

GME: TODAY & TOMORROW

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

DOING MORE WITH MORE

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by LIAISON

Doing More With More

Thank you for reading this issue of *GME: Today & Tomorrow*, the magazine dedicated to the art, science and industry of graduate management education (GME) admissions. In light of all that has transpired during the COVID-19 crisis, I wish nothing but the best for you, your institution and the people you care about. I hope you're doing great and feeling optimistic about the future.

By its very nature, of course, the future is uncertain. But the pandemic seems to have made us more anxious than ever to know what the future holds. We want to know when we'll return to our offices and classrooms. We want to know whether international students will return in significant numbers, and whether today's undergrads and employers will still see value in an MBA. We want to know what a "new normal" might look like.

I don't have all of the answers, but I do know this: Many of the "old ways" of doing things in GME recruiting and admissions will no longer serve our purposes in the future. Rather than assuming that best-fit applicants will discover our programs on their own, for example, we need to leverage new and better ways of helping them find us. And rather than maintaining a myopic focus on the challenges facing our individual institutions, we must broaden our vision to encompass all of the most urgent issues and opportunities facing GME as a whole.

Why? Because I believe that by coming together to achieve shared goals in communities such as BusinessCAS™, we will always be able to "do more with more."

I hope you enjoy the articles in this issue of *GME: Today & Tomorrow*, each of which offers insights on how to get more and better results with more and better resources at your business school.

Sincerely,



Toby McChesney, Ed.D.

**Chair of the BusinessCAS Advisory Board
Senior Assistant Dean, Graduate Programs**



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY
LEAVEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



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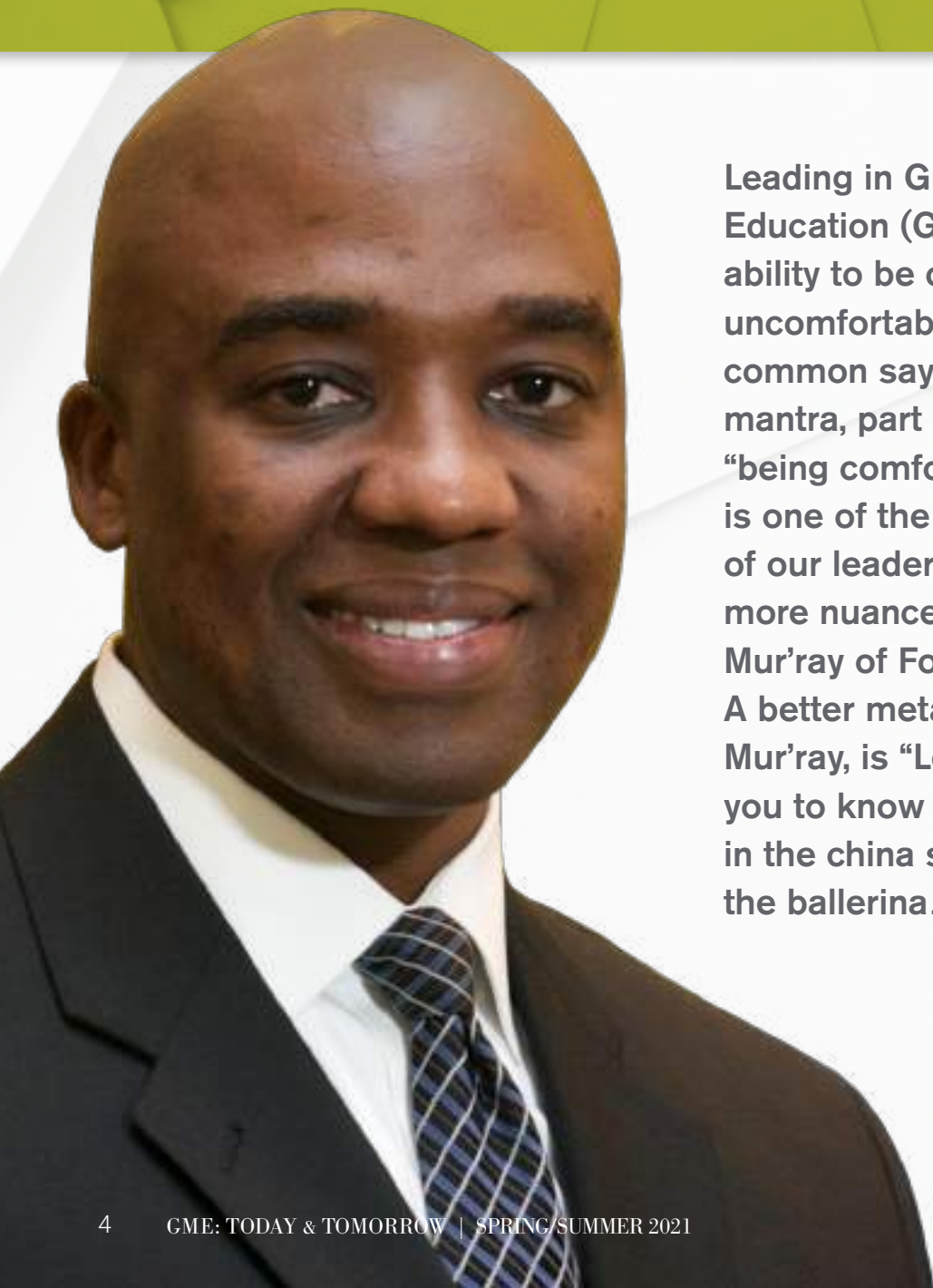
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**GME: TODAY
& TOMORROW**

Meet the Board: Going Beyond the Curriculum with Lawrence Mur'ray

FORDHAM
THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Gabelli School
of Business



Leading in Graduate Management Education (GME) requires the ability to be comfortable being uncomfortable, or at least that's the common saying in the field. Part mantra, part aphorism, this notion of "being comfortable with discomfort" is one of the defining characteristics of our leadership roles, but there's more nuance to it, said Lawrence Mur'ray of Fordham University. A better metaphor, according to Mur'ray, is "Leading in GME requires you to know when to be the bull in the china shop, and when to be the ballerina..."

That drive to find balance through the right mix of bold action and reflective analysis is the binding thread in the tapestry of achievement and leadership Mur'ray has woven during his professional career. Mur'ray is currently serving as the Senior Assistant Dean of Graduate Admissions and Advising for the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University, but you may know him from his impact at schools like the Eller College of Business at the University of Arizona, the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, or at UNC Kenan-Flagler, where he led the development of one of the first undergraduate specialization tracks. But despite this history of success, the past is certainly not Mur'ray's primary focus, and he emphasized that "Leaders have to break the traditional hierarchies of the past in order to take their organizations into the future."

