

GME: TODAY & TOMORROW

FALL/WINTER 2021

GETTING AHEAD OF CHANGE



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Classes Are Possible
With This Inquiry-to-
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by LIAISON

GETTING AHEAD OF CHANGE: IT'S OUR BUSINESS

I hope you'll agree that it's finally time for those of us in the GME and business communities to retire the old expression, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." While it's true that our top priorities will continue to be admitting and hiring the strongest candidates possible, the manner in which we need to approach those goals has changed forever — and I believe for the better.

In my new role as Vice Provost for Graduate Programs at Santa Clara University, I am also seeing firsthand that change is happening not just in business schools, but in other areas such as law, engineering, education and more.

With more companies with remote staff and more competition in the world of business education, we are all going to continue to experience even more paradigm-shifting changes in the future. Rather than hoping for a "return to normal," we now need to embrace change and stay one step ahead. The days of reacting to new challenges and disruptions are behind us. The era of inspired leadership and innovation is upon us. I think that bodes well for our students, institutions and the professions they serve.

With that in mind, I encourage you to read this issue of *GME: Today & Tomorrow* with a fresh perspective and a willingness to reconsider how your institution identifies and pursues its most important goals. That's exactly what we in the BusinessCAS Community have been doing, and I'm excited to share some examples of our re-energized initiatives in the following pages.

I suggest you start with BusinessCAS Research Director Stephen Taylor's thought-provoking piece about our ongoing diversity, equity and inclusiveness efforts at Liaison and beyond. Our "Then & Now" feature takes a retrospective look at how the pandemic has changed the roles and responsibilities of GME leaders, while another article spotlights our recent (and highly successful) BusinessCAS Summit. Yet another presents extensive data from the most recent BusinessCAS Cycle Report, which provides important information to help benchmark your program's progress during the past year. Other "must reads" include an article highlighting feedback from students who used BusinessCAS to apply to their programs of choice as well as recaps of recent webinars hosted by accomplished GME thought leaders.

I also encourage you to share this issue of *GME: Today & Tomorrow* with peers at your institution and elsewhere. Together, we can create the change necessary to remain relevant and prosperous in the months and years ahead. Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,



Toby McChesney, Ed.D.
Chair of the BusinessCAS Advisory Board
Vice Provost for Graduate Programs



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**GME: TODAY
& TOMORROW**

Introducing

TOTALENROLLMENT™

by LIAISON 

Better, more diverse classes are possible
with this inquiry-to-alumni ecosystem.



Twenty-first-century admissions and enrollment offices are challenged by the almost total collapse of standardized testing, the rise of mobile-first and mobile-only classes, the emergence of rubric-challenging diversity requirements and the looming demographic cliff of 2025.

To win in this environment, admissions and enrollment offices need to move from a patchwork set of disparate solutions to a seamless product ecosystem. The right ecosystem streamlines labor-intensive tasks, automates marketing outreach across all media channels and provides enterprise-strength predictive and prescriptive analytics, allowing every office to immediately review results and adjust for the next class, cycle or year. The right ecosystem is also scalable, easy to use and meets your stringent security requirements. This winning ecosystem is Total Enrollment by Liaison.

Not only has Liaison brought together the individual strengths of its award-winning brands — including TargetX, Othot, CAS and WebAdMIT — it seamlessly plugs into other products, services or solutions like Salesforce, Slate, Starfish, Anthology and many others. Read about the CAS + Slate integration on page 6 as an example of the power of this new approach.

A stand-alone tool — or an integration solution

“We’re bringing together what we believe to be the top-producing assets in the market,” said Liaison’s Chief Innovation Officer, Sasha Peterson. “Total Enrollment is built on the idea that search, various follow-up campaigns, data management, application management — all of that — can be delivered to you through a seamless, integrated toolset from Liaison and other vendors throughout the market.”

By unifying all recruitment and enrollment, admissions management, analytics and student success/retention initiatives, Total Enrollment works seamlessly as an all-in-one, stand-alone resource or as an integration solution for the systems your institution already uses.

Actionable, data-driven pathways

Total Enrollment also allows you to manage your student search, application and decision process and student counseling in a system that can provide real-time, data-driven guidance via machine learning to optimize the process and bring about your best outcomes.

With Total Enrollment, you can now focus your time and energy where it should be rather than on the manual tasks associated with recruitment, enrollment and the management of applications and admissions decisions. Find out more at liaisonedu.com/total-enrollment. ■

“The ability to start thinking in a much more holistic way, and a much more critical way, is what we’re hoping to inspire. Total Enrollment creates actionable, data-driven pathways to help you build better, more diverse classes.”



SASHA PETERSON
Chief Innovation Officer



FACT *or* FICTION

Liaison's new CAS integration with Slate enables admissions and enrollment management leaders to access a suite of powerful capabilities to support class-shaping, recruitment and enrollment.

Liaison International recently announced the launch of a new integration with Slate, the customer relations management (CRM) system from Technolutions.

The integration drives class-shaping, enrollment and student success by connecting Liaison's Centralized Application Service (CAS) platform and its complementary services — which institutions use to expand their applicant pools and optimize the flow of prospective students — with Slate, a CRM solution used by admissions/enrollment management, student success and advancement offices at over 1,400 colleges and universities. Institutions that use Slate can now easily automate the import of CAS applicant data into their institution-wide CRM, streamlining the process of adding new and prospective students into broader institutional efforts to increase enrollment, yield and student success.

“Against a backdrop of historic enrollment challenges, we're seeing increased demand for platform-agnostic technologies that can help institutional leaders serve

students more seamlessly during the admissions process,” said George Haddad, CEO and Founder of Liaison. “With this Slate integration, we gain another powerful collaborator on our mission to empower higher education leaders and administrators to advance their goals and outcomes.”



For years, CAS users have been able to combine this application with Slate, and now it's an improved and seamless process... This automated integration between Slate and CAS further empowers leaders in admissions and enrollment management to work more efficiently.”

ALEXANDER CLARK
CEO and Founder

technolutions



Liaison, a Slate Gold Preferred Partner, has in its family of solutions the recently acquired TargetX and Othot and can integrate directly with Slate to improve service to the CRM's users. ■

Meet Board Member **SHARON LYDON**

RUTGERS

Rutgers Business School
Newark and New Brunswick



Role & School

Associate Dean for Alumni & Corporate Engagement, Associate Professor of Practice, Rutgers Business School, Rutgers University

Location

Newark, New Jersey*

Brief Bio

With a career in GME spanning two decades, Sharon Lydon's work has been centered on serving others. Whether it be as a member of the faculty teaching courses or as an internal consultant for one of the world's most successful multinational corporations, Sharon's focus has been on helping others understand the context of their decision making and connecting people and ideas across industries. Currently serving as Associate Dean at Rutgers Business School — she's been with Rutgers since '08 — Sharon has served across a broad spectrum of roles from research and teaching to accreditation oversight and grad program administration. Sharon holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from George Washington University with a research focus on Entrepreneurial Leadership. She has master's and undergraduate degrees from Columbia University and Gettysburg College, respectively. Her corporate experience includes working in the Global Management Strategies and International Marketing departments at Estée Lauder Companies, as well as the consulting practice at Accenture.

