first indigenous

students to complete a Ph.D., now a faculty member on tenure track at Beedie, is generating research on a new area of study, indigenous economies. The body of work looks at what wealth means and how an indigenous world view of wealth can be incorporated in business.

The program recently changed its format, based on the discovery during the pandemic that students appreciated the convenience of online learning. Now the blended learning model delivers two courses a semester online and one, one-week face-to-face on-the-land learning experience in the faculty member’s home community.

The program’s alumni help demonstrate its impact, as they make their mark in environmentalism, resource and land development, housing, and other areas, says McKinnon. “They are doing incredible work in their communities.” The program inspired other alumni—20 of them—to pursue doctorates, helping increase the number of indigenous faculty.

In coming years, the program will work to expand indigenous studies and research and support more indigenous leaders, while always remaining committed to the success of its students, says McKinnon.

“We believe in bringing the entire cohort along, so everyone who starts finishes. We create the conditions for them to learn and grow and find those areas they want to further for their nations, their businesses, or themselves.”



IN THE CLASSROOM

EMBA STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM DEI CURRICULUM ADDITIONS

From electives to stand-alone offerings to curriculum integration, EMBA Programs are building DEI discussions, research, and practices into EMBA.

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Integrating the pillar of inclusion

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

Chris Meehleib gained a key understanding about inclusion from the EMBA Program at the University of Colorado Boulder Leeds School of Business.

“Since starting my EMBA, I have learned that being ‘inclusive’ is more than just ensuring that my teams are adequately represented,” says first-year student Meehleib. “It’s also about making sure that every member of my team feels that their voices are heard, and their views are appreciated. This in turn has helped me establish a stronger sense of trust with the teams that I lead, both stateside and abroad.”

Leeds designed its EMBA Program on three intertwined pillars that it considers critical for successful leaders—inclusion, innovation, and leadership, says Lori Seward, faculty director, Leeds MBA Programs, and teaching professor, strategy, entrepreneurship, and operations management.

“Successfully leading a diverse workforce will foster innovative ideas that provide limitless opportunities for business,” says Seward. “Because most EMBA students are working professionals, programs have a unique opportunity to

“Because most EMBA students are working professionals, programs have a unique opportunity to create space for students to discuss their real-world experiences with DEI in the workplace, both successes and challenges.”

LORI SEWARD, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

create space for students to discuss their real-world experiences with DEI in the workplace, both successes and challenges.”

To that end in 2021, the Leeds EMBA introduced its Inclusive Leadership course, designed specifically for EMBA students. “Inclusivity resonates with today’s leaders,” says Seward. “Leeds has expertise in this area, and we saw this was missing from many EMBA Programs. Today’s successful leaders must integrate DEI into their practices just as they must have knowledge in traditional business disciplines.”

The course focuses on helping students grow into authentic and inclusive leaders by exploring unconscious biases around racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia.

“We can only truly lead authentically when we reflect on what drives our decision making,” she says. The course helps students understand their biases, then work to consciously consider their impact on decisions and on their stakeholders.

Students have responded with overwhelming support for the course, and they want more.

As a result, the program is building in more programming for students throughout their EMBA journey.

“The two key aspects of the course that resonate most with students are time for deep participation and discussion during our team-led case studies during residency week and the interviews, both recorded and in person, with industry leaders on their own experiences,” says Stacey Edgar, course instructor and assistant teaching professor, social responsibility and sustainability.

EMBA Programs also must strive to enroll a diverse student body, says Seward.

Leeds has implemented several recruitment initiatives to increase the pipeline of diverse students, launching targeted LinkedIn ads, sending postcards to diverse undergraduates, including corporate partners with deep DEI efforts into graduate program information sessions, securing scholarships for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, and hosting the inaugural Transforming Business: Connecting Diverse Scholars Day. The school is also building on the success of its Office of Diversity Affairs in recruiting undergraduate diversity by looking to create a Graduate Diverse Scholars Program.

As graduate programs for business leaders, EMBA Programs are in a strong position to support inclusion beyond the classroom.

“Too often in the workplace DEI is a one-time mandatory training instead of a way of working,” says Seward.

