

EXECUTIVE CONNECTIONS

Today's EMBA students are...

Reflections on what has stayed the same for
EMBA students and what is changing. 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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TODAY'S EMBA STUDENTS ARE...

REFLECTIONS ON
WHAT HAS STAYED
THE SAME FOR EMBA
STUDENTS AND WHAT
IS CHANGING

What do today's EMBA students want from their program? Have the expectations of prospects and students changed, and in what ways? What does it all mean to EMBA Programs? In this article, EMBAC members in program leadership, coaching, and marketing and admissions share their thoughts and experiences about what's new and what's not with EMBA students.

EMBA students are...

looking for flexibility, experiences, a voice

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Cheri DeClercq first started working with EMBA students at the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University just as the 2008 recession started taking hold and at the same time the program expanded to a second location.

While students faced some anxious moments thanks to the economy, they focused on making sure they gained the knowledge, skill set, and networks to advance in their careers, she says. Today's EMBA students may recognize the value of the degree even more, but their reasons for coming remain basically the same.

"For me fundamentally, they haven't changed why they want the degree," says DeClercq, assistant dean for MBA Programs at Broad. "I think they have changed more on how they want to experience the degree and what they expect to be included in that experience."

Remote learning during the pandemic opened opportunities and presented challenges, as student expectations continue to grow, she says. "We are seeing an increase in students' expectations for flexibility," she says.

In 2020, Broad launched a new EMBA offering that increased flexibility for its students. The Executive MBA Flex at Broad combines online with face-to-face. Flex students alternate face-to-face classes

“The value they see is far beyond the academics...
They want to become leaders, powerful leaders,
transformative leaders.”

GARY ANELLO, WHU-OTTO BEISHEIM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

on campus one weekend with their peers with asynchronous studies the next weekend.

“The format has proven to be popular with students,” says DeClercq. “The idea of integrating life with their work in the program in a way that is more student-driven is one of the changes I sense more of now than I did a decade ago,” she says.

Sometimes, balancing student interests with reality takes some experimenting.

DeClercq and her team organized extra optional activities beyond the classroom experiences in response to students’ requests for more networking opportunities. Although they expressed interest in doing more, many students struggled with missing conflicting life and home events.

Now, the program includes two additional integrated weekend sessions that bring all three cohorts together on campus. These weekends feature a C-Suite speaker series, interactive leadership development, and optional networking activities designed by the students. “We’ve found what seems to be an ideal mix of program required value-add interactions plus optional student-led networking,” says DeClercq.

In the past few years, the program also has added executive coaching and other enhanced experiences available through the optional Enterprise Leadership Academy, designed to provide high-achieving EMBA students with even more personalized professional development opportunities.

Although students want more say in their experiences and want to be partners in their education, often their concerns center not on the program’s academic core, but on smaller, logistical concerns, says DeClercq. EMBA Programs can help address student expectations with clarity on the front end.

“It’s important first to understand what the program’s value proposition is, to be clear about what a student should expect from the experience with your school and what the likely outcomes are,” she says. “And then, I would say, over deliver on that.”

To keep students focused on their “why,” Broad EMBA staff at orientation ask them to write a card that describes their reason for pursuing the degree. The program mails the card back to students halfway through their studies as a reminder.

With the pressures of meeting expectations and the stresses of quickly changing situations, those who work in programs also may benefit from taking a moment to reflect.

“I think it’s also important for us as program teams to recognize how awesome our student body is...just to pause, step back, and recognize that we really are making an impact on the world through the students who are engaged in our programs.”

EMBA students are...

**focusing on leadership, meaning,
impact**

WHU

Gary Anello joined the WHU-Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany as leadership and career development manager in 2019. Four years and one pandemic later, Anello sees some shifts in students who are entering the Kellogg-WHU Executive MBA Program.

“The desire to develop as a leader really seems to be moving to the forefront,” says Anello, who is also a certified coach. “The value they see is far beyond the academics, the business acumen they gain. They want to become leaders, powerful leaders, transformative leaders.”

Post-pandemic, students are looking at leadership through a different lens. “It’s a recognition that their leadership has consequences, and those consequences are meaningful for them, they are important to them,” he says.

The modular Kellogg-WHU EMBA Program offers students a leadership focus through the curriculum and optional leadership and career development workshops in almost all modules. More than 90 percent of EMBA students choose to participate in the workshops, where they learn more about developing executive presence, negotiating difficult conversations, and building executive resilience, among others. Three workshops also feature group coaching, two with simulations and one where students bring a genuine leadership problem to their group. They also benefit from one-on-one executive coaching, as well as career coaching, and a variety of assessment tools and resources.

Anello also hosts 15 to 20 minutes of reflection time twice every module at the start of the day, which gives students some quiet moments to digest their leadership lessons and listen to each other's perspectives.

In the fall 2022 cohort, Anello and faculty members noted a subtle difference in the way that students engaged in the classroom. "There is a thoughtfulness about this particular cohort," he says. "They're not so quick to answer questions. They are focused on really thinking through their answer before they respond."

Whether a result of the pandemic or a generational difference or both, EMBA students also seem more dedicated to finding meaning in what they do and a better balance in their lives, he says.

