Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by Raven350 - 2011/05/12 10:52

Hi!

I've been consuming material regarding online MBAs, accreditation, ranking, reviews, etc., for the past 5-6 months, and I believe my vision has regressed by .5. I am ready to pursue an online MBA and have applied and been accepted to: Northeastern University, University of Scranton, Manchester Business School (UK),University of San Diego, and Rochester Institute of Technology's EMBA. All the programs listed are AACSB, respectively ranked, so that's good.

However, within the online format, what distinguishes one AACSB program from another? I know it's up to me to utilize the skills learned in the program to drive my success; but I'm having a hard time deciding if I should pay $30k for say, University of Scranton (AACSB, ranked regionally, solid reputation) or $62k for Northeastern University (AACSB, ranked nationally, solid reputation).

What would you recommend if my employer only contributes $375 per credit and the rest are federal loans? Also, I have worked professionally (7+ years) within the IT field and am looking for a career change; does school reputation/brand weigh heavily?

I have read many threads/forums/websites that convey different messages. Some say it wouldn't necessarily matter if you have work experience, which I do. However, others say if you're interested in a career change, MBA brand plays a bigger role and you should always try to get into the best MBA program you can - rather be part of a select few than the masses.

I'd appreciate any suggestions or advice.

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/05/12 13:22

Raven350 wrote:
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I'd appreciate any suggestions or advice.

Hi Raven,

Impressive job narrowing your choices!

I'm surprised you were not driven insane by all the permutations you had to factor in when comparing the 400 or so accredited distance MBA degree programs available out there today.

You've clearly done your homework and are ready to enroll.

Big Question:

$30,000 for the University of Scranton Distance MBA(AACSB, ranked regionally, solid reputation) VS. $62k for the Northeastern University Distance MBA(AACSB, ranked nationally, solid reputation).

What will you get for that extra $32,000???

More importantly, will paying $32,000 for the Northeastern MBA get you something of equal value in your learning experience or for your career advancement?

Here are the issues I'd factor in if I were in your boat ....

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1) Reputation of the Chosen MBA School in Your Commute / Work Area?

You have chosen 2 distance MBA programs that operate in the Northeast and that are well established and known as residential colleges in the Northeast. I am going to assume that you live/work in the Northeast.

GetEducated studies of employer acceptance of online degrees reveal that employers hold a bias toward programs that operate residential degree programs in their own backyard.

Your 2 choices are fairly equal in terms of being "known" in the Northeast with NEU having perhaps a slight reputation edge on traditional prestige rankings for its grad business school for working managers.

On the other hand, Scranton is a private Jesuit school, and if you are working in a heavily Catholic area there could be a tremendous loyalty and brand clout + effect in holding a business degree from a private Jesuit school like Scranton.

Try searching linked in profiles to see if any grad business school seems more popular among managers in your chosen career area or geographic commute area.

If I lived in urban Massachusetts I'd give an edge to NE's business school for hiring.

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2) Reputation of Chosen MBA school in IT Field Career Niche You Will Work In?

You said you are moving into IT but not what your expertise or emphasis would be.
This may be extremely important.

Ideally, if you are changing careers this is a great time to use the grad degree to prep you for career change and new employment opportunities.

I'd consider this issue a HUGE factor if I were making the choice for a graduate degree on-line.

Which degree will best serve my intent to respecialize and position myself to move up in my new career?

The Scranton MBA has a new unique major area in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP).
Offered in conjunction with SAP – the world's largest ERP software company – the Scanton MBA program prepares professionals in the configuration and use of ERP software, enhancing managerial and technical skill sets, by teaching knowledge of ERP systems to any software environment or industry.

ERP is, however, a very specialized emphasis in IT.

Do you intend to work in ERP?

If you want to be certified in ERP-SAP systems this Scranton MBA major is a great major area, but it is very narrowly focused and not applicable to broader IT career work.

Northeastern U, on the other hand, has a broader MBA major in Technology Management ....

