

# Lessons for Real Life:

# 10 YEARS

By Jeanne Spreier

# of Exec Ed

PROGRAMS GEARED TO HELP EXPERIENCED MANAGERS THRIVE  
ON RELEVANCY AND QUICK RESPONSE

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *It's been a decade drawn from real life for The School of Management's Executive Education programs. This year, Exec Ed, geared to answer the higher-education needs of experienced workers anxious to improve their skills and move up in the job market, celebrates ten years of fast-paced response, real-world immediacy, and lasting value. Benefits have accrued all around. As graduates have earned credentials and credibility, the School has learned the importance of these oxymorons: Make change a permanent part of the program; be absolute about adaptability.*

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hese students aren't looking for another diploma to paper their wall, although it doesn't hurt. These students aren't demanding business theory, unless it's applicable right now. Some of these students, in fact, might not even show up on The University of Texas at Dallas campus except once every couple of months. Students in The School of Management's Executive Education programs, all people who have been out in the working world for typically ten or fifteen years or more, in fact might be some of UTD's most demanding students.

Associate Dean for Executive Education Dr. David Springate knows that — and respects it.

"We draw on that experience," says Dr. Springate of the four component curriculums that operate under his aegis. The Executive MBA (EMBA) Program appeals to seasoned managers seeking to upgrade their skills, and the Project Management Program helps project team leaders keep apace — even ahead of — changes in corporate structures and operations. Managers seeking international expertise and a flexible learning environment are drawn to the Global Leadership Executive MBA (GLEMBA) Program. There's even an Exec Ed program, the Alliance for Medical Management Education (AMME), for medical professionals to learn business skills specific to healthcare settings.

## A DECADE DRAWN FROM REAL LIFE

In all these, Dr. Springate says, "folks expect to contribute, and they expect [classes] to be relevant. Not only do they want long-term relevance, but they want relevance next week, next month." These students need professors who can think on their feet, who aren't doctrine-driven, who can keep the class focused on the day's topic while incorporating real-life challenges. That might include a student observing, after a textbook discussion: "Our company tried that two years ago, and it didn't work."

Academia can have what in the business world is a deathly long change cycle, sometimes taking as long as ten years to switch program requirements. But Dr. Springate says UTD's Executive Education offerings are much more nimble than that. "Each program has graduates who we talk to. They are not shy about what they like and don't like." The youth of Executive Ed-



Dr. David Springate (top photo), associate dean for Executive Education; Jim Joiner (at left in center photo), director of the SOM Project Management Program, with two of his students, Troy Daugherty and Skip Masters; Dr. Jasper Arnold (bottom photo), director of the EMBA Program.



**Class of 1994** The first Exec Ed class at UTD (top photo) on the steps of the International Management Center in Budapest, Hungary; Dr. David Springate (second from right in center photo) and class members in Prague, Czech Republic; class members (bottom photo) confer during a company visit. The first class convened in September 1992.



ucation at UTD — this year it celebrates its tenth anniversary — gives the program its flexibility. “We don’t have a long enough history to have institutionalized the program,” Dr. Springate says.

### EMBA:

#### GIVING ‘EM THAT ‘GOT-TO-KNOW’ SUBSET

That has allowed for some remarkably quick responses to the demands of business execs looking for advanced degrees.

In all the Executive Education programs, the two driving issues are a potential student’s lack of flexible time coupled with a thirst for additional education, percolating under the demand for information readily usable today. “Adults want to learn things that are relevant to them,” says Dr. Jasper Arnold, head of UTD’s largest Executive Education offering, its EMBA Program. “They are not too interested in learning stuff that they can’t put into action right now.”

Exec Ed addresses the students’ need for immediate relevance by incorporating team assignments and an international component throughout its curriculum. Students grouped together in teams that change from course to

course and semester to semester usually find corollary benefits in their mini-assemblies. Cultural diversity stands out and is appreciated for the horizons it broadens; clear communication and productivity gain new respect; networking, negotiating, and bonding offer useful subtexts. Global aspects of business are interwoven into course topics whenever possible. Three of the programs — EMBA, Project Management, and GLEMBA — follow this up with an international trip project, and team efforts also go into preparations for the classes’ ten-day travel tours abroad.