"EMBA students prior to the pandemic focused on the next best thing, but I think the perception of the next best thing is what's changed," he says. "People are looking to do things for them that matter. I've always said that I was amazed at students who felt like they wanted to make an impact, but that seems much more acute now."

All that is good news for Anello because it reinforces the importance of his leadership and career coaching initiatives for EMBA students. From the first module that includes a leadership in organizations course to workshops and executive coaching throughout the program, the program helps students build a deeper understanding of who they are.

"It's my belief that if you don't have a clear idea of who you are, what you want, what matters, why it matters, it's very difficult to make a meaningful change in your career, one that's going to last, one that's going to be truly satisfying."

Because coaching is all about helping people see what they can bring to the table, Anello is an advocate for teaching EMBA students to coach as the next step in leadership development. A potential offering is in the discussion phase at this point.

"EMBA students are starting to become more and more familiar with coaching. I think it would be great if we could teach them to coach."

WORKING PROFESSIONALS SPEAK

QUESTION

When you reflect on your own professional development, how important are the following?

	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Ability to change your career trajectory	2.58% 10	11.63% 45	30.75% 119	37.47% 145	17.57% 68	387
Expanding your scope/ breadth/depth of impact	0.51% 2	2.31% 9	14.14% 55	41.90% 163	41.13% 160	389
Enhancing your earning potential	0.52% 2	5.41% 21	21.65% 84	34.79% 135	37.63% 146	388
Enhancing your ability to gain promotions	2.32% 9	8.76% 34	26.03% 101	37.37% 145	25.52% 99	388
Improving your professional network	0.77% 3	7.73% 30	32.22% 125	35.05% 136	24.23% 94	388
Enhance your opportunities to do fulfilling work	0.26% 1	1.29% 5	10.03% 39	35.99% 140	52.44% 204	389
Have a positive impact on society	0.77% 3	4.88% 19	15.42% 60	33.42% 130	45.50% 177	389

SOURCE: Professional Insights Survey, Ivy Exec

“...students were expressing to us their changed expectations. They were asking us for more flexibility.”

RHONDA BUSH, UT DALLAS

EMBA students are... wanting to talk one-on-one

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Before the pandemic, Naz Erenguc spent plenty of time on the road, hosting information sessions at hotels and conference centers. These days, she and her team still travel weekly, but when arriving at the destination, the team member grabs a table at a nearby Starbucks for coffee chats with prospective students, applicants, or the newly admitted.

“Our working professionals appreciate it when we come to them as opposed to them trying to come to us,” says Erenguc, director of admissions for Warrington College of Business at the University of Florida. “The notion that people will come to a large conference room, that’s gone.”

Even though coffee chats take more of the team’s time, it helps deliver on what prospects want—an individualized approach where they can tell their story.

“Prospects and applicants very much want that face-to-face interaction,” she says. “Our target population wants assurance that with the time, energy, money, and sweat equity they are going to put in this effort, they are going to get a return.”

The team combines coffee chats with other in-person events, such as open houses and student days. Team members also plan more EMBA-specific events than in the past and strive to include opportunities where prospects can see the EMBA experience in action, such as mock case studies.

Technology also plays a growing role in marketing, recruiting, and admissions strategies, says Erenguc. In addition to weekly virtual information sessions, all admissions interviews take place online. The college also is investing in artificial intelligence to help find new prospects.

When it comes to recruiting efforts, diversity remains top of mind as well. “We’re trying to be more intentional in what we are doing,” she says. “We’re trying to be more inclusive in all the recruiting groups that we would like to see more of in our classrooms.”

For example, Erenguc noticed a dip in female representation after the pandemic and began pursuing strategies to engage more female candidates,

such as outreach to groups like Forte and the Society of Women Engineers.

With millennials comprising most of incoming students, student perceptions and expectations are shifting, she says. Students still want to increase their business acumen and advance their careers, but today’s students are looking for greater flexibility and more options—not just the education, but the total experience, she says.

“I think EMBA students just overall expect more,” says Erenguc, a millennial who also has a Generation X sister. “By more, I mean EMBA students want more career coaching, more professional development opportunities, more tailgates, more networking luncheons.”

Whether generational or a result of a busy schedule, today’s students may want to come but sometimes can’t because of conflicts. Erenguc makes sure to handle student asks honestly with an open ear and a smile. “Validating the request, even if it can’t be met, is huge.”

Today’s changing market, with all its uncertainties, requires quick moves. Erenguc poses a key question: “How can we as a team operate in a way that demonstrates we are as agile as we expect our future leaders to be?” And the answer can make all the difference.

“Being agile is super important in an admissions role,” she says. “Having the ability to act quickly, make decisions quickly, and be agile as the market demands is a huge strength.”