“EMBA Programs can encourage deep, culture-shaping work towards combatting unconscious and affinity biases by including a required inclusive leadership course in their curriculums—giving students the time to explore the topic deeply, practice problem solving through case studies, share experiences, and build practical tools for leading inclusive organizations.”

INFUSED CURRICULUM

Weaving aspects of DEI throughout the program

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The difficult conversations portion of the EMBA orientation immersion starts with a simple question that goes something like this: Do you remember a time when you felt like an outsider?

The question helps set a place of common ground—remembering situations where students felt like they didn’t belong, their reactions at the time, and the impact on them longer term. From there, the pace moves quickly, and students engage with others for conversations they might not otherwise have.

Integrated into a 2019 redesign of the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business EMBA Program, the popular offering reflects a desire to weave aspects of DEI thoughtfully throughout the curriculum, says Joe Stephens, senior assistant dean and director, Working Professional and Executive MBA Programs.

With 40 percent of the EMBA class first-generation graduate students from various backgrounds, those conversations often reveal much about students.

“When you sit down and listen to their stories, which we encourage them to tell, it’s pretty incredible,” says Stephens. “We’re trying to get them to open up to each other, and that’s helped us build a stronger, more open culture.”

The new curriculum also includes a capstone component, Leading for Impact, which asks students to consider a social component as part of their project and exposes students to diverse populations. In addition, throughout the curriculum, the program encourages faculty to infuse DEI topics and examples in their courses.

The DEI commitment runs through the school, including expanding staff. As the new director of DEI for graduate programs, Zerina Hamulić joins the associate dean for DEI, which focuses on the faculty component of the school’s DEI strategic plan, a diversity and community engagement staff member, and a DEI director on the undergraduate side.

“If one perspective can help you think a little deeper about any particular situation in a new or different context, you’re probably going to make a better decision longer term.”

JOE STEPHENS, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Students play an important role in advancing the DEI cause. “Students push for it,” says Hamulić. “The students genuinely seem to appreciate and engage with the efforts they see.”

The school often involves EMBA students, who come to the program with years of experience and include those who lead DEI issues at their organizations, as panelists and participants for its annual Elevate Diversity Conference. They also nominate and vote on an Amplify Award that recognizes faculty who create the best environment for conversations.

In recent years, the tensions that surround diversity topics can make it challenging for others to share their thoughts and perceptions.

“Part of what I see my role being in our school and community is thinking through how to address this and ensure that everyone knows they have a voice and perspective to share in DEI conversations,” says Hamulić.

Those voices become important elements of the learning experience, say Stephens and Hamulić.

“If one perspective can help you think a little deeper about any particular situation in a new or different context, you’re probably going to make a better decision longer term,” says Stephens.

CURRICULAR ASSETS

Setting the DEI stage from the start

NYU STERN

The NYU Stern School of Business offered electives in the DEI space in its EMBA curriculum for several years, and most recently it added a new required core course for its EMBA students.

The course, *Leading Through Change: Diversity and Inclusion as Business Assets*, delves into the history and emerging theories of business and the definition and the practices that are associated with diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. NYU’s senior vice president for global inclusion, diversity, and strategic innovation teaches the course.

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion has always been a priority for us in Stern’s EMBA Programs, as it has been across the school,” says Naomi Diamant, clinical assistant professor of management communication, academic director of the Stern EMBA Program, and assistant dean, executive programs.

“This course, together with a course on Professional Responsibility, are the first two courses that incoming EMBA students take,” she says. “It is our firm belief that, apart from or

in addition to their personal position on DEI, future leaders will need to understand the issues around diversity and inclusion so that they steward their organizations, their stakeholders, and their communities.”

Students in the Stern EMBA Program in Washington, D.C., also participate in a required Speakers Series, which includes diversity and inclusion as one of its themes. The series has featured Tina Taylor, co-founder and co-CEO of CORE3 Innovations; Nate Yohannes, head of Product Management | Artificial Intelligence for Content Understanding and User Interests at Meta; and Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP.

Stern has worked to expand its DEI-focused curricular elements and diversity in its teaching bench, as well as recruiting student cohorts with different backgrounds.

“At our orientation and residency for new students, students frequently comment to me about how the breadth of student diversity across many dimensions—gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, as well as country of origin—leads to rich and challenging conversations from the very outset of their experience. I’m always very happy when I hear this. It is exactly what we are working towards.”





