

The Professional Science Master's Degree

Helping America Produce a Highly Skilled Workforce

Professional Science Master's (PSM) degrees provide students with intensive two-year, interdisciplinary graduate level programs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, combined with training in management and workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, and finance and marketing. Launched in 1997 with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, these innovative degree programs help to meet private sector and government demand for employees who possess not only technical and scientific training, but also the “soft” skills needed in today’s workplace.

Currently, more than 200 programs at over 100 universities nationwide enroll approximately 3,800 students annually in a variety of disciplines, including mathematics, physics, biology, computational sciences, forensics, chemistry, cyber security, and geographical information systems, among others. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to grow the PSM and increase the number of graduates in these interdisciplinary fields. Business can help accomplish this.

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN SUPPORTING PSMs

Because the PSM is designed to meet employer demand for particular workforce skills, a hallmark of the PSM is the active involvement of business leaders in these programs’ development and operation, in collaboration with host institutions. This collaboration typically includes, for example:

- Participating in a PSM advisory board that advises the host college or university on PSM curriculum development and program operations;
- Sponsoring internships for PSM students;
- Participating as adjunct faculty in the program;
- Providing tuition assistance and mentoring opportunities for students;
- Sponsoring PSM projects and providing financial support; and
- Encouraging employees and others to enroll in PSM programs.

This business collaboration with higher education helps drive demand for these programs, ensure that program curricula are relevant to business needs, and ensure that PSM graduates possess the skills that employers need to compete in the global marketplace.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

For a list of illustrative PSM programs, including those in which the Business-Higher Education Forum’s (BHEF’s) members’ institutions participate, go to BHEF’s online resource center, www.StrategicEdSolutions.org®. To obtain a complete compendium of programs and learn more about how PSM graduates can meet your workforce needs, go to www.sciencemasters.com.

The Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF) is the nation’s oldest organization of senior business and higher education executives dedicated to advancing innovative solutions to U.S. education and workforce challenges. Composed of Fortune 500 CEOs, prominent college and university presidents, and other leaders, BHEF addresses issues fundamental to our global competitiveness. It does so through two initiatives: [the College Readiness, Access, and Success Initiative \(CRI\)](#), addressing college- and work-readiness, access, and success; and [the Securing America’s Leadership in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM\) Initiative](#), promoting America’s leadership in STEM. BHEF and its members drive change locally, work to influence public policy at the national and state levels, and inspire other leaders to act. Learn more at www.bhef.com.