Welcome to summer! The challenges emerging from the pandemic crisis have spurred the thinking of individuals and organizations to re-focus strategies. Leaders find it an imperative to re-imagine the future. Those that will be successful will lead by shaping the future. An outstanding leader and alum of the Executive MBA program, Ralph de la Vega recently reflected on the topic in his LinkedIn article “Leading effectively despite the unknowns.”

In this vein, our MBA program is designed to develop leaders to re-imagine their future as well as that of organizations that they will lead. An NIU MBA offers an opportunity for professionals the fundamental skills to propel their careers in directions aligned with their aspirations. Our record of phenomenal success is punctuated by graduates rising to the pinnacles of professions as unique as them.

With the new curriculum, NIU’s College of Business has infused curricular and co-curricular experiences in the MBA Program to prepare leaders who can be effective in a range of industries and markets. As the recent crisis highlighted, supply chains are global and managing them effectively is critical. In line with this need, a new course “Global Supply Chain Management” provides fundamental skills to manage complex global supply chains as well as the risks associated with it. Another course on “Change Management” enhances the skills of individuals to influence, drive and manage change. With a new offering in the MBA program titled “Digital Transformation Strategy,” participants will be ready to re-imagine business models and tech enabled processes. Just in the last two decades, over half of Fortune 500 firms have been impacted by technological developments and the trend is only likely to accelerate. Our graduates from the MBA program will be at the forefront of leading this change.

Indeed, our graduates have an exceptional record to become trailblazers of companies on the forefront of innovation. They have led programs, people, and innovative projects worldwide. See a partial list of places of where our MBA graduates contribute.

Balaji Rajagopalan, Ph.D.
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New Formats. New Direction.

While virtual business practices are forging us in novel ways, NIU has stepped up to re-construct the MBA formats to better align with new business and personal objectives. The program has created “distinctive experiences” for each format (effective for the 2021-22 academic year) that will enhance the learning of the cohorts. All formats provide international travel and cultural immersion while specifically designed to complement individual strengths and needs.

Explore the opportunities.

The four different formats offer you the flexibility to choose the plan that works best for you. You do you!

Applications for fall 2020 are due July 15. See cob.niu.edu/mba for more information and to register.

NIU MBA Program

Our MBA Program is offered in four distinct formats to provide personalized experiences.

Executive MBA
Saturday format delivered in Naperville for 16 months. Designed for experienced professionals aspiring to be organizational leaders focusing on four mindsets needed to be successful leaders: Agile, Transformational, Entrepreneurial and Global.

One Year MBA
Offered in Chicago and Hoffman Estates, this format focuses on transitioning individual contributors into industry leaders. Graduates will be prepared to lead global teams, integrate thinking to enable innovation and manage change.

Global MBA
This full-time program delivered in DeKalb is designed for recent graduates who will gain a broader understanding of global business and competencies in analytics.

Industry Aligned Curriculum
All formats have enhanced curriculum to develop leaders to meet the demands of the 21st century and industry 4.0.

Online MBA
Our newly designed Online MBA program focuses on product design, product development and equipping leaders to make data-driven decisions.

Distinctive Experiences
All formats have distinctive experiences imbedded into the program such as an international visit and career planning.

Capstone Course testimonial

The finishing touch to our Executive MBA program is a Capstone course. Students take on consulting roles for a company to solve a real-world business need. The course develops students’ professional skills, including communication, presentation, problem-solving and working as a team. Testimonials from clients on the receiving end of our Executive MBAs’ expertise, have been praise-worthy.

Travis Linderman is the Managing Director of Innovation DuPage, a non-profit venture that unites entrepreneurs and small business owners with people, resources and programs to help them grow. Innovation DuPage partnered with our MBA students to assist start-ups Vissers Battery and Gray Matters Games to grow their businesses, venture into new markets and think about their companies in fresh ways. “The experience has been invaluable,” said Linderman.

View the testimonials here.

Would your business benefit from a Capstone project? Contact our office for more details.
Meet the New Associate Dean, Daewoo Park
A Leader of Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Contributed by Rachel Schmit

If you ask a man what he intended to be when he grew up, and he shares “a military officer”, believe that he has intention to be a solid and effective leader with a conviction to oversee a successful outcome. This was Daewoo Park’s childhood dream. While Park, who comes from a line of military officers and served in the military for two years, is no longer in the Army, he is a leader in the world of business education. It is with his guidance that the College of Business at Northern Illinois University has recently set sail to change.

