

# SIMMONS

## BA/MBA Program

Our accelerated program offers a supportive and flexible environment for women who seek the credentials they need to advance in their careers.

# curriculum

## New BA/MBA program offers options, flexibility

BY ROBERTA MARTONE PAVIA

*“Judy Smith” has a secret of sorts. It’s not a dirty little secret, but it is a secret, nonetheless, and one that may be holding her back in her professional career. Although “Judy” is vice president of human resources for XYZ Company, she has yet to complete her undergraduate degree, let alone an MBA program. “Judy” is not alone.*

There are many other successful, professional women just like her. These are women in the workforce today who hold high-level positions in corporate and not-for-profit organizations that are good at what they do — very good, as is evidenced by their numerous promotions, as well as the level of positions they hold even without the recommended degrees. But, oftentimes, there’s no getting around it: today, the “Judys” of the world need that degree. And now, thanks to a new program at Simmons College, they can get it.

With the new Simmons combined BA/MBA program initiated this September, “Judy” and colleagues at last have some options. Students are now able to take an accelerated yet very flexible program that will allow them to pursue their undergraduate degree along with an MBA degree.

The brainchild of **Catherine Beyer Hurst**, director of the Undergraduate Management Program at the Simmons School of Management, the program targets women ages 30-to-45-plus who have as few as 20 or as many as 80 undergraduate credits already under their belt, but, who, for various reasons — family, finances, work — have been unable to complete their undergraduate degrees.

Hurst explains: “Our target student is someone who has completed two or three years of college but has no degree. Now she finds herself working in a professional environment where the lack of an undergraduate degree and, especially, the lack of an MBA are holding her back. She’s discouraged and overwhelmed at the prospect of having to complete not one, but two degrees at this stage of her career. Our new program not only gives her an option and flexibility; it also gives her a plan and the infrastructure to reach that goal.”

Hurst agrees there are some similar programs currently out there, but the Simmons joint program is unique in that it is not like the more standard programs known in academia—speak as “4 and 1” or “3 and 2”

options. In other words, the student finishes an undergraduate degree in four years then completes an MBA in a one-year add-on.

Alternatively, the student finishes the undergraduate requirements in three years and begins the MBA degree in the fourth year of study, double counting the credits. Hurst says neither option was attractive to Simmons.

She says, “With this new program students have a lot of flexibility and a lot of time, if needed, to complete the degree. They can take three, four, five years — whatever is needed — to complete the program.” Hurst adds that the combined BA/MBA program is the only one like it in the country designed *exclusively* for women.

In the past, Simmons has offered and will continue to offer accelerated MBA programs. Hurst says, “Our one-year MBA program is good for certain people. It’s highly compressed and requires a lot of work in a short amount of time. While some students prefer this kind of intense program, others find it too difficult. The new combined BA/MBA program is a more attractive option for those who need more flexibility in terms of a time line.”

Here’s how the new combined program works. Prospective BA/MBA candidates apply to the Dix Scholars program at Simmons. The Dix Scholars program is an undergraduate program for students 24 and older who have some college credits, but have been away from school for a while. This program allows the student to reenter the academic environment with others in similar circumstances. Dix Scholars also have the option to receive academic credits for professional or volunteer life experience through the CPL or Credit for Prior Learning program.

Once enrolled at Simmons, the students choose their major (finance, marketing, retail, or management) and coursework under the guidance of the BA/MBA undergraduate advisor. At the end of their junior year (when they have accumulated approximately 92-96 credits), they may



apply to the MBA program as BA/MBA candidates. If accepted, they take two MBA courses during their senior year, which count toward both their undergraduate degree and their MBA degree. In addition, students can waive two MBA core courses, one undergraduate core course, and one undergraduate elective. Altogether, the combined degree program allows students to decrease the total number of credits for two degrees by 12 credits, or four courses, and, just as important for some, decrease the cost of both degrees by \$9,000 to \$10,000. But, according to Hurst, the biggest appeal of the joint program is its time savings and flexibility.

Yet, certain parameters still apply. Students applying for the MBA under the BA/MBA admissions requirements must be approved by their undergraduate advisor, attain a 3.0 GPA, and maintain a B-average in their MBA coursework to continue in the program. In addition, they must have accrued at least 48 undergraduate credits in residence. They can transfer up to 80 credits from other institutions and may also receive up to 24 credits (of the 80) awarded for significant professional work experience.

Hurst is quick to say that the two degrees — while offered in the combined program — still remain separate. If, for some reason, the student does not or cannot meet the above criteria for the MBA portion of the program — because of unforeseen circumstances such as financial difficulties, low grades, or life changes — she is still awarded an undergraduate degree at the completion of her undergraduate course of study.

There's another advantage to the joint program. While historically Simmons accepted a number of non-traditional students (those without an undergraduate degree) into the MBA program each year if they demonstrated a very high level of expertise in their profession, that entrée into the MBA is no longer available because of a recent accreditation process.