OPEN LENSES

Students who formed their own DEI committee. Alumni whose work helps diverse populations make gains in life and business. Their stories highlight their commitment, experiences, and impact.

GLOBAL CHANGE

Advancing DEI in many settings

During a casual meeting with a friend, Robert Palmer hatched a plan to help women in Yemen participate in the national dialogue process for drafting a new country constitution.

Taking much from the page of U.S. lobbyists, Palmer devised a strategy that involved building a base to influence policy. It included developing a network of six local NGOs on women's issues, conducting face-to-face meetings to gather feedback about the state of women and girls in Yemen, engaging decision makers, and leveraging all those efforts to gain a voice in the process. With seed money provided by the United Nations, local female leaders led the charge building on grassroots successes, gathering data, and crafting messaging and communications. As a result, three female members became part of the constitutional drafting process, making history with language that granted equal citizenship to women and provided a legal base for equality.

"For a while, Yemen was the first country in the Middle East to have women as equal citizens in the constitution," says Palmer, who was working as an independent consultant to the United Nations at the time. "That's an example of complex DEI issues in a complicated environment,

EMBASSADORS IN THIS ISSUE



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ROBERT PALMER

HIS WORK IN YEMEN

Moving DEI forward in one of the most difficult cultural circumstances.



TINA TAYLOR

GIRL POWER

Leaving the C-suite to inspire youth — particularly minority girls—to pursue opportunities in STEM.



FABIANA BENTES

HER ADVOCACY FOR OTHERS

Working in one of Rio de Janeiro's most violent favelas.

“My EMBA experience gave me confidence in many ways. I could speak the language of business leaders to better build strategic partnerships that advance social good.”

ROBERT PALMER, EMBA ALUMNUS, KELLOGG/HKUST

and how systems, structures, processes, methodologies, and strategies can actually implement profound change.”

While equality fell apart when war began, it’s an experience that Palmer won’t forget and a reminder of the challenges and joys of moving DEI forward in one of the most difficult cultural circumstances.

A global citizen who has worked in around 50 countries, Palmer often finds himself the minority in the room. When he entered the Kellogg/HKUST Executive Program with a different background than most EMBA students, it seemed true once again. In one of the first sessions, he presented his work in Yemen, and ended with a call for questions.

“Every hand went up and everyone was engaged,” says Palmer, who received a non-profit scholarship that made it possible for him to attend the program. His fellow students wondered how they might help, and as a part of a class project in appreciation for the EMBA education they received, they raised funds and built two schools, one in Nepal and one in Mawali.

“My EMBA experience gave me confidence in many ways. I could speak the language of business leaders to better build strategic partnerships that advance social good. It’s also given me clarity on how to run organizations.”

Recently, Palmer has been helping advance DEI as CEO for the Association of Change Management Professionals, an organization that supports the discipline of change management worldwide and sets the basic standards and foundation for change management work.

Through Palmer’s leadership, fostering DEI has become one of the

association’s strategic objectives. A DEI statement has been drafted, a board-level DEI committee created, and a review of all programming, policies, and procedures with an eye to DEI undertaken. The organization is also integrating DEI into the next evolution of its standard process for change management, a step that will help ensure practitioners consider DEI as part of their change management initiatives.

“Our members are really excited and interested in this because their organizations are asking how we do this,” says Palmer. “It’s just the smart thing to do—to be effective as an organization, to be effective in general, or to help make change in the world.”

STEM FOR GIRLS

Following a passion and opening opportunities

Whether gathering samples in the field or programming small robots, the young people in Heritage STEM Camps Foundation bootcamps gain hands-on experience and exposure to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM, and, yes, business too.

The driving force behind the Heritage STEM Camps Foundation and a host of other educational

opportunities to engage and inspire youth, Tina Taylor left the high-level corporate world to follow her passion. Now she shares the joy of STEM with young people—particularly underrepresented girls—to nurture their interest and participation in STEM education and fields.

As the first African American female to sit in the C-suite, Taylor, then chief quality & information officer, had reached a milestone at GE Lighting. She joined GE with an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering, and after rising to a top leadership position, she was still interested in continuing to broaden her global perspective on business.

