

A number of factors are required, he says, before an institution will consider adding an online component to these programs.

"There is still a very substantial and

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"But they need to at least have some experience in terms of how product development is done well and how it's done poorly so that they have that kind of perspective when they come into the program," he says.

"Companies aren't necessarily interested in supporting the education of students that are not ready to move into leadership roles, and that usually takes some time for them to get to that point, so this program is certainly more midcareer-skewed," Smith adds.

Though interest in the program remains high, the economic downturn has taken its toll. Last month, two employers slashed their tuition assistance for the degree from full support to \$5,250 per year.

"The employers are definitely backing off on their tuition support, for sure," Smith says.

Some local higher-education institutions are countering the high cost of graduate degrees by offering less expensive workshops, leadership experiences and other learning opportunities to managers and future executives.

The vast majority of students in Monroe Community College's Lean Six Sigma black belt program receive full tuition support from their employers, says James Gertner, product development manager at MCC Corporate College. The program costs \$5,500 and consists of 136 classroom hours, supplemented by 24 hours of online material.

Examples of programs at Nazareth College that enroll students who receive financial aid from employers are the master of science programs in management, human resource man-

agement and human resource development. Roughly 25 of the 100 students in those programs receive some level of tuition assistance from their employers, says Lorraine Henderson, assistant professor at Nazareth's School of Management and director of the three programs. A cohort currently in the human resource management program, for instance, works at Paychex Inc.

A year ago, some students in the programs reduced the number of courses they were taking because of cuts in tuition assistance, Henderson says. Tuition for nearly all of Nazareth's graduate programs is \$798 per credit hour.

But employer support has rebounded at Nazareth, she says.

"As a matter of fact, I do have probably a half a dozen students who have come back and done a second degree," Henderson says.

Still, "I notice that there is much more time between when I interview a student—and I interview all of the incoming students—and when they actually make a decision to come to school," Henderson says.

Students pursuing graduate degrees are more strategic than ever about furthering their education.

"A lot of that has to do with finances," Henderson says. "If they cannot get some percentage of it covered by their employers, they're being very selective and specific about timing, when they're going to get started, when they're going to get done and how many courses they're going to take in a given year, because it's expensive."

Sheila Livadas is a Rochester-area freelance writer.

Such conditions have led astute business schools to begin offering either fully online or blended programs, Petree observes.

It took a lot of work for the online program to replicate RIT's in-person executive MBA program, Lawlor says.

"The difficult question is, how do you create an online program that has the same rigor and attention to detail as the in-class program?" he says. "That's something that actually took us a few years to really figure out."

The answer came in part from involving faculty in the creation of the online program. They were not adjuncts selected haphazardly to develop the curricula, Law-

lor says. Colleges and universities have yet to settle on a standard model, and many formats being tested.

"It's kind of like when the typewriter first came out," Lawlor says. "You had dozens of companies all with different models of how it looked and where the keys were placed."

"The difference is I don't think we'll ever have just one model of online learning. There will be different types of programs that will be appropriate for different students and different programs."

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letter denying any knowledge of the peace delegation from Richmond, even though he had recently met with that delegation).

What are parents and business leaders to make of this? Is lying simply part of our nature, or is it something that causes damage in our families, businesses and government? Yes and yes.

It's likely factual that all leaders lie and that most lie consistently and unconsciously. Because leaders tend to possess more resources and better access to power than others, when leaders lie, the negative consequences to the group can intensify. That's why it's important for leaders to look at the integrity realities of their behavior, rather than hiding in lofty ideals.

A starting point for integrity

Leaders wishing to examine their character might consider starting with a noble admission: "I am capable of and practiced in the art of unconscious deceit and, at the very least, vulnerable to conscious deceit."

This admission is important because it

fuels greater vigilance about honesty.

Acknowledging lack of complete honesty prepares a leader to identify concrete instances of deceit. "Where, specifically, am I lying to protect myself, and what are the harmful consequences?" I have come to believe that this kind of wrestling with integrity is more honest than assuming perfection.

Most of us would prefer a leader who struggles with genuineness over a leader who appears squeaky clean. We're shamefully shortsighted when we assume our kids require perfect parents or when we imagine that employees will respect leaders only if they are above reproach.

Those utopian expectations are sure to backfire, pressuring leaders to look and talk as if they are completely honest. That's deceptive.

The biggest lie we will tell ourselves is the lie that we seldom lie.

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