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2009 GRADUATE SCHOOL guide

Alphabet Soup – graduate degrees flavored by flexibility, market

By Jo Ann Rathgeb
Special Correspondent

One are the days when going to graduate school meant only a career in academics or a move up the corporate ladder. The Ph.D. and the MBA have been joined by an alphabet full of flexible and employment-relevant degrees.

Graduate schools have kept up with the needs of students and their concerns about time and money by developing programs that meet specific needs.

At **Jefferson College of Health Sciences**, M.S. degrees for nurses and physician assistants address health-care issues including the country's nursing shortage and primary-care needs.

Jefferson's MSPA program, in fact, grew out of the needs of Southwestern Virginia, and Wilton Kennedy, program director, noted that 50 percent of PA graduates have remained in the rural area around Roanoke.

Digging into the community is more than a metaphor at **Virginia State University**, where a degree in plant sciences uses the school's agricultural learning center, Randolph Farm. The program focuses on research methods that students can use to boost local economies and alleviate global hunger.

Since many graduate students want to work full time, part-time and online classes are popular. At **Longwood University**, the part-time student is indeed the "average" grad student. Longwood

assists them with many options. Some programs offer two courses each term, and there are two online degrees.

Online programs are increasingly popular. The distance MBA at **Colorado State University** is one such program; despite the distance, Virginia students can complete the degree with ease.

Then there are "hybrid" classes, such as some at Longwood, which meet in person about three to five times, then allow the rest of the work to be done online.

While taking classes slowly is the traditional way to a graduate degree, the opposite is also true: speeding things up.

One example is the accelerated master's program in systems engineering at the **University of Virginia**, which offers a degree in one year. The program includes class meetings every other Friday and Saturday in Charlottesville, plus a two-week residency.

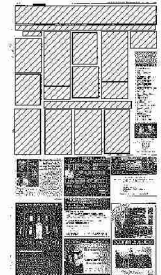
Applying for graduate programs has also been streamlined, with most students applying online. "Applying online is easier for both the applicant and the admissions officer," noted Donna Spradlin, director of graduate recruiting at **Radford University**.

David Hawsey, vice president of enrollment management at **Emory & Henry College**, noted that many of the school's grad-school applicants are only getting started when they get online.

"These are largely working professionals or returning adult

students or people already working in their field. They rely a lot on information on the Internet, but then they want to talk with faculty," he said. Emory & Henry professors often discuss course work with prospective grad students by telephone.

Students looking for traditional graduate programs – the MBA, academic and teaching degrees – can certainly find them, but now even those with specific needs or niche ambitions will also find, statewide, the program that's right for them.



2009 GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

For full information on individual programs, contact the school's Web site.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Distance MBA Program

www.csudistancemba.com

Graduate Admissions:

(800) 491-4622 ext. 1

gradinfo@biz.colostate.edu

Degrees: MBA (online)

EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE

Emory, Va.

www.ehc.edu

(276) 944-6133

ehadmiss@ehc.edu

Degrees: M.E.: History,

Reading, Professional Studies

(5-year program)

JEFFERSON COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Roanoke, Va.

www.jchs.edu

(888) 985-8483

admissions@mail.jchs.edu

Degrees: M.S.: Nursing,

Occupational Therapy,

Physician Assistant

LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

Farmville, Va.

www.longwood.edu

(434) 395-2255

graduate@longwood.edu

Degrees: M.A.: English

(4 concentrations); M.S.:

Education (14 concentrations,

online programs), Sociology/

Criminal Justice, Communication

Sciences and Disorder; MBA

(3 concentrations)

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Radford, Va.

www.radford.edu/gradcollege

(540) 831-5023

dgspradli@radford.edu

Degrees: M.A.: 5 programs
M.S.: 13 programs, including
Nursing and Social Work;
M.F.A.; MBA; Psy.D, Counseling
Psychology; Ed.S, School
Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Charlottesville, Va.

www.virginia.edu

Contact individual schools

Degrees: M.A. and M.S.: 83 total
programs; M.Law; Ed.S.: 6; M.D.;
J.D; Doctoral: 57

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Stafford, Va.

www.umw.edu

(540) 286-8088

admit@umw.edu

Degrees: M.Ed.; MBA; M.S.,
Management Information
Systems (MIS); Concurrent
Degrees: MBA./M.S., MIS;
Graduate certificates: Business
and Education

VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Chesterfield County

www.vsu.edu

(804) 524-5985

GradAdmiss@vsu.edu

Degrees: Ed.D; Ph.D; M.A.;
M.Ed.; M.I.S.; M.S.; Graduate
certificates: 16 programs



Students pursue master's degrees in education at UMW's College of Graduate and Professional Studies.



At Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Lauren Bowers is part of the Master of Science in Physician Assistant program.

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