Here is how NEU defines Tech Management:

Online MBA High Technology Management Concentration

High Technology Management concentration examines the various approaches available to develop and protect intellectual property while building your knowledge of corporate governance and structures as well as business law and intellectual property management within technology companies. Faculty use experiential exercises and hands-on activities to help you answer questions surrounding the increasingly important topic of teamwork, for example how to build and lead successful co-located, virtual, global, and top management teams by creating an environment that fosters effective communication, collaboration, and commitment. This specialization is not limited to teamwork or IP and with the help of text books and case studies, students also focus on matters of entrepreneurial finance including the financial analysis of high technology ventures, working capital management, risk analysis, capital budgeting, sources of financing, valuation, and exit strategies such as licensing, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, and IPOs.

Do you want to move into Technology Management / IT as defined by NEU?

If so, NEU MBA is a great broad prep major for moving up in IT management.

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3) Different Core Core Structure for Different Thinkers - Career Types

In addition to different major areas of study the CORE FOUNDATION courses for the Northeastern online MBA are less rigid or traditional than the Scranton program.

NEU's core is more aimed at open thinking and entrepreneurship.

The University of Scranton Online MBA on the other hand, offers more traditional courses in their CORE online course requirement structure.

What kind of thinker are you?

What kind of work environment do you flourish in?

Where do you work, or will you work in the future?

In terms of coursework and study plans the Scranton MBA is more big business, corporate, nuts and bolts and traditional, whereas the NEU Online MBA is more fluid, more focused on top level strategic thinking and innovation for the entrepreneurial and global thinking type.

Which are you?

These 2 MBA degree programs have very different core required course structures so I encourage you to compare these two online MBA programs for the best fit.

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4) Student Satisfaction

Here is one difference that may or may not matter to you.

The Scanton MBA, I believe, uses the same faculty and course design as on campus.
It is a traditional corporate program in every sense, except that it is offered online.

I believe the NE MBA program does not use the same faculty and course structure as the campus legacy program.

We do have an unhappy student review on file for Northeastern Online MBA Northeastern Online MBA but I can give you little feedback if that review is indicative of bigger issues with the NE MBA or not.

We just don't yet have enough reviews to detect a real pattern of real student satisfaction (or not) with either of these 2 online MBA programs.

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Well, that's it!
I hope this is helpful.

For the record, I think you were wise to rule out the UK MBA from Manchester.

In my experience most Americans (I am assuming you are in the USA) find UK courses difficult to follow and also have low completion rates when they try and cross the pond and think in UK and European

business terms.

American business concepts and regulations are very different from UK and European models.

If you are in the UK or Europe or intend to deal with businesses in a global environment then a UK Distance MBA can be a great asset.

Otherwise, cost aside, you'd likely find a UK MBA degree difficult to absorb and complete.

Vicky Phillips
GetEducated.com

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by Raven350 - 2011/05/12 18:34

Wow! Thank you for the quick response. You definitely helped me put things into better perspective, and that's what I needed - someone with experience in this subject. All of my peers couldn't distinguish or explain things the way you did, so it only left me more confused. You're surprised! I'm surprised I haven't gone blind. My eyes have burned, required excessive moisturizing drops, and plenty of rest after the reading I have done and continue to do.

You made very good points. I dropped Manchester Business school (MBS) from the equation when I realized I could obtain a globally focused program from a respected U.S. school. In addition, the MBS program runs 3-years long, which is not appealing to my situation.

The program offered by University of San Diego is a MS in Global Leadership with a Project Management certificate. What interested me in that program was its emphasis on leadership while including some of the common courses found within an MBA program, such as: Accounting/Finance, Marketing, Business Law, etc. However, I felt an MBA would hold more weight to the eyes of employers.

What will I get for the extra $32k spent on NEU over Scranton? I think you made that point very clear. Before I get to that point, here's my situation.

I'm 28, have 8+ years of professional IT (systems analysis/management) experience with the US Air Force, Technical Consulting, and now with Southern California's leading transit agency. I support my agency's financial information systems, and am now interested in making a career change into strategy, innovation or change-management consulting. My strengths are in people and coming up with creative solutions to technical problems, but I'd like to get more business acumen beneath my experience and BS in Business Technology Management. With that said, you now know I reside in Southern California, LA to be exact. Within the next 2-3 years I'd like to move to Charlotte, NC. Good economy, lower cost of living, less congestion and cleaner air!