“Peers are important,” says Taylor, who decided to pursue a graduate business degree with an international focus for seasoned leaders. “I wanted to collaborate and learn from global thought-leaders outside my traditional work environment. I wanted a unique experience that would nurture my entrepreneurial curiosity.”

Taylor chose the TRIUM EMBA, a joint program between the London School of Economics, HEC Paris, and NYU Stern. There, she found a place to step back and reflect on what was next and how to leverage an enriching journey to the young generation with the support of her cohort.



Tina Taylor left the C-suite to inspire youth—particularly minority girls—to pursue opportunities in STEM.



“It gave me the opportunity to say yes to me and the things I am passionate about and create a path forward.”

STUDENT-DRIVEN

Taking action to advance DEI in their programs and business

During summer 2020, the murder of George Floyd and others at the hands of the police sparked a desire among EMBA students at the University of Maryland Smith School of Business to act.

“Our class started the program in January 2020,” says Latrice Wilson, PharmD. “We had some classes together before the pandemic hit and that helped us form a bond with one another. After the summer, we were affected by the murders of unarmed people of color at the hands of the police, and we really felt we needed to do something.”

Students participated in a town hall to talk about the events, their impact, and the cohort’s potential contributions to helping advance DEI in the program and in business.

“We wanted to talk to our cohort to get a general pulse,” says Wilson. “We wanted to make sure it was more than just a conversation that we were having. How can we build opportunities and have impact? We started that conversation.”

As cohort representatives, Wilson and Randy Marsh met with the EMBA academic director and the college diversity officer to share the cohort’s interest in moving forward. With their support, the students formed their own DEI committee, wrote a charter, and established two subcommittees—one to look at curriculum and one to enhance the pipeline for diverse students to access Smith’s programs.

Students in the curriculum subcommittee started by talking with one professor, who opened the diversity discussion in class. They also partnered

Based on her own experiences, Taylor knew well the scarcity of women in STEM and the barriers to education and advancement that girls faced throughout the world. When the program asked students to identify their capstone projects, Taylor had an idea to develop a unique educational initiative in South Africa that would introduce STEM to girls.

“I remember I made a pitch for the capstone when we were in New York,” she says. “I pitched it for 90 seconds and several people came to me and wanted to be part of that transformational change. That gave me the go-ahead that this was something needed and wanted.”

Soon she decided to devote 100 percent of her efforts on building a boarding school and STEM Business camps for girls in South Africa. Educating girls often results in a multiplier effect, especially in less invested and underdeveloped regions, she says.

“Anytime you give women work and opportunities, that changes their communities. When they learn information, they share it. It’s an investment in the community that improves GDP.”

Since that start, Taylor has expanded the camps and other educational opportunities to the U.S., including a

two-year STEM cohort for girls and a series of online master classes for all young leaders. The camps feature both hands-on experiences and an emphasis on business skill-building, including working in teams and developing leadership abilities.

Her success rate is high: Since 2016, 95 percent of participants enrolled in college and five percent started their own companies. Her work also has attracted funding from corporations, such as Smithfield Foods, Inc., and other donors.

She continues to reach more children worldwide and began offering STEM education in Spanish and will host several residential camps in Miami, Nepal, and the Philippines in 2023-2024.

Taylor also is changing global dynamics through the commercial and technology management firm, Core 3 Innovations, which she co-founded and serves as co-CEO. The firm focuses on developing business solutions that drive economies of scale and support economic advancement in underdeveloped communities globally.

In making a choice to apply her own business skills with the aim of increasing opportunities for female advancement in STEM and business, Taylor turned an EMBA educational experience into a successful and sustainable cause.



“When our actions are well-developed, when you persuade people to work with you like a volunteer, it’s a sign that you’re a force and actions are helping and are having the desired effect.”

FABIANA BENTES, EMBA ALUMNA, FUNDAÇÃO DOM CABRAL

with professors to put together a panel with a diverse group of EMBA alumni. The pipeline committee worked to complement Smith’s recruiting efforts, including helping with the recruitment pitch and organizing a panel for high school students at a local school.

“We wanted our school and our program to reflect our community,” says Wilson. “We wanted to connect with youth to empower them so they can think about becoming future EMBA candidates.”

