

“India is a key market and source of talent for the School”



Please tell us about the Undergraduate and Post Graduate courses offered by your institute.

We offer a full-time MBA, an Executive MBA, a Ph.D. program and recently launched a Master of Science in business analytics degree in partnership with UVA’s McIntire School of Commerce. We offer MBA programs that teach through the case method, which we use for its unparalleled ability to prepare students at the true pace of business. The first year of the MBA program is focused on a core curriculum, with a focus on areas such as operations, global economies, financial management, marketing, accounting and business ethics, among other courses. Our full-time MBAs conduct an internship between the first and second year, working with major corporations or startups across the world, and of course many students end up working at those same companies after graduation. In the second year, students align expertise with their purpose, choosing from more than 100 elective topics.

How are you bringing in innovation in terms of teaching pedagogy at your college? Please throw light on the management staff and faculty.

Darden has been ranked the world’s best business education experience by The Economist for seven years in a row, so we are ever-mindful of maintaining a top education experience. But that does not happen by standing still, and we are hyper-aware of the competitive global space in which we operate.

To give you one example of innovation, Darden recently launched the Initiative for Transformational Leadership and Learning, which will develop and implement an evidence-based curriculum and learning laboratory devoted to leading-edge leadership development. In addition to considering critical issues such as how to incorporate new technology into the curriculum, we will build-out some really exciting and novel capabilities involving experiential leadership testing, where we will simulate and provide feedback on crucial leadership moments. On a very practical level, you’re also seeing more technology woven throughout the curriculum. So a Darden MBA today is much more familiar with software development and coding languages than they were even a few years ago. We also launched an MBA/Master of Science in Data Science dual degree that students complete in two years with our colleagues at the UVA Data Science Institute and it has been a big success.

Technology is the fastest growing sectors that employs graduates abroad,” says **Scott Beardsley, Dean, Darden School of Business - The University of Virginia**. In an exclusive interview with **Ritika Arora Bhola**, he talks about the courses offered, staff at the institute, participation of Indian students and placement cell. Excerpts



Please throw light on participation of Indian students in your school.

India is a key market and source of talent for the Darden School. Between the just-graduated Class of 2018 and the Class of 2019, we have almost 40 students who hold primary Indian citizenship, which is a significant sum for a relatively small school. We have hundreds of alumni living in India or from India originally and doing great work at incredible companies like Amazon, Google, McKinsey, Bain or Goldman Sachs, and our alumni chapter in India maintains lots of activity in Bangalore, New Delhi and Mumbai. In the class that just graduated, our Indian students were incredibly successful at getting excellent jobs. For those who wanted to stay in the U.S., they went to work at firms such as Twitter and McKinsey, to name a few. We are committed to making Darden accessible and affordable for students from India. We offer about 150 merit-based scholarships to each class and the majority of our students with Indian citizenship were awarded a full or partial scholarship.

According to you, what are the most sought after courses being picked by students nowadays?

Courses with technology explicitly woven into the curriculum are perennially popular. Our “Data Science in Business” course, in which students begin to wrap their heads around how to interface with so-called Big Data is very popular. Students want a facility with data whether they hope to pursue a technology position or go into consulting or marketing.

Courses with an entrepreneurial focus are always popular, as more and more students are pursuing their own startups or recognizing the value of an

entrepreneurial mindset within a larger organization. Students also love the opportunity to study with thought leaders such as Professor Saras Sarasvathy.

The truth is students tend to love classes, and they recognize pretty quickly how the core curriculum all fits together to enable a transformational learning experience.

Placement is a key factor driving admissions in professional institutes nowadays. How does the market scenario look like?

The market for Darden MBAs is excellent. We produce a team-oriented, expert problem solver, so you can imagine many organizations want to hire that sort of person -- Consulting firms, banks, big tech, startups etc. One way companies express their demand is in compensation, and the average salary of new Darden graduates ranked No. 4 among all U.S. business schools, just behind Harvard, Stanford and Wharton. Finance and technology also each attract more than 20 percent of Darden students. We are one of the Top 5 feeder schools for investment banks, despite our student body being much smaller than many of the other top schools.

I’ll also add that our international students who want jobs in the U.S. are getting them. U.S. work visas for talented MBA graduates are available, and top companies in the U.S. want international talent. Technology has been one of the fastest growing sectors for our graduates as we double down on our connections to Silicon Valley and our alumni rise to the top in companies like Amazon, Google and Tencent. In fact, the biggest single employer for the Class of 2018 is Amazon. 