Mur'ray feels that the current and future value of GME is extremely high, particularly in light of the disruptions caused by the pandemic and political unrest. He sees the pandemic as a fulcrum for the way we think about change, and he notes that there have been years of discussion around developing offerings in business education that operate in different modalities. Now is the time, Mur'ray urged, to embrace new offerings that are dynamic enough to meet the needs of a rapidly changing workplace. Degree programs won't disappear in Mur'ray's vision for GME, but they will be supplemented with offerings that meet students where they are. So what else does Mur'ray see coming for GME?

GME & Technology

The variety and sophistication of offerings in EdTech have ballooned in recent years, complicating leaders' abilities to source effective solutions without doing extensive research on each option. This complexity will be one of the biggest barriers in GME if leaders can't figure out how to work around it. Mur'ray suggested that "GME needs to determine how to leverage all the tech that's out there right now, and more importantly, how to standardize its use so colleges and universities have a clear path on how to succeed with tech partners."

GME & Operations

Business school operations have become remarkably complex, with goals that sometimes stand in direct tension with each other, and with field-level best practices being tied up mostly in anecdote and conference conversations.

GME can learn a lot about how to address these challenges, however, by looking to the very training that we offer our students. "Looking to areas like portfolio management, process analysis, and traditional consulting inquiries could really help universities actively build better processes and quickly develop their own best practices," Mur'ray explained.

GME & Innovation

While many in the field approach conversations about innovation in GME with some hesitation because of the way "innovation" as a term has become a vaguely defined buzzword, Mur'ray's approach is more measured. "Where are there new programs and practices that should become the standard across the field? Where are the innovations taking place that can help us infuse more business principles across industries? How can we think about what our students need in five years as a way to develop activities for today?" These are just some of the questions Mur'ray has used to lead conversations about why innovation is so important to the future of GME.

Mur'ray sees the future of GME as exceptionally bright, but noted the importance of acknowledging the disruptive period we're in. "COVID will be a fork in the road for business schools; we've had years of conversations about the need to innovate in our offerings, but those who do not use this moment to embrace change and find ways to innovate will be left behind," he asserted.

For Mur'ray, leadership is the key to the success of GME in the future. As an autodidact and avid mentor, he sees GME leaders as having a broader charge than enrolling and graduating students: "The function of a school of business is to create transformational experiences for students that go beyond the curriculum," he advised.

As leaders across the full spectrum of GME functions grapple with the complexity of creating leaders who can solve the complex challenges of now and the future, facilitating transformation beyond the curricula of our programs is an aspiration to be shared by all. ■

Liaison International's Acquisition of Othot Raises the Bar for Data-Driven Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention

Advanced analytics platform enables more informed decision-making in higher education

On April 21, Liaison International announced it had acquired Othot, the leading provider of the nation's most advanced analytics platform for predictive modeling and prescriptive actions for colleges and universities. As an EdTech leader, this step boldly confirms Liaison's intent to support the full student lifecycle, which in the post-COVID era means helping institutions manage net tuition revenue and sustainability.

"We have always known that to be successful, our campus partners need visibility and a clear understanding of the challenges institutions face today, and perhaps more importantly, they need to foresee new challenges that they will face tomorrow," shared George Haddad, Founder and CEO of Liaison, as he reflected on how Liaison's combined technology and services help campuses navigate the challenges of limited resources and gain the ability to see around corners. "With Othot's powerful AI and machine-learning capability to better inform modeling in real-time, we are even better equipped to help institutions ensure their enrollment and retention success and plan for their futures."

"Othot combines modern machine learning with comprehensive and rich data sets to help our partner schools thrive," said Fred Weiss, President and CEO of Othot. "Our analysis of the upcoming demographic cliff — and the many other complicating factors — indicates the need for predictions and prescriptions about each individual. This will not only drive admissions, but retention as well, since every tuition dollar will be more important to weather the coming storm. Based on what they've shown throughout the last three decades, Liaison is best positioned to unite these facets."

"By leveraging modern technology (AI and machine learning), Othot stands apart from the historical approach to modeling financial aid and retention," added Craig Stanford, Chief Strategy Office at Liaison. "Together with prescriptions, users are guided to take the most effective action, be it an award amount or an intervention to ensure they maximize efficacy."

"Othot gives institutions complete transparency, control and dynamic updates in real-time, based on what is happening in the market now versus acting on what happened in prior years," Stanford advised.

Othot's Enrollment, Student Success and other solutions join Liaison's expanding family of strategic enrollment management solutions, which includes their Centralized Application Service (CAS), Enrollment Marketing (EM) and the recently acquired TargetX (CRM).

"When you consider how impactful these tools are on their own, the impact they can have together is astounding," shared Jamie Hansard, Vice President for Enrollment Management at Texas Tech University. "As superusers of both Othot and TargetX, we have been able to leverage these tools in real-time to make strategic decisions and act on those factors that will have the most impact on recruiting the individual student. Our 6% year-over-year freshman increase in enrollment during the pandemic is just one proofpoint. I look forward to seeing how together they will help us implement an even more transparent and results-focused approach to our strategic enrollment priorities." ■

Don't Miss the

BUSINESSCASTM by LIAISON MEMBER SUMMIT

In the four years since the BusinessCAS Community was founded, our members have revolutionized how they manage recruitment, admissions and enrollment and more importantly, how they are envisioning the future of global business leadership.

You are cordially invited to join us for the first annual BusinessCAS Member Summit
on Monday, July 12 from 2-5 p.m. ET.

This is our chance to celebrate the progress we've made so far and continue our work toward realizing our shared vision.

We look forward to hearing your perspective on and offering you insight into:

- ✓ How to leverage our GME Community and its strategic partnerships to further your own work on your campus.
- ✓ What tomorrow's GME applicant pool will look like based on data-driven predictions from our Annual BusinessCAS Applicant Report.
- ✓ Which research efforts will make the most significant impact on our industry as a whole and how and when we plan to undertake them.

Registration is free for BusinessCAS Community members and their colleagues.

Non-BusinessCAS members who are interested in attending, please connect with BusinessCAS Executive Director Robert Ruiz for pricing information.



