MBA applications slip at Kellogg and Booth

By Lorene Yue
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(Crain's) — Applications for traditional master's in business administration programs at Chicago's two powerhouse schools slipped this year, reflecting a regional and national trend.

Northwestern University and the University of Chicago recorded single-digit decreases for their full-time, two-year MBA program. Applications were down 7 percent at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management while they slipped 3 percent at Chicago's Booth School of Business.

The drops were in line with others in the Graduate Management Admission Council's 2012 application trends survey. Nearly three out of four Midwest business schools reported a decline in applications to their conventional programs. The Midwest suffered the heaviest losses in the nation. Conversely, 59 percent of business schools in the Mid-Atlantic region experienced an increase, according to the report.

Among the big losers: the University of Illinois at Chicago's Liautaud Graduate School of Business. Applications to its two-year program that began this semester plunged 24 percent.

Kellogg and Booth fared better than some of their slightly lower-ranked Ivy League peers. Applications skidded 19 percent at Columbia University and 9.6 percent at Yale University.

Overall, applications at full-time, two-year MBA programs in the U.S. fell at 62 percent of grad schools. Meanwhile, only 14 percent of schools in the Asia Pacific and 10 percent in central Asia (Pakistan and India) received fewer applications than the previous year.

The council surveyed 359 schools from 46 countries. Two-thirds of the schools that participated are based in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

There is a bright spot for domestic programs: the one-year MBA program. More than half of the schools offering the fast-track degree reported an increase in applications, according to the GMAC report.

That was the case at Northwestern, where applications jumped 6 percent from last year. The school also increased class size for its full-time, one-year program to 100 from 85.

UIC had similar results. Its one-year master's of science in accounting and master's of science in management information systems programs each saw double-digit jumps. Applications rose 67 percent for the management information systems program and 24 percent for accounting.

Chicago's Booth does not have a one-year program.
Loyola University Chicago's Quinlan School of Business doesn't differentiate between full-time and part-time applications, so it can't say if there was a change for its traditional B school degree. Total applications, however, rose 35 percent from last year.

Reston, Va.-based GMAC administers the Graduate Management Admission Test.