

CLEAR ADMIT **School Guides**

**University of
Virginia Darden
School of Business**

About This Guide

The Clear Admit team has prepared this reference guide to the University of Virginia Darden School of Business ("Darden") to assist you in your research of this program. Our comments are designed to be of use to individuals in all stages of the admissions process, providing information relevant to those who are determining whether to apply to this program, looking for in-depth information for a planned application to Darden, preparing for an interview or deciding whether to attend.

The guide is unique in that it not only addresses many aspects of life as a Darden MBA student and alumnus, covering school-specific programs in depth, but also compares Darden to other leading business schools across a range of criteria based on data from the schools, the scholarly and popular presses, and Clear Admit's conversations with current MBA students, alumni, faculty and school administrators. We have normalized the data offered by each business school to allow for easy side-by-side comparisons of multiple programs.



Applying to business school?

Learn more from Clear Admit!



The Leading Independent
Resource for Top-tier MBA
Candidates

Visit our website: www.clearadmit.com

Stay up-to-date with the latest news on the world's best business schools
and sharpen your approach to your applications with insider advice on MBA admissions

Want this information--and more exclusive content--delivered straight to your inbox?

Sign up for our Newsletter

Check out our unique offerings to guide you through every step of the admissions process...

Publications

From a school's curriculum to universal b-school strategy, each of our publications series provide a centralized source of information that is crucial to an effective application.



Live Wire

Track the ebb and flow of admissions decisions with Live Wire: application results in real time, submitted by site visitors.

Application results in real time, submitted by site visitors.

- All Schools ▾ All Rounds ▾
- Accepted to **Yale SOM**
 - Waitlisted at **Harvard Business School**
 - Interview Invited at **UT Austin/McCombs**
 - Rejected at **Cornell / Johnson**
 - Accepted to **Yale SOM**
 - Waitlisted at **Harvard Business School**

Interview Archive

Receive an invitation for an interview? We have collected thousands of interview reports from MBA candidates. Sort reports by school and know what to expect in your admissions interview.



...and come find us on social media



Contents

1	<i>Introduction to Darden</i>	1
	Program Highlights	1
	Brief History of the MBA	1
	Darden History	3
	Student Demographics	4
2	<i>Academics</i>	6
	Academic Calendar	6
	Pre-Term & Orientation	7
	Student Body	8
	Teaching Methods	8
	Core Curriculum	9
	Electives	10
	Second-Year Electives	10
	Concentrations	11
	Curriculum Comparison	11
	Grading System	12
	Honors	13
	Honor System	13
	Faculty	14
3	<i>Special Programs</i>	16
	Study Abroad	16
	Global Business Experience	16
	Global Field Experience	16
	Darden Business Projects	17
	The Batten Institute	17
4	<i>Life at Darden</i>	19
	Campus Spaces	19
	Life in Charlottesville	19
	Clubs	21
	Conferences	21



5	<i>Life After Darden</i>	24
	Career Development Center	24
	Recruiting/Interview Procedures	24
	Career Statistics	25
	Industry	25
	Geography	27
	Alumni Network	27
	Alumni Career Services	27
6	<i>Admissions</i>	29
	Visiting Darden	29
	Application Requirements	30
	Interviewing with Darden	30
	Deadlines	31
	The Consortium	31
	Joint Degree Programs	32
7	<i>Financing the Darden MBA</i>	33
	Tuition & Expenses	33
	Financial Aid	33
8	<i>Appendix</i>	35
	Essay Topic Analysis	35
	Admissions Director Q&A	36
9	<i>Further Resources</i>	39
	Publications	39
	Darden Research Centers & Institutes	39
	Contact Information	40
	Social Media	40





1 Introduction to Darden

Program Highlights

Case Method – Darden’s approach to business education is centered on the case method of instruction. Professors focus on helping students identify and solve problems in complex business situations, with the goal of providing a strong general management education.

Community – Darden’s small size and location outside a major metropolitan area mean that students and their partners spend a significant amount of time working and socializing with each other. In addition, campus traditions such as First Coffee, in which all members of the Darden community are invited to gather for a half hour of coffee and conversation and announcements after the first class of the day, provide regular, relaxed settings for socializing with classmates and professors.

Broad-Based Career Placement – The case method of instruction provides students with a strong foundation in management principles, while the concentrations available in the second year help students build more specific skill sets. This balance between breadth and depth is reflected in the relatively broad range of industries chosen by graduates.

Mid-Atlantic Recruiting – Darden sends one of the highest percentages of graduates into positions in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. of any leading business school. For students hoping to work in this region upon graduation, Darden offers particularly strong access to area recruiters and alumni.

Brief History of the MBA

Originally conceived as an extra year of undergraduate training in finance, economics and accounting, business schools shifted around the start of the 20th century to begin offering managerial training for the U.S.’s new industrialized companies (see Figure 1.1). Their prestige grew throughout the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the research and training generated by business schools was seen as a key to the country’s economic recovery. The unprecedented managerial needs of World War II further increased the demand for formal business education, and after the war, U.S. veterans used their G.I. Bill funding to finance their business studies and move into management jobs.

By the 1950s, the MBA was a two-year, post-graduate pro-



Figure 1.1 Notable Developments in MBA History

MBA Degree		Darden School of Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business schools are established in the U.S. to train managers for service in the new industrialized economy, especially the railroad industry. Academic focus is on accounting and bookkeeping, and most professors are professionals in these fields. 	1880s	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association of Collegiate Schools of Business is founded in 1916 to provide resources for the growing number of U.S. business schools, which by 1919 enroll over 36,000 students. 	1910s	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-campus recruiting by industry rises. Curricula begin to include policy issues. 	1920s	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research and training conducted by business schools during the Great Depression is seen as key to the U.S.'s economic revival, significantly raising public opinion of business schools. 	1930s	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World War II sharply increases demand for trained managers, and WWII veterans return to U.S. business schools in droves. 	1940s	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most professors now hold Ph.D.s in business, and academic research begins to form the basis of business school curricula. Strategic decision-making and quantitative and statistical analyses enter many curricula. 	1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University of Virginia creates a School of Business Administration in 1954.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MBA starting salaries rise 5-10% per year at some schools, even during stagflation. Entrepreneurship enters most curricula. 	1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first woman enrolls at the School of Business Administration in 1964.
	1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recognition of founding president Colgate Darden, the school is renamed the Colgate Darden Graduate School of Business Administration in 1974.
	1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1988, a required business ethics course is introduced into the first-year curriculum.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business schools focus on leadership, ethics and interpersonal skills, altering course content and increasing classroom emphasis on working in teams. 	1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darden receives an anonymous gift of \$13.3 million in 1999, the largest in the school's history.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-profile corporate scandals prompt calls for greater ethics education in business schools. By 2004, 447,000 students are enrolled in U.S. business programs. 	2000s	
	2010s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2005, veteran Darden professor Robert Bruner is appointed Dean. The Darden core curriculum is overhauled for the 2010-2011 academic year. Bruner elects to return to teaching in 2015 and Scott C. Beardsley is named dean as of August 1st.

gram that turned business into a professional discipline on par with medicine and law, and the degree was seen as a ticket to a better, more secure career. The MBA continued increasing in popularity, from 21,000 business management master's degrees awarded in the 1969-1970 academic year to 139,000 in 2003-2004. This rise came in conjunction with a growing demand for MBA graduates in the workplace and with rising starting salaries for those graduating from top schools.

Since the early days of the MBA, there have been conflicts over the purpose of a business education. Initially, tension between a classical education in economics and more "practical" training in business dominated the debate, and in some ways this remains the central conflict. Today, the tension between theory and practice has increasingly taken center stage, as business school professors have become more academic and employers demand broader skill sets from MBA graduates. Most business schools, however, have designed programs that offer students exposure to both theory and practice – internships, fieldwork and school-based consulting programs are widespread. The increase in average full-time work experience among entering MBA students, as well as the growth in Executive MBA programs, ensures that classroom theories are continually tested against real world experiences. Regardless of these tensions, the MBA remains one of the most popular graduate degrees in the United States and around the world.

Darden History

In the early 1950s, a group of Southern business leaders united to establish a graduate school of business administration at the historic University of Virginia, with hopes it would help train the next generation of Southern managers. Led by Colgate Whitehead Darden, Jr., the president of the University of Virginia and a former Virginia governor and congressman, the committee amassed a sizeable endowment that was augmented by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Using these funds, the University of Virginia created a School of Business Administration in 1954, which welcomed its first class of 28 students the following year.

Charles Abbott, a longtime professor at Harvard Business School, was selected to lead the fledgling institution. From the start, Dean Abbott and President Darden laid out a set of tenets that continue to define a University of Virginia business education today. The pair stipulated that the business school would operate exclusively on the graduate level, and that the predominant form of instruction would be the case method, just as at Harvard. The interdisciplinary approach of the case method was strengthened by the decision that the school would have no departments, so as to promote integrated management training. In the same spirit, students were required to cooperate with team members from varied backgrounds to complete their coursework.

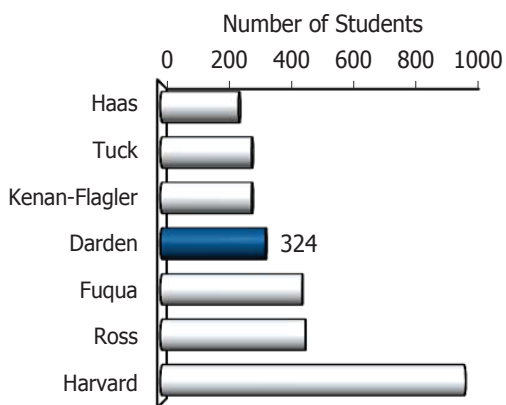
Dean Abbott also implemented strict requirements for writing and public speaking. The value he placed on preparation and



effective communication can be seen in his policy of allowing professors to choose any student at random to teach the day's case lesson. In the early years, students attended class every day but Sunday and often concluded the week with Saturday afternoon quizzes. Darden's growing reputation as the "Harvard Business School of the South" stemmed from more than just the rigorous education it offered: Darden's founding faculty members were all affiliated with Harvard, and for a time, the curriculum essentially duplicated that of HBS.

In 1964, Darden opened its doors to women, although it did not count more than one in each class until 1971, when an unprecedented five females enrolled. In 1974, the school was officially named for its founding president, becoming the Colgate Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, in recognition of the key role this statesman and educational leader had played in creating the school 20 years before. Shortly thereafter, the Darden School moved from its original home in Monroe Hall to the more expansive North Grounds complex, where it remains today.

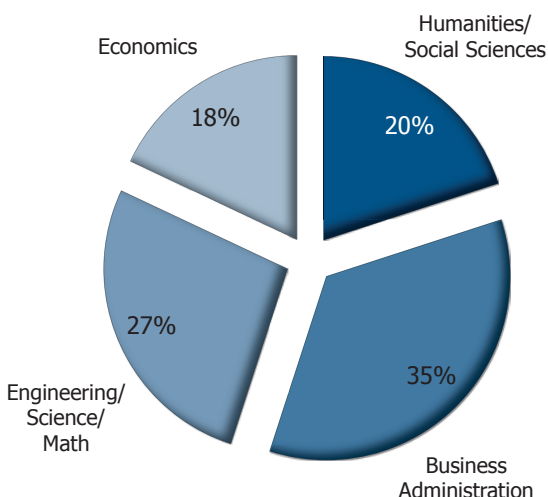
Figure 1.2 Size of Incoming Class



True to its roots, Darden has retained a sense of responsibility to Virginia and the South over the years, while at the same time broadening its engagement with national and international business. In 1962, the Tayloe Murphy Center opened with the aim of furthering the school's outreach to Virginia businesses. The Olsson Center for Applied Ethics was established at Darden in 1966 and helped introduce a required first-year business ethics course to the curriculum in 1988. More recently, the Batten Institute, a business think tank, was founded to serve as a focal point for the study of innovation and its applications to business, and Darden's Center for Asset Management launched in 2013.

