

# Teach Texas to Build

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# Teach Texas to Build

## A PROPOSAL TO TEXAS MCCOMBS FOR AN AI-NATIVE CURRICULUM

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### Executive Summary

Every top business school now teaches students to *understand* artificial intelligence. Almost none teach them to *build and ship* with it. That gap is the opportunity.

I propose two complementary offerings for Texas McCombs:

1. **The Builder's MBA: AI for the General Manager** — a flagship MBA elective in which every session ends with a shipped artifact and the course ends with a live Demo Day.
2. **The Builder's Sprint: AI for Executives** — a Texas Executive Education intensive, the hands-on counterpart to the catalog's existing online, conceptual AI programs.

**A note on scope.** Both courses below are **representative** — they illustrate what I would teach and how. The exact syllabi, number of sessions, sequencing, length, and format would be designed jointly with McCombs faculty and are easily tailored to class capacity, the academic calendar, and student or executive time constraints. Credit hours, cohort sizes, and weightings shown are illustrative, not fixed.

Both are taught by an instructor doing this work at the frontier today: I am Head of Product for alexa.com, Amazon's competitor to ChatGPT, and I lead the cultural shift inside Amazon's product organization that turns product managers from writers-of-requirements into builders-of-product. I hold a CS degree from Stanford and an MBA from Harvard — fluent in both the code and the boardroom.

This document covers the market landscape, the core learnings and applications for students, the proposed courses with full syllabi, learning outcomes and assessment, the fit with McCombs, and a proposed pilot.

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## 1. Market Landscape — Beyond the Obvious

The faculty question is no longer *whether* to teach AI. It is *which* AI education compounds in value. Three observations a curriculum committee should weigh:

**The literacy tier is filling up — and McCombs already leads it.** Texas Executive Education offers a strong, deep catalog: *AI for Leaders*, *AI & Machine Learning: Business Applications*, *Agentic AI*, and *Generative AI for Business Applications*. These are excellent, largely online, and explicitly designed to teach leaders to understand and deploy AI *without coding*. The market — Wharton, Kellogg, online platforms — is converging on this same “literacy” offering.

**Literacy is depreciating; fluency is appreciating.** The half-life of “AI awareness” is short. A 2026 MBA who can merely *describe* large language models has a skill the next cohort gets for free. What appreciates is the ability to *produce*: to take an idea and make it real — a deck, a working app, a film, a data analysis, an autonomous agent — alone, in hours, without an engineering team. This is a durable, hard-to-commoditize capability.

**Inside frontier companies, the job itself is being rewritten.** At Amazon, I am living the shift that hasn’t yet reached the classroom: the highest-leverage product people no longer hand specs to engineers and wait. They build the prototype, the tool, the analysis, the pitch themselves, with AI, in an afternoon. The constraint on a modern manager is no longer headcount — it is whether they personally know how to build. Business schools that teach *building* — not just commentary about building — will define the next decade of management education.

**Implication for McCombs:** extend an existing lead. Texas owns the literacy tier through Exec Ed, CATT, and the IROM department. The “build and ship” tier is open white space. Occupying it differentiates the MBA, strengthens Exec Ed revenue, and creates a recruiting and employer-branding asset — with no cannibalization of existing online programs.

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## 2. Key Learnings & Applications for Students

The course is organized around a single promise: *students leave able to build, deploy, and own — not merely discuss*. Nine concrete capabilities, each tied to a graded deliverable:

Capability	What they ship
Decks & documents	A board-ready, narrative-first strategy deck
Landing pages	A live, deployed page that validates demand
Web applications	A working internal tool, spreadsheet → software
iOS & mobile	A tappable iPhone prototype
Video & motion	A produced 60-second film
Audio & podcasts	A published podcast episode
Brainstorming & strategy	A red-teamed recommendation with an AI “dissent memo”
Data & analysis	A dashboard answering a live business question
Agents & automation	A multi-step agent that runs recurring work

Wrapped around the building craft are two leadership capabilities that distinguish a *general manager* from a power user:

- **Leading adoption** — the change-management playbook for turning a skeptical team into builders, drawn directly from my work at Amazon.
- **Judgment, risk & ethics** — verifying, red-teaming, and governing AI output; knowing when “the AI said so” is malpractice.

### 3. The Builder’s MBA: AI for the General Manager

*Representative flagship MBA elective · designed for the elective slate (Full-Time, Evening & Weekend) · no prerequisite. Length, session count, and format flex to the calendar and class size.*

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Build and deploy working artifacts — decks, landing pages, web and mobile apps, video, audio, dashboards, and agents — independently, without writing traditional code.
2. Diagnose where AI creates real leverage in a function and where it introduces risk, and make defensible build-vs-buy-vs-skip decisions.

