

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Demand Is Strong For New Xavier Graduate Degree in Business**

*Xavier Becomes One of Only a Few Schools to Offer a Masters in Customer Analytics*

Recognizing a serious shortage of analytics experts, Xavier University is launching a new graduate degree program to develop business leaders who can make decisions using large customer databases.

The need for these graduates is so great that at least two leading Cincinnati businesses have said they'd hire the entire first graduating class.

The Williams College of Business at Xavier will be one of only a few schools in the U.S. to offer such an academic program. The Master of Science Degree in Customer Analytics will enable students to be adept at managing and analyzing large databases to make informed and ethical decisions. They also will become skilled at communicating their insights and recommendations to senior executives.

"Through the use of real-world data sets, our students will gain the skills, confidence and expertise required to succeed in today's information-sensitive environment," said Clint Schertzer, an associate professor of marketing who helped to develop the academic program.

By 2018, the U.S. will have a shortage of 1.5 million managers and analysts who have the ability to understand and solve business problems using big databases, the McKinsey Global Institute predicts.

The need for a masters program focusing on customer data is greater in the Cincinnati area than elsewhere because the region has so many large consumer-oriented companies. In fact, Cincinnati has become known nationally as a hub for marketing and consumer sciences, fields that involve understanding and influencing consumer-buying habits.

"With more than 1,000 unfilled skilled data and technology jobs in our region and a projected 8,000 new jobs by 2020, we felt it was an excellent opportunity for Xavier to help ease the pent-up demand by tapping the substantial expertise of our faculty," said Associate Professor Greg Smith, chair of the College's Management Information Systems department.

Representatives of the Cincinnati area companies, who sit on advisory boards of the College, identified the need for the degree and partnered with Xavier for nearly a year to create the masters degree program. These companies

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include regional and global leaders such as 84.51°, formerly known as dunnhumbyUSA, The Kroger Co., Procter & Gamble, Burke Inc., Macy's, Inc., Cintas and Directions Research.

“These partner organizations were instrumental in helping us to shape the program to ensure relevancy with their organizations’ needs,” said 84.51° executive Scott Beck, who teaches marketing at Xavier and helped to develop the graduate degree program.

Once the academic program starts in fall 2015, these companies will continue to help the masters program remain relevant and enhance thought leadership by providing guest lecturers, reviewing student deliverables and providing internships. The companies also will provide real datasets and real business questions and ask the students to respond by developing insights and recommendations for executives. This approach is consistent with Xavier’s emphasis on experiential learning.

Across the U.S., analytics degrees are plentiful, teaching students how to collect, store and manage data. But students in such programs might not understand enough about business to know how to use large databases for business decision-making. Xavier will fill that gap by teaching students how to draw conclusions from those databases and how to communicate those conclusions to top executives. A key course, for example, will focus on leadership and communication. Students also will be taught how to build a consensus to enhance collaboration in organizations to ensure their recommendations are followed.

As the sources and datasets containing customer data have grown, so have the ethical issues related to data collection and use. Ethics will be woven into and emphasized throughout the curriculum in alignment with Xavier’s Jesuit heritage and values. Students, for example, will learn how to recognize and address privacy issues that arise from having access to so much customer data.

Likely students for the degree include those with undergraduate degrees in math, science, psychology or anthropology, those with undergraduate degrees in business who want an advanced degree in analytics, students with technical degrees who want business-oriented careers, and MBA graduates who want an analytical career path.

Courses include consumer behavior, introductory data mining for managers, database management, marketing research, consumer-centric category management and marketing strategy. The program is designed so part-time students can complete the degree in two years, although it could be completed in a shorter time by full-time students. The degree is a collaborative program between two academic departments in the College – marketing and management information systems.

More information about the new degree, including how to apply, is available at: <http://www.xavier.edu/master-science-customer-analytics/>

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*Xavier University is a private university located in Cincinnati, Ohio, providing a liberal arts education in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition. Founded in 1831, the university is the sixth-oldest Catholic university in the nation. U.S. News & World Report ranks it No. 5 among master's-level universities in the Midwest, and The Princeton Review names it as one of the “Best 377 Colleges in America.”*