

# Education

DEGREES GEARED FOR TODAY'S WORLD

CREATING A CAREER IN COMPUTER ANIMATION ★ ADVICE FOR TRACKING DOWN VALUABLE SCHOLARSHIPS

## EXECUTIVE DECISION

### Get to the next level by investing in an executive MBA

By ERIKA PRAFDER

**Y**OU'RE holding your own — a job, family, mortgage, sanity. How do you know if going back to school to get an executive MBA is right for you? Will pursuing it throw a wrench into your work/life balance?

"However good you think your time management skills are now, you will be forced to be that much better at it four or five months into our program," says Tom Pugel, vice dean for executive programs and professor of economics and global business at New York University's Stern School of Business.

The degree is geared toward those with substantial work experience — typically those who are older than the average MBA student.

Ideal candidates for Stern's

EMBA are those who want to gain a deeper, broader knowledge about business and management practices and do it quickly. "These folks want to achieve positions with more responsibilities. Some of them want to start their own businesses," says Pugel.

While the investment is considerable (\$137,000 for the current two-year program), there is a significantly increased potential for higher income.

Beyond the mix of required courses (accounting, finance, marketing and negotiations, to name a few) an exciting component of NYU's program is its one-week global study tour. Each year, the class goes abroad to study business on site. This year's trip was to China and Vietnam. Past locations include Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Estonia and Turkey.

"Business is global. As much as

See **EXECUTIVE** on Page 46

### HIRE LEARNING

WHAT academic majors are at the top of employers' wish list for this spring's college grads? Eight-hundred employer members of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) were recently surveyed to uncover just that.

For the class of 2011, the job market is off to a positive start, according to the survey, with reported plans to hire 13.5 percent more new bachelor's graduates than from the class of 2010.

Industries that will be hiring include utilities, food and beverage, wholesale trade, retail trade, accounting services and engineering services. Retail and wholesale organizations and firms stand out as the best bets.

At the master's degree level, MBA graduates continue to top the list of majors in demand,



Computer engineers are among the graduates in demand.

followed by electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, accounting and computer engineering grads. At this level, 14 respondents reported data on the average signing bonuses they will offer to MBA graduates, with 36 percent offering bonuses of \$20,000.

Employers' skill wish list includes teamwork, problem-solving, verbal communication skills and initiative. — Erika Prafder



Belinda Di Giambattista serves up healthy lunches and business success.

## DEGREE WORTH A HILL OF BEANS

### How one woman's degree led to a booming business

**B**ELINDA Di Giambattista used to count beans for a living, but after achieving her EMBA, she's cooking and serving them up — in her own business.

After years working for Moody's Investor Service in credit analysis, Di Giambattista wanted to be more efficient and strategic in her role.

"I looked at different programs, and the executive MBA was appealing. The average age of students is higher. You can hold down your day job and still attend school," she says.

Another attractive factor was that "you're with the same students all the time," says Di Giambattista. "Students really take networking to the next level." Di Giambattista ultimately set her sights on the EMBA program at New York University's Stern School of Business.

"The school is so much about helping support you and providing a practical relationship with you — it's not just something to

put on your resume," she says.

The school hours worked well for Di Giambattista as well. "The degree is geared toward the working professional. We took classes from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every other Friday and Saturday," she says. "It takes two years to complete."

Shortly after receiving her degree in 2005, Di Giambattista decided to strike out on her own. Her idea stemmed from working in the garden with her grandparents as a child. "They sold market vegetables. We shelled butter beans and sold them right out of the shells," she says.

In 2008, Di Giambattista launched ButterBeans, Inc. (butterbeanskitchen.com), a company that delivers homemade, all-natural, organic and locally-sourced meals to schools.

"We offer fresh food made from scratch — well-rounded meals with foods from all the necessary groups and we make it delicious. Kids have access to a great lunch that's not processed," explains Di Giambattista.

Today, with 15 employees, ButterBeans serves schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and the company is looking to expand.

To gain funding for her new venture, Di Giambattista was able to enter New York University Stern School of Business' annual new-venture competition, beating out 152 entrants for the first prize of \$50,000.

"A year before, I'd gone to watch the competition and met a man who was the chief operating officer of his own company. He has mentored me ever since," she says.

Di Giambattista credits her EMBA for her primary research and financial analysis skills, as well as networking opportunities. (There are 80,000 in Stern's alumni network).

As for advice on nabbing first prize at NYU's competition, "You have to have a viable business idea that is scalable," Di Giambattista says. "Investors want to see the ability for a business to grow." — Erika Prafder

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