

1-2-2017

Defining and Achieving Student Success at Non-Elite Schools

Charles J. Fornaciari
La Salle University

J. B. Arbaugh
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj>



Part of the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Organizational Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fornaciari, Charles J. and Arbaugh, J. B. (2017) "Defining and Achieving Student Success at Non-Elite Schools," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1, Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol14/iss1/3>

ARTICLES

Defining and Achieving Student Success at Non-Elite Schools

Charles J. Fornaciari^a and J. B. Arbaugh^b

^aSchool of Business, La Salle University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA; ^bCollege of Business, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA

ABSTRACT

Ensuring student success has become an increasingly loud conversation for business schools. Unfortunately, most of the solutions offered within the literature tend to be proffered by those at elite institutions, and their advice unconsciously reflects that worldview. However, the vast majority of us do not work at elite institutions, even those residing in the, by definition, limited and prestigious universe of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB)-accredited schools. Subsequently, the elites' problems do not match our non-elite realities and, even worse, often push our issues into the background. This article seeks to explore three student success concerns that are more relevant, yet typically undiscussed, to those of us at non-elite AACSB-accredited institutions. These are the ways we collect and use data, an over-emphasis on process without a firm outcomes perspective, and the increased emphasis on efficiency-based measures of performance. By identifying and exploring these themes, this article seeks to help reframe and broaden the conversation to include non-elite institutional issues about how best to ensure student success.

KEYWORDS

AACSB; elite versus non-elite schools; future of management education; managing a business school; outcome assessment

Recent years have witnessed increased worries in business education about how to improve student success. These worries have emerged from a number of sources, ranging from the popular press (Baron, 2015), to academic research (Gupta, 2014), and perhaps most importantly, for the purposes of this essay, to accreditation agencies such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). Subsequently, educators are receiving contradictory signals about what student success actually means. One way to parse those signals is to examine their sources. For example, we note that the signals can be seen in terms of the different worldviews of elite and non-elite institutions. Thus, even though by definition AACSB accreditation conveys that a school is part of a limited and prestigious group from which all members can benefit, there exists a wide variation in institutional status within the AACSB member universe. For the purposes of this essay, we use the term *non-elite* to denote those AACSB-accredited schools that are not very high research activity institutions (RU/VH: research university/very high research activity), using the classification language of the U.S. Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Center for Postsecondary Research, 2010), or are not nationally or globally ranked by *BusinessWeek*, *Financial Times*, or one of the other numerous rating entities. Non-elites typically are regionally focused, and are particularly reliant on sometimes unsteady outside

revenue sources for covering basic operating expenses—either as state-funded institutions or as predominantly tuition-driven private schools. Conversely, the elites, even the public elites, often have the ability to use their significant endowment and research funding to cover those costs. For example, the University of California at Los Angeles's Anderson School of Management recently gained increased autonomy from its state system in exchange for dramatically decreased financial support—a move that quickly was followed by it receiving a \$100 million endowment gift (Byrne, 2015; Rivard, 2014). Given this background, this essay's main purpose is to explore some of the unique, yet often underacknowledged, challenges that non-elite AACSB business schools face with regard to helping their students achieve success.

As a starting point for our conversation, we notice that non-elite and elite AACSB business schools often have missions that focus on different student success measures. For example, non-elite public school leaders often define success for students in terms of holding costs down and offering more programs focused on increased postgraduation employment and higher salaries in job shortage areas, including business, while decreasing resources for the liberal arts (Bender, 2011; Bradwell, 2015; Jaschick, 2011). Thus, California State University Bakersfield touts the low cost (especially when compared to private schools), flexibility, and convenience of its master's in business

administration (MBA) program (<http://www.csub.edu/mba>). At private schools, with their higher published tuition rates, lower yields, and often aggressive discounting to meet enrollment targets, success is defined in terms of a tuition–salary “value” index—for example, Western New England University emphasizes the affordability of its MBA compared to other schools in the region (<http://www1.wne.edu/business/index.cfm?selection=doc.1279>).

Conversely, elite AACSB business schools have missions that tend to focus on broader and more aspirational conceptualizations of student success. For example, Harvard Business School Dean Nitin Nohria recently noted, “We realize the HBS mission of educating leaders who make a difference in the world” (Nohria, 2014, p. 1). Similarly, Dean Judy Olian proclaims, “At UCLA Anderson, we’re not content with how things are; instead, we look to the future to discover and chart what will be” (<http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about>). In the starkest of terms, the elite schools assume that their already accomplished and academically well-prepared students will land very high paying jobs after graduation; thus, they define success for students as preparing them for the “opportunity to change the world.” Conversely, non-elites tend to offer a success narrative based on preparing students to get jobs with salaries commensurate to their tuition.

However, despite these different operationalizations of success, we notice that many of the prescriptions for improvement are created by, and aimed toward, elite institutions, and therefore may be of limited use to the vast majority of business schools. Consider, for example, Pfeffer and Fong’s (2002) work, which is one of the most widely cited “business of business school” journal articles. At the time, both were at Stanford University, one of the most selective business schools in the world—its 2014 acceptance rate was 7% (Badenhausen, 2014). Their view is evident when they explore the impact of the MBA degree on consulting and investment banking careers (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002, p. 81). While Stanford worries about how well its training is helping its students to succeed on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley, the vast majority of business schools place their graduates elsewhere. Non-elite graduates typically are hired for positions such as an assistant human resources (HR) manager of the regional office of a national bank or as a sales associate for the town’s family-owned furniture store. If these graduates then pursue an MBA, it is likely that they will begin their studies earlier in their careers at non-elite part-time programs, perhaps to transition to other industries while not incurring the expense of elite, full-time programs (Hwang, Bento, & Arbaugh, 2011; Yeaple, Johnston, & Whittingham, 2010). Although these types of placements could be seen as “successful,” they

are not materially equal. Therefore, if schools that carry the same accreditation are to produce comparable outcomes, approaches to produce such changes must disproportionately benefit the non-elites.

Consequently, we find Pfeffer and Fong’s (2002) experiences to be significantly different from ours. They proffer several improvement suggestions—almost all of which are inapplicable to non-elite schools; we view one as the most emblematic of the conversational differences regarding enhancing student success. They argue that world-class schools “concentrate on more experienced students, often practicing managers who attend classes episodically and then return to their work environments to confront their learning with their everyday experiences, and vice versa” (p. 89). In the non-elite world, every enrollment dollar and full-time equivalent (FTE) counts, so non-elites do not have the luxury of carefully “shaping” their classes by rejecting 93% of their applicants. This is even more problematic for non-elites, given that recent declines in graduate enrollments impacted them harder and more permanently than the elites, who have, and are using, their expansive resources to aggressively recruit premier students, often by drawing them away from potential non-elite suitors (Baron, 2014; Baron & Allen, 2014; Byrne, 2014; Korn, 2014; Rao, 2015; Xin, 2015).

Likewise, elite school residents Bennis and O’Toole (2005, p. 104) called for redesigning curriculum to include more humanities and interdisciplinary courses to make the MBA more relevant. Again, for those of us at non-elites, where our government leaders are advocating for reducing liberal arts training, and where our business school’s “low-cost per capita high volume model” often underwrites expensive and limited-access programs like nursing, we ask who is going to pay for all of the extensive faculty retraining their proposal calls for, how can the faculty members fit it into their existing obligations, and would administrations willingly let their “cash cows” morph into high-cost programs (Billsberry, 2014; Okazaki-Ward, 2001; Piercy, 2000; Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2004; Vinten, 2000; Wilson & McKiernan, 2011)?

