

UMUC Business and Executive Programs
Master of Business Administration

Interviewer: Dr. Nancy Gentry-Glenn, Assistant Director Graduate School

Interviewee: Dr. Mike Evanchik, Chair of Business and Executive programs

Title: MBA Program Overview

Dr. Glenn: Hello, my name is Nancy Glenn. I am the Administrative Director for the MBA program at University of Maryland University College. I have the pleasure to introduce Dr. Mike Evanchik, Professor and Chair of UMUC's Business and Executive Programs Department. Dr. Evanchik led the team of faculty that developed UMUC's MBA program. This is the first program designed by the University to be delivered completely online. Dr. Evanchik is going to discuss how it can meet the needs of busy, working professionals. Good morning, Dr. Evanchik.

Dr. Evanchik: Good morning, Nancy.

Dr. Glenn: First, would you give us an overview of the programs offered by the Business and Executive Programs Department?

Dr. Evanchik: Absolutely. We have three major program groups. We have our MBA program, with about 2,000 students. We have our executive programs, Executive MBA, Executive Technology degrees, and there's about 200 students. And then we have our Doctor of Management program, which has about 150 students. All of these programs are similar in that they are cohort-based.

Dr. Glenn: Thank you. Would you take a few minutes to provide an overview of the MBA program?

Dr. Evanchik: The MBA program is a cohort-based program, as I mentioned, and there are seven six-credit courses that students take. So it's a 42 credit program. And there is a one credit fundamentals course that students can take at the beginning. If students have a Master's degree already or others have other graduate degrees, they don't have to take the fundamentals course. If they've taken the GMAT and scored 600 or above, they don't have to take the fundamentals course. But the course is designed to help students become acclimated to the online delivery. We do have both an online format and a hybrid format and in both, students do spend considerable time working at a distance and the fundamentals course is designed to help them become familiar and become comfortable with that environment. It also allows them to get a sense of how we operate our program. One of the things that we've tried to do over the course of the last eight years as we've been developing and continually approving this program is to provide support for students. In each classroom, in addition to the faculty member, students have a faculty assistant, another person that they can go to that can work with them on particular topics, particular issues that they need more help with. So there's somebody else in addition to the faculty

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member that works with our students. Each of our courses has a course manager, a faculty member who's responsible for the design and delivery. That faculty member is also part of that support system within the classroom and will communicate on a regular basis about general items of interest, registration, activities that students might want to participate in. So there's also that element to each of our courses. And then finally, we have our both academic advisors and our academic coordinator. We have an MBA Coordinator in our department whose entire responsibility is to focus on student issues and students can go to this person for assistance. And then, again, they also have their student advisor. So working in our MBA program is not sitting alone in front of your computer. It's working with a group of people who are dedicated to helping students understand the material, get their education, and then make sure that any questions they have get a prompt response.

Dr. Glenn: Interesting. Tell me what makes UMUC's nationally acclaimed MBA program so unique.

Dr. Evanchik: Well, in 2005, we were honored by receiving the award from the Sloan Consortium as the most outstanding online teaching and learning program. The Sloan Consortium is a big industry association. It's focused on business education programs and is arguably the premier organization focused on online education. So we were very pleased to receive the award. In fact, we're the only MBA program to have received this distinction. Well, why did we get it? I think because we designed a program that centers around the students. It's designed, as I said, for online delivery and that's to recognize that students need the support, but they also need to have a curriculum that meets their needs on the job. And this is something that we've paid particular attention to. Because it's a cohort program, we can integrate the curriculum across the seven six-credit courses. Because it's a cohort program we can focus on themes. We have five themes in our MBA program: Technology, leadership, globalization, ethics, and technology. And these themes span the academic content in all of these seven courses. In addition to the focus on these themes, there is also a focus on developing a specific set of competencies in our students. And we focus on ten particular competencies, and I'll just list them briefly. It starts with technology fluency, information literacy and research skills, systems thinking, critical thinking, decision making, diversity/cross-cultural awareness, communication skills, team building skills, executing decisions, and then finally, and perhaps most importantly, ethical leadership. Our programs are designed to reinforce these competencies throughout the program.

Dr. Glenn: Dr. Evanchik, in light of the uniqueness of the program, what sets UMUC's MBA faculty apart from other universities?

Dr. Evanchik: Well, we're very pleased to have a very talented group of faculty who have both academic scholarship -- I mean, we have almost all of our faculty, over 90 percent of our faculty have a terminal(?) degree in a particular area of expertise - - but they also have extensive business experience. Many of our faculty are practitioners in the business world. They do this for a living and they bring that experience back into the classroom. One of the things that our program pays

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particular attention to is making sure the students don't just get the theory behind the various management areas, but also, the ability to apply that in situations that are meaningful to them. And our faculty have been doing it, are doing it, and can help students to improve their effectiveness on the job.

Dr. Glenn: Thank you. What can you tell us about student demographics?

Dr. Evanchik: Well, UMUC is an open university. We have a wide variety of students. We have some that are in their 20s. We have some who are in their 50s and perhaps older. But most of our students are in their early to mid-30s. They have 10 to 15 years of experience. And really what they're looking to do now is get back to their formal education. And we're designing our programs and we've focused on these particular individuals as we've thought about what it is that we want our program to accomplish.

Dr. Glenn: Looking ahead of it, what can we expect from the MBA program in the near future?

Dr. Evanchik: Well, one of the things that we've always prided ourselves is the use of technology, integrating technology into the application of our curriculum. From the very beginning, we've used conference calls so that we can communicate on a synchronous basis with our students. We've used various software tools that help us to deliver presentations in an audio or video format to our students. So they can receive much the same kind of instruction that they get in a face-to-face classroom. So, technology has been a critical element of what we do. And we're working on new technologies now to improve the quality of the learning experience for our students. What we want to do is use technologies and currently focusing on one called Adobe Connect, which is a synchronous web conferencing tool that allows students and faculty to work together in a shared learning environment. They can share documents. They can share spreadsheets. They can use this for team interaction. So we're really looking to continually improve our ability to bring technology into the classroom so that the learning experience of our students can continually be improved.

Dr. Glenn: And finally, Dr. Evanchik, where can students or prospective students go if they need additional information?

Dr. Evanchik: Well, there's information, of course, on our department web page and we would encourage anybody who has a question or needs additional information to give us a call or send us an email. And if anybody wants to apply online, they can simply go to www.umuc.edu, the main web page for the University, and click on the button that says Apply Online. So there are lots of ways in which we'd be glad to work with students individually and encourage all to give us a call if there's anything that we can do to help.

Dr. Glenn: Well, thank you, Dr. Evanchik, for the helpful information. And thank all of you for your attention.

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