



## From the Dean's Desk

### *The Making of a New MBA Program (plus Real Estate and Accounting)*

The importance of education is a recurring theme in the parshiot that we are currently reading. Rashi and Medrash Raba highlight Avraham Avinu's recurring efforts to educate not only Yitzchak Avinu but also Yishmael (e.g., Bereishit 18:7) and Lot (Bereishit 19:1). Hashem Himself, when giving the one reason we find in the Torah for why He chose Avraham, says it's because Avraham passes down his values and education to his children (Bereishit 18:19).

At YU, we have steadily been putting in place piece after piece to enable our next generations to **gain the best education while being grounded in our values**. In past newsletters, I have highlighted how we have steadily strengthened key parts of our undergraduate education across the Torah U'Mada landscape. (For instance, [Jewish Values curriculum](#), [Real Estate minor](#), [portfolio of Entrepreneurship offerings](#), [Summer internship programs](#), and our Honors Program. Please see the State of Sy Syms [in animated version](#) and [in data](#).)

One other major effort over the last two years has been **to redesign and relaunch three major graduate programs**. Building on a solid foundation (e.g., Sy Syms is one of only 5% of business schools that have received AACSB accreditation), the MBA, Mitzner M.S. in Real Estate, and M.S. in Accounting have been rethought and redeveloped from the ground up for the post-COVID era, while **giving unprecedented control to students** about where they can do the programs, how quickly, and with what content. These three major programs are companion programs to the M.S. in Taxation that is continuing to meet in person in New York City.

Read on to see how we designed the all-new MBA program, Mitzner MSRE, and M.S. Accounting program and debuted the new programs this semester, followed by the implications for YU undergraduate students from Sy Syms, Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noam".

Dr. Noam Wasserman  
Dean

## *The Making of a New MBA Program*

In the Fall of 2019, we convened [EMBA Program Director Mark Finkel](#) and our senior faculty to assess the future of our EMBA program. We identified six major constraints on growing the program's impact and enrollment:

- **Geographic Constraints:** Students had to be located in the New York City area to attend the in-person program.
- **Timing Flexibility:** All students spent 21 months in the program, regardless of how quickly or slowly they wanted to do it. They also had to be in class on Sundays and some weeknights, which sometimes posed work conflicts for them.
- **Leading-edge Skills:** We wanted to strengthen the coverage of market-demanded skills like data analytics, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
- **Infuse Ethics, Integrity and Values:** Existing MBA programs have trouble infusing ethics across their existing courses and instead have to settle for having a single ethics course, which compartmentalizes their ethics training and fails to build it into the decision making students learn in other courses.
- **Siloed Programs:** Across academia, graduate students usually only take courses with others from their own program, even though in the workplace they will be interacting with people from a lot of other functions.
- **“EMBA”:** Executive MBA (EMBA) programs are usually for professionals who have worked for a decade or more. We wanted to clearly focus the program on people who were earlier in their careers (e.g., 2-5 years of work experience), which would be better captured by using “MBA.”



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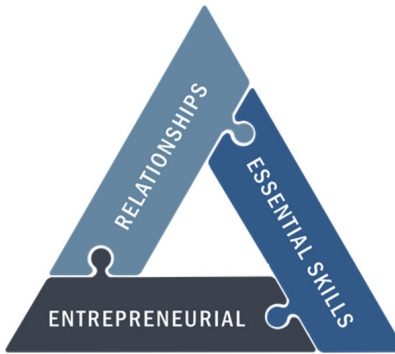
Our redesign tackled all of these constraints.

- **Coursework on Your Own Time:** We worked with an outside firm whose expertise is sophisticated online course development, especially the type of asynchronous teaching that enables students to do coursework and assignments when it's most convenient within each week. That would be interspersed with exercises and role plays in which groups of 2-4 students would coordinate their schedules but not be beholden to the schedule of everyone in their cohort.
- **Multiple Starting Times:** Students can begin the program in August, January, or May, whichever timing is best for them.
- **Speed Up or Slow Down:** Students who want to complete a full-time MBA can do it in a year and a quarter. Students who want a part-time pace can spread out their courses over 2-3 years. Students can even speed up or slow down in the middle of the program. Just got promoted and want to scale back to one course this term? Go right ahead! Want to accelerate your degree? Go right ahead!

