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ESSENTIAL WORK SKILLS AND READINESS: PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS, MBA STUDENTS, AND UNDERGRADUATES

Sohel Ahmad, St. Cloud State University
Michael J. Pesch, St. Cloud State University

ABSTRACT

In the ever-changing business landscape, it is important that graduates from business programs possess the essential skills needed by employers. Periodic surveys of employers and business students make important contributions in aligning employer needs in new-hires with student skill sets and expectations. In this study, we surveyed undergraduate and MBA students to assess their understanding of skills that employers thought were most important for new graduates to possess and the skills employers thought were most in need of improvement. The same survey was used to collect data from the employers. The responses were compared across the three groups: Undergraduate Students, MBA Students, and Employers.

The survey results for the skills that are 'Important to Possess' show that traditional MBA students need to realize that employers felt several skills to be more important to possess than what they thought. These skills include: 'honesty/integrity,' 'strong work ethic,' 'interpersonal skills (relates well to others),' 'professionalism/etiquette,' 'develop creative solutions' and 'think analytically.' Additionally, results suggest that both undergraduate students and MBA students should be aware that 'flexibility/adaptability' and 'detail-oriented' skills were considered more important by the employers than what students in both groups thought. Being aware that these skills are highly valued by employers is likely to help newly hired employees fit in better with their new work culture and thrive in the long-term.

For the 'Need to Improve' variables, there were a large number of skills that undergraduate students thought they needed to improve upon more than what employers felt they needed to. These include 'professionalism/etiquette,' 'honesty/integrity,' 'think analytically,' 'organizational skills,' 'knowledge of company/environment,' 'interviewing skills,' 'teamwork skills (works well with others)' and 'utilize technology.' There also were three additional skills that both undergrads and MBA students thought they needed to improve upon more than what employers felt they needed to, including 'communication (verbal and written),' 'leadership skills,' and 'interpersonal skills (relates well to others).'

Viewed positively, this could mean students, especially undergraduate students, will be proactive in enhancing the skills they think they need to improve upon and thereby exceed employers' expectations. But in another sense, focusing on improving so many skills that employers already feel are sufficient might diminish efforts to improve skills employers deem most in need of improvement. For the latter, employers gave significantly higher 'Need to Improve' scores than undergraduate students to the variables 'realistic expectations' and 'lose sense of entitlement.' One interpretation of these findings might be that although employers are generally

pleased with the skill sets of business students, employers prefer undergraduate students to be more patient and realistic in their expectations for career advancement.

INTRODUCTION

Employers often have voiced concerns about business school graduates' preparedness for entry-level jobs. Employers expect recent college graduates to possess certain skill sets that many of them lack. There can be many reasons for this discrepancy but an important cause of the problem may be that students are not aware of the skills valued by the employers. The purpose of this study is to understand whether business students are aware of the skills employers consider important, especially the skills employers think students need to improve upon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research has shown that undergraduates start college full of misconceptions about employers' skill preferences (Humphreys & Davenport, 2005). Although a number of efforts have been made by researchers to understand employers' expectations in general (DuPre & Williams, 2011) and in specific fields (Tesone & Ricci, 2012), this subject remains not well understood by the students. Without a good understanding of the skill set valued by the prospective employers, it is not possible for the students to prepare themselves, even if they have the willingness and resources from the school to do so. Therefore, it is not surprising that a recent survey by the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that nine out of ten employers judged recent college graduates as poorly prepared for the workforce in areas such as critical thinking, communication, and problem solving (Belkin, 2015).

In this study, we surveyed undergraduate and MBA students to assess their understanding of skills that employers thought were most important for new graduates to possess and the skills employers thought were most in need of improvement. The same survey was used to collect data from the employers. The responses were compared across the three groups: Undergraduate Students ("Undergrads"), MBA Students ("Grads"), and Employers.

The data from MBA students were collected from second-year students in a "traditional" MBA program designed primarily for recent college graduates. That is, the program did not require students to have post-baccalaureate or managerial-level job experience. These MBA students, while further along in their career development than Undergrads, nevertheless are recent college graduates who are still in the early stages of their careers, and we hypothesize that it would be many years before the perceptions of these MBA students would be similar to the respondents in the Employer survey. Having survey responses from each of these three groups provides a unique opportunity to analyze how students' understanding of employers' expectations might vary according to the stage of career development.

