Tips for Requesting Corporate Sponsorship

One of the ways that students fund their degree program is through employer sponsorship. While your company may not advertise that this funding is available, they may have funds available to you if you put in a request.

Beyond funding, employers can also support your degree progress by adding flexibility to your schedule and providing new challenges and opportunities to take advantage of your growing skill set. Having a scheduled conversation to discuss your professional development goals is a great idea to help foster support, in whatever form it may take.

This tip sheet offers you some information to help you request employer support for the Master of Information and Data Science.

How to shape your sponsorship request.

- **Schedule an appointment:**
  Plan a meeting with your supervisor or human resources representative. In this preliminary meeting, you should be prepared to discuss the program and identify reasons why you want to earn this degree.

- **Do your research:**
  See if your company has an educational benefits program or has sponsored individuals in the past. Familiarize yourself with these efforts before meeting with your supervisor.

- **Frame your argument:**
  Consider why you want to pursue your master’s degree and make a list of the reasons earning your degree will make you more valuable to your organization. Be sure your objectives and reasoning are clear and that you are prepared to discuss your plans.

- **Demonstrate your value:**
  Think about key issues your department/company is currently facing and align your skill development in the program with these key issues.

- **Drive action:**
  Let your employer know that they can speak with a datascience@berkeley Admissions Counselor if they have questions about the program or about the application process.

Program Overview

Since your company may not be familiar with the program, here is some basic information to include in your sponsorship request.

- **Master of Information and Data Science (MIDS) at the UC Berkeley School of Information.**
- **The program is preparing data science leaders who want to solve real-world problems using the latest tools and methods for identifying patterns and gaining insights from data.**
- **As a student in the program, you will delve into the data lifecycle, learning to apply disciplined, creative methods to define a research question; gather, store, retrieve, and analyze data; interpret results; and to convey findings effectively.**
- **The program is delivered online, allowing you to continue working while pursuing your degree.**
- **The program features a project-based approach to learning and encourages pragmatic application, which means you will have the opportunity to apply what you’re learning immediately to your work.**
Learning Objectives

Your employer will want to know why this program is a good investment. This information explains what you’ll learn as a student and, ultimately, what you will bring to your company.

Imagine new and valuable uses for our large datasets.

- Retrieve, organize, combine, clean, and store data from multiple sources.
- Apply appropriate data mining, statistical analysis, and machine learning techniques to detect patterns and make predictions.
- Design visualizations and effectively communicate findings to key decision-makers within the organization.
- Understand the ethical and legal requirements of data privacy and security relevant to our industry and business operations.
- Gain experience in successfully managing globally distributed project teams.

Learning Application

Part of the value of completing the MIDS degree program while continuing your career is that you will able to apply learning directly to your work, which is a benefit to you and your employer. This powerful benefit allows you to:

- Develop a perspective that is embedded right from the start on what your company can do with data science.
- Increase the speed and efficiency of what products and outcomes of data science get used at your company.
- Generate the right questions to get answers you can use.
- Bridge the divide between qualitative and quantitative data, and apply this learning to create holistic strategy.
- Understand how to make data science work for strategic decision making.

Recent Press

The program has been featured in several recent articles that speak to the need for experts in organizing, analyzing, and communicating data.

InformationWeek

“UC Berkeley Data Science Master’s Program 100% Online”

Forbes

“How Big Data Could Determine Whether Your Business Succeeds Or Fails”

Xconomy

“UC Berkeley Pioneers an Online Master’s Degree in Data Science”

CIO

“Who’s Training the Next Generation of Data Scientists?”