While the original committee members graduated, their legacy inspires others. The class of 2021 continues the work that the inaugural committee began. Wilson and Marsh remain available to help the students carry on the initiative.

“Involving students is important,” says Marsh, vice president of operations for Children’s Defense Fund. “If you are going to talk DEI, you have to talk to students.”

The changing nature of the workplace makes DEI a necessity for business programs, such as EMBA, with the aim of developing leaders for the increasingly diverse workforce.

“Our work is becoming more diverse, so it is imperative to understand diversity,” says Wilson, now an entrepreneur and founder of NVR ALWAYS, a vintage retail operation. “The program strengthened my confidence to lead a group of diverse and skilled people.”

MANY FACES

Advocating for others and a better world

Fabiana Bentes has seen the many faces of diversity throughout her career as a journalist and through her leadership roles in government, business, and non-profit organizations.

Her work takes her to one of Rio de Janeiro’s most violent favelas, a place of extreme poverty where people stay because they cannot afford proper housing in the city. “There are significant risks to work there,” she says. “I understand that I am there on a mission.”

Bentes’ background covers much ground. She was state secretary of social development and human rights, as well as public security counselor, for the state of Rio de Janeiro and contributed to projects that help refugees and help prevent violence against women, LGBTQI+ people, indigenous people, children, and the elderly. In addition, she served as consultant and project director of the Interamerican Bank of Development—the largest source of development financing for Latin America and the Caribbean—working as a bridge between favelas, public sector, and big companies like Visa, Colgate, and NBA and working for a World Cup legacy and Olympic Games legacy.

In 2015, she founded the Sou do Esporte, a Brazilian-based non-profit association that promotes governance in sports, social development throughout sports, and qualified

contents for sports management, with a strong network between athletes, sports entities, and public authorities.

In 2021, Bentes was elected tourism ambassador of Rio de Janeiro. She received her MBA as a graduate of the Fundação Dom Cabral Executive MBA.

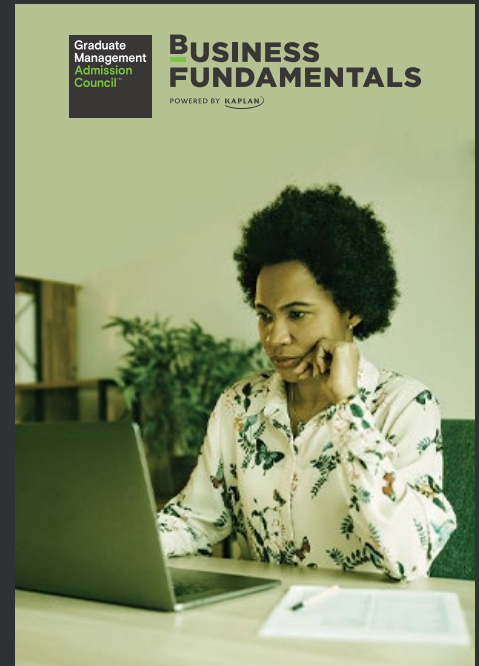
“I have always taken the responsibility to act in favor of the vulnerable population, regardless of where I am or the position I hold,” says Bentes. Her commitment and actions help inspire others to act.

“Everything I do has to have a purpose. Because I believe what I do has a positive impact—engaging more people in charitable or social responsibility actions. It’s necessary to realize that many people want to get involved, but do not know where to start or which path to go down. When our actions are well-developed, when you persuade people to work with you like a volunteer, it’s a sign that you’re a force and actions are helping and are having the desired effect.”

Her EMBA education helped her spread the word and offered her important perspectives on business.

As the only student in her EMBA class from the service sector of the economy, Bentes helped her fellow students better understand why companies need a stronger relationship with social impact and how this impact can change the perception of brands. She also learned more about how business operates. “It has improved my knowledge in managing resources of companies and in dealing with the expectation of social impact.”

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Tool for the DEI Journey

EMBAC I&D COMMITTEE DEVELOPS QUESTION PROMPTS TO HELP PROGRAMS

In February 2021, EMBAC kicked-off the first meeting of its Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) Committee. The I&D Committee made EMBAC history by attracting the most committee members ever, with more than 30 EMBAC members volunteering to participate.