Park is no stranger to transformation, starting with his own. After his time in the service, Park began working as a marketing representative for IBM, who was on the helm of the technological industry’s uprising. It was here that he learned about computers, technological information and technological transformation. Ultimately, this position gave light to a new dream for Park. It inspired him to pursue a path of working in marketing; specifically, he wanted to be a director of marketing.

Park left IBM and came to the US in 1984 to earn a Master of Business Administration with the University of Texas, Austin. Soon, he was offered a teaching assistant position, assisting management professors. He credits this hands-on opportunity to providing him with a deeper knowledge of strategic management and leadership, as well as marketing, finance and accounting. He found himself motivated to acquire a Ph.D. in strategic management and innovation at Texas A & M University. Upon completion of his doctorate, Park started on yet another journey. This time he carried with him a wealth of knowledge he had acquired in his course of studies. It was his intention to inspire effective change and transform the world of collegiate instruction and the educational experience itself for students. Park’s devotion to modernize how students are prepared for the business world started showing up in full force at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was at Xavier University that Park transitioned from leading in the classroom as a professor, to becoming the Director of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center. Here he not only created innovative academic programs, but was gifted with 3.5 million dollars from Home City Ice for the entrepreneurship and innovation center. He and his team maintained an elite program that was ranked continuously at the top 25 of the nation. Twelve years after successfully overseeing this team, and watching his passions prevail among successful students, Park once again looked inside himself to ensure he was fulfilling his desire of personal growth. Determined to continue endorsing his passions, he considered expanding his collegiate leadership experience again. One who teaches change, must not fear creating and experiencing their own. After 23 years, Park made a bold shift in his career. He accepted a position at Hawaii Pacific University.

For more information on the graduate program or Daewoo Park, Ph.D. find the following links:

More on Daewoo Park
MBA Program

Continue reading about Daewoo Park here.
MBA Alumni Profile — Wes Saber

His nickname is “The Candyman,” and it’s no surprise that he is the most popular guy in his neighborhood. As the CFO of one of the world’s leading candy companies -- HARIBO of America -- he enjoys the nickname and treating his friends to the delightfully sweet taste of the entire HARIBO line of candies, including the world-famous gummy bears.

Wesam “Wes” Saber (MBA 2014) brings his contagious smile, personality and work ethic to his job each day and celebrated the many years he’s been involved in the candy industry.

Saber was one of six children brought up in the Middle East by his Egyptian parents, and he has a remarkable 46 cousins. He spent his formative years growing up in the rich Egyptian culture known for its hospitality, friendliness and emotional intelligence. From a young age, he learned these traditional values as well as a deep respect for others, especially his elders and extended family members.

These values come through as soon as he walks into a room. In conversation, Saber makes you feel like family. He has impeccable manners, and his presence exudes the warmth of his upbringing. To him, listening is imperative to capturing every word, nuance and meaning in a conversation. Colleagues in his organization say, “He is the only executive that we’ve worked with who truly cares about every one of us here, as well as our families. He’s such a warm, inspirational person.”

His first job out of Cairo University suited him well as he learned to manage a tourism company near the Red Sea. But he always wanted to work for one of the big accounting firms, and he navigated his way to KPMG (Egypt) in June 1997 as a market research analyst on the tourism and telecommunications business. From there, he went on to market and expand Pizza Hut in Dubai. KPMG called him back to produce market studies and financial feasibilities but, a few years later, he moved on to Mars, the snack and ice cream company. Still, he kept yearning for more international experience, so he decided to earn his M.B.A. in the U.S.

“I chose NIU’s Executive M.B.A. program because of its unique offerings and flexible fit,” said Saber. He would travel from Egypt to Illinois every 10 days for almost two years to attend classes. Sundays were always reserved for family.

Not only did he meet some of his closest and most respected friends and colleagues in NIU’s program, but he absorbed the different business styles and creative, competitive environment. Immersing himself in a new culture with different thought processes enhanced his management skills.

Now, as the CFO of HARIBO of America, located in Rosemont, Illinois, Saber uses his skills to work for a multinational company. He is open-minded, multiculturally aware and well-traveled. In fact, he makes a trip to company headquarters in Germany every month. In the Midwest, he is deeply involved in HARIBO’s expansion to open its first-ever U.S. factory in Wisconsin.

So next time you eat one of HARIBO’s gummy bears, think of one of our favorite Huskie and NIU’s “Candyman.”

Interested in being featured as an outstanding alumnus? Update your information here.