

Dear Friends,

MBA@Rice has launched. We're thrilled to have week one in the books.

The hybrid delivery of our MBA degree has been a longtime goal of the university and is a novel complement to our campus programs. Most significant, perhaps, is the fact that we are reaching working professionals who would not be able to earn their Rice MBA without this option.

Thanks to Barbara Ostdiek and Fabiola Currarino for their stewardship and guidance, and to so many of our faculty, Rice Business staff, and staff across the university, for bringing the first online degree at Rice to life. Thanks also to our partners at 2U for working side by side with us, sharing their knowledge and expertise.

In late June, we held the first live session of the program. The students in our inaugural cohort joined us from all over the U.S. to meet each other, learn about forming successful teams, and complete their first assignment as Rice MBA students. The screenshot below captures the session, led by Prof. Brent Smith and Brooke Sabo.



This first cohort has 26 students with 81% from Texas, a 65/35% male/female split, and an average work experience of seven years. These students are just the right mix to strengthen and deepen our programs.

Victoria Hopkins, for example, is currently living in Houston but will be moving to South Korea in a few months to work on a military base as a physician. She received her B.A. and M.D. from Brown University and master's degree in Public Health concentrating in international rural medicine from Harvard. She tells us she values the reputation of Rice Business and appreciates the innovation the MBA@Rice program brings to the table.

Heather Price's path was not a traditional one. She started in a community college before attending a four-year university, and during her final year, also worked full time at her current company. Since then, she has climbed the ranks and is one of only a few women in leadership in her workplace. Heather was drawn to Rice because of our passion for diversity. She knows being LGBT is accepted and championed here.

Adam Forness is a design engineer with Subsea Drilling Services, and his boss is enrolled in the campus program. With a growing family and long work hours, he wants to be home for his kids as much as possible. MBA@Rice was the perfect match and his top choice.

We're excited to welcome these three leaders and their classmates to Rice Business.

For those of you curious about what goes on in an asynchronous session, I've included two clips. The first one is of [Professor Brian Rountree](#) introducing his accounting course. This is the first video students watch as they begin the course. The second clip is [Professor Balaji Koka](#) presenting a blind cola taste test as part of his core strategy class. These examples show just two of the many approaches our faculty are taking as they design their hybrid courses. Below is a glimpse of what it looks like behind the scenes: Prof. Connie Porter filming her welcome to the students in front of the green screen.

It feels great to have this first week completed and this is just the beginning! Over the coming months we will continue to shape the program and the experience. I look forward to seeing what the future brings for this program and our MBA@Rice students.

I hope you enjoyed the latest issue of [Rice Business Wisdom](#) magazine with Utpal Dholakia's take on the [price of Hamilton tickets](#), Hajo Adam's recipe for the right amount of [anger in negotiations](#), and other [faculty research](#).