“The response to this committee has been phenomenal,” says Michael Desiderio, EMBAC executive director. “It shows not only the importance of the topic, but the willingness of our members to dive into discussions about complex issues and learn from each other.”

In 2022, the I&D Committee conceived and developed a tool to help members and non-members alike with their DEI journeys. DEI Questions to Consider provides a series of questions as prompts to aid exploration and implementation of DEI within organizations.

The I&D tool is a valuable one, says Angel Burgos, executive director of Florida International University’s Executive MBA—Miami and EMBAC I&D Committee member.

“It starts out with questions to consider from all perspectives of DEI,” says Burgos, who joined the committee

to learn more about what other schools were doing with DEI. “It’s a great reference document for any institution during any point in their journey.”

Burgos intends to use the tool to move forward DEI strategies and actions for the EMBA Program he leads. “This document because it touches on all the elements, everything from recruitment and marketing to the curriculum, is really going to be very helpful. It’s all-encompassing.”

EMBAC wants to make the tool as widely available as possible. The EMBAC public website at embac.org/programs-dei.html and EMBAC member portal both include copies to download. A print copy of the tool follows.

“We want to make as many members as possible aware of DEI Questions to Consider,” says Desiderio. “We also encourage members to share stories about how they used the tool through our I&D Committee member forum. In the coming year, the I&D Committee will continue to explore new avenues to help programs advance their DEI journeys.”

DEI QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Preface

When it comes to the complex and critically important topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), all organizations will be at different points in the journey. Some just beginning the discussion, others having implemented strategies, practices and processes to effect change and measure outcomes.

EMBAC’s intent with this document is not to be “prescriptive” but instead to provide a series of questions as a guide to aid your exploration and implementation of DEI within your organization.

We encourage you to utilize this document within the frame of reference that is relevant in your geography and culture.

How Do I Use This Document?

First, we strongly encourage you to read through the entire document.

Once you are familiar with this “Questions to Consider” document, you’ll have some decisions to make. There’s no perfect way to use the document. There is no “one size fits all” approach when referring to DEI initiatives.

- You might choose to start with a small group of interested people.
- You might choose to modify or delete some of the questions to fit your context.

- You might use this document within an ongoing dialogue, or to create a new dialogue.

Finally, this document, while broad, is in itself ever-evolving and imperfect. We welcome your insights as to how it may be improved. The collection point for your inputs is Linda Thompson so feel free to email your ideas to linda@embac.org.

Definitions and Definitions Discussion

- Here’s a general definition for DEI, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to provide a baseline of understanding:

- **Diversity** refers to anything that sets one individual apart from another, including the full spectrum of human demographic differences as well as the different ideas, backgrounds, and opinions people bring.
- The “E” in DEI stands for **Equity**—fair treatment for all, while striving to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers. Equity is different than equality—if I am helping all employees reach the top shelf of the supply room, I would give everyone access to the same height ladder, regardless of how tall they are. The problem with treating people equally is that not everyone has the same needs. In this case, some may not be able to reach the top shelf with the provided ladder, while others may not need to use one at all! When I am treating people equitably, I strive to eliminate barriers and overcome past inequities—I would give the tallest people the shortest ladder and the shortest people the tallest ladder so everyone can reach the same height.
- **Inclusion** implies a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging, a sense of uniqueness and acceptance. It represents the extent to which employees feel valued, respected, encouraged to fully participate, and able to be their authentic selves.
- What do each of these mean in the context of your school?
 - Diversity
 - Equity
 - Inclusion
- Do you agree with the above definitions or do you need to change them for your context?
- Are your DEI efforts sustainable and does it align with the mission/vision of your school?
- Why is this topic important to your program, school, etc.?
- How are DEI initiatives aligned with the school’s mission/vision?
- Have strategic alliances and partnerships helped you advance your DEI goals and if so, in what way?
- Who has the authority to form strategic alliances in your school and sign agreements?
- How do you make your partnerships transformational as opposed to transactional?
- When working with strategic partnerships to help with DEI, what key things are important to consider in the relationship?