Getting to Know Sharon

Known as one of the most affable and approachable leaders in GME, Sharon is widely recognized for her keen insights into what's happening in the industry and for her tireless efforts to support key organizations in the field. She has supported groups like the MBA Roundtable, MACBA, GMAC and others through formal board work and committee service. ■

*Rutgers has campuses in several locations in and around the Newark/Philadelphia area





BUSINESSCAS™

by LIAISON 

2019-2020 Cycle Report

The 2019-2020 BusinessCAS Cycle Report aggregates data for all received and complete applications submitted through the Centralized Application Service during the 2019-2020 admissions cycle (September 10, 2019, through March 31, 2021). This report primarily reflects data for applications to Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Winter 2021 and Spring 2021. Liaison offers it as a resource to participating schools to assist in trend and recruitment analysis, benchmarking and strategic decision-making.

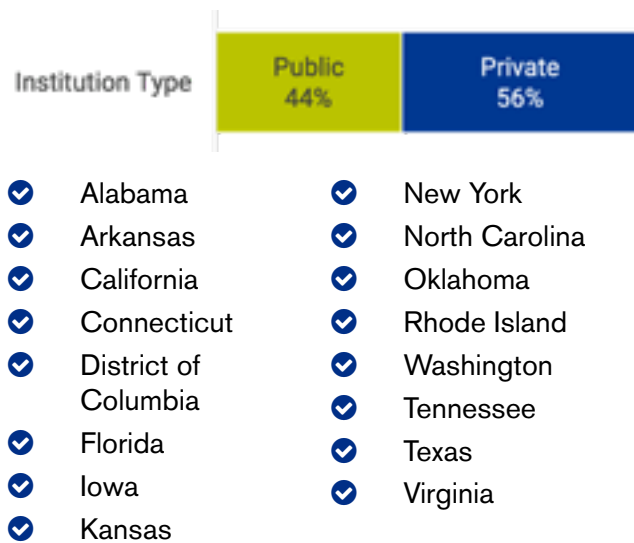
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BusinessCAS Summary

The 2019-2020 cycle marked the third year for the CAS. BusinessCAS has experienced tremendous growth in this time, expanding both its reach across the business school community and the number of students who applied through it.

PARTICIPATION BY STATE AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION:

Participating schools grew by nearly **40%** in BusinessCAS this cycle. The growth expanded the CAS's reach across more states and provided services to a diverse range of research, liberal arts, minority-serving and other types of institutions.



PROGRAM FEE COLLECTION:

The Liaison processing fee for BusinessCAS applications is **\$48**. Participating schools have the option to collect an additional program fee (specific to their institution) as part of the application if they so choose.

Programs Collecting Fees in Addition to Liaison's Processing Fee



Total fees (i.e., Liaison processing fee + school program fee) range from

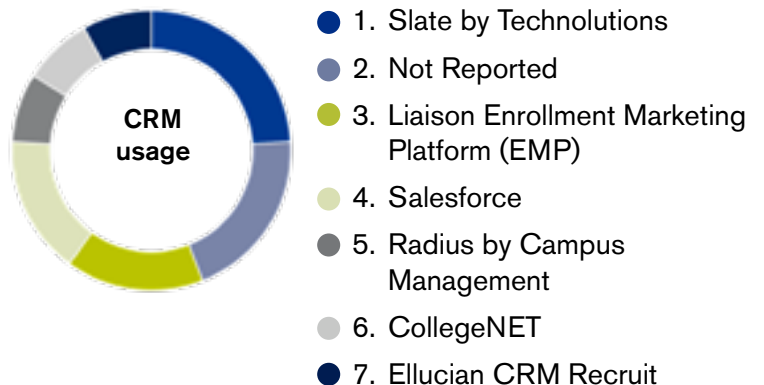
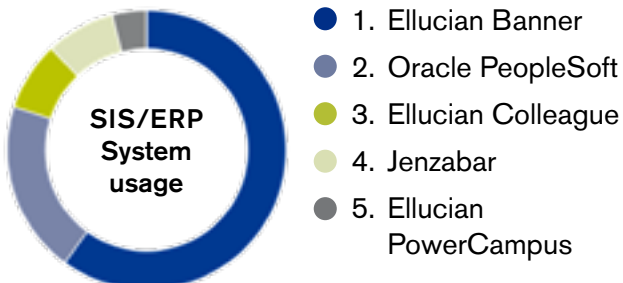
\$50-\$150

For those collecting program fees, the average amount collected is

\$47

SOFTWARE SYSTEMS:

BusinessCAS comes with one of two admissions management software, WebAdMIT or Admissions by Liaison. However, CAS users also have the option to build integrations to their local systems to manage some or all of their communication plans, review process and/or post-admission processes. BusinessCAS users frequently choose to take advantage of Liaison's export tools and move data and documents to their local systems. Here is a breakdown of systems BusinessCAS users currently use:

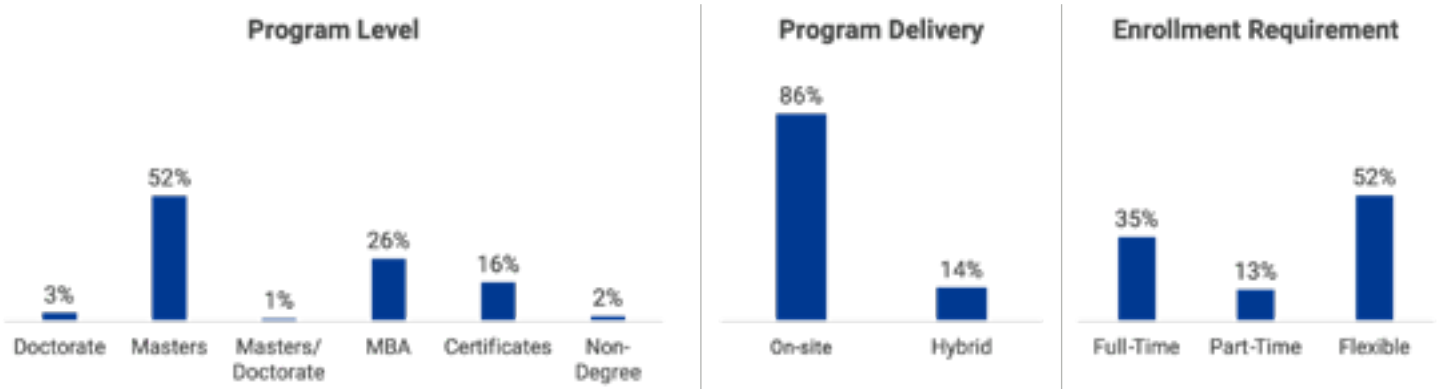


Program Summary

Programs that participate in BusinessCAS reap the benefits of a Centralized Application Service and a community of their peers while maintaining the unique branding and requirements that help them admit and enroll best-fit students.