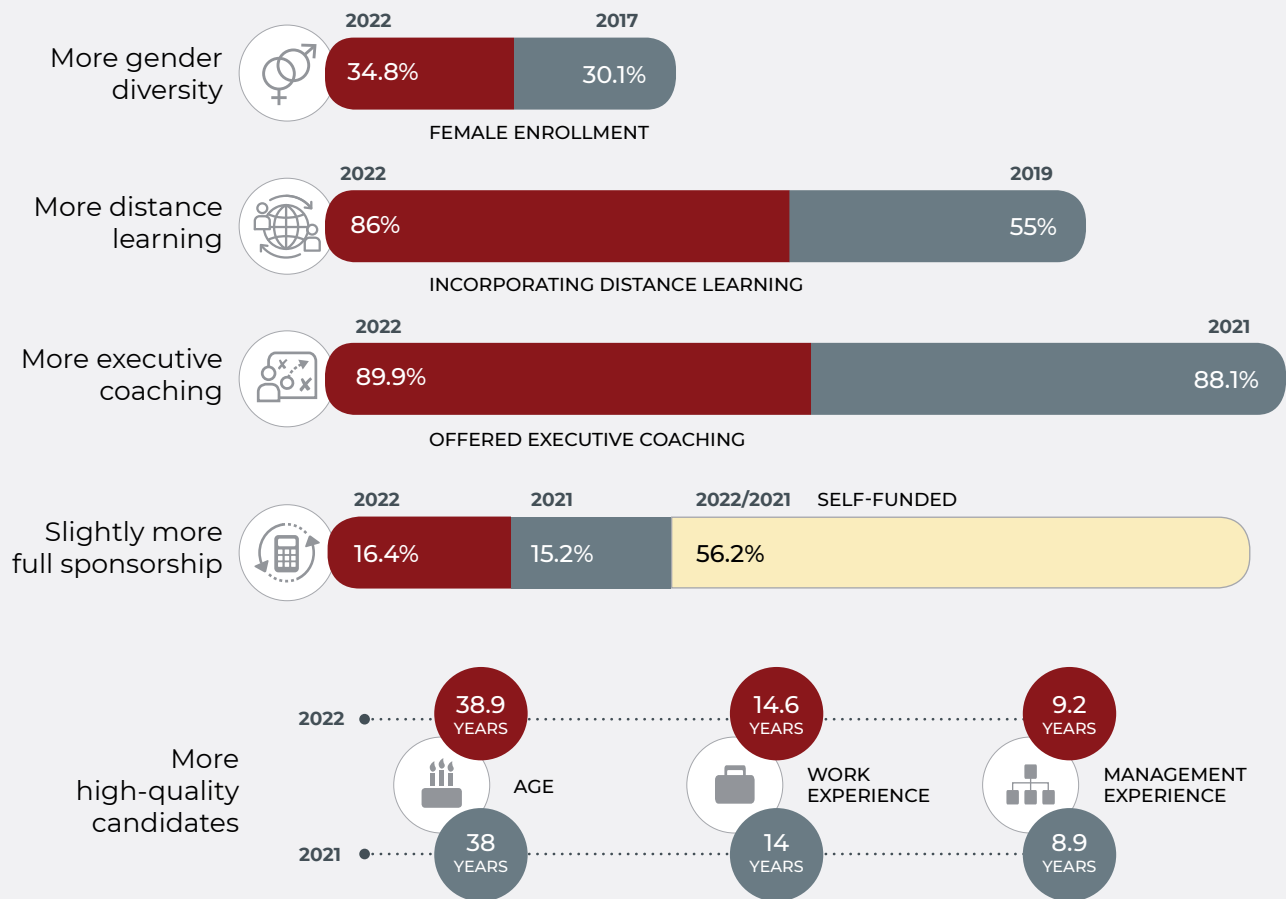
EMBA students are... exploring new options

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

In 2014, the University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) transformed its Global Leadership MBA into a hybrid program, making the most of technology at the time. Thanks to another change in 2019, now its students only know the online world as the program’s home.

UT Dallas designed the Global Leadership MBA to meet the needs of students who couldn’t commit to an every-other-weekend format. An early adopter of the hybrid format, UT Dallas also has invested heavily in specialized EMBA Programs, and except

TRENDS IN EMBA EVOLUTION



SOURCE: EMBAC Membership Program Survey data

for its traditional Executive MBA Program, those specialized programs also live in the hybrid or online only space.

The current lineup of EMBA offerings includes a variety of options:

- Campus-based traditional Executive MBA
- Online-only EMBA programs that include an EMBA with an emphasis in Project Management, an EMBA with an emphasis on Healthcare Leadership Organization, an EMBA with emphasis in Product Lifecycle and Supply Chain Management, and the Global Leadership MBA
- Hybrid EMBA programs that include an EMBA with an emphasis in Healthcare Leadership and Management (for professionals) and an EMBA with emphasis in Healthcare Leadership and Management (for physicians)

In one way or another, students helped drive changes: Case in point—moving the Global Leadership MBA format online. Program leaders heard from students who said that taking any time off work was difficult, who travelled and couldn't always make classes, and who moved during the program but still wanted to finish the degree. They also tracked the different reasons why students didn't choose their program.

"It wasn't that we wanted to change their expectations," says Rhonda Bush, assistant dean, executive education, and director of the Global Leadership MBA at UT Dallas. "It was more that students were expressing to us their changed expectations. They were asking us for more flexibility."

Program leaders also took note of student interest in electives, as well as industry needs, which led them to growth in elective offerings, specialized EMBA programs,

“Flexibility is clear in both the ways that learners study and the approaches that employers want.”

CARRINGTONCRISP, FROM A NEW WAY OF WORKING AND LEARNING REPORT

and optional certificates that complement the degree work. For example, the project management and supply chain MBAs each offer academic certificates.

