

# 5 South Florida business schools aim to broaden their appeal with innovative, flexible programs

BY JOSEPH A. MANN JR. *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*

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Students at the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami attend a class on July 15. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*

Sustainability, cybersecurity, social media marketing, big data, analytics, cryptocurrencies.

These are just a few challenges and opportunities that executives and other business professionals must deal with today — in addition to growth, profit-and-loss, finance, marketing and all the traditional disciplines that keep companies competitive and successful.

To deal with all this, colleges and universities in South Florida have expanded, updated and adjusted their business courses and MBA/master's programs, adding new courses and making it easier for executives and other working professionals to obtain degrees and training through flexible and online class schedules, as well as intensive, short-term certificate programs.

Ironically, even as the pace and complexity of change in business is growing, many U.S. business schools have reported fewer master's of business administration (MBA) applicants.

An article last year published by TV business channel CNBC said that among 363 U.S. business schools surveyed by the Graduate Management Admission Council, 70 percent of two-year, full-time MBA programs reported a decline in applications in 2018. The article, which also said the most recent MBA grads earned about \$150,000 a year, noted that the decline affected the nation's most prestigious schools, including Harvard, Stanford and Wharton, at the University of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, MBA applications were up last year in Asia, Canada and Europe.

South Florida business schools are acutely aware of this trend, and have acted to broaden their appeal and make themselves more relevant to the business world. This is how five of them — a sampling of the many programs that exist in the region — have done so.

## **UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI | MIAMI BUSINESS SCHOOL**

“While business schools have seen flat or declining numbers in MBA applications, Miami Business School [at the University of Miami] has seen an increase in applications for our graduate degree programs,” said John A. Quelch, dean of the Miami Business School (MBS) and vice provost for executive education at the university. “This year, the number of applicants was up 25 percent, while last year we saw a 12 percent increase.

“We have bucked the trend by regularly innovating and expanding our suite of specialized masters programs and various post-graduate degree offerings. We also benefit from our unique position at the crossroads of the Americas, as Miami is home to the Latin American operations of many global corporations,” Quelch said.

“With technology constantly changing the way we do business on a daily basis, we have added and updated many business analytics and technology classes, including High Performance Computing, Programming for Distributed Systems, and Supply Chain Analytics.”

MBS offers a range of master's and MBA programs including master's degrees in finance and business analytics, a global executive MBA, an online professional MBA, and executive MBAs in health, real estate and a juris doctor (law degree)/MBA.

Under its executive education program, the school also offers more than 50 Fast Immersion Modules developed by professors to cover specialized areas in 2-4 hour courses. Students can choose blocs of modules to be studied over a few days or several months. These modules are given on campus or online.



Dean of the University of Miami Business School John Quelch, at the school's campus in Coral Gables in July.  
Charlie Ortega Guifarro [CGUIFARRO@MIAMIHERALD.COM](mailto:CGUIFARRO@MIAMIHERALD.COM)

At the same time, UMiami's Division of Continuing and International Education offers cybersecurity "bootcamps" for entry-level students who want to prepare for careers in cybersecurity/IT, and for experienced, working cyber professionals who want to advance their skills and prep for international cybersecurity certification.

But this year, MBS launched its latest and perhaps most innovative new program, the master's of science degree (M.S.) in sustainable business — a full-time, 10-month series of courses that began Aug. 19 with 25 students. The school also offers a master's in leadership.

"We are responding to the market," Quelch said, when he announced the new program in February. "There is greatly increased demand for talented leaders who understand both business and sustainability, especially with a rigorous grounding in science."

“One of the reasons we developed this program is because sustainable business applies to all industries,” said David Kelly, the academic director of the new sustainability curriculum and a tenured professor of economics at MBS.

Sustainability is not just a new corporate buzzword. It means that an enterprise generates social and environmental benefits while simultaneously benefiting financially.

“A very simple example is an airline that finds ways to reduce fuel usage,” Kelly said. “Society benefits from less carbon and pollution emissions and the firm benefits from lower costs. And socially responsible investors also provide motivation by only investing in companies that satisfy sustainability metrics.”

“Sustainable business is a huge trend,” said Kelly, who has done research in climate change policy, the design of environmental regulation as well as economic growth and the environment. “The number of S&P 500 firms reporting on sustainability has increased four-fold in only the last eight years.

“Business students are also increasingly interested in the good that firms do, especially millennials. How can firms provide social and environmental goods in a way that makes financial sense? Interest in environmental problems has expanded greatly in South Florida in recent years, so firms have a role to play in finding solutions,” Kelly said.