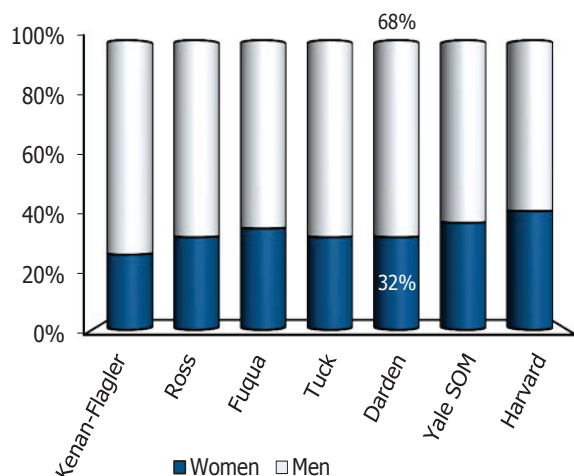
In addition to its engagement with the business community, Darden prides itself on being responsive to student initiatives and continually reevaluating its own effectiveness in management education. Most recently, in 2010, the school overhauled both its first-year and second-year curricula, restructuring the first-year core and introducing formal second-year concentrations for the first time under the leadership of Dean Robert Bruner, who has led Darden as its dean since 2005. Scott C. Beardsley took over the deanship from Bruner on August 1st, 2015. Beardsley joined McKinsey & Co. in 1989 and rose in the ranks consistently until most recently serving as an elected member of McKinsey's global board of directors from 2011 to 2014. He chairs the board of directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and his extensive research has covered topics such as technology trends, the knowledge economy, regulation, IT productivity, performance transformation and broadband.

Figure 1.3 Undergraduate Majors



Student Demographics

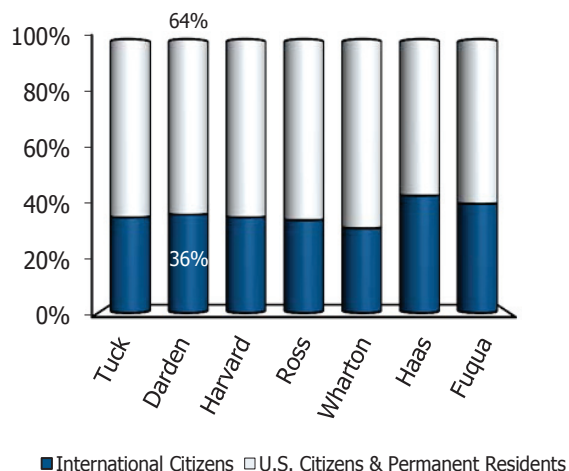
Darden students come from across the U.S. and the world, and from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds. With an incoming class size of 324 in the fall of 2014, Darden

Figure 1.4 Gender Distribution

is one of the smaller of the leading MBA programs, alongside schools such as Haas and Tuck (see Figure 1.2).

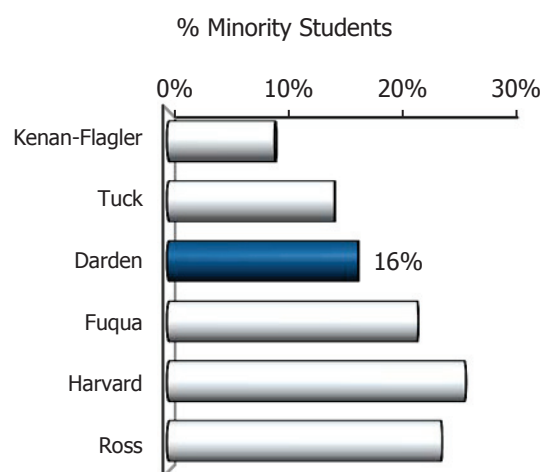
In the Darden Class of 2016, the average GMAT score is 706, the same score posted by the previous year's entering class. The class has an average undergraduate GPA of 3.5. As is typical at MBA programs, most students in Darden's Class of 2016 majored in fields such as engineering, science, business and economics during their undergraduate years. However, 20% of incoming students majored in subjects within the humanities, social sciences and other fields, adding academic diversity to the classroom experience (see Figure 1.3).

Because many of the leading business schools believe that students benefit from having several years of professional experience before beginning the MBA, the average age of incoming MBA students tends to be slightly higher than that of other professional schools. Students in Darden's Class of 2016 were, on average, 27 years old upon matriculation, a figure in line with the average age at many of Darden's peers.

Figure 1.5 Citizenship

MBA programs also differ from professional schools such as medicine and law in that they often struggle to attract and enroll female students in numbers equal to male students. Darden has traditionally found this gender gap particularly difficult to overcome, typically enrolling one-quarter as many women as men. With 35% female enrollment in the Class of 2015 and 32% in the Class of 2016, however, Darden has climbed much nearer the top of its peer group. In 2015, Darden also joined six peer schools, including Ross, Haas, Johnson, Fuqua, Stern and Yale SOM, in launching events focused on women in business school.

Like most business schools, Darden seeks to enroll a diverse class of students who are drawn from many countries and a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. This cultural diversity helps students gain exposure to new perspectives and prepares them for entry into the increasingly international world of business. Darden's small size and its location far from major metropolitan areas, however, have historically made it difficult to attract a highly diverse class. In the Class of 2016, 36% of Darden students were born outside of the U.S. Overall, 36 countries in total were represented in the Class of 2016, making for a fairly diverse class given the school's size.

Figure 1.6 Minority Students

For similar reasons, Darden also continues to enroll a fairly small percentage of U.S. minority students, a term that usually refers to a student of African-American, Hispanic American, Asian American or Native American descent. In Darden's Class of 2016, 16% of students identified as a member of one of these minority groups (see Figure 1.6). Although several other small, non-urban business schools, such as Kenan-Flagler and Tuck, enrolled similarly low percentages of minority students, peer schools such as Ross attracted significantly higher percentages of minority students than Darden.

2

Academics

"The Darden curriculum distinguishes itself from many other business school curricula in two manners: the carefully planned first-year program and the reliance on the case method. I find both of these aspects to be relative advantages."
– Darden Student

The Darden MBA is a full-time program designed to be completed in two consecutive academic years. Like Harvard Business School, Darden uses the case method as its primary mode of instruction and has designed an integrated first-year core curriculum that all students are required to complete in full.

Academic Calendar

First- and second-year students at Darden have similar academic calendars. Both first- and second-year students begin classes in successive weeks in late August, enjoy a spring break in mid-March and conclude the academic year in early May (see Figure 2.1). Both can participate in the J-Term in January, which allows students to partake in one intensive course outside the traditional Darden curriculum, career-related activities or off-campus electives.

Darden's class schedule during the week is markedly different from those of its peer institutions. To begin, first-year courses are taught for only about four weeks at a stretch, with each course meeting every day from Monday through Thursday. Every Friday, students complete self-scheduled take-home exams for each of the three courses being taught during that term.

Figure 2.1 First-Year Calendar 2015-2016

Term 1	
Classes begin	Aug. 26, 2015
Classes end	Oct. 15, 2015
Term 1 exams	Oct. 16-20, 2015
Term 2	
Classes begin	Oct. 26, 2015
Classes end	Dec. 10, 2015
Term 2 exams	Dec. 11-15, 2015
Term 3	
Classes begin	Jan. 19, 2016
Classes end	March 7, 2016
Term 3 exams	March 8-12, 2016
Spring Break	March 13-20, 2016
Term 4	
Classes begin	March 21, 2016
Classes end	May 5, 2016
Term 4 exams	May 6-10, 2016

At the conclusion of each four-week block of instruction, first-year students receive several days off from academic obligations. During this time, they can focus exclusively on recruiting, working on internship applications and attending networking events and company presentations. This cycle of coursework and recruiting repeats five times during the first year as students make their way through the core curriculum.

In 2015, Darden introduced a new requirement for first-year students: A seven-week, team-based, field project that is completed during the final quarter of the first year. The new core requirement, called "Innovation, Design and Entrepreneurship In Action" (IDEA), replaces an elective in terms of credits. Five to six different learning teams will be assigned to the same business challenge, which will be sponsored by a corporation, government agency or nonprofit organization. It is a first for Darden to require such an experiential learning opportunity, though they have offered such projects as options before.

The second-year schedule also differs from those at most other schools. Second-year electives meet on an "early-week"

"The very broad and challenging first-year curriculum provides a great foundation for understanding business from a variety of different angles."
– Darden Student

or "late-week" schedule throughout the quarter. Early-week classes meet on the first two to three days of the week, while late-week classes meet on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

The typical schedule in the first year consists of class from 8:00 a.m. to 1:10 p.m., then one and a half to three hours of independent preparation in the afternoon, followed by two to four hours of meetings and discussion with one's learning team in the evening. In 2015, the program introduced Darden Academy, which provides first-year students with the opportunity to meet every Tuesday afternoon to discuss current topics and prepare for IDEA. Given that first-years tended to spend 60 to 80 hours a week on school work, the school administration wanted to provide a window to catch up on current events and prepare for the new field project, IDEA.

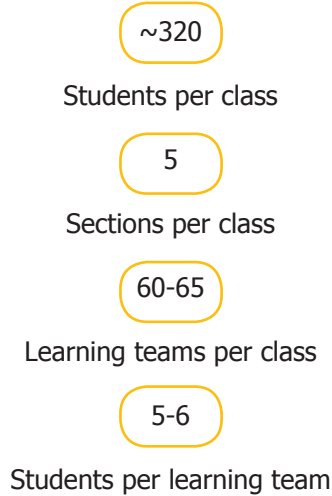
Pre-Term & Orientation

Many schools offer pre-term and orientation programs for first-year students prior to the start of the academic year. While orientations are usually required three- or four-day programs focused on meeting classmates and becoming acclimated to the campus, pre-term programs include an academic component, which may be anything from placement exams to leadership seminars. Orientations are always mandatory, though pre-term programs may be optional, depending on the nature of the activities taking place.

In the weeks prior to the start of first-year classes, Darden organizes several programs to help new students make a successful transition back into academic life. The rigor of the curricula at Darden has been described as a "fire hose," so first-year students encourage incoming ones to participate in the Grounds-On pre-term offering. These online courses, which cover accounting, Excel and other topics, take about 15 to 20 hours to complete, but help students readjust to academic life prior to returning to campus. For the incoming Class of 2017, the school also introduced Darden-Before-Darden Camp, an optional eight-day orientation program. The school aims to help incoming students adjust to the case study method and refresh business fundamentals during this period.

The week prior to classes also tends to include a number of informal social events at students' houses; those who have participated report that these social events are a great opportunity to meet classmates and build friendships before the start of classes. Students also participate in a career orientation and hear presentations from business leaders during this time, and Darden social traditions such as First Coffee hold their inaugural events. The end of the week—and therefore the beginning of the first-year core—is marked by a school-wide barbecue that brings together faculty, administrators, first- and second-year students and their families for food and socializing.



Figure 2.2 Structure of the Student Body

Student Body

Darden's entering class is divided into five sections of 60 to 65 students each (see Figure 2.2). As at other business schools that break their classes into smaller groups, Darden's sections are designed to represent the full professional and demographic diversity of the first-year class. Each section takes all of its core courses together and therefore shares a common set of professors.

Section loyalty runs deep at Darden, as can be seen in the yearlong Darden Cup. Intersection athletic events and other competitions take place each year through the Cup, with students' fall sections holding their principal allegiance. In addition, alumni returning to campus often identify themselves by their section affiliation.

Darden first-years are further divided into roughly 60 learning teams of five or six students apiece. As with the sections, learning team assignments are made with an eye to the diversity of students' professional, academic and geographic backgrounds. However, Darden's learning teams differ from those at most schools in that they are made up of students drawn from different sections of the class. Because class participation counts for such a large percentage of the grade in each course, case-based schools such as Darden and Harvard try to avoid placing two members of the same section in a learning team together. This arrangement allows students to share their insights freely in team discussions without having to compete against their teammates in the classroom.

