

UAEU College of Business and Economics: Pioneers in graduate education

Geralyn McClure Franklin, Ph.D., the Dean of the College of Business and Economics at the United Arab Emirates University, says that, as the country's foremost university, UAEU is leading the way in pushing the boundaries of business and management education forward.

UAEU has offered undergraduate business programs since 1977 and graduate programs from 2001. Today, the College of Business and Economics (CBE) has a vision supported by a tradition of top quality teaching, a strong research base, and a community outreach approach. These academic programs are designed to meet the needs of the UAE. Dean Franklin has managed business programs at four different American institutions for more than a decade prior to coming to the UAE. Her wealth of experience has guided her approach to the CBE at UAEU. Her approach can be summed up in the following way: "One criticism of higher education is that it is not always practical. However, I believe that a business school should effectively operate as a business. That's what I've tried to do in my career so far and what I've tried to do here by focusing on the business college as being an entrepreneurial venture within a larger organization."

The value of a degree

The CBE in Al Ain offers bachelor's degrees in accounting, economics, finance and banking, management information systems, and also statistics. The main campus also offers a business administration degree where students can major in entrepreneurship, human resource management and development, as well as marketing and supply chain management. All of these programs are fully accredited. As Dean Franklin has explained, "We have accreditation from AACSB International, the premier global accreditation body for business programs. The CBE was the first business college in the GCC and MENA Region to be accredited by AACSB. Today, the CBE has the distinction of being the only business college in the region accredited in both business and accounting.



Geralyn McClure Franklin, Ph.D., the Dean of the College of Business and Economics at the United Arab Emirates University.

We know that employers often question the value of a degree. Accreditation from AACSB means that a business degree from UAEU is internationally recognized and meets rigorous international standards."

AACSB International – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) – was founded in 1916 and currently accredits 746 of the world's best business colleges (only 182 colleges hold accreditation in accounting). This is less than 5 percent of over 15,000 business programs around the world globally that AACSB recognizes.

Moving business education forward

According to Dean Franklin, "As the national university, we serve the needs of the

country. We are leaders in moving business and management education forward. Our graduate programs are excellent examples of this and include several regional 'firsts'." The CBE launched the UAE's first MBA program in 2001 and has seen more than 375 MBA graduates to date. The first MBA program in Manufacturing Excellence was launched in partnership with Tawazun Holding in 2012, while the first English-language MPA program in the GCC and MENA Region began in 2013. The CBE also opened the first DBA program, by an AACSB accredited institution, in 2011.

Graduates from the MBA or MPA programs set themselves apart from their colleagues in the workplace. According to Dean Franklin the background of graduate program applicants varies enormously: "There is a concentration of graduates with a bachelor's degrees in business as well as those without a business degree (e.g. engineers) who want to progress into managerial or higher-level management positions that benefit from gaining an MBA. The MPA is usually for individuals who already have a bachelor's degree in accounting and understand that professional accountants, with graduate training, can ensure institutional success in today's globally competitive and constantly evolving business environment. Those who have non-accounting backgrounds can also enroll but must take on additional coursework."

Business leaders are made, not born

It is not only the employee, but the organization as a whole, that benefits from their up-and-coming managers doing the MBA at UAEU. Dean Franklin believes that, "Business leaders are made, not born! An MBA from UAEU allows organizations to get the best management and business education for their employees. Every



organization needs leaders. Employers have the opportunity to train employees for the overall benefit of the organization. They will also be networking with others and sharing best practices. We find that the more broad-based the employees' education the more flexible and adaptable they become. Additionally, from an investment point of view the MBA is more cost effective than taking several stand-alone professional courses."

There is also a Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) designed for senior-level executives and research-oriented professionals. The DBA is the highest professional qualification available in business today. According to Dean Franklin, "The goal of the program is to expand students' knowledge of management and equip them with broad research skills in order to address complex issues in today's highly competitive, global marketplace."

The DBA is a four-year, blended, part-time program taught in English. Stage 1 of the program has two years of coursework. Stage 2 involves two years of work on a dissertation. Dean Franklin added that, "The focus of a DBA dissertation is more practical than a research-oriented Ph.D dissertation and therefore has practical

implications for the workplace, ensuring a worthwhile return on the employer's initial investment."

Tomorrow's leaders

As part of the UAE's national university the CBE strives to maintain standards of excellence despite a constantly evolving business landscape. This is achieved by col-

laboring with government and industry to ensure that degree programs meet their needs. The MBA in Manufacturing Excellence was specifically designed, in collaboration with Tawazun Holding, to meet the needs of the UAE's manufacturing sector. Dean Franklin added that, "We are now in talks with other organizations to determine if a customized MBA is required. We have to keep thinking beyond the present and what we've accomplished thus far. We are looking to offer new specialties in our MBA program. We also want to expand our Master's offerings from the MBA and MPA degrees to a more specialized MS degree in areas of high demand. We want to add majors such as 'sustainability' and 'human resource development' that meet



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