

HIGHER EDUCATION

& ONLINE LEARNING



ONE OF THE TOPICS ON MANY OF OUR READERS' MINDS TODAY IS HIGHER EDUCATION. THEY WANT TO EXPLORE the benefits of an advanced degree for themselves or their employees. They want to know about the latest trends in MBAs and what is being studied. And they want to know what education institutions are doing to stand apart from the competition.

This special supplement to the Los Angeles Business Journal takes a look at some of the top executive education programs in the region that are taking local professionals to the next level of excellence, while we also take dig into some of the trends affecting the education landscape and how – through innovative programs such as online learning platforms – schools are preparing professionals to withstand and overcome challenges and unforeseen circumstances such as the global pandemic and economic hurdles.

HIGHER EDUCATION & ONLINE LEARNING

Attitudes Toward Online Learning Improve Post Pandemic

Report finds online learners are primarily motivated by career outcomes

Positive attitudes toward online learning have increased to their highest levels yet among learners who use it, according to Wiley's annual Voice of the Online Learner report, issued last month.

The vast majority—94%—of online learners in the survey said they have a positive or very positive view of online learning, up from 86% before the pandemic. And 83% said they would learn online again.

Among graduated online learners, 87% reported achieving an outcome they can attribute to their degree, such as obtaining a salary increase or more marketable skills.

“Our findings suggest those individuals who engage in online learning overwhelmingly have a positive experience,” said Todd Zipper, Wiley's executive vice president and general manager of University Services and Talent Development. “They also see real value in the results they achieve through online education, which allow them to advance in their career.”

The report is based on a national survey of 2,500 adult respondents enrolled or planning to enroll in an online degree or certificate program. It's the 11th such annual survey conducted by

Wiley's University Services division, a global provider of technology-enabled education solutions to meet the evolving needs of universities, corporations and learners.

PANDEMIC-DRIVEN ONLINE LEARNERS PERSIST, BUT LACK COMMITMENT

Last year's report identified a new group of pandemic-driven online learners, who hadn't considered a fully online program before the pandemic forced many institutions to shift to remote instruction in early 2020. This segment of online learners persisted this year, representing a third of the respondents.

There are doubts, however, about whether this group will stick with online learning moving forward. Pandemic-driven learners in the survey, who skew younger than traditional online learners, were more likely to prefer in-person than online instruction, and around a third expressed a likelihood to return to campus-based learning in the future.

Nevertheless, commitment to online learning remains strong among respondents overall. More respondents reported a fundamental preference for online learning this year than previously, and 77% said the fact that it was online was the most important factor in their decision to learn remotely this year. In fact, 60% said they'd choose an equivalent remote program at a different school if their preferred college or

university didn't offer the program online.

ONLINE LEARNERS MOTIVATED BY CAREER OUTCOMES

Online learners are largely motivated by career outcomes. The top-mentioned factors that influenced respondents' decision to pursue a degree are improving their job prospects (40%), advancing their careers (38%), and starting their careers (35%).

Changing careers is the next largest motivation, such as switching to a career that aligns with their interests (32%) and switching to earn more money (31%).

OTHER RESULTS

The survey provided additional insights into the behavior, motivation and preferences of online learners, including the following findings:

- **A new openness to synchronous learning is emerging:** Online learners are now more open to occasional, synchronous sessions either online or on-site; 79% of respondents said they'd be willing to log in at a specific time at least once per course for a required discussion or virtual lecture; and 55% reported a willingness to visit campus at least once per term for an in-person session.
- **Timing is important:** Nearly 70% of online learners want a program with a fast completion time, with the same percentage looking for the flexibility to work through courses at

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their own pace.

- **Online learners highly value a college education:** 83% agreed that their degree will be very important in helping them achieve their career goals, and 79% agreed that a college degree can lead to better jobs.

- **Local is preferred:** Online learning remains localized with the majority of students still preferring a university less than 50 miles from where they live. Indeed, more than one-third said being close to their physical campus was important or very important to them for two main reasons: to attend their graduation ceremony and to connect with their professors.

Learn more at Wiley.com.

Survey Results Show More MBA Programs are Powered by Technology

Interest remains strong as applications and inquiries are on the rise

The Executive MBA Council (EMBAC) announced earlier this year the results of its 2021 EMBAC Membership Program Survey, which revealed EMBA Programs made greater use of technology and format adaptations – with 88.6 percent of schools now reporting offering some form of distance learning compared to 73.9 percent in 2020 and just 55.3 percent in 2019.

“Clearly the global pandemic is driving acceleration in the use of technology, and is evidence of how adaptable our member programs are,” said Michael Desiderio, executive director of EMBAC.

The results also show the average number of applications received per program increased by 17 percent in 2021 compared to 2020. Along with this increase, inquiries rose 3 percent in 2021 compared to 2020.