Darden's learning teams work together throughout the first year. Students are expected to use their teams as a resource for sharing and testing ideas before introducing them in the classroom. Above all, though, the team experience is seen as an exercise in learning to lead a diverse group toward a shared goal. The school expects students to be committed to their learning teams, and this commitment plays a central role in the lives of first-years.

To support the work of the learning teams, Darden reserves a dedicated study room for each team from one to three hours from Sunday through Thursday. This practice is nearly unique among Darden's peer programs; few business schools have enough study rooms to provide their learning teams with dedicated meeting space throughout the week.

These first-year learning teams, however, do not work together on the new field project, IDEA. Instead, separate learning teams—still drawn from across sections—are brought together for that course.

Teaching Methods

As at HBS, the case method of instruction is at the core of Darden's educational philosophy. Cases are designed to present students with real business dilemmas and to challenge

"One of the things that defines Darden in your first year is the case discussion in the classroom. Everyone takes the same classes, so you have students from finance and from marketing backgrounds taking the same finance course. As a result, you end up with better discussions and learning from peers, not just professors." – Darden Student

them to evaluate possible alternatives before recommending a course of action. Cases representing a variety of industries, products and management styles are used throughout the curriculum to expose students to the full range of modern management issues.

Class discussion is at the heart of the case method of instruction. Students are expected to prepare for each class session by conducting an in-depth analysis of the featured case. Class time is then spent on defining and analyzing possible approaches to the problems raised in the case. Because the richness of these discussions is dependent on hearing many points of view and a wide range of ideas, active class participation is expected of all students.

The cases used in the first-year core are part of a planned sequence designed to show students how management concepts can be applied across academic disciplines rather than teaching them in isolation. In practice, this means that many cases are discussed in multiple courses, though the focus of the discussion shifts depending on the course topic. For instance, a case taught in Financial Management and Policies may have an ambiguous ethical component well suited for discussion in the Business Ethics course.

Although written cases are the primary method of instruction at Darden, they are not the sole method. Individual professors may incorporate multimedia cases, simulations, role-playing exercises, field trips, guest lectures and other teaching tools into their courses as appropriate. Moreover, with the introduction of Innovation, Design and Entrepreneurship In Action (IDEA), experiential learning has become a required part of the curriculum.

Core Curriculum

During the first year, all Darden students take the same 10 core courses (see Figure 2.3). The first-year curriculum is designed to teach students to apply concepts from multiple disciplines in order to solve complex management problems; it provides students with a common foundation in business fundamentals and an integrated perspective on general management before they move on to electives in the second year.

Because Darden's core is designed as a yearlong, integrated academic program, students are not permitted to waive courses based on prior knowledge or experience. As at Harvard Business School, the Darden faculty believes that the case method of instruction has the potential to provide new insights and challenges regardless of a student's background in the subject. First-year students typically cover 12 cases each week and spend their first few terms looking forward to the 100 Case Party, a school-sponsored bash that marks this late-October milestone.

Figure 2.3 Darden Core Curriculum

- Management Communication
- Global Economies & Markets
- Financial Management & Policies
- Accounting for Managers
- Marketing
- Operations Management
- Leading Organizations
- Decision Analysis
- Business Ethics
- Strategic Thinking & Action



Figure 2.4 Elective Areas at Darden**Elective Areas**

- Accounting
- Consulting
- Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Strategy
- Ethics
- Finance
- Global Economies and Markets
- Leadership and Organizational Behavior
- Management Communications
- Marketing
- Operations
- Quantitative Analysis
- Sustainability

Industry Specialty Areas

- Energy
- Healthcare
- Media, Entertainment & Sports
- Real Estate
- Retail & Luxury Goods
- Social Enterprise
- Technology

Electives

Darden students have the freedom to exercise some choice in their course selection in Term 4 of their first year, selecting three electives from a list of one dozen elective areas as well as seven additional industry specialty areas (see Figure 2.4). Second-year students are required to complete a total of 30 elective credits over four quarters. During the second year of the program, students have the freedom to choose their own coursework; the school does, however, impose a number of requirements and restrictions on students' registration decisions during this final year, including restrictions related to topic and type of courses taken.

Second-Year Electives

The second year of the Darden MBA program comprises four quarters of elective courses. In addition to drawing from the Darden course catalog, students are also permitted to enroll in as many as six credits of relevant graduate-level coursework taught through other University of Virginia schools. The experiential opportunities in the second year also include field projects and cover topics like entrepreneurship, consulting, innovation and leadership. Students may also complete up to three 7.5 combined credits of individual research, which requires the support of a faculty sponsor. The popular Darden Business Projects (DBPs), meanwhile, provide students with experiential learning opportunities in consulting or venture development (see Chapter 3, "Darden Business Projects").

In April of the first year, Darden students select their elective courses for the entire second year of the program, declaring any intended concentrations at the same time. Like many of its peer institutions, Darden employs an auction model to enroll students in electives; because demand for certain courses exceeds the number of available seats, students are allotted a set number of points that they can use to bid on the courses in which they are most interested. Students can modify their desired schedules and bid distributions as often as they like up to the close of pre-registration, at which point they receive their tentative course schedules for the coming academic year. Each quarter of the second year begins with an Add/Drop period, during which students can adjust their schedules across all four quarters of the second year.

While students can generally exercise a good deal of freedom in designing their schedules, they are required to complete at least one 1.5-credit elective focused on leadership, and face a few restrictions on the number of credits they can earn through certain offerings. First, due to the school's emphasis on delivering broad general management preparation, of the 30 credits that second-year students must earn toward graduation, no more than 12 can be taken in any one of the program's major elective areas: accounting, global economies and markets, finance, marketing, operations, organizational behavior and quantitative analysis. At most, 7.5 credits of independent research electives can be applied toward gradua-

tion.

Students who have a compelling career-related reason to pursue more than the allowed number of credits in a certain area may be permitted to do so; to enroll in more than 30 credits for the second year, students may make overload requests during Darden's add/drop periods.

Figure 2.5 Concentrations at Darden

Career Tracks

- Asset Management/Sales and Trading
- Business to Business Marketing
- Consumer Marketing
- Corporate Finance/Investment Banking
- Entrepreneurship
- Strategy Consulting
- Supply Chain Management

Theme Tracks

- Business Development and Growth
- Corporate Innovation
- Market Analytics
- Business Analytics
- Innovation for Sustainability

Concentrations

Darden students have the option of pursuing up to two concentrations during their second year. The school currently offers 12 concentrations, seven of which are organized around specific career functions and five that center on more broadly applicable themes (see Figure 2.5). Each concentration comprises a set of primary and secondary courses adding up to between 9 and 10.5 credit hours. The number of credits that must be drawn from the primary list, which encompasses a necessary core of knowledge, and the secondary list, which includes more specialized and advanced courses, varies by concentration. For example, students concentrating in Corporate Finance/Investment Banking must complete 6 credit hours from the primary course list and just 3 credit hours from the secondary course list, whereas the Strategy Consulting concentration calls for 4.5 credit hours from the first category, three from the secondary list and an additional three credit hours dedicated to an experiential requirement that can be met by a field study or research component. The experiential component of a concentration typically involves the completion of a research elective, Darden Business Project or Global Business Experience related to the concentration area.

Curriculum Comparison

While each of the leading MBA programs organizes its program around a core curriculum, the structure and flexibility of these cores vary significantly. By comparing the number of core courses a school requires to that school's overall graduation requirements, prospective students can determine what proportion of their studies will be structured by the school and what proportion might be spent pursuing topics of their own choice. This flexibility may be enhanced by the possibility of waiving core courses or substituting them for electives; courses that can be waived in this manner are considered conditionally required.

Whereas most other leading MBA programs permit students to bypass certain first-year courses if they are able to demonstrate proficiency with the subject matter—either through exemption exams or previous coursework—Darden requires all students to take the same 10 core courses in the first year, regardless of their prior skills or experiences (see Figure 2.6).

While core coursework also dominates the first year at peer schools such as Fuqua and Ross, students at these schools



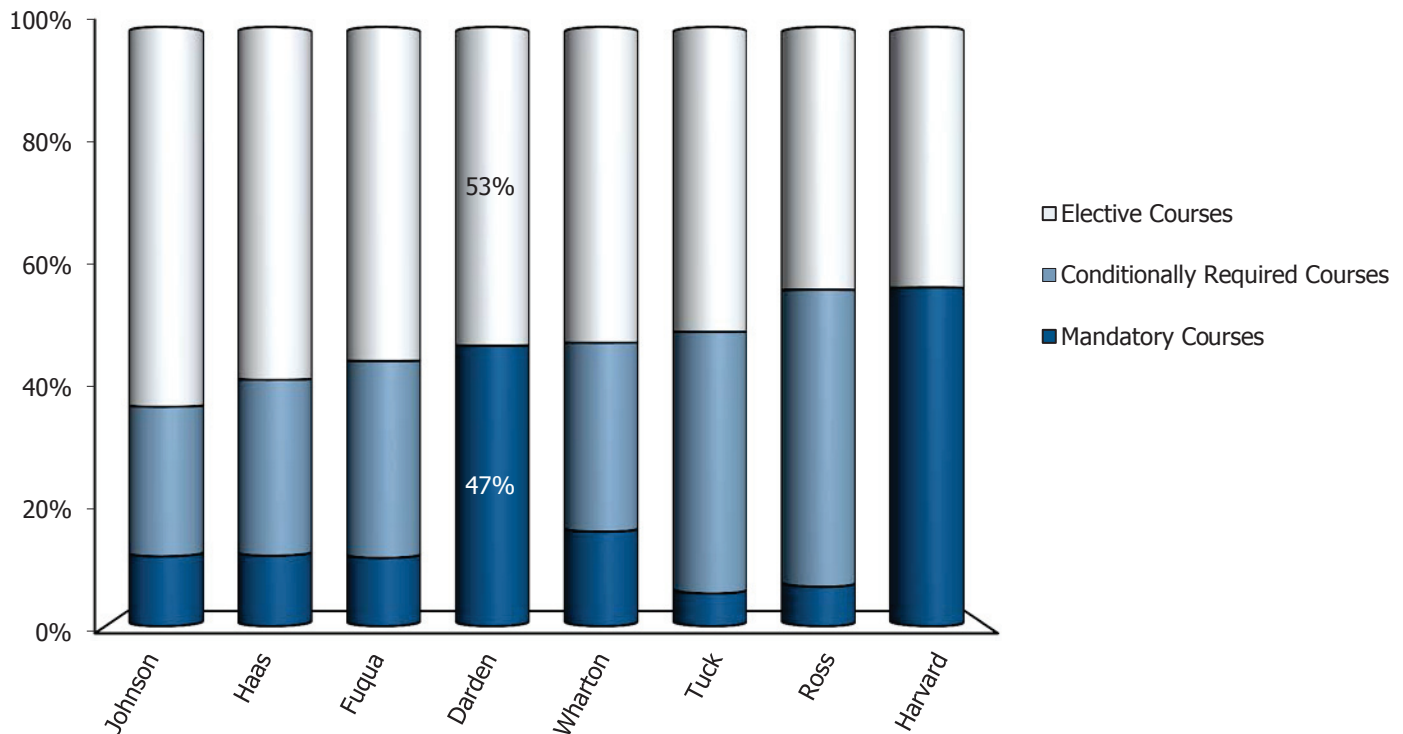
have the opportunity to waive certain core courses and replace them with electives or higher-level courses. For instance, an entering student with an undergraduate major in business or accounting or a professional background as a CPA would likely be able to waive the introductory accounting course at Ross. However, that same student would still be required to enroll in Darden's first-year Accounting for Managers course. Although this inability to waive core courses may limit the academic choices of some Darden students, as at Harvard, the school believes that all students, no matter what their level, will benefit greatly from the extensive case discussions in the core.

