The EMBA Program at the Forefront of Education

In a unique e-education initiative, the 18-month EMBA program at OSB is now completely web-enhanced. For cohort 18, all program material and logistics have been centralized in Moodle, the learning management system adopted by AUB. Spearheaded by Mrs. Rasha Bohsali, EMBA officer, and in collaboration with the IT department, eLearning Team & IT Managers, the digitalized EMBA program is now closely aligned with its candidates' on-the-go lifestyles and global educational and green trends.

While all material of the EMBA program was previously paper-based, necessitating the lugging around of bulky binders, photocopied material, and heavy textbooks, corporate life has transitioned to online platforms, cloud storage, and virtual communication. Thus, in an effort to align itself with these tendencies and catering to executives with over 10-years of managerial experience, whose jobs typically require that they travel frequently, the program now allows them to better integrate their studies into their daily lives.

As per AUB policy, attendance remains mandatory but it is currently combined with digital support and the centralized learning management system. As Wissam Nahas, AUB E-learning Manager notes, “EMBA students have access to the digital material (eBooks) through integration between Moodle and book publishers on their iPads anytime and anywhere. Also, students will be fully engaged in their courses by submitting their assignments, taking exams, participating in discussion forums, checking [and synchronizing] their calendars for important dates, and chatting with their classmates through a friendly mobile app interface.”

Generally tech-savvy, some candidates used the iPad distributed to them on the first day of the program while others reverted to their laptops and other tablets to meet program requirements. Still, adequate IT training on using iOS and navigating Moodle was duly delivered on the first day of orientation. Textbooks have also been made available upon request to those who prefer the feel of actual paper or wish to use them
for annotation and problem solving. Patrick Abou Slaiby, EMBA cohort 18 candidate and Senior Project Manager at Bank Audi, indicates that though he prefers to use textbooks, he finds that following the presentations on the iPAD and having digital access to all the material through Moodle streamline the learning and communication process.

In parallel, the EMBA administration offered continuous support, training and digitizing of material to create a common Moodle interface for all courses making access and use both straightforward and user-friendly to all parties involved. Vassili Valerik, EMBA cohort 17 candidate and AUB FEA IT manager, was brought on the team as “student representative trying to shape the user experience by testing it out throughout [his] studies to provide maximum convenience for the students of cohort 18.” He comments that this effort “makes the learning experience convenient, modern, economical, and ecological at the same time.”

In light of the overwhelming positive feedback so far, this shift is viewed as sustainable on the long-term from both executive and operational perspectives. Considering it has led to the integration of the learning process into candidates’ fast-paced lives, increased program organizational efficiency, prompted clear and advanced digital material development, structured interactions between candidates, faculty and administration, and contributed to preserving the environment, this digitalization represents a decisive step for the EMBA in corporate leadership and enhancing the program’s competitive edge.

Written by Emma Moughabghab for the EMBA Program