



Forté Foundation reports all-time high for women's enrollment in MBA programs on 20th anniversary

Despite declines in MBA applications overall, the proportion of women's enrollment increased in 2022 and 17 schools reached at least 45% women enrolled

(Austin, TX, November 11, 2022) – Twenty years after Forté Foundation was founded to increase opportunities for women in business leadership, the nonprofit reported a record 17 member schools reached at least 45% women enrolled in full-time MBA programs, up from 10 schools in 2021, two in 2017 and zero in 2012.

While [MBA applications declined 3.4% overall in 2022](#), after rising in the first two years of the pandemic, the percentage of women enrolled among Forté member business schools continued to rise. Women's enrollment inched up to 41.4% in 2022 from 41.2% in 2021. Last year Forté saw a record 2% jump from 39% in 2020 after women's enrollment stalled near the start of the pandemic. In a little more than a decade, women's full-time MBA enrollment at Forté schools climbed nearly 10%, from 31.8% in 2011.

[Forté was founded in 2002](#) in response to [groundbreaking research](#) illuminating the differences in female enrollment among various professional education programs. A notable finding suggested that while law schools and medical schools enrolled nearly equal numbers of men and women, MBA programs averaged less than 28% women.

The 17 schools that reached above 45% women's enrollment in full-time MBA programs in 2022 are:

- George Washington University (School of Business) - 59%*
- John Hopkins University (Carey School of Business) - 52%
- University of Pennsylvania (The Wharton School) - 50%
- Southern Methodist University (Cox School of Business) – 48%
- Duke University (The Fuqua School of Business) – 48%
- Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Management) – 48%
- Oxford University (Saïd Business School) – 48%
- Washington University in St. Louis (Olin School of Business) – 47%
- University of Cambridge (Judge Business School) – 47%
- University of California – Berkeley (Haas School of Business) – 46%
- Harvard Business School – 46%
- University of Southern California (Marshall School of Business) – 46%
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT Sloan School of Management) – 46%
- New York University (Stern School of Business) – 45%
- Alliance Manchester School of Business – 45%
- Dartmouth College (Tuck School of Business) – 45%
- Columbia University (Columbia Business School) 45%

“It's exciting and gratifying to see the impact of our efforts over the last two decades to close the gender parity gap in MBA programs” said Elissa Sangster, Forté's CEO, who has led the organization to grow from 12 business schools and eight corporate partners in its early years to 56 top MBA programs in the

U.S., Canada and Europe. In addition, Forté has expanded to 33 Executive and Professional MBA programs, 63 undergrad schools and 67 corporate partners. Forté has also become a powerhouse generator of innovative programming from the undergraduate level through MBA programs and from early career to the C-suite. Forté reached close to 200,000 women in 2022, up from 87,000 in 2016. “More women today understand the opportunities an MBA offers and our work has helped build the pipeline of young women interested in business careers and advancing to leadership,” Sangster said. “But we can’t rest on our laurels. Every percentage gain in women’s enrollment is hard won, much like the struggle to increase women in the C-suite and on boards. Forté will continue to support women in business for as long as it takes to achieve parity in the workplace, in corner offices and in corporate boardrooms.”

Understanding that an MBA degree is often the steppingstone to business leadership, influence and power, a group of business schools and forward-thinking companies launched Forté to address those barriers that women face in pursuing an MBA and building successful careers in business. Forté’s initiatives over 20 years have helped close the gender gap in business and include the following:

- Forté Fellows scholarship program has been key to increasing the number of women MBAs. Between 2003 and fall 2022, Forté partner schools awarded approximately \$400 million in scholarships.
- Forté MBA Women’s Leadership Conference, attended by women MBAs and top companies annually, took place in June 2022 in-person and October virtually with over 1,000 participants.
- Forté Undergraduate Campus to Business Leadership Conference, College Fast Track to Finance Conference, the Undergraduate Leadership Summit and Candid Conversations for Women of Color provided opportunities for thousands of college women to build leadership skills, explore career paths, and network with top Forté partner companies and business schools.
- In 2022, Forté introduced three new initiatives for MBA students and post-MBA women, including:
 - MBA Takeoff - A hybrid learning experience that combines FranklinCovey’s award-winning leadership content, and Forté’s MBA and gender expertise, to prepare women mentally, socially, and emotionally for their first year as an MBA student.
 - Career Strategist - A 12-week development program, for women in their early career.
 - Rise – A new three-month professional development pilot program that provides peer support, expert advice, coaching and accountability to help women five to 10 years post MBA reach their business career apex.
- In 2022, Forté also updated its Allyship portfolio to include free toolkits for starting allyship groups on MBA Campuses and in the workplace. (Visit these links to request [corporate](#) and [MBA](#) toolkits.)
- MBALaunch, an eight-month road map for applying to business school that provides guidance, resources and ongoing feedback on the business school application process, including weekly webinars, monthly peer group sessions and feedback from experienced advisors.
- For the first time in 2021, Forté launched Diversity Day, a symposium for interested MBA candidates who identify as African American, Black, Hispanic, Latinx, and/or Native American women.
- In 2023, to celebrate the 20th anniversary in-person, Forté will host regional events in select U.S. cities for the Forté community and plans large social campaigns to support its fundraising efforts.

ABOUT FORTÉ

Forté is a non-profit organization with a goal of achieving gender parity at all levels of business. Forté works closely with business schools, corporations, and universities to ensure women have access to opportunities at every stage in their career. They offer a wide variety of resources, including MBA prep,

professional development, leadership education, and a diverse community of successful women. For more information, visit fortefoundation.org.

**On November 18, 2022, The GW School of Business provided updated figures correcting previous data which included information for both a part-time MBA program as well as their full-time Global MBA program. The initial data listed their program at 47 percent women. The correct data for the Global MBA class individually is 59 percent women.*

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