Grading System

Because the value of the case method depends on the quality of class discussion, class participation is a major factor in the grades for most Darden courses, typically comprising 50 percent of a student's final course grade. Although the Darden faculty may sometimes give students feedback on the quantity or quality of their participation, students are expected to seek feedback from faculty members or classmates if they are unsure of the value of their contributions.

Darden's grading system recognizes six categories of performance: Distinguished Performance (DP), High Performance (HP), Standard Performance (SP), Low Performance (LP),

Figure 2.6 Course Type as Percent of Credits Required to Graduate



Note: Mandatory classes are required for graduation and cannot be waived under any circumstances. Conditionally required courses are part of the core curriculum but may be waived by exam or credential or substituted with other coursework.

Unsatisfactory Performance (UP), and Fail/No Credit (F). The High Performance, Standard Performance, and Low Performance grades are considered relative indicators of performance, meaning that they are awarded based on how a student ranks in comparison with classmates. The grades of Distinguished Performance, Unsatisfactory Performance and Fail/No Credit, on the other hand, are considered an absolute indicator of performance and are awarded based on a student's understanding of the course material: superior (DP), unsatisfactory (UP), or little or no understanding (F). In rare cases, a student may be assigned the grade of IN for Incomplete; this will only be assigned if a student has not completed his or her work at the end of the specific academic period.

Although professors must award the HP, SP and LP grades based on the school's established curve, they are not obliged to award any grades of DP, UP or F unless a student's performance warrants such a grade. The grading scale at Darden is more generous for first-year core courses, allowing new students to become acclimated to the academic rigors of the business school.

Darden carefully monitors the academic record of each student and has established strict standards for minimum performance; students who earn a grade of UP or F will receive points on their record, and those who accumulate too many points will be dismissed from the MBA program. A final grade of F in any course is also grounds for automatic dismissal from Darden. However, make-up exams are available for first-year students who fail a core course. In most cases, students who have been dismissed from the program may apply for readmission in a later year.

Honors

Darden's faculty and administration present both first- and second-year students with a variety of awards to recognize outstanding contributions to the school's academic and community life. The most prestigious award at the school is the Samuel Forrest Hyde Memorial Fellowship, awarded to the one first-year student who has contributed the most to Darden and displays the greatest potential in their future career.

Among the school's purely academic recognitions include the William Michael Shermet Award, which denotes outstanding academic achievement in the first-year curriculum. Other awards recognize student contributions both inside and outside the classroom, including the G. Robert Strauss Marketing Award and the C. Stewart Sheppard Distinguished Service Award. Several of these awards include a monetary prize, the amount of which varies depending on the income earned from the supporting funds during the prior year.

Honor System

The University of Virginia has one of the nation's oldest and



most cherished student honor codes, and as part of the UVA community, the Darden School of Business and its students commit to supporting this code. In short, the Honor System states that each student at the university must agree to “live by and support the spirit of honor.” The university strongly believes that the Honor System helps to create a community of trust within the school and therefore explicitly encourages prospective students who are not prepared for or interested in embracing this system to reconsider their plans to apply.

As part of Darden’s orientation program, all students are given a detailed summary of the university’s Honor System and its application to social and academic life.

Faculty

The Darden School employs 72 full-time faculty members, with its regular faculty topping 100 when counting adjunct instructors. Conversations with students reveal that while Darden professors are undeniably demanding, they are also extraordinarily dedicated teachers who are frequently described as energetic, engaged and accessible. Some of the most popular professors at Darden are profiled below.

Paul W. Farris

As the Landmark Communications Professor of Business, Professor Farris teaches the first-year core course Marketing, along with Advertising, Promotion and Integrated Marketing, Consumer Marketing and Marketing Metrics. He earned his MBA from the University of Washington and his doctorate in business administration from Harvard University, where he taught before joining the Darden faculty. Farris has worked in marketing management for Unilever in Germany, and in account management for the advertising agency Lintas. Currently, he is on the board of directors of Sto Corp.

Professor Farris’s research, which has been published in professional journals such as the *Harvard Business Review* and the *Journal of Marketing*, focuses on issues of marketing productivity and budgeting. In his current research, he seeks to build coherent systems for integrating financial and marketing metrics. His book *Marketing Metrics: 50+ Metrics Every Executive Should Master* was named the 2006 Marketing Book of the Year by *strategy+business*.

James R. Rubin

Professor Rubin joined the Darden faculty in 1991 after earning both his M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Virginia. As an Assistant Professor of Business Administration and the school’s Area Coordinator of Management Communication, Rubin teaches the first-year core course Management Communication, as well as Corporate Communication. Professor Rubin was the first faculty recipient of the Frederick S. Morton Award, which annually recognizes a Darden student for excellence in leadership and the faculty member who contributed the most to that student’s Darden experience.

“Faculty often show up to student-organized community service events and even social events. Many professors invite students to their homes for dinner. My first-year accounting professor invited my entire section out to a bar at the end of the quarter.” – Darden Student

"You have professors living in Charlottesville who are 100-percent focused on students and you get candid, engaged conversations in the classroom. All the classes are case-based and use real examples, and a lot of cases come directly from alumni." – Darden Student

Rubin is considered an expert in the areas of management and corporate communications, having consulted many communication specialists on these topics. He has supervised the production of many cases on corporate communication and has written articles on corporate brand and crisis communication.

Sankaran Venkataraman

The MasterCard Professor of Business Administration and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Research, students have voted Professor Venkataraman Darden's Most Popular Professor; he has also earned the Outstanding Faculty Award. Venkataraman is a member of the Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Ethics area at Darden and teaches the first-year MBA courses Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Ethics. He also leads the Strategy Seminar and teaches many modules of executive education offerings.

Venkataraman's endeavors outside of Darden include consulting for Fortune 500 firms as well as several small companies. He is past editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Business Venturing* and has served as an advisor to the Entrepreneurial Forum, a program of the International Trade Administration within the U.S. Department of Commerce, which promotes trade through entrepreneurship globally.

3 Special Programs

Study Abroad

Figure 3.1 International Exchange Partners

- Argentina: IAE, Universidad Austral
- Australia: Melbourne Business School, University of Melbourne
- China: China European International Business School (CEIBS); Guanghai School of Management, Peking University; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Business School (HKUST)
- France: HEC Paris
- India: Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad; Indian School of Business
- Italy: SDA Bocconi School of Management
- Japan: Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy; International University of Japan Graduate School of International Management
- Mexico: IPADE, Instituto Panamericano
- Netherlands: Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
- South Korea: Seoul National University
- Spain: IESE Business School
- Sweden: Stockholm School of Economics
- Switzerland: Universität St.Gallen

Darden offers quarter- and semester-long exchange programs with 17 business schools in 13 countries (see Figure 3.1). Each exchange is typically limited to between one and three second-year students per year, so while there are many opportunities for Darden students to study abroad, those who are targeting a single popular exchange may find enrollment to be competitive.

All students planning to study abroad must submit a short application that includes their top choices in exchange programs. Students are cautioned that some programs are only offered at certain times depending on the partner school's academic schedule for the year, and first-years are made aware of the programs on offer for the upcoming year, and any associated requirements, during Second-Year Pre-registration in mid-April.

Global Business Experience

For students who do not wish to spend an entire term abroad but who are still interested in learning about international business and culture, Darden offers the Global Business Experience program, or GBE. Through the program, which takes place during the midterm break in March of each year or in May, students have the opportunity to spend one to two weeks traveling to locations such as Argentina, China, Brazil, Israel, South Africa, France and Sweden. The goal is to learn about management practices and the business landscape in their host countries. While abroad, students meet with business and community leaders, take classes at local business schools and visit companies with offices in the region.

Students note that the GBE is one of the most popular programs on campus. Both first-years and second-years are eligible for the GBEs taking place in March, but those traveling in May are open to first-years only. Participating students earn 1.5 credits upon completion of the GBE program. Grades in the course are based on class participation and a final project, with each accounting for half of the final grade.

Global Field Experience

The Global Field Experiences (GFEs) are quarter- to semester-long electives that entail consulting projects with an international firm. Small teams of students work closely with a faculty member on the business challenge, then conduct onsite

work either at the beginning or the end of a course. Managed by the Darden Center for Global Initiatives, past GFEs have supported companies in Zambia, Tunisia, the Philippines, Nicaragua and more.

Darden Business Projects

During the second year of the MBA program, many students choose to enroll in an experiential project. Through the Consulting Darden Business Project, second-year students work in teams to solve a real-world business issue on behalf of a client organization. Students who opt to take the Darden Venturing Project can earn credit as they develop a proposal for a new business and a plan for funding and developing their planned venture.

Under the supervision of a faculty mentor, teams of one to six students dedicate 60 to 180 hours to their DBPs over the course of the year, though the particularly directed teams may complete their projects earlier. Regardless of the type of project selected, to meet the standards of the DBP program, students must complete a field investigation, identify the major issues, analyze data and present a viable solution.

The Batten Institute

Darden students interested in entrepreneurship and innovation are encouraged to make use of the resources offered by the school's Batten Institute. In addition to supporting research projects that focus on economic growth, emerging markets, sustainability and healthcare, the institute offers frequent opportunities for experiential learning and networking, along with financial support for student entrepreneurs.

To support ventures in an array of stages of development, the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership within the Batten Institute organizes various annual entrepreneurial competitions. For example, the university-wide UVA Entrepreneurship Cup gives cash prizes, ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, for best business concepts. The Business Plan 2.0 Competition, which is also university wide, asks teams to submit a video, a one-page executive summary, a 10- to 15-page Power Point presentation and an optional two-minute "elevator" pitch.

The Batten Institute also supported the construction of Darden's innovation lab, or i.Lab, which officially opened in March 2010 and was expanded significantly and renamed the W.L. Lyons Brown III Innovation Lab—still i.Lab for short—in April 2013. The i.Lab is an on-campus learning environment intended to encourage innovative and entrepreneurial thinking through experiential opportunities. Included in this space is a full-fledged design studio, equipped with work benches, tools and an array of building materials, so that students can actually design and create models and prototypes of their entrepreneurial ideas. The i.Lab also features an open collabo-



ration space in which students can share and evaluate their ideas and models.

A selection of Darden's electives are now taught in the i.Lab, including a course on product development in which student teams are asked to work with a client firm to come up with a new product idea. Taking advantage of this learning space, students are able to build a prototype, test it, receive feedback from peers and then modify the original prototype based on what they have learned through this process. In this way, the i.Lab is designed to foster collaboration and to encourage the act of learning and improving from peers.

On campus, the Batten Fellows program brings scholars, thought leaders and promising young professionals to Darden to collaborate on projects with members of the school's community. Past projects included stakeholder entrepreneurship with Rashed Chowdhury and software innovation with Alex Cowan.



4 Life at Darden

Campus Spaces

The University of Virginia was established by former U.S. President Thomas Jefferson, who regarded his contributions to education as a legacy even more significant than his time in the presidency. Its campus, traditionally known as the Grounds and designed by Jefferson himself, centers on a U-shaped collection of buildings known as the Academical Village. With its red Virginia brick, Chippendale balustrades and red-metal roofs, the Academical Village sets the architectural tone for the rest of the university's buildings, including those on the Darden Grounds.

Saunders Hall, the formal entry point to the Darden School of Business, contains a reception area, a three-story atrium in the foyer and several lounges throughout the building. The school's facilities include learning team study rooms, a cafe and bookstore, dining facilities for 400 students, a lecture hall that seats 500, multimedia-enabled classrooms and a 500-space parking garage. In addition, the university's Camp Library provides access to over 101,100 books and periodicals, as well as online access to thousands of business journals.

The three-story PepsiCo Forum within Saunders Hall serves as the gathering place for the Darden community throughout the week and plays host to the beloved First Coffees each weekday morning. Held after the first class period of each day, First Coffee provides the entire Darden community with a chance for informal socialization over coffee, tea and pastries. Current students mingle with administrators and faculty members, and prospective students and visitors are able to get a better feel for the overall Darden culture. It is not unheard of to see the occasional congressman or senator munching on a bagel while talking to a first-year student. First Coffees are also used as a time for school-wide announcements, special presentations and awards ceremonies. A tradition since Darden's founding, First Coffees hold a special place in the school's culture and are an important part of many Darden students' memories and experiences.

