

BUSINESS EDUCATION

For U.S. Business Schools, Leaders Are Hard to Find

Some of the most prestigious M.B.A. programs are seeking deans willing to run them



ILLUSTRATION: JAMES YANG FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Kelsey Gee

June 20, 2018 8:00 am ET

There is something missing at dozens of business schools where high-profile corporate chiefs and prominent government officials have gone to polish their management credentials: a leader.

Elite M.B.A. programs at Northwestern University, Yale University and the University of California's Berkeley and Los Angeles business schools, are all searching for new deans, as longtime administrators return to teaching or take positions outside academia.

Through the start of June, job listings for 28 business-school deans were advertised with the accrediting body Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business in 2018, up nearly 50% from this time last year.

Business-school leaders typically serve four- or five-year terms, which many will complete this summer. A handful of early exits this year and prolonged searches for a replacement dean are exacerbating the industry shortage. The stakes are higher than ever for top administrators, who

HELP WANTED

Here's a list of some of the universities seeking a dean to run their business school in 2018:

- University of California, Berkeley
 - University of California, Los Angeles
 - California State University, Fullerton
 - Cornell University
 - Missouri State University
 - Niagara University
 - Northwestern University
 - Notre Dame University
 - University of Wisconsin-Madison
 - Yale University
-

are
now
und
er
pres
sure
to
over
haul
degr
ee
prog
ram
s
and
crea
te
new

revenue streams because of waning student interest in the traditional M.B.A.

Last month, Dean Roger Huang announced his return to the finance faculty at Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business, whose alumni sit on corporate boards including Marathon Petroleum Corp. and General Mills Inc.

Rich Lyons also has committed to another year of teaching at Berkeley's Haas School of Business, where his term as dean ends this month. He called the position "the most fulfilling job I've ever had in my life," but he's eager to write a book and delve more deeply into two hobbies he has neglected since taking over the school in 2008: playing guitar and advising startups.

Mr. Lyons, 57 years old, said he isn't interested in dean jobs outside of Berkeley, his alma mater; he said he took a pay cut of more than 50% to join the school from his C-suite position at Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

Not everyone shares Mr. Lyons's view of the dean job as a "passion project." Early in the search for his replacement, Mr. Lyons recommended economics professor Catherine Wolfram raise her hand. She said she was too much of an introvert, and couldn't give up the research that first drew her to academia.

"Rich is the rare academic who also has great people skills, and can give an inspirational, rousing speech," Ms. Wolfram said.



The exterior of the Andersen Hall of Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Ill., on Nov. 30, 2016.
PHOTO: TAYLOR GLASCOCK FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Deans must now work to raise bigger sums of money while building new degrees in fast-growing fields, such as data analytics, as they search for untapped revenue. Some schools, including the University of Iowa and Wake Forest University, are cutting traditional M.B.A. programs, despite opposition from graduates who are saddened to see a treasured piece of their school and résumé disappear.

“Being the dean is becoming harder,” said Edward Snyder, who in March announced the coming school year would be his last running Yale University School of Management. “The expectations of the various constituencies you serve have all dialed up, and it keeps getting a little more difficult to meet those expectations.”

Since taking over in 2011, Mr. Snyder has boosted Yale’s enrollment and secured major gifts from alumni donors like Indra Nooyi, chief executive of PepsiCo Inc. Before Yale, Mr. Snyder led similar business-school turnarounds at the University of Chicago and University of Virginia.

Many deans have had a tough run. Soumitra Dutta’s abrupt resignation from the top post at Cornell University’s SC Johnson College of Business prompted administrators to lure a former dean out of retirement to take over.

Wisconsin School of Business has yet to restart its search for a dean to replace Anne Massey, who resigned in December, after four tumultuous months on the job. It cost the school \$188,000 to recruit Ms. Massey from a professorship at Indiana University last year, according to a spokesman.

At least three recent deans discussed axing the expensive program after a sustained drop in Wisconsin’s M.B.A. applications, according to past and current administrators of one of the

nation's oldest business schools. Tuition and university-transferred funds amounted to half of the school's \$65.4 million in revenue for 2016. Adding philanthropic gifts and alumni donations, Wisconsin was still short of its \$68.7 million in expenses, which included nearly \$20 million in salaries for nonfaculty staff and student-support personnel, according to financial statements obtained by The Wall Street Journal.

Ms. Massey, who didn't respond to requests for comment, led a proposal in October to halt M.B.A. admissions while reviewing Wisconsin's degree programs, striking a nerve with alumni and donors. She dropped the proposal one week after a Wall Street Journal article broke the news to many outside the Madison campus, and left the job two months later.

While some deans come from corporate careers, most are former management, accounting or finance professors, trading in pressures to publish original research for a nearly constant string of recruiting and networking events. High-ranking business-school professors earned an average \$175,000 last year, while deans earned an average \$279,000 in the 2017-2018 school year, according to AACSB data.

Brigitte Madrian, a public-policy professor at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, will take over Brigham Young University's business school as its first-ever female dean in 2019. She will succeed Lee Perry, who at 67 said he's planning a brief return to teaching, after 20 years in various professor and administration roles there.

"Although I feel young and hearty, I know I have a short runway ahead of me, and I want it to end teaching here," he said, noting his long-held preference for the classroom.

Write to Kelsey Gee at kelsey.gee@wsj.com