While specialized programs address niche markets, students from the degree programs do come together. “Now that students are online, they are able to take their core courses together, build that network, understand different industries better, and when they complete their specialization, that’s when they separate out.”

The UT Dallas strategy has proven success. “It has worked for us,” says Bush. “It’s allowed our executive education as a whole to stay very healthy and we have a program for everyone.”

It also made it much easier for students to continue their studies during the pandemic and helped them become more comfortable with remote or hybrid work in their professional lives. Students will continue to look for flexibility, which helps them better balance their personal and work lives with their pursuit of a degree, says Bush.

“There are more options for students with EMBA Programs,” she says. “They don’t have to go with their local EMBA options anymore. I would say the students are doing more homework before selecting a university program. They are comparing more programs because they realize in addition to hybrid and on-campus options, they also can look at online options.”

EMBA students are... more self-aware, more often in search of career transitions

MIT

When Carla Akalarian started coaching EMBA students in 2013, she worked with students who came to her office for a first visit wondering why their interviews didn’t turn into offers. She then guided them back to the beginning of their career journey with a focus on knowing themselves and the market to find the optimal career fit.

That situation happens with less frequency these days.

“Students understand the importance of doing the discovery work early on, even before they are ready to make a transition or know they want to make a

transition,” says Akalarian, executive career coach in the MIT Sloan Career Development Office.

Akalarian customizes her coaching to guide EMBA students through the self-discovery process, which includes identifying values and strengths, as well as taking a deep dive into motivations and key competencies. “It’s about meeting them where they are, helping them move through any limiting beliefs that may stand in the way of moving forward to where they want to be.”

While today’s students and alumni may recognize the value of taking those steps before pursuing positions, Akalarian also anecdotally has noted another perhaps related trend: More of today’s EMBA students enter the program with an interest in a career transition.

“In the last three years, a bigger percentage of MBAs have come to the program knowing that they wanted to make a change,” she says. “In fact, I would dare to say that’s an impetus for them in addition to the learning and connections to an incredible network. They want to leverage the program to make a change.”

The MIT career development team identifies three career-seeking paths for EMBA students—advance for those who want to move forward in their organizations; switch for those transitioning; and launch for entrepreneurs.

“Sometimes students are exploring all three at the same time,” she says. “It isn’t unusual for someone to explore opportunities to advance in their current organization or move into a different functional area while they are also exploring externally. Sometimes they can be dabbling in a start-up idea too.”

As for many people, the pandemic prompted students to take stock of their priorities, which is translating into a greater focus on family, health, and well-being. With more acceptance of mental health services, Akalarian also is seeing more students who combine therapy with coaching.

“People are really willing to reach out and get that support,” she says. “And the combination of coaching and therapy can be extremely powerful for people.”

The pandemic also helped accelerate the use of technology. Compared to five or 10 years ago, EMBA students now are more willing to embrace new and emerging technology, she says. On the career development side, Sloan has invested in an online Executive Career Journey portal, which helps guide



EMBA students through the career process and offers them additional resources.

No matter the generation, Akalarian finds some universal truths about EMBA students. “EMBA students are humble, appreciative, self-aware, and really willing to do the work it takes to live into their aspirational goal.”

EMBA students are... asking about diversity in classmates and in perspectives

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

When one EMBA prospect started following universities that were recognizing their diverse student populations, she learned that Baylor University just dedicated a statue to the university’s first Black students. She decided to learn more about Baylor’s EMBA Program.

The story illustrates two trends that Sharon Mawet sees on the recruiting and admissions front: Prospects who want to know more about diversity and other topics and prospects who are spending more time researching EMBA Programs on their own.

“Students are asking about diversity, not just classmates, but questions to faculty about how they are bringing articles, cases, and guest speakers to support diversity of thought in what they deliver in the classroom,” says Mawet, director of the Baylor Executive MBA Program in Dallas.

In admissions interviews, another topic interests students. More prospects want to know whether the program teaches artificial intelligence (AI) or makes use of AI or ChatGPT, she says.

Mawet also has noticed an increase in applications from prospects who did all their research online, which has implications for marketing and recruiting. “We put more emphasis on what we share through our email campaigns, our website, and social media so people can do the independent research they desire.”

Knowing that in some cases students are finding them on their own, the program has broadened its outreach outside of traditional email campaigns and digital advertising. It profiles alumni and students more often, capitalizing on their social media exposure.

Before the pandemic, the program hosted the traditional after-work information sessions. With interest already waning, the pandemic essentially meant the end for in-person information sessions and the start of customized appointments at times convenient to prospects.

“What has replaced that has been more one-on-one phone calls or one-on-one virtual sessions,” says Mawet. “They’re wanting their specific questions answered and a more personal response to what value we can bring to them.”

In the more than a dozen years since Mawet has worked at Baylor, she has seen changes in EMBA students. Although their reasons for coming to the program remain similar, their motivations have shifted a bit.

“I feel like today people are wanting the experience for their personal satisfaction and knowledge—I think the percentage of those students has increased,” she says. “People are investing more in themselves, and they see this as an investment in themselves.”

More organizations also seem on board, with a recent slight uptick of student sponsorship, perhaps as a talent retention tool in a tight job market. “Our employer support has increased since the pandemic. There was a trend of it decreasing before the pandemic, but we’ve had an increase since then.”

