

DECISION LINE

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Thinking About Business Education

Gary L. Ragatz, *Michigan State University*

I recently came across a report prepared by the AACSB's Management Education Task Force, entitled "Management Education at Risk" (you can find a copy of the report at www.aacsb.edu/metf). The report is two years old, but contains some interesting ideas about the current state of business education and the challenges business schools and business educators will face over the coming years. The task force identified two concerns that should be of particular interest to DSI members—an impending shortage of doctorally qualified business faculty and the relevance of business school curricula.

Demand for business education is growing, both in the U.S. and globally, but the supply of doctorally qualified business faculty is not keeping pace. After many years of steady growth, the number of business doctorates granted annually in the U.S. began to decline in 1996, falling over 19 percent by 2000. Exacerbating the problem, according to the AACSB report, is that a smaller percentage of doctoral graduates are pursuing academic careers.

Under a "status quo" scenario in terms of the demand for business education, the task force projects a shortfall of 1,500 doctorally qualified faculty in the U.S. alone by 2009. Economic factors are likely to make the shortage worse before it gets better. Forty of the fifty largest business doctoral programs reside in public universities, where current economic conditions are likely to put further pressure on these programs, which are difficult to justify on strictly economic bases.

The task force offers a number of fairly wide-ranging recommendations for addressing the shortfall. Doctoral programs could be more attractive and more accessible, particularly to experienced business people. Reward structures could be changed for faculty and more engagement in faculty development could improve productivity. Other recommendations focus on developing different staffing models that incorporate more

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"clinical" faculty and possibly faculty from non-business disciplines.

The task force also sees the business world changing more rapidly than our business curricula and pedagogical approaches. They find curricula to be too "siloeed," where business issues tend to be cross-functional. Among other suggestions, the report calls for more attention to current, practical business issues in our curricula, better use of technology to enhance pedagogy, and more cross-disciplinary programs.

The Decision Sciences Institute has been a leader in addressing many of the issues that the AACSB report raises. A cross-functional or cross-disciplinary orientation is really a part of how the Institute has defined itself. Innovation in pedagogy and in curricula has been a key focus of the organization since its inception. We were one of the first professional associations in business to publish a journal specifically oriented toward educational innovation, and sharing of best practices and instructional innovation have been a prominent part of our annual meetings for many years. The Institute also has a long record of promoting doctoral education and development of new faculty.

I think many of the ideas that the AACSB task force is promoting are well aligned with the Institute's goals and objectives. There are also, however, a number of specific ideas that are a bit more radical and deserve further critical evaluation and debate. I encourage you to take a look at the report and start a conversation with your colleagues about its ideas.

Planning for Boston in November

We're at that point in late summer when many of us are thinking about our travel plans for the annual meeting in November. As I mentioned in my last "President's Letter," Ken Kendall and his Program Committee have generated a great deal of enthusiasm for the Boston meeting. With the large number of submissions, we have a full four-day schedule. As you prepare to make your travel plans, please take time to check out the preliminary program, which you can access through the DSI home page. There are sessions scheduled from early Saturday morning through late Tuesday afternoon. Please make your plans so that you can participate in the entire program.

Also, as you plan your trip to Boston, I want to encourage you to make reservations at the conference hotel, the Boston Marriott Copley Place. Staying at the conference hotel is the most convenient option for meeting and networking with colleagues at the conference, and it also helps defray the cost of the conference. At each of the hotels where we hold the annual meeting, we make a "room-night guarantee" to the hotel. In exchange for hotel room rentals, the hotel will make meeting rooms, audio-visual equipment, refreshment breaks, and various other amenities available at reduced cost or no cost to the Institute. If we are unable to meet our guarantee, the hotel will add charges that, depending on how far we miss our guarantee, can run into tens of thousands of dollars. The Institute has negotiated very competitive rates at the Marriott, so please, plan to attend the annual meeting in Boston, and plan to stay at the conference hotel. I look forward to seeing you there!

Web link: AACSB's Management Education Task Force "Management Education at Risk," www.aacsb.edu/metf ■

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the editor of the journal during these years. "We never had to print a retraction or correction when Darl was our technical editor!"

"Darl was a decision scientist," Sorensen continued. "He approached his work and his play as a series of decisions. He was one of the best scholars our journal has ever seen." Darl remained thoroughly engaged with DSI, and regularly attended international, national, and Western meetings. He brought many qualities to our Institute: a sage mentor, a colleague, a teacher's teacher, a gentleman professor, and a loyal friend.

A special memorial service was held on the campus of the University of

Denver on July 17, with hundreds in attendance. The theme of the service was "Honor . . . Courage . . . Commitment," the motto of the U.S. Naval Academy, where Darl began his undergraduate education, and so appropriate to Darl's entire being. His family and dozens of his friends and colleagues spoke at the service about the special ways in which Darl had touched their lives.

We will not see Darl's smiling charismatic face anymore or hear his calming voice. At the University of Denver, the gym will seem empty without him. His friends at the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Center will wonder how to proceed with the evaluation of the anti-retroviral combination drug therapy

without Darl's advice. His collaborators engaged in summer research at the Southern Denmark Business School in Sonderborg will miss his mentoring. At the Decision Sciences Institute, his absence will leave a void in the hearts of all those who were enriched by his association.

Darl Bien, farewell dear friend! ■

*Krishna S. Dhir
Dean, Campbell School of Business
Berry College
kdhir@berry.edu*