In the twenty-one month EMBA Program, students work on team projects each semester. In addition, as a class, they take a domestic trip as well as the international tour. This strategy is well-planned for students, most of whom are in their 30s and 40s with a decade or more of corporate experience. “Our Exec MBA Program gives knowledge but also know-how,” Dr. Arnold says, “[and] the skills to put it in play.... There’s a got-to-know subset of knowledge and some that’s-nice-to-know.

“What we have to do is give them the got-to-know stuff.”

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

#### A NEW TWIST ON A CAREER FROM NOAH’S TIME

Jim Joiner, head of the Exec Ed’s Project Management Program, hands out the “got-to-know” in a program he began just five years ago in response to needs of local companies. The needs existed in companies like Raytheon, where work strategies are based on the project management ethic exemplified in team efforts. This year, because of demands from potential students who couldn’t attend the monthly three-day sessions required of Project Management students, Mr. Joiner instituted an online program. It kicked

**Class of 1996** Students and faculty members (top photo) at a Texas Instruments facility in Hong Kong; class members (bottom photo) experience the judicial point of view in the state Court of Criminal Appeals chambers in Austin.



off this past spring with nine students.

There isn't a job in this nation, Mr. Joiner says, that doesn't require some amount of project management sensibility. "Project management has been around since Noah's time," he says. "But in the past, it was kind of an engineering thing."

Mr. Joiner retired from Texas Instruments after a thirty-one-year career there. After one year at home, he knew he needed to do something else. He hooked up with Dr. Springate to upgrade the School's eighteen-hour certificate program in project management.

"It really needed to be a degree program," Mr. Joiner says. Response to that need was immediate, and options

of completing either a Master of Science degree or an MBA were added to the certificate program.

**GLEMBA:**

**FLEXIBLE, PORTABLE, AND GLOBAL, TOO**

Dr. Anne Ferrante oversees another Executive Education offering, the Global Leadership Executive MBA (GLEMBA) Program. GLEMBA allows students to do the vast majority of their coursework online. "The main issue for most [GLEMBA students] is they need flexibility and portability," Dr. Ferrante says. "The driver of that is travel. That is the number one reason they can't commit to a Friday-Saturday program."

Don't think matchbook-cover diploma mill, however. Think about how people already operate in the business world. Their team members are in corporate offices across the nation, or even the world; teleconferencing is routine;



**Class of 1995** EMBA Student Ross Lyle (top photo) was among class members who visited a Soviet-era aircraft factory in Prague, Czech Republic; class members (center photo) pose at the graduation reception at the Grand Kempinski Hotel in Dallas; class members Matt Bosch (left) and Meade Monger (right) with an embassy official (at center in bottom photo) at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, Hungary.

**Class of 1998** Class members and faculty members (top photo) on the steps of the TXU subsidiary in Santiago, Chile; class members (bottom photo) pose at the graduation reception at the Westin Galleria Hotel in Dallas.



and, for some, they need the ability to attend a program regardless of where they live. GLEMBA allows students to be anywhere and requires them to be on the Richardson campus just once a quarter.

The global focus of this program, Dr. Ferrante says, answers needs that people can't possibly know as they enter the workforce in their early 20s. Thus GLEMBA students are returning students who find themselves employed in an industry with global reach or plans, and they find they need more international management knowledge. "We are giving extra-heavy doses of economics at the macro and micro level," she says, in addition to "skill building that goes with the knowledge set."

**AMME:**

**A TRUE MIX OF MANAGEMENT AND MEDICINE**

This overall flexibility has allowed Executive Education to develop programs to address very specific needs in advanced learning. John McCracken, a UTD faculty member whose doctorate is in finance, oversees a strategic partnership between UTD and U.T. Southwestern Medical School. That partnership developed a graduate business degree program specifically designed for physicians and senior health-care administrators in management roles in medicine. The program, the Alliance for Medical Management Education (AMME), targets those overseeing a large clinic or practice, heading a hospital department, or working in private industry in a medicine-related field.

