

The George Washington University School of Business

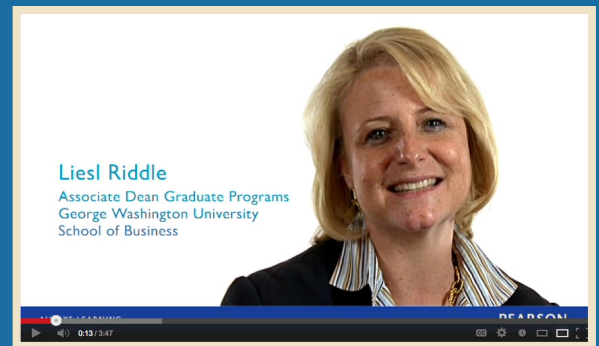
How One Institution Partnered with Pearson to Create a Customized Digital Community Solution and Reinvigorate their Graduate Program

About The George Washington University School of Business

The George Washington University School of Business (GWSB) is an international leader in education and research. The GWSB trains future leaders to be global problem solvers and socially-responsible managers. The school has more than 3,000 students in 19 degree programs. With its prime location — in the heart of Washington D.C. — the GWSB attracts visiting scholars and business leaders to engage with students on campus. The depth and variety of its academic and professional programs, including five specialized master's degrees, provide rich opportunities for academic engagement and career development for students in the school's core Bachelor of Business Administration, Master of Business Administration and doctoral programs. To expand its global reach, the GWSB established a campus in Suzhou, China in 2012.

Challenges

Like many universities and schools of business, the GWSB was facing challenges including a shrinking Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) market as well as increased competition both globally and locally for M.B.A. and specialized master's programs. The GWSB was also facing lower student engagement, a lack of local, current events in the classroom, and a lack of faculty collaboration in course development. The GWSB's part-time students were struggling to feel connected to the academic learning community outside the classroom. They were pressed for time with work and family commitments.



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“We sought to build a program that would develop and enhance student competencies in online business communication and other global and virtual team skills.”

— **Liesl Riddle, Ph.D.** Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs
at The George Washington University School of Business

The GWSB wanted to improve student satisfaction by offering more convenient, engaging programs that helped develop their students' abilities to succeed in a global marketplace. Structurally, the GWSB needed to stretch 120 full-time faculty members across 19 graduate degree programs. Only a small cluster of faculty had online teaching expertise. Faculty members across the programs wanted to present learning in more readily digestible and engaging ways. They were unsure where to begin.

Solution

In partnership with Pearson, the GWSB created a Digital Community concept to leverage university strengths and address challenges across three aspects of the graduate program ecosystem: admissions, programs, and career placement.

The GWSB Digital Community consists of three degree programs: Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.); Master of Science in Information Systems Technology (M.S.I.S.T.); and Master of Science in Project Management (M.S.P.M.). Students can participate online, face-to-face, or in hybrid learning environments. Students are admitted using the same admissions process as the school's traditional programs. They take courses from the same faculty and earn the same degrees.

To help take the Digital Community from vision to reality, Pearson matched appropriate instructional designers with GWSB's faculty members to help transform their successful

onground teaching strategies into meaningful and collaborative online learning experiences. Both Curriculum and lead Educational Consultants provided initial framework to the model, as well as the expertise needed to make the technical and learning components of the Digital Community meaningful and flow seamlessly for an unencumbered and engaging student experience. The instructional designers worked with faculty members to ensure instructionally-sound alignment of course objectives and outcomes with filmed sessions. The teams collaborated on assessments, projects, and discussion questions. They also identified appropriate integration of rich, engaging media, including Pearson digital assets, and integrated synchronous sessions into the courses to complement the creative videos and enhance this engaging and unique learning experience.



“Pearson is helping us really truly take advantage of what the Internet has to offer, and that is custom-tailored education.”

— **Liesl Riddle, Ph.D.** *Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs at The George Washington University School of Business*