GME Perspectives: A Conversation with AACSB's Caryn Beck-Dudley

PRESENTED BY **BUSINESSCAS** by LIAISON & **AACSB** Business Education. Connected.

BusinessCAS Research Director Stephen Taylor spoke recently with Caryn Beck-Dudley, CEO of the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Among other topics, they discussed AACSB's new business-accreditation standards, the societal impact of business schools and the role of non-traditional programs in business schools.

Stephen Taylor (ST): AACSB recently revised its business accreditation standards. What's important to know about the new standards?

Caryn Beck-Dudley (CBD): We started on this re-imagining accreditation path about two years ago when I was chair of the Board of Directors. It encompassed people from all over the world; we had hundreds of listening sessions. Everybody's pretty excited. The 2020 standards launched in July, and we have 21 pilot schools right now involved in finding out what's working.

Really, the changes are principles-based, not rules-based. We've doubled down on mission. Your mission might be to your local community, your mission might be to your country or your mission might be an international mission or a global mission. We allow schools flexibility in that choice. The one thing that I'm most excited about is the societal impact. There's an expectation now that business schools — in their

teaching, in their community outreach and in their research — must demonstrate societal impact.

ST: How can business schools make a societal impact?

CBD: Your positive societal impact doesn't have to be altruistic, although many schools across the globe do give away some of their products. I think about how much time we spend at work in business schools. If we're not creating a positive societal impact, what are we doing? What are we spending our time doing? I am very anxious to see how business schools tell us what they're doing because we really don't have a good catalog of that yet. How are they inspiring others? What are we doing to really step up to the plate to solve the world's most pressing problems and innovate for change? Business schools have the ability to do that — and they have done it — but, boy, we've been quiet about it.

“AACSB wants to ensure that students are well-trained for the future workforce, not for the workforce of the past. I think credentialing and certificates have a big role to play in that.”

ST: Do you think that business schools are going to continue to be under the kind of increased pressure to deliver revenue that came out of the pandemic or will that pressure somehow decrease after the pandemic?

CBD: No, it doesn't go away. The revenue consideration is always going to be there. But what I'm really excited about is that we've only just begun to see the role business schools can play throughout the university — and in combination with governments and business — to really solve problems. We've really seen that with the pandemic.

Business schools have, in many situations, been like islands within universities. The business school itself is perceived as a cash cow, an island, that just generates money for the rest of the university. That type of thinking won't work in the future.

Business schools have to be partners across the university. The rest of the university can learn from a lot of business schools, for example, about how to do online education.

ST: A lot of schools are trying to figure out how to fit certificates into their offerings. What's your take on that?

CBD: AACSB cares about everything that has to do with business education, but we're not prescriptive on certificates. In fact, the new standards allows for a lot of flexibility, a lot of creativity and a lot of innovation in the certificate-badging world.

A lot of business schools are now offering credentialing and certificates, and they're doing short courses with or without their executive partners. AACSB wants to ensure that students are well-trained for the future workforce, not for the workforce of the past. I think credentialing and certificates have a big role to play in that. We're hoping to see a lot of experimentation with interdisciplinary programs as well.

ST: We need well-trained, compassionate leaders who are focused on ethics. Is GME, as a field, prepared to take on the challenge of producing leaders who are more compassionate and ethical than some of the leaders we've seen in the past?

CBD: I hope so. You can get business subject matter just about anywhere now. There are thousands of great YouTube videos on how to read a financial statement. So the role of the professor, I think, is changing. The role is becoming that of a mentor, a coach, a facilitator. It involves emotional intelligence and the practice of being ethical. Faculty members need to understand that that's our value. If we don't have that value, people really can get a free business education without going to business school. Business schools really need to focus on the human skills that we need to move forward because the technical skills change every couple of years.

“The business school itself is perceived as a cash cow, an island, that just generates money for the rest of the university. That type of thinking won't work in the future.”

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ST: What you're saying about the value of business education is universal. But how does it apply to AACSB efforts in other parts of the world?

CBD: AACSB now has 42 members across 13 countries in Africa, including seven accredited members in Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa. We're also co-sponsoring a student entrepreneurship competition. We do a lot of work with African business organizations, business schools, academy management, etc. A lot of times, innovations come from places where they don't have a history of business schools and business education. That creativity is an opportunity for us. Business schools that are over 100 years old can actually learn from schools that don't have that history.

We're not going to tell them how to run business schools. It's a partnership. They give us their best ideas and we give them our best ideas. We really collaborate to determine what the business school of the future will look like worldwide. I think business schools have a huge opportunity to make an impact. What we teach, how we think about solving problems, how we move goods through society. All of that is incredibly valuable. We saw that with the vaccines. Scientists created them, but somebody had to distribute them. Somebody had to market it to get people to understand that they can take it. You have to package it. Those are areas where business schools really thrive.

ST: What's your take on diversity, equity and inclusion in business education right now?

CBD: Some schools are doing it really, really well, but most of us are not. We're still rooted in our history and our culture. Diversity and inclusion is all about social justice in a global sense. What we're talking about with diversity and inclusion and equity is really a sense of belonging. How do you ensure that people within your organization feel like they belong, have a seat at the table and can help make the organization stronger? We're going to start incorporating that type of thought into all of our AACSB conferences so people can have really hard conversations about really hard topics. We require all of our accredited schools to focus on diversity and inclusion and to not discriminate against people, of course. But, when I watch the news, that does not seem to be enough. ■

“What are we doing to really step up to the plate to solve the world's most pressing problems and innovate for change? Business schools have the ability to do that — and they have done it — but, boy, we've been quiet about it.”

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Why “MORE” Was the Word of the Year for BusinessCAS in 2020

The final numbers are in and they're impossible to ignore: BusinessCAS experienced tremendous growth in 2020 — and the momentum continues to build.

The Facts Speak for Themselves



284%
INCREASE
IN BUSINESSCAS
APPLICANT POOL
(2019-2020 cycle compared to 2018-2019 cycle)



24%
INCREASE
IN PARTICIPATING
SCHOOLS
(since October 2020)



291%
INCREASE
IN APPLICATION
VOLUME
(2019-2020 cycle compared to 2018-2019 cycle)

BUSINESSCAS
by LIAISON

EXPERIENCED **NO DISRUPTIONS** DURING 2020, despite the extraordinary challenges the year presented.