"About 95 percent of doctors want to practice clinical medicine and want to leave the business side alone," Dr. McCracken says. "About 5 percent are natural leaders. They aspire to a leadership role." It's a finite number of potential students, Dr. McCracken knows, but those who come for the Medical Management Executive MBA know



**Class of 1997** Dr. David Springate (left) and EMBA faculty member Dr. David Ford (top photo) outside the China-Europe International Business School on the EMBA trip to Shanghai, China; class member Darla Ripley (left) and DeWayne Nelon (right) with Dr. Springate (center photo) in the Japanese countryside; Ms. Ripley and class member Shaunna Holloway (bottom photo) on the tour bus in Japan.



**Class of 1999** In Frankfurt, Germany, the EMBA class (top photo) visits the offices of Arthur Andersen; EMBA class members (center photo) at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin; Project Management students (bottom photo) work on a group project.

it's what they need. And, he says, UTD offers one of the only programs nationwide that is not simply a reconstituted MBA program. "It's a true joint venture between the medical school and the business school," he says.

Mark G Ewell, an anesthesiologist now working in Laredo, Texas, is wrapping up his AMME Program studies. "There's been a leadership void among physicians," says Dr. Ewell, who only realized after years of training that more than just clinical skills were needed to be a good physician.

"I don't think [the AMME Program] has changed my clinical skills.... But there is a nonclinical skill set, too," he says. Especially in areas of conflict resolution, he now understands the dynamics and roles involved, using a business model approach. The program "has been a plus for my professional development and my personal development. I only wish I'd done this earlier."

### SAM GILLILAND:

### TEN YEARS' WORTH OF CREDIBILITY

One executive who did do it earlier is Sam Gilliland, now president and CEO of Travelocity.com, the Fort Worth-based travel marketing and transaction company. He joined UTD's first Exec MBA class ten years ago. His education was in electrical engineering, but as he moved up in Sabre, Travelocity's parent company, he saw some blanks in his knowledge base. "I felt I needed a foundation in basic business principles," he says. "It's not that the technical track was unfulfilling to me. I was having a great time.... The [Exec MBA] Program [helped] me in solving problems that were outside my technical background."

The results, as he looks back, were twofold. It built his confidence, and, he says, "my contribution had more credibility."

### USEFUL IN BOOMS-AND IN BUSTS

Dr. Arnold expects EMBA enrollment, now at ninety-one students, to remain stable despite economic uncertainties.

"During recession times, people go back to school because they feel insecure," he says. "During boom times, they go back to gain new skills. There's pressure in both the boom and bust phase."

That certainly holds true for Laura Sellers, an EMBA student who expects to graduate in May. She started her program while at one Internet-dependent firm, lost that job, got student loans to fund her tuition, went ahead with her education plans, and then had some additional job upheavals in the shaky Internet environment. Worried that finding another position would be difficult when potential employers learned she needed every other Friday off to attend EMBA classes, she toyed with the idea of dropping out.

**Class of 2000** EMBA class members John Fleming and Joe Matarese bargain with a street merchant (top photo) in Hanoi, Vietnam; class members (bottom photo) pose at the U.S. Embassy in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon.



Instead, the fact that she was enrolled helped her land her current position as vice president for marketing at Trintech, an Irish software and services company with its U.S. headquarters in Dallas. "It impressed [my future boss] that I was doing this. It was an asset for me. It helped me get this job."

Ready to change, able to adapt, Ms. Sellers epitomizes the character of most Executive Education students and the essence of the programs themselves. Just as the future isn't a lock, the programs aren't locked in, either.