In another post-pandemic change, the average age of students also increased. Historically the average age hovered around 36 years, and in the last five cohorts that average rose to 38 and 39 years.

“I think people are thinking about their career in a longer-term vision,” says Mawet. “As they get into their late 40s or early 50s, they are really seeing a new chapter in their career developing, or a new interest, so they are using that MBA to pursue those career goals.”

Students in the program meet monthly face-to-face, and the program attracts students from throughout the country.

“It speaks to the idea that they are looking for the right program—that culture, that diversity, that knowledge we’re delivering is important to them, and they are willing to travel to find that right program.”

EMBA students are... attracted by a strong brand

INSEAD

INSEAD calls itself the “business school for the world” based on its mission of bringing together people, cultures, and ideas to develop responsible leaders who transform business and society.

“One element that is dear to INSEAD is the international aspect and being culturally aware,” says Virginie Fougea, global director of admissions and financial aid at INSEAD. “Our motto is business is a force for good. We feel that companies and individuals who come to our program have this mission to transform the world. We emphasize this alignment of business as a force for good.”

That strong brand makes an even greater difference for today’s students, who are faced with many different options when it comes to professional development, she says. A clear and distinct brand helps students recognize the business school and EMBA Program that offers them the best match.

“It’s really a world where you have to ask yourself what matters to me,” says Fougea. “I think it’s important for students to remain true to their inner values. I think people need to be really asking themselves questions about what they really want.”

In the last several years, the demographics of EMBA students at INSEAD have shifted a bit. A decade or more ago, most EMBA students entered the program 20 years or more into their career with management experience and proven leadership skills. While the program still attracts the traditional mid-career candidates with significant management experience, others are just starting their management journey, she says.

“The shift is toward the extreme, both people who are a bit younger and earlier in their careers, as well as some people who are a little later in their careers, typically even more than 20 years of work experience.”

Format plays a more important role for these applicants. INSEAD’s Global EMBA (GEMBA) Program takes place at three campuses in France, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi. “Now we see people approaching the GEMBA Program for the modular aspect of it,” she says.

The leadership program within GEMBA offers another important draw for students, says Fougea. The leadership offering distinguishes itself from other EMBA Programs in several ways: Students work with both professional and personal coaches throughout the entire program, beginning, middle, and end.

“They learn about themselves during the program,” she says. “They really have this self-introspection on what makes them a good leader and what they can slightly tweak or change. For this reason, I think, it has always been very appealing to the traditional EMBA applicants, but this program is now more and more appealing to those who are later in their careers as well.”

The fact that people are working longer may be driving that trend, she says. Overall, EMBA Programs are positioned well to respond to where students are in their lives.

“We live in this uncertain world now, and leaving a well-paid job for a full-time program can be scary for some, so the EMBA format has benefits. It’s reassuring not to have to leave your job.”

The diversity and flexibility of EMBA Programs offers the marketplace strong choices. Programs that stand out will find ways to strengthen their brand and reputation, so they attract students who are looking for what they offer, says Fougea.

“It’s not one size fits all. I think there’s a program for everybody and a moment for everyone. It’s just a question of when.”



WELCOME TO THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD OF AI

A LOOK AT WHAT IT
MIGHT TAKE TO MAKE
AI SUCCESSFUL IN
ORGANIZATIONS AND
EMBA PROGRAMS

Explore a broad view of how organizations can harness AI in meaningful ways—without job losses—and how business schools, EMBA Programs, and EMBA classrooms can benefit from AI.

Harnessing the potential of AI

People often assume—incorrectly—that the book Brian Evergreen is writing on the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) will focus on AI implementation.

The book title, though, offers a clue: *Autonomous Transformation: Creating a More Human Future in the Era of Artificial Intelligence*. Making the most of AI's potential and that of other emerging technologies, Evergreen argues, relies on a social systemic approach—one that successfully incorporates social sciences with management and effectively leverages the differing perspectives among technology, industry, and business leaders.

“It’s through a more human future that we can harness the economic potential of AI, as opposed to using AI and happening to steer it at a better future,” he says.

An internationally competitive chess player, music major, entrepreneur who ran a company that taught children chess, and tech visionary, Evergreen takes a long lens, interdisciplinary view on the optimal ways to maximize the benefits of technology. His experience includes global head of Autonomous AI Co-Innovation at Microsoft Research, as well as technology leadership roles at Accenture and Amazon Web Services.

Evergreen recently founded his own consulting company, The Profitable Good Company, to help organizations harness the potential of technology through a new, human-centered approach to management thinking on the foundation of the social sciences.

“Most people don’t talk about that when they talk about AI. They talk about how fast it can move and how complex it is.”

Studies point to a low success rate for AI projects, says Evergreen. Why? AI implementation faces challenges because most organizations still manage and lead with approaches developed within the mechanistic world view of the industrial revolution, he says.

Even though Frederick Taylor penned *Principles of Scientific Management* in 1911, the main elements of his theories, a core component of the Second Industrial Revolution in the United States, still thrive.

“Today, most of what we do as organizational leaders, most of the disciplines we learn in schools, even the idea of being data-driven, have roots all the way back to that historic moment,” says Evergreen.