More Knowledge, More Insights

BusinessCAS also **more than doubled the number of** live and on-demand webinars it offers for GME professionals. Highlights included:

GME Perspectives: A Conversation With John Byrne featuring the Editor-in-Chief of Poets&Quants
An unscripted discussion about rankings, GME advocacy and more.

Back to B-School: What It Will Take to Thrive This Fall and Beyond
GME enrollment leaders from Texas A&M University and Kansas University outlined adaptations they made during the pandemic and predicted which of these changes will stick moving forward.

Doing More With Data: Innovative Strategies to Inform Strategic Decision-Making
Admissions leaders from George Mason University School of Business shared innovative tools they use to capture enrollment data in real-time to better inform strategic decisions.

New Opportunities for the Future

On top of all that, Liaison's acquisition of TargetX in October simultaneously broadened the reach of BusinessCAS and consolidated some of higher ed's most popular tools under one platform — at a time when other companies were closing because of the pandemic.

The numbers don't lie: BusinessCAS helped more business school programs and applicants achieve their goals in 2020 than ever before — and this can do the same for your GME programs in 2021.

Enrollment in Focus: Achieving More Sustainable Growth Through BUSINESSCASTM

by LIAISON

BusinessCAS Research Director Stephen Taylor recently hosted an online forum in which GME leaders and experts discussed how Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business achieved impressive enrollment growth during the pandemic thanks to its participation in BusinessCAS.

Stephen was joined by Toby McChesney, Ed.D., Senior Assistant Dean of Graduate Business Programs at Santa Clara and Chair of the BusinessCAS Advisory Board, and Rick del Rosario, Liaison's Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management Solutions.

Here's an edited version of their conversation:

Stephen Taylor (ST): How does your outlook for Fall 2021 differ from your experience in Fall 2020?

Toby McChesney (TM): Fall 2020 was great for us. We had a lot of success at Santa Clara. But Fall 2021 is still very murky, especially now with a second wave of the pandemic hitting India. It's just an onslaught. And it's very unfortunate and sad. For schools like Santa Clara that really depend on students from India, it may require another shift. I feel like we're having déjà vu from this time last year. We're slowly moving in the right direction, but we're still dealing with the pandemic.

Rick del Rosario (RD): In my role, I speak with a lot of business programs, engineering programs and other grad programs, and the assumption had been that we might have fewer Chinese students, but that Indian students would continue to attend. Now we're hearing from a lot of schools — especially schools

that are using BusinessCAS — that they have been able to shift their strategies quickly and effectively by focusing on regional and domestic recruitment.

What's happening in India is a major concern for a lot of business programs. How you do to react to that? I think a strategy that involves being targeted in your efforts, being able to pivot quickly and being responsive will be critical for any business program in 2020 and beyond.

ST: How did BusinessCAS support your program's enrollment goals for Fall 2021?

TM: The increases we saw in Fall 2020 in our evening MBA program, online MBA program and Executive MBA program — which increased by 75% — were really staggering. Our rankings have definitely shot up given our enrollment growth. We've been working hard as a team to really increase the brand recognition of Santa Clara University Leavey School of Business.

When we adopted BusinessCAS in 2018, we were one of the first schools to do so. Now there are about 60 different business schools in BusinessCAS so far. In the past year, our revenue has grown \$6.1 million. The business school and the university have been able to avoid furloughs and layoffs because the extra income coming in from the business school was being shared with the rest of the programs. The Provost's office is very excited about that, of course, and about the overall increase in applications. We had the largest volume of applications ever at the grad business level — a 48% increase. And we had an increase in deposits.

“Coming together to talk about trends and support each other is going to be important for the GME community.”

Toby McChesney, Ed.D.

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TM: When we shut down in March 2020, the university decided that only one person per school, the dean, would be allowed to go to campus to get mail. My dean was allowed to go to campus twice a month to get mail for us. If we had not been on BusinessCAS, she would have had to schlep 30 bins of mail to my house and then schlep more somewhere else. It would have been a logistical nightmare.

ST: What can we learn from the past year?

TM: I'm very competitive but, at the same time, I think we need to come together as a community and help our students, especially now with the pandemic. We need to help our international students apply rather than create barriers for them.

Coming together to talk about trends and support each other is going to be important for the GME community. I'm excited about more schools joining BusinessCAS because I want this platform to have all the data it possibly can — on GMAT scores and GRE scores, on testing or no testing, on curriculum and programmatic changes. The more business schools that join BusinessCAS, the more intelligently we can tell our deans and provosts about what schools are doing. That's what I'm excited about. It's about coming together as a community, telling a story and reminding students that BusinessCAS really helps GME as a whole.

"In the past year, our revenue has grown \$6.1 million. The business school and the university have been able to avoid furloughs and layoffs because the extra income coming in from the business school was being shared with the rest of the programs."

Toby McChesney, Ed.D.

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Toby McChesney, Ed.D.

ST: Can the interview process be integrated in BusinessCAS?

RR: Yes! Liaison recently formed a partnership with Kira Talent which gives programs the ability to manage and create a more personalized interview experience by using Kira's technology and services. It gives applicants the opportunity to respond to a series of questions and then helps you move them through the funnel. Reviewers can watch a recording of their answers and then record their decision. It's a great way to streamline the process. ■

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: The BusinessCAS Applicant Experience

We wanted to know what applicants really think about their experience using BusinessCAS to research and apply to business school programs. Here's what they had to say this year:

"Simple to use."

"The website is really clear and easy to use. Also, the design is appealing."

"It's a nice system and very convenient."

"It was very user-friendly."

"Good work!"

"It's easy."

"Quick process!"

"A very good system, and modern. I liked using it for my application."

SEE BUSINESSCAS IN ACTION
Register for Our Next Demo now at
liaisonedu.com/cas-see-it-in-action-demo

THE ROLE OF MISSION IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

by Stephen Taylor
Research Director

BUSINESSCAS
— LIAISON —

THEN & NOW

The title of “business school” has meant many different things through its history in the US: an alternative secondary school, a secretarial training organization, a place to do correspondence courses via mail or even an online-only course provider focused on technical skills. Whatever the focus, the purpose of business school has always been to impart key knowledge and skills to students. These students, in turn, join both commercial and governmental enterprises to make individual contributions — and sometimes, to lead those organizations.

The expectation for an immediate, practical application of coursework is one of the main historical drivers of enrollment in collegiate schools of business, and the natural competition that developed around providing the highest-quality, highest-ROI education drove innovations that have led the MBA to be one of the most recognized and highly sought degrees in all of higher education. The successful careers of the graduates have a lot to do with driving that interest, obviously, but there is another driver at the heart of business school success: mission.