- **Leading-edge Skills:** The program includes market-primed skills in a wide variety of areas, electives in hot skills like data analytics and entrepreneurship, the capability for Sy Syms to add or enhance leading-edge courses, and potential future concentrations to gain depth in a hot area.
- **Ethics and Values as a Backbone:** Rather than having a compartmentalized 14-session ethics course, as is standard across MBA programs, we identified the half-dozen courses that can most benefit from ethics material and built those sessions into each course. We tapped dean emeritus [Dr. Moses Pava](#), a world expert on business ethics, to develop and teach all of those sessions.
- **Cross-program Courses:** Students from across the programs take courses together, such as the new required course entitled “Leading with Emotional and Moral Intelligences” and the electives “Data Analytics” and “Founder’s Dilemmas.”

### *“Real and Relevant”*

The arrival of COVID soon after we started redesigning the program poured fuel on the fire to focus on online education, helped our faculty build their online-teaching skills, and has informed new material that we have built into the program (something else that’s hard for existing MBA programs to do as quickly). As a driving theme for the program and to capture the emphasis on real-world, practical skills, the faculty chose “Real and Relevant.”



Core Pillars of the MBA Program

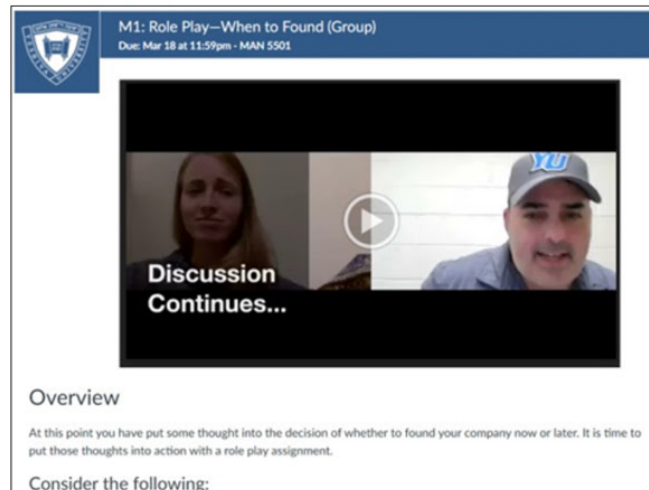
To pilot the new approach and inform future course development, we developed two initial courses, one in each of the two initial areas of market-ready skills:

- **Data Analysis and Visualization**, developed and taught by Associate Dean Dr. Avi Giloni.
- **Founder’s Dilemmas**, the first online version of my long-time [Harvard Business School course](#).

We taught those courses in the Spring, and then used those experiences to develop the teaching standards for the subsequent courses developed for the program.

**Showing the power of this new approach**, the Spring version of Founder’s Dilemmas also included two MBA students from Hebrew University who were able to participate fully despite the seven-hour time difference. This was part of a new course-exchange agreement we created with Hebrew University that will hopefully continue to grow, bringing students (electronically) in both directions on YU’s Israel Superhighway.

Our pilot cohort for the MBA program started in August and is **off and running! We already have students enrolling in the next cohort, which will start in January**, followed by the May cohort.



Role play from the new Founder's Dilemmas course  
(left) student from Hebrew University; (right) student from Yeshiva University

Joining the Party: Mitzner M.S. in Real Estate, M.S. in Accounting

With the groundbreaking redesign of the MBA program, we then explored whether to do likewise for other graduate programs.

A few weeks later, under the leadership of the academic director of the **Mitzner M.S. in Real Estate**, [Dr. Andreas Christopoulos](#), and the program director of the **M.S. in Accounting**, [Dr. Henry Huang](#), those two programs joined the MBA program in the shift to the new model and our faculty began developing the courses for those programs.

Those programs also debuted in August and will have cohorts starting in January and May.

### *Undergraduate Pathways*

Concurrent with these efforts, we have also been working to pave a path for **undergraduate YU students, including those in Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women, who want to start taking graduate courses while seniors** and then continue into one of these graduate programs.

As of last year, undergraduate Accounting students can take up to four graduate courses and then continue into the master's Accounting or Taxation programs. We are actively expanding those pathways to encompass more undergrad majors and the rest of the graduate programs.

With programs and pathways like these, and with our continuing-education efforts, we are making Yeshiva University into a place where students can become "**YU Lifelong Learners**," continuing to benefit from the University for decades!