Previous studies investigating important skill sets for students as expected by prospective employers have compared either undergraduate students' views with those of the employers' (Kavanagh & Drennan, 2008; Roth et al., 2010) or the graduate students' views with those of the employers' (Elmore, 2010; Hill et al., 2014). We add to the existing literature by taking a

comprehensive approach by comparing and contrasting views of all three groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, and the employers) simultaneously in the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the early 1990s the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has conducted an annual survey of what employers and job candidates (graduating seniors and recent graduates) want from each other. The Saint Cloud State University (SCSU) College Job Outlook Survey (also referred to as the Minnesota College Job Outlook Survey), where respondents were the employers, was started in 2004 to overcome several shortcomings of the NACE survey. Whereas NACE sampled fewer than ten Minnesota state employers (and even fewer that recruited from SCSU), the SCSU Survey samples dozens of organizations that participate in the three primary college job fairs in Minnesota state, representing a wide variety of economic sectors, including business services, telecommunications, education, financial services, government, healthcare, the military, manufacturing, non-profit/human services, restaurant/hospitality, retail, and technology. Although the NACE and SCSU surveys remain similar in some respects, the SCSU (mostly catering to Midwest employers) Survey has evolved somewhat differently as it has increasingly focused on the issues considered most important to its Midwest employer participants.

The SCSU College Job Outlook Survey is really two surveys: the 'Important to Possess' survey and the 'Need to Improve' survey. Each seventeen-item survey includes the same thirteen skills plus four additional skills that are unique to each survey. The 'Important to Possess' survey asks Employers "What skills do you feel are most important for new college graduates to possess?" The 'Need to Improve' survey asks Employers "What skills do you feel new college graduates most need to improve upon?" The instructions on each survey are to rate each skill on a 1-to-5 "Not at all important" to "Extremely important" scale.

To administer the two surveys to Undergrads and Grads, the leading question for each survey was rephrased. The 'Important to Possess' survey asked students "What skills do you think employers feel are most important for new college graduates to possess?" The 'Need to Improve' survey asked students "What skills do you think employers feel new college graduates most need to improve upon?" The two surveys were pilot tested on two small groups (eight students in each group) of Undergrads and Grads by asking each student to restate each item on the survey which was then compared with the original wording of the corresponding item to verify content validity and reliability. The survey items/skills for the 'Important to Possess' survey and the 'Need to Improve' survey are listed in Table 1 (column 1) and Table 2 (column 1) respectively.

Employers

The SCSU College Job Outlook Surveys (also called Minnesota College Job Outlook surveys) have been conducted every year since 2004. We used data from the 2013 SCSU College Job Outlook Survey. Its 82 respondents (64% response rate) were HR professionals (primarily recruiters) from a diverse range of public and private sector organizations. We limited our analyses to the 77 respondents with complete data on both surveys.

Undergraduate Students (“Undergrads”)

The SCSU College Job Outlook Survey with the leading questions rephrased was distributed in seven different upper-division (junior and senior level) management classes in 2013. It was described to the students as part of ongoing efforts to improve curricula and student services. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Data were collected from 253 Undergrads (96% overall response rate). Undergrads who failed to provide complete data on the seventeen items for a survey were not included in the analyses for that survey. This resulted in usable data from 250 Undergrads for the ‘Important to Possess’ survey and 242 Undergrads for the ‘Need to Improve’ survey.