MAKING A POSITIVE STATEMENT

The mission statements of business schools have always focused on the broad impact made by graduates of their programs and consumers of their research. With often-sweeping statements about the impact of their

graduates on the world, business schools acknowledge that the broader expectation society has of them is to make a positive difference.

Indeed, the calls for schools of business to play a broader role than training alone started almost as soon as there were schools of business. One particularly salient call for a broader role comes from a 1971 issue of *The Journal of Business Education* by two faculty members at Penn State. In Joseph P. Giusti and George R. Lovette’s article, “The Business School in Higher Education,” they argue that business schools will be the primary determinant of success for rapidly growing economies. The argument has two main premises: that business schools must play a critical, practical role in higher education, and that the rapid pace of change can be leveraged to national success if business schools train their leaders well.

The broader role of the business school advocated by Giusti and Lovette is based on the notion that not only do schools of business offer specialized practical training, but that training “develops competencies needed to enter an occupation and grow,” centering the need for skilled workers at the core of higher education’s focus. The authors go on to argue that developing a basic understanding of the practices and purposes of business is a critical need for everyone, and they support this by noting that the pace of change in the economy is increasing, and that demography will drive a giant need for skilled practitioners and managers.

A NATIONAL ADVANTAGE

Clearly, to these prescient authors, the role of the business school should grow on campus because of both immediate needs of businesses

as well as the future needs of the population. The authors punctuate their argument by claiming that the increasing pace of change can and should be used to national competitive advantage. Gaining sustainable advantage by harnessing the forces of change, however, is only possible if business schools can train effective generalists skilled in change management.

Taking on an expanded role in higher education and training effective generalists is part and parcel of the success of business schools over the last 50 years. The field has grown to be one of the largest graduate disciplines by enrollment; online programs have become so prolific as to be commonplace and at the core it has remained the classic generalist-with-expertise training of GME. So many outstanding leaders have innovated through challenges and changed the world for the better through training in Graduate Management Education that one may reasonably wonder what’s next for schools of business.

But among the many, many differences between 1971 and 2021 is that major problems in the world have been laid bare in our most recent period of disruption: the global inequalities of pandemic response, the struggle for social justice and the dramatic challenge of misinformation have all been on vivid display for all the world over the last year. There has never been a greater need for leaders who are not only trained for a specific

set of knowledge, skills and abilities, but who also have a commitment to compassion, an understanding of inclusive leadership and a will to make the world a more equitable place.

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS — AND EXPECTATIONS

The authors of “The Business School in Higher Education” could not have been more perceptive about the ways in which business education would transform the US economy and help to define notions of national competitiveness. But what’s also different about 2021 and 1971 is that there is connectivity between people and easily accessible global communication channels that would have been unimaginable to authors writing during a time when computers were often the size of cars. The accessibility of information and of each other has transformed our expectations for the role of institutions in day-to-day life and the business school is now much better poised to take the next step in its evolution: playing a broader role in society.

Many have claimed that the current moment of opportunity presented by the disruption and upheaval of recent years will push business schools to have greater influence on their campuses and on the world. In this way, the past and future align well, as we believe GME currently has the greatest potential of any other academic discipline to make the world a more just place. Today, GME has the opportunity to redefine the way business engages with the entire world, training compassionate leaders who can approach globally networked problems with dynamic critical thinking and their humanity.

As the authors of the ’71 paper projected, “If the business school continues to adapt its programs to meet the differences of incoming students as well as the fluid demands of society, the business school could very well be at the commencement of its greatest period of expansion and public service.”

Business schools have been many things over their long history. Now is the time to leverage the unique abilities and offerings of GME to not just redefine their role in higher education, but also to guide the world to its greatest potential. ■

PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE

MBA Roundtable

FAST TRACK
CURRICULUM INNOVATION 
A W A R D

REFLECT ON SUCCESS

Since 2011, the MBA Roundtable has handed out its Innovator Award to “promote initiatives that advance innovation in GME education and recognize institutions that drive change in the field.” This year’s award, which is being sponsored by BusinessCAS, will be announced at the 2021 MBA Roundtable Annual Curricular Innovation Symposium on October 28, 2021.

With that in mind, *GME: Today & Tomorrow* recently spoke with past winners and finalists about their Innovator Award experience and outcomes.



2013
WINNER

GME: Today & Tomorrow: The Student Leadership Initiative (SLI @ Foster) was designed to connect the curricular and non-curricular elements of MBA students’ lives in order to create a richer, more cohesive and more effective learning experience. What inspired that submission?

Dan Turner, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Master’s Programs (DT): At the time of the submission, the Foster community was looking for a way to further our shared commitment to enhancing students’ ability to elevate the impact of their ideas on the world. Prior to 2013, Foster School leadership had pursued a school-wide focus on so-called “soft skills,” an effort aimed at accelerating the leadership development of students in the Foster community. Leadership felt that submitting an MBA Roundtable Innovator Award application for SLI @ Foster would serve as a productive means for galvanizing community support behind our soft-skills plan, pre-commit the Foster community to action and draw attention to the initiative from those both inside and outside the Foster community. We believe that participation in the MBA Roundtable Innovator Award process achieved those goals. We are not the same community that we were in 2013. We’re better together, better now and better for our involvement. More importantly, we’ll be better tomorrow, too. We still have a long way to go in living our shared purpose of fostering leaders, insights and progress to better humanity, but our community is better positioned than ever to take up that challenge based upon the active student engagement that our Innovator Award participation supported.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: How has the Student Leadership Initiative evolved since your school’s Innovator Award submission in 2013?

DT: The single biggest change in SLI @ Foster since inception is that it has become an integrated part of Foster’s community culture. Most current Foster students and recent alumni would likely respond, “What’s that?” if asked about their SLI @ Foster experience. SLI @ Foster has become so ingrained in the student experience that it is no longer recognizable as a stand-alone initiative. Students and recent alumni simply cannot envision the Foster community any other way. We consider that a tremendous sign of success.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: What did you learn as a result of participating in the Innovator Award?