I have to agree with you in that NEU offers a more flexible curriculum aimed at open thinkers and entrepreneurs. I like that. I flourish within an environment that encourages creativity and innovative thinking, which is precisely what attracted me to NEU's MBA with Innovative Entrepreneurship specialization. Not only would I obtain entrepreneurship know-how, but it would encourage me to think outside the box. When things become dry, rigid or routine, I get bored. I must always remain in an ever-changing environment, which is why I like the idea of consulting. I also like the prestige the

university carries. When I asked for statistics on their MBA graduates and a few of the organizations they have gone off to work for, I was pleasantly satisfied. When I asked Scranton for the same information, they couldn't provide any and when they tried, it was lackluster.

I was also intrigued by the idea NEU outsourced their online program to another organization; however, I have learned that the organization only facilitates the online classes, but students are taught by NEU faculty curriculums and collaborate with NEU faculty. I spoke with the admissions counselor and was pointed to their website, where other well-known universities are listed in addition to NEU. I was assured I'd have nothing to worry about when it came to the curriculum and personnel teaching the material. If they lied to me, it's ground for a law suit, right? :)

The other university on my plate, RIT, has an online EMBA program that can be done in 15-16 months, and is also AACSB. The curriculum is designed and taught by their faculty but facilitated by the same organization that houses NEU, Boston U and many others. This program consists of 25 classes, given at the pace of 2 courses per 6-week timeframe. I think I've narrowed it down to NEU and RIT, based on self-reflection and the curriculum of each. RIT also encompasses innovation, technology, business acumen and leadership. It also offers a cohort style learning experience, and has 1 residency and 1 final international trip, which I find interesting.

Interestingly I did not just look at the northeast for schools to attend, but based on ranking, AACSB accreditation and characteristics the listed were chosen. Also, I refuse to take the GMAT so it also limits me to others I would have otherwise considered. Do you know of any great schools in the NC area that offer online MBA programs with no GMAT requirement? I think I've scoured them all and came up empty-handed, but maybe you have extra web searching tricks I have not yet learned.

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/05/18 15:35

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Very sound reasoning there, Raven!

After you're done you should hire yourself out as a consultant on how to find the best online MBA!

I double checked our quick list of online mbas AABCSB that require NO GRE GMAT

As you know it's a short list since most AACSB online business schools do require one of these exams (which is somewhat odd since the results of these exams are not correlated with academic success for older students).

I have to say that the RIT online MBA RIT online MBA makes sense for you based on your descriptions.

In your field (IT / logistics / large corp consulting background) I think you'd find RIT is extremely well known on the East Coast for it's double punch in business + technology. Not all schools have that brand recognition and you are definitely playing in the career area where big business and technology intersect.

RIT will be more structured and more techie. They were an engineering school first and that carries clout in IT and PM worlds as well as military and big business consulting.

It may be that your personal learning style -- open and innovative -- is more NEU BUT your smartest move for deeper recognition in your IT tech career area may be RIT.

Either would play well in NC.

I think I agree with your thinking about the San Diego Global Leadership masters. Project management is certainly a biggee in government/corp consulting these days and IT PM is career gold. But at the end of the day corporations with IT sectors like to see the hard skills that a MBA implies. It has a certain cache, that MBA thing. Leadership is a softer sale.

I can't find a better Carolina MBA for you. The University of North Carolina Flagler School online MBA was just launched this year,, but that one's $90K and there is no GMAT waiver. It's a great traditional MBA with clout but cost, GMAT and more rigid coursework and less tech name rec don't add up to be the price (so I think).

I will check some more on the Carolinas and get back to you.

FYI -- I have a good friend who moved from Boston to NC and loves it all the way around - people, COL, and culture. There is a great deal of recognition of Boston/NYC college names down that way.

Vicky Phillips
Founder - Get Educated

Raven350 wrote:
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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by Raven350 - 2011/05/20 01:41

Haha, is there such a career? I would love to help others find the best online MBA for their personality. However, with as much headache as I've given myself over the selection process, I may be of no use. :)

This decision is harder than I thought. I love the curriculum from RIT's EMBA, which includes innovation, strategy, leadership and typical business courses. However, I'm slightly hesitant due to pace of courses (2-classes per 6-weeks); is it enough time to absorb the material? I also like the 16-month program duration, which means faster return on investment, or I'd like to hope so. That is if I can stick it out for a strenuous 16-months. RIT's EMBA also incorporates an international trip as the final, which is interesting.