Life in Charlottesville

Darden and the University of Virginia School of Law occupy their own corner of the University of Virginia grounds, about one-half mile north of UVA's main undergraduate campus. The university's long, skinny campus runs north-south along



"I love Charlottesville. There are great restaurants, great concerts, great vineyards, lots of historical spots, and plenty of hiking/biking/outdoor activity areas around." – Darden Student

the western border of Charlottesville, Virginia, a town of roughly 44,000 permanent residents and 21,000 university students. The 2004 publication *Cities Ranked & Rated* named Charlottesville the best American city to live in based on such factors as climate, cost of living and overall quality of life.

Founded in 1762, Charlottesville was home to many figures in early American history, including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe, the third, fourth and fifth U.S. presidents, respectively. Jefferson founded the University of Virginia in 1819, establishing it as the first major secular institution of higher learning in the country. Instead of building his university around a central church, as most others were at the time, Jefferson chose to give center stage to the library, today known as the Rotunda, and built the Grounds, or campus, around it.

Today, Charlottesville is a young and vibrant town loved by natives and students alike. The Downtown Mall, a six- to seven-block section of Main Street, serves as the town's cultural center; it is closed to traffic and filled with shops and restaurants. In warm weather, this area is crowded with street performers and fortunetellers, and the many coffee shops and bars hum with business year-round. Bizou, a crowded diner described by one reviewer as "French Continental meets the American South," is best known for its gourmet meatloaf. Just a few blocks away is Bella's, a casual family-style Italian restaurant that serves up both traditional Roman cuisine and Italian-American favorites.

Though a relatively small town, Charlottesville offers a variety of nightlife opportunities. The intersection of University and Elliewood streets on the eastern border of the UVA campus, known as "the Corner," is a lively hotspot where bars cater to a fun-loving and largely undergraduate clientele. The Shebeen menu includes a diverse array of South African fare, and there is also a pub area in the restaurant for those who choose not to dine. Nearby restaurant Zocalo offers a variety of Spanish-influenced entrees and a wide selection of elegant but pricey wines and cocktails.

Like many college towns, Charlottesville has a robust music scene. Due to its large student population and many small clubs, it is a tour stop for many up-and-coming rock and hip-hop groups. Indie rock legends Pavement and the Silver Jews both got their start in Charlottesville—Pavement's frontman Stephen Malkmus is a UVA alum. On Fridays throughout the summer, the city hosts "Fridays After Five," a free event with music by local blues, folk and rock artists. Charlottesville also attracts more widely known acts to the recently completed John Paul Jones Arena. Built as a sports venue that seats over 16,000, the arena has played host to pop star Justin Timberlake and to Charlottesville natives The Dave Matthews Band, among many others.

Although no professional sports teams play in the area, the university's teams, particularly men's basketball and men's and women's lacrosse, are well loved by the local community.



"For the first six months, you live and breathe Darden. You're in class from 8 a.m. until 1:15 then you go to the library together, and a very close-knit community comes out of it—a pretty special experience."
— Darden Student

For residents interested in the outdoors, Charlottesville's location in the heart of Virginia provides numerous opportunities for hiking, climbing, rafting and other activities. Just an hour's drive from campus puts students deep into Shenandoah National Park and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Shenandoah contains countless hiking trails and camping spots, and a trip down the park's famous Skyline Drive provides fantastic views in all directions. A bit farther away, over the West Virginia border, New River Gorge is home to some of the best rock climbing and whitewater rafting in the world. For the less athletically inclined, the countryside surrounding Charlottesville is dotted with local wineries offering tastings and tours.

Clubs

Darden has an extensive list of extracurricular organizations that center on the common interests and characteristics of its students. Of the 50 clubs on campus, approximately two-fifths are dedicated to students' professional interests, while the other three-fifths revolve around extracurricular interests, affinity and identity, and community outreach (see Figure 4.1).

Career-focused clubs offer their members tools for preparing for post-Darden careers. Most career-related clubs host regular events such as speakers series, networking dinners, workshops and seminars to help students stay up to date with industry trends while connecting with alumni and leaders in the field.

For instance, the Darden Health Care Club plans an active calendar of events to support its student members. The club releases a healthcare career guide each fall that provides an overview of the industry and summarizes internships and full-time opportunities.

Other career-related clubs range from standard MBA student organizations, such as the Finance Club and Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Club, to unique options such as Community Consultants of Darden, an actual consulting firm started on campus in 1956. Providing marketing, operational and strategic planning services to Charlottesville-area nonprofits and small businesses, Community Consultants offers students a great way to gain hands-on consulting experience while contributing to the local community.

Darden's other clubs range from social and affinity groups, such as the Wine and Cuisine Club and the European Society at Darden, to organizations such as Building Goodness in April, which repairs and rehabilitates 12 to 14 homes in the Charlottesville area on a single day each April.

Conferences

Darden's location less than three hours from Washington,



Figure 4.1 Darden Student Clubs**Athletic Clubs**

Darden Golf Club
 Darden Rugby Club
 Darden Running Club
 Darden Soccer Club
 Darden Racquet Association
 UVA IM Sports

Affinity Clubs

Adam Smith Society
 Asian Business Club at Darden
 Black Business Student Forum
 Darden African Business Organization
 Darden Christian Fellowship
 Darden Jewish Student Association
 Darden Latter-Day Saint Student Association
 Darden Military Association
 Darden Partners Association
 Darden South Asia Society
 European Society
 Graduate Women in Business

Hispanic American Network at Darden
 International Business Society
 Latin American Student Association
 Middle Eastern and Islamic Student Association
 Pride at Darden

Professional Clubs

Business and Public Policy Club
 Business Design and Innovation Club
 Consulting Club
 Darden Capital Management
 Darden Emerging Markets Development Club
 Darden Impact Venture
 Darden Private Equity Club
 Darden Technology Club
 Education Club
 Energy Club
 Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Club

Finance Club
 General Management & Operations Club
 Health Care Club
 JD/MBA Society
 Marketing Club
 Media, Entertainment & Sports Club
 Real Estate Club
 Retail & Luxury Goods Club
 Toastmasters
 Turnaround and Restructuring Club

Community & Outreach Clubs

Building Goodness in April
 Cold Call Chronicle
 Community Consultants of Darden

Social & Common Interest Clubs

Cold Call Chorus
 Photography Club
 Wine and Cuisine Club

D.C., helps to support an active campus conference schedule, and many of the school's extracurricular organizations plan their own conferences for the benefit of the entire Darden community.

The 2015 Darden Black Business Student Forum's (BBSF) annual conference focused on the theme of "Emerging Domestic Markets: Finding Growth in the U.S." The keynote speaker at the conference was Maurice Jones, secretary of commerce and trade for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Six student clubs, along with Darden's Institute for Business in Society, sponsor the annual Business in Society Conference, which brings together students, community members and business leaders to discuss how business can provide lasting value in a complex global society. The March 2015 conference focused on public-private partnerships and attracted sponsorship from student organizations such as the Net Impact, Energy, Business & Public Policy, Healthcare, Education and Emerging Markets Development Clubs. The keynote speaker was Andrew O'Brien, U.S. special representative for global partnerships.

The Graduate Women in Business Club holds an annual dance and auction to benefit the Shelter for Help in Emergency in Charlottesville, called the SHE Gala. In 2015, the organization auctioned photographs submitted by students, faculty and staff to raise proceeds.

Finally, the entrepreneurship conference, known as the E-Conference, is organized by Darden's Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Club. The latest meet-up covered several topics related to the theme "Partnering for Start-Up Success."



Issues tackled including scaling, venture capital, partnerships, success and failure. Speakers included the likes of Seth McGuire '11, Senior Business Development Manager at Twitter.



5

Life After Darden

Career Development Center

The Career Development Center, or CDC, stands at the center of Darden's recruiting process. The center assigns career consultants to arriving first-year students based on their career goals, as well as a second-year student who serves as a career development coach with related industry experience gained in internships between their first and second years. These two counselors help first-years with résumé and cover-letter writing, networking, interviewing and other job search skills. In addition to this coaching, which occurs throughout the first year, entering students have access at a reduced cost to CareerLeader a self-assessment tool that helps them map career paths.

Finally, the CDC offers programs and workshops throughout the year on issues such as etiquette for corporate events, immigration and visa issues, MBA-level job functions, networking and off-campus job search strategies. While most of these sessions are optional, a handful of sessions are required of any student planning to participate in on-campus recruiting.

Recruiting/Interview Procedures

Darden maintains an active schedule of on-campus recruiting events, including more than 100 company briefings and internship and full-time interview programs later in the school year. Students manage their job search and keep in touch with on-campus recruiters through the CDC's intranet, which allows users to sign up for corporate presentations, submit applications and schedule interviews.

Companies that recruit at Darden tend to fill most of their interview slots with prescreened candidates whom they have selected on the strength of their résumés. However, like many other MBA programs, Darden requires all on-campus recruiters to reserve 25 percent of their interview slots for assignment through an online bidding system. Through this system, slots are assigned to those enthusiastic students who are willing to wager the highest numbers of bid points on a chance to interview with a company representative. Because students start the recruiting season with a limited number of bid points, they must think carefully about the companies on which they want to "spend" these points. The bidding process adds another wrinkle to an already complicated process, but most students, especially those seeking to make a big career change, appreciate the opportunity to make their case to companies that would not otherwise have chosen to interview



them.

Although on-campus recruiting is an important aspect of the internship and job searches, the CDC also seeks to provide students with the skills and resources to effectively look for jobs without the help of the CDC. To this end, several of the workshops offered each year focus on how to identify and target firms in an industry of interest, as well as making effective use of networking techniques.

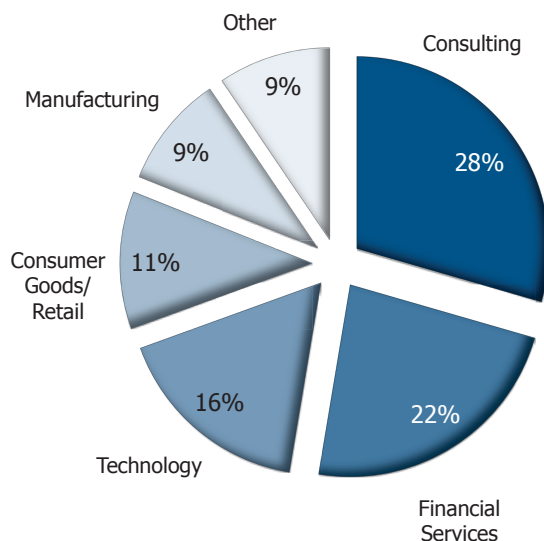
To facilitate networking between Darden students and graduates, as well as with other members of the University of Virginia community, all students are given access to the university-wide Career Assistance Network, a database of more than 25,000 University of Virginia alumni who are interested in helping other UVA graduates with their career searches.

Career Statistics

All MBA career offices work to build recruiting relationships with companies in many industries and geographic locations. However, if a school boasts a high number of students with an interest in a particular industry or location, that often suggests that the school is more likely to attract recruiters from those fields or regions, and that those companies are more likely to have a successful recruiting season and be interested in building partnerships with the school. Likewise, when a large number of companies from a particular industry or region regularly visit a school, it tends to attract a larger network of students interested in that field or location.

Because of this cycle of interest in on-campus recruiting, MBA candidates should research the industry and regional employment statistics of their target schools to get a sense of the relative recruiting opportunities available. Of course, with up to half of students at some schools finding their full-time positions through independent searches, it is important to remember that there are many opportunities available beyond on-campus recruiting.

Figure 5.1 Darden Industry Placement



Industry

Following the trend of many MBA programs, Darden graduates in the Class of 2014 gravitated toward the fields of financial services and consulting, drawing 22% and 28% respectively (see Figure 5.1).

