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Marquette University: Marquette Business launches ESG courses for industry driven certifications

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MILWAUKEE — The Marquette University College of Business Administration has announced the launch of two new environmental, social and governance (ESG) courses to serve as preparatory course for industry driven certifications for accounting, investment professionals and ESG leaders. The courses were unveiled at the college's recent Sustainability 2.0 Conference and launched on Tuesday, Nov. 1.

There are two more courses expected in the first and second quarters of 2023 to equip organizations to manage ESG in today's interconnected economy.

The courses, "ESG Investing" and "Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting Credential," aim to advance sustainability standards-based education in business. They will be offered to industry professionals in an asynchronous hybrid/in-person format. The timeliness of these offerings coincides with the new SEC Climate Disclosure rules.

"Marquette Business strives to be on the forefront of innovation in business spaces and we have been doing that with our ESG conference, which is the largest in the Midwest," said Dr. Chris Merker, instructor of practice in finance. "Responsible investing with an eye on sustainability has been moving fast and the industry is starting to catch up. With stringent standardization through regulatory agencies coming, this education is a necessary professional development tool that Marquette is proud to offer."

Sustainability practices are becoming table stakes for business, and U.S. and

international regulators are mandating climate disclosure. Investors are incorporating ESG data to gain a broader understanding of the companies in which they invest. “ESG Investing” was developed in collaboration with the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute and covers diverse aspects of sustainable investments and offers tools for effective financial valuation, opportunity and risk assessment.

“Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting,” is a credentialing course that is being taught to the Sustainable Accounting Standards Board standards. It is designed to understand the link between material sustainability information and a company’s financial performance. Through an industry supported partnership with the International Standards Sustainability Board – IFRS Foundation, Marquette has developed cross-disciplinary course materials on sustainable accounting standards to be offered to the business communities, and ultimately incorporated into undergraduate and graduate curricula in the future.

“Innovation and sustainability are woven into the fabric of Marquette’s Catholic, Jesuit values, so these new courses are one way to serve businesses as an education partner for Marquette Business,” said Tim Hanley, acting Keyes Dean of the College of Business Administration. “These courses are generating plenty of interest throughout the industry with business and corporations interested in these credentialing and professional development opportunities for ESG. The response has been phenomenal, and we are excited to roll out these classes as we open O’Brien Hall, the new home for Marquette Business, which will serve as a hub for local businesses. The Marquette of the future will support businesses by partnering on their talent development needs to promote a thriving economy.”

Additional courses for 2023, include “Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting II,” which expands on the fundamentals of sustainability and materiality, and a “Strategic Sustainability” capstone. This capstone course provides a holistic approach for businesses to integrate sustainability into strategic planning. The course addresses strategy, finance, operations, marketing, compliance and reporting, as well as investor, customer and stakeholder communication of sustainability programs.

Standards for assurance of sustainable business practices are developing and regulatory mandates are accelerating with the SEC climate disclosure requirement. Public and private companies in Europe are already subject to mandatory disclosure requirements. In the U.S., not just public companies will be subject to these requirements; “Scope 2 and 3” reporting will impact thousands of private

companies, too, who contribute as suppliers and partners to these companies. Corporations are in a unique position today to elevate ESG practices in partnership with Marquette.

Marquette recently received the STARS Bronze rating for comprehensive sustainability achievements and committing to the WAVE program is the latest way in which the university is working toward a sustainable future. Other recent initiatives include an updated endowment policy that prohibits direct investments in fossil fuels; the Marquette University Police Department moving to hybrid squad cars; enhanced opportunities for bicycle use; renewable energy initiatives; sustainable building standards; and the Sustainability Internship Program. More information about Marquette's sustainability efforts is available online.