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University of Illinois Relocates Executive MBA Program from Champaign to Chicago

Chicago Now Home to Three of Nation's Top Ten Executive MBA Programs – More Than Any Other City

CHICAGO, March 6, 2003 – The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has announced the relocation of its highly ranked Executive MBA program to Chicago. Effective with the class starting in August, other than three resident weeks on the Urbana-Champaign campus, classes will be held exclusively at the school's Illini Center, 200 South Wacker Drive.

As part of the move, the University will take an additional 22,000 square feet at its Chicago loop headquarters. Much of the new facilities will be devoted to new classroom space and other educational resources that will house the Executive MBA program, as well as other University programs.

The Executive MBA at the University of Illinois has been ranked number eight of all Executive MBA programs in the U.S. and number thirteen in the world according to the *Financial Times* (October 4, 2002). It was also ranked as the number one public institution Executive MBA program in the country.

A springboard for many senior-level careers, the program has provided a solid academic grounding of higher business education for more than 27 years. It has earned recognition as one of the premier programs of its kind – achieved by only a handful of universities throughout the world. The Executive MBA at the U. of I. was built into a world-class program on the University's campus in Urbana-Champaign.

Today's announcement, however, reflects a strategic shift of focus to serve the Chicago business community, underscored by the significant number of Chicago-area companies that have been sending students in recent years and the appeal of the region's overwhelming dominance in the Midwest as a center for commerce, manufacturing and technology companies.

"Many factors have converged to make the Chicago region a viable, attractive home base for us," said Merle Giles, director of the Executive MBA program at the University of Illinois. "A critical element was the ability to offer a nationally ranked and internationally heralded Executive MBA program in a world-class corporate market that has already demonstrated leadership in supporting and promoting the highest level of business education."

"I join the entire Chicago business community in congratulating the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on the decision to base its prestigious Executive MBA Program in this city," said Jerry Roper, president and chief executive officer of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.

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“This move combined with the Executive MBA programs at the University of Chicago and Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management, means that Chicago is home to three of nation’s top ten Executive MBA programs as ranked by the *Financial Times*,” continued Roper. “No other city in America can make that claim and it should be an attractive prospect for corporations and employers already located here or thinking about locating in Chicago.”

The Executive MBA at the U. of I. is among the most concentrated of its kind. It brings the best professors in theoretical business strategy from the Urbana-Champaign campus into the program through a highly focused, interactive format. Beginning with its all-Chicago-based program later this year, it will offer a full, 18-course curriculum in a 15 month schedule – including the required international study – beginning each August. The program’s new schedule calls for two full days of class every other Friday and Saturday. This twice-monthly schedule maximizes student immersion in the program and minimizes disruption to their professional and personal commitments. The Friday/Saturday schedule allows an equal time commitment from the executives and their companies.

“Today’s business leaders must not only be thoroughly adept in the traditional business disciplines, but must also understand and appreciate how technology is impacting business and society, learn how to best nurture innovations and the business ventures that result from them and do so in the context of an increasingly competitive global marketplace,” said Dr. Avijit Ghosh, Dean of the College of Business for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. “The Executive MBA at Illinois is the perfect program for today’s modern manager to address these critical business issues.”

During the past few years, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has built an increasing presence in Chicago for its Executive MBA program. Prior to the move to Chicago, the program was unique among all Urbana-Champaign degree programs to offer classes in Chicago, as well as on the main Urbana-Champaign campus. The program has always specialized in a high degree of technology support that allowed remote access to classroom lectures and archived presentations and classroom study for anytime reference.

Executive MBA programs have emerged nationwide as attractive alternatives to either full-time programs requiring one or two years, or part-time programs that can stretch an MBA degree program over as many as five or six years of night and weekend classes. The Executive MBA program at the U. of I. schedules classes at regular and concentrated intervals to enable students to continue working while obtaining an advanced degree. This concentration of classes and the elimination of the summer recess, inherent in many university programs, are designed to respond to the demands of today’s fast track executives, allowing them to obtain their degree in just 15 months.

Students in the program typically are manager- or higher-level corporate executives, or aspire to such positions. Most range in age from 30 to 45, and have 10-plus years of professional experience, enabling each student to benefit from the collective experiences of his or her classmates.

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“The relocation of the Executive MBA program is just another example of the University of Illinois’ overall commitment to the Chicago area,” said Dean Ghosh. “The College of Business has 18,000 alumni in the Chicago area and the Urbana-Champaign campus boasts nearly 100,000 alumni in these seven counties. We are continuing to move forward to strengthen our connection with Chicago and the thousands of alumni who live here.”

For his part, Merle Giles sees the relocation of the Executive MBA at the U. of I. to Chicago as the natural evolution of a program so successful the *Financial Times* ranks it as the eighth best program in the United States and the thirteenth best in the world.

“We have always been cutting-edge and global in scope, while maintaining a tuition level that is among the most affordable of all the nation’s premier programs. We’re convinced Chicago’s role as an international business and technology center will only grow in the future, as evidenced by the wealth of companies situating their headquarters here. It’s a perfect market for us and we want to be a part of that growth.”

About the Executive MBA Program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

The Executive MBA program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is an accelerated degree program that meets the educational needs of experienced managers and executives through a unique class schedule, dedicated and experienced faculty, a full 18-course curriculum, technology-supported instruction and a stimulating two-week international study program in just a 15 month timeframe. The degree is designed to meet the demands of today’s fast track executive with individual attention, prestigious class composition and enterprise-wide perspective.

Offered primarily through classrooms at the University’s downtown Chicago Illini Center (beginning in August 2003), in conjunction with introductory study at the University’s Urbana-Champaign campus, the Executive MBA program at the U. of I. is one of only three such programs in Illinois to be ranked among the nation’s best Executive MBA programs by both *Business Week* and the *Financial Times*. The program is offered by the University’s College of Business, Avijit Ghosh, Dean.

For more information, see the program details at www.TheExecutiveMBA.com, call (312) 575-0900 or send an e-mail to emba@uiuc.edu.

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