“Despite the uncertainty of the global pandemic, interest in EMBA programs remains strong,” said Desiderio. “That said, more inquiries and applications didn't necessarily translate into increased enrollments as average class size dipped a bit from 47 in 2020 to 44 in 2021.”

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic, EMBA Programs continue to innovate and adapt, with 47.6 percent indicating a change in program delivery this year, compared to 30.3 percent in 2020. The biggest changes



result from online and virtual or blended and hybrid additions.

Programs have expanded their use of technology in other ways: Almost four out of five EMBA Programs in the survey purchased cases electronically, and the purchase of electronic books rose from 30.7 percent in 2020 to 35.6 percent in 2021. Programs that use other electronic course materials also increased from 33.5 percent in 2020 to 36 percent in 2021.

In addition to these trends, the findings also show that the percentage of female enrollment in EMBA programs is at its highest ever – now reaching 33 percent in 2021, compared to 30 percent in 2017.

“While there is work to be done, EMBA programs are chipping away each year at closing the gender gap,” said Desiderio.

Additional insights from the 2021 EMBAC Membership Program Survey include:

- Executive coaching continues to be an integral part of EMBA Programs: 88.1 percent of EMBA Programs offered executive coaching in 2021, up from 83.3 percent in 2020.
- The percentage of students who received full financial sponsorship dipped, while self-sponsorship increased slightly. The percentage of self-funded students rose from 53.8 percent in 2020 to 56.2 percent in 2021, and 15.2 percent

of students received full sponsorship in 2021, compared to 17.6 percent in 2020.

- Almost 60 percent of programs offer scholarships or fellowships, and almost one-third of EMBA students receive scholarships or fellowships.

The EMBAC Council currently includes nearly 200 colleges and universities that administer close to 300 programs in more than 30 countries worldwide. Each year, EMBAC conducts a Membership Program Survey using the current methodology annually since 2003. In 2021, the survey was conducted by Percept Research, held from June 22 to Aug. 29, 2021, and was completed by approximately 84% of the EMBA member programs.

The academic association that represents the Executive MBA (EMBA) industry, the Executive MBA Council (EMBAC) advances the cause of EMBA Programs by serving as a facilitator of best practice sharing and knowledge dissemination, and fostering an inclusive and diverse community among high-quality programs. EMBAC plays a thought leadership role by engaging in research that offers insights, by generating or packaging relevant content of importance and interest to the membership and industry, by advocating for the industry, and by nurturing an environment of inclusion that inspires all members and stakeholders.

To learn more about the Council and its members, visit embac.org; prospective students should visit executivemba.org for more information.

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HIGHER EDUCATION & ONLINE LEARNING

Where Innovation Meets Impact: USC Gould School of Law

Innovation has always been a hallmark of the USC Gould School of Law. It was the first law school in Southern California, founded more than 120 years ago, and pioneered concepts of clinical and interdisciplinary legal education.

Today, USC Gould is a top 20 law school nationwide, and top 3 in entertainment. The

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Gould School has established a distinctive legacy of educating leaders across industries, sectors and businesses — offering a wide range of practice-focused academic programs, as well as graduate certificates in specialized professional areas.

USC Gould provides students with an enriching learning environment, both on-campus and online. Multi-disciplinary degree programs include: the Juris Doctor (JD); Master of Dispute Resolution (MDR); Master of Laws (LLM); LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution; LLM in International Business and Economic Law; LLM in Privacy Law and Cybersecurity; Master of International Trade Law and Economics (MITLE); and Master of Comparative Law (MCL) and newly established Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies.

Six years ago, USC Gould furthered its legacy of leadership training, with the launch of the online Master of Studies in Law (MSL) degree.

The MSL is a groundbreaking program, specially designed for professionals in any role – or any career – to gain a robust understanding of legal concepts and issues related to their fields.

LEGAL SKILLS TO EXPAND YOUR EXPERTISE

From contracts and compliance, to finance and health care, to cybersecurity and IP, a growing number of today's roles and responsibilities intersect with legal topics.

As the business landscape has shifted, legal education has evolved as well, with USC Gould at the forefront to meet these demands. Through the MSL program, the USC Gould School helps professionals in a variety of roles enhance their business expertise with an essential legal education.

Real estate executive Jonathan Larsen (MSL 2019) noted, "As a commercial real estate executive, I am on several nonprofit boards and am required to interface with legal professionals on a daily basis. The MSL degree has given me the tools I need to conduct contract negotiations with confidence."

DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE PROFESSIONAL SCHEDULES

In the MSL program, students have the convenience of completing the degree 100% online, and the flexibility to study part-time — making it an ideal format for working professionals.

No LSAT or GRE test is required; no prior law degree is required either. Generous scholarships are available and considered for all applicants.

The MSL degree enables graduates to contribute to their roles with a more thorough understanding of the law. MSL degrees can apply diverse career goals and business industries, including those who deal with human resources, real estate, entertainment, government, or who work closely with their organization's legal department. The program provides students with a working knowledge of the law to amplify their career impact.