The Second Industrial Revolution broke tasks into their most basic elements and automated them, paving the way for the dominance of the mechanistic viewpoint that places

more value on machines and processes than on human reasoning and work culture. “We need to move from this mechanistic world view to a social systemic world view,” says Evergreen.

That switch requires a different approach: Instead of allowing technology to drive change, organizations need to set a vision, work backwards from the vision to see what it would take to reach it, facilitate conversations all along the way to explore paths to the vision, and apply inductive and deductive reasoning at all levels to move forward.

Technologies such as AI, then, become more of a resource than a driver of strategy, says Evergreen. Not realizing the desired outcomes, some organizations are beginning to course correct when it comes to a technology-first philosophy. Examples include organizations that tried fully automated call centers and are pivoting back to human responders with the aim of nurturing personal connections with customers. AI, though, can still play a role by acting as a tool for customer service agents to find answers more quickly for customers.

While many people are naturally wary of what AI means to their own personal economic security (aka job), AI will create more jobs than it makes redundant, Evergreen says.

“What I’ve seen time and time again, when there is job loss without warning and without transitioning those people to new opportunities within the company, that is a function of a failure to plan, not a function of necessity.”

New technologies take a long time to implement—enough time to develop a roadmap that shows what new jobs will be created, what jobs will be augmented, and what jobs will be eliminated and to begin training and transitioning to avoid the loss of institutional knowledge. “I call that job pragmatism.”

AI and emerging technologies will impact work and jobs in all industries. Organizations with an eye on social systems that emphasize human-centered leadership and collaboration will stand better positioned for success, he says. “Every aspect of the way we work as humans today is going to be touched on and evolve in some way.”

Applying AI to graduate management programs and the education of business leaders



*Brian Evergreen,
founder and CEO of
The Profitable Good
Company*

In higher education, including EMBA Programs, the buzz has begun about the impact of ChatGPT, a new generative form of AI that crafts written responses when prompted, based on quickly tapping its access to vast amounts of information.

Is ChatGPT friend or foe for those who are striving to create a transformational educational experience for students? The answer to that depends.

“If you are trying to teach the same curriculum the same way, ChatGPT could present a problem for you,” says Evergreen.

Those who think about the educational objectives and consider how ChatGPT and other AI-related technologies can further those goals could strengthen their impact. “The educational methods might change, but the objectives can be even better now aided by technology.”

AI offers the potential to enhance student learning in several ways:

- Summarizing and identifying key points from a lecture or presentation



“It’s through a more human future that we can harness the economic potential of AI, as opposed to using AI and happening to steer it at a better future.”

BRIAN EVERGREEN, THE PROFITABLE GOOD COMPANY

- Quickly finding past lectures or specific comments or references from past lectures
- Automatically generating citations and formatting them according to citation style

Educational programs, especially those with a leadership focus such as EMBA Programs, also face a larger question than application of the technology in the classroom. How can they prepare leaders to take advantage of AI and other emerging technologies in ways that strengthen their organizations?

One important step involves defining and focusing on the abilities that will help leaders effectively marshal new and emerging technologies to their organizations’ benefit, says Evergreen. Other possibilities? Imagine what your program might look like if you built it from scratch based on emerging leadership needs, as well as ask faculty to think about the ways AI and other emerging technologies impact their disciplines and the potential adjustments to their courses.

Leaders don’t need to be practitioners of AI or the next greatest technology, he says. They do need to excel at a host of other key skills: Setting a vision that inspires everyone in the organization, navigating vast amounts of information and hype to discern the real and meaningful pieces, facilitating teams with the diverse representation that supports innovation, encouraging collaboration, and empowering others.

Classroom experiences and assignments can reinforce skill development, such as asking EMBA students how they would approach considering a new technology without much information behind it yet.

“That would be an example of saying, how do you clear through the fog between what’s true, what’s not, what’s relevant. Is this so urgent that you have to throw money at it? Or is it more like a child prodigy and we need to wait-and-see?”

21st century leaders will need to serve more as visionaries and facilitators than their predecessors, uniting people behind a common purpose and creating the right organizational dynamics that tampers the desire to control decisions and instead activates the power of collaboration. “I call it moving from being divided by expertise to having the multiplication of expertise.”

This type of leadership emphasizes social systems and draws on non-traditional management disciplines, such as philosophy and the history of reason. Evergreen encourages graduate management programs to integrate social systems sciences into the traditional management curriculum.

While students increasingly may expect management programs to include an AI component, students such as those in EMBA and related programs don’t necessarily need a deep dive into any one technology, he says. Instead, a focus on strategy—where technology may fit and what it might mean—proves more valuable, he says.

“Rather than trying to constantly update the curriculum every year with tons and tons of content, or creating a whole new class each year on whatever the latest fad is, look at what are the long-lasting leadership principles that will help leaders regardless of the technology, and have the class perform exercises applying those principles to the latest technologies in collaborative, Socratic discussions.”

How important is strategic, forward thinking? Evergreen points to Microsoft, which spent a billion dollars on a start-up that had no revenue and 100 employees and that had just transitioned from a non-profit to a for-profit organization. At the time, most organizations would question the wisdom of that investment. Now that Open AI brought ChatGPT to life, Microsoft is integrating it into its products and shareholder value has risen.