Table 1 What skills do you think <u>employers feel</u> are most important for new college graduates to possess?												
Skill	3 = Grads or MBA Students (<i>n</i> =47)			2 = Employers (<i>n</i> =77)			1 = Undergrad Students (<i>n</i> =250)			Significant contrasts <i>p</i> =		
	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	1 v 2	2 v 3	1 v 3
Communication (verbal and written)	4.74	0.44	1	4.81	0.56	1	4.82	0.42	1			
Honesty/integrity	4.51	0.72	2	4.77	0.65	2	4.74	0.56	2		0.022	0.015
Teamwork skills (works well with others)	4.36	0.67	3	4.51	0.68	6	4.53	0.66	4			
Ability to acquire learning	4.34	0.70	4	4.31	0.85	9	4.37	0.67	7			
Strong work ethic	4.28	0.65	5	4.60	0.73	3	4.57	0.56	3		0.005	0.003
Motivation/initiative	4.26	0.71	6	4.52	0.64	5	4.46	0.63	5			
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	4.17	0.73	7	4.55	0.60	4	4.43	0.67	6		0.003	0.015
Professionalism / etiquette	4.04	0.69	8	4.39	0.76	7	4.26	0.70	9		0.009	0.050
Customer service ¹	4.02	0.85	9	4.27	1.03	10	4.31	0.74	8			
Utilize technology	3.87	0.74	10	3.79	0.82	16	3.96	0.72	14			
Leadership skills	3.85	0.93	11	3.97	0.84	13	4.18	0.78	10	0.049		0.011
Flexibility/adaptability	3.83	0.79	12	4.38	0.71	8	4.09	0.78	11	0.004	0.000	0.035
Detail-oriented ¹	3.72	0.77	13	4.09	0.85	11	3.78	0.75	17	0.002	0.010	
Organizational skills	3.70	0.91	14	4.03	0.76	12	3.96	0.78	13			
Ability to plan and manage a project ¹	3.57	0.85	15	3.62	0.89	17	4.01	0.78	12	0.003		0.005
Develop creative solutions ¹	3.51	0.91	16	3.90	0.68	14	3.82	0.75	15		0.037	0.012
Think analytically	3.51	0.98	17	3.88	0.83	15	3.82	0.77	16		0.014	0.016
¹ These items were not included in the "need to improve" survey. The instructions are to rate each skill on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all important and 5 = extremely important.												

Skill	3 = Grads or MBA Students (<i>n</i> =47)			2 = Employers (<i>n</i> =77)			1 = Undergrad Students (<i>n</i> =242)			Significant contrasts <i>p</i> =		
	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	Mean	<i>sd</i>	Rank	1 v 2	2 v 3	1 v 3
Communication (verbal and written)	4.34	0.89	1	3.92	0.94	4	4.23	0.91	2	0.010	0.014	
Realistic expectations ¹	4.17	0.96	2	4.27	0.85	1	3.97	0.92	6	0.012		
Work ethic	4.09	0.80	3	4.03	0.93	3	4.00	0.96	5			
Professionalism/etiquette	3.96	0.98	4	3.73	1.05	8	4.10	0.91	4	0.003		
Knowledge of company/environment ¹	3.85	1.00	5	3.87	0.97	5	4.21	0.87	3	0.005		0.014
Lose sense of entitlement ¹	3.77	0.94	6	4.08	1.04	2	3.43	0.99	15	0.000		0.035
Interviewing Skills ¹	3.77	1.05	7	3.51	0.98	9	4.25	0.91	1	0.000		0.002
Leadership skills	3.72	0.90	8	3.38	0.89	10	3.89	0.89	7	0.000	0.037	
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	3.72	0.97	9	3.36	0.98	11	3.76	0.98	9	0.002	0.048	
Motivation/initiative	3.70	0.93	10	3.86	1.07	6	3.73	0.96	10			
Honesty/integrity	3.60	0.93	11	3.23	1.09	14	3.69	1.03	11	0.001		
Flexibility/adaptability	3.53	1.10	12	3.82	0.94	7	3.51	1.00	14			
Think analytically	3.47	0.91	13	3.16	0.99	15	3.57	0.87	13	0.000		
Teamwork skills (works well with others)	3.40	0.97	14	3.27	0.97	12	3.81	1.05	8	0.000		0.014
Organizational skills	3.38	1.01	15	3.26	0.89	13	3.68	0.97	12	0.001		
Ability to acquire learning	3.06	1.03	16	2.86	0.97	16	3.18	1.09	16			
Utilize technology	2.62	1.10	17	2.66	1.13	17	3.05	1.23	17	0.015		0.025
¹ These items were not included in the "important to possess" survey. The instructions are to rate each skill on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all important and 5 = extremely important.												

There were 1.6% freshmen, 1.6% sophomores, 31.0% juniors, and 63.2% seniors (2.6% did not provide this information). Approximately 49% were management majors, 32% were other

business majors, and 16% were not business majors. Ages ranged from 19 to 48 years with a mean of 22.8 (4.4% were older than 30 years), 50.8% were female (1.6% did not identify gender), 12.0% had internships, 4.0% were veterans, and 78.3% were working while taking classes (the average was 24.23 hours/week with a range of 2 to 50 hours/week). Respondents could select multiple identity categories (thus the results may not add to 100%): 88.0% selected Caucasian, 5.8% Asian, 3.1% Black, 1.9% Hispanic, 0.8% American Indian, and 1.6% Other. Self-reported GPAs ranged from 2.0 to 4.0 (C to A) with a mean of 3.17. Finally, respondents indicated the highest level of education obtained by each parent. For each parent, the mean was some college and the mode was a college degree.