DESIGNATION DETAILS:

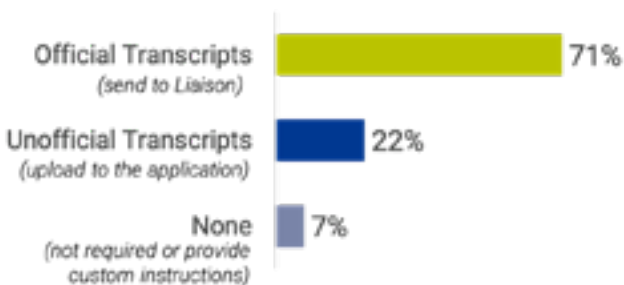
A “designation” refers to how a program is listed and can be selected within the CAS. Each designation allows BusinessCAS users to specify the program name, fee, track, term, population and method of delivery. An applicant submits applications to programs as per these designation listings.



TRANSCRIPT REQUIREMENTS:

One of the benefits of BusinessCAS is that it gives users the ability to set up their transcript requirements such that Liaison can receive and process official transcripts on their behalf.

The 2019-2020 cycle saw a 16% increase in the number of business programs requesting applicants to upload unofficial transcripts compared to the previous year.



Total number of transcripts Liaison processed

	For Submitted Applicants	For In-Progress Applicants
Official US Transcripts	3,129	535
Unofficial US Transcripts	1,341	475
Foreign Evaluations	336	24

RECOMMENDATION REQUIREMENTS:

Letters by Liaison provides recommenders with an easy-to-use experience for submission. BusinessCAS users have the option to choose from several different recommendation types including GMAC’s Common Letter of Recommendation.



Approximately **36%** of BusinessCAS programs did not set up any recommendation requirements for their programs or provided students the option to submit if they chose.

Average number of recommendations required:

Each designation determines minimum recommendations required and maximum recommendations allowed.

⬇️ Minimum – **1.98** ⬆️ Maximum – **2.71**

Average # of recommendations received per applicant **1.35**

	For Submitted Applicants	For In-Progress Applicants
Total number of recommendation letters Liaison processed	8,361	742

Applicant Pool Summary

As more schools joined the CAS, the BusinessCAS submitted applicant pool grew by **405%** from the previous application cycle. As this growth trajectory continues and we ramp up recruiting and marketing efforts to drive qualified applicants to the CAS, we expect steady growth in applicant volume and quality.



16% of applicants, or **1 of every 6**, used a mobile device to access the BusinessCAS application.



Nearly 70% of applicants used Google Chrome as their browser to apply to BusinessCAS.

FIRST-GENERATION STATUS:



30%
of applicants identified themselves as first-generation college students.

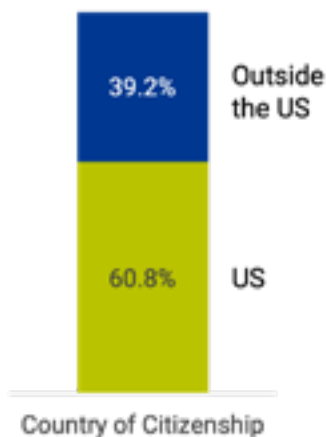
VISA REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants who indicated they would need an F-1 or J-1 visa to study in the US.



COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP:

BusinessCAS received domestic applications from residents of all 50 US states. The international applicant pool drew students from 117 countries. The 2019-2020 cycle saw an **18%** increase in applicants from outside the United States.



Top 5 US States of Residency:



Top 5 Sending Countries for International Students:



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

Although students who attended both US and non-US schools report their credits and GPA, the diversity of grading and credit systems internationally makes it difficult to report averages. The data below reflects academic performance of students who reported their studies at US institutions only.

Average cumulative GPA:

Undergraduate	3.31
Graduate	3.55

Average number of credits earned:

Undergraduate	92.53
Graduate	46.06

BusinessCAS 2019-2020 Cycle Report

Below is a breakdown of the top two self-reported test scores for all BusinessCAS applicants, irrespective of the type of program they applied to.

Average self-reported GRE score (scaled):		Average self-reported GMAT score:	
Overall	315.14	Overall	607.06
Quantitative	159.68	Quantitative	43.35
Verbal	149.41	Verbal	29.41
Analytical	3.27	Analytic Writing Assessment	4.18
		Integrated Reasoning	4.72

TOP 10 UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS:

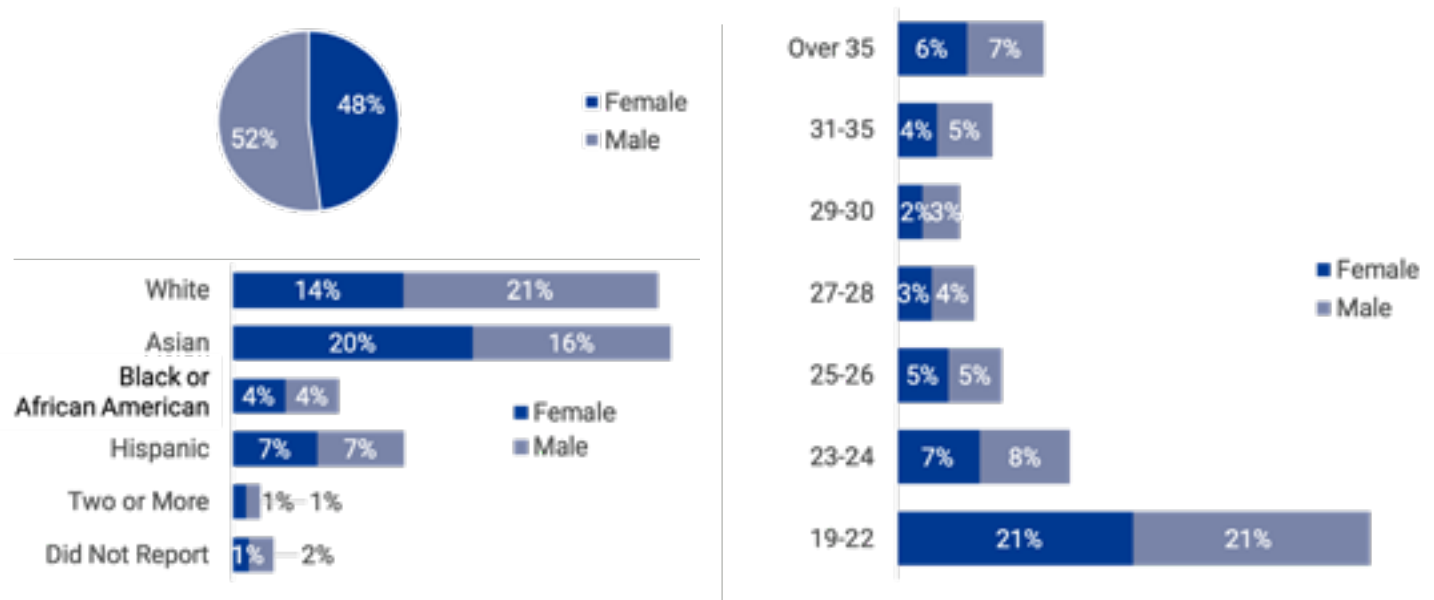
The undergraduate majors for BusinessCAS applicants stayed constant from the previous cycle.