While sustainability is studied in other undergraduate and graduate business schools, the business sustainability degree puts MBS in the vanguard of graduate business education. Only a few other schools in the U.S. have master’s programs in sustainable business, Kelly said.

The curriculum is inter-disciplinary. Students take electives in the science behind sustainability from across UM, Kelly said. For example, they may take a course in climate change from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science or a course in green building certification at the Environmental Engineering School.



University of Miami Business School professor David Kelly at the school's campus in Coral Gables. Charlie Ortega Guifarro [CGUIFARRO@MIAMIHERALD.COM](mailto:CGUIFARRO@MIAMIHERALD.COM)

After completing classes at the University of Miami, students in the program will work directly with a company to apply what they've learned to a sustainability project in a practical way, Kelly said.

“This year, students will work in teams of four at Office Depot headquarters in Boca Raton. They will look at all aspects of Office Depot's business, including supply chains, headquarters and retail locations.”

The first class in the sustainability program is made up of students from South Florida and overseas. Most are younger, but several are already working in sustainable business and want to gain more expertise, or are professionals who want to change from other fields.

The curriculum was developed with input from sustainability experts. Its strong scientific component makes it the first STEM-certified degree in sustainable business in the country. The certifying body is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which requires that 50 per cent of credit hours are devoted to science, technology, engineering or math.

The cost of tuition for the full academic year 2019-2020 in the sustainable business M.S. program is \$67,200 (32 credits), not including all fees, housing, transportation, meals and other expenses.

South Florida companies like Lennar Corporation have developed sustainable business policies that make economic sense, Kelly said. Among them:

- Lennar Corporation has been researching housing developments with solar powered micro-grids, he said. “Now that California — and even South Miami — have put in regulations that new buildings must have solar powered roofs, Lennar will gain a competitive advantage.”
- Perry Ellis is working to make its supply chain sustainable. It is using clothing from factories in less developed countries that provide safe and improved working conditions to avoid the accidents that have occurred in unsafe workplaces used by other clothing companies.
- Royal Caribbean, which operates in many jurisdictions with different environmental rules, sets one standard that exceeds regulations in all jurisdictions, rather than doing the minimum in each country. As a result, it saves money in compliance training, software and other items.

In fact, if a company fails to take sustainable environmental policies seriously, Kelly says, it will face consequences. He cites Vale, a giant Brazilian mining company, as an example of a company that’s paying a high price for its lapse:

At a Vale iron mine in January, a tailings dam — an earthfill embankment dam used to store byproducts of mining operations — collapsed, killing at least 248 people and causing an environmental disaster when tons of sludge spread throughout the area. A few years earlier, in 2015, another tailings dam in Minas Gerais owned by Vale and a partner also had failed, killing 19, washing away a village and contaminating one of the country’s most important rivers, which carried dangerous pollutants to the Atlantic Ocean.

Aside from the loss of life and jobs, Vale, which ignored reports of safety concerns, suffered a serious blow to its international reputation and will pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation.

- ***University of Miami - Miami Business School: For information, contact Priscilla Ferreira, Assistant Director, Graduate Business Admissions Direct: 305-284-3981 or email: [pferreira@bus.miami.edu](mailto:pferreira@bus.miami.edu)***

## **MIAMI DADE COLLEGE | CYBERSECURITY CENTER OF THE AMERICAS**

“When an engine fails, a commercial airline pilot must be ready to take immediate action,” said Jorge Ortega, director of Miami Dade College’s Cybersecurity Center of the Americas. “When a cyberattack occurs, the cyber security team at a company also must be able to detect and respond to the intrusion immediately. They always work on prevention, but they must be prepared to stop the attack before any damage is done to the organization’s computer network.”

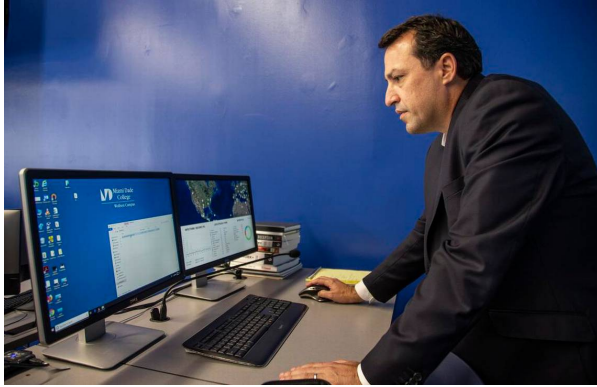
Responding to the increasing number of crippling cyber attacks on corporate and government computer systems, Miami Dade College (MDC) last year established the cybersecurity center at its Wolfson Campus.