MBA Students (“Grads”)

The SCSU College Job Outlook Survey with the leading questions rephrased was also distributed to second-year MBA students in three MBA courses during the 2013-2014 academic year. Just as for Undergrads, the Grads survey was presented as a part of ongoing efforts to improve curricula and student services. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Complete data were collected from 47 Grads (100% response rate).

Ages ranged from 22 to 40 with a mean of 26.8 years (11% were older than 30), 46.0% was female (one student did not identify gender), 21% had internships, 7% were veterans, and 76.6% were working while in the MBA program an average of 38 hours/week (from 20 to 70 hours/week). Respondents could select multiple identity categories (therefore the results may not add to 100%): 80% selected Caucasian, 13% Asian, 0% Black, 4% Hispanic, 0% American Indian, and 6% Other. Self-reported undergraduate GPAs ranged from 3.0 to 4.0 (B to A) with a mean of 3.57. Respondents indicated the highest level of education obtained by each parent. The mean for each parent was some college. The mode for mothers was a college degree and the mode for fathers was high school (no college).

Special Note on Survey Administration

It is possible that some respondents from the Undergrads and Grads groups might find it challenging to distinguish between the meanings of “Important to Possess” and “Need Improvement.” A skill that is deemed “important to possess” might be confused with skills “needing improvement,” perhaps because if a skill is important, improvement of the skill would also be desirable. We addressed this potential bias in the responses by carefully and extensively explaining to both Undergrads and Grads groups the difference between the leading questions in the two surveys. Given the much higher level of experience and depth of understanding for Employer respondents, confusion between the two questions is less likely to be a problem in the Employer surveys.

DATA ANALYSIS

If we glance at the ranking of the ‘Important to Possess’ variable means (see Table 1), there seems to be agreement on ‘communication (verbal and written)’ and ‘honesty/integrity’ as they are very highly ranked across the three respondent groups. Such agreement is not apparent across

three groups for the ranking of the means of the 'Need to Improve' variables (see Table 2). While respondents were not asked to rank the variables, we are reporting the ranking based on the value of the means of the variables to provide cursory observations only. The statistical analysis of the data follows.

We ran MANOVA to check if dependent variables (seventeen items of the 'Important to Possess' survey) differed overall among three groups (Undergrads, Grads, and Employers). Wilks' Lamda (λ) was found to be 0.80, $p = 0.000$. The results indicated that a significant difference existed among three groups when all 'Important to Possess' dependent variables were considered jointly. MANOVA requires that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables be not significantly different across groups (Undergrads, Grads, and Employers). For this reason we also report Pillai's Trace, which is least sensitive to the violation of equality of covariance, in addition to Wilks' Lamda (λ) (Tang & Algina, 1993). Pillai's Trace was found to be 0.21 which is highly significant ($p = 0.000$) consistent with the result found by Wilks' Lamda (λ).

Next, we conducted analysis on each 'Important to Possess' dependent variable to find if the mean of that variable differed significantly across three groups. First, for each dependent variable, we checked if the assumption of homogeneity of variances across three groups was met using Levene's test (Gastwirth et al., 2009). If the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, we performed one-way ANOVA for that variable and used Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test. Alternatively, if the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met, we carried out a Welch ANOVA instead of a one-way ANOVA and used Games-Howell post hoc test. Welch ANOVA is also suggested where there are unequal group sizes (Games & Howell, 1976; Klahr & Nigam, 2004). Results are shown in Table 1.

A similar approach was used to analyze data collected from the 'Need to Improve' survey. We ran MANOVA to check if dependent variables (seventeen items of the 'Need to Improve' survey) differed overall among three groups (Undergrads, Grads, and Employers). Wilks' Lamda (λ) was found to be 0.67 ($p = 0.000$) indicating a significant difference existed among three groups when all 'Need to Improve' dependent variables were considered jointly. Pillai's Trace was found to be 0.34, highly significant ($p = 0.000$), supporting the result indicated by Wilks' Lamda (λ). Subsequently, we checked if the assumption of homogeneity of variances across three groups was met for each 'Need to Improve' dependent variable using Levene's test. If the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, we performed one-way ANOVA for that variable and used Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test. Alternatively, we carried out a Welch ANOVA instead of a one-way ANOVA and used Games-Howell post hoc test if the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not met. Results are reported in Table 2.

