



**THE PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S CURRICULUM: ADDRESSING THE CHANGING
NEEDS OF STUDENTS
AND INDUSTRY**

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Often rising costs of higher education and declining enrollment go hand-in-hand. However, recent growth in Master's programs appears to evidence the desire on the part of students to gain competitive advantage in the job market and an attempt on the part of universities to address the changing career needs of students.

Over the last several years, one Mid-western institution has found that many "merchandising" students now report that they would be very interested in job opportunities in the areas of marketing, sourcing, or product development. Additionally, many have considered acquiring an M.B.A. due to the more applied nature of the degree or an additional undergraduate degree to enhance their competitiveness in the job market. These findings, coupled with the rising costs of education and the tightening of departmental budget resources designated for graduate assistants, have provided the impetus for the development of a new 5th Master's curriculum in apparel and textile business.

This presentation will (1) provide a brief overview of the significant Master's level educational experiences desired by industry, (2) examine the development of a marketable 5th year Master's, and (3) assess the pros and cons of such programs for the students, faculty, departments, and industry.