DT: I think the most replicable thing we learned from participating in the MBA Roundtable’s Innovator Award process relates to the enhanced impact and concentrated effort that a public community commitment to innovation affords. The public community commitment to SLI @ Foster galvanized students, recent alumni, stakeholder organizations, employers, staff, faculty and school leadership around a common vision. The advice, questions and feedback we received about SLI @ Foster from colleagues in the Graduate Management Education community as a whole broadened our thinking, made us ask deeper questions of our community and made the initiative better and more impactful as a result.

2012 WINNER

GME: Today & Tomorrow: You received the 2012 MBA Roundtable Innovator Award for your submission describing the LeaderCORE program at the School of Management, University at Buffalo, State University of New York. What inspired you to participate in the Innovator Award?

Erin K. O'Brien, Assistant Dean, Chief Enrollment and Marketing Officer (EO): We felt we had a program that went beyond the basic leadership training that's found in most full-time MBA programs, and that we had created a program that delivers real, tangible, impactful personal and professional growth. LeaderCORE is a credit-bearing, opt-in program, and our data shows that LeaderCORE UB MBAs have better career outcomes than our non-LeaderCORE UB MBAs do. Taken all together, there was definitely something to shout about!

GME: Today & Tomorrow: LeaderCORE is an individualized program to help students assess and develop competencies judged by employers to be at the core of leadership success. Could you please elaborate?

EO: We developed curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular LeaderCORE components to harness the power of in-class and experiential learning. The model has more than 150 leadership competency behaviors — this gives our students something they can model themselves against and a target they can move toward. We incorporated a strong coaching element and a final student defense of the knowledge they generated during the program, to create a comprehensive, immersive leadership experience that leaves an impression well beyond graduation day. Learn more at mgt.buffalo.edu/leadercore.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: What did you learn as a result of participating in, and winning, the Innovator Award?

EO: Winning the MBA Roundtable Innovator Award allowed us to share with the greater B-school world the impact that competency-focused leadership development can have on students at all levels. It has also helped raise the visibility of our school and MBA program. We are grateful to the MBA Roundtable and its executive director, Jeff Bieganek, for always sharing successful, leading-edge business curriculum with the whole GME industry.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: How do the insights you gained from LeaderCORE and the Innovator Award apply to the work you do as a member of Liaison's BusinessCAS Advisory Board?

EO: The Innovation Award spirit didn't stop when we won the award — it continues to this day. As a LeaderCORE coach and mentor, as well as assistant dean and chief enrollment officer of our school, my perspective is shaped every day by the LeaderCORE lens, focusing on furthering my own leadership competencies and bringing success for our school. As a member of Liaison's BusinessCAS Advisory Board, I am always grateful to be able to work with Liaison and fellow GME colleagues in the same way, using our leadership to understand the real, everyday challenges we face as business schools in a dynamic marketplace and to approach problem-solving in a creative way to bring about mutual success.

2011 WINNER

GME: Today & Tomorrow: Olin Business School received the 2011 MBA Roundtable Innovator Award for its submission describing Critical Thinking @ Olin, which was developed to address the need for more advanced critical-thinking skills among MBA graduates. What inspired you to participate in the Innovator Award?

Jackson Nickerson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Organization and Strategy (JN): Joe Fox, the head of Olin's MBA Program at the time, alerted me to the award application. Joe was very active in the MBA Roundtable. He also saw the benefits of Critical Thinking @ Olin, the initiative that was the basis of our MBA Roundtable submission. Following Joe's advice, several of us put together an application.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: Critical Thinking @ Olin was designed to contribute to a "fundamental and functional transformation" in student abilities and Olin's MBA program. How has it achieved those goals?

JN: In speaking with many recruiters as well as senior managers, we discovered that MBA graduates in general — not just from our school but all schools — performed poorly at figuring what the "real" problem or opportunities are in organizations. Without honing a skill in comprehensively formulating challenges — what we called "problem formulation" — leaders typically adopt solutions based on surface symptoms. In essence, leaders frequently solved the wrong problem and would later have to cycle back and try again. Obviously, this cycling wastes time and money. It also undermines an organization's culture and can breed cynicism about leadership capability. Creating value requires solving the "right" problem the first time.

MBA students who came through the required short course on Critical Thinking @ Olin were sensitized to the importance of problem formulation and also learned and practiced a variety of methods designed specifically to help them formulate and solve the right problem the first time. Very quickly, recruiters saw a difference in our students. Employment rates 90 days after graduation soared into the ranks of the top five. This statistic, along with a variety of others indicators, gave us confidence that the program likely achieved its goals.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: What did you learn as a result of participating in, and winning, the Innovator Award?

JN: I experienced an awakening — a new awareness of what was missing not only in the MBA curriculum but also in my research, which is in strategic management. This initiative changed my research trajectory as well as my career. I am now known in my field as someone who focuses on problem formulation and have several research publications in this area. As the MBA Innovators Award came early on in the development of the initiative, the award gave me personal confidence and encouragement that we were on to something big and important, which was worthy of continued attention and advancement. Without the process of the award, I might not have realized the value to be gained by continuing to invest in these ideas. ■

MOVING APPLICANTS DOWN THE FUNNEL AT



Before the University of Oklahoma's Price College of Business ("OU Price") adopted BusinessCAS two years ago, "our application was not the most user-friendly, and the user experience was not great," said Erin Wolfe, Senior Director of the Center for Graduate Student Success.

In addition to offering a poor user experience for applicants and staff, the old system at OU Price didn't notify admissions that students were in the pipeline until they submitted an application.

"We were kind of blind," Wolfe said. "We'd be surprised, which is not great from a recruiting perspective. Your most in-demand leads are the people who are most engaged, and we had no idea who was engaged."

GREATER INSIGHT, MORE DATA

As a result, one of the institution's biggest drivers for moving to BusinessCAS was the ability to get deeper insights into who is in its pipeline. That, in turn, would allow OU Price to develop more effective outreach campaigns designed to get prospective applicants further down the funnel.

"We chose BusinessCAS because it gave us the ability to see who was completing applications and it gave us the ability to reach out to them to answer questions and get them much further ahead in the process," Wolfe said. "It also gives us data at the end of the recruitment cycle to see where we are losing applicants. Then we can determine whether there is something that we can do to make the process smoother."

Wolfe also liked the fact that BusinessCAS allows students to apply to multiple programs with just one set of application materials.

"BusinessCAS lets students choose the right programs for them," she said. "I like the ability of students to look at multiple programs and choose the best for them without having to do a ton of research on hundreds of MBA programs out there."