RESULTS

First we discuss the results of skills 'Important to Possess' from Table 1. We focus on only those skills that were rated higher by Employers compared to both Undergrads and Grads, where the differences in mean ratings were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). Employers felt that these skills were more important for candidates to possess than what Undergrads and Grads thought. Grads differed significantly from both the Employers and the Undergrads for the following skills: 'honesty/integrity,' 'strong work ethic,' 'interpersonal skills (relates well to others),'

‘professionalism/etiquette,’ ‘develop creative solutions’ and ‘think analytically’ where Grads rated these skills lower compared to Employers and Undergrads. This suggests that Grads need to be made aware that these skills are valued more by Employers than what they thought.

Both Undergrads and Grads differed significantly from Employers on ‘flexibility/adaptability’ and ‘detail-oriented.’ Since Employers scored these skills significantly higher than both Undergrads and Grads, it implies that both Undergrads and Grads failed to understand that these are skills highly sought after by Employers.

Next, we discuss the results of ‘Need to Improve’ skills from Table 2. We focus on those skills where the differences in mean ratings were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) across at least two of the three respondent groups: Employers, Undergrads, and Grads.

Undergrads differed significantly from Employers for the following skills: ‘professionalism/etiquette,’ ‘honesty/integrity,’ ‘think analytically’ and ‘organizational skills.’ Each of these skills was rated higher by Undergrads as needing improvement compared to Employers. This implies that Undergrads respondents thought they needed to improve on these skills more than what Employers felt.

Undergrads also differed from the Employers on ‘realistic expectations’ but here Employers rated the need to improve significantly higher than Undergrads. This finding suggests that Undergrads need to do a better job of managing their expectations in the workplace.

Also in the ‘Need to Improve’ results, Undergrads differed significantly from both Employers and Grads on the following skills: ‘knowledge of company/environment,’ ‘interviewing skills,’ ‘teamwork skills (works well with others)’ and ‘utilize technology.’ Each of these skills received the highest scores by Undergrads among the three groups of respondents, whereas Employers and Grads felt these skills had lower needs for improvement.

Undergrads also differed significantly from both Employers and Grads on the skill ‘lose sense of entitlement’ in the ‘Needs to Improve’ results, giving this skill a lower score than Employers and Grads. This result indicates that Undergrads need to improve on ‘lose sense of entitlement’ significantly more than what they thought.

Employers significantly differed from both Undergrads and Grads on ‘Need to Improve’ scores for ‘communication (verbal and written),’ ‘leadership skills,’ and ‘interpersonal skills (relates well to others).’ Each of these skills was scored lower by Employers than by both Undergrads and Grads. This implies that students in both respondent groups thought they needed to improve on these skills more than what Employers felt.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results for the ‘Important to Possess’ variables, traditional MBA students need to realize that employers felt several skills to be more important to possess than what they thought. These skills include: ‘honesty/integrity,’ ‘strong work ethic,’ ‘interpersonal skills (relates well to others),’ ‘professionalism/etiquette,’ ‘develop creative solutions’ and ‘think analytically.’ Additionally, results suggest that both undergraduate students and MBA students should be aware that ‘flexibility/adaptability’ and ‘detail-oriented’ skills were considered more important by the employers than what students in both groups thought. Being aware that these skills are highly

valued by employers is likely to help newly hired employees fit in better with their new work culture and thrive in the long-term.

For the 'Need to Improve' variables, there were a large number of skills that undergraduate students thought they needed to improve upon more than what employers felt they needed to. These include 'professionalism/etiquette,' 'honesty/integrity,' 'think analytically,' 'organizational skills,' 'knowledge of company/environment,' 'interviewing skills,' 'teamwork skills (works well with others)' and 'utilize technology.' Additionally, employers also gave lower scores than both Undergrads and Grads to the skills 'communication (verbal and written),' 'leadership skills,' and 'interpersonal skills (relates well to others).'

Viewed positively, this could mean students, especially undergraduate students, will be proactive in enhancing these skills and thereby exceed employers' expectations. But in another sense, focusing on improving so many skills that employers already feel are sufficient might diminish efforts to improve skills employers deem most in need of improvement. For the latter, employers gave significantly higher 'Need to Improve' scores than undergraduate students to the variables 'realistic expectations' and 'lose sense of entitlement.' One interpretation of these findings might be that although employers are generally pleased with the skill sets of business students, employers prefer undergraduate students to be more patient and realistic in their expectations for their job and paths for career advancement.

