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## Mastering a new market

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# Mastering a new market

By Jennifer Nice

**A year after reintroducing graduate education for the first time in a generation, the university goes all-in with innovative new programs.**

Madi Reimer '21 was already applying to graduate schools when she learned about Linfield's new master's degree programs.

The former student-athlete developed an interest in athletic administration thanks to a senior year in which she completed an internship in athletic compliance and served as co-president of Linfield's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. The experiences made her realize athletic administration integrates several of her passions: collaborating with athletes, community outreach and promoting wellness through sport.

Reimer had explored similar degrees at a large state university, but none were the right fit.

"I wasn't inspired by the curriculum," she said. "It seemed too corporate and focused on professional sports teams."

Instead, Reimer feels Linfield's Master of Science in business, which has a track focusing on sport leadership, stands apart for many of the same reasons she came for her bachelor's degree – small classes, flexible curriculum, opportunities for hands-on learning and professors who are passionate about teaching, not just research.

## Investing in high-demand business leaders

The 12-month sport leadership track is one of two offered as part of the M.S. in business. The other is in design and innovation. Both programs welcome their first cohorts in fall 2021.

The choice for Linfield to offer a M.S. versus the more prevalent Master of Business Administration (MBA) was intentional, allowing the university to align its graduate-level programs with its liberal arts core.

"An MBA helps identify problems," said Jennifer R. Madden, dean of the School of Business. "Linfield's M.S. in business is focused on finding solutions through an emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence."

Classes are primarily hybrid – a mix of in-person and synchronous remote classes, depending upon where the instructor is based. Students have the opportunity to learn from Linfield faculty as well as visiting scholars. This fall, a former IBM executive is teaching a class in change management and offering micro coaching sessions to students.

The program concludes with an international capstone experience,

where students work with a client to conduct stakeholder analysis. Students then create and deliver a project designed to solve a problem for the client.

"Working across time zones, language barriers and cultural norms to showcase the culmination of skills learned will be an incredible opportunity for our students," Madden said.

Eventually, she said, the School of Business intends to add five more M.S. tracks.

"We will continue talking with business leaders to confirm that our course offerings address industry needs," she said. "We want to be on point to ensure the demand is there for these future tracks."

## Investing in healthcare leadership

After a 20-year hiatus, Linfield offered its first new graduate degree in fall 2020 with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), based in the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing. The program, which focuses on leadership in healthcare ecosystems, enrolled 13 students in its inaugural cohort.

Angel Harris '01 was among those initial students. After working as a nurse in hospital and eldercare locations for 18 years, Harris spent two years advocating for health equity as president of the NAACP chapter in Corvallis. Around the end of her term, she read about the MSN program in the Linfield alumni newsletter.

"I found myself at a crossroads in my career. I wanted to do more but wasn't sure how," she said. "I want to work with communities and legislators to create equitable policies, be an educator that is part of preparing the next generation of nurses and be a part of systems change, not just 'putting out fires.'"

"Linfield's MSN program offered me the opportunity to elevate my leadership skills at the right time in my career. It integrates so many of the aspects of nursing that I want to excel in."

Designed for professionals who aspire to leadership positions in healthcare, the MSN curriculum incorporates economics, environmental and social sciences, and health sciences to address broad challenges to healthcare delivery.

"The practical curriculum fits my passion and goals," Harris said. "It's preparing us to be changemakers and leaders in healthcare."

## Investing in Linfield's future

The combination of practical application and interdisciplinary learning are hallmarks of all of Linfield's graduate programs. Each program fills a unique need, thanks to research identifying gaps in the workplace.

Seeing needs in the marketplace has also led Linfield's education department to add a graduate- and undergraduate-level endorsement in special education this summer. It joins an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) endorsement program that began in 2013.

The reintroduction of graduate programs is a strategic investment in Linfield's future.

"Linfield has to stay relevant and attuned with the changing higher education landscape," said Susan Agre-Kippenhan, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "The traditional undergraduate population is shrinking nationwide. Offering master's degrees allows us to reach a wider demographic of students and expand opportunities to those students."

## Investing in the future of sport

In addition to the MSN and M.S. in business degrees, the College of Arts and Sciences is admitting students for their new Master of Science in sports science and analytics this fall, with a full cohort expected in fall 2022.

The curriculum combines a traditional exercise science program with data science to elevate the approach to training and rehabilitation of the human body.

"Students will use real data to help enhance sports performance and recovery," Agre-Kippenhan said. "Paired with a liberal arts emphasis, students will excel in interpreting and translating data to consumers, coaches, patients and athletes."

The M.S. in sports science and analytics is structured to give students hands-on experience alongside classroom learning. "The connections faculty have with professional sports teams, high schools and international businesses will allow for some really exciting future partnerships and opportunities for our students," Agre-Kippenhan said.

It's a future that Reimer feels ready to embrace this fall.

"I've observed a great sense of community here, both on and off the soccer field," she said. "I'm excited to build on my experiences and expand that community as a graduate student."

## DECODING THE GRADUATES

### MORTAR BOARD

- Caps are black, made to match the gown.

### TASSEL

- Tassels are black or the color of the degree subject.

### GOWN

- The gown is black and is untrimmed.
- Sleeves are oblong, open at the wrist. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut, and the front part has an arc cut away.

### HOOD

- Hoods are black, made from the same fabric as the gown.
- For master's degrees, the length of the hood is 3 ½ feet.
- A red satin lining and purple chevron represent university colors.
- Velvet edge varies by color based on the degree subject.
  - Business - drab
  - Nursing - apricot
  - Sports science and analytics - sage

*\* Information courtesy of the American Council on Education.*

