

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO



*Office of the Dean  
College of  
Business Administration*

September 12, 2022

Dr. Richard Mathieu, Dean  
McColl School of Business  
Queens University of Charlotte  
1900 Selwyn Ave  
Charlotte, NC 28274

Dear Dr. Mathieu and members of the Award Committee,

I write to you to offer my full support of the attached application packet for the 2022 SBAA Societal Impact Award entitled *Corporate Academies: A Model for Industry-Led Experiential Business Education*.

The application describes an initiative that was first implemented at the University of Texas at El Paso College of Business Administration in 2016 with the creation of our Human Capital Management Corporate Academy. That first Academy, in partnership with ADP, was an initial attempt to combine industry-driven coursework with meaningful professional development opportunities for our students. Through this partnership, we have been able to provide business students with hands-on experience in the classroom paired with the leadership and expertise of a corporate partner. In turn, our corporate partner has gained access to a highly skilled talent pool, already familiar with the most pressing issues affecting their industry before even reaching graduation.

We found this model to be so successful that we have since created three more Corporate Academies in a variety of industry areas. The most recent of these is the Banking Academy, which represents not just a substantial investment from industry, but also significant collaboration from its ten founding partners. We believe this collaboration signals the relevance and value that industry partners recognize in our Corporate Academies initiative.

I invite you to learn more about these programs in the application attached. I appreciate your consideration and am available to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Payne'.

**James Payne, Ph.D.**

Dean, College of Business Administration  
Paul L. Foster and Alejandra de la Vega Foster  
Distinguished Chair in International Business  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

## **Corporate Academies:**

# **A Model for Industry-Led Experiential Business Education**

**Submitted to the Southern Business Administration Association**

**In Consideration for the 2022 SBAA Societal Impact Award**

**by**

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### **With support from**

Dr. James Payne, Dean

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College of Business Administration  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
500 W. University Ave.  
El Paso, TX 79968

Total Enrollment: 3,364

## Description of the Innovative Strategy or Program

The College of Business Administration shares with The University of Texas at El Paso its mission to provide a high-quality education that will enable its students to be successful in a global business environment. To that end, the College has partnered with global and regional industry leaders to offer Corporate Academies that integrate specialized courses, industry-specific technologies, and co-curricular activities. Students who participate in these Corporate Academies are uniquely prepared for challenging careers in a number of high-demand business fields.

The Corporate Academies supplement the academic preparation our students receive through co-curricular programming. The Corporate Academies feature four components: 1) customized professional development programs; 2) hands-on experience with industry technology; 3) exclusive networking opportunities with employers and professionals; and 4) mentorship from industry professionals. The College currently offers four distinct Corporate Academies, each paired with their own academic objectives and industry partners. Collaboration with our corporate partners has been critical in providing relevant professional development to our students and in informing the content and direction of the academic curriculum. Corporate partners engage with students through guest lectures, workshops, mentorship programs, corporate tours, and internship and full-time recruiting opportunities. Students can join an Academy and participate in these corporate engagements as early as their first semester – thus creating long-term exposure to industry and building on their experiences since freshman year.

Though each Academy has its own founding partners, the College is continuously exploring opportunities to collaborate with other industry leaders in order to expand the breadth and depth of expertise to which we expose our students through Academy-related programming. The four Corporate Academies are the following:

1. **Banking Academy:** seeks to address the shortage of banking professionals in the West Texas and Southern New Mexico region supported by significant contributions from regional/national banks and financial institutions. *Eligibility:* students in the Banking and Financial Institutions major or

minor. *Founding Partners:* Bank of America, Chase, Commerce Bank, FirstLight Federal Credit Union, GECU, Raiz Federal Credit Union, Sunflower Bank, Texas Bankers Association, Wells Fargo, WestStar.