Wolfe also said that by eliminating much of the paperwork and administrative burdens historically associated with application processing, BusinessCAS allows admissions staff to spend more time engaging with students.

"We're using that time wisely to help reinforce our efforts in that area," she said.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Those results weren't achieved in isolation. OU Price worked closely with other departments on campus to implement BusinessCAS, most notably the institution's Graduate College and IT department. With help from Liaison, the implementation went well.

"It's not easy to do something like that at a university," Wolfe said. "Not because people don't want to do it, but because it's a huge institution with a lot of legacy systems everyone is tied to. I was really pleased and thankful that we were able to do it in just a few months."

"The team at Liaison was great," she said. "Before working with the MBA program, I worked on strategic planning for the University and I was responsible for various technology implementation projects. I've worked with a lot of software developers and I work with a lot of implementation teams. I thought the Liaison team was very responsive. They did what they said they were going to do and we stuck close to the timeline."

The result is a better recruitment and admissions process at OU Price.

"BusinessCAS gives you more control over your students' user experience and it gives you more control over your engagement with prospective students, from your homepage on BusinessCAS all the way through the application. That then allows you to make better decisions about how to recruit students, how to move them through the pipeline and how to better serve them before they actually click the submit button. Most universities just don't have that." ■

"BusinessCAS lets students choose the right programs for them."



Erin Wolfe
*Senior Director of the Center for Graduate Student Success
University of Oklahoma
Price College of Business*

HOPE ON THE HORIZON:

A Closer Look at International Graduate Student Enrollment Trends

New research released by CGS gives institutions optimism for the future of international students pursuing graduate degrees in the U.S.

Although she acknowledges that “it has been a challenging year for everyone,” Suzanne Ortega, President of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), remains optimistic about the future of international graduate student enrollment in the United States. Much of that optimism is based on findings contained in the recent CGS report, “International Graduate Applications and Admissions: Fall 2020 and “Impact of COVID-19 on Graduate Education Access: Selected Results from the 2020 NAGAP/CGS Survey of Graduate Enrollment Professionals” which was supported by Liaison.

The first study focused on a series of questions regarding U.S. international and domestic enrollment trends, outreach efforts and graduate student pipeline issues. The 360 colleges and universities that participated were all members of CGS, the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS), Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS), Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools (NAGS) or Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS).

(Continued on next page)

The NAGAP/CGS survey, which was sent to active NAGAP members in November and December 2020, asked a series of questions about U.S. graduate enrollment trends in Fall 2020, outreach efforts, and graduate school pipeline issues, among other topics. A total of 217 GEM professionals working across the graduate schools, university office of admissions, professional schools, academic colleges and academic programs responded to the survey. Approximately 60% of them identified themselves as lead GEM professionals on their campuses.

“Some Really Good News”

During a Liaison-sponsored roundtable discussion of the report, two themes dominated the conversation: Why graduate enrollment declined in Fall 2020 after an increase the previous year, and how the number of deferrals this year may affect international graduate student recruitment and enrollment in the months ahead.

“The report points to some really good news,” Ortega said. “But for the global pandemic, we almost certainly would have seen higher international graduate enrollment in Fall 2020. But of course, there was a significant decline in enrollment, likely due to COVID-19 and continuing challenges obtaining visas. We ended up seeing a large number of deferred graduate admission offers, which in turn are likely to have implications for future enrollment.”

The View from Campus

To share insights into the CGS survey findings — and what they portend for U.S. graduate education — Ortega participated in the February forum with several graduate admissions leaders, including K. Jill Barr, J.D., M.Ed. (Associate Vice Provost, Education and Senior Assistant Dean, Graduate Enrollment at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County) and Scott M. Lanyon, Ph.D. (Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education at the University of Minnesota). The conversation was moderated by Hironao Okahana, Ph.D. (Associate Vice President, Research and Policy Analysis at CGS).

The following is an edited version of their discussion.

Key Data

Among the findings contained in the report:

- Total applications from international graduate students increased 3% in Fall 2020, on a year-over-year basis. That trend was driven primarily by increases at doctoral universities.
- After rising 4% in Fall 2019, first-time international graduate student enrollment plummeted 39% in Fall 2020.
- First-time international enrollment in business and engineering programs declined 41% and 52%, respectively.
- First-time enrollment of students from China and India dropped 37% and 66%, respectively.
- At the master’s and certificate level, 12% of offers of admissions were deferred.
- At the doctoral level, 10% of offers of admissions were deferred.
- The total number of deferred admissions and first-time enrollment for Fall 2020 exceeded Fall 2019 first-time enrollment.

Hironao Okahana (HO): How are institutions balancing the deferred admissions from Fall 2020 and the new set of applicants for Fall 2021?

K. Jill Barr (KJB): In many ways, this is a faculty dilemma related to teaching capacity. At my institution, faculty are aware that there are a lot of students who wanted to come in Fall 2020 but couldn’t make it, and there are a lot of applicants for Fall 2021. So faculty are negotiating with higher administration about opening up more sections and finding faculty to teach those sections. To make it slightly more complicated, we still haven’t defined exactly how much instruction will be in-person versus online this fall. So it’s a little bit of a crap shoot right now. We anticipate being able to deal with pent-up demand, but we’re probably not going to be able to meet the complete amount of demand that we have for some of our high-demand courses, particularly computer science and information systems. But we’re doing the best we can to get higher numbers that we’ve had in the past.



Scott Lanyon (SL): Our faculty are admitting based on resources — how many T.A. slots there are, how many research assistantships and fellowships they anticipate getting. For our Ph.D. programs, competition will be stiffer this year because there will be fewer new students admitted. We have 845 students who deferred last fall. Should they decide to come, that significantly decreases the number of students that these programs are going to be able to admit.

HO: How is the racial climate in the United States shaping international admission trends right now?

SL: At Minnesota, we’re paying careful attention to that. George Floyd was murdered here, not far from campus. It’s very much on everybody’s mind, so we do anticipate hearing about it. Oddly enough, we haven’t been hearing about it in talking with international students. I spoke to a colleague recently who’s been working to help students in Sub-Saharan Africa put together their applications for grad school. He said he hadn’t heard any concerns from students in Africa who were considering coming to the U.S. Instead, he was hearing concerns about China, where there have been instances of serious backlash against students from Africa after some of them tested positive for COVID-19. This is a very complicated issue to be thinking about, but the bottom line is that we haven’t been hearing from students about it. I’m very surprised by that.

