

## News from the schools

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### In the pink

Fuqua recently made headlines for all the wrong reasons (see below). But some welcome news came in May, when the school retained the top spot in the ***Financial Times's* ranking of executive education programmes**. Harvard, IMD, Chicago and IESE completed the top five in the ranking, which combines both open-enrolment and customised courses. In the separated categories, Duke kept its top ranking for customised programmes and Harvard headed the ranking of open-enrolment courses.

There were some notable movers. The University of North Carolina's customised programmes jumped 19 places to 12th, while in open enrolment Michigan's Ross school fell 15 places to 28th. Schools with reason to cheer included the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which was reckoned to offer the best value-for-money for its customised programmes, and Darden at the University of Virginia, whose faculty scooped the accolade for best open programmes.

This was the ninth edition of the FT's annual ranking, which judges open-enrolment programmes at 52 schools and customised ones at 67 of them. Both rankings are based on surveys of participants and on data provided by the schools.

### Microbanking, microschoooling

In sharp contrast to big-name business schools, which set high standards for prospective students, the tiny **Mann Deshi Business School** in the Indian state of Maharashtra has few entry requirements. The brainchild of Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank, a not-for-profit microfinance provider, the school offers women mainly from rural districts courses in topics including entrepreneurship, marketing and finance. A free gym and career counselling are also available to students.

Classes at Mann Deshi began in December 2006 with 150 students in the first intake. Over the next five years, the Satara-based school hopes to enroll 350 students for each session of between three and six months. The cost of enrolment is a steal by business-school standards at between 150 and 600 rupees (\$3.70-14.80). Already, the school has declared its programme so successful that it plans to expand into the neighbouring state of Karnataka.

### Questionable character?

Prospective MBA students look at traditional ranking, recruiter and remuneration figures when deciding which business school to attend. But Carnegie Mellon's **Tepper School of Business** reckons that identifying a school's character is equally if not more important. To this end, it has devised a checklist—part of its “MBA Reality

Check" campaign—which arms students with the questions they should ask when picking a school. For example, are classmates likely to be competitive or collaborative? Will the programme challenge or coddle? Does the school welcome contributions from students, such as the adding of a new programme to the curriculum?

Tepper also advises students to be wary of schools that introduce "flavour-of-the-month" courses at the expense of core disciplines. The checklist's final piece of advice may well be the most important: ask whether you will have a good time.

### **African adventure**

**Kansas State University's College of Business** is to forge a relationship with the University of Lagos in Nigeria. The US Agency for International Development—a government body responsible for foreign aid—has handed K-State a grant of \$500,000 (plus \$468,000 in cost share) to strengthen business education in the West African country. K-State intends to fund faculty and curriculum development for both undergraduate and graduate business programmes at the University of Lagos over the next three years.

According to K-State, Nigeria's once-pioneering business education programmes have not kept pace with a changing business environment. The American school first hopes to build curriculum from scratch, re-aligning it with private sector needs. Bringing Nigerian faculty to K-State for conferences, workshops and seminars and improving careers services are also on its agenda.

Oil-rich Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and its second-largest economy. Always volatile, its stability was undermined by vote-rigging in April's elections. K-State says this only strengthens its desire to teach a more rigorous approach to corporate social responsibility. With America looking to Nigeria to provide as much as one-tenth of its oil needs, it could be argued that investing in the country's future business leaders makes sound economic sense too.

### **Don't let them out of your sight**

Duke University's **Fuqua School of Business** is dealing with the fallout from a breach of its honour code. On April 27th, Fuqua announced that 34 first-year MBA students (out of a total of 410) would be disciplined. Nine students will be expelled, 15 will be suspended for one year, and nine will fail the course and one the assignment to which the disciplinary action related. The students are expected to appeal the penalties.

The severest penalties related to a take-home examination that students collaborated on, despite being told to work alone. Their efforts attracted some barbed credit from James Bailey, who teaches leadership at George Washington University's School of Business and edits the *Academy of Management Learning & Education*. "They were enterprising, they took initiative, and they worked together", Mr Bailey told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Aren't those all the qualities we're trying to encourage of business school students?" The financial cost to the disciplined

students is potentially huge: Fuqua estimates tuition and living expenses for the first-year students at almost \$60,000.

### **Nipping to Tuck**

Dartmouth University's **Tuck School of Business** has launched a global distance-learning initiative for its executive education clients. Obviating the need to travel to New Hampshire, Tuck is using virtual technology—primarily video-conferenced lectures, but also asynchronous communication (ie, e-mail)—to reach managers around the world. Paul Danos, Tuck's dean, expressed hope that the initiative would allow a school with a small faculty to build an international clientele to be competitive with larger players.

First up is a customised programme working with Citibank managers in India—a market on which Tuck has been focusing—where star professors such as Vijay Govindarajan will give 90-minute virtual seminars on strategy transformation. A similar programme is in the pipeline in Mexico, where Tuck's partner will be IPADE, a business school based there.

### **But is it sustainable?**

In a tribute to the potency of the concept of “sustainability”, **Donahue Graduate School of Business** at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh plans to offer a new “MBA for Sustainability” programme from this autumn. The programme, which it is hoped will attract science and engineering graduates, is expected to last 12-15 months. According to Donahue, the core curriculum will be identical to its regular MBA programme, but sustainability students will take part in “live projects” with a focus on the “triple bottom line” (financial, environmental and social). Lance Kurke, the school's director of MBA programmes, told reporters he hoped the new MBA would help “revitalise” the school. There is a way to go, however—at the time of writing, only two prospective students had been accepted.

### **La Dolce Vita**

Claiming inspiration from Italy's cultural heritage, Milan's **SDA Bocconi** is launching a two-year masters programme, taught entirely in English, aimed at the “creative industries”. The Masters of Science in Economics and Management in Arts, Culture, Media and Entertainment will be awarded to students at the end of two years of study. The course will include economic, legal and managerial components.

The programme expands Bocconi's existing arts-centred course for undergraduates, and includes some tasty partnerships: students can try for internships at the Getty Centre in Los Angeles and the Villa Borghese museum in Rome. Enrolment closes on June 10th.

### **Much Boozing Ahead**

Student life can be notoriously boozy, particularly on graduation day. MBA students are little different, though in some cases they are able to spot a marketing opportunity through the haze. At **Ashridge**, Johan Spendrup, a Swedish student with a family background in brewing, marked his passing-out in May in true British style with the launch of “MBAle”—according to Ashridge, “an English-style bottle-conditioned ale which has a clear and fruity flavour, with a distinct character of toasted malt”.

The project was the culmination of a year of thirsty work for Mr Spendrup, whose dissertation addressed the challenges faced by Britain's small independent breweries. He produced 700 bottles of the brew for the ceremony—ten-bottles-and-a-mouthful per student. Whether this was sufficient for the hard-drinking MBA candidates has not been disclosed.