1. Account/Finance
2. Business Administration
3. Business/Management
4. Other/Not Listed/None
5. Economics
6. Engineering (various specialties)
7. Marketing
8. Computer Science/Information Technology
9. Psychology
10. Political Science

GENDER, AGE, RACE & ETHNICITY:

(Percentages <1% not shown)

Similar to 2018-2019, the 2019-2020 BusinessCAS applicant pool is split almost equally in terms of gender.



Conclusion

BusinessCAS was able to generate impressive momentum and results for participating programs during the most disruptive year in recent history. Data demonstrates Liaison's ongoing commitment... We look forward to continued expansion of the BusinessCAS Community and its contribution to graduate management education. ■

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

The BusinessCAS Applicant Experience

Applicants to the 2020–2021 BusinessCAS cycle recently shared their feedback through a short survey about their experience using the Centralized Application Service (CAS) designed specifically for GME programs. Here's what they had to say:

93%

of applicants said **account creation and login** was easy or very easy.

“I will recommend using BusinessCAS to all graduate applicants. I am extremely thankful for the support it provided and the ease of use.”

“A seamless, very straight forward process.”

86%

said the **application process** was easy or very easy.

87%

of applicants said they would recommend applying to programs via BusinessCAS.

84%

of applicants said applying to programs using a common application like BusinessCAS is easier than applying to each program separately.

“It was very easy to use!”

“Very well organized system with plenty of opportunities to make myself stand out.”

“I enjoyed my experience using BusinessCAS.”

87%

said the **payment process** was easy or very easy.

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

85%

said **application navigation and usability** was easy or very easy.

“Very good experience.”

“Everything was smooth and perfect.”

“Easy to navigate.”

“It’s more efficient for all involved parties.”

SEE BUSINESSCAS IN ACTION
Register for our next demo now at
liaisonedu.com/cas-see-it-in-action-demo

BRINGING THE BIG PICTURE INTO FOCUS:



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN GME

In a possibly apocryphal tale, Jonas Salk was approached by a journalist shortly after the Polio vaccine was announced to the nation. Excitedly, the reporter rushed to Salk to ask him something like, “Now that you’ve saved the world, what do you plan to do next?” Salk reportedly replied with the oft-repeated quote, “The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more...” So as business schools around the world began reporting out statistics on their incoming MBA cohorts this fall, and an almost celebratory tone began to appear on school websites and in trade press, one can’t help but be reminded of this idea. By all metrics, GME should celebrate the success of welcoming one of the most diverse groups of students ever; indeed, the best reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more, and there is much to be done.

Across a broad spectrum of schools, there were significant gains announced in the number of students from underrepresented minority backgrounds, increases in the percentage of women in the class — to greater than 50% in some programs — and in students who are part of LGBTQ+ communities. And while some have been quick to point out that these gains are only a statistical point-in-time that will be difficult to repeat, after decades of extensive efforts, GME is undeniably ‘moving the needle’ on DEI efforts in a big way. If GME has figured out how to make progress in one of the most important challenges facing the field during a pandemic, perhaps this year’s success represents some lasting positive momentum.

THE BACKDROP OF SUCCESS

The admissions success this year takes place in an environment in which most DEI conversations have evolved from explanation and justification to a tactical conversation about how best to improve access and inclusion for marginalized groups. These gains are partially the result of tireless efforts from groups like Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT), The Consortium for Graduate Study in Management (The Consortium) and dozens of others. The Consortium, for example, works to improve URM representation in both GME enrollment and in corporate leadership by facilitating the connection between hiring organizations, students and business schools. Their positive impact has been seen across business and academic hiring for more than 50 years, and their organization continues to grow and include more schools and employers in support of their inclusive mission. While early indicators of more inclusive programs are to be celebrated, it is important to remember that it has taken the hard work of decades to get to this point.

One might argue that these statistics and celebrations indicate that efforts to expand the overall student pipeline for GME has been successful, and with good justification. The improvements come on the heels of a record year in application growth for many schools, as reports¹ indicate that most schools experienced an increase in applications: 70% of schools, according to Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC).² Only next year’s class will show if the trends will continue, but consider that schools experiencing these gains are doing so even in the face of uncertainty and portfolio disruption, it may be easy to ignore the progress celebrations of so-called elite schools, but remember that these schools often serve as leading indicators for what others will experience in the next cycle.

Add to the mix another notable improvement this year — applicant profiles³ — and it becomes clear that GME has made significant progress in expanding the pipeline of students through targeted accessibility and inclusion efforts. The point here is that schools are developing the ability to build a carefully crafted cohort, what some might call a “better” class, not only with respect to DEI, but in the traditional elements of applicant profile, too.



Continued on next page

**Bringing the Big Picture Into Focus:
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in GME**
(Continued from previous page)

Against this backdrop of success, here are three areas where GME should make progress by leveraging the momentum of their success in admissions to broaden the DEI conversation for the future:

AREAS OF FOCUS

1 Curriculum

The efforts to develop more inclusive curricula have been intense and ongoing for decades. They have involved the work of a broad spectrum of faculty, curriculum and pedagogy experts, master teachers and many others. These stakeholders and others agree that curricular representation matters, and therefore the centerpiece of DEI success can be in developing programs of study that allow all students to see themselves in case and instructional materials, as well as participate fully in learning exercises.

Exemplars among the many groups focusing attention and energy on developing a canon of best practices for inclusive curricula, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the MBA Roundtable have made outstanding contributions in this space. Not only are AACSB's core values oriented around diversity and inclusion, the most recent standards have been updated to hold schools accountable for their DEI initiatives and outcomes.

This critical step of including DEI efforts in the accreditation process forces all schools to formalize their thinking and approach in this area and represents a sea change in how schools include DEI initiatives in their strategic planning. Like the commitment to DEI seen from AACSB, the MBA Roundtable has played a key role in advocating for more inclusive and accessible curricula in GME programs too. Their commitment to curricular innovation and celebration of DEI initiatives will be highlighted at this year's annual symposium, where award categories include "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Innovation in GME Curriculum."

An inclusive and accessible curriculum is one of the core elements of graduating students who can, through their leadership training, make the world a more just and equitable place. There is outstanding positive momentum here, thanks to the efforts of many, but the ongoing work will be challenging and likely to be necessary for the foreseeable future.