KJB: Many of the students we attract for our master’s-level programs are very focused on career opportunities. Their focus has been a lot more on visa acceptance, Optional Practical Training (OPT) and whether or not they’ll be able to get internships. Though they may be aware of the struggles we have in this country with racial reconciliation and some of the awful things that we’ve been seeing, I think they’re still focused on their end goal, on what they’re trying to accomplish. One of the things we can do as institutions, however, is to really make a concerted effort to have these conversations and to recognize systemic racism that we may have never really thought about before. Regardless of whether or not our applicants are demanding us to act, it’s incumbent upon us to do so.

HO: What are you hearing from international applicants these days and how has it changed over the last several months?

KJB: There's a lot of confusion. Under the previous administration, people were waiting for the next shoe to drop, whether that meant being stopped at the border, or not knowing if visa offices would be open or whether OPT would be going away. Even though we're under a new administration, there are still concerns about the stability of immigration policies in this country and what the future holds for them. I think people are starting to feel a little bit better, but there's still very much a wait-and-see attitude.

SL: We keep telling international students what great opportunities there are here and how enthusiastic we are about having them join our communities. But that's not what they see in the media from the U.S. I think it's going to be a little while before there's real trust about what their experience in the U.S. is going to be like.

KJB: We are trying to roll out the welcome mat in a way we have never done before. We're much more engaged with applicants and admitted applicants than we have been in the past.

SL: Generally speaking, international students in the U.S. love their experience here. One of the most important things we can do as institutions is facilitate communication between our current students and prospective students.

This is definitely a year when staying in touch with frequent communication is going to be important. Remaining silent because we don't have all the answers is bad. All it takes is to reach out to students and say, 'We know you're stressed about this. We don't have the answer yet, but we really value you. We have your back and we'll do our best.' That's really important to do. If they don't hear from us, they just stress that much more. ■



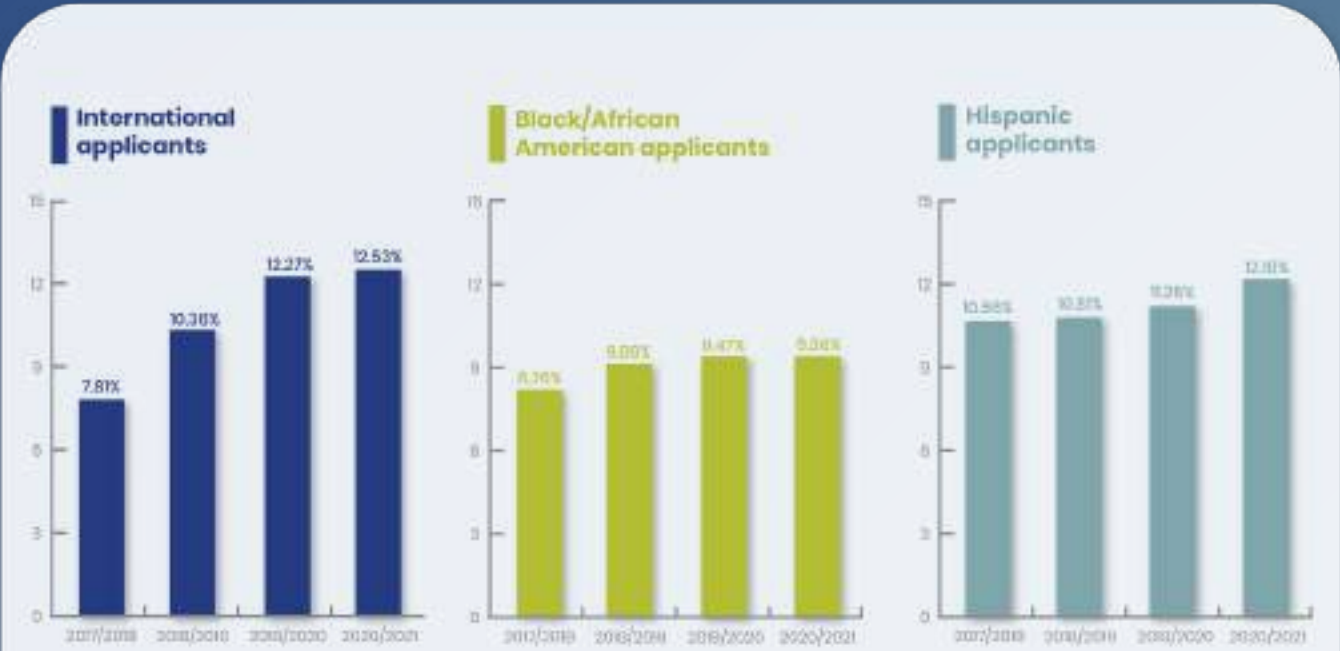
The International Graduate Applications and Enrollment Admissions: Fall 2020 report was co-authored by Enyu Zhou, Ph.D. (Senior Analyst at CGS) and Janet Gao, Ed.D. (Research and Program Associate at CGS). You can read the entire report [here](#).

The NAGAP/CGS survey was administered by CGS in partnership with NAGAP (The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management) with support from Liaison International. The research brief Impact of COVID-19 on Graduate Education Access: Selected Results from the 2020 NAGAP/CGS Survey of Graduate Enrollment Professionals, which was prepared by Janet Gao under the direction of Hironao Okahana, can be found online [here](#).

Who's Using a CAS?

Increasingly Diverse Pools of Applicants*

As more graduate programs strive to increase the diversity of their applicant pools and student bodies, many of their admissions leaders are scrambling to find effective ways of achieving that goal. A quick look at the recent success of Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS) — as illustrated in the following charts — answers that question.



* Source: Liaison International, 2021. Data represents the number of applicants using a Liaison Centralized Application Service (CAS) to apply to a graduate program during the respective time frames. Results include data from 26 unique CASs.

To learn more about how joining the BusinessCAS Community can help your program enjoy the benefits associated with attracting and enrolling a more diverse class each cycle, visit businesscas.org.

The BusinessCAS Advisory Board: Meet the Leaders Guiding GME Forward

The BusinessCAS advisory board is comprised of subject-matter experts from campuses across the U.S. These GME professionals provide strategic guidance and drive the vision for the Centralized Application Service for GME programs. These leaders focus on innovation and collaboration with the Liaison team, and they serve as a connection to the greater GME community.



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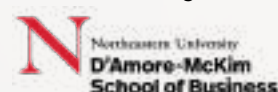
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