The high-tech center provides training to cyber professionals, working professionals and academics at its Security Operations Center (SOC), built to duplicate the security environments of corporate cyber operations facilities, and at its state-of-the-art Cyber Range, where students must deal with cyberattacks on a virtual network in real time.

MDC’s Cyber Range is powered by Cyberbit, an international company that develops ultra-realistic cyber security training and simulation platforms.

Part of MDC’s School of Engineering and Technology, the center currently serves students in South Florida, the Caribbean and Latin America, offering full-time, part-time and remote courses.

“We launched the center in August 2018 because there is a huge demand for cybersecurity talent and not enough people are prepared in government, the private sector and others areas,” said Ortega, a veteran cybersecurity and finance executive who has worked in the private sector.



Jorge Ortega, director at the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami works on a computer on July 15. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*

“The leadership of Miami Dade College realized there was a void and decided to create the center, which offers certificate programs and academic credit. So far, we’ve trained over 150 people, and [we] have about 20 students in the current course,” he said.

Costs vary. Certification courses can start with no charge for qualified, grant-funded individuals. Outside grant-funded courses, certification courses currently start at \$999, which includes all course ware, exam voucher, instructor, practice testing software, etc., Ortega said. Costs are higher for more advanced certifications or for organizations doing multiple training sessions with the Cyber Range.

Cybersecurity training involves dealing with a range of threats, Ortega said, including malware, ransomware, denial of service, Trojan viruses, web defacements, data capture, worms and other viruses, all of which can disrupt the operations of businesses, government and other organizations.

For example, a company can be crippled when an employee receives an email apparently from a trusted contact, and opens an attachment.

This happened in Riviera Beach earlier this year when a ransomware attack paralyzed the city’s computer system — and all the offices and services that depend on it — after a city employee opened an email link. The city paid the equivalent of \$600,000 in untraceable Bitcoins to restore service.



“The creators of complex malware know that organizations have developed systems to foil them, so they come up with new versions,” Ortega said. “It’s a never-ending game. And some companies and organizations never tell you they’ve been hacked.”

Program participants — who may include government and private-sector information technology (IT) professionals as well as MDC engineering students — train by simulation, starting at the Security Operations Center and frequently moving on to the Cyber Range. Some IT professionals and cyber teams from companies and other organizations go directly to the Cyber Range to practice.



Ambrel Brown, 20, a student at the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in Downtown Miami listens to the instructor during a class on Monday, July 15, 2019. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*

At the Cyber Range, participants — who must have experience in information security — work in the same type of environment seen in computer security offices at private companies and government organizations. Often working along with their office security team, they sit at terminals and are subject to a variety of real cyber attacks generated by Cyberbit’s advanced technology. They are rated on how they perform and train to thwart future attacks at their own organizations.

Often, teams ranging from help-desk employees to security managers to senior executives take courses at the center, Ortega said. Some participants are beginners who want to pursue careers in cyber security, but to be accepted into the program, applicants must have solid knowledge of computer networks and other related areas.

“The goal of cybersecurity is to maintain a safe environment for all your digital assets — documents, music, financial accounts, etc.,” Ortega said. “Cybersecurity is agnostic. It’s not just for public and private organizations, it’s for the entire community. It spreads across computers and connected systems we all use.”

In addition to the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas, Miami Dade College provides a variety of specialized courses in cloud computing at its Cloud Computing Center (Eduardo J. Padrón Campus) and a program covering IoT Applications (the Internet of Things) at its Hialeah and Wolfson campuses.

MDC is a state college operating from eight campuses that offers associate and baccalaureate degrees. Total student enrollment is more than 66,000, including full- and part-time students.



Franklin Mesa Jr., lead instructor at the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami talks to students Alan Lozano, 18, left, and Angel Hidalgo, 18, after class on July 15. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*

MDC’s Miguel B. Fernandez Family School of Global Business, Trade and Transportation has degree and certificate programs in a variety of areas, including supervision and management, business administration, economics, transportation and logistics, marketing, accounting, financial services/banking and entrepreneurship.