2 Faculty & Staff

A diverse faculty and staff not only create an environment of diverse thought and experience but also bring diverse perspectives to decisions on how best to support students across the full student lifecycle; they also practically support students in their quest to become more understanding, inclusive leaders. Making progress toward a more inclusive faculty and staff is complex and highly context-driven by each institution and its stakeholders, but one organization making a big impact in this space is the Ph.D. Project.



The Ph.D. Project is a non-profit organization focused on increasing the number of Black, Hispanic and Native American faculty in the US. Launched by a conversation in the 1990s between schools and organizations concerned with the lack of a consistent faculty pipeline of underrepresented minorities, the resulting organization is funded and supported by almost 200 universities, a veritable who's-who of MBA students' preferred employers and organizations like GMAC and AACSB. The results of their efforts are impressive; in just two decades since launch, the number of minorities earning Ph.D.s has quintupled, and over 1,000 faculty who are Black, Hispanic or Native American have used their support as part of landing their faculty dream jobs.⁴

In addition to recruiting and supporting a diverse faculty, GME must make every effort to steward human resources by developing a more diverse program staff. Social identity research suggests that institutional affiliation can have an outsized impact on identity formation because of the complex set of conferrals between individual and institution. This identity and affiliation connection is important in a couple of ways. First, we know there is a highly dynamic set of pressures on identity formation during the period of time that most of our students are in their programs. Our goals related to representation paired with our understanding of how much individual identity formation is happening for our students should lead us to advocate for a more diverse staff for the sole purpose of being a more inclusive program or school for our students. But we also know from both research and our own lived experience that individual affiliation with employer is an exceptionally dominant element of Western social cultures. So we can be the example of inclusive institutions not only in our instruction, research and student support, but also by creating inclusive environments for our staff.

We see in an organization like the Ph.D. Project a great example of how effective cross-industry initiatives to create a more diverse faculty can be; there is, perhaps, a growing need for a similarly-focused effort on developing more diverse program staff and inclusive work environments.

3 Social and Environmental Justice Considerations

One of the institutional goals for schools across the GME spectrum should be to develop an expanded understanding of DEI, one that includes the notions of social and environmental justice. Trends reported in the media show students are especially interested in careers with big sustainability footprints. This means leadership roles with organizations focused on environmental conservation or that allow a tangible impact on curbing

climate change will soon dominate the preferences of our students.⁵ Students will thus be choosing schools that can demonstrate this kind of broad understanding of how students fit into a very complex future. GME should respond to this movement by integrating social and environmental justice considerations across faculty, staff, curriculum and all of the key stakeholder groups and core operations.

There have also been recent conversations in GME about shifts in how students are describing their motivations for pursuing a grad degree in business — specifically an MBA — that portend a change in the kinds of programs students want. The conversation here suggests that traditional motivations for GME study center on professional ambition with a nod toward financial gain, while more current anecdotes reveal that students are now emphasizing how a given career path integrates with expectations for a more balanced, less job-focused lifestyle with a career that has a transparent connection to making the world a better place.

This is the ultimate space for GME to live up to the potential and help students build the world they want to see instead of just the world they'll inherit. Schools should seek to demonstrate through their faculty, staff and curriculum that their understanding of DEI encompasses social and environmental justice.

BEING THE CHANGE

Seeking inspiration from one of the most quoted GME faculty members of all time, Peter Drucker might close the conversation with the following: "One cannot build performance on weakness, let alone on something one cannot do at all."⁶ GME can and must build on the successes and strength of what has been achieved through enrollment-focused DEI efforts. To do otherwise is to ignore what students want, what research tells us is coming and our obligation to make the world a more just and equitable place. ■

1. <https://encoura.org/whats-happening-in-the-business-masters-market/>
2. https://www.gmac.com/-/media/files/gmac/research/admissions-and-application-trends/2020_app_trends_survey_report_final.pdf
3. P&Q Business Casual podcast "Harvard's New MBA Class," 9/31/21; <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/harvards-new-mba-class-profile-should-finding-a/id1519099407?i=1000533900422>
4. <https://www.phdproject.org/our-success/milestones-achievements/> (6 Items)", p. 11, *Harvard Business Review Press*
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/06/gen-z-climate-change-careers-jobs>
6. Peter Drucker, Alan Kantrow, Rick Wartzman, Julia Kirby (2016). "Get the Right Things Done: The Drucker Collection

YOU WANTED TO KNOW

BUSINESSCAS[™]

by **LIAISON** 

FAQs



To help you learn more about BusinessCAS, this issue of *GME: Today & Tomorrow* includes answers to several frequently asked questions.
For additional insights, please visit businesscas.org

What is BusinessCAS?

BusinessCAS is a Centralized Application Service (CAS) that allows a student to apply to multiple graduate degree programs on one campus, or to multiple programs across multiple campuses, by submitting a single application for enrollment. The applicant is able to manage the entire process, including submission of supporting documentation, transcript(s) and recommendation requests, as well as answer additional unique questions asked by individual campuses and/or programs, including essays, personal statements, CVs/resumes or other documents of work samples. BusinessCAS is provided by Liaison International, the leader in application management for higher education. Liaison has powered Centralized Applications for nearly three decades and currently serves over 31,000 programs at more than 1,000 colleges and universities.

What are the benefits of using BusinessCAS?

BusinessCAS provides GME institutions with:

- ✔ A single source for purview over all graduate program applications.
- ✔ Customized application for each college and/or program.
- ✔ Creation of dynamic application workflows in Liaison's cutting-edge review and processing software.
- ✔ Reduction of effort to process and package applications for review.
- ✔ Reduction in applicant email and phone support.
- ✔ Reduction in your application processing costs.
- ✔ A single data source to manage for integration to your CRM, SIS and other systems.
- ✔ Data for all graduate programs available from a single source.

Will my school's applicants be able to apply to other programs?

Yes, BusinessCAS provides applicants the ability to research and apply to multiple programs. Research suggests that, due to the competitive nature of admissions, 62% of prospective students already apply to multiple programs. In this regard, a CAS is a value-added service to the applicant and to the participating programs. However, applicants accessing BusinessCAS via your website will be taken directly to your programs first. They would need to take an additional step to view other programs in BusinessCAS.

Will BusinessCAS increase the workload of my school's current staff?

BusinessCAS may give you the opportunity to reallocate your resources. You will likely be able to move away from clerical and administrative tasks to more valuable endeavors such as recruitment, marketing and relationship building. We are aware of no situation where staff have been eliminated due to a CAS.

Will BusinessCAS make admissions decisions for my school?

