

South Florida CEO

The Business Magazine of Miami-Dade, Broward & The Palm Beaches

October, 2003



No. 8 EDUCATION

Latin Americans have long come to Miami for higher education. Now thousands are pursuing executive business degrees – in Spanish.

For the past five years, a cadre of top Latin American executives has flown into Miami for business, but not to negotiate deals or participate in conventions. They have come to attend the University of Miami School of Business Administration, for a year-long Spanish-language master's degree program in managerial skills.

Since 1998, the Professional Management program has grown both in prestige and popularity, says Ania Nozewnik-Green, director of graduate business recruiting and admissions. "We offer the complete package – a unique geographic location, exceptional quality, and a prestigious reputation with a world-renowned faculty." The students have an average age of 40 and a minimum of eight years of business experience. There is no "distance learning," either; the program typically consists of five intense two-week sessions in Miami.

For distance, Florida International University – Miami's top state university – offers a Global Executive MBA that is an Internet-focused experience. During five week-long residencies at Miami's Biltmore Hotel Conference Center of the Americas, the students are constantly plugged into the Internet. When students of the 13-month program are not in Miami, they meet for class online to participate in discussions and lectures. The Global eMBA is specifically designed for managers with five to eight years of international Latin American management experience, and has attracted executives from the Latin American divisions of companies like Monsanto, Xerox and 3Com.

"It's a global program for managers in the Americas, so it's oriented towards them," says Dr. Sally Gallion, assistant dean of FIU's Chapman Graduate School of Business, who was herself raised in Peru and Argentina. "The whole Chapman school's mission is to prepare business leaders for the Americas."

The main student body of FIU is itself highly international, with about 20 percent of the nearly 34,000 students from foreign countries, dominated by Venezuela, Jamaica, Colombia, Brazil and Trinidad/Tobago. They enroll in programs such as architecture, business, engineering, medicine, education and law, as well as a Spanish-language masters program in journalism. Similarly, at Florida Atlantic University in Palm Beach County, almost 10 percent – 2,516 students – are from Latin America and the Caribbean.

South Florida is also a major exporter of academic and intellectual capital throughout the Americas, with universities operating graduate school or specialized training programs from in-country sites, or distance learning programs using satellite television, videotapes and the Internet.

"For more than 25 years, we have had a successful undergraduate and business school program in places like Panama and Jamaica," says Ray Ferraro, president of Nova Southeastern University (NSU), located in the Broward suburb of Davie. NSU also offers graduate education programs in the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, and a doctor of pharmacy program in Puerto Rico. Some 1,243 students in NSU's 2002 class came



Back to School: The University of Miami's master's program in business administration is in Spanish.

from outside the US, predominantly the Americas.

Much of the research on Latin American and inter-American issues is also conducted in Greater Miami. For instance, FIU's Latin America and Caribbean Center acts as a "think tank" funded by the US Department of Education, and has incubated FIU's Institute for International Professional Services and its Summit of the Americas Center.

Finally, internationalism is a hallmark of South Florida's K-12 schools. The area's top private schools have large percentages of foreign students, and more than a dozen Miami-Dade schools have programs that focus on learning in a foreign language. ■

SNAPSHOT

Percent of students at FIU from the Caribbean and Latin America:

20%

UM started its Spanish-language MBA in: 1998

Years that S. Florida schools have run graduate programs in Latin America and the Caribbean: 25+ years

Caribbean and Latin American students at FAU:

2,500+

Clips From:

O'CONNELL & GOLDBERG