UC SANTA BARBARA

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Sonia Fernandez

Keeping PaCE

The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impacts have forced all of us to rethink our jobs and how we do them. Perhaps the most jarring effect for many is the uncertainty of employment, as the economy shifts in response to the “new normal,” and certain positions fall by the wayside, or change substantially.

A certain amount of agility is necessary to navigate these unsettling times, and UC Santa Barbara’s Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) is here to help. With a suite of online programs in a variety of fields — from accounting and finance to web development — PaCE (formerly UCSB Extension) can provide members of the campus and the surrounding community the relevant skills to compete in today’s job market.

“Upskilling is no longer optional,” said Sheetal Gavankar, PaCE’s director of academic programs. “We are past the days when one can go to school for four years, get a degree, and never step in school again. Voluntary, self-motivated and life-long learning is necessary not only to advance in one’s career, but even to stay employable in today’s job market.”

Registration continues for fall courses, with PaCE programs including coursework in business and executive management, legal and paralegal, arts and humanities, science and technology, medical and pre-med, healthcare and counseling and education.

Even before the pandemic, the world of work was already changing, thanks to technological innovations that led to greater efficiency, which in turn is driving more people out of their normal roles and into new ones. On top of that, the generalized move to the online space has made competition for jobs global.

“That’s when being associated with a world-class university like UC Santa Barbara pays its dividends,” Gavankar said.

According to Gavankar, certain skills are — and will be — important in the post-pandemic world, and PaCE can provide them. All courses are offered online currently in response to the pandemic. Scholarships are available.

The courses include:

· Digital upskilling that would help with immediate career change, such as Digital Marketing, Python, available throughout the year and Web Development, its certificate program starting in the Winter quarter.

· Accounting, for an immediate career change or a career boost, for those already in the field.

· General skills that all workers should have regardless of the expertise, especially in these changing times, such as Negotiations, Personal Branding and Selling for Non-Sales professionals. These classes are very popular even internationally, and are offered throughout the year.

· Another valuable endeavor is to enhance Leadership skills.

· If you’re looking to get an understanding of business, but don’t want to get a full MBA, PaCE offers various business and management courses.

· Always popular and essential are Project Management skills, regardless of the industry.

“We are starting career and employability workshops in January for those who enroll in our programs,” Gavankar said. The five workshops, which will be offered every quarter starting with winter, provides three hours of hands-on training in topics such as resume polishing, networking skills and interviewing.

Being part of the PaCE community pays other dividends as well, according to Gavankar. The content and delivery mode of the courses adjust according to the needs of the local community, thanks to frequent surveys. For instance, she said, survey results have shown that the working population prefers some online components even when in-person instruction is available.

“We have made the learning process more compatible with peoples’ work lives,” Gavankar said. “Most of our evening classes will retain some online components even after the pandemic, with the right blend of ‘study at your own pace,” and “get help from your instructors who are also industry experts.’”

Meanwhile, those interested in exploring academic courses to complete prerequisites for a major or to get a certificate can enroll in Open University, which provides access to UCSB courses without formal admission to the university, as long as there are places in the classroom.

More information about PaCE and its offerings can be found can be found at https://ucsb.pro/current

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.