Finally, we see another aspect of the elite school world-view within our literature—the rankings game. Gioia and Corley (2002) note that many schools play the game by rigorously controlling the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) scores of their entering classes, while Khurana (2007) discusses how schools attempt to move up in the rankings game through the use of expensive branding programs (pp. 343–346) and a reliance on using costly “market signaling” techniques, to both potential students and employers (pp. 347–352). Again, for those of us at non-elite schools, the resource intensity of the elite rankings game is astonishing.

Thus, we are struck by the underlying, if unconsciously skewed, philosophy that drives the recommendations of “improving” business school student success: All problems can be solved if you are not resource constrained and you can use your admissions selectiveness to shape your incoming class. For those of us at non-elite schools where we have fewer resources available to enact such strategies, the ideas put forth by the authors at elite institutions give us little practical ability to meaningfully improve our programs.

Although we are more sympathetic toward the non-elite schools, we do note that some of this situation likely is self-inflicted. Due to a variety of reasons (Hedrick, Henson, Krieg, Wassell, & Charles, 2010; Spritzer & Billings, 2005), AACSB shifted its accreditation standards in 1991 from research to mission-based measures. Although these changes opened doors for non-elites, they also had unanticipated resource consequences. AACSB schools can be more expensive to operate than non-accredited schools on a host of factors (cf. Arbaugh, Bento, & Hwang, 2010; Hedrick, Henson, Krieg, Wassell, & Charles, 2010; Julian & Ofuri-Dankwa, 2006; Lowrie & Willmott, 2009; Romero, 2008). Therefore, for non-elites, these changes came as a double-edged sword. On one hand, there is increased prestige from AACSB accreditation that enables them to recruit and attract from pools of faculty and student talent to which they otherwise might not have access (Casile & Davis-Blake, 2002; Hedrick et al., 2010; Romero, 2008). On the other hand, they now have to attract or generate the support to retain and service this increased human capital, and historically they have been less prepared and able to do so than AACSB’s traditional elite-institution members.

Additionally, non-elites cause self-inflicted wounds due a desire to “grow their way out of their problems.” For example, online learning mistakenly can be seen as a magic bullet for adding revenues and FTEs. However, online learning often is accompanied by significant pitfalls, ranging from ongoing infrastructure commitments to the realization that the competition is now all schools around the world. The continued lack of understanding of the unique circumstances of the new milieu can result in missed enrollment targets and/or high dropout rates (Allen & Seaman, 2013; January; Carr, 2000; Jenkins, 2012; Park & Cho, 2009; Willging & Johnson, 2004). This, in turn, results in higher costs per FTE, and it can be exacerbated as schools engage in expensive spending races as programs attempt to get noticed in an increasingly crowded marketplace (Fornaciari, Forte, & Mathews, 1999). Again, these issues are not unique to the non-elites, but they are felt more keenly due to resource constrictions.

Given the contextual factors just described, the remainder of this essay explores some systemic, yet often unspoken, issues that impact the ability of non-elite schools to effectively teach their students and prepare them for success. Because the literature is vast on many of the microlevel issues that impact success, such as motivation, skills, and teacher effectiveness (Bacon, Stewart, & Silver, 1999; Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002; Hawk & Lyons, 2008; Klein, Noe, & Wang, 2006), we adopt a macrolevel institutional perspective to explore the issues that we believe are equally important yet for the most part have remained under the radar in institutional effectiveness and student success conversations. Even Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek’s (2006) encyclopedic review of the student success literature favors micro perspectives, and their macro conversations tend to focus on a number of well-known topics, such as “successful student” courses (e.g., note-taking, study habits), the first-year experience, and academic advising. Thus, we argue that most AACSB-accredited business schools (and, for that matter, those who work with other accrediting bodies), but especially non-elite institutions, are dealing with three increasingly important issues that are systematically challenging their ability to improve overall student success. These relate to how institutions collect and use student data, an increasing process versus outcomes orientation, and an increasing prevalence of metrics focused on efficiency of resource utilization. Our goal in this article is not to provide solutions to these problems, as all of them are complex, and sometimes intractable, but to bring them to light to help reframe the conversation regarding how we consider the realistic institutional factors that influence student success, especially at non-elite business schools. Thus, this article seeks to explore the realistic issues that relatively resource-starved and enrollment-dependent non-elite schools are struggling to address in the cause of improving student success.

Data issues and student success

Recent decades have witnessed an explosion in college and university data collection activities as regional accrediting agencies (such as Western Association of Schools and Colleges and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools), discipline-specific accrediting agencies (such as AACSB International), the federal government, and many public institutions and state governments have demanded greater accountability and transparency. It is uncommon for a modern-day university to not have some form of “institutional performance” office for which the primary purpose is to collect the school’s data, analyze them, and report them to various oversight bodies. Similarly, most AACSB-

accredited business schools typically have at least one senior-level administrator whose primary function is to oversee and manage data collection and reporting requirements, especially those connected to Assurance of Learning, and we suspect those related to the 2013 AACSB standards related to measuring “impact.” Thus, it is not surprising that the number of administrative personnel has increased dramatically (Anonymous, 2012). Faculty members are not immune to these chores, especially those at non-elite institutions where the work is not “farmed out” because research and teaching assistants with qualifications similar to those at doctoral institutions are the exception and not the rule. Most faculty members have become increasingly familiar with program-level assessment rubrics that are designed to measure their students’ collective progress toward some college-wide learning outcome. Ideally, data generated from such initiatives could be particularly helpful for non-elite business schools (whose students are, by definition, not as academically talented as their peers at elite institutions) in their efforts to elevate student learning by helping them determine the number and types of obstacles students are most likely to encounter in their degree progression, and the students most likely to be impacted by those challenges. After the school collects and analyzes these data, it can experiment with and develop strategies to preemptively identify students most likely to be impacted by particular types of challenges and the respective challenges’ successful navigation.

However, we are struck by the irony that more often than not, while faculties collect and analyze the data on their students, the first step toward reporting is to aggregate and anonymize the data in the report. Thus, although institutions have become experts at collecting data, they often remove some of the key information that actually may help identify the weaknesses of individual students. Likewise, the process suffers from other flaws, especially from a statistical perspective because, in our experience, faculties and administrators at non-elite institutions rarely receive the rigorous training that needs to be an integral part of any quality improvement process (cf. Kelly, Tong, & Choi, 2010). For example, assessments often occur on class sizes of 30 or fewer students, yet despite the common lack of parametric validity of the data, faculty members typically are exhorted to determine teaching improvements for future classes based on a statistically insufficient sample size (Bacon & Stewart, *in press*). For large classes that achieve parametric sizes, control variables often are not factored into the assessment, thus lessening the statistical validity of the findings. Other sins committed include each faculty member evaluating his or her own students, thus inevitably leading to inconsistencies in application of

rubrics, or, even worse, a simple inconsistency within individual faculty members’ evaluation processes (either collectively or individually)—which often is seen as “yet another report to generate” among the steadily increasing administrative burdens placed upon their busy days. When faculties do collectively assess a common item, the chore often is broken into various subgroups, which may change within a term or across terms, once again leading to consistency and reliability issues. Finally, standard practices, such as testing for interrater reliability, are likely to be hit and miss.

We suspect that there are many causes that have led us to this environment. Though we are not lawyers, we believe that one concern is due to institutional caution relating to the privacy restrictions imposed by various laws such as the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Another concern relates to what admittedly would be significant coordination issues among all involved parties, which likely are greater at non-elite bureaucratic state institutions. Assuming that there were no restrictions on the data, and that faculties could, for example, know the true individual performance of each student in each class (and not just the student’s grade), it likely would take an enormous amount of work and resources to build and run systems where faculties could have individual and comprehensive insights on each and every student. Complicating this is the idea that these insights would need to be updated and refined each and every term. Even though we offer a critical analysis here, we shudder to think what such a system would look like in practice, and what demands it would place on both our time and our independence. Unlike much of primary education, especially in the early years where one teacher has one student virtually all of the time for an academic year, the business school education model, with few exceptions, is predicated deliberately on fragmentation of the student’s educational experience—and more often than not, this is presented as a feature of the system. Finally, and ironically, AACSB (and regional accrediting agencies, in our experience) seems blithely unconcerned about these issues, especially those related to data gathering and reporting, because, as has been suggested, enforcement of such standards would shrink AACSB’s own market and, consequently, its revenues (Trank & Rynes, 2003). We suspect that most colleges and schools avoid correcting them not only due to the lack to strong demands from accreditation agencies, but also due to the tremendous time, effort, and expense that would be involved in actually generating data that would pass the scrutiny of any respectable academic journal.