BusinessCAS does not make any admissions decisions. BusinessCAS is simply a mechanism to gather the data from applicants that you need to make admissions decisions. BusinessCAS will provide data and documents in a ready-to-review format as well as tools like rubric scoring, faculty evaluations and others that can be used in the evaluation of the applications. The service will not interpret or evaluate the eligibility of any applicant. The selection and admission of all applicants is the sole prerogative of each college or department. ■

THE FUTURE OF TESTING IN GME

An Interview With Joy Jones and Walt Jiménez



**Graduate
Management
Admission Council**



BusinessCAS Research Director Stephen Taylor recently hosted a webinar in which “entrance testing” experts Joy Jones (Chief Product Officer and General Manager, Assessments at Graduate Management Admission Council) and Walt Jiménez (Senior Director at Educational Testing Service) shared their thoughts about the role testing will play in the future of GME.

You can watch the entire webinar (as well as others) at businesscas.org/events. In the meantime, here are some highlights from their conversation.

Stephen Taylor, BusinessCAS (ST): How do you view the role of testing in GME admissions? Why do we need it, and what does it do for candidates?

Joy Jones, GMAC (JJ): The data that testing provides is a key ingredient in admissions processes; it serves as a reliable predictor of academic readiness for a program. Testing is important in the GME space, in particular, because a lot of programs have candidates who may have been out of an academic environment for several years. Looking at their GPA as the primary indicator of academic readiness may not give you the full picture.

Testing complements the overall application process schools use to introduce the right cohort and build the classes they want. And candidates consistently tell us that they truly believe testing is a fair, transparent, reliable element of an admissions process that’s consistent across the board. That’s especially true for candidates from other countries or systems who may otherwise find it difficult to understand how they align against other candidates and how ready they are for a program.

Walt Jiménez, ETS (WJ): We know from research and from our experience that a standardized measure like the GRE or GMAT provides an objective piece of information about an applicant. A lot of other pieces of the admissions process, including GPA, can have their own biases. The objective measure that a standardized assessment provides is a particular benefit to those who are coming from a less advantaged background. There’s a need for that kind of assessment information as part of a holistic admissions process.

ST: What's your view on the way testing policies shifted at so many institutions during the pandemic, and what does the future hold?

WJ: Many schools waived test requirements during the pandemic in order to remove barriers for those who were trying to apply to their programs. I don't know that the world will ever go back to the way it was prior to COVID, but we're certainly seeing that many programs are now deciding to re-instate the test requirements that they had made optional. And even those who are not making that decision are realizing that there are serious empirical questions that need to be answered about whether waiving test requirements actually led to the benefits and goals they were hoping for.

ST: What's your advice to people who are trying to reimplement a test requirement? How can programs do that without losing their pipeline?

JJ: It's important to think about what the drivers were for dropping test requirements versus what the expected outcomes were. We need to make sure that we're clear about communicating the rationale for why we moved away from tests and why we see value in the use of tests. I think that will resonate with students. Discerning candidates will appreciate our transparency and honesty about the decision-making process. You need to be clear about how testing fits into their programs and how it affects their opportunity to meet their career objectives. This also gives us an opportunity to move away from some of the other preconceived notions about testing that had taken root before the pandemic. We have an opportunity to actually change the narrative about what a test score means. If we're honest, transparent and fair about our rationale for using standardized tests, I think that will be well received.

WJ: The theme that runs throughout this conversation is the need for education. You need to be clear and explain why you're using test scores and how you use those test scores. Many students still don't quite understand that a test score is just one data point in a much richer set of data that admissions officers consider about each applicant. We have a great opportunity to address these questions and explain how testing can benefit applicants.

ST: What's your response to those schools that say, "Our students last year did fine without the tests."?

WJ: Without test scores, those school had to rely on other information to try to assess applicants. Exclusive of tests, what is the best set of data points that you can look at? Frankly, we don't know whether the admissions processes that were used in this last 18-month-period were as fair as possible.

JJ: Anecdotally, many of those schools have been generally pleased about their admitted classes and they've been optimistic about how those students will fare. But I am cautious about attributing that satisfaction and their initial performance during COVID strictly to the fact that testing was not included in the admissions process or testing was optional. I think a lot of other academic and contextual factors that didn't exist before COVID were at play. For example, there were a lot of changes in grading policies that made the picture even less clear. Eventually, those students will make their way into programs' pipelines and classrooms, and I think there's a lot of uncertainty about their academic preparedness. And so I strongly caution against throwing out something that has been such an important part of the admissions process at a time when there are so many other dynamic elements at play.

The discussion today shouldn't be about going back. It should be about moving forward to a better, more informed model. We should be leveraging what we learned during the pandemic to make sure that we're actually building the best opportunity for our GME community and fulfilling the commitment that all of us have made to be successful leaders in business. ■

“Testing complements the overall application process schools use to introduce the right cohort and build the classes they want.”

JOY JONES



Change



Ahead

For those whose careers focus on the training of leaders, the pandemic has resulted in some uncomfortable realizations about the ways in which leadership can serve as the fulcrum of success against major challenges. Chief among those discoveries is a changing relationship between institutions and individuals, which will have major implications for how we operate and train future leaders. The long-established patterns of exchange between individuals and institutions are being redefined, triggering a shift in the power dynamic that will require the schools of GME to identify new strategic priorities. Put simply, individuals and outside actors — students, firms — now feel increasingly empowered to dictate the way institutions operate, and GME must grapple with this expanded influence. One of the biggest shifts schools will need to make is related to how they receive and process feedback, since many traditional modes of receiving and processing feedback in colleges are committee-bound (and consequently, slow and tedious).

Continued on next page

Consider a recent discussion on the AACSB message board *Exchange* about requiring calculus in the MBA curriculum, which reflects a long-standing tension between managing both external and internal feedback. Students and faculty alike have persistently questioned the practicality of a calculus prerequisite, and leaders are under growing pressure to address the persistent feedback from stakeholders. The AACSB message board debate represents a traditional academic discussion in which “members of the academy” debate the merits of a type of reasoning, a category of skill or the use of a specific tool as both necessary and sufficient for the completion of a specific degree. This is a typical illustration of internal feedback processing among the faculty of a college or discipline, and most will recognize this type of discussion from their academic program committees or department review conversations. A typically slow process, the consensus nature of many committees means that responses to this type of internal feedback often feel more like satisficing than anything else.

And while less established or classical than the calculus debate, consider my personal experience with receiving student feedback on Goldratt’s *The Goal*. This book has been a classic in MBA curricula for decades, and every year I’ve been associated with a business school, at least one student complaint about the book’s sexism was brought to my attention. In the face of claims that a problematic title is the ‘best available’ resource, ultimately this kind of issue travels the traditional committee response described above to seek consensus on a reasonable substitution. Again, this kind of feedback is usually processed internally in a way that doesn’t meet expectations of timely responsiveness nor of operations dynamism.

A more complex type of feedback, that which comes from outside the institution, can be seen shaping the behavior of schools in sometimes unexpected ways. Take degrees in accountancy as a primary example of a discipline where there is a close relationship between schools and the firms that employ graduating students. In recent years, accounting giants like KPMG, PwC and EY have all rolled out partnerships with schools of accountancy in which the firm dictates — creates, in some cases — the curriculum of a degree program. This trend indicates that even when providing consistent feedback on curriculum to a discipline that is closely connected to firms, the response is deemed insufficient, which then drives firms to create and dictate a curriculum to schools. Another trend in accountancy underscores this point further: firms are often more willing to hire accountancy grads out of undergraduate programs with the goal of training internally than they are to hire master’s grads. An agile response to external curricular feedback is imperative to avoid lost enrollment to employers that think they can provide a better alternative to graduate degrees.