I love Northeastern's MBA due to its brand (higher visibility among corporations--how true is this?), pace of courses (1-class per 7-weeks), and higher ranking in business schools, albeit a small difference -- RIT 63rd / NEU 56.

I know you mentioned RIT would best serve me due to my IT background; however, what if I'm trying to branch out into strategy, innovation and/or change management consulting? Would either school serve that purpose just the same? Does the difference in brand/prestige really matter that much, and between these two schools? If I'm going for a new career path, I have read brand weighs heavily.

Anyway, I'm glad I've narrowed it down to these two, and I'm pretty sure I can't go wrong with either one in the end. Maybe I should just put aside all facts and statistics between the two and just select based on university colors and t-shirt preference. Haha!

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by MissShona - 2011/06/10 10:14

I'm a bit late here; but I would suggest talking to current students or recent alumni from the online MBA programs that you are considering if at all possible. I admit that I did not do this; and while I do not regret my choice in regards to online MBA program, it is a bit different than how the school presented it to me.

Working at a university myself (for an online program at that), I am keen to how the "marketing machine" machine at colleges work. I am not saying that they do anything that other producers of goods and services don't do....in regards to showing you the benefits and possibilities...while hiding the pitfalls.

It is your money, and you'll only get one MBA. So choose wisely & good luck to you! :-)

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/06/10 10:42

I think you are right. It would hard to decide on any objective basis between RIT and Northeastern distance MBA, though more insight and reviews from alumni and current students would help here, so IF you attend either OR neither please come back and review the schools so other folks can follow your decision trail.

I would say that RIT has the best "tech" rep having been founded as a tech school -- BUT the Northeastern MBA fits your character and would probably be better for future strategic thinking and business innovation.

There are a lot of people trying to decide between all the online MBA degree programs and its a difficult task if all you have to go on are the admissions materials the colleges publish.

Keep us posted!
Vicky Phillips
GetEducated.com

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Re:Deciding between AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/06/10 10:59

Hi MissShona,

Good advice!

It is hard to untangle the real differences between all these online MBAs. Many of the schools present themselves in a similar light.

Reviews from real online students -- like yourself, TYK for the informative review of Florida Gulf Coast University Online MBA that you left on the site -- is really crucial data.

We are encouraging real online students and alumni to come and review online mba programs because this kind of insider feedback really sheds light on what the program will be like once enrolled.

All online MBA degree programs are not alike and there is SO much choice.
Get Educated profiles 400 400 online mba programs -- and they vary wildly by cost, public perception and trust,accreditation, admission standards, curriculum, and student satisfaction.

What we really want to know and give voice to is .. what happens after an online student enrolls?

Does the online degree program meet its promise and live up to its reputation?

Please encourage your fellow online students to come and review their programs.
Potential online students are eager for this kind of real insider feedback!

So many college review sites on the web are polluted with fake reviews or paid reviews -- we have a Real Verified Online Student registration and function so people can "trust" that a registered verified student is behind the review they are reading, but it is hard to get the word out and get the students to take the time to share their experiences.

I hope you will contribute more in the coming days as many people need to hear from real online students like yourself in their quest to find credible online education.

Vicky Phillips
GetEducated.com Founder

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by Qmechdoc - 2011/07/14 14:38

I am a practicing physician in North Carolina and have decided to attend the Online MBA program at East Carolina University. I start the program in several weeks. I would appreciate any feedback on this program.

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Re:Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/07/14 14:50

Qmechdoc wrote:
I am a practicing physician in North Carolina and have decided to attend the Online MBA program at East Carolina University. I start the program in several weeks. I would appreciate any feedback on this program.

Hi QMechDoc,

I linked to the East Carolina University Online MBA program above and here so others can see the complete program profile and current reviews and report card ratings.

So far, we know that this program is incredibly affordable for Carolina residents -- it's on the Get Educated national ranking list of top 10 affordable online MBA programs AACSB accreditation.

One verified online mba student and one general public member have rated this degree program an "A," so so far so good. I am hoping with your post maybe we can get some current students or alumn to check in and broaden our feedback for you.

All the Best
Vicky Phillips
Get Educated

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Re: Deciding between several AACSB distance MBA programs

Posted by shawngoodin - 2012/05/23 23:26

So which did you pick? And why wasn't Drexel on your list? I'm trying to make the same decision now and struggling?

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