Of special note is a surprising result for the 'Need to Improve' skill 'communication (verbal and written),' where both undergraduate and MBA students scored this skill higher than employers. This finding surprised us, not only because other studies reported that employers considered communication skills to be critical for career success (Orr et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2014) but particularly because we (faculty) received feedback from past employers that our students were weak on this skill. Based on this feedback from prospective and past employers, the Career Services Center at our university in the past few years launched a number of programs to make students aware of this issue. The results of this study seem to indicate that the message is getting through; students show an awareness of the need to improve communication skills and employers indicate that communication skills have improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Career service centers and university/college leadership can play important roles in preparing students for future employers. University career counselors can work closely with the students to make them aware of different stakeholders' expectations during their college-to-work transition (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008). The role of internships on students' marketability in the job market cannot be overemphasized (Gault et al., 2010). Having a wide network of organizations from various sectors of the economy offering internship opportunities to the students is crucial.

Developing and maintaining a network of professional contacts requires a well-staffed internship office, in addition to faculty champions. Programs such as 'Executives in Residence' that bring business practitioners to campus for a limited period of time can have a great impact on students' understanding of employers' expectations, in addition to other benefits (Johnston, 2013). Identifying interested and capable working or retired local business executives is the key to the success of such program.

The efforts to make students aware of employers' skill preferences should not be left for the senior year, and instead should start as early as in the sophomore year (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). Initiatives such as mock interviewing, job shadowing, mentoring by past graduates, providing internship opportunities, and instituting executives in residence programs require additional resources and therefore cannot be achieved without the full commitment of the university/college leadership and on-going efforts to fund these programs. There is a wide scope of future research opportunities in this area. Future research streams can focus on the efficacy of these initiatives in closing the gap between employers' and students' understanding of skill preferences.

CONCLUSION

An article in the Wall Street Journal (Gellman, 2015) indicates that the skill sets of job applicants are becoming so important that some employers such as Facebook, Intuit, Anheuser-Busch InBev, and Zappos are conducting what's being called "program hiring," where job applicants are hired based on trait-related skill sets before a specific job is assigned. Program hiring "identifies a person's transferrable talent, such as problem-solving or analytical ability, and then finds a job that puts those traits to the test." Unlike traditional employer programs that put new-hires through rotation programs to improve their skills in various organizational contexts, program hiring strives to hire people who already possess desirable skill sets. "As businesses large and small seek workers who can adapt to rapid technological or strategic shifts, companies are realizing they should recruit for innate abilities or attitudes, such as high motivation, rather than (technical) skills applicable to a particular job..." As employers become more focused on acquiring new-hires with the "transferable" trait-related skills in our survey, business schools that understand best these essential skills, will be able to prepare their students for future success.

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APPLICATIONS OF MACHINE LEARNING TO STUDENT GRADE PREDICTION IN QUANTITATIVE BUSINESS COURSES

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ABSTRACT

With ever growing pressure to increase student performance, as well as the need to support first generation students and those from underrepresented backgrounds, never before has there been a greater need to quickly identify students who are on track to perform poorly in a class. Traditionally, instructors have relied mainly on intuition and rough averaging of exam scores to predict what grade a student who is on track to receive. With the advent of machine learning and data mining, we have the unprecedented ability to leverage historical student performance data to make statistically accurate and justified predictions beyond an instructor's intuition. Here, we demonstrate the efficacy of three machine learning algorithms—Naïve Bayes estimation, K-nearest neighbors, and support vector machine—for use in predicting students' grades, and compare the results to a "simple average" approach of predicting student grades as a proxy for an instructor's prediction. We show that a support vector machine outperforms all other predictors, including the simple average. However, the error of the simple average predictor is not significantly greater than with the support vector machine, and with the increased computational cost of the support vector machine over the simple average predictor, it may be more economical and convenient to instead rely on instructor predictions or a simple average predictor than a more complex algorithm. Overall, while we show here that machine learning is promising for applications in predicting student performance outcomes, there is still much work to be done towards applying this technology on a broad scale.

INTRODUCTION

At some point, every college instructor has inevitably been asked by a student midway through the semester: "What grade am I going to get in your class?" The most naïve approach is to simply calculate the student's current grade, and assume this as their final grade. However, this approach fails to take into account factors such as variations in difficulty between exams, performance trends over the course of the semester, and similarities and differences between past and present students. Every instructor who has taught the same class multiple times has accumulated significant amounts of past grading data. Here, we ask: "Is it possible to meaningfully predict students' grades using only past grading data?"

