In Perspective

US News Ranks UC Irvine’s Paul Merage School of Business 1st in Placement of Full-Time MBAs

As the 2009-2010 academic year comes to a close, we can look back upon it with the knowledge that the Merage School flourished in one of the most challenging economies in history; one that has truly tested the capabilities of our students, faculty and staff. We have emerged with renewed respect for our institution and confidence in our future. As we prepare for 2010-2011, we do so with an outstanding group of quality students; a success rate in placing students in exciting new careers that has put us at #1 in the rankings for employment of MBA graduates three months after graduation; and a Full-Time MBA program that recently moved up an impressive 15 spots to 36th on U.S. News and World Report’s annual ranking of America’s Best Graduate Schools.

And there’s more. U.S. News also ranked our Executive MBA and Fully-Employed MBA programs in the top 25 nationally among part-time business school programs. Overall the Merage School ranked 16th among public university business schools, 19th in the nation for GPA, 23rd for acceptance rate, 29th for employment at graduation, and 33rd for GMAT entrance scores.

Kudos go to our faculty, staff, alumni and friends, and especially to our incredible students on this exciting news. It is further affirmation of the success of the initiatives we have set into place to enhance our program to better meet the demands and expectations of our business community. Our vision to be recognized among the top public university research-based business schools in the country has clearly become a reality. Even in the face of a very difficult economy, we have attracted talented, experienced, and tenacious students who proved they could succeed.

As a leading business school, we expect to remain among the Top 50 schools as we continue to define our vision and differentiate our programs, and graduate business leaders with the exceptional ability to help grow their organizations through strategic innovation. By utilizing input from our alumni and corporate partners, we are continually focused on the caliber of students we are bringing into the program and we have enhanced our curriculum with a keen eye toward the strategic innovation and global competitiveness, which have helped to set our graduates apart in the job market.

About the Methodology

Each year, U.S. News and World Report ranks professional-school programs in business, education, engineering, law, and medicine. These rankings are based on two types of data: expert opinions about program quality and statistical indicators that measure the quality of a school’s faculty, research, and students. These data come from surveys conducted in fall 2009 of more than 1,200 programs as well as 12,400 academics and professionals. The part-time MBA ranking was based on surveys of more than 300 business schools conducted in fall 2009. More detail on the report and methodology can be found at usnews.com.

What Does Success Look Like?

Picture an executive who is founder, principal and CEO of his own company; a Visionary member of the Merage School’s Dean’s Leadership Circle; a top alumni recruiter for the Merage School; coach for the MBA Management Practicum; member of the Don Beall Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; and newly appointed member of the Merage School’s Dean’s Advisory Board for 2010. We’d like you to meet Alumnus Thomas Antunez, FEMBA ‘05.

Recently Antunez shared his success with The Paul Merage School of Business in the form of a $150,000 gift toward the Merage School Building Campaign.

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Liz Ann Sonders, chief investment strategist for Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. spoke to a sold out crowd of nearly 350 on May 12, with a theme of Investment Strategies for Turbulent Times. Sonders opened the event, sponsored by the Center for Investment and Wealth Management at UC Irvine’s Paul Merage School of Business, by stating, “I think the recession is ending.” She followed her statement with the comment, “Being a contrarian, I am very comfortable in my view if very few people share it.”

Sonders supported her view on the current state of the global economy with an extensive and detailed discussion that included “The Bear Case and The Bull Case,” along with a comprehensive set of charts and information. Sonders, a frequent guest on nationally-popular broadcasts such as CNBC, CNN, Fox Business News and others, presented a thorough review of recent market trends and contrasted them both with historic data and up-to-date indicators of economic recovery.

According to Sonders’ data, the recession ended in June 2009, following the bottom of the stock market, which occurred in March 2009. She noted, “The greatest weakness in the recession occurred during the first quarter of 2009, while the single best quarter so far was Q4 of 2009. “There are several indicators that we are in a recovery mode,” said Sonders. “Inventories are building again and consumer spending is on the rise. Consumer spending pops before jobs and feeds into recovery, not the other way around as many people believe.” She added, “Corporate profits are outstanding. We are seeing a profitability boom.”

Addressing the nationwide real estate market, Sonders cautioned, “Interest rates are not the only factor in regaining traction in the real estate market. It’s more important to fix asset demand.” On the bright side, Sonders indicated, “Commercial real estate might not be the next shoe to drop.”

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