“I think that the ability for leaders to be able to see those kinds of opportunities, discern the credibility and trustworthiness of those who are bringing them information about these new technologies, these new opportunities, and map them back to the broader vision—those are the leadership skills that EMBA students will be so glad to have as they go out to navigate the world.”

EMBAC UPDATES

Looking ahead

EMBAC expands its reach with a new member type

Earlier this year, EMBAC members approved some significant changes to the EMBAC bylaws, the association's governing document.

One change adds a secondary membership focus on other targeted degrees for working professionals, which allows EMBAC to consider for membership schools with programs that offer executive master's degrees and specialized master's degrees for working professionals.

Any membership candidate must meet the bylaws' description of prospective students: "These graduate business degree programs are directed at fully employed, experienced

professionals generally with more than five years of meaningful post-baccalaureate work experience."

The potential benefits of adding members from these programs include a better understanding of prospective students and market changes, exposure to new best practices, and more opportunities for networking and collaboration.

"The emergence of new offerings to serve the working professional market is apt to grow," says Michael Desiderio, EMBAC executive director. "The ability to keep up with and see beyond the immediate market shifts is critical for the ongoing success of our members."

Since EMBAC's start 42 years ago, the market has shifted from predominately corporate sponsorship, or a business-to-business model, to predominately student sponsorship, or a business-to-consumer model. With more offerings in the

Bylaws Vote—2023

Amending EMBAC bylaws, specifically Article II and IV, was recently brought to a vote in an effort to reflect EMBAC's evolution and the organization's global view. The results of the vote are shown below.

133

TOTAL NUMBER OF
RESPONDENTS

ARTICLE II

Regarding Academic Members—change the language stating "that focuses exclusively" to "with a primary focus"

YES

91.73%

NO

8.27%

Add language which states: "Other Academic Members: Acknowledging that experienced professionals are now served by a wide array of degree offerings, our secondary focus may be on other degree offerings targeted for the working professional (e.g. Executive Master's programs, etc.)"

YES

89.47%

NO

10.53%

ARTICLE IV

Modify point 1, changing the word "manage" to "govern"

YES

95.49%

NO

4.51%

Modify point 2, stating that two voting board members must be from outside North America, to read as follows: "As a result of the election, the Board shall generally consist of eleven voting members, at least four of whom shall be from a non-US member institution." (The provision of having four non-US member institutions will commence with the 2024 election cycle)

YES

91.73%

NO

8.27%

“We realized that our busy members don’t always have time to make the most of the available survey information, and we set out to find a solution that allows them to tap key data more quickly.”

MICHAEL DESIDERIO, EMBAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

marketplace for working professionals, including representation from adjacent markets helps EMBA Programs learn more about the how prospective students view these options and what elements of those options most appeal to them.

“EMBAC’s member base is no longer homogenous, as programs have had to evolve to meet the changing needs of the marketplace,” he says. “EMBA Programs can learn from different offerings and vice versa, which ultimately could lead to schools better serving the end user, the student.”

Before the vote, EMBAC hosted several virtual discussion forums for members to share their thoughts. Some members voiced concerns that the move might dilute EMBAC’s well-established culture of sharing. Adding new voices, though, can enhance EMBAC’s core strengths, says Desiderio.

“The collegial culture of EMBAC is not something we will compromise,” he says. “It is something we hope to expand, amplify, and grow.”

EMBAC plans to start slowly, investigating the interest of schools with qualifying programs in membership and identifying possible programming and other initiatives of interest for professionals in the new member types, as well as current offerings of benefit.

“We are looking forward to reaching out and beginning discussions to find the best synergies in what we now do and in what we could do.”

Members also approved another important change: Increasing the required number of non-U.S. board members to four. This provision will take effect with the 2024 election cycle.

“This change reflects the global growth of EMBAC in the past several

decades,” says Desiderio. “We have members from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, and we are excited to add more international diversity to our leadership.”

Introducing new EMBAC dashboard

The data display you need

When EMBAC Research Committee members thought about improvements to reporting results of the EMBAC Membership Program Survey, they wanted a new tool that offered ease of use and quick comparisons of key data points.

Now a select portion of the world’s most comprehensive source of data on EMBA Programs soon will be available in an online interactive dashboard. EMBAC plans to unveil the dashboard during the 2023 EMBAC Conference, set for Oct. 1-4 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

“The EMBAC Membership Program Survey offers such a rich resource for EMBA Programs,” says Michael Desiderio, EMBAC executive director. “We realized that our busy members don’t always have time to make the most of the available survey information, and we set out to find a solution that allows them to tap key data more quickly.”

Desiderio often hears from members who use survey results as part of their decision-making process and as support for change initiatives. “The dashboard enhances queries to assist in making more informed decisions.”

The dashboard will include the following popular data points:

- Admissions funnel performance comparison of peer segments by region and program cost



- Class profile demographic comparison of peer segments by region and program cost
- Program delivery profile (length, frequency, technology) comparison of peer segments by region and program cost
- Market and market share comparison to peer segments by region and program cost

From approximately Oct. 31 to March 31, EMBAC will pilot the dashboard with aggregate data from the 2022 EMBAC Membership Program Survey. During that time, all academic members will have access. Schools must have purchased or purchase a license for Power BI Pro, the software that runs the dashboard.

On April 1, EMBAC plans to migrate data from the 2023 EMBAC Membership Program Survey to the dashboard and limit access only to those EMBAC members who completed the 2023 survey.

