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University of Miami Welcomes First Master in Health Administration Class

With a world-class faculty, flexible curriculum and real-world learning and consulting opportunities, the University of Miami School of Business Administration's new specialized Master in Health Administration (MHA) program is already drawing rave reviews from students.

"I'm learning so much about healthcare administration in our first classes," said Benjamin Saltzman, a financial analyst for UHealth – University of Miami Health System. "I couldn't have asked for a better program."

Saltzman is one of the 22 graduate students in the school's new MHA program, which is offered in addition to UM's longstanding Executive MBA in Health Sector Management and Policy program at the UM School of Business.

✖ Karoline Mortensen, associate professor of health sector management and policy, says the school's new graduate-level health administration program is based on an MBA curriculum with health care-specific classes and electives. Classes are held days, evenings and Saturdays with convenient scheduling for working professionals.

"Our students can earn an MHA in just over a year, or progress at a slower pace," Mortensen said. "The curriculum has room for electives, such as a course on entrepreneurship, so the program can be customized for individual's career goals." Students also have options for an internship experience in varied geographic locations or with their current employer in a different department.

Former U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services and former University of Miami President Donna Shalala, now a professor of health sector management and policy, is teaching MHA students this fall, along with Mortensen and Steven G. Ullmann, chair and professor of health sector management and policy, and director of the School's Center for Health Sector Management and Policy.

"When I enrolled in UM's MHA program, I didn't know that Dr. Shalala would be one of our professors," said Teodora Maftei, who recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in the biological basis of behavior. "Professor Shalala gave us insights into current federal healthcare policies along with a behind-the-scenes look at the crafting of the HIPAA (the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). It's been an amazing experience."

Maftei, who plans a career in health care administration, said she also benefited from an introductory class on information technology. "It's given me a greater understanding of the

importance of IT in modernizing and improving the nation's health care system," she said.

UM School of Business Dean John A. Quelch, who has focused his research at Harvard Business School on the connections between business and healthcare, is presenting one of his case studies to the class this fall. Students will also tour the new School of Nursing and Health Studies Simulation Hospital, and team up to prepare a consulting report for the Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME), whose board is meeting on the UM campus in November.

"Our students will review the landscape of health care higher education and present their findings to CAHME," Mortensen said. "It's one of the many exciting real-world learning opportunities we provide for our MHA students."

For Saltzman, the MHA program has already provided new information he can take back to his work at UHealth. "I can sit down with my vice chair and give him more ideas for benefiting our clinics," he said. "I'm building my professional skills while learning insurance, quality of care and community health. This program offers so much more than I could read in a book."

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