

MIT Professional Education

Academic year 2014 marked the twelfth year of operation for the office of [MIT Professional Education](#) (MIT PE), which was established in 2002 under the School of Engineering as the umbrella organization for all Institute-wide, non-degree/non-credit professional education programs aimed at science and technology professionals. All MIT PE programs (Short Programs, Advanced Study Program, International Programs, Custom Programs, and the new Online X Programs) deliver practical learning benefits to industry professionals from around the world, furthering MIT's core educational mission and enhancing the Institute's leadership and influence globally. Teaching in MIT PE programs also allows the faculty to enhance its connections with the global practitioner community.

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

MIT Professional Education continues to expand student enrollments in all its programs, with particular emphasis on increasing international participation in order to further the influence and relationship of MIT with professionals and companies around the world. MIT PE also seeks to expand the roster of MIT faculty teaching professional courses. To address the needs of industry professionals outside the United States who cannot easily come to campus, MIT PE plans to deliver a select portfolio of short courses in Asia, Latin America, and Europe. And with the first online professional course launched successfully on the edX platform in March 2014, MIT PE considers it a high priority to introduce additional revenue-generating online programs to further widen its global reach. Principles that guide MIT PE activities overall include the following:

- Use the best MIT expertise to meet the learning needs of industry professionals globally
- Extend knowledge from MIT research and discoveries to industry professionals, particularly knowledge related to Institute-wide initiatives such as innovation, transportation, manufacturing, and energy
- Maintain a relatively small and nimble, net revenue-generating, customer needs-oriented organization

Accomplishments and Program Developments

During AY2014, MIT PE launched the unit's first online course for professionals globally, expanded enrollments, added new courses and faculty, expanded international student participation, and pursued new custom program opportunities.

Online X Programs

MIT PE introduced its first online course on the MIT/Harvard-developed edX platform, Tackling the Challenges of Big Data, under the banner of its new [Online X Programs](#). This course was taught by 12 prominent researchers/faculty members from the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, including the lab's director, professor Daniela Rus, who codirected the course with professor Sam Madden. The four-week class attracted an impressive enrollment of 3,474 participants from 88 countries.

Short Programs

In the summer of 2013, [Short Programs](#) marked 64 years of operation and delivered 41 one- to five-day courses taught by MIT faculty and invited lecturers. Almost 1,000 students from over 55 countries attended these courses on campus. Sixteen new faculty members from the Schools of Engineering, Architecture and Urban Planning, and Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences joined the Short Programs faculty roster. Among new courses offered were Mastering Innovation and Design Thinking, Autonomous Robots, Social Data and Networks, Game Development, and Leadership for Early Career Engineers.

International Engagement

Since the acting director for international programs was assigned to carry out the ambitious launch of the unit's first online course, only one short course could be delivered outside the United States in AY2014. Professor Sanjay Sarma (Mechanical Engineering and director of Digital Learning) delivered a well-received course titled Radical Innovation to senior managers of Accenture in Bangalore, India. Separately, opportunities to introduce courses in Brazil and China were discussed with representatives of the government and/or universities of the two countries while MIT PE participated as the "education partner" of the Industrial Liaison Program (ILP) at conferences held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Beijing, China.

A course titled Innovation and Design Thinking was held at MIT for 30 mid-level professionals from South Africa, working in the transportation and logistics industries. These individuals from "previously disadvantaged communities" were sponsored by an agency of the South African government. The highly successful course included hands-on workshops and visits to area companies such as General Electric.

Advanced Study Program

In its 50th year, the [Advanced Study Program](#) continued to integrate into its ranks high-performing students with baccalaureate degrees and select MIT employees seeking advanced knowledge in subjects pertinent to their careers and/or planned careers, while also expanding the number of traditional enrollees coming to the program from industry. The total number of enrollees in the Advanced Study Program for AY2014 was 134, an increase of more than 50% from enrollment levels prior to AY2013.

Custom Programs

MIT PE completed its eighth year of engagement in information technology curriculum review and examinations development for the Accenture Technology Academy, previously called the Accenture Solutions Delivery Academy. In addition, MIT PE executed a significant contract with the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) division of Accenture to deliver live webinars from MIT faculty on topics including analytics, innovation, and enterprise architecture that will enable BPO employees and clients to deliver better business results. For details visit <http://web.mit.edu/professional/custom-programs/index.html>.

Funding

The program continues to be fully self-supporting and revenue contributing. No external funding was needed or received this year.

Future Plans

Plans for AY2014 include the following:

- Expand online offerings of professional courses and investigate implementation of blended learning models (i.e., online instruction combined with on-site classroom learning)
- Expand international program offerings, particularly in Brazil, India, China, and South Africa markets
- Integrate professional education programs into products and services offered by ILP to their corporate clients
- Work with MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives and other MIT programs with international corporate partners, enabling them to discuss professional education programs as a value-added proposition with their industry partners

Personnel

Nadia Ustariz was promoted from financial administrator to manager of finance and operations. Kandis Schuler assumed full-time responsibilities as a financial assistant, while Bev Foxx, long-time executive assistant to the executive director, retired. Luke McNeill and Sarah Foote both continued to work in Short Programs as program associates.

Bhaskar Pant
Executive Director