▪ ***Miami Dade College: Cybersecurity Center of the Americas. For information on courses, costs and enrollment, contact: [cybersecuritycenter@mdc.edu](mailto:cybersecuritycenter@mdc.edu)***

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/biz-monday/article235819482.html>

## **FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY | CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP**

Reaching out to working professionals, managers and executives, Florida International University's Center for Leadership offers a broad array of programs that provide advanced training with FIU faculty, business leaders and other experts. The courses range in length, from one day to six months.

The center, closely aligned with FIU's College of Business, supplements the business school's comprehensive offering of graduate and undergraduate courses, degrees, programs and other educational offerings with a focus on developing and improving effective leadership skills in business, government, education, NGOs and other sectors.

It provides working professionals — including aspiring leaders — the opportunity to attend short- and medium-term courses in a vital field while still keeping their jobs and obtain a certificate from FIU.



Nathan J. Hiller, academic director at FIU's Center for Leadership and associate professor of management and international business at the university. *FIU*

“Our students include people from Fortune 100 companies, public education, government, the military and major local companies, like Baptist Health, Ryder and

Merck,” said Nathan J. Hiller, academic director at FIU’s Center for Leadership and associate professor of management and international business at the university. “A key selling point for many companies is that Miami is a major Latin and international city that may be an important part of their business,” said Hiller, a widely published researcher, consultant and expert on executive leadership.

About 65 percent of students are from South Florida while the remainder are from the rest of Florida, other states and overseas.

The center’s portfolio includes programs in leadership acceleration, women leaders, high-impact leadership, driving leadership potential, leadership essentials, and senior executive leaders. In addition it has customized options where FIU faculty visit companies and other organizations. The center began offering its women leaders program a decade ago, and since then has added six more, constantly adjusting and updating them.

“We spend a lot of time planning, not to differentiate ourselves, but to the best job we can,” Hiller said.

The Leadership Accelerator Program, for example, is an intensive course concentrating on leading self (leveraging the totality of an individual and engaging in self-reflection), strategic focus, connecting with others, leading others and delivering results. It is designed for managers with 2-10 years of experience, including job titles likes assistant/associate directors, senior managers, project mangers and managers. It runs Thursday and Friday this week (Oct. 10-11) and costs \$1,995.



FIU's Center for Leadership offers programs, ranging from one day to six months, that provide training with faculty, business leaders and other experts. Margi Rentis | FIU [WWW.MARGIRENTIS.COM](http://WWW.MARGIRENTIS.COM)

FIU zeroed in on a critical area when it developed its first leadership center program 10 years ago: women leaders.

Since this program began, 345 women have graduated. Alumnae include executives from Walmart, Baxter, Baptist Health South Florida, Beckman Coulter, Mastercard Worldwide, Miami-Dade County, Ocean Bank and State Farm Insurance.

The next women's leadership program runs from May 4-7, 2020, and costs \$6,750, with special rates for early registration, multi-registrations, nonprofits and others.

In addition, the center is offering a five-day course in international business and public policy in October jointly with Georgetown University. It also is teaching a series of two-day programs in cybersecurity leadership and strategy,

A key factor in FIU's leadership programs is the center's copyrighted Leadership Competence Builder, a proprietary, research-based list of leadership competencies that helps determine what is needed in successful leadership for all levels and organizations.

FIU's College of Business recently launched a 10-month program in which "unicorn entrepreneurs" are showing entrepreneurs how to start a new enterprise or grow an existing business using strategies and financial skills that do not require venture capital.

▪ ***Florida International University Center for Leadership: For information, call 305-348-5323 or use email contact form at <https://lead.fiu.edu/contact>***

## **NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY | H. WAYNE HUIZENGA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship (HCBE) at Nova Southeastern University in Davie pays close attention to students, alumni and business in developing and adjusting curricula to best meet the needs of students and the corporate world.

"Business is all about analytics," said Steven Harvey, assistant dean of graduate affairs at HCBE, including digital marketing and analytics as a tool in general. "This is what we hear from our corporate partners and alumni as we survey them to determine what they need to remain competitive and at the head of their industries. That is why we have focused coursework in both areas for nearly a decade."



The H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University in Davie pays close attention to students, alumni and business in developing and adjusting curricula to best meet the needs of students and the corporate world. *NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY*

In HCBE's MBA with a concentration in marketing, students are exposed to cutting-edge social media marketing instruction. Students in this concentration also pursue courses in both marketing research and analytics, and digital marketing analytics, he said.

Access to a wide range of working professionals is important. "The Huizenga College's MBA with a concentration in business intelligence/analytics (MBA/BIA) is very accessible to working professionals," Harvey said. "The courses are offered both weeknights and online for the local or distant learner. Faculty spend countless hours ensuring that the online experience is rich and engaging as the live experience.

