

GIBS launches new online Business and Management Development Programme

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University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) has announced the launch of a new digital programme that will combine many of the benefits of the methodologies of on-campus executive education with the power and flexibility of online learning.

The Business and Management Development Online programme aims to provide managers with the relevant skills to perform their management responsibilities more effectively in a changing and dynamic business environment. The programme which covers seven modules will run over eleven weeks and includes various topics within the business environment.

"As a leading business school, GIBS has a responsibility to find the relevant methodology to equip each leader with the right skills while continuously upholding the very best standards in terms of quality of education and relevance of approach," explains Nishan Pillay, executive director of Open Programmes at GIBS.

"Teaching the skills of tomorrow requires a future-focused approach that is not aimed at simply replicating old content on a new platform, but rather merging the best of both worlds and offering teaching techniques that will bring distinctive, purpose-driven and quality learning experiences to the delegate," he adds.

In a world where automation is threatening some traditional jobs, continual learning is key and requires that digital learning adapts to mirror the new world – looking at merging the human element with technological, digital and cross-border systems, which will help to develop the full suite of skills needed to thrive in any career today. Learning cannot be approached in the same way as it was in the past. A multi-layered and guided collaborative learning approach is needed to make learning effective, adaptive and accessible, while still maintaining a highly individualised approach.

"The skills which are going to define the next era include human skills, unique and complex problem-solving, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, creativity and entrepreneurial ability; and, for organisations, the ability to adapt, be digitally aware and culturally sensitive," he explains.

This brings to light the question of whether these skills can be taught in an isolated online environment that has defined traditional e-learning programmes? The answer is a clear "no", as developing human skills certainly requires human interaction. To optimally absorb knowledge and ideas delegates need interaction, and this helps them to master new skills via collaboration and debate. This peer-to-peer learning must occur constructively in a safe space.

That is why GIBS believes that they have created an online programme that doesn't simply move executive education online but rather takes into account the complex layers of what it means to be human in the learning process.

What is critically important in this approach is that discussions are led by world-class faculty that are subject matter experts and are able to guide the conversation and debate through a variety of interactive media channels, including live webinar sessions, podcasts, virtual discussion boards, interactive question and answer sessions, and online facilitator support. "It is here, in this environment of exchange and engagement, where the very essence of humanity will come to the forefront and leadership will thrive," concludes Pillay.

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