When thinking about how GME schools usually take feedback, our “calculus in the curriculum” and “problematic resource” issues are the best-case scenarios for how feedback from individuals is processed. The scenario in which institutions external to the college are influencing — demanding? — specific curricular choices is one example of how feedback sometimes plays out in ways that should give us pause when coming from an institution to a GME institution.

Clearly, the traditional way of processing feedback in GME will not be enough to meet the challenges of ongoing disruptions and redefining relationships between individuals and institutions. We have seen throughout the pandemic — through rapid shifts in delivery modes, changes to curricular requirements and relaxing of admission conditions — that the preferences of our prospective students is likely to play a much larger role in how we train them to be leaders ready for the future. Given the ongoing conversations in the field about the changes we know are coming in the “Future of Work” and what most are seeing from their own staff and faculty, we know that individuals are likely to play a much larger role in the ways in which we operate as employers as well.



Our future as a discipline depends on how we manage the implications of this coming shift, not only in the ways we process feedback, but across the gamut of school operations. What can schools do to get ready?

Embrace Feedback: Ongoing, persistent questions about the relevance of GME training and concerns about ROI should trouble everyone in the field. It's time to embrace the continuous disruption and creative destruction that have defined the field for decades and allow our curriculum and offerings to be dynamically defined in an ongoing dialectic between school and prospect, or school and employer. Finding ways to respond to reasonable feedback across stakeholder groups to innovate novel offerings based on feedback will be a competitive advantage for schools in the coming era.

Build Culture: Talent stewardship and culture beat strategy, or at least those schools who best steward their faculty and staff resources and build strong positive cultures will be the ones who hold a sustainable competitive advantage. With concerns — *and evidence* — of a Great Resignation, an emerging leadership fatigue from ongoing pandemic crisis management and increased pressure from university leadership for enrollment performance, schools will need to shift at least part of their focus. Emphasizing flexible approaches to working while engaging with students on innovative ways to meet them where they are will help schools thrive through the coming disruptions.

Reflect on GME: What are students graduating in GME being trained to do? We know all of the clichés about managing in the future and the VUCA world in which our students will serve as leaders, but the role of generalist leaders is about to become much more important. Not only to build a more just and equitable world, but to lead institutions through this renegotiation of relationship between institution and individual. We need intense critical evaluation of what leaders and specialists will need in order to keep schools offering GME relevant and responsive.

As leaders work through the ongoing pandemic and associated challenges, most have become numb to the once-theoretical notion that disruption was coming to fundamentally shift the future of GME. Leaders in GME have seen for years that the primary characteristic of the marketplace is, in fact, ongoing disruption, an unpredictable cycle of creative destruction in which schools are challenged to shift strategy and operations in response to feedback all while innovating in curriculum and community. But the pandemic has also revealed a coming shift toward individuals dictating the way institutions operate, toward having a more expanded influence on the ways that schools and employers, especially, are influenced by the demands of students.

Preparing for the future is not only about dynamic leadership and improving representation across the many dimensions of a school. It's also about figuring out how to improve the ways we receive and respond to feedback and how to be better stewards of talent. It will require radical reconsiderations of what leadership training looks like for generalists and specialists alike. And if there's any discipline up to the task of redefining for the future how to train the leaders, it's the discipline that has been thriving through disruption for decades: GME. ■



Recap

BUSINESS **CAS**[™]

by LIAISON 

MEMBER SUMMIT

2021

2021: A Turning Point for GME

2021 represents a turning point in GME for many reasons: a return to campus for the fall, the return of international students to campus, the transition from online to blended instruction for some programs and a big uptick in applications for many schools. Against this backdrop of turning points and transition, the BusinessCAS Community held its first Member Summit this summer to discuss what's happening in the field and how best to prepare for it.



A Bold Vision for GME

During the opening session of the Summit, BusinessCAS Managing Director Robert Ruiz laid out our bold vision for supporting GME:

- Our Vision for GME is one where each school is comprehensively achieving its unique mission. We believe that schools offering programs in grad management education have the greatest capacity to improve the world by making it a more just, equitable and sustainable place. The world needs leaders who can solve complex challenges in a way that GME trains them to do. We want to support the schools training these leaders.
- The tradition of GME is the training of generalists – outstanding problem-solvers who can lead in any situation, and now we've expanded to the training of specialized experts in the tools of analysis, systems and the individual functions within the discipline. This generalist training means that for every person, there is a GME program that can fit positively into the narrative of their professional journey, and we want to support accessibility to those programs and their potential.
- In our vision, GME is training the leaders who help us take the world into the next chapter, one that will address the inequalities and challenges of the past AND the present. We are committed to partnering with schools focused on training leaders who will help meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The Power of Community

- One of the defining characteristics of the GME Community is the willingness of leaders to share information, best practices and developing trends across schools and geographies. This willingness to share was on display at the 2021 Member Summit. In case you didn't have the chance to attend, here are some discussion highlights worth noting:
- **Student-Centered:** Program leaders are thinking deeply about the student experience right now, with emphasis on the changing motivations of GME students, preliminary planning to determine how the persistent mix of online and face-to-face instruction disrupts traditional portfolio planning and many conversations on how to bring initiatives around diversity, equity and inclusion to their practical application.

- **Data-Driven Decisions:** With many schools sporting exceptionally healthy enrollment pipelines at this point in the cycle, conversations about data and its use were among the most popular. Understanding how reliable that enrollment data is will play an outsized factor in this year's efforts to yield a class over the final period of the summer break. Determining how best to leverage available sources—especially in light of data integrity concerns spurred by the wide variety of sources—was an active conversation with discussions around source identification, standardizing metadata elements for enrollment reporting and best practices for including key data in strategic planning.
- **Shifting Application Requirements:** It's not just the BusinessCAS Community that's growing and changing, but many elements of the traditional landscape. Several schools indicated they have eliminated the application requirement for not only entrance exams, but also letters of recommendation. It's too early to tell what the impact will be from these changes, but we'll be hosting a meeting with representatives from GMAC and ETS to share their view of the future role of testing in GME program admission.
- **Application Pool Diversity:** The BusinessCAS applicant pool for the last cycle was 52% female and 36% Asian, representing a positive turn in DEI efforts across member schools.
- **Leading in GME:** The Great Resignation is a concern for many GME leaders, but the vast majority of schools are offering some type of flexibility in their required return to the office.
- **Holistic Admission Trends:** Admissions requirements are changing, and while no schools announced open enrollment options in any of their degrees, there is a shift away from traditional elements of candidate evaluation in favor of more holistic review methods.
- **Supporting International Candidates:** While there were concerns that international students may struggle to secure visas this year, schools are working overtime to make sure campus is ready for their (potential) arrival, with most schools working with groups across a broad spectrum of campus activities to ensure international students are supported when they arrive. The key question regarding these activities is: Is this level of activity sustainable with current staffing? ■

MBA@UNC:

A **“BOLD MOVE”**

That’s Still Making an Impact
10 Years Later



As the MBA Roundtable was preparing to announce the winner of its 2021 Innovator Award, *GME: Today & Tomorrow* spoke with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's C. Michael Stepanek (Managing Director, MBA Programs & Executive Director, Academics and Operations, Kenan-Flagler Business School) and Amy Foster (Program Director, MBA@UNC, Kenan-Flagler Business School) about that institution's 2011 submission.