Marketing/Recruiting

- Open-ended:
 - How do you define diversity for your program as it relates to recruitment?
 - How are you striving to make the application processes and questions welcoming to diverse candidates?
 - How do you celebrate diversity through your application process?
- Yes/No/In process/Not sure Questions:
 - Do you
 - > Have a diversity profile goal for your students?
 - > Publish your diversity metrics as part of your recruiting process?
 - > Set a goal for having a diverse slate of student candidates as part of recruiting?
 - If so, do your marketing materials reflect the diversity you aspire to achieve at your school?
 - > Have a recruiting team that matches the diversity profile that you aspire to at your school?
 - > Have the adequate staffing to achieve your diversity goals?
 - > Have a written marketing plan? Does that marketing plan have elements to advance DEI?
 - > Have a recruiting communication plan that includes diversity, equity, inclusion goals?
 - > Check all that apply:
 - Diverse faculty involved are actively engaged in our recruiting process
 - Alumni and other outside groups regularly refer us to possible diverse future students
 - Affinity groups at our school exist for diverse students

Overarching Questions

- Does your school have a vision/mission statement?
- What is your vision for DEI? Example: What is the vision within your academic program, your school, your university, etc.?
- How does your school support your DEI vision/mission through recruitment, training, and overall collaboration?
- How do you measure the impact of your DEI efforts?
 - Do you have a rubric at your institution?
- Do you have the right people involved in the DEI discussion?
 - Who all do you need to add to the DEI discussion?
- What have you learned about advancing your diversity efforts that you could share with other schools?

- Campus affinity groups get involved in recruiting
- Companies and NPOs are contacted and assist in some way with our recruiting efforts
- A chief diversity officer (or similar title) at your school has the primary responsibility to ensure your diversity profile goal is met
- How can you make your marketing/recruiting DEI efforts sustainable?

Student Support

- Yes/No/In process/Not sure Questions:
 - Is DEI part of every student orientation?
 - Is psychological safety part of every orientation and the beginning of every class/cohort?
 - Do you discuss unconscious bias, or similar?
 - Is DEI part of every course?
 - Do we provide access for those with physical disabilities?
 - > In the classroom, in services provided, course accommodations, other
 - Do we provide access for other differences, such as neurodivergent learning (e.g., autism, etc.)?
 - > In the classroom, in services provided, course accommodations, other
 - Have all administrative and support resources been created with accessibility in mind?
 - Has physical infrastructure been created with equity in mind (e.g. breast feeding locations for those in need, prayer rooms for those who need, childcare, transgender support, etc.)
 - In your evaluations or other feedback mechanisms do you consider accessibility for individuals with disabilities (are your evaluations and feedback mechanisms accessible for all, including individuals with disabilities)?
 - Does your DEI and “access team” (program, departmental, college, university, other) have frequent visibility and interaction with your student population?
 - Do students have a way to give feedback about being a place to learn about DEI?
 - How do you ensure diversity on your learning/study teams?
 - Do staff work through a lens of DEI?
 - How can you make your Student Support DEI efforts sustainable?

In Classroom Experience

- Yes/No/In process/Not sure Questions:
 - Do you have specific monitors and measures for shared participation to assist faculty in navigating DEI?
 - Do faculty teach through a lens of DEI?
 - Do syllabi reward shared participation?
 - How do faculty curtail students when they dominate lectures?
 - Do faculty encourage psychological safety and shared participation?
 - Are syllabi reflective of content in DEI?
 - Are all of the materials balanced in terms of DEI?
 - Are case studies and research balanced in terms of DEI?
 - Are guest speakers representative of your DEI goals?
 - DEI access is taught in at least one course or in a standalone course?
 - Psychological safety is taught in at least one course or in a standalone course?
 - Team surveys (or similar) are administered throughout the program to make sure that the learning teams are balancing participation and showing ideal leadership skills with one another that would be inclusive and psychologically safe for all?
 - DEI topics are apparent in the curriculum capstone?
 - DEI is woven into international study trips and consulting projects?
 - Is there exposure to organizations that help set standards for DEI?
- Open ended:
 - In what different ways do you teach DEI access etc. in your curriculum—and weave through your entire curriculum?
 - What resources do you need that are not available within your organization?
 - Have strategic alliances and partnerships helped you advance your DEI goals and if so, in what way?
 - Name organizations your school could partner with to achieve DEI goals?
 - > (DEI organizations, Higher Ed Organizations, Organizations on campus or in the business school, Community Organizations, other?)
 - How can we make DEI efforts cost-effective?
 - Who has the authority to form strategic alliances in your school and sign agreements?
 - When working with strategic partnerships to help with DEI, what three things are most important to consider in the relationship?