Although students seeking positions in consulting and financial services are likely to have the most extensive on-campus recruiting programs, the strength of Darden's placement record across industries means that there are likely to be recruiting opportunities in all fields. The school sent 16% into technology, for instance, 9% pursued careers in manufacturing and consumer products drew 11% of the class. The school sends greater percentages of its class into manufacturing and consumer products than do most of its peers.



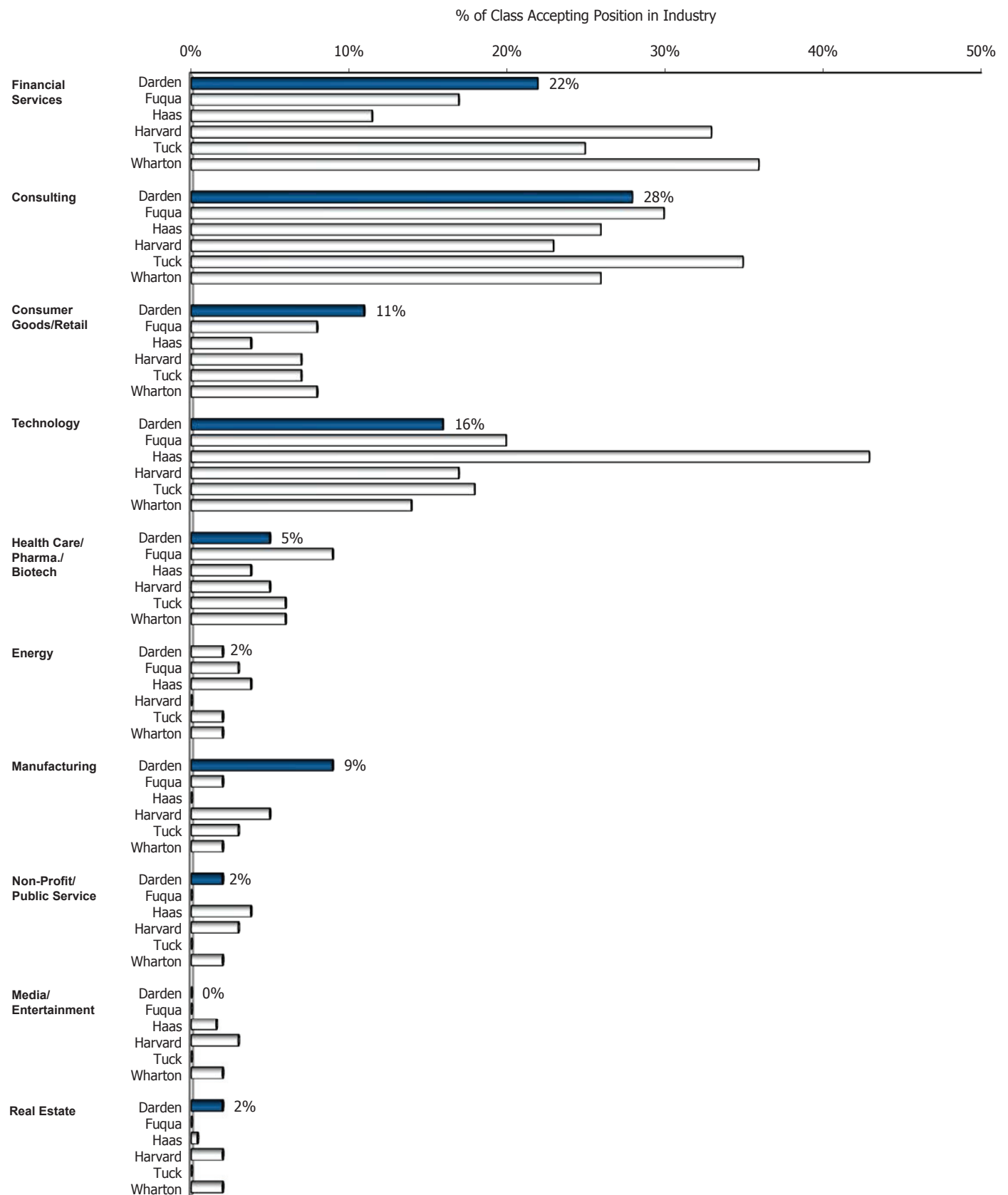
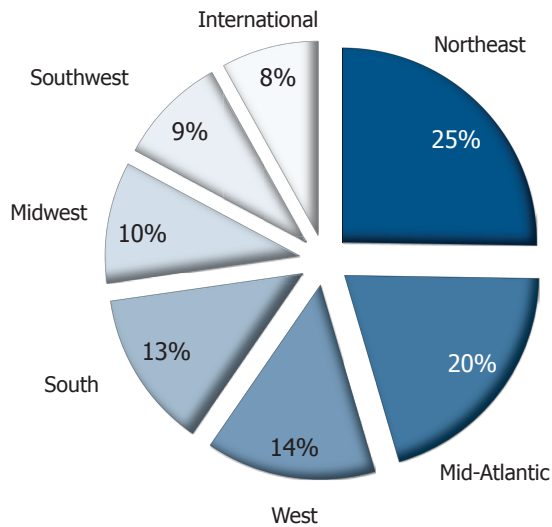
Figure 5.2 Job Placement by Industry

Figure 5.3 Darden Regional Placement

Geography

Located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., Darden is located roughly two and a half hours south of Washington, D.C., six to seven hours south of New York, and approximately nine hours north of Atlanta. Despite its relative proximity to centers of commerce in the Northeast, the school was founded to serve the needs of the Southern business community, and it still retains some of that historical orientation. Thirteen percent of the Class of 2014 accepted post-MBA positions in the Southern U.S.

Given the popularity of the financial services industry among graduates, though, the Northeast U.S. is still a strong draw for Darden students; in the Class of 2014, 25% of graduates took positions in the Northeast (see Figure 5.3). Darden's home region, the Mid-Atlantic, also proved to be a relatively popular choice, attracting 20% of the Class of 2014. This is by far the highest Mid-Atlantic placement rate among Darden's peers (see Figure 5.4). Given that technology has risen in popularity, it is not surprising that 14% opted for work in the West.

Alumni Network

Darden has a strong and loyal alumni network. The school's more than 15,000 living graduates stay connected to each other through 16 U.S. alumni clubs and 11 international chapters. Current students report that Darden's alumni are very responsive to inquiries from students through both formal and informal channels, and many of Darden's clubs bring alumni to campus for speaking or networking events.

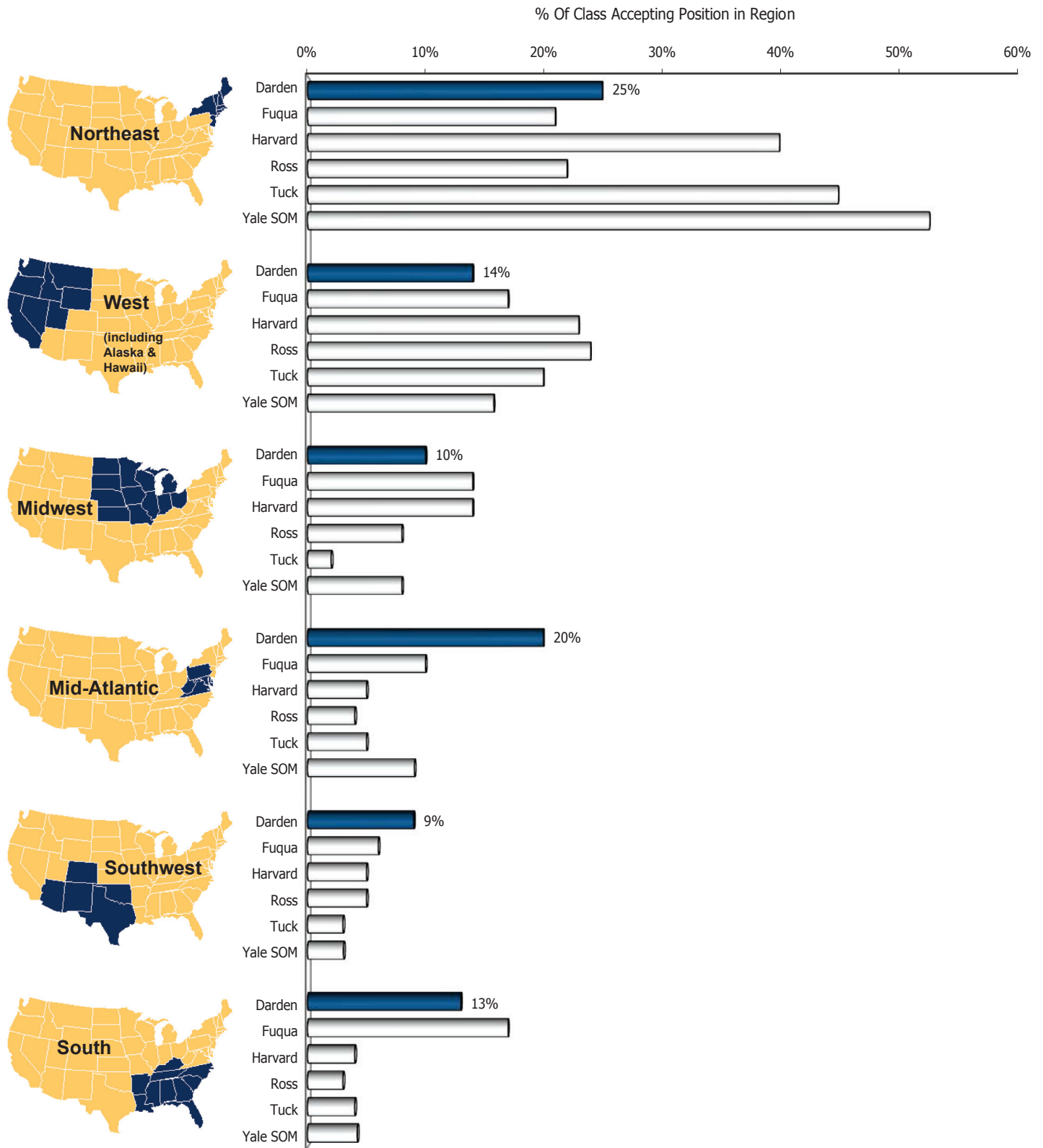
Alumni Career Services

Darden considers career development to be a lifelong process. In 1998, the school established the Armstrong Center for Alumni Career Services (ACS) to assist graduates with their continuing career choices. Data collected by the center for a recent study shows that approximately eight percent of all Darden alumni are actively engaged in a job search. The ACS's dedicated staff of alumni career counselors offers these graduates many of the same services available to current students.

Resources at the ACS include individual counseling on issues such as résumé-writing, changing careers, job search strategies and networking. Darden alumni also have access to a secure website through which they may use various self-assessment tools, retrieve job postings, and find information on improving their job search skills.

In addition, Darden alumni are eligible for discounts on the school's executive education courses, which the school hopes will encourage a lifelong pursuit of learning and development.

"I think that the alumni network is very important and very involved at Darden... Alumni, even at the highest levels of their organizations, are more than willing to help out students and share their perspectives. I called many alumni to network during FY recruiting and was always greeted warmly."
– Darden Student

Figure 5.4 Job Placement by U.S. Region

6 Admissions

Like its counterparts at most MBA programs, the Darden Admissions Committee is tasked with building a diverse class with reference to candidates' academic backgrounds, professional experiences, and personal qualities and characteristics. The committee highlights that candidates should be prepared to share their own perspectives in a school that values class participation. Darden says it "prepares responsible leaders who step forward to improve the world." There is no minimum number of years of work experience required, nor are students required to have studied particular fields in their undergraduate years.

Visiting Darden

"I only applied to Darden, and I have been absolutely in love with it. Everyone here is completely immersed." – Darden Student

Prospective students may visit the Darden Grounds throughout the year, with several Fridays in July set aside for wide-ranging afternoons on campus. It is also possible to attend classes and see the case-study curriculum in action during the school year, beginning in late August.