Entitled, "Introducing MBA@UNC: The First High-Quality Online MBA Program," it was named that year's runner-up.

Although neither Stepanek or Foster was involved with MBA@UNC at the program's inception, both work closely with it today. Foster is also a graduate of the program.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: What inspired Kenan-Flagler's submission?

C. Michael Stepanek (CMS): The submission highlighted MBA@UNC, the goal of which was to recreate the educational experiences that our MBA



students were having with our faculty and with their research activity, but to do it in an online format. We wanted to build community beyond the formal classroom. It seems silly in today's age to be talking about why this

was a novel idea, but it was a very bold, risky move for a top-20 business school at that time. We were still very much unsure of what the market for it would be.

Today, MBA@UNC is reflective of a working professional population. In many cases, the students are executives in middle management with many direct reports and a pre-MBA salary well into the six figures. They're looking for the opportunity to access a world-class business education with the flexibility they need for their working careers. Whether they're sitting in a hotel in Chicago, or a living room in New York or stationed on a military base in Japan, they have the opportunity to be educated by our faculty and in our community.

Establishing a program of this nature at the level that we did was a bold move. Ten years ago, there wasn't a good understanding about what a high-quality online education would look like and I think we helped define it. And in many ways that's still the story today: We have defined, and we continue to define, a whole new genre of graduate management education.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: How did MBA@UNC achieve its goals?



Amy Foster (AF): The program's sense of community is really critical. We provide opportunities for students to come to campus, and that has become one of the highlights of the program for them.

It's really amazing to see the connections they build with each other. They'll meet in person over a weekend, become fast friends and start traveling together after those weekends here at Chapel Hill. And they love to come to campus to meet the faculty. Community was definitely key for building out a successful online program.

GME: Today & Tomorrow: How has MBA@UNC evolved since the Innovator Award submission in 2011? How has online graduate management education changed since then?

MS: When we started the program, the original cohort was 19 students. We now bring in 100-125 students nearly every term, four terms a year. So we're a program that's nearly 1,000 students strong. But it started with humble beginnings.

Today, doing what we did is not as risky because there's a greater acceptance. But the risky part is that there's a more crowded space now. You're not just competing with other online programs, you're also competing with credentialing, badging and whatever other private organizations and companies are doing. Yes, it's a crowded space, but where we are today with MBA@UNC — and what we've learned getting here — has been extraordinarily helpful to not just our MBA program but to Kenan-Flagler Business School as a whole. ■

THEN & NOW | STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

If you haven't had the chance or inclination to look through the archives of The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) standard, *BizEd*, perhaps now is the right time to give it a shot. Not only is it stunning to see the cover layouts from years past and reflect on how key people and trends have shaped GME into the transformative discipline it is today, but the vast majority of reporting has weathered the passage of time remarkably well.

The best "case-in-point" of the great material in the archives may be the January 2012 issue. In that issue, the editors of *BizEd* focused an entire issue on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for the first time, taking a pragmatic approach to defining the 'what' and the 'why' of DEI in business education.

In the feature article, "Diversity & The Future of Business," the leaders of a few key organizations are asked to define a vision for DEI and the key areas in which schools should focus attention.

One writer, Peter Aranda, CEO of The Consortium for Graduate Study in Management (CGSM), was the first to take on the task and he focuses his ideas on efforts to improve racial minority representation among GME faculty and in overall enrollment. He provides a good discussion of practical DEI advice in enrollment strategy, curriculum development and closes with a particularly strong argument for more research funding for DEI.

Aranda's calls for better research support ten years ago have been met with an incredible shift in the funding calculus for research in DEI areas. Look to the 'Pivot' online funding database for academic DEI research, or to the National Institutes for Health online funding database, as another example. There has been an incredible increase in the availability and sources for those doing research to determine how best to understand DEI concerns. Federal agencies, private funds, institutional grants: the full spectrum of funding is now available for those doing research in this area.



Another writer, Richard Wynne of the Work Research Center, brought a European perspective to the discussion by advocating a broader definition of categories of diversity. Identifying *older workers*, *ethnic minorities*, *religious minorities*, *women* and *the disabled* as core groups to consider in discussions of diversity, he proceeds with a now-classic justification for diversity as a broad goal for those seeking to make the world a more just and equitable place.

Over the last ten years, the industry has responded well to these types of calls. The inclusion of DEI accountability in the most recent version of the accreditation standards released by AACSB is a notable example of how the field has shifted to expect context-driven approaches to practical DEI. Most faculty hiring now includes a diversity statement requirement, and the vast majority of schools have now identified specific areas of emphasis for DEI in their school and programs.

Contemporary notions of diversity have expanded to include gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, mental health, (dis)ability and ideological perspective. We now understand that DEI encompasses issues of power dynamics and the accessibility to the full spectrum of opportunities associated with institutional affiliation. As a field, we define our broad vision for DEI advancements in helping train our students to acknowledge and work through implicit bias, to deepen cultural understanding and to understand the complex interconnections that make up social and environmental justice.

Things change quickly in GME, so it can be difficult to predict the future; as we consider the next chapter in the history of GME and wonder about how effective our current DEI efforts will be, these writers give us hope that our impact will indeed make our programs more inclusive and our world more just. ■



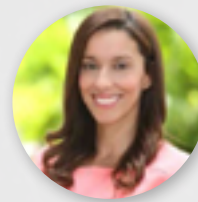
The BusinessCAS Advisory Board: Meet the Leaders Guiding GME Forward

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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*Assistant Dean,
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Loubna Bouamane, Ph.D.

Founder/CEO



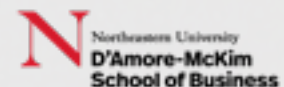
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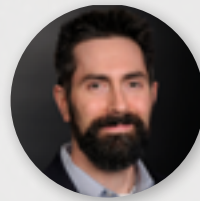
*Vice Provost for
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Chair of the BusinessCAS Advisory Board



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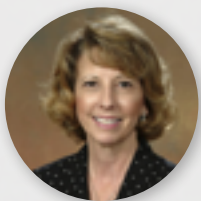
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