Thus, we are in a unique situation where most universities generate and collect tremendous amounts of data about each student, but by design, data collected for program-level assessment is often is “locked away”

and faculty do not get to see it at a granular level. Considering that at non-elite schools, where the onus is more likely than at elite schools to be on elevating the learners' knowledge, skills, and abilities from an average or below-average level (or where bimodal distributions are more likely to be present), instructors being able to access baselines for their individual students or, for that matter, a class composite would be helpful in determining areas of emphasis before the course begins. In essence, we treat each and every student as a unique and independent object in every course. For example, Professor X may know that a student struggles with a particular concept, which is a prerequisite for Professor Y's course. However, Professor Y likely will never know this unless Professor Y encounters that student in class and happens to discuss that student with Professor X. Although individual students attend college and universities to improve their individual knowledge, skills, and abilities, the great irony is that institutions have set up institution and program-level assessment systems in the past two decades that are uninterested in treating students as individuals—their interest in students is simply at the collective level, but even there their data collection practices are weak at best.

Further, in an era where businesses are investing significantly in “big data,” it is not surprising that we are witnessing the rise of large-scale institutional data collection activities (Ice et al., 2012; Picciano, 2012). However, we witness some of the same issues that we discussed in the preceding. Such data are not used to provide instructors precourse guidance regarding the learning needs of their students, leaving instructors the options of either asking all their faculty colleagues about their incoming classes or having the good fortune themselves to have had a student in a previous course. Schools often pick standardized exit exams, such as by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), because they promise large-scale comparative standardized data and are comparatively less burdensome from a resource perspective than other assessment processes. However, for a degree that ultimately is offered as preparation for professional practice (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Khurana, 2007; Trank & Rynes, 2003), and by the time assessments such as these are conducted and disseminated, it is usually too late to do much to help the particular students who took the test (unless they return to that school for an MBA; but even then, these data tend not to be used to customize the students' subsequent experiences). How much have we really learned about our students toward being effective professionals based on a multiple-choice exam?

Even some of the aggregate and cooperative data collection systems involving multiple institutions, such as the Predictive Analytics Reporting (PAR) Framework ([\[www.parframework.org\]\(http://www.parframework.org\)\), start the process with anonymized student data and institutionally deidentified course level records. Granted, the primary reasons for this approach are to protect student identities and for schools to avoid divulging potential sources of competitive advantage to other institutions, but to use a manufacturing analogy, colleges and universities seem to have taken the position that if 93 out of 100 cars are produced defect free, then they have done their job well and they are not particularly concerned about the problematic cars. However, the customers who purchased those problematic seven cars are likely to have a very different viewpoint—and very specific concerns. Therefore, individual schools now are using their own student data to build models that support the development of infrastructure that includes warning systems and targeted interventions to improve student retention and graduation rates \(Kamenetz, 2016\).](http://</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Thus, although we see that all schools, both elite and non-elite, can take advantage of “big data” and overall use data better to ensure student success, we believe that this offers a much greater opportunity for non-elite institutions. As mentioned earlier, outcome measures that often are used as indicators of student success, such as 4-year graduation rate, freshman retention rate, and acceptance rates, vary significantly between elite and non-elite schools. According to the most recent statistics, Harvard's freshman retention rate is 97.3%, its 4-year graduation rate is 86%, and its acceptance rate is 5.8% (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/harvard-university-2155>). Conversely, the University of North Florida's rates are 82.5%, 21%, and 53.4%, respectively (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/university-of-north-florida-9841>), and SUNY Oneonta's rates are 85.3%, 52%, and 43%, respectively. To borrow a phrase from recurring revenue industries, such as cellphone services, non-elite schools suffer from greater “churn” than elites, and just like cellular carriers, reducing churn presents tremendous financial upsides. Thus, because elite schools often control success through their admissions processes, there is more “upside” for non-elite institutions, which often need to correct for student shortcomings after admissions, to use big data to discover and correct those issues that are preventing their students from completing courses successfully, gaining position-specific relevant work experiences with targeted employers, and graduating successfully in a timely manner. For tuition-dependent private non-elites this can represent significant cost savings, and for state schools this often represents key outcome measures from governing bodies and state legislatures. Because several elite schools are members of public university systems, we also see

potential advantages for non-elite public institutions through their often-coordinated data collection and reporting efforts at a state level, thus likely giving them a “built-in” big data foundation upon which to build. Indeed, the increasing use of performance-based funding or PBF (philosophically rooted in resource dependency theory; Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978) by state funding entities, with its emphasis on items like graduation rates, certificates earned, enrollment in high-need subject areas, and course completion rates (Harnish, 2011,) is a prime example of this concept in action. As of mid 2015, 32 states in the United States use some form of PBF (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).

Process versus outcomes and student success

We also need to consider significant advances in management thinking about how we measure processes, outcomes, and results that seem to have not made it into our conversations and consciousness. At their core, accreditation agencies like AACSB tend to adhere to a philosophy that good processes produce good outcomes (Moskal, Ellis, & Keon, 2008; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Romero, 2008). Ironically, this approach, inspired by the Deming and Baldrige awards, does not necessarily guarantee improved learning outcomes. History is replete with Baldrige award winners that failed to achieve any significant gains in market share or profitability. Likewise, AACSB’s emphasis is on process, with its ideology that each school is best able to design processes that are uniquely suited to its own mission and vision (Moskal et al., 2008; Zammuto, 2008). Considering our previous point that progression of student knowledge, skills, and abilities is a key factor from which non-elite schools can compete, on the surface, the concept of assurance of learning appears to carry merit. Because the number of aspirant schools declines dramatically for the elites in the accreditation process, we see the issue of assurance of learning being emphasized primarily for non-elite schools.

That said, what evidence actually exists that the “assurance of learning” framework has produced measurable increases in performance in business schools in ways that matter to students and the market of employers? And, with this school-level “uniqueness” perspective, have we set up a system where true measurement across institutions is almost impossible to achieve due to the variations in definitions and measures (Rubin & Morgeson, 2013)? Although there may be some initial approaches for assessing differences in MBA graduates across institutions based upon differences between schools’ learning goals (Costigan & Brink, 2015), mechanisms for employing such approaches still appear

to be in the future. If this is the case, how will prospective employers be able to compare applicants from different schools a priori? As employers increasingly seek to place the responsibility for preparing and their future workers onto other entities (Cappelli, 2015), we can see where being able to directly compare “apples to apples” could be an approach that these employers could find attractive. However, presently we are in a position of literally having hundreds of thousands of students being subject to “assurance of learning” regimes with absolutely no ability to determine, for example, whether a student at a mid-sized public institution in Nebraska is any more, or less, skilled on a single item than a student at a large private research institution in Massachusetts. For that matter, we may not even be able to determine differences between graduates from mid-sized public or private (not-for-profit or for-profit) schools in the same state or province.

In many ways, this approach works to the advantage of both the schools and AACSB: Schools can create their own mechanisms for assessing learning and AACSB can state that it requires members to show that their students are learning, but this deliberate variability and incompatibility in measurement systems do not necessarily serve the overall market well. Furthermore, the attempts that schools have made for standardized measurement, such as the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test for the Bachelor’s Degree in Business (ETS, 2015), or Peregrine Academic Services’ COMP Assessment Exams (n.d.), all seem to be geared toward assessing fairly rudimentary skills and abilities—just like the concerns that we are seeing regarding the K–12 system in the United States. For example, one sample question provided by the ETS (n.d.) is “A firm that would like to know whether it has enough cash to meet its bills would be most likely to use which category of financial ratio?” Some authors have openly questioned the ETS exam’s ability to serve effectively as an assurance of learning tool, either within an institution or across institutions, due to multiple significant concerns about the lack of transparency in its construction and reporting procedures (Green, Stone, & Zegeye, 2012).

Adding further insult to injury, emerging business practices that address these types of issues (Charlier, Brown, & Rynes, 2011), such as evidence-based management (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006) and “checklist manifestos” (Gawande, 2011), are virtually absent in business schools’ self-management. One reason for this is the amount of instructor control that is required to be relinquished. The “checklist manifesto,” with its focus on checklists and standardized

procedures in medicine, has demonstrated its ability to reduce errors in surgery and improve health outcomes. However, much as in medicine, with its “omniscient” surgeon philosophy, business schools and much of the professorate suffer from the dogma that each professor is best able to determine how to best teach his or her students. Consequently, the idea of standardized teaching practices is virtually anathema to the profession—we believe this, unfortunately, has translated into the overall culture of the management of business schools themselves. This issue has become even more visible in the past several years as we have seen many faculties—and not just at business schools—react strongly against the perceived threat of MOOCs (massive open online courses) using justifications that often include concerns regarding loss of local curricular control by using courses provided by elite institutions (cf. the debate at San Jose State, and at elite Amherst, about MOOC courses: Kolowich, 2013, April 29; Kolowich, 2013, May 2; Lewin, 2013). As Parker Palmer notes in his book *The Courage to Teach* (1997), teaching is one of the few remaining professions practiced in isolation compared to other professions, such as law, which are practiced in front of other experts; we daresay the management of business schools suffers from the same problems. Thus, checklist manifestos, with their inherent ability to standardize practices and improve actual outcomes, tend to be ignored, by both the professorate and the administrations. Thus, checklist manifestos, with their inherent ability to standardize practices and improve actual outcomes, tend to be ignored, both by the professorate and college administrations even when instructional autonomy is being openly challenged by outside regulatory and funding forces.

We wonder whether AACSB-type assurance of learning regimes and “each school designing its own unique processes” models, with all their aforementioned issues, ultimately are doomed to failure. We already are seeing reactions against ETS-type exams and perhaps via proxy, AACSB-type assessment of learning (AOL) approaches. These reactions often are led by employers who both are suspicious of how colleges credentialize their graduates and are increasingly demanding the ability to gain easily benchmarked measures of the quality of the specific graduates they are considering hiring. Higher education is beginning to focus on producing direct measures of soft skills over the current regime of simplistic knowledge assessments and half-hearted assessment processes. This response includes initial steps to create common criteria outcome-based audits for assessing university and college effectiveness (Blumenstyk, 2016) to the Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Quality Student Learning’s recent project to begin designing, validating, and using standardized student learning assessment rubrics

across a variety of low- and high-level student learning outcomes (Berrett, 2016).

The Council for Aid to Education (2015) Collegiate Learning Assessment+ (CLA+) also implicitly criticizes ETS-type exams for what they do not measure—namely, items like critical thinking, problem solving, and writing. The Council for Aid to Education has the support of some of the most influential foundations in higher education, including the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The CLA+, which some have dubbed “the post-college SAT,” was first administered in the spring of 2014 and already has more than 200 participating colleges and universities (Belkin, 2013). The CLA+ offers schools the ability to compare their freshmen and seniors to assess the institution’s effectiveness over time. Additionally, the Council for Aid to Education explicitly offers benchmarking data, at both the student and the institutional level. Thus, while non-elite business schools often struggle with the “capstone course” issue of trying to identify and then build unique soft metrics as a means of signaling the added value to their students’ skills and abilities, we already are witnessing the emergence of perceived hard outcomes-based student-specific assessments with benchmarking, even if some education critics have labeled them as flawed products (America’s Future Work Force, 2013) or if they are misperceived by businesses and the popular press (Around Learning, 2013). And, perhaps unsurprisingly, the CLA+ is already being advertised as a way for students to gain an advantage over their peers by presenting easily comprehensible standardized scores to potential employers (cf. Lenson, 2013). Conversely, we see this as much less a concern for elite institutions, given the signaling of student quality inherent in the “elite” moniker.

Thus, we ask ourselves, in a world where performance is the ultimate measure of success, are faux process approaches, where any measure is acceptable, already past their expiration date? If so, will we see non-elite schools move in this direction before the elites, as it would give the non-elites an almost immediately recognizable cost savings by reducing the expenses associated with the various learning measurement processes? As the Around Learning (2013) essay already referenced argues, we are likely to see widespread adoption of CLA+ types of assessment first in spaces like for-profit and community and technical colleges, as they offer either more convenient credentialing, but at a cost (for-profit), or greater “bang for the buck,” with little reputational capital (community and technical colleges). If these predictions come true (and we suspect they will), the moves of for-profits and community colleges likely would impact non-elites more quickly and directly, as their price advantage

and reputational desires represent a direct assault on the non-elites' value propositions. If this is the case, how will we define student success in the future? Under "an AACSB 'process first' and ETS-multiple choice regime," individual student success is commingled with the institution's overall academic reputation, and consequently, individual students can either hide within, or be held back by, their school's umbrella. If employers begin to routinely demand assessments like the CLA+ to measure individual student capabilities, then the entire cottage industry of "good processes, regardless of outcomes" will be cast aside for a model much more familiar and acceptable to business: absolute results on easily measurable and comparable criteria. We suspect the impact on all business schools, but especially on the non-elites, will be profound if this, indeed, comes to pass.

Class size, efficiency metrics, and student success

One of the implications of the lack of evidence-based or checklist approaches is that approaches to increase efficiency are adopted without prior testing or study. For example, the inevitable move to larger class sizes (Anonymous, 2012) is being adopted in spite of a general lack of research on the impact of class size in management education. This trend is particularly salient for non-elite schools because offering courses with smaller class sizes (particularly at the introductory/gateway level) often is used by non-elites as a recruiting tool, though it inevitably adds to their institutional costs in one form or another—either directly through the need to raise tuition rates to pay for these smaller classes or through "making it up" somewhere else in the system. The few studies that have examined this issue have tended to focus either on online environments (Arbaugh & Duray, 2002; Grandzol & Grandzol, 2010; Kulchitsky, 2008) or on smaller classroom-based settings (Hawk & Lyons, 2008; Parnell, Crandall, & Bell, 2009; Sciglimpaglia & Toole, 2009), but they primarily have been based upon samples from non-elite schools. However, results from these studies are inconclusive. The idea that class section size predicts course completion or learning in online settings receives mixed support (Arbaugh & Duray, 2002; Arbaugh & Rau, 2007; Grandzol & Grandzol, 2010). Some classroom-based studies note that smaller class sizes actually can be problematic (Parnell et al., 2009). Collectively, these studies suggest that we have a long way to go before we can make definitive conclusions regarding whether and how class sizes at non-elite schools affect outcomes in management education. This lack of research

attention means not only that administrators may push for larger class sizes on little more grounds than the sake of efficiency, but also that instructors would push for smaller classes on little more grounds than personal convenience. Neither side in the debate has sufficient evidence to determine whether, or how, its proposed approach impacts student learning.

The push toward cost efficiencies as demonstrated by increasing reliance upon contingent faculty also may be having implications for accreditation standards. The recently revised AACSB standard for faculty qualifications and engagement (Standard 15) that broadens two qualifying categories (Academically Qualified or Professionally Qualified) to four categories may carry implications for business school payrolls. Of these four new categories, three address practice: Practice Academic, Scholarly Practitioner, and Instructional Practitioner (the fourth category, Scholarly Academic, appears to be similar to the previously used Academically Qualified category). Although we applaud the revised standard for the acknowledgment that business schools with different missions should be allowed to differentiate their workforce composition to reflect their respective missions, we also are concerned about the potential incentives to "credential down" instructional staff.

Considering that scholarly activity has long been established as a primary predictor of business school faculty compensation (Certo, Sirmon, & Brymer, 2010; Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992; Mittal, Feick, & Murshed, 2008), a possible implication of these revised accreditation standards could be that some non-elite business schools may pursue less scholarly active, but professionally active, PhD holders in an attempt to control escalating faculty salaries. The 2013 AACSB Accreditation Standards have a minimum threshold of 40% of a business school's faculty meeting the Scholarly Academic criteria (down from 50% Academically Qualified in the previous standards) and 90% meeting either Scholarly Academic, Practice Academic, Scholarly Practitioner, or Instructional Practitioner criteria (AACSB International, 2013). This classification schema means that a business school could staff up to 60% of its positions with instructional staff members who are not scholarly active and still be compliant with AACSB guidelines. Considering the relative resource constraints of public, master's-level comprehensive business schools in particular, this could be an appealing strategy for administrators at non-elite business schools seeking to balance problematic budgets, especially given the inevitable campus issues that are created by business school faculty salaries (regardless of their AACSB status) (Miles et al., 2014). Non-elites could decide to address resource issues by

carrying a relatively small cadre of moderately research-active faculty and seeking primarily those with lower levels of interest in research in their recruitment and selection processes. Although such “AACSB, but on the cheap” efforts may bring students more in contact with practice, this approach may compromise business school scholarly engagement. Considering that some studies have shown that business schools with faculty members who are extensively engaged in producing scholarship in “just below” A-level journals positively affect student salaries after graduation (O’Brien, Drnevich, Crook, & Armstrong, 2010), such pushes toward increased cost efficiency could adversely impact the likelihood that a non-elite business school could attain this generally desired longer term outcome of management education.

Perhaps the most salient example of the issues relating to class size, efficiency, and student success can be seen in the differences playing out in institutional attitudes related to online learning. Witness, for example, the recently chronicled debate between Michael Porter and Clayton Christensen regarding how their institution, Harvard Business School, should go online (Neumeier, 2014; Useem, 2014). Despite the differences in proposed approaches, Harvard’s ability, and decision, to shield its core operations from the financial vagaries of bringing a program online stands in marked contrast to the experience of the non-elite schools, where the impetus is often a mistaken belief in either cost savings or revenue maximization, which may be further fueled by the idea that schools need to determine how to use the delivery medium that best fits their own strategy and situation (Whittaker, New, & Ireland, 2016). For the non-elite schools, online learning “cost savings” is often a “do more with less philosophy” for current staff (another prep for faculty members), often with limited training for its unique requirements (Alexander, Perrault, Zhao, & Waldman, 2009; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012), more students to handle in the admissions and advising offices (Harvard has a separate admissions staff, among many other things, with its new Harvard Business X [HBX] program, as does Indiana University’s Kelley Direct), and an overall “shorting” of essential administrative and support services that support online student success (Lee & Choi, 2011). On the revenue side, we see non-elite schools perversely incentivizing themselves to admit more, and often less qualified and experienced, MBA students, in attempts to capture larger revenue streams (Arbaugh & Duray, 2002; Millson & Wilemon, 2008; Ozdemir, Altinkemer, & Barron, 2008)—in effect, creating a Catch-22 situation of spiraling costs and revenues. This approach further exacerbates the historically, and as yet unsolved, chronic problem of

significantly lower student retention and graduation rates in online learning (Allen & Seaman, 2013; January; Lee & Choi, 2011; Simpson, 2012), and once again creates greater churn for those institutions least able to afford it. Thus, although both elite and non-elite schools face tough choices regarding online learning, we witness significant differences between how they philosophically view and manage it, and we note that non-elite schools are inherently pursuing riskier approaches that can jeopardize both their financial stability and service levels.

Moving forward

Now that we have identified the primary challenges in measuring, monitoring, and attaining student success in non-elite business schools, what are some strategies for increasing the likelihood that our students actually might be successful, and in ways that do not jeopardize the well-being of the non-elites? Some of the trends we have described will continue unabated—it is unlikely that the efficiency conversations or the push for greater amounts of data will go away anytime soon. The question is whether there are ways non-elite schools might turn them to their advantage. We propose some steps that will work with the flow of events rather than against them. These steps pertain to instructional approaches, faculty composition, and potential emergent applications of the move toward “big data” that could assist instructors in customizing their courses toward learner success.

Regarding changes in instructional approaches, some of this shift could come from changes in measuring faculty teaching to better reflect desired learning outcomes. Given the emphasis on showing student progression being of particular importance to non-elites, this suggests that more concerted efforts to determine student knowledge and skill baselines upon admission to our business schools are warranted. Also, rather than assessing only cognitive or declarative knowledge, higher level processes and affect also could be assessed. This approach would allow us to determine not only what concepts students know, but also whether they see the material as useful now and in the future because it has become part of their identity (Brown, Arbaugh, Hrivnak, & Kenworthy, 2013). If the course material is not shaping their attitudes and mind sets in addition to increasing their knowledge, skills, and abilities, they are unlikely to take away positive impressions from their experiences or reflect well on our programs to prospective employers and/or sources of future students or financial supporters. Non-elites also could give further attention to the “informal

curriculum” of outside of class activities, such as internships, and seek to make them an increasing part of the official curriculum (Caza & Brower, 2015; Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010). Given our points regarding employers increasingly expecting business schools to provide employment-ready graduates, we are surprised that less than 5% of AACSB-accredited schools require students to have internships (Kim, Kim, & Bzullak, 2012). This situation provides the potential of temporary advantage for those who currently require them, but we see this becoming more of a “cost of doing business” for accredited non-elites going forward.

Other faculty composition changes also could be leveraged to further enhance the learning process while supporting scholarly productivity. O’Brien and colleagues’ (2010) research on the economic impact for students of academic research found that a faculty emphasis on publishing in second-tier rather than top-tier or lower-tier journals was the strongest predictor of economic value for students. Although these authors did not suggest reasons for this finding, one possible explanation is that faculty in such environments have to keep a presence in the worlds of both cutting-edge research and practice. Although they may not be publishing in top-tier journals, at least some of the faculty in such schools need to maintain contacts and networks with scholars who are able to produce the quality of work that will be published in second-tier journals. As they also interact with more faculty more engaged with practice (as revised AACSB standards appear to encourage, with their emphasis on showing demonstrable impact of a school’s activities), this could create a blend that combines current practice with emergent findings from rigorous research, thereby helping students to better contextualize the examples of practice they hear about and observe.

Such an approach to faculty composition actually may be complementary with the potential efficiency-driven faculty model for non-elite business schools we discussed earlier. A business school could go with a model that carries a larger component (up to 60%) of relatively lower cost practice-oriented faculty, but use at least some of the cost savings to attract and develop a smaller cadre of faculty members who have established track records of publishing in second-tier journals. Such faculty may not have enough top-tier publications to be tenured or promoted at the elite schools, but they likely would have networks that include scholars from such schools so that they can access cutting-edge research.

Some of the responses for considering student success will involve reconceptualizing how we think about data, not just on the aggregate level. We are on the verge of massive new capabilities in data collection and

analysis, but just like GIGO (“garbage in, garbage out”), universities will have to design and use these new systems to work at the student level. We have missed previous opportunities (such as early conversations about the promise of individualized student learning coming from online delivery of content)—can we afford to miss them again? Although collaborative efforts such as PAR maintain anonymity of student data in a multi-institutional format, the institutions themselves certainly do not have to do so internally. Because of resource constraints commonly associated with non-elite schools, some do not have the expertise in house to do the predictive modeling, and therefore could use the assistance in making such efforts a reality. Therefore, we see initiatives that seek to apply analytic expertise to multiple college and university settings such as PAR being particularly helpful for identifying strategies that best support enhanced student learning in non-elite business schools.

Although FERPA guidelines may not allow individual student data to be revealed for truly individualized attention or their existence may simply be enough to deter risk-averse schools (again, we are not lawyers), predictive approaches still might be incorporated to help instructors target their instruction. Might it be possible to draw upon “big data” at the course level to get a class composite before the course begins so that instructors could tailor the course to a particular class’s learning needs more closely? For example, could non-elite schools examine data to predict a student’s performance in a particular course offered through a particular delivery medium (classroom, blended, or online) based on factors such as demographics and prior performance, and then make advising recommendations for which delivery format the student should use to take that course?

As beneficial as using data to predict student success might be, perhaps a greater benefit of such data will be the opportunity to identify particular impediments for student learning and design and test interventions that directly address those impediments. For example, the Signals Project at Purdue University has used data generated from predictive analytics to design approaches to anticipate at-risk students and allows instructors both to identify where students are likely to encounter difficulty and to send targeted feedback that specifically addresses those problem areas (Tanes, Arnold, King, & Remnet, 2011). If such approaches can be effective at a school that would be included in our definition of elites, how much more important is it for such approaches to be implemented at non-elite schools where showing student development and progression is paramount?

We also must get much closer to our students, not only in ways we have used in recent decades with luxury dorms

and so on, but also in our classrooms and in activities outside of class. We need to be more active in determining students' abilities and providing that baseline information to instructors. We need to find out exactly what types of knowledge they want and desired learning outcomes they are interested in pursuing. We also need to do a better job of conveying what they should want—testing of affect and attitudes (motivation, self-efficacy, identity) in addition to content knowledge (Brown et al., 2013). One potential implication of the increasing use of big data to predict student and course activity is that as behavior data from tools such as Learning Management Systems become incorporated into predictive analytic frameworks, we may be able to anticipate what students want based upon their patterns of behavior in their previous online or blended courses.

Finally, we hope that through this essay, the non-elite business school will become a more acceptable context for which business school authors can write and scholars can examine. Presently, it is difficult to find information specific to non-elites because they tend to be either ignored by the popular business press or combined with elite schools to provide more general examples of practices when addressed in trade publications such as *BizEd* or *AACSB eNewslines*. Such coverage of non-elites makes it difficult to find examples of their successes with these issues, leaving their dissemination to events such as informal exchanges at regional deans' conferences or "success stories" on the school's website, for which many aspects of the issues we've discussed do not lend themselves to external stakeholder-friendly sound bites. *Academy of Management Learning & Education* has noted the importance of context in management education research (Egri, 2013), and the composition of the journal's editorial board and its mix of authors suggest that it considers perspectives from scholars at both elite and non-elite schools. We encourage those authors at non-elites to build on our ideas by explicitly considering and articulating this context for both research and future provocative essays.

Conclusion

Changing environments for business schools will continue to make the definition and attainment of student success difficult. We have shown in this essay that these environmental changes will not have the same impacts for all business schools. In spite of these environmental difficulties, elite institutions still will be able to draw upon their global reputations, alumni networks, and advocates with governmental entities to help solidify their positions and attract high caliber students. Conversely, the relative absence of such attributes may mean that the continued success of the elites comes at the expense of the non-elites.

However, we also have identified areas where environmental shifts actually may present opportunities for non-elites in their mission to educate their student populations. Changes in the nature of instruction, the composition of faculty, and availability of data present business schools and faculty a moving target. However, we hope that in the midst of these challenges, the changes can create opportunities to teach and assess in new and different ways, with truly successful students being an attainable outcome.

About the authors

Charles J. Fornaciari is a Professor of Management in the School of Business at La Salle University in Philadelphia, PA. He received an MBA in finance and a Ph.D. in strategic management from Florida State University. Dr. Fornaciari's primary teaching interests are strategy and ethics. His research interests include spirituality and religion in management, business ethics education, effective teaching practices, and the business of business schools. He can be reached at fornaciari@lasalle.edu.

J. B. Arbaugh is a Distinguished Professor of Management at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. He received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University. Ben is a former Editor of Academy of Management Learning and Education and is a past chair of the Academy of Management's Management Education and Development (MED) Division. His current research interests are in drivers of author and institutional educational research productivity in business schools, the impact of management education research on management education practice, and online management education. He can be reached at arbaugh@uwosh.edu.

References

- AACSB International. (2013). *AACSB business accreditation standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/business/default.asp>.
- Alexander, M. W., Perrault, H., Zhao, J. J., & Waldman, L. (2009). Comparing AACSB faculty and student online learning experiences: Changes between 2000 and 2006. *Journal of Educators Online*. doi:10.9743/JEO.2009.1.2
- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2013, January). *Changing course: Ten years of tracking online education in the United States*. Wellesley, MA: Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group.
- America's Future Work Force. (2013, August 28). *The CLA+: The wrong approach*. Retrieved from <http://americasfutureworkforce.org/2013/08/28/the-cla-a-nefarious-scheme/>
- Anonymous. (2012, December 1). Not what it used to be: American universities represent declining value for money to their students. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21567373-american-universities-represent-declining-value-money-their-students-not-what-it>
- Arbaugh, J. B., Bento, R., & Hwang, A. (2010). Does the MBA experience support diversity? Demographic effects on program satisfaction. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 8(2), 391–415. doi:10.1111/(ISSN)1540-4609

- Arbaugh, J. B., & Duray, R. (2002). Technological and structural characteristics, student learning and satisfaction with web-based courses: An exploratory study of two MBA programs. *Management Learning*, 33(3), 231–247. doi:10.1177/1350507602333003
- Arbaugh, J. B., & Rau, B. L. (2007). A study of disciplinary, structural, and behavioral effects on course outcomes in online MBA courses. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 5(1), 65–95. doi:10.1111/dsji.2007.5.issue-1
- Around Learning. (2013, August 29). *Everything you know about the CLA is wrong*. Retrieved from <http://aroundlearning.com/2013/08/everything-you-know-about-the-cla-is-wrong/>
- Bacon, D. R., & Stewart, K. A. (in press). Why assessment will never work at many business schools: A call for better utilization of pedagogical research. *Journal of Management Education*. doi:10.1177/1052562916645837
- Bacon, D. R., Stewart, K. A., & Silver, W. (1999). Lessons from the best and worst student team experiences: How a teacher can make the difference. *Journal of Management Education*, 23(5), 467–488. doi:10.1177/105256299902300503
- Badenhausen, K. (2014, April 16). Stanford is tops for most satisfied MBA graduates. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2014/04/16/stanford-is-tops-for-the-most-satisfied-mba-graduates/>
- Baron, E. (2014, October 16). Face time key to hybrid MBA battle. *Poets & Quants*. Retrieved from <http://poetsandquants.com/2014/10/16/demand-for-face-time-key-to-hybrid-mba-battle/3/>
- Baron, E. (2015, October 22). Are MBAs to blame for VW and other business ethics fiascos? *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/10/22/mba-ethics-volkswagen/?iid=lefttrail>
- Baron, E., & Allen, N. (2014, November 20). The MBA scholarship wars. *Fortune*. Retrieved from <https://fortune.com/2014/11/20/mba-scholarship-wars/>
- Belkin, D. (2013, August 25). Are you ready for the post-college SAT? Employers say they don't trust grade-point averages. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323980604579029143959843818>
- Bender, M. C. (2011, October 11). Anthropologists take aim at Gov. Scott. *Miami Herald Blog*. Retrieved from <http://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2011/10/anthropologists-take-aim-at-gov-scott.html>
- Bennis, W., & O'Toole, J. (2005). How business schools lost their way. *Harvard Business Review*, 83(5), 96–104.
- Berrett, D. (2016, October 16). The next great hope for measuring learning. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Next-Great-Hope-for/238075>
- Billsberry, J. (2014). In R. P. Wright & K. G. Brown (Eds.), *Educating tomorrow's thought-leaders: Distinguished scholars answer a burning question* (p. 12). Chicago, IL: SMS Teaching Community.
- Blumenstyk, G. (2016, October 18). Forget accreditation: Bring on the college audit. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Forget-Accreditation-Bring-On/238090>
- Boyatzis, R. E., Stubbs, E. C., & Taylor, S. N. (2002). Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies through graduate management education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 1(2), 150–162. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2002.8509345
- Bradwell, M. (2015, February 4). Scott Walker proposes removing 'state needs' from U. of Wisconsin mission statement. *United Press International*. Retrieved from http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2015/02/04/Scott-Walker-proposes-removing-state-needs-from-U-of-Wisconsin-mission-statement/8711423080724/
- Brown, K. G., Arbaugh, J. B., Hrivnak, G., & Kenworthy, A. (2013). Overlooked and underappreciated: What research tells us about how teaching must change. In Graduate Management Admissions Council (Ed.), *Disrupt or be disrupted: A blueprint for change in management education* (pp. 219–258). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Byrne, J. A. (2014, September 10). The unbundled MBA: How you'll earn the degree in 25 years. *CNBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/id/101981153>
- Byrne, J. A. (2015, May 14). *UCLA B-School Gets \$100 Million Gift*. Retrieved from <http://poetsandquants.com/2015/05/14/ucla-b-school-gets-100-million-gift/>
- Cappelli, P. H. (2015). Skill gaps, skill shortages, and skill mismatches: Evidence and arguments for the United States. *ILR Review*, 68(2), 251–290. doi:10.1177/0019793914564961
- Carr, S. (2000, February 11). As distance education comes of age, the challenge is keeping the students. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46(23), A39–A41.
- Casile, M., & Davis-Blake, A. (2002). When accreditation standards change: Factors affecting differential responsiveness of public and private organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(1), 180–195. doi:10.2307/3069291
- Caza, A., & Brower, H. H. (2015). Mentioning the unmentioned: An interactive interview about the informal management curriculum. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(1), 96–110. doi:10.5465/amle.2013.0164
- Center for Postsecondary Research. (2010). *The Carnegie classification of institutions of higher education*. Retrieved from <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/descriptions/basic.php>
- Certo, S. T., Sirmon, D. G., & Brymer, R. A. (2010). Competition and scholarly productivity in management: Investigating changes in scholarship from 1988 to 2008. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(4), 591–606. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2010.56659878
- Charlier, S. D., Brown, K. G., & Rynes, S. L. (2011). Teaching evidence-based management in MBA programs: What evidence is there? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10(2), 222–236. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2011.62798931
- Costigan, R., & Brink, K. (2015). Another perspective on MBA program alignment: An investigation of learning goals. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(2), 260–276. doi:10.5465/amle.2013.0315
- Council for Aid to Education. (2015). *Critical thinking assessments*. Retrieved from <http://cae.org/products-and-services/higher-education-assessment/critical-thinking-assessments/>
- Crawford-Ferre, H. G., & Wiest, L. R. (2012). Effective online instruction in higher education. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 13(1), 11–14.
- Educational Testing Service. (2015). *Major Field Tests: Bachelor's degree in business*. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/mft/about/content/bachelor_business
- Educational Testing Service. (n.d.). *Major Field Test in Business sample questions*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/MFT/pdf/mft_samp_questions_business.pdf

- Egri, C. P. (2013). From the editors: Context matters in management education scholarship. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(5), 155–157. doi:10.5465/amle.2013.0140
- Fornaciari, C. J., Forte, M., & Mathews, C. S. (1999). Distance education as strategy: How can your school compete? *Journal of Management Education*, 23(6), 703–718. doi:10.1177/105256299902300608
- Gawande, A. (2011). *The checklist manifesto: How to get things right*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Gioia, D. A., & Corley, K. G. (2002). Being good vs. looking good: Business school rankings and the Circean transformation from substance to image. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 1(1), 107–120. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2002.7373729
- Gomez-Mejia, L. R., & Balkin, D. B. (1992). Determinants of faculty pay: An agency theory perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 35(5), 921–955. doi:10.2307/256535
- Grandzol, C. J., & Grandzol, J. R. (2010). Interaction in online courses: More is NOT always better. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*. Retrieved from http://distance.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/summer132/Grandzol_Grandzol132.html
- Green, J. J., Stone, C. C., & Zegeye, A. (2012). *The Major Field Test in Business: A pretend solution to the real problem of assurance of learning assessment*. Working paper. Ball State University, Muncie, IN. Retrieved from <http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/MillerCollegeofBusiness/Econ/research/WorkingPapers/bsucwp201201green.pdf>
- Gupta, A. (2014). An empirical analysis of the effect of MBA programs on organizational success. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 451–460.
- Harnish, T. L. (2011, June). Performance-based funding: A re-emerging strategy in public higher education funding. *A Higher Education Policy Brief*. Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
- Hawk, T. F., & Lyons, P. R. (2008). Please don't give up on me: When faculty fail to care. *Journal of Management Education*, 32(3), 316–338. doi:10.1177/1052562908314194
- Hedrick, D. W., Henson, S. E., Krieg, J. M., & Wassell, C. S. (2010). The effects of AACSB accreditation on faculty salaries and productivity. *Journal of Education for Business*, 85(5), 284–291. doi:10.1080/08832320903449543
- Hwang, A., Bento, R., & Arbaugh, J. B. (2011). Post-MBA industry shifts: An investigation of career, educational and demographic factors. *Career Development International*, 16(6), 592–615. doi:10.1108/13620431111178344
- Ice, P., Díaz, S., Swan, K., Burgess, M., Sharkey, M., Sherrill, J., ... Okimoto, H. (2012). The PAR framework proof of concept: Initial findings from a multi-institutional analysis of federated postsecondary data. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*. Retrieved from <http://jaln.sloanconsortium.org/index.php/jaln/article/view/277>
- Jaschick, S. (2011, October 12). *Florida GOP vs. social science. Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/10/12/florida_governor_challenges_idea_of_non_stem_degrees
- Jenkins, R. (2012, March 13). *Online courses and college completion. Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Online-ClassesCollege/131133/>
- Julian, S. D., & Ofuri-Dankwa, J. (2006). Is accreditation good for the strategic decision making of traditional business schools? *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 5(2), 225–233. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2006.21253788
- Kamenetz, A. (2016, October 30). How one university used big data to boost graduation rates. *nprEd: How Learning Happens*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/10/30/499200614/how-one-university-used-big-data-to-boost-graduation-rates>
- Kelly, C., Tong, P., & Choi, B.-J. (2010). A review of assessment of student learning programs at AACSB schools: A dean's perspective. *Journal of Education for Business*, 85(5), 299–306. doi:10.1080/08832320903449519
- Khurana, R. (2007). *From higher aims to hired hands: The social transformation of American business schools and the unfulfilled promise of management as a profession*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kim, E. B., Kim, K., & Bzullak, M. (2012). A survey of internship programs for management undergraduates in AACSB-accredited institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 26(7), 696–709.
- Klein, H. J., Noe, R. A., & Wang, C. (2006). Motivation to learn and course outcomes: The impact of delivery mode, learning goal orientation, and perceived barriers and enablers. *Personnel Psychology*, 59(3), 665–702. doi:10.1111/peps.2006.59.issue-3
- Kolowich, S. (2013, April 29). Why some colleges are saying no to MOOC deals, at least for now. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://chronicle.com/article/Why-Some-Colleges-Are-Saying/138863/>
- Kolowich, S. (2013, May 2). Why professors at San Jose State won't use a Harvard professor's MOOC. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://chronicle.com/article/Professors-at-San-Jose-State/138941/>
- Korn, M. (2014, September 19). Wharton M.B.A. applications rise. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.wsj.com/atwork/2014/09/19/wharton-m-b-a-applications-rise/>
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006, November 1–3). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature: National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success: Spearheading a Dialog on Student Success*, Washington, DC.
- Kulchitsky, J. D. (2008). High-tech versus high-touch education: Perceptions of risk in distance learning. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(2), 151–167.
- Lee, Y., & Choi, J. (2011). A review of online course dropout research: Implications for practice and future research. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 59, 593–618. doi:10.1007/s11423-010-9177-y
- Lenson, B. (2013, April 20). Looking for a Job? The CLA+ will give you an edge. *StraighterLine*. Retrieved from <http://www.straighterline.com/blog/looking-for-a-job-the-cla-will-give-you-an-edge/>
- Lewin, T. (2013, May 3). Professors at San Jose State criticize online courses. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/03/education/san-jose-state-philosophy-dept-criticizes-online-courses.html?src=rechp&r=2&>
- Lowrie, A., & Willmott, H. (2009). Accreditation sickness in the consumption of business education: The vacuum in AACSB standard setting. *Management Learning*, 40(4), 411–420. doi:10.1177/1350507609335851
- Miles, M. P., Franklin, G. M., Heriot, K., Hadley, L., & Hazeldine, M. (2014). AACSB International's 2013

- accreditation standards: Speculative implications for faculty and scholars. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 7(2), 86–107.
- Millson, M. R., & Wilemon, D. (2008). Educational quality correlates of online graduate management education. *Journal of Distance Education*, 22(3), 1–18.
- Mittal, V., Feick, L., & Murshed, F. (2008). Publish and prosper: The financial impact of publishing by marketing faculty. *Marketing Science*, 27(3), 430–442. doi:10.1287/mksc.1080.0361
- Moskal, P., Ellis, T., & Keon, T. (2008). Summary of assessment in higher education and the management of student-learning data. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(2), 269–278. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2008.32712624
- Narayanan, V. K., Olk, P. M., & Fukami, C. V. (2010). Determinants of internship effectiveness: An exploratory model. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(1), 61–80. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2010.48661191
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2015, July 31). *Performance-based funding for higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/performance-funding.aspx>;
- Neumeier, M. (2014, June 12). Michael Porter and Clayton Christensen are both wrong about finding the future of business education. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2014/06/12/michael-porter-and-clay-christensen-are-both-wrong-about-finding-the-future-of-business-education/>
- Nohria, N. (2014). *Annual 2013: The year in review*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.
- O'Brien, J. P., Drnevich, P. L., Crook, T. R., & Armstrong, C. E. (2010). Does business school research add economic value for students? *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 9(4), 638–651. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2010.56659881
- Okazaki-Ward, L. I. (2001). MBA education in Japan. Its current state and future direction. *Journal of Management Development*, 20(3), 197–234. doi:10.1108/02621710110386336
- Ozdemir, Z. D., Altinkemer, K., & Barron, J. M. (2008). Adoption of technology-mediated learning in the U.S. *Decision Support Systems*, 45(2), 324–337. doi:10.1016/j.dss.2008.01.001
- Palmer, P. J. (1997). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Park, J.-H., & Cho, H. J. (2009). Factors influencing adult learners' decision to drop out or persist in online learning. *Educational Technology & Society*, 12(4), 207–217.
- Parnell, J. A., Crandall, W. R., & Bell, S. L. (2009). The other side of the coin: Overcoming the detrimental effects of small classes in management education. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 13(1), 61–68.
- Peregrine Academic Services. (n.d.) *Our Services/Program assessment exams*. Retrieved from <http://micro.peregrineacademics.com/services/program-learning-outcomes-assessment.php>
- Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2002). The end of business schools? Less success than meets the eye. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 1(1), 78–95. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2002.7373679
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependency perspective*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2006). *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths and total nonsense: Profiting from evidence-based management*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Picciano, A. G. (2012). The evolution of big data and learning analytics in American higher education. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*. Retrieved from <http://jaln.sloanconsortium.org/index.php/jaln/article/view/267>
- Piercy, N. (2000). Commentary: Why it is fundamentally stupid for a business school to try to improve its research assessment exercise score. *European Journal of Marketing*, 34(1/2), 27–35. doi:10.1108/03090560010306179
- Rao, D. (2015, March 2). Should business school deans know real business? *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dileeprao/2015/03/02/should-business-school-deans-know-real-business/>
- Rivard, R. (2014, June 30). Public to private MBA at UCLA. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/06/30/uclas-full-time-mba-program-turns-down-state-funding>
- Romero, E. J. (2008). AACSB accreditation: Addressing faculty concerns. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(2), 245–255. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2008.32712622
- Rubin, R. S., & Morgeson, F. P. (2013). Reclaiming quality in graduate management education. In Graduate Management Admissions Council (Ed.), *Disrupt or be disrupted: A blueprint for change in management education* (pp. 297–345). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sciglimpaglia, D., & Toole, H. R. (2009). Use of student field-based consulting in business education: A comparison of American and Australian business schools. *Journal of Education for Business*, 85(2), 68–77. doi:10.1080/08832320903253619
- Simpson, O. (2012). *Supporting students for success in online and distance education* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Spritzer, A. D., & Billings, C. D. (2005). Faculty intellectual contributions under the new AACSB International accreditation standards. *Journal of Business and Behavioral Sciences*, 13(1), 46–64.
- Starkey, K., Hatchuel, A., & Tempest, S. (2004). Rethinking the business school. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(8), 1521–1531. doi:10.1111/joms.2004.41.issue-8
- Tanes, Z., Arnold, K. E., King, A. S., & Remnet, M. A. (2011). Using signals for appropriate feedback: Perceptions and practices. *Computers & Education*, 57(4), 2414–2422. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2011.05.016
- Trank, C. Q., & Rynes, S. L. (2003). Who moved our cheese? Reclaiming professionalism in business education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 2(2), 189–205. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2003.9901678
- Useem, J. (2014, May 31). B-School, disrupted. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/01/business/business-school-disrupted.html?_r=1
- Vinten, G. (2000). The business school in the new millennium. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 14(4), 180–192.
- Whittaker, J., New, J. R., & Ireland, R. D. (2016). MOOCs and the online delivery of business education: What's new? What's not? *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 15(2), 345–365. doi:10.5465/amle.2013.0021
- Willing, P. A., & Johnson, S. D. (2004). Factors that influence students' decision to dropout of online courses. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(4), 105–118.

- Wilson, D., & McKiernan, P. (2011). Global mimicry: Putting strategic choice back on the business school agenda. *British Journal of Management*, 22, 457–469. doi:10.1111/bjom.2011.22.issue-3
- Xin, Y. (2015, April 5). EMBA ed's decline due to more than state crackdown. *Beijing Today*. Retrieved from <https://beijingtoday.com.cn/2015/04/emba-eds-decline-due-to-more-than-state-crackdown/>
- Yeaple, R. N., Johnston, M. W., & Whittingham, K. L. (2010). Measuring the economic value of pre-MBA work experience. *Journal of Education for Business*, 85(1), 13–20. doi:10.1080/08832320903217515
- Zammuto, R. F. (2008). Accreditation and the globalization of business. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(2), 256–268. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2008.32712623