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NEW CERTIFICATION PROGRAM HELPS MBAS COMPETE IN CROWDED JOB MARKET

CMBA Objectively Measures MBA's Command of Core Business Curriculum

MOCKSVILLE, N.C. – Fewer jobs, recruiters and offers, along with a record number of MBA graduates, are creating a bottleneck in the MBA job market. Traditional MBA recruiters, such as those in banking and consulting industries, are scaling back campus recruiting, job cuts are totaling more than 40,000 on Wall Street¹, and only 26 percent of MBAs had received or accepted a job offer near graduation in 2002, compared to 41 percent in 2001².

To help MBA students set themselves apart in a highly competitive job market, the International Certification Institute (ICI), in conjunction with Galton Technologies, a part of Prometric and the leading provider of assessment and certification services, has developed the Certified MBA™, or CMBA, to confirm a student's command of the common body of knowledge required across all accredited MBA programs.

Although there is a standard measure of the incoming abilities of an MBA candidate through the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), there has not been a universal standard that measures an MBA's command of the core business curriculum prior to graduation.

As developed, the CMBA measures an MBA student's mastery of the following four core curriculum areas required across all accredited MBA programs by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the international nonprofit accrediting agency for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs in business administration and accounting:

1. Financial reporting, analysis and markets
2. Domestic and global economic environments of organizations
3. Creation and distribution of goods and services
4. Human behavior in organizations

These core curriculum areas typically comprise a majority of first-year MBA coursework in traditional two year MBA programs and normally represent approximately 40 percent of a student's total semester hours when taken at the graduate level³. They form the foundation for a student's specialty area of study.

"This is the first evaluative tool that compares MBAs on the same objective and quantitative scale, regardless of school or program," said Dr. Bern Beatty, director of ICI's CMBA Academic Advisory Council. "By taking the question of skill out of the equation, the CMBA will neutralize the bias of school rank or reputation in the recruiting process and level the playing field for all MBA students."

As a further benefit to MBA students, a CMBA Skills Profile™ will be provided to all students taking the CMBA exam. The CMBA Skills Profile assesses students' performance in 10 key subject areas, enabling them to identify their strengths and pursue opportunities to improve in areas where they may be weaker.

With a record 112,258 MBA degrees granted in 1999-2000⁴ and job placement rates for MBA graduates down significantly versus last year, the competition for each MBA-level job is intense. And, with applications to MBA programs on the rise, the need to differentiate oneself will continue well into the future.

"The CMBA Skills Profile will help MBA students leverage their strengths during the recruiting process," said Beatty. "Students can confirm that their skills match the specific needs of the company, providing an added level of assurance in the company's hiring decision."

The explosive growth in the number of traditional and non-traditional MBA programs is also fueling the need for the CMBA. Today, in the U.S. alone there are more than 900 degree-granting MBA institutions. In addition, more than 50,000 students are expected to be enrolled in online MBA programs in 2002 compared to only 5,000 online students in 2000⁵.

"The CMBA helps recruiters feel confident that the skill level of the student they are evaluating meets certain standards, regardless of school or program," said Lisa Walter, director of ICI's MBA services. "This allows companies to focus on other criteria, such as personality and leadership abilities, to determine if the candidate would be a successful fit for them."

MBA students and graduates have the opportunity to sign up for the CMBA exam by visiting www.CertifiedMBA.com, or by calling ICI at 1-866-664-CMBA (1-866-664-2622). Testing will begin in November 2002.

About ICI:

The International Certification Institute was founded to develop and deliver the CMBA exam in conjunction with Galton Technologies and Prometric. Based in Mocksville, N.C., ICI is organized around its three primary constituencies - students, businesses and educators - and facilitates advisement and product development through its Council of Academic Advisors, Council of Business Advisors and Association of Certified MBAs (ACMBA) . ICI's executive management is committed to working directly with this network of professional and academic bodies to add value to graduate business education and to the global institutions that depend on academic and certification institutions to educate business administrators.

About ICI Partners:

***Galton Technologies** (www.galton.com), a part of Prometric, provides cutting-edge, computer-based assessment and state-of-the-art certification development services. Providing a customized mix of consulting, item and test development, data management, training, research and software tools, Galton offers solutions and support for creating legally defensible exams and quality certification programs. Galton has been a leader in IT certification development serving clients such as Cisco, Oracle, Compaq, Lucent Technologies, Novell, Sun Microsystems, NCR, Nortel Networks and Intel. Galton Technologies is headquartered in Lindon, Utah.*

***Prometric** (www.prometric.com), a part of The Thomson Corporation, is the global leader in technology-enabled testing and assessment services for information technology certification, academic admissions, and professional licensure and certifications. Prometric delivers standardized tests for more than 200 clients, in more than 25 languages, over the web or through a network of more than 4,800 testing centers in more than 140 countries. Based in Baltimore, M.D., Prometric employs more than 3,000 employees worldwide.*

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¹ Bloomberg News, 2002

² Source: Graduate Management Admission Council, 2002

³ Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Standards for Business Accreditation, February 2001

⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Education

⁵ Source: InterEd, Inc. research