How the Digital Community Works

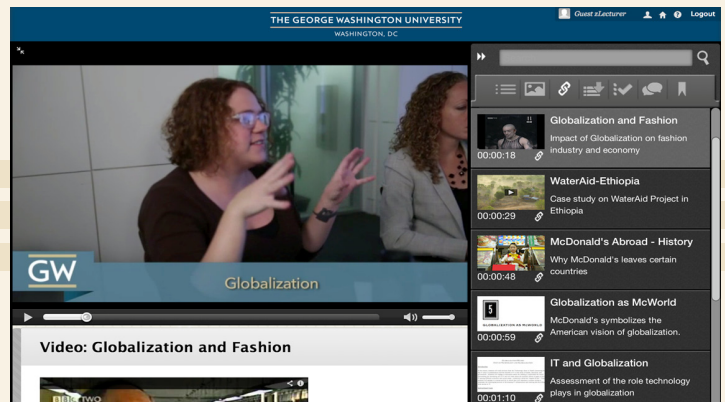
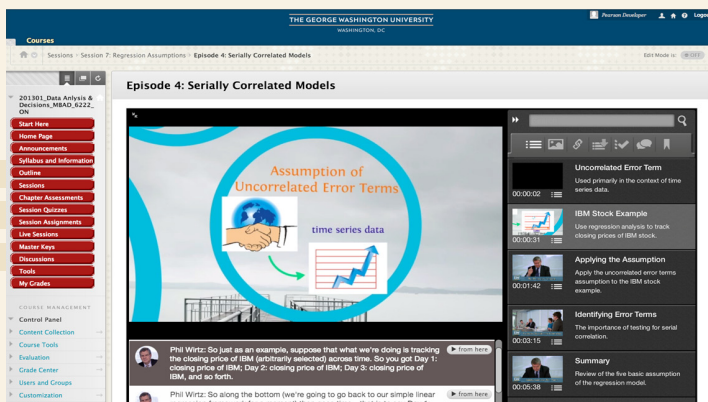
The GWSB's Digital Community programs have a unique look and feel to them, in large part because of the partnership with Pearson. Each Digital Community course is offered in Blackboard. A custom, multimedia player (embedded into the learning management system) synchronizes short, episodic videos with transcripts, PowerPoint presentations, multimedia supportive content, and assignments organized into weekly sessions. The videos place distance students into small group discussions with faculty members. Below are some distinctive features of the Digital Community courses.

1 Courses are $\frac{3}{4}$ asynchronous and $\frac{1}{4}$ synchronous, feature alumni spotlight videos, and many involve assignments that enhance and develop online business communication and other virtual team skills.

3 The videos are synchronized with multimedia assets (newspaper articles, other videos, e-book exercises, e-book readings, e-book cases, etc.) that allow the student to go deeper into what's being discussed in the course video.

2 Each course is organized into weekly sessions; each session is organized by episodic videos.

4 Courses include episodic video transcripts of the conversation, as well as PowerPoint presentations that correspond with each aspect of the narrative.



“Our partnership with Pearson has fundamentally changed how we develop courses. Our faculty members, who used to develop a program by themselves, now can sit with a team of experts to help really bring their dream vision to life for their particular course.”

— Liesl Riddle, Ph.D. Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs at The George Washington University School of Business

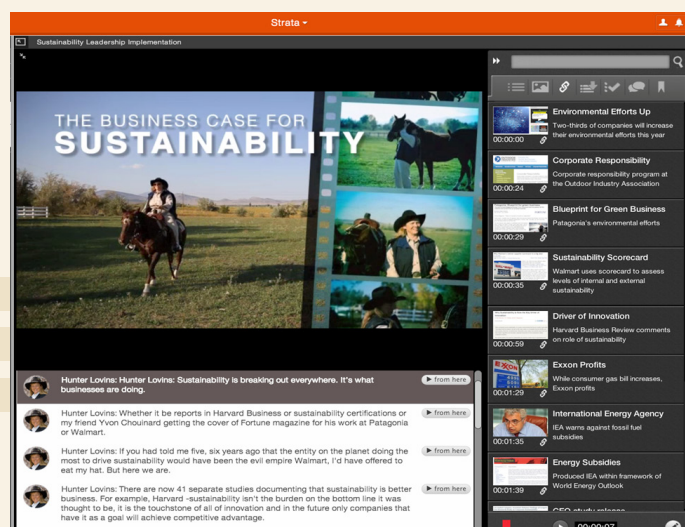
Plans for the Future

Going forward, the GWSB faculty members are thinking deeply about how to create greater customization in these courses at the discussion level and at the individual student level.

“Our new interface allows students to really get an integrated learning experience right there in the learning moment, not artificially.”

— Liesl Riddle, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs at The George Washington University School of Business



Pearson's Custom Curriculum team develops quality, instructionally-sound curriculum, content and educational solutions for the on-ground, blended, and online learning environments. They work with career schools, higher education institutions, professional organizations, governments, and K-12 schools.

Custom Curriculum specializes in the following services:

- Online and on-ground course development
- Scalable bandwidth to help schools expand production
- Standardization of course components
- Adherence with state, federal, or accreditation standards
- Enhancing instructor's educational content
- Assessment strategy or creation

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