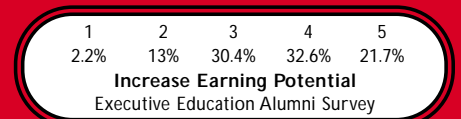
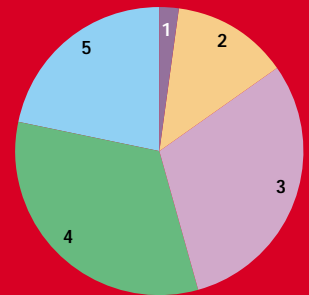
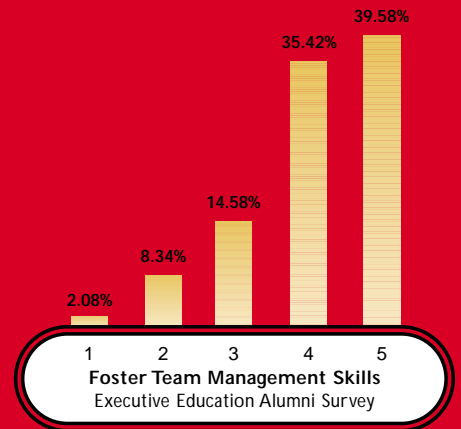
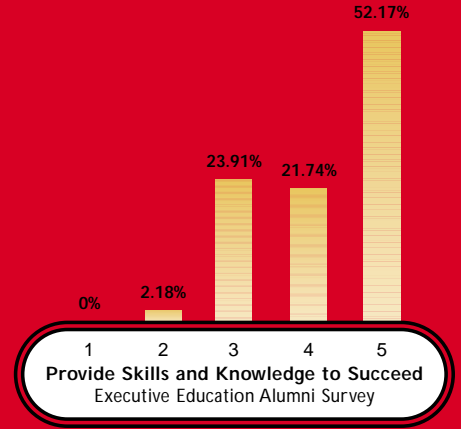
It's all a matter relevancy, after all; especially in Executive Education. ▶

**Class of 2001** Members of the GLEMB Amazon study tour (top photo); EMBA class members (center photo) meet at their opening retreat at Garrett Creek Ranch in September 1999 and (bottom photo) on the steps of the United States Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C.



## Exec Ed Survey Report:

This summer, as we approached the tenth anniversary of Executive Education at UTD, we surveyed our alumni to find out how successful our programs have been in achieving their objectives. The charts below reflect positive feedback we received. Those surveyed were asked to rate their experiences on a 5-point scale with 1=Not at All and 5=Extremely Well.



The average annual salary increase within five years of graduation from the executive MBA program ranges from \$32,000 to \$45,000.

# We asked our alumni in what ways the skills and knowledge they gained in their UTD Executive Education program changed their business careers. Here's what they said:

"...The UTD program gave me a different perspective on things and the way to handle business situations." – **Charles M. Prowant**, MBA 2002, Project Management, market area manager, Ericsson

"The UTD program has given me a greater awareness of the entire business environment. With this greater awareness, I see opportunities in my day-to-day business activities that were simply overlooked in the past. When the opportunities surface, I move strategically and confidently, taking full advantage of the circumstances." – **John J. Grothe**, GLE MBA 2001, account manager, Warren Electric Group

"...Added broader corporate/organizational perspective and context to the individual and small-group work that is my specialty." – **Kim Sawyer**, MS 2002, ODCM, executive

coach/business facilitator,  
The Wealth Source

"... My training has enabled me to direct my group with more authority and expertise while still wearing the same white coat they do." – **E.A. (Andy) Clark**, AMME 2000, medical director, Diagnostic Clinic

"Not only am I able to recognize significant opportunities as I market myself based on having an MBA, but I am also in a better position to recognize needs of and enhance business operations of companies with which I interface." – **Patricia Gorman**, EMBA 1997, Business Development, Pegasus Texas Construction LP

"The program made me realize the value of globalization. I have a job that involves a German parent company and customers and suppliers that operate in all regions of the world. ... As a company, our ability

to operate and function globally is a strategic advantage over competitors in our industry."

– **Charles Calhoun**, EMBA 1996, director sales and marketing-U.S., Kraiburg TPE Corporation

"The Executive MBA program has given me the confidence to believe in myself and follow my own path, pace, and theme. . . ." – **Esther M. Bauer**, EMBA 1995, EB Writers Inc.

"The knowledge that I gained helped me to better understand some issues that earlier were being decided only on my gut feelings. It helped put some methodology to the process of thinking through some complex management issues." – **Satish Kirtikar**, EMBA 1998, president, ACTIA Corporation

"... Going to school again opened up my mind to new ideas and a new way of thinking. The education helped me formalize my practical experiences in business. I attribute my increase in earnings, in part, to the education I received at UTD." – **George W. Aubrey**, EMBA 1997, vice president, Kabira Technologies, Inc.