3. Lead AI adoption inside an organization: redesign roles, drive behavior change, and overcome cultural resistance.
4. Apply executive judgment to AI outputs — verifying, red-teaming, and governing them rather than trusting them blindly.
5. Assemble a personal “AI operating system”: a repeatable toolkit and workflow that compounds their leverage after the course ends.

## REPRESENTATIVE SESSION ARC

*Illustrative sessions — sequence and count would be set jointly with the faculty.*

1. **The Builder’s Mindset — Why the GM Is Now the Bottleneck.** The shift from managing makers to making. *Build: your first AI-built one-pager, live.*
2. **Prompting as a Management Skill.** Context, constraints, examples, critique loops. *Build: a reusable brief library.*
3. **Decks That Persuade.** Narrative-first board-ready decks. *Build: a 12-slide strategy deck on a real decision.*
4. **Landing Pages & Brand.** Validate demand before funding it. *Build: a live landing page with analytics + signup.*
5. **Web Apps Without Engineers.** Spreadsheet → deployed application. *Build: a working internal tool.*
6. **Mobile in Your Pocket.** Concept → runnable iOS prototype. *Build: an interactive iOS prototype.*
7. **Video & Motion.** The 60-second story. *Build: a produced 60-second video.*
8. **Audio & Podcasts.** Owning the highest-trust channel. *Build: a published podcast episode.*
9. **Brainstorming & Strategy.** The model as sparring partner and red-teamer. *Build: a red-teamed recommendation + dissent memo.*
10. **Data Without a Data Team.** Messy data → defensible decision. *Build: an analysis + dashboard.*
11. **Agents & Automation.** Hiring software that works for you. *Build: a working multi-step agent.*
12. **Leading the Revolution.** The Amazon adoption playbook. *Build: a 90-day adoption plan.*
13. **Risk, Ethics & Judgment.** The responsible builder. *Build: a governance + risk memo.*
14. **Demo Day — Ship It.** Live capstone demos, judged by operators and investors.

## ASSESSMENT (ILLUSTRATIVE)

The course is portfolio-based: students graduate with shipped work, not just a grade. A representative weighting:

Component	Weight	What it proves
Build Sprints (each session)	40%	The muscle of building, repeated until reflexive
Capstone — “Ship It” Project	30%	A real, deployed product demoed live
Adoption Plan + Governance Memo	15%	Leadership and judgment, not just building
Build Journal & Peer Reviews	15%	Reflection and critique

## 4. The Builder’s Sprint: AI for Executives

*Representative in-person Texas Executive Education intensive for senior leaders. Length and depth flex to the audience and calendar.*

The hands-on counterpart to the catalog’s online AI programs. Leaders arrive skeptical and leave having personally shipped real artifacts and a 90-day plan to lead the shift at home. A representative arc:

- **Unlearn & Reframe.** The leverage shift; a live idea→deployed build in under an hour; the competitive landscape.
- **Build the Core Four.** A board-ready deck; a live landing page; an internal web tool.
- **Voice, Story & Data.** Short-form video and a podcast; plain-English data analysis; AI as strategy sparring partner.
- **Agents & Automation.** Build an agent that runs a recurring task; guardrails; risk, IP, and duty of care.
- **Lead the Revolution.** The Amazon playbook; workshop a 90-day adoption plan; capstone demos and commitments.

**Deliverable:** a portfolio of shipped artifacts plus a 90-day adoption plan. Open-enrollment and custom in-company versions available.

## 5. Why Now, Why McCombs, Why Me

- **A new dean, a new chapter.** With leadership transitioning to Dean Bradley Staats in July 2026 — a scholar of operations, learning, and organizational adoption — a flagship “build with AI” course aligns with the moment.

- **Texas already owns the literacy tier.** CATT, the IROM department, and a deep Exec Ed AI catalog provide credibility and infrastructure. This proposal extends that lead without internal cannibalization.
  - **The adjunct path is built for this.** UT System faculty rules (Regents' Rule 31001) expressly invite accomplished industry leaders to serve as Adjunct Professors and Professors of Practice. A frontier operator teaching a hands-on craft course is the textbook use of that title.
  - **Recruiting and brand upside.** "The MBA where you learn to build with AI" is an admissions and employer story that travels. Demo Day becomes a showcase; the artifacts become proof.
  - **The instructor is the syllabus.** I don't write *about* this revolution; I run it — as Head of Product for a frontier AI product and as the person turning Amazon PMs into builders.
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## 6. The Ask

I would welcome 30 minutes to walk a faculty champion through this and scope a pilot — either the MBA elective in a coming term or a first Exec Ed sprint. I will bring a complete syllabus packet, a sample Demo Day, and references.

Let's give Texas operators the unfair advantage I watch reshape teams every day.

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*What starts here gets built here. Hook 'em.*