- o How can you make your In-classroom experience DEI efforts sustainable?

Training and Development (Staff, Faculty and Admin)

- Yes/No/In process/Not sure Questions:

- o Do you have:
 - > Chief Diversity Officer or a dedicated leader in place to support your DEI and access initiatives?
 - > Systems and processes in place that make those sustainable over time?
 - > Do you have DEI after-action reviews to determine what is working and what is not working?
 - > Do you have key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure DEI success?
 - > Continuous improvement efforts related to your diversity profile goals?
 - > Ongoing unconscious bias training?
 - > Ongoing training to build an environment of psychological safety?

- > Other training connected with DEI?
- > Fireside chats or other open discussions about DEI?
- > Affinity spaces to celebrate intersectionality?
- > Student participation/access to discussions about DEI?
- > Champions or sponsors who participate in training and development specific to DEI initiatives?
- > Alumni or diverse leaders from the community speaking to your admin, staff and faculty?
- > Mentoring available for diverse students, faculty and administration?
- o Open ended:
 - > What specific methods are you using to successfully recruit faculty and staff who reflect your diversity goals?
 - > What ways does your school celebrate the diverse voices of students, faculty and staff?
 - > Are you on track to achieve your desired diversity profile among your faculty?

Epilogue

Like many critically important topics, the understanding, the definitions, the context surrounding DEI is ever-evolving. We should not be fearful of this evolution but instead embrace it and understand that it's part of the journey.

Our goal, and ultimately the goal of this document, is **to create conversations to increase the probability of positive change.**



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



EMBAC has embarked on a diversity, equity, and inclusion journey: We formed an Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Committee with members from throughout the world. We created a members-only online forum, a place for members to ask questions and share best practices. The committee developed a tool, a series of questions, to help guide members no matter where they are with their DEI efforts.

With the endorsement of its Branding Committee, EMBAC decided to devote this issue of *Executive Connections* for a more in-depth look at what programs, students, and alumni are doing to advance DEI. This issue includes a copy of the DEI tool, also available for download on the EMBAC member website (embac.org/programs-dei.html). We hope you find it compelling, encouraging, and helpful to read about the DEI innovations of programs and the amazing work of alumni and students.

The 2022 EMBAC Conference will continue the discussion, with several DEI sessions. The conference marks the first in-person, industry-event-of-the-year since the pandemic's start. I find myself in awe of the response. Despite uncertainty, the desire to come face-to-face in person, to feel the energy that comes from proximity, could not...would not...be stifled!

While we won't reach pre-pandemic attendance this year... and maybe not even in 2023, it's clear those who can make the trek to the great city of Austin are eager to attend, and I CAN NOT WAIT! Participants will reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. I am right there with you!

As our first back-in-person offering in March, the flagship Marketing & Admissions Program attracted 35 highly

engaged participants. In addition, face-to-face regional meetings took place in New York, London, Houston, East Lansing, and Denver. Other regions remained virtual for 2022 because of workload and travel constraints.

To expand reach as much as possible, EMBAC also hosted several 60-minute Virtual Discussion Forums (VDFs) on a variety of topics. In July, it debuted a new professional development offering, Virtual Short Programs (VSPs), deeper three-hour dives on topics that yield immediate practical takeaways. Led by international keynote speaker and life management coach Mark Guilbert, the first well-received VSP explored well-being. Look for a November session on the topic of nurturing alumni loyalty.

On the research front, EMBAC's contract research partner, Percept Research, created a new executive summary to help make the Membership Program Survey data easier to digest at-a-glance. For this year only, EMBAC subsidized the cost of this new executive summary for each program that completed the survey, which means participants will receive the full standard report and the benefits from this complimentary report.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank member schools who have been willing to connect me with their alumni for the EMBASSADOR's initiative, which highlights alumni who are acting as a positive force in society. This effort allows us to shine a light on the value of the EMBA to working professionals and showcase the diverse ways alumni work for the good of society. If you want to know more or involve your alumni, please contact me at michael@embac.org.



Michael Desiderio
Executive Director