

Bloomberg Certification Gives Mercy Students an Edge

Among Several Technologies to Develop New Skill Sets

How does Mercy's School of Business ensure that its students are prepared to meet the demands of a constantly evolving business and finance job market?

By maximizing training and usage of vital technologies and career readiness programs so

that students and alumni can demonstrate expertise in hard and soft skills when applying for internships and jobs. This includes the ability to earn certificates that will enhance students' resumes.

These technologies and programs include Bloomberg Certification (aka Bloomberg Market Concepts) using Mercy's Bloomberg terminals, Microsoft Excel certification, Tableau

certification and the Mercy Career and Professional Development Office's EPIC (Explore, Prepare, Implement, Career Launch) program. Leading the effort to optimize the College's digital investments and expand students' knowhow in industry-valued computer systems are School of Business Dean Lloyd Gibson and Assistant Professor Abdel-Kader Ben-Mohamed, chair



of Mercy's undergraduate business program.

"The Bloomberg terminal is omnipresent in the financial industry," said Ben-Mohamed. This system provides users real-time global financial data and is used by large institutional investors, portfolio managers and financial analysts to facilitate financial transactions such as trading in stocks, option and other financial instruments.

"The Bloomberg Certification is important for our students to obtain as part of their career preparation. By incorporating the certification course into the School of Business curriculum and providing students in-class support, we are underscoring the importance of Bloomberg terminals as a tool for success in finance and business," explained Gibson. He emphasized that this and other efforts related to student success are a team effort that involves many others in the School of Business.

To demonstrate proficiency in the Bloomberg terminal, professionals complete the "Bloomberg Market Concepts Program" and earn a "Bloomberg Certification," proving successful completion of an eight-hour plus e-learning course that includes modules on economics, fixed income, equities and currencies and an overview of the core functionality of Bloomberg terminals.

During the fall 2019 term, Gibson and Ben-Mohamed embedded the Bloomberg Certification Program in the School of Business undergraduate curriculum and as an extra credit opportunity to graduate students. Whereas prior to the fall 2019 term undergraduate students were encouraged to complete Bloomberg Market Concepts – and obtain a Bloomberg Certification – on their own time, the process is now a requirement as part of an introductory finance course.

While adding additional course requirements that affect a student's grade may not always be the popular route, students are largely grateful

for the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of Bloomberg terminals with close support from faculty and classmates. According to Ben-Mohamed, some have even led their peers through the process: "One of my students, who was very skeptical at first, is now my most enthusiastic advocate for the initiative."

Gibson and Ben-Mohamed have already seen the fruits of their labor. The number of students enrolled in Bloomberg Market Concepts increased from 41 in the fall 2019 term to 94 in the fall 2020 term, and out of those 94 students, 91 gained a Bloomberg Certification. Also, the certification has helped many Mercy graduates stand out while applying for jobs. Riding on their success,

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they are working to offer certification for alumni and further training for students and faculty.

Like the Bloomberg Certification Program, the School of Business has embedded Excel certification into the School of Business curriculum. In fall of 2020, Associate Dean Victor Petenkemani led the implementation of new teaching software and Ben-Mohamed streamlined the Excel certification process for students, and pivoted to address COVID-19 challenges, so that they can now take the qualifying test online. Ben-Mohamed is also working towards incorporating certification for Tableau, a powerful data visualization software tool that simplifies raw data into an understandable format, into the School of Business curriculum.

With the help of faculty, Gibson and Ben-Mohamed have doubled down on ensuring student participation in Mercy's EPIC program, a web-based system initially embedded into one business

course has now been expanded across four required courses and seamlessly incorporated into the course syllabi. In the fall of 2020, 361 Business students participated in the program and completed over 2,200 modules of instruction.

As explained by Gibson, EPIC is a Mercy-wide program that allows students to take inventory of themselves, develop their resumes, practice interviews, use LinkedIn and much more. Beyond providing additional faculty and student support, Gibson and Ben-Mohamed decided to implement an incentive for students to engage in and fulfill all components of EPIC in the form of an official certificate upon completion of the program.

In increasing usage of tools such as Bloomberg terminals, Excel and EPIC, the School of Business is keeping up with greater shifts in higher education trends towards specialization, layered certification and accommodation for nontraditional students. As the School of Business innovates to stay on top of these trends by providing credential and certificate opportunities, it ensures that graduates meet industry demands and gain significant value from their college education term after term, not just post-graduation.

"Mercy is a dynamic institution, and our offerings are dynamic in the sense that we will not let market and technical tool requirements get away from us or our students," Ben-Mohamed asserted. "We will do everything we can to provide students with an affordable education that puts them on the cutting edge of what the market is expecting."