Similar studies have examined this question. Majeed (2016) examined the effect of taking both the instructor's grading history as well as past student performance into account when predicting grades, and was able to achieve 95% classification accuracy by using a large amount of

data and features to perform this classification. Lakshmi (2013) employed a genetic algorithm to analyze the root causes of student performance and behavior.

To predict students' grades across our data set, we employ several machine learning algorithms. We compare the results of the machine learning algorithms to the "simple average" approach most often employed by professors and students to make predictions. What follows is a brief overview of machine learning methods, results of using machine learning methods to predict students grades in comparison to a baseline "simple average" prediction, and a discussion of pedagogical applications of this approach to grade prediction.

MACHINE LEARNING OVERVIEW

A. What is machine learning?

Machine learning, in its simplest definition, is using data and statistics to make meaningful predictions about other data. Much like learning in humans, a machine learning algorithm will look for patterns in existing data or train itself to correlate certain inputs with certain outputs. There are two main families of machine learning algorithms: unsupervised and supervised learning. Unsupervised learning seeks to find structure in existing data. Most often, this is focused on looking for clusters of data points within a data set. An example would be looking at gene expression data to see if patients tend to cluster into different groups based on genetic data. Tair (2012) showed the usefulness of using unsupervised learning techniques to analyze student data. In this study, they used techniques such as singular value decomposition to discover trends in the data.

However, while unsupervised techniques can give insight into the structure of data, it cannot in general make exactly predictions from data. To this end, we turn to supervised learning. Supervised learning seeks to correlate inputs with outputs to train a model that predicts the output for a given input. The simplest example of supervised learning is linear regression: taking a set of input and output data points and fitting a best-fit line. However, supervised learning also describes a wide range of models, ranging from simple regression models to something as complex as convolutional neural networks, a model often used in computer vision or natural language processing.

For a classification problem in machine learning, we have n different classes of data in our *training set*, or the dataset used to optimize our statistical model, and we would like to find the class of data in our *test set*, or set of data not used to train the model to mimic empirically applying the model. Grade prediction is such a classification type problem: we have exam scores from throughout the semester for students, and we would like to predict their final grade in the course. To perform this task, we employ several different supervised machine learning algorithms.

B. Supervised learning methods

Agrawal (2015) explored the use of on a Naïve Bayes classifier for student performance prediction. In this study, we employed two additional supervised learning methods to make predictions about student grades: k-nearest neighbors and support vector machine.

i. Naïve Bayes

Naïve Bayes estimation is based on Bayes rule:

$$p(C_k|\mathbf{x}) = \frac{p(C_k)p(\mathbf{x}|C_k)}{p(\mathbf{x})}$$

where C_k represents a class of data (e.g. a student's grade) and \mathbf{x} is our feature vector, the numerical values we use to characterize a data point (James 2013). Naïve Bayes is “naïve” in the sense that we assume independence between the constructs in our feature vector. By making this assumption, we can rewrite Bayes rule as:

$$p(C_k|x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) \propto p(C_k) \prod_{i=1}^n p(x_i|C_i)$$

From here, we can pick our prediction $\hat{y} = C_k$ i.e. the class which maximizes the probability. In mathematical terms, this is:

$$\hat{y} = \arg \max_{C_k=1, \dots, n} p(C_k) \prod_{i=1}^n p(x_i|C_i)$$

ii. K-nearest neighbors

K -nearest neighbors classifiers classify a data point as belonging to the class it is geometrically closest to in our training dataset (James 2013). The different classes of data are shown in color, and our data point of interest is in green. In K -nearest neighbor classification, we first calculate the distance between the point we wish to classify and the points in our training dataset. From here, we look at the K closest points in the training set, and pick our point as belonging to the most common class in the K nearest points.

An example of K -nearest neighbors classification is shown in Figure 1 below. The point of interest is in green, and we wish to classify it as belonging to the red or blue class. After calculating the distance between the green point and the other points in our data set, we can do a majority vote with the K -nearest points. In this case, if we use $K = 1, 2$, or 3 , then we will have Class = Red. However, if we use $K = 5$, we have Class = Blue. This demonstrates that the K -nearest neighbors algorithms will not deliver the same classification depending on number of nearest neighbors used.

