

Florida tops distance-learning MBA ranking from *The Economist*

Gainesville, Fla. – The UF MBA Program at the Hough Graduate School of Business was ranked #1 in the world in the inaugural distance-learning rankings just released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). No other public school in the U.S., and only one private, is ranked among the Top Ten. EIU also publishes the annual *Which MBA?* guide to the world's finest MBA programs.

According to the survey, Florida's students are especially impressed with the quality of the school's distance learning materials, the program's value for the money, and their sense of connection to the school.

"It's quite rewarding to earn the #1 distance-learning MBA ranking, since it's among all global business schools," says Alex Sevilla, assistant dean and director of UF's MBA programs. "Since the inception of the UF Internet MBA in 1999, we've focused on creating the premier distance-learning MBA program, as defined by pairing exceptional students with the world's best faculty, and enabling them to collaborate within an industry-leading technology platform. Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated faculty and professional staff, the UF Internet MBA isn't simply an online degree program, it is a rich and rigorous MBA experience that consistently earns high praise from our students."

Distance-learning MBAs are becoming an increasingly important sector of business education, allowing students from around the world to earn degrees from top-quality schools without having to change jobs or move abroad—often at a fraction of the cost of a full-time program. For these same reasons, they're also becoming increasingly popular with employers, and no longer considered a "poor relation" to the full-time MBA. As the corporate world has come to embrace them for their own employees, they also accept them as an important qualification for new recruits.

The EIU required different methodology in looking at distance-learning MBAs, since many of the quantitative data used in the EIU's full-time MBA ranking don't apply when it comes to distance learning. Salary data, for example, are less important because many students will continue in their pre-MBA employment. However, with much of the program undertaken in isolation, a sense of connection to the school and good virtual learning materials are essential, and many of these are best judged subjectively. Sixty percent of the ranking is, therefore, based on a survey of distance-learning students, with the remaining 40% based on quantitative data supplied by schools. The survey took into account three basic criteria to judge the schools: program content; the quality of fellow students; and distance-learning elements, including such things as the effectiveness of distance-learning materials.

For the complete listing of rankings, see our website at: www.floridamba.ufl.edu/press/rankings.asp.

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