"The MBA/BIA focuses on big data, which is not only about collecting information, it's about collecting the "right" information and making it accessible for decision making. Too often companies struggle with either knowing what data to collect or how to store and distribute it in such a way that a single location or multidivisional companies can share and keep the data protected," Harvey said. The flexible program is designed to be attractive to both working professionals or full-time students. "The vast majority of our students are working professionals with experience in the health or healthcare industry."

In 2017, HCBE launched a new program, an MBA in complex health systems, in collaboration with the new medical school at NSU, creating the Center for Executive Health Education.

"The program focuses on the 'new' business of health — the intersection of technology, research and innovation to provide business solutions that take discoveries from the laboratory bench through the complex journey to the patient's bedside," Harvey said.

Other innovative programs include an MBA in process improvement, an MBA in human resources, and a master's of accounting in three areas: managerial accounting, public accounting (CPA license) and taxation. These program are also available online.

The business college offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as professional certificates. It has MBA programs in 12 concentrations. All the MBA options are typically completed in 18 months, but can be done in as little as 12 months. The MBA/BIA program began in 2012.

NSU says that tuition costs for its master's degrees in business run from \$34,743 to \$43,194, depending on the number of credits, not including all fees, textbooks and other items.

About 80 percent of the college's MBA students are working professionals and about 85 percent of the student body lives in the tri-county area. HCBE said about 1,800 students are pursuing master's degrees in the Fall 2019 semester.

▪ ***Nova Southeastern University - H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship. For information, call (800) 672-7223 or go to [hcbeinfo@nova.edu](mailto:hcbeinfo@nova.edu)***



Steven Harvey, assistant dean of graduate affairs at Nova's HCBE. J-Pruitt

## **FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

The College of Business at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton has designed a series of executive education degree programs and certificate courses that appeal to working professionals eager to improve their skills.

“Our executive education programs are designed to assist working professionals to acquire new skills, learning and adapting to a much faster moving business world,” said Vegar Wiik, executive director of executive programs at FAU's College of Business. “Thirty years ago, people stayed in their jobs for a long time. Now managers need to retool every seven to 10 years.”

The college offers flexible scheduling for masters, MBA and doctoral degrees, as well as a wide range of professional certificate programs.





The College of Business at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton has designed a series of executive education degree programs and certificate courses that appeal to working professionals eager to improve their skills. *FAU*

For example, students in its 23-month executive MBA programs in international business, health administration, big-data analytics, finance and operations management attend classes every third weekend from 8 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. The cost, which includes tuition, books, breakfast and lunch plus others items, ranges from \$38,600 to \$44,390.

One of the business school's newest courses is a Ph.D. in business administration for senior-level professionals who want to earn the highest academic degree in business while continuing to work.

FAU's MBA in Sport Management began in 2000 but continues to be one of the most acclaimed programs in the country for training sport business executives and management. Students, who cannot be employed outside the sport sector while enrolled in the program, may study on campus in Boca Raton or online anywhere in the world.

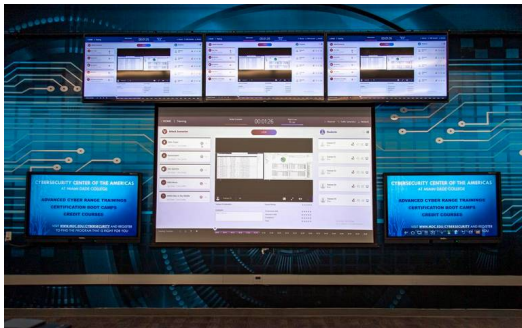
Students seeking executive and professional degrees are taught by FAU faculty and experienced business executives, obtain extensive experience in the local business community and can opt for flexible weekend, evening and online courses. FAU's college of business has about 8,000 students.

▪ ***Florida Atlantic University (FAU) College of Business Executive Education: For information, call (561) 297-2709 or visit: <https://business.fau.edu/executive-education/contacts-and-directions/>***



Vegar Wiik, executive director of executive programs at Florida Atlantic University's College of Business.

The writer can be reached at [josephmannjr@gmail.com](mailto:josephmannjr@gmail.com).



A view of the computer terminals and projection screens inside the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*



Jorge Ortega, director of the Cybersecurity Center of the Americas at Miami Dade College - Wolfson Campus in Miami, meets with students after a class. SAM NAVARRO *SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD*