

The Folly Of Teaching ‘A’ While Hoping For ‘B’

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"I Keep Six Honest Serving Men ..."

*I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.
I send them over land and sea,
I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me,
I give them all a rest.*

*I let them rest from nine till five,
For I am busy then,
As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
For they are hungry men.
But different folk have different views;
I know a person small-
She keeps ten million serving-men,
Who get no rest at all!*

*She sends'em abroad on her own affairs,
From the second she opens her eyes-
One million Hows, two million Wheres,
And seven million Whys!*

The Elephant's Child

INTRODUCTION

Motivated to investigate the non-business related content in business content courses, I applied for a two quarter sabbatical asking for feedback and support from both my department chair and the dean of the College of Business where I have researched and taught classes for over twenty-five years. They collectively provided neither advice, feedback, nor support, forcing me to go over their heads directly to the Research Committee charged with reviewing sabbatical applications. The committee supported my research idea and granted me a one quarter sabbatical. Based in part on my research findings and based in part on my experiences during the application process, I wanted to share the events associated with curricular reviews with other academicians. As Clint Eastwood once said, "Sometimes if you want to see a change for the better, you have to take things into your own hands."

My research called for me to investigate the non-business content of business courses to verify whether or not our graduating students are learning all they need to know to be competitive in the job market while making a contribution to society. Much like Rosa Parks, "I was just tired of giving in." And, I was weary of witnessing the rearranging of academic furniture, when what we really needed were fresh ideas – an entirely new architectural design. Throughout this case report my intentions are to provide descriptive rather than evaluative comments. For

our students to achieve success they will need to be open minded and to develop great people skills – skills developed in part through interacting, i.e., communicating with others from all walks of life. Faculty and administrators should provide positive role models to help inspire students to become all they can become. We should strive to remain open minded and continue to develop our interpersonal skills. After all, what is good for the goose is equally good for the gander.

REVIEW OF THE NON-BUSINESS CONTENT OF BUSINESS COURSES AT ONE REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

The focus of this segment of my research case is to summarize a review of the non-business content of the business curriculum at a second tier university's College of Business to determine if graduating business students are learning all they need to know to be competitive in the job market while making a contribution to society. Reflective thinking and clarity and grace of expression, both oral and written, using a wide variety of media, are included in this portion of the case as are values clarification and ethics.

A descriptive summary from examining all syllabi for fall, winter, and spring quarters of a Department of Management containing finance, human resources, management, marketing, & operations/production courses was undertaken to determine whether faculty stress in their syllabi the importance of critical thinking and clarity in communications, both written and oral. These elements of the syllabi are referred to as the non-business content of business content courses. In short, what did the learning objectives, reading assignments, homework, and grade weights imply about the priorities of the professor in charge of a given course?

A total of fifty-seven (57) courses (the Sample) were taught by the Department of Management at a regional two tier university offering accredited undergraduate and graduate MBA's. Of the 57 syllabi reviewed only four developed topical course outlines without using the table of contents of the text assigned while the remaining fifty-three (53) simply used the table of contents spread out over the 11-12 week term as their course outlines. The vast majority of learning objectives taken from the Sample population of syllabi generally contained either brief or no reference to writing, thinking, or to the grading value of either writing or thinking as behavioral learning objectives. Rarely were the terms citizenship or leadership mentioned. A slight minority of the Sample's objectives, 26 out of 243, contained references to writing and thinking within the learning objectives portion of the syllabi. It is interesting to look at the percentage of objectives referencing business course content as important versus the importance of non-business content. The percent of objectives stressing business content as the ultimate learning outcome desired by the faculty compared to the importance of objectives stressing thinking or writing were quite revealing with nearly 90% stressing the business content as the fundamental priority. Only 10.7% of these objectives made any reference to writing, thinking, and good citizenship, that is, leadership traits or what I am calling Success Dimensions (see Appendix I) as a desired learning outcome. There were four classes that did not have objectives, goals, or an overall focus! For the purposes of this case report, I use the term 'citizenship,' to mean references to learning outcomes related to ethical beliefs, values, or interpersonal skill development, characteristics possessed by successful leaders.

An amazing fifty-one course syllabi in the Sample used some form of homework requiring writing in the form of a project or case analysis as part of the quarter grade. It was not always clear what portion of the homework was an individual's responsibility versus that of the team, nor was it clear how much grading weight or value was placed on business content versus writing, grammar, and spelling. The average percentage of grading based on some form of writing was 42.36% with a range of 8-100%. In short, the grading weights for writing revealed that on average about 43 percent of the grades were based on some form of work requiring students to write in class or type at home, while 57 percent was strictly course content as measured through objective testing electronically scanned and graded. A few faculty members stated within their syllabi a requirement for blue book exams, while others mentioned "some combination of multiple choice and short essay" without splitting these out. There was generally no clear indication connecting writing or homework to the learning process and achievement of course objectives on the part of professors leaving unanswered the question, "What is the purpose of assigned writing activities?"

A number of syllabi contained reference to the university's Student Honor Code stressing the desire for students to do their own work and master standard guidelines used in writing, for example, "*Writing with Sources*" (Harvey, 1998). Of interest to this researcher was in finding that some faculty members do not always practice what they preach when it comes to documenting sources used in the development of their syllabi. The Sample appears to contain a melting pot of similar wording as if the invisible hands of some Sous Chef were tossing a verbal house salad. One wonders whether students pick up on this liberal use of ideas from someone else as they compare syllabi distributed by their own professors to those distributed by other faculty members.

Faculty must determine their own focus, making sure it fits within the parameters of the business curriculum. Faculty must also help students find and set their individual foci as they work towards producing an anthology of their program of study. My personal approach in these matters includes encouraging students to write as a means of improving their writing. I read and respond to their writing in journals or portfolios, not with grades and red marks; but, rather with notes, suggestions, cogent questions, and encouragement. This sort of student-faculty interchange is labor intensive yet it seems to me that anything worth doing in the classroom is worth doing right. Such intensity will help move the curriculum towards, "A rigorous and engaged student learning experience (from the regional university's *Statement of Our Commitment*, 2005)."

Previewing 12 of the 26 objectives from the Sample that listed non-business content as learning objectives may help shed some light on the importance of writing, thinking, and citizenship (leadership traits) to a minority of faculty. Within these 26 learning objectives eleven referenced writing while seven mentioned citizenship or leadership, and eight indicated decision-making to be important.

QUOTES OF A NON-BUSINESS CONTENT APPEARING AS LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. "Role playing, oral discussions of cases and team building will affect your grade."
2. "A brief typed summary of the weekly reading assignment, is due prior to start of class."
3. "Readiness Assessment Quizzes will be used."
4. "Communicate in a manner acceptable in a business."
5. "Develop analytical and critical thinking skills (and) create a research project."
6. "This course is a blend of theory and application."
7. "Develop a set of beliefs and values and begin to develop the courage to stand up for your own convictions."
8. "Develop a viable marketing plan."
9. "To provide you with greater ability to think about how financial markets work using economic and other concepts."
10. "Communicate in a manner that is expected in the business world. Written work requires good spelling, grammar; deadlines so check your work but don't sweat bullets over these issues."
11. "Students will polish their oral and written communication skills throughout the (term)."
12. "This course is concerned with the development, development (SIC), and implementation of ..."

Several of the above quotes are descriptive in nature and need some rewording if they are to serve as learning outcomes for students. It is important to stress the importance of writing well if we expect our students to do the same and it is important to ensure that each student does his/her own case analysis or problem sets. Assignments completed outside of class are difficult to monitor. For example, I believe it is imperative to point out that E-bay has become a source for students to obtain copies of inexpensive instructor's manuals containing case write ups. These can often be purchased for around \$12-\$15. And, it goes without saying that fraternity & sorority files are filled with papers, exams, and the like. The challenge for allocating faculty time is obvious, what are the priorities: research, grading, developing lectures, committee work, or community service?

Perhaps, a standard format for syllabi should be used to better enable the structuring of departmental curricula. This would provide for the inclusion of a proper blend of business content and non-business content. It would also help faculty link the many ways student progress will be monitored, audited, and graded by stating the importance of business versus non-business content in terms of grade points for each. Having said that, I would

propose requiring faculty to include in their syllabi several measurable learning objectives, the means of measuring student progress towards achieving these objectives, and the weight of all assignments related to each objective. Such an approach might better help both students and faculty. It would help students understand where their priorities should be placed; and, it would force faculty to link cause with effect and also with consequence. Students must be made aware of what is expected of them, how these activities will be evaluated, and how the activities relate to the course learning objectives. It would be up to the student and his/her advisors to discuss the collection of courses making up a student's curriculum and how they might prepare him/her for a given career. Syllabi should serve as blueprints to inform and be used to construct educational experiences

Project based and leaderless group activities that create or force students into situations requiring them to find their way out of the maze will perhaps become a better training ground made available in the classroom by closely simulating the real world of business filled with all its chaos, risk, and uncertainty. "In most college programs, students need to write both individually and in teams (overcoming their own weaknesses as they encounter them along the way)" (Mitchler, 2005). Projects such as essays, term papers, posters, one-page advocacy position papers, and the like must receive equal footing to the "business content" of this or that discipline. I am not saying that professors are wrong to devote 90-100% of class time on business content; however, I am saying that Socrates would have disagreed as perhaps would faculty across the university campus.

The challenge, then, is helping students develop a repertory of researching (and creative thinking) skills, the sense of when to use them, and the skill to incorporate others' ideas effectively into their own (writings). Writers (and teachers) have to figure out what's appropriate for a given situation, then produce and shape language to fit...college writing instructors (must) develop sequences of assignments that help students build a repertory of analytic and writing skills – through practice (and by example). (Hesse, 2005)

To do otherwise is disingenuous to the students and taxpayers alike and creates new meaning for "artificial" intelligence by letting a curriculum develop that looks good without being good and by doing or not doing the things that make students look smart without actually shaping their writing, thinking, or leadership skills. It is not enough to assign homework or case write ups for example; without providing a set of learning objectives and the necessary prerequisite guidance, and just the right amount of timely feedback.

A 2004 (Washington) statewide survey of employers . . . said they were having trouble finding good workers. The most cited need mentioned by 91% of 1,350 companies responding, was for workers with 'occupation-specific' skills. The next most common skills needed were problem-solving; communication (83%); and adaptability to change (79%). The basis skills of writing, math, and reading were cited by 63%, 62%, and 38% of companies respectively (Sowa, 2005).

The stressing of business content alone is not enough and is merely a job half finished. Who is responsible for attending to the other half? I believe this responsibility belongs to each and every member of the faculty, and administrators across campus. The challenge is in the planning, implementing, and controlling of the general curriculum to fulfill this responsibility.

An unbalanced focus on business content seems a disservice to students in many instances. Of course, any curricular change will require strong leaders with keen insight and a desire to disclose information, admit mistakes, encourage two-way communications, invite interested parties to important meetings, and show that they are willing to change their mind when someone else comes up with a better idea. Let's face it, cooperation, collaboration, coordination, and strong team dynamics are the backbone of today's academic units and today's business corporations and public organizations. We academicians must practice what we preach, especially in the classrooms, but also in our daily interactions with other members of the university.

As teachers, we must avoid presenting ourselves to students as masters of written communication and must instead model for them the very struggles and processes we desire to see in their writing; (because) teaching writing and assigning writing are two entirely different endeavors. (Copeland, 2005)

THE GENERAL CURRICULUM

Graduation requirements are part and parcel of any curriculum and define, for example, a business program! Yet, I am arguing that a curriculum is more than the sum of the courses required or prescribed for a particular business program or for a given major within business. The total educational experience of the typical business student should be a synergetic culmination of general education requirements, supporting electives, requirements in the business core and business major including upper and lower division courses, and more. The synergetic scope of what a curriculum is also includes those non-business content areas typically thought of as a balanced mixture of liberalizing educational experiences – what I call general education proficiencies. These general educational experiences or proficiencies can also be further enhanced by extracurricular activities as well.

It is imperative to understand that a list of required general education courses does not constitute ‘the general education’ curriculum. The aspirations for the general education curriculum encompasses more than the sum of its courses, courses designed to develop within all students “the furniture and discipline of the mind.” In order for this to happen, the non-business content represented by the general education courses must be carried over and integrated into the business courses required for graduation as preparation for future leaders of the communities served by the university. The business disciplines must include mental training that teaches students to think appropriately, rather than simply master a fixed amount of content. After a review of business faculty syllabi here and elsewhere, I take as given that business faculties in typical business programs will generally teach the discipline based course content that they have been taught. And, it has been my experience covering nearly 35 years of university teaching that these business faculties tend to teach the content of their discipline without much regard to the non-business content so important to the future career success of students graduating with a business major. Administrators organize faculties by discipline into colleges, schools, and departments where faculty members overwhelmingly teach to their disciplines in isolation.

Students might be better served if professors aimed at developing intellectual culture and training rather than overly focusing on the acquisition of knowledge, respecting long-term rather than immediate results. Too frequently, discipline based courses are commonly and profoundly weighted with collections of that discipline’s content. The content in turn appears in published textbooks, themselves a compilation of traditional topic areas. Similarly departments, as part of the university administrative structure, are organized along disciplinary lines and provide the content of the discipline and the department’s disciplinary bias.

Albert Einstein wrote, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” (Magretta, 2002). Such imagination comes from practicing critical, creative thinking and from the practice of communicating those thoughts developed as the student progresses through a well rounded three-tiered integrative program of study. Turner calls it, “Thinking across the Disciplines” where, “Helping students become reflective thinkers (and writers) is everyone’s job.” (Turner, 2005).

A well rounded all encompassing curriculum will liberate the student and help focus on developing within him/her a capacity for reasoning, reflecting, and independent critical thinking (see www.criticalthinking.org, maintained by The Foundation for Critical Thinking, for more information on the role of liberal education). Such a curriculum produces graduates who are curious about the workings of the world around them. Graduates who possess the capacity to adapt to ever changing work and home environments, are open-minded, and have the creativity to put new ideas into practice using new and old methods in so doing. Such a curriculum would include pedagogy that produces good citizens and talented leaders with an aptitude to think clearly about public or private issue, and the ability to contribute eloquently to the controversial debates of the day. Such breadth of study will be balanced by depth within one’s major area of interest.

A TRAINING GROUND FOR REAL MANAGER

“Real managers” understand how to integrate all of the business functions in achieving success for themselves and their organizations (Fred Luthans, *Real Managers*). How well they accomplish this integration depends on communication and networking skills as much as it depends upon understanding the content of business

courses taken. Stressing disciplinary content alone is insufficient preparation to provide students with managerial competencies. That would be the Folly of Teaching ‘A’ (content only) while overlooking the necessity of connecting a liberalizing general education to the major content areas and hoping for an outcome I’m referring to as ‘B’ (liberal arts elements: thinking, creating, writing). Graduates from programs that include both are broadly educated, have depth of content mastery, and should be ready and willing to make a contribution to society.

The general skills of critical thinking can lend themselves to all subjects. “What is needed is critical thinking, thinking as a process within which a person’s ability to understand is greatly enhanced” (Paul & Elder, 2001). The ability to think critically provides students the wherewithal to question sources of information, information itself, conclusions and opinions of others. Critical thinking becomes somewhat like the “scientific methodology” (Cohen), a way of gathering facts in an unbiased fashion and discerning who, how, what, where, when, and why? It is a branch of logic that contains elements of both inductive and deductive thinking. It is the realization that “man does not think in straight lines” (Cohen). Critical thinking is used to clarify, to probe, and to understand that which was previously not understandable. Such thinking and understanding is in keeping with the poem used to open this research report; “The six honest serving men taught me all I knew.”

In the world of business, strategic planning and implementation, oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills used to build networking relationships, leadership skills, and the ability to think analytically are important attributes of successful managers (see Luthans, *Real Managers*). Furthermore, recent events have revealed that it is essential for every organization to have leaders with vision, honesty, and the ability to guide and encourage their employees through difficult or changing situations. Organizations and universities with effective leadership not only anticipate external change and challenges; they create an internal environment where all members are empowered to grow and take responsibility for their positive contributions and performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2005). It is not always the case that these traits are practiced in higher education, although we do preach to our students about them!

Folly ‘A’ can occur when the classroom focus is heavily on the business content side of our business courses with little time or effort devoted to the more general education competencies required for student success while in college and, more importantly, after graduation, all the while hoping to produce the perfect graduate ready and willing to achieve success in the real world of business. Educating the whole person by providing ample opportunities for reflective thinking helps students become creative and critical decision makers, both prerequisites for clarity and grace of expression.

While we often lack the convenience of a crisis for which we are required to fight or take flight akin to dealing with Katrina or the recent earthquake in Pakistan, faculty can artificially create a crisis for students to gain such experience. These simulations will enable students to experience the school of hard knocks, but within a protective classroom environment. As Barry Litzer writes, “Indeed, the relative merits of the core-curriculum and distribution approaches to general education raise critical questions that deserve sustained discussion...(we must) transcend the boundaries of specialization and provide all students with a common language and common skills” (Litzer, 2004).

In short, graduating students must be able and willing to make intellectual contributions to society based on their knowledge of the diverse world around them, and they must be made aware of how world events impact organizational decision-making. This lifelong learning is important because a democracy will need informed citizens, both now and in the future.

“Business is keenly aware of shortfalls in the United States education system as it confronts job applicants who are ill prepared for the workplace” (Trends, The Kiplinger Letter, 2003). The methods recommended to turn this situation around include everything from “charter schools to partnering with colleges and universities to apprenticeships, summer interning, work-study programs and job shadowing” (Trends). As educators we can do this and much more by coordinating the learning activities of our students across disciplines, and not merely teaching to our disciplines.

Cross-discipline teams of scholars and practitioners would be wise to undertake a thoughtful review of the important role general education skill-development plays within the business core curriculum presently, and to investigate what it can or should be expected to accomplish. Such an undertaking will require a flexible forum – something not always found when faculty come together to form curriculum committees. The cross-discipline team's charge should be to help answer several pre-structured curriculum-related questions with a discipline-related, but non-business content perspective. We need to ask faculty across campus what makes up the content of their non-business courses – courses such as writing, composition, logic, and the like. Perhaps, such information will help business faculty concentrate on educating the whole person. In other words, we need to work cooperatively across campus in order to find out if we know what we are doing, if we know how to articulate what we want to do, and if we are doing what we want to be doing with our programs of study. Such philosophical underpinnings of a curriculum review must be developed prior to undertaking the review; they provide the structure for the review.

Additionally, a number of program related questions must be addressed. First, what are the current skills, knowledge, and abilities that hiring managers expect graduating students to possess? Second, should a College of Business prepare students for both current and future job markets and can this be done by combining business course content with General Education requirement and competencies? And third, who decides on the skills, knowledge, & abilities that students should master during their college experience? In short, what is the domain of general education as part of the requirements for graduation from a College of Business?

Not all AACSB International schools need have the same exact curriculum structure and academic underpinnings. “The subjects listed in a curriculum will be determined by the mission of an institution, by the training and experience of its faculty members, and by the needs of the clientele being served, i.e., business practitioners” (Changing the Curriculum, Lewis Mayhemp & Patrick Ford). What seems to be missing in current curriculum is an awareness of “the needs of the clientele being served” (Mayhemp & Ford). Secondary to this awareness are the issues of who should decide what those needs might be, and how they ultimately will decide. Curriculum planners must include the organizations that hire graduates from their college or university, and pay attention to their descriptions of a well rounded educated person worthy of hire. Too frequently, faculty teach primarily to their disciplines, especially with ever increasing class sizes where many faculty feel pressed for time to do otherwise. Term papers and essay examinations that require critical thinking and articulate responses fall by the wayside under such conditions. Instead students are required to satisfactorily complete a collection of classes, including a common core and the courses within their respective majors in order to graduate. But a curriculum is much more than the sum of its courses taken. A curriculum should enable and insure that students completing a program of their choosing will be educated and prepared to embark on a life of learning, leading to success, growth, and development.

A profile describing “well-rounded” graduates could be developed using the SKA's (skills, knowledge, and abilities) present managers believe are the requisite characteristics of graduates they would like to hire. Examples would include skills in preparing written reports, in making oral presentations, in directing the work of others, in communicating with fellow employees, in perceiving and reacting sensitively to the needs of others, and in making decisions or in rendering judgment. Examples of knowledge based training deemed helpful include those traditional disciplines so frequently making up the core at most colleges of business; knowledge for example of management information systems, of finance, of marketing, of accounting, of statistics, of productions/operations management, of research methodologies, and of international business. Additional desirable outcomes might include multiple abilities, for example, to understand and carry out oral & written instructions, ability to make persuasive presentations of ideas or facts, to come up with creative solutions to complex business problems, to create a good first impression, to express ideas clearly in writing, to plan and organize groups or activities, and the ability to reach logical conclusions based on the evidence at hand. Such skills and abilities represent the non-business content of business content courses while knowledge represents the subject matter or business content of those courses. Remember, that while Einstein stated that imagination was more important than knowledge, he did not say knowledge was unimportant. The degree of importance between the two is a relative concept; of that I am absolutely certain.

I believe that individual faculty must strike a balance between their dual roles, acting occasionally as mentors and often times becoming tormentors to encourage student engagement. Can such judgment calls be quantified, explained, defended, and presented in some sort of activity plan for others to use and learn from? Perhaps! Yet it seems easier to gain student engagement than it is to explain to someone else all the nuances that are involved. “The Six Honest Serving Men” will better teach them “all I knew.” Perhaps faculty connecting with students is the case of something easier done than said. Einstein believed, “Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted” (Magretta, 2002). There are far too many subjective intellectual nuances, opinions, varied situations, and expert judgments to be made by schooled scholarly professors. Trying to develop highly structured pedagogies reminiscent of econometric modeling styles of pedagogy takes more time than they might be worth, primarily because no two learning situations in the classroom are exactly alike or composed of exactly the same mix of students and student abilities. Teaching is as much art and philosophy as it is science, especially given the diverse students enrolled at different points in time.

FACULTY ACTIVITY PLANS

Perhaps requiring something like faculty activity plans might work to help coordinate curricular matters, yet such plans seem reminiscent of those used in business under the guise of MBO (managing by objectives) – a tired management tool of the seventies that failed far more frequently than it succeeded. Such failures stemmed primarily from a breakdown of communications and trust between managers and their subordinates. Cooperation and coordination established through trust and good faith communications are central to the success of any organization, perhaps doubly so in higher education.

We really need to get away from structuring departments around disciplines and get back to focusing on the needs of students. There is no more stunning fact about the academic profession anywhere in the world than the simple one that academics are possessed by disciplines, i.e. fields of study, even as they are located in institutions. “With the growth of specialization in the last century, the discipline has become everywhere an imposing, if not dominating, force in the working lives of the vast majority of academics (Yale Website).” Each student will have a different set of academic needs correlated with their career aspirations, since each individual student will be seeking different objectives from a particular program of study. We must structure our curriculum around the needs of students if we are to call ourselves “student centered.”

Learning objectives and outcomes will need to be developed and integrated into college curricula if a given College of Business is to fulfill a student-focused mission. To do so, we need to connect general education to the content majors by working across disciplines, departments, and colleges, using pedagogy that gives students multi-tiered and integrated perspectives. We need to target student competencies, personal development, behavioral orientation, and civic conduct. In addition, we need to expand our idea of enriching student experiences by providing easy access to extra-curricular activities occurring outside the classroom, by providing ample opportunity for faculty-student research projects across disciplines, and by providing student access to experiential learning using ‘live’ cases, internships, practicum’s, small group recitation-class formats, and through service to the community by using real world case projects that engage students with genuine world realities. Educators can do that only if they are allowed to do so, and only if they are willing and able to work in what I conceptualize as three-tiered or three dimensional formats.

By this I mean that what we do should always be in the best interest of students, be best for the personal growth and development of faculty and staff, and be best for the university and the communities served. It also means that course work builds on previous course work, evolving and becoming more inclusive as students progress from freshman to senior year. We must be able to identify what we say we want to do, using business practitioners to help guide us along the way, and, we must accomplish what we say we want to be doing. In short, we must do the right things and do them correctly. The focal question must be, “What should we be doing with the whole curriculum and not just the business curriculum?” Its folly to say that we are doing all the right things, but not actually doing them, while hoping for high graduation rates, successful careers for graduates, and grateful alums that continue to support alma mater with their generous donations. “Managers are going to be in demand (in 2005 and

beyond). They can be specialists or generalists, but they must be good at communicating, motivating, and building cooperative teams,” (The Kiplinger Letter, 2004).

Paul Harrington, economist and associate director at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern recommends, “Students contemplating majors in the liberal arts or humanities should also take some business-oriented courses.” Perhaps, we need to move the requirements for degrees out of the realm of traditional business discipline exposure and content mastery to the realm of demonstrated managerial competencies. And, unlike typical faculty meetings, we must do more than discuss curricular changes, we must take action because, “The U.S. faces a worker gap and a skills gap – and both are right around the corner” (Business Week, May 20, 2002). It is imperative that institutions of higher education produce an educated citizenry and a well equipped work force, connecting thought to actions, theory to practice. Critical thinking is the cornerstone of such an undertaking!

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Without a strategic comprehensive plan to design, implement, and manage the quality of student learning that takes place in higher education, any given university will find it difficult to maximize the allocation of scarce resources to increase productivity, to provide quality service to the communities served, to graduate quality students, and to become competitive in attracting quality students, faculty, staff and administrators. Central to the issue of quality programming is program design which in turn is embedded in what is now being called Enrollment Management. (Seidman, A. (1995).

The purpose of this research paper was to discuss the specific ramifications of the non-business content of curriculum design as reflected in course syllabi. However, of equal importance is the implementation and assessment as a subset of university management, along with the leadership styles, and financial and philosophical support from key administrators across campus. In short, I wanted to gauge whether or not a second tier university was doing what they said they were doing?

Future research will need to address the importance of conducting additional studies linking what is being done in the classroom to long run enrollment management. Such management is a process designed to achieve and maintain optimum enrollment which is important since enrollment is generally tied directly to a university’s budget funding formula. And, it is this funding in large part that enables a university to operate and serve its constituents or stakeholders. Seidman writes, “Enrollment management is a comprehensive process designed to help achieve and maintain optimum enrollment (recruitment, retention and graduation rates). It is an institution wide process that permeates virtually every aspect of the College’s function and culture,” from admissions standards and guidelines to graduation requirements.

One of the tenets of the present paper posits that the quality of a university’s academic programs can only be developed and maintained in a stable enrollment environment. Such stability begins with curriculum design as reflected by course syllabi as well as university and college mission statements. We must not only be doing the right things in the classroom; we must also do them correctly. And, we must market what we are doing to future potential students who will apply and enroll at our respective college or university. Reputation building includes the academic side as well as sporting events!

Thus, while marketing is the process of selling a given product or service to specific demographic audiences at the right price (the four P’s: place, product, price, promotion) one must first develop the product and service. In higher education, the product or services are the curriculum, academic programs and student services where quality is judged by students and their extended family, future employers, and the general public whose taxes help fund higher education. Each will have a voice in answering the question, “who enrolls where and for what purposes?”

Numerous sub-issues are related to enrollment management in addition to curriculum elements; for example, diversity, student retention, sources of funding, reputation, placement of graduates, and service to the communities being served. Seidman explains, “Enrollment management strategies include recruitment strategies,

marketing strategies, retention strategies, intervention strategies, and information strategies (are fundamental to the success of an institution).” While each of these is extremely important, they were delimited from this paper. The focus of the present paper was on just one important element - the product or curriculum as depicted by course syllabi. Are we doing or providing ‘A’ while hoping for outcomes such as ‘B’? We need to develop and deliver an integrated curriculum for breadth of knowledge, one comprised of eclectic elements from across campus while still focusing on specialization and depth, because “Executives don’t face (traditional) academic disciplines, they face problems” requiring a plethora of skills, knowledge, and abilities (Alsop, WSJ, July 11, 2006). This is further illustrated by a “Ranking (of) the Attributes” of graduates preferred by corporate recruiters (Alsop, WSJ, Sept. 20, 2006). At the top of the list is communication and interpersonal skills - rated as very important by 89% of college recruiters, while only 38% rated content of the core curriculum as very important. The former is used within the context of this research paper as non-business content, while the latter is the business content, of business school courses.

I hope that my comments have value for those who reflect upon the need for change and who have experienced the frustrations of on-going curricular reviews that simply reshuffle the courses and call that “the ten year reform.” Success is a journey and not a destination. The road to becoming an educated citizen capable of making major contributions to society is always under construction hence the need to instill in students a love of lifelong learning through the instillations of values, beliefs, skills, knowledge, and abilities. Success for students during their college years and later in careers is also a journey and not merely a destination measured by the number of credits or courses completed. To fix the theory-to-practice paradigm we need to add a liberal arts catalyst to the business courses – reading & writing as well as arithmetic. Such a catalyst is the non-business content represented by the general education requirements expressed as student learning outcomes and not merely as a collection of courses. The content of these general education required courses must become part and parcel of the business courses. In such a multiple tiered format, students continue to strengthen their liberal arts skills and abilities while learning about the theory and application of business knowledge.

While we infrequently have the luxury of a crisis, where students are forced to experience this or that real world situation, such challenges can be manufactured; thereby requiring students to engage in critical thinking using business content like so many geometry theorems to resolve complex issues that they can cogently discuss using multiple media. The importance of understanding and communicating that understanding to others is characteristic of successful managers.

Necessity truly is the mother of invention; hence students in a counterfeit crisis will energize and innovate to resolve the issues at hand. Today’s students seem to love games and game theory; we should take full advantage of this devotion to games. Along the way students will quickly realize the importance of group sharing and working for the good of the entire class consequently learning first hand about corporate social responsibility. An all inclusive capstone course experience, or senior thesis, seems appropriate and should be required of students during their last term in school.

Students will rise to the level of faculty expectations as long as students have been made aware of those expectations through the various syllabi and through dialogues with the professor. Students will learn the business content portion of newly designed courses by being allowed to engage in eclectic reasoning and thinking for themselves about that very content, its origins and applications. We should demand from our students that they grow up and begin to act like adults taking responsibility for their own education. They must pay attention! I always tell my students that it is their responsibility to master the subject matter and acquire the attributes that lead to successful careers. My focus is on their learning! I plainly say, “Pay attention and take responsibility for learning the material while meeting new friends outside of classes.”

Learning thus becomes somewhat of a treasure hunt. I purposely act as their mentor and tormentor depending on what is required as gleaned through evaluative feedback. Assessment takes place during student role-playing, in-basket exercises, leaderless group discussions, and “a variety of testing techniques designed to allow (students) to demonstrate, under standardized conditions, the skills and abilities that are most essential for success in a given job” (Coleman, 1987).

At the cusp of a university's success in fulfilling its mission is a sound curriculum and strong leadership, leadership that has forged trusting relationships through good faith decision-making and shared governance. What is needed is a climate that encourages free and creative thinking while also providing a collaborative working environment that supports the most important piece of the academic puzzle, namely, the faculty. Whenever leaders make bad decisions, related directly or indirectly to curriculum, emotionally based or otherwise, it is extremely difficult to go back and unscramble the omelet.

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APPENDIX # 1

Success Dimensions

Students are evaluated using assessment centers activities and traditional assessments at the beginning and end of each academic term. Evaluations by the individual student, the student's team members, and the faculty teaching the course are encouraged. Numerical scores from 0-4, with 4 being highest, are place in columns 1 & 2 at midterm and end of term by the individual student to enable him/her to gauge their development during the term.

	1	2
Impact Ability to create a good first impression, to command attention and respect, to show an air of confidence, and to achieve personal recognition.		
Energy Ability to be self-starting and to achieve a high activity level		
Oral Communication Skill Effectiveness of expression in individual or group situations.		
Oral Presentation Skill Ability to make a persuasive, clear presentation of ideas or facts.		
Written Communication Skill Ability to express ideas clearly in writing in good grammatical form.		
Creativity Ability to come up with imaginative solutions in business situations.		
Range Of Interests Having breadth and diversity of interests, concern for personal and organizational environment, and a desire to actively participate in events.		
Stress Tolerance Stability of performance under pressure and opposition.		
Motivation The importance of work in personal satisfaction and the desire to achieve at work.		
Work Standards The desire to do a good job for its own sake.		
Leadership Effectiveness in bringing a group to accomplish a task and in getting ideas accepted.		
Salesmanship Ability to organize and present material in a convincing manner.		
Sensitivity Skill in perceiving and reacting sensitively to the needs of others.		
Listening Skill Ability to pick out important information in oral communications.		
Flexibility Ability to modify behavioral style and management approach to realize a goal.		
Tenacity Tendency to stay with a problem or line of thought until the matter is settled.		
Risk Taking Extent to which calculated risks are taken based on sound judgment.		
Initiative Action efforts to influence events rather than passive acceptance.		
Independence Action based on own convictions rather than a desire to please others.		
Planning And Organization Effectiveness in planning and organizing own activities and those of a group.		
Management Control Appreciation of needs for controls and maintenance of control over processes.		
Use Of Delegation Ability to effectively use subordinates and to understand where a decision can best be made.		
Problem Analysis Effectiveness in seeking out pertinent data and determining the source of the problem.		
Judgment Ability to reach logical conclusions based on the evidence at hand.		
Decisiveness Readiness to make decisions or to render judgment.		