

Quality of Faculty Again No. 1 Factor Impacting Executive MBA Program Choice

Results of second annual Executive MBA Council Student Entry Benchmarking Survey shed light on key decision factors for students

FEBRUARY 21, 2008 -- The top five factors that students consider when selecting Executive MBA Programs include the quality of faculty, reputation of the school, program format, quality of classmates and curriculum/class offerings, according to the results of the second annual Executive MBA Council Student Entry Benchmarking Survey. The survey offers programs and the industry information about the factors that students consider when looking at programs, their expectations of programs, their information-gathering process and their perceptions of the admissions process. Approximately 1,966 new students from 44 member programs responded to the survey.

The 2007 survey findings revealed that two-thirds (66 percent) of students in Executive MBA Programs considered applying 12 months before attending. To select a program, students weighed the factors listed below, which they rated on a 10-point scale. The mean rating is in parentheses. In this year's survey results, curriculum/class offerings, strength of elective offerings and the admission process increased in importance.

1. Quality of faculty (9.06)
2. School reputation (8.96)
3. Program format (8.68)
4. Quality of classmates (8.66)
5. Curriculum/class offerings (8.34)
6. Location/geographic setting of campus (8.29)
7. Rankings (8.28)
8. Global content (7.8)
9. Strength of alumni network (7.26)
10. Integration of technology (6.92)
11. Strength in a particular functional area (6.69)
12. Class size (6.60)
13. Strength of elective offerings (6.38)
14. Admissions process (6.28)
15. Total cost (tuition and fees) (6.20)
16. Career services (5.99)
17. Program web site (5.29)

What prompts students to consider programs and apply

The top five factors that prompted students to *consider* a program were the same top factors that influenced their decision to *apply*: colleague/friend, alumni/current student, rankings, school information session and campus visit. Rankings were more important when considering a program than when applying.

Resources most helpful in choosing program

Students rated on a 10-point scale the program resources that helped them make the decision to attend a particular program. Again, the mean is in parentheses.

1. Faculty/staff (8.24)
2. Admissions process (8.13)
3. Information session (8.11)
4. Campus visit (7.79)
5. Alumni (7.47)
6. Program web site (7.27)
7. Current student (7.25)
8. Program brochure (6.62)
9. Virtual information session (5.38)
10. Program CD-ROM (4)

New students have high expectations

Seventy-seven (77) percent of students expect to be given new responsibilities from their employers while enrolled in an Executive MBA program. Thirty-eight (38) percent expect to be promoted while enrolled, and 59 percent expect to be promoted after they complete the program. Students expect that their salary at the end of the program will be 24 percent higher than when they started. Comparing incoming expectations with outgoing outcomes, about 43 percent of program graduates who completed the 2007 Executive MBA Council Student *Exit* Benchmarking Survey were promoted during their programs, and their salaries increased by 21 percent.

Sixty-seven (67) percent of students will be partially or fully reimbursed or sponsored by their employers. Incoming students expect that it will take 51 months to recoup their personal investments if they assume the entire cost of tuition. They estimate that the payback period for employers sponsoring students will be 29 months if the employers sponsor the entire cost of the program. Graduates reported in the 2007 Executive MBA Council Student *Exit* Benchmarking Survey estimated that the payback period was 45 months for students and 23 months for employers.

About the Executive MBA Council

The Executive MBA Council fosters excellence and innovation worldwide in Executive MBA Programs. The council provides a place for programs to share best practices and gathers data that helps members improve their programs and reveals the importance of business degree programs for professionals. The council has more than 200 members worldwide, which offer more than 330 programs. The independent market research firm Percept Research conducted the Student Entry Benchmarking Survey for the council. For additional information, visit www.emba.org or contact Paula Mielke, media relations for the Executive MBA Council, 651-647-0311 or paula.mielke@embac.org.