

Episode 17: The INFORMS Prize with Sanjay

Host:

- Kasie Whitener, Clinical Assistant Professor, Management

Guest:

- Dr. Sanjay Ahire, Michael J. Mungo Distinguished Professor, Co-Director, Operations and Supply Chain Center

The operations and supply chain undergrad program at the Moore School retained its No. 3 Gartner ranking, and moved up to No. 5 in graduate ranking in 2024. This marks the first Top 5 ranking for the graduate program. The ranking comes two months after the management science department was awarded the industry-renowned UPS George D. Smith Prize from INFORMS, the largest professional association for the decision and data sciences.

Dr. Sanjay L. Ahire is a Professor of Operations and Supply Chain Management at the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina (USC). Dr. Ahire holds a Ph.D. in management science from the University of Alabama (1992). He also holds a master's degree in management studies (1985) and a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering (1982), both from the University of Bombay (India). Dr. Ahire is the Co-Director of the USC-Operations and Supply Chain Center. He heads the unique industry-validated Sonoco-USC Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification initiative that has graduated more than 1,600 students with this valuable certification before graduation. Dr. Ahire has been at the Darla Moore School since 2006 and was named the Carolina Trustees Professor of the Year in 2023.

Dr. Ahire came from University of Dayton where he'd created a program similar to this and launched our program in 2007. In the 2024 Gartner rankings, we're ranked #3 in Undergraduate Supply Chain Programs and ranked in the Top 5 for our graduate program. Many of the brightest students major in international business, where we're #1 for the 26th year in a row and IB requires a secondary major. Operations and Supply Chain Management has become a good go-to. But over the years, people are applying and coming specifically for the Operations and Supply Chain Management major. The pandemic really brought the field to the front of people's consciousness and that's become more interesting. The attraction to the field is that it's what creates value for organizations.

Topics include:

- What's the reason students choose this major?
- The mission: produce graduates who not only know but who have also practiced the operations side of the business.
- Kinds of careers supply chain majors can expect: 1) leading manufacturing firms - companies like 3M and BMW, Tesla; 2) consumer products - J&J, PNG; also high tech firms like Intel, Meta, Google, LinkedIn; 3) leading consulting firms - Accenture, BCG, etc.; retailers and services - WalMart, Target, but also 4) insurance companies and hospital systems, airlines

- The nature of an applied program – we’ve integrated experiential learning through the capstone project that comes at the end of the project – learning 2 competences – the operations side and also the logistics side.
- The Business Process Perspective – look at the existing process and make it better with frameworks they’ve learned to deconstruct a process and then build it back.
- Center projects are faculty driven. More than 360 projects over the last 15 years.
- Sonoco Lean Six Sigma certification for students to earn through the project experience.
- The INFORMS UPS George D. Smith Prize - This award is given to the best program in the world that prepares their students for the application of management science to the supply chain field.
- INFORMS prize event December 5th and 6th: Two-day event inviting the UPS leadership, INFORMS leadership, alumni, and community members.

To learn more about the Operations and Supply Chain Center, [click here](#).

To learn more about the Darla Moore School of Business visit [this site](#).

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