The benefits extend beyond the classroom. Graduates of the MSL program gain access to the lifelong and worldwide Trojan Family network, which spans more than 14,000 USC Gould alumni.

SPECIALIZED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

MSL students can tailor their educational experience by pursuing a certificate aligned with their area of interest. These certificates can be completed at no additional cost, as part of the MSL program.

Certificate programs span: Business Law; HR Law; Compliance; Entertainment Law; Financial Compliance; Privacy Law and Cybersecurity; Health Care Compliance; among other areas.

The MSL recently launched new certificates in Social Work Administration and Law, Social

Justice and Diversity. This follows last year's expansion of its online Entertainment Law and Industry certificate with courses in Dealmaking in the Entertainment Industry; Digital Media Transactions; Music Law in Practice; and Negotiation Skills.

To learn more about the USC Gould School of Law's innovative MSL program, visit gould.law/msl.

EXPLORE CORPORATE OPPORTUNITIES

How can a corporate partnership benefit both careers and companies? Organizations can support their homegrown talent as well as promote employee retention and skills development, through custom partnerships with the USC Gould School of Law. USC Gould collaborates with numerous organizations that offer scholarship savings to employees, including for the online Master of Studies in Law (MSL) for professionals in any career or role.

Benefits for corporate partners and their employees include personalized application support, one-on-one academic advising, and more.

To explore partnership opportunities or to learn more about partner benefits, please contact: corporatecustomed@law.usc.edu — or visit gould.law/corporate.

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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

The Benefits of Online Learning

Why do students flock to the online learning environment? With millions of students enrolled in online schools and universities (and that number was growing 30% per year even before the pandemic struck), there are many compelling arguments for attending a cyber classroom.

1. Students can “attend” a course at any time, from anywhere. This means that parents can attend to their children, then sit down to class; working students can attend classes no matter what their work schedule might be, folks that travel for business or pleasure can attend class from anywhere in the world that has internet access.

2. Online learning enables student-centered teaching approaches. Every student has their own way of learning that works best for them. Some learn visually others do better when they “learn by doing.”

3. Course material is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students have the ability to read and re read lectures, discussions, explanations and comments. Often spoken material in the classroom passes students by due to a number of distractions, missed classes, tiredness or boredom.

4. In an online environment, attendance to class is only evident if the student actually participates in classroom discussion. This increases student interaction and the diversity of opinion, because everyone gets a say, not just the most talkative.

5. Online instructors come with practical knowledge and may be from any location

across the globe. This allows students to be exposed to knowledge that can’t be learned in books and see how class concepts are applied in real business situations.

6. Using the internet to attend class, research information and communication with other students teaches skills in using technologies that will be critical to workers in the 21st century business community that works with colleagues globally and across time zones.

7. Participating online is much less intimidating than “in the classroom.” Anonymity provides students a level playing field undisturbed by bias caused by seating arrangement, gender, race and age. Students can also think longer about what they want to say and add their comments when ready. In a traditional class room, the conversation could have gone way past the point where the student wants to comment.

8. Because online institutions often offer “chat rooms” for informal conversation between students, where student bios and non class discussions can take place, there appears to be a increased bonding and camaraderie over traditional class environments.

9. The online environment makes instructors more approachable. Students can talk openly with their teachers through online chats, email and in newsgroup discussions, without waiting for office hours that may not be convenient. This option for communication provides enhanced contact between instructors and students.

10. Online course development allows for a broad spectrum of content. Students can access the school’s library from their PCs for research articles, ebook content and other material without worries that the material is already “checked out.”

11. Students often feel that they can actually listen to the comments made by other students. Because everyone gets a chance

learning lets them attend class when fully awake and attend in increments of convenient time block, rather than rigid two or four hour stretches once or twice a week.

15. Because there are no geographic barriers to online learning, students can find a diversity of course material that may not be available to them where they live or work. This is especially true for professional training

While “brick and mortar” institutions will never be eliminated, it’s easy to see why a growing number of people are attending class in the cyber world.

to contribute, students are less irritated with those that “over contribute” and can ask for clarification of any comments that are unclear.

12. Over 75% of colleges and universities in the U.S. offer online degree programs, with online degrees as respected as “on the ground” degrees.

13. Online classrooms also facilitate team learning by providing chatrooms and newsgroups for meetings and joint work. This eliminates the problems of mismatched schedules, finding a meeting location and distributing work for review between meetings.

14. Students often comment that online

such as medical billing training or purchasing training and for students in remote rural areas that cannot support college or vocational training centers.

While “brick and mortar” institutions will never be eliminated, it’s easy to see why a growing number of people are attending class in the cyber world. They may be reasons of accessibility, flexibility or quality, all compelling and contributing to the attractiveness of this mode of learning.

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