



Forté Foundation Reports Women's MBA Enrollment Hits Historic 42% in 2023

Five MBA programs achieve gender parity; non-U.S. schools align with U.S. programs for the first time

(Austin, TX, November 2, 2023) – Forté Foundation, a nonprofit founded to increase opportunities for women in business leadership through access to business education and professional development, reported a record 42% women enrolled in full-time MBA programs at their 58 member schools, the top-rated MBA programs in the U.S., Europe, and Canada.

Key highlights of Forté's 2023 report include:

- *Women's enrollment in full-time MBA programs in fall 2023 rose to a record 42%, up from 41% in 2022, 38% in 2018 and 34% in 2013.*
- *For the first time in Forté's history, five business schools reached gender parity with three schools close behind. In 2022, three schools achieved gender parity, and only one in 2018.*
- *Thirty-four out of 58 Forté [member business schools](#) reported 40% or more women enrolled, up from 27 in 2022 and 19 in 2018.*
- *Fifteen schools enrolled 45% or more women, down from 17 in 2022. However, five schools came close at 44%, a substantial jump from only four schools with 45% or more women enrolled in 2018.*
- *Business schools based outside the U.S. saw an increase of over three percentage points in women's enrollment in full-time MBA programs, aligning them with U.S. schools for the first time since Forté started reporting in 2011. Non-U.S. schools had nearly 42% women enrolled in 2023, up from almost 39% in 2022.*

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

"Given economic and other headwinds, including diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges, we are thrilled to see women's MBA enrollment continue its slow but steady climb this year," 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 66 corporate partners and 58 top MBA programs in the U.S., Canada, UK, and Europe.

"Our efforts over the past two decades, along with our member schools and companies, have significantly impacted the increase in women interested in business careers and advancing to leadership," Sangster said. "Every year we see about a percentage point gain in women's enrollment and trust me it's not easy to achieve. Getting to gender parity in MBA programs is an uphill climb but it's critical to drive change and help more women lead in the C-suite, on boards, and as business owners."

The five schools that achieved gender parity in 2023 include:

- George Washington University (School of Business) – 65%
- Oxford University (Saïd Business School) – 51%
- Johns Hopkins University (Carey Business School) – 51%
- University of Pennsylvania (The Wharton School) – 50%
- Penn State University (Smeal College of Business) – 50%

Three additional business schools are close behind:

- University of Rochester (Simon Business School) – 49%
- University of Toronto (Rotman School of Management) – 49%
- Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Management) – 48%

The following additional seven schools achieved 45% or above women’s enrollment in full-time MBA programs:

- University of Washington (Foster School of Business) – 47%
- Stanford Graduate School of Business – 46%
- Queen's University (Smith School of Business) – 46%
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT Sloan School of Management) – 46%
- Duke University (The Fuqua School of Business) – 45%
- Harvard Business School – 45%
- Alliance Manchester School of Business – 45%

Five additional schools reached 44% women’s enrollment in full-time MBA programs:

- Arizona State University (W. P. Carey School of Business)
- Columbia Business School
- Dartmouth (Tuck School of Business)
- ESADE
- Michigan State University (Broad College of Business)

An MBA degree is often the stepping stone to increased earning potential, business leadership, and influence. In fact, Forté’s research also reveals that 45% of women CEOs of the S&P 500 hold an MBA or equivalent advanced degree in business. With this understanding, a group of business schools and forward-thinking companies launched Forté in 2002 to address the barriers women face in pursuing an MBA and building successful business careers. Some of the initiatives Forté leads to help close the gender gap in business include:

- [Forté Fellows Scholarship](#) - This program is key to increasing the number of women MBAs. Between 2003 and the fall of 2023, Forté partner schools awarded approximately \$400 million in scholarships.
- [Forté MBA Women’s Leadership Conferences](#) - Attended by women MBAs and leading companies annually, the in-person conference took place in June 2023, and a virtual offering wrapped in October 2023, with about 1,000 participants.
- **Forté Undergraduate Campus to Business Leadership Conference, College Fast Track to Finance Conference, Women of Color Leadership Symposium, and Undergraduate Leadership Summit** - These [events](#) provide opportunities for thousands of college women to build leadership skills, explore career paths, and network with leading Forté partner companies and business schools.
- [MBALaunch](#) - An eight-month road map for applying to business school including weekly webinars, monthly peer group sessions, and feedback from experienced advisors.
- **Forté Professional Development Programs** - These initiatives provide support and guidance for women as they navigate business school and the workplace:
 - [Rise](#) - This three-month program provides expert advice, leadership coaching, peer support, and accountability to help women advance into executive-level roles.
 - [MBA Next](#) - Designed with recent MBA graduates in mind, this program helps facilitate the next stage of their careers while connecting them to a supportive network of peers.
- [Diversity Day](#) - Launched in 2021, Forté hosts a symposium for interested MBA candidates who identify as African American, Black, Hispanic, Latinx, and/or Native American women.
- In 2023, Forté hosted in-person regional events in select U.S. cities to celebrate its 20th anniversary and to provide the Forté community with opportunities to support fundraising efforts.

ABOUT FORTÉ

Forté is a nonprofit organization with the 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 careers. Forté offers 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.

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