“We hope all academic members will take advantage of the dashboard during the pilot ‘free play’ period,” says Desiderio. “We look forward to their feedback and to continue exploring new ways to bring valuable industry data to members.”

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In sunny Arizona this summer, it's hard to not think about the weather, which has reached 117 degrees Fahrenheit, or 47 degrees Celsius. The great news: The heat will fade away, and by the time you arrive in Scottsdale to attend the EMBAC Conference, which takes place Oct. 1-4, milder weather will greet you. Oh...it will still be warm—hot if you come from cold climates—but the desert air is dry, and the evenings are just stunning in October!

Hot-topic conference plenaries...

Regardless of the weather, thanks to the great work of this year's Conference Committee you are in for a treat! We are offering four plenary sessions, instead of our traditional three in the face-to-face world. And each speaker promises to provoke your thinking and enhance your knowledge when it comes to several of the hottest topics in the EMBA world right now!

...And other hallmarks and highlights

The conference also offers a host of concurrent sessions on diverse topics and, of course, networking, both hallmarks of the EMBAC Conference. Plan to attend and learn from the speakers and from your peers as you discuss your challenges and successes in the hallways, at lunch, and during breaks. Reconnecting with “old” friends and making new ones is part of EMBAC's DNA, so do plan to join us for another memorable event.

One final thing about this year's conference. We plan to showcase a new tool at the conference, which we believe will usher in a new way of leveraging our research. In collaboration with the EMBAC Research Committee, EMBAC is developing a prototype of an interactive dashboard that makes it easier to tap and compare valuable key data from the EMBAC Membership Program Survey (see story on page 15). It helps bring survey metrics to life. We believe this dashboard represents the future path for our core research study, and experimenting with it sooner than later makes good sense. Look for pilot launch details soon.



EMBAC 2023 Conference
OCTOBER 1-4
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA



Face-to-face AND virtual

Thanks to the various host schools throughout the world, we returned to a vibrant lineup of regional meetings in a face-to-face format. While I had the privilege to attend most of them, this year's tight scheduling between meetings made it impossible for me to participate in all regional meetings. As usual, the amazing buzz at all of them was the same...sharing in person what's happening in your region remains a valuable opportunity for members.

While we are happy to return to face-to-face, like EMBA Programs, we also acknowledge the benefits of virtual programming. EMBAC continues to expand our virtual offerings because it allows us to deliver relevant content to our members on a more frequent basis. This year our offerings range from expert-led sessions to hot topic sessions with our board members to EMBAC committee overviews to more in-depth Virtual Short Programs. Visit our virtual programs page (<https://embac.org/programs-virtual.html>) for more details.

I would be remiss I didn't share my thoughts about some significant changes that members approved earlier this year.

Deeper dive into bylaws' changes



First, with an eye toward furthering the diverse and inclusive nature of the EMBAC board, members approved a bylaws' requirement for a minimum of four non-U.S. board members on our board at any given time. In truth, even without this requirement, EMBAC's history is strong as it relates to diversity and our board of trustees. However, by requiring it, we're making an overt commitment that this is our new way of operating. We appreciate the membership supporting this change.

For the first time in our history, members also approved a bylaws' change to include a new academic member type that is not an Executive MBA Program. Recognizing and acknowledging that the working professional education market

continues to evolve, EMBAC will launch carefully crafted efforts to add MS programs targeted to the executive and working professional populations.

We believe that by doing this, we will create additional value for our existing members. Adopting best practices across program platforms happens today organically. It makes sense to try to accelerate this best practice sharing, to formalize it, as a way of keeping up with a shifting education landscape where many institutions are offering a portfolio of programs. Again, we appreciate the membership supporting this change. We now will begin the slow, methodical process of pursuing qualified institutions that offer these other degree types. And to be clear, EMBAC continues to aggressively pursue EMBA Programs that are not yet part of our family.

I want to acknowledge the voices on all sides of the bylaws' changes. Our culture embraces sharing and openness; I so appreciate each and every member who shared their thoughts and ideas as we prepared to bring these proposed changes to the membership for a vote. There seems to be a great deal of polarization in the world today; it is so refreshing to be part of an organization where we can disagree and still embrace each other and move forward side-by-side with the same goal of improving and growing together!

Strategic reflections

Finally, at EMBAC's June board meeting, an outside facilitator walked us through an exercise of thinking about where we are today and where we may be going tomorrow. This exercise was so energizing, and so necessary, that we plan to institutionalize it as a part of how we do business each year.

As leaders we know tending to what needs to be done to keep the enterprise going can keep us from taking time to pause and reflect on the future. I hope you consider taking a similar action for your own program and organization...it is time so well spent!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Desiderio'.

Michael Desiderio
Executive Director



CREATING IMPACT

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Goizueta Business School, Emory
University

Texas A&M University, Mays
Business School - MBA Programs

Texas McCombs Executive MBA

University of Washington, Foster
School of Business

MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT

Four outstanding
plenaries on hot
topics: AI, diversity,
disruptive innovation

Concurrent sessions
with the latest best
practices

Time to network
with colleagues from
throughout the world

Great location:
Hyatt Regency
at Gainey Ranch,
Scottsdale, Arizona