Candidates may schedule class visits through the Darden Admissions Office website, though the school does suggest applicants who have not yet received an offer to interview should strongly consider waiting to sit in on a class until an interview invitation is received. These appointments are available whenever classes are in session; applicants should use the office's online system to ensure that their intended visit date does not coincide with one of Darden's frequent exam periods. Due to limited capacity, partners may not sit in on classes alongside prospective students. Classes typically meet at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. or 11:45 a.m. and last approximately 85 minutes apiece.

After the class visit, candidates are welcome to meet the course instructor as well as stay for lunch and a tour at 1:15 p.m. with second-year student volunteers, and are also encouraged to attend First Coffee at 9:30 a.m. Although these events take place most weekdays, candidates should confirm availability prior to their visit by contacting the Darden Admissions Office. Darden also holds day-long open house events throughout the fall for prospective students. The schedule is posted in late summer.

In addition to attending events hosted by the Admissions Office, visitors are welcome to arrange informational appointments directly with members of Darden's administration, faculty and student organizations of interest.



Figure 6.1 Darden Essay Topic
2015-2016

Essay 1

Describe the most important professional feedback you have received and how you responded to it. (500 words)

For Clear Admit's strategic advice on how to approach Darden's essay, see the section, "Essay Topic Analysis," in the Appendix.

Application Requirements

All Darden applicants are required to complete an online application form that requests basic personal information and summaries of their educational and professional history. Along with this form, applicants must submit a one-page professional résumé, respond to a short essay prompt, and include two letters of recommendation (see Figure 6.1).

Darden also requires applicants to submit recent results on the GMAT or GRE. Self-reported GMAT and GRE scores are sufficient for an application to go under review, but an official score report is required for admission. Likewise, while the Admissions Office encourages applicants to submit a self-reported transcript to speed the evaluation process, admissions offers cannot be finalized until official transcripts are received from all undergraduate institutions and post-collegiate coursework.

Due to the importance of class participation to the Darden experience and to students' grades, most applicants who do not speak English as a native language are required to submit TOEFL results as part of their application package. Those who received a bachelor's degree from an institution where English is the primary language of instruction are not required to take the TOEFL. International students should also complete and submit the University of Virginia Request for Form I-20; although this form will not be reviewed until the school's offer of admissions is accepted, its presence in one's file will accelerate the visa application process after admission.

Finally, all applicants must submit an application fee, payable online via credit card or by mail via check, money order or cashier's check, and must complete a supplementary Residency/In-State Status form to enable the school to determine their tuition rates. Because UVA is partially supported by the state of Virginia, residents of the state pay lower tuition rates than do students from other states or countries.

Interviewing with Darden

Because of the value Darden places on interpersonal skills in the classroom and the community, interviews are a critical part of the school's application process. Along with most other leading MBA programs, Darden offers interviews on an invitation-only basis.

On-Grounds interviews are conducted both by full-time members of the Admissions Committee and by members of the Student Admissions Committee, a group of trained second-years who help to evaluate applications and serve as Student Ambassadors for applicants. All candidates residing within the U.S. at the time of application must interview at Darden, while international students may also travel to the school but are not expected to do so; these candidate may interview with Darden alumni or admissions committee who are traveling through the region or conducting the interview via Skype. Interviews are evaluative and completely blind, which means



that the interviewers have no prior knowledge of an applicant's file and do not require candidates to bring résumés with them to the interview. The interviews are typically conversational, since the quality of the candidate's interpersonal skills is as important as the content of his or her responses. Most interviews last from 30 to 45 minutes, including a period at the end for candidates to ask questions about the Darden School.

Since an interview is required of all matriculating students, those applicants who do not hear from the Admissions Committee regarding an interview should not expect an offer of admission. That said, interview invitations have at times been sent out as late as the day of the official notification date.

Deadlines

Like most other leading MBA programs, Darden reviews applications in three rounds (see Figure 6.2). Deadlines for the 2015-2016 admissions season are scheduled for early October, January and April.

Candidates should also keep in mind that Darden expects all applications for a given round to be complete by the 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time deadline for that round. Any supplemental information, including test scores, recommendations and interviews, must therefore be received by this time. Applications that remain incomplete will be reassigned to the next round. Applicants can monitor their status via the Darden Admissions Online web application; once a final decision is posted, they will receive an email instructing them to check their status online.

The Consortium

Darden is one of 18 members of the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management, an organization promoting diversity and inclusion in American business. The Consortium's mission is to address the underrepresentation of African-Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans in business education and management positions. To do this, the Consortium actively recruits U.S. citizens and permanent residents from these underrepresented groups, as well as any applicant who can demonstrate a commitment to furthering the Consortium's mission. Through the Consortium application, candidates may apply to up to six of the member business schools using just

Figure 6.2 Darden Deadlines 2015-2016

	Application Deadline	Interviews Begin	Notification Date
Round 1	October 8, 2015	Mid-November	December 16, 2015
Round 2	January 8, 2016	February	March 23, 2016
Round 3	April 8, 2016	Late April	May 11, 2016

Note: All applications are due by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline.



Figure 6.3 Joint Degree Programs at Darden

- Business: MBA/Ph.D. in Management at the Darden School of Business
- East Asian Studies: MBA/M.A. in East Asian Studies with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Education: MBA/M.Ed. with the Curry School of Education
- Engineering: MBA/ME with the School of Engineering and Applied Science
- Government or Foreign Affairs: MBA/M.A. in Government or Foreign Affairs with Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Law: J.D./MBA with the School of Law
- Medicine: M.D./MBA with the School of Medicine
- Nursing: MBA/MSN with the School of Nursing
- Public Health: MBA/MPH with the Department of Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine
- Public Policy: MBA/MPP with the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

one application form. Candidates admitted to one or more of these schools are considered for a full-tuition Consortium Fellowship and have access to the Consortium's dedicated career development services.

Joint Degree Programs

Darden offers nine joint degree programs through partnerships with other University of Virginia graduate schools (see Figure 6.3). In addition to these, Darden itself offers a joint MBA/Ph.D. in Management that enables interested candidates to complete the full MBA core curriculum and then move straight into doctoral research. Through these programs, students who hope to embark on an interdisciplinary career are able to complete two degrees in tandem in less time than it would take to earn them sequentially.

To be considered for admission to any joint degree program, students must first be admitted separately to both Darden and its partner school through each school's regular admissions process. Following admission, the student must then submit a third application to the joint degree program, which will be evaluated by a committee of to the Darden School of Business.

7 Financing the Darden MBA

Tuition & Expenses

Because the University of Virginia is part of the Virginia state system of higher education, Virginia residents are entitled to a tuition discount at the Darden School of Business. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the estimated annual tuition and fees for a first-year in-state resident total \$58,150, while residents of other states in the U.S. can expect to pay \$61,150, and international students pay \$61,250.

Estimated living expenses, including a first-year computer allowance, bring the total estimated yearly budget to \$84,437 for Virginians, \$87,437 for other U.S. residents, and \$88,367 for international students (see Figure 7.1). The Financial Aid Office states that students should expect a five percentage point increase in tuition and a three percentage point increase in the cost of living each year. In calculating their estimated expenses, international students with families are instructed to allot an extra \$7,000 for their spouse and \$4,000 for each dependent.

Financial Aid

The Darden Financial Aid Office aims to ensure that each qualified student has access to the financial resources needed to attend the school. Though the school recognizes that financing may present a substantial obstacle, it seeks to ensure that students can focus on their studies and Darden experiences, not financing, over their two years of study. Darden therefore makes a commitment to supporting students through scholarship and loan assistance (see Figure 7.2).

Darden makes roughly 150 scholarships offers each year, both for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, and for internation-

Figure 7.1 Estimated Costs 2015-2016

Expense Item	VA Resident	Non-Resident	International
Tuition and fees	\$58,150	\$61,150	\$61,250
UVA health insurance	\$2,613	\$2,613	\$2,613
Living expenses	\$16,690	\$16,690	\$16,690
Materials charge (Cases)	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Books	\$2,314	\$2,314	\$2,314
Computer (first year only)	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Transportation	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$4,000
Federal loan fees	\$2,170	\$2,170	----
Total	\$84,437	\$87,437	\$86,501



Figure 7.2 Available Loans**U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents**

- Federal Direct Loans
- Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loans
- Private loans

International Citizens

- Private loans (available to all students; no co-signer necessary although private loans with U.S. citizen or permanent resident as co-signer may be an alternative)

al students. Awards range from several thousand dollars to the full cost of tuition plus a stipend. Among the most prestigious are the Batten Scholarships, which cover the full cost of tuition for students devoted to a career in entrepreneurship, technology, innovation or the media, and the Darden Jefferson Fellowships, which also afford students full tuition reimbursement and a stipend as well as a one-on-one research opportunity with a member of the faculty. All first-year scholarships are carried over to the second year, contingent upon students maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or above.

To be considered for a scholarship or other financial aid, applicants must first be admitted to the Darden School of Business. Following admission, applicants who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents should plan to complete and submit the FAFSA to qualify for federal loans, as well as file the University of Virginia Financial Aid Application. International citizens may take advantage of the Discover Custom Graduate Loan process or private loans in order to gain additional sources of funding.

8

Appendix

Essay Topic Analysis

As seen in Chapter 6: Admissions Darden has kept last year's structure of one 500-word essay, although with the online application not posted for the year at the time of publication, it remains to be seen whether applicants will again need to tackle two shorter essays in their data forms. The Clear Admit team has combined its years of business school expertise to analyze Darden's essay topic and help applicants determine how to craft effective responses.

This is the third consecutive year that the Darden essay section has comprised a single 500-word essay asking applicants to recount the specifics of a past experience. Meanwhile, the nature of that situation is a new one for this admissions cycle; where last year's applicants were asked to describe their most courageous professional decision, this year's applicant class is asked to identify the most important feedback they've received on the job. This new prompt reflects a closer focus on the applicant's ongoing development in the workplace and ability to learn and grow as a professional (as opposed to brave transitions between roles or firms).

Let's take a closer look at the Darden 2015-2016 essay topic:

Essay 1

Describe the most important professional feedback you have received and how you responded to it. (500 words)

This response is designed to assess an applicant's maturity, receptiveness to guidance, and commitment to ongoing development and improvement. We all have blind spots and areas for growth, and the Darden adcom is signaling an interest in admitting students who welcome feedback and work hard to implement it in order to better serve the client, customer, company, and other stakeholders.

The topic of this essay is limited to the professional realm, so applicants will need to describe feedback they have received in a workplace context. You might start by reflecting on the feedback you've received during your career to date and noting the criticisms that were most surprising or hardest to hear. You might also consider the feedback that has made the biggest difference in how you operate in the workplace. Each of these considerations will point you to "important" pieces of feedback.

Once you've done some brainstorming, we recommend that if possible, applicants select a substantive piece of feedback that required some reflection or effort on their part — and which



ultimately made a difference in the impact they were able to have on a person, project, or organization. To put it another way, while supervisors' suggestions about being less of a perfectionist or managing one's time more effectively are important to one's own self-preservation, applicants are likely to get a bit more mileage out of feedback that allowed them to make a difference beyond their own work/life balance. Examples of this might include feedback about adopting a more assertive communication style during meetings to better advocate for one's team, being more attuned to a new employee's learning curve when delegating work, or learning to anticipate and proactively address a client's needs rather than reactively responding to their requests.

There are two additional factors to consider when writing about feedback. First, applicants should work to frame this feedback in a way that focuses on skills rather than personality traits. The reason for this is that personality traits are generally regarded as stable qualities that are resistant to change, whereas skills are more malleable and can more easily be learned. For example, instead of the feedback to "be more patient with my direct reports" (personality trait: impatience), consider "budget more time to provide feedback to my direct reports" (skills: time management, training, professional development). Second, it's beneficial to have a bit of distance from the event that prompted the criticism. This allows you to suggest that you have really mastered the skill in question and successfully applied it to more recent projects or interactions. It would therefore be ideal to select a piece of feedback that you received at least one year ago.

