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Two new morning management programs have mixed results

By Tom Harlan

Two early-bird management programs at local universities headed in opposite directions this winter.

Barry University canceled plans for an early-morning MBA program that was to start this month. But an undergraduate program at Florida International University is flourishing.

The Barry program, which was to cater to working students with family responsibilities, was canceled due to lack of interest, said Jose Poza, marketing director for Barry's Andreas School of Business.

Fewer than 20 students applied, Mr. Poza said, not enough to cover costs and ensure a cadre from differing backgrounds.

Barry officials laid out plans a year ago for the program, marketed to its typical MBA student — 29 years old with family and professional responsibilities not conducive to evening and weekend classes.

Students were to take classes from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and gain 36 credit hours in 23 months.

But prospective students didn't want to start that early, Mr. Poza said, preferring to spend mornings with their families.

Meanwhile, a morning FIU undergraduate management program is growing, said Clifford R. Perry, associate dean of academic affairs and undergraduate programs for FIU's College of Business Administration.

The school's BBA+ morning program offers students the opportunity to work full-time and graduate with a bachelor's degree in management in a year-and-a-half, he said.

Classes run 7:30-8:45 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Pembroke Pines campus. Students also study online.

The program is designed for students who have full-time jobs and other responsibilities, Mr. Perry said. Students take three classes during shortened semesters to fulfill requirements for the management major.

The program is designed so that a group of students will go through the entire course together, he said. Students are required to remain with their group and work on joint courses and projects until they graduate.

The program started with 12 students in January 2004, Mr. Perry said, with a second group of 18 to 20 who started this year. The program's promotion of teamwork more than its morning schedule makes it popular, he said.

FIU doesn't have a morning MBA program because students prefer attending classes Saturdays to avoid rush-hour traffic, said Joyce Elam, dean of the FIU College of Business Administration.

But the school might explore starting a morning program, she said, if it opens a proposed MBA program downtown.

"We've never really considered the morning for an MBA program," she said. "We've been really successful with our weekend



Joyce Elam: FIU students prefer easy drive to Saturday classes over weekday morning rush hour. Photo by Maxine Usdan

programs. But if we had the right location, we might look into it."

Barry has an evening MBA program with ideal class sizes that will expand into Coral Springs in September, Mr. Poza said.

University of Miami officials have not discussed adding a morning program, said Ania Nozewnik-Green, assistant dean of UM's graduate business program.

The school has a traditional MBA program and two weekend programs for executives and working professionals Saturday mornings and Monday evenings.

The Saturday executive program is most popular, Ms. Nozewnik-Green said, with about 200 students enrolling between the fall and spring semesters.

The program has grown over the past few years as fewer students have been willing to leave their careers to work full-time toward an MBA, she said. "They are holding onto their jobs and enrolling in executive-type programs offered on the weekends."