The Role of Emerging Technologies in the MBA

By Pamela Foster Brady

Emerging technologies are becoming an integral part of our business environment. While your organization may not be on the cutting edge of the latest technology, consulting publications, academic publications and the news are touting how emerging technologies are disrupting businesses. Every organization should be preparing to “disrupt or be disrupted”.

Recently the WSJ noted that enrollment in the US MBA has declined. As administrators, it is paramount that we ensure the MBA curriculum remains relevant. There’s an increasing discussion in academia on the integration of business analytics. The debate is should business analytics be integrated into the MBA or should it remain as an independent MS, Business Analytics? At UT Dallas, we are doing both. In addition to offering an MS, Business Analytics, in which we have over 900 students enrolled, the executive MBA programs are integrating business analytics and emerging technologies into our curriculum.

Our executive MBA students begin orientation with a lesson in Tableau, a data visualization tool and ESRI ArcView, a geo-database. Our information technology course begins with business analytics and then focuses on five emerging technologies including the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain and machine learning. Each semester, at least one course is integrating an emerging technology into the student learning so that our student experience is relevant in today’s dynamic business environment. The framework for our curriculum continues to be “strategy for performance transformation”. Our goal is to prepare students to design, develop, and implement strategy to grow their organization – emerging technologies will be an essential element to remain relevant.

I presented our approach to the EMBA Council – an organization of over 350 international MBA programs in Madrid, Spain in October 2018. Only a handful of schools are doing this in the US and we’re proud to be on the forefront of keeping our curriculum relevant!