Effective responses will open by providing some context for the rest of the essay, explaining the setting and situation, the people involved, and the events that led to the feedback being given. Applicants should then describe the feedback they received and spend at least half of the essay discussing their response and the ultimate result. Note that your response includes your internal reaction — how it felt to receive the feedback, whether it prompted reflection — as well as your observable behavioral response. To show that you were able to learn and grow from the constructive criticism in question, it will be important to detail the steps you took to implement the feedback in your work. And, as we hinted above, it would be ideal to close the essay with a more recent example that demonstrates that you were able to maintain this behavior change over time and find success as a result of internalizing this important piece of feedback.

Admissions Director Q&A

We recently caught up with Sara Neher, director of MBA admissions at Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia (UVA), who had just returned from a family trip to celebrate her dad's 70th birthday in the mountains of Colorado. Trading one beautiful environment for another, she's back now in Charlottesville and ready to dive into the MBA admis-



sions cycle just as it begins to heat up.

Neher, who celebrates her ninth anniversary as director of admissions this month, says she initially turned down an invitation to work at Darden. After five years in sales at Proctor & Gamble—including completing an MBA at Emory’s Goizueta School of Business while working—she returned to her home state and undergraduate alma mater to work for the Jefferson Scholars Foundation, which offers merit-based scholarship aid to exceptional undergraduates, graduate students and professors to come study and teach at UVA. During that time, the foundation launched a scholarship program with Darden for MBA students. “I met the dean—everyone was speaking my MBA language—and they said they had a vacancy at Darden in admissions,” she recalls. To which she replied, “No, I love my job.”

A few months later, Neher found she’d had a change of heart. As director of the Jefferson Scholars undergrad scholarship program, she had worked with several classes of really accomplished, driven young students. “Typically, I was the only woman with an MBA they had ever met,” she says. “They weren’t seeing the MBA as a path—especially the women—and I thought, ‘Maybe this is my chance to do something about that.’” Fortunately for her—and for Darden—they hadn’t yet filled the position.

She concedes that change has come slower than she might have liked in terms of increasing female enrollment. “It has taken me a long time to get more women in the program, but that—and increasing diversity in general—is something I think a lot about,” she says. “And I am glad to say that it has changed a great deal since I got here.”

In the interview that follows, Neher talks about the arrival this week of Darden’s new dean, what she’ll miss most about departing Dean Bob Bruner and the (surprising to some) diversity of the school’s alumni network. She also describes—in detail—just how the application process unfolds and how best to approach the school’s essay. Don’t miss out.

Clear Admit: *What’s the single most exciting development, change or event happening at Darden this the coming year?*

Sara Neher: That’s easy. The new dean, Scott Beardsley. His first official day was Monday, but I had been emailing with him a lot before that. I foresee his arrival as bringing a lot of good change. We all have a lot of excitement around the network that he brings to us and his ideas and strategic vision.

Scott is very different from outgoing Dean Bruner. For starters, he has a huge European network. One of the first things we are doing is going to Europe with him. Of course, he also has the McKinsey network and all the companies he has worked with through McKinsey.

He is very passionate about getting the right people in the rooms, and I am excited about what he is going to bring to all sides, although what he’ll bring to recruiting here at Darden is



most immediately evident.

As for what I'll miss the most about Dean Bruner, I think his compassion is probably the closest word I can think of. Having been at Darden for as long as he had, he had such an understanding for all the staff and faculty and really tried to help them do anything they wanted to do. His approach was always, "Let's get in the trenches and figure out how to do this the best way possible."

He just had such compassion and understanding for others. The students could tell he cared about them. We had lunch with him—just the Admissions Office—to say goodbye. He traveled with us, he really got to know us. So the farewell lunch gave us an opportunity to tell him what we appreciated about him, and he in turn gave us some tips about how he thinks we should onboard Scott.



9 Further Resources

Publications

Darden Business Publishing, the principal publications outlet at the Darden School, offers an extensive collection of business cases, books and videos for use in business school classrooms.

The Darden Report is the school's alumni magazine. It is published in print and distributed to all alumni, faculty and students twice each year, but is also available online through the Office of Communication and Marketing website. Darden also publishes a weekly business podcast titled *The Darden BusinessCast* that is available through the school's main site.

Darden Research Centers & Institutes

- *Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability*: Offers data and networking resources to foster research into sustainable business, especially in conjunction within a consortium of 14 universities.
- *Batten Institute*: Focuses on how entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial organizations create, lead and transform global enterprises, and oversees the Darden Business Incubator, which provides opportunities for students to develop their business plans.
- *Behavioral Research at Darden Lab*: Promotes interdisciplinary research into the field of behavioral studies, including decision-making, marketing, organizational behavior and more.
- *Business Roundtable Institute for Corporate Ethics*: An association of chief executive officers dedicated to enhancing ethical behavior among business leaders in day-to-day business decision-making.
- *Darden Center for Global Initiatives*: Fosters partnerships with international corporations and educational institutions.
- *Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education*: Merges best practices from business and education to provide innovative solutions to senior leadership of school organizations and their business and community partners.
- *Institute for Business in Society*: Advances leadership de-



velopment in order to make an impact at the intersection of business and society.

- *MavoCenter for Asset Management*: Offers comprehensive research and support regarding all asset classes within the field of asset management.
- *Olsson Center for Applied Ethics*: Researches applications of ethics in business and sponsors the Ruffin Lecture Series.
- *Society for Effectual Action*: Explores areas within effectuation and how topics in entrepreneurship are taught worldwide.

Contact Information

Office of Admissions

Assistant Dean of MBA Admissions: Sara Neher
darden@virginia.edu
(434) 924-7281

Dean's Office

Dean: Scott C. Beardsley
Dean@darden.virginia.edu
(434) 924-7481

Alumni Relations

Vice President: Michael Woodfolk
dardenalum@darden.virginia.edu
(434) 243-8977

Career Development Center

Assistant Dean for Career Development: Jack Oakes
careerdevelopment@darden.virginia.edu
(434) 924-7283

Financial Aid Office

Director: Susan Loduha
loduhas@darden.virginia.edu
Assistant Director: Haike Giragosian
Assistant to the Director: Heather Williamson
financialaid@darden.virginia.edu
(434) 924-7739

Mailing Address

Darden Graduate School of Business
University of Virginia
100 Darden Boulevard
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 924-7281
darden@virginia.edu

Social Media

Facebook: facebook.com/DardenMBA



Twitter: twitter.com/dardenmba

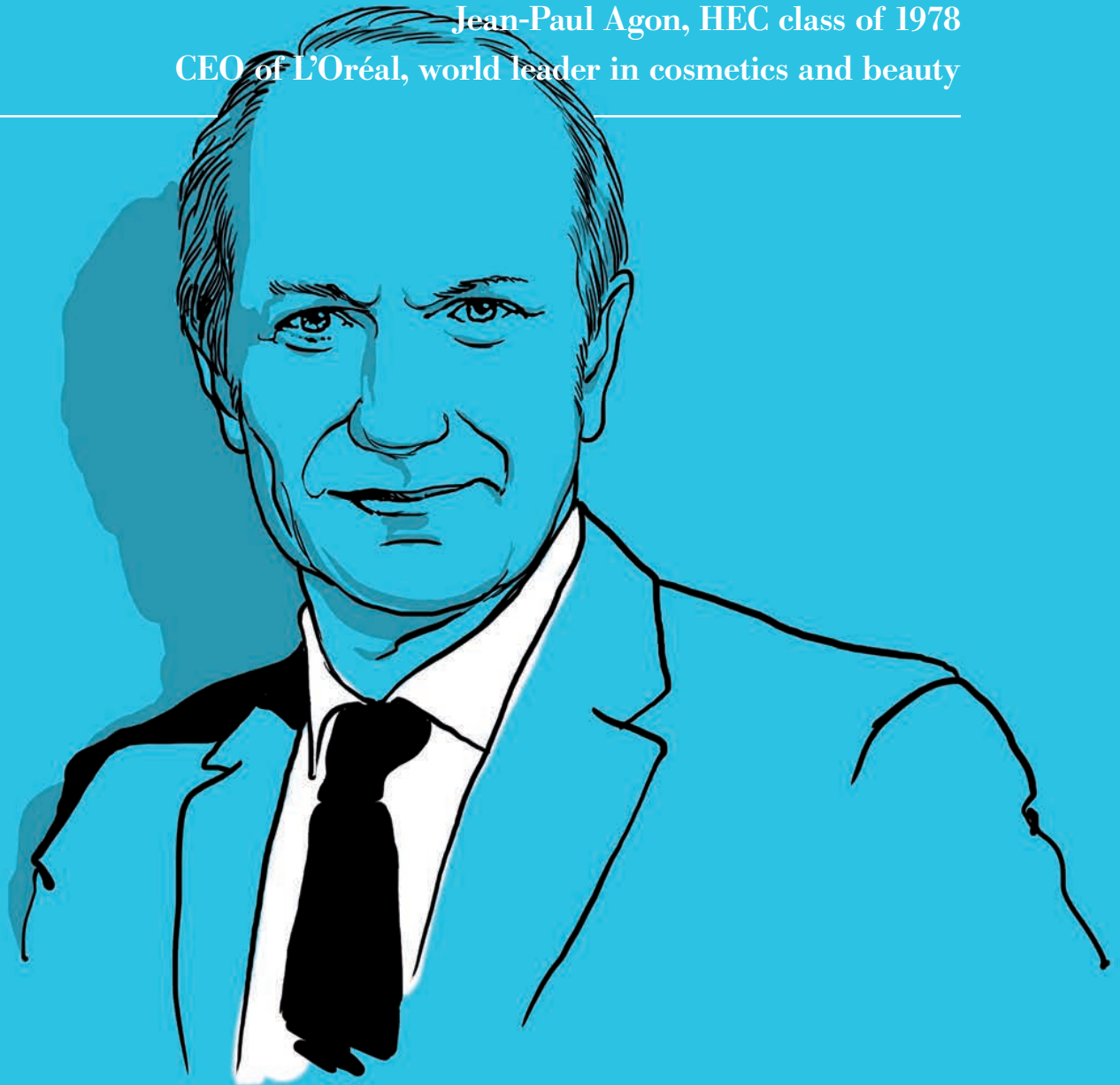
LinkedIn

YouTube: youtube.com/user/DardenMBA



*“THE RESPECT OF DIVERSITY IS
THE ONLY WAY TO STAY RELEVANT IN
OUR GLOBALIZING WORLD.”*

Jean-Paul Agon, HEC class of 1978
CEO of L'Oréal, world leader in cosmetics and beauty



By gathering more than 95 nationalities on campus, HEC Paris MBA teaches current and future leaders to embrace diversity and to connect with the entire world.

TOMORROW IS OUR BUSINESS

Focus on your MBA. We'll focus on the finance

Prodigy Finance has been revolutionizing student finance since 2007.

Our innovative model allows us to offer loans to international postgraduate students at leading universities and business schools.

- 150 Nationalities are eligible*
- No co-signer or guarantor required
- Loan amounts are based on your future affordability
- Competitive interest rates
- Conditional approval, with interest rate, in 5 business days

to date over

\$139M
DISBURSED

funding over

2900
STUDENTS

from

112
COUNTRIES

*Exclusions are 1) Domestic borrowers (except UK) 2) Select countries (see Prodigy Finance website)



*"I could not be at London Business School without the support of Prodigy.
It gives me an opportunity I would not have had."*

– Jonathan, Australian, London Business School MBA 2015

prodigyfinance.com

Prodigy Finance Ltd is incorporated in the United Kingdom (Company Number 05912562) and registered with the Office of the Information Commissioner (Reg. No. Z9851854). Prodigy Finance Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, and entered on the Financial Services Register under firm registration number 612713. Prodigy's registered address is Palladium House 1-4 Argyll Street, London, W1F 7LD