Hurst explains: “Now that we are in pre-accreditation status with AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), we are no longer allowed to accept those non-traditional students into our regular MBA program, even if the prospective student has as many as 80 undergraduate credits. Yet, we still have many non-traditional MBA alumnae who are very passionate about their Simmons opportunity and continue to recommend candidates with similar credentials.”

According to Andrea Bruce, assistant dean for marketing and admissions at SOM, each year as many as 10 or 15 non-traditional students express an interest in pursuing an MBA at Simmons. The combined program now offers a place to put those women who might be otherwise discouraged by having to finish their undergraduate degree before pursuing an MBA.

Program size is being carefully monitored for a number of reasons, too. Hurst says that it's important for the group to have a sense of camaraderie and adds that often people gravitate toward others who have similar issues and/or life experiences. “We want the BA/MBA program to be large enough so that there's a sense of community and identity among the participants, but small enough so that it doesn't overwhelm the existing MBA class,” she adds.

With approval this past May, four undergraduate juniors have already applied to the program this year. The goal is to matriculate five to ten students into the program each year. Currently, the program is only open to Simmons undergraduate management students, but as it expands, the plan is to open it up to other undergraduates at Simmons, such as those majoring in the sciences or economics.

For more information about the combined BA/MBA program, contact the Undergraduate Management Program at 617-521-2400 or [management@simmons.edu](mailto:management@simmons.edu).

# BA/MBA and BS/MBA Accelerated Degree Programs

Each student enrolls in an undergraduate degree program at Simmons, and applies for admission to the MBA program by June 30 after her junior year. If accepted into the program she may enroll in two MBA courses as a senior undergraduate. If she completes her Simmons undergraduate degree with a 3.0 GPA, and earns a B- in her MBA courses, she may proceed with her MBA courses that fall. Students must take at least 48 credits at Simmons of the total 128 credits required for the undergraduate degree. (Up to 24 credits may be granted for life learning.) The accelerated MBA program requires only 36-37 additional credits.

## UNDERGRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MAJOR

**NOTE:** All courses 4 credits except where noted.

Two required courses in undergraduate management program are waived and the student takes two MBA courses instead.

| Introductory Courses                  | Intermediate Courses  | Advanced Courses                                    |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Intro to Management                   | Managerial Accounting   | Operations & Technology Management                  |
| Financial Accounting                  | Organizational Communication & Behavior                             | Strategy  |
| Microeconomics                        | Marketing   | Senior Seminar                                      |
| Macroeconomics                        | Finance   | Independent Learning (8 cr.)                        |
| Business Statistics                   | 2 Electives in Management, Marketing, Finance, or Retail Management | Leading Individuals and Groups (MBA course — 4 cr.) |
| All-college distribution requirements |   | Second MBA course depending on major (3-4 cr.)      |

## NON-MANAGEMENT MAJOR WITH BUSINESS METRICS MINOR

**NOTE:** All courses 4 credits except where noted.

Student takes two MBA courses as a senior in addition to her major/minor requirements.

| Introductory Courses                  | Intermediate Courses  | Advanced Courses  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Financial Accounting                  | Managerial Accounting   | Leading Individuals and Groups (MBA course — 4 cr.)           |
| Microeconomics                        | Finance   | Organizations & Their Environment (MBA Course — 3 cr.)        |
| Macroeconomics                        |   |   |
| Business Statistics (recommended)     |   |   |
| All-college distribution requirements | All courses required for a bachelor's degree in another field | All courses required for a bachelor's degree in another field |

## RESULTING ONE-YEAR MBA PROGRAM

**NOTE:** Two MBA courses are waived due to undergraduate courses completed at Simmons with a B or better.

Two more MBA courses were already taken during the student's undergraduate senior year.

| Fall Term (10-13 cr.)  | Spring Term (10-13 cr.)   | Summer Term (13 cr.)                             |
|--|---|--|
| Financial Reporting & Analysis (3 cr.)                                     | Finance (3 cr.)   | Strategy & Leadership (3 cr.)                    |
| Marketing Management (3 cr. — not required for marketing or retail majors) | Negotiation (2 cr.)   | Leadership, Governance, & Accountability (2 cr.) |
| Technology & Operations Mgmt. (3 cr.)                                      | Career Strategies (1 cr.)   | Strategic Decision Making (2 cr.)                |
| Communications Strategies (1 cr.)  | Organizations and Their Environment (2 cr. — not required for management majors or business metrics minors) | Quantitative Analysis (3 cr.)                    |
| Quantitative Analysis (3 cr.)  | Business, Government, and the Global Economy (3 cr. — not required for finance majors)                      | Elective (2 cr.)                                 |
|  | Elective (2 cr.)  | Elective (2 cr.)                                 |

**NOTE:** Student may also choose to pursue a 2 or 3-year MBA program.