- 2. Enterprise Resource Planning Academy:** offers students an application-oriented view of ERP systems, incorporating the world's leading ERP business software, SAP. *Eligibility:* students with a minor/certificate in ERP. *Founding Partner:* Lockheed Martin. *Contributing Partners:* Amazon, Dell, GECU, General Motors, and Microsoft.
- 3. Human Capital Management Academy:** offers students a broad and application-oriented view of human capital management. As part of the Academy experience, students begin to make linkages between what they are learning in the classroom and the challenges they will face in the workplace. *Eligibility:* students with a minor/certificate in HCM. *Founding Partner:* ADP. *Contributing Partners:* Dell, GECU, Lockheed Martin, and Raiz Federal Credit Union.
- 4. Risk Management Academy:** offers financial and academic support to students who are pursuing an actuarial or risk management career pathway. The program aims to increase the number of Latine actuaries in the industry from the current 2%. *Eligibility:* students in the Finance-Risk Management concentration. *Founding Partner:* Prudential. *Contributing Partners:* Microsoft, Organization of Latino Actuaries, Questpro, Society of Actuaries, Spencer Foundation, The Standard, and Willis Towers Watson.

#### **Innovativeness or Uniqueness of Strategy or Program**

The Corporate Academies are innovative in that they combine ongoing opportunities for meaningful experiential learning with an industry-led approach to business education. By pairing the Academies with industry-backed coursework, students are able to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, often with the use of the most relevant and prevalent software systems used by global companies today. The Corporate Academies also present a holistic approach for our students to succeed in a global business environment. Not only are they equipped with the knowledge they will need in their

future careers, but they also gain critical professional competencies designed to elevate their networking, interviewing, and interpersonal skills.

Students in the Corporate Academies also have the opportunity to build on technical skills that are not part of the academic curriculum. With support from our corporate partners, Academy students have attended workshops or completed short-term programs aimed at training them in Python, Microsoft Power BI, advanced Microsoft Excel, and Tableau. The Academies have also provided academic and financial support for students interested in industry certifications, such as the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE) exam, the Risk Management Association's Credit Essentials Certificate, and the Society of Actuaries' Probability, Financial Mathematics, and Investment and Financial Markets exams.

### **Societal Impact of the Strategy or Program**

With an undergraduate population that is almost 50% first generation and almost one-third of which lives on a family income of \$20,000 or less, the College has a unique opportunity to increase the social mobility of a significant portion of our business students by providing them access to the information, resources, mentorship, and sponsorship opportunities that traditionally lead to career success. Through the Academies, the College leverages the expertise of industry professionals not just in our region, but beyond as well. Only a few of our corporate partners – mostly those in the Banking Academy – have a physical presence in El Paso. Geographically, our city is considerably far removed from other major business hubs in Texas. Therefore, exposing students to subject matter experts from beyond the region is critical in providing a well-rounded perspective of current and future business needs. By expanding the network of professionals our students have access to, we aim to increase their social capital and remove barriers of entry into industry so they can more easily find career success. As a result, many of the 136 Academy graduates have secured full-time positions with our corporate partners upon graduation, and others have used that preparation to leverage positions with their competitors or other industry leaders.

Conversely, the Academies provide corporate partners with a diverse talent pool that is well prepared for the challenges facing their industries today. The National Association for Colleges and Employers found in their 2021 Recruiting Benchmarks Survey that almost 90% of more than 200 surveyed employers have formal diversity recruiting strategies in place. As one of the largest Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the country with a student body that is 84% Hispanic/Latino, our College is well positioned to meet the recruiting demands of employers that are now making stronger, more meaningful commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion. Through these partnerships, the College aims to contribute to the transformation of a number of industries and, in turn, elevate the experiences, voices and talents of our population through an asset-based, industry-led approach.

#### **Description of Applicability or Transferability to Other Institutions**

The Corporate Academies model is highly transferable to other institutions. Taking into consideration their specific academic offerings, unique ties to industry, emerging business and technology trends, and the needs and talents of their own student populations, other institutions can create unique academies that pair industry-backed coursework with relevant co-curricular programming. Corporate Academies also offer the potential to activate an institution's alumni base, and to provide opportunities to engage local, regional, or national stakeholders.

As other institutions explore opportunities to establish the Corporate Academies model, it is important to note that corporate engagements can be highly variable as well. At the College, the corporate commitments to the Academies range from in-kind contributions, such as access to specialized software and subject matter experts, to multi-year, multi-million-dollar investments. Considering the unique intersection of academic programs, corporate engagements, and student needs, the Corporate Academies model is not only highly transferrable, but also expressly customizable for each institution.