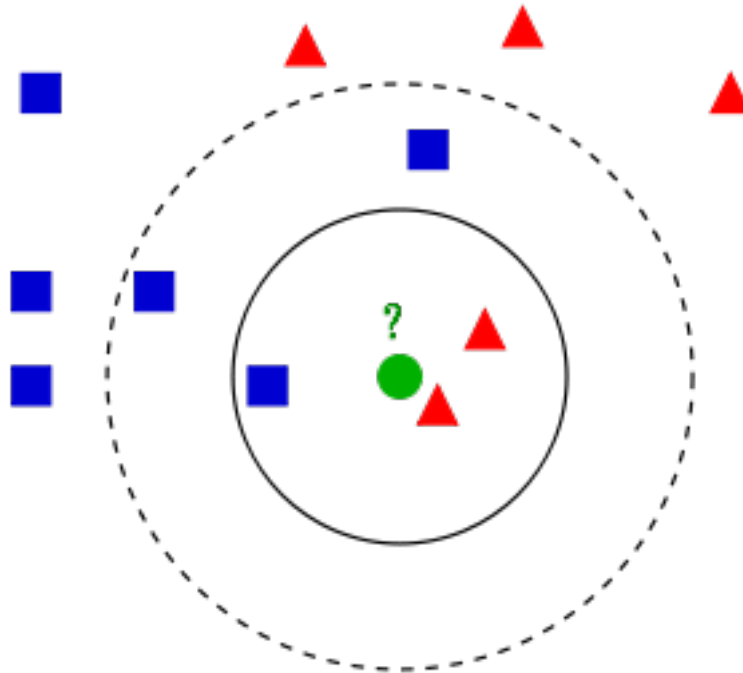


Figure 1: Illustration of K-nearest neighbors. Here, we want to determine the class of the green point. If we use $K = 1$, then it will be classified as red. However, were we to use $K = 5$, the majority nearest neighbors would be blue, so the green dot would be classified as belonging to the blue class. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

iii. Support Vector Machine

The final type of classifier we employ in this study is a support vector machine (SVM). A SVM seeks to find a maximal separating hyperplane between two classes of data (Hastie 2009). In two dimensions, this is equivalent to finding a line to separate or minimize the overlap between two types of data. This is shown in Figure 2 below. Here we have two classes of data: filled and empty dots. The red line shown is the maximal separating hyperplane since it maximizes the distance between each data point and the line. SVMs are extremely effective at separating data from different classes and have been a staple of machine learning algorithms since the advent of their modern form in the 1990s (Cortes 1995).

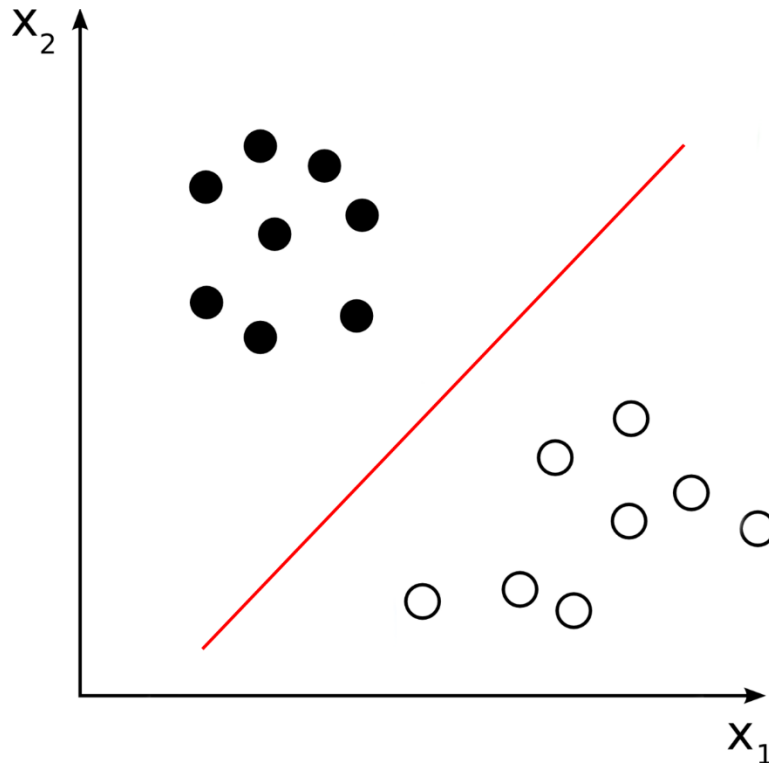


Figure 2: Illustration of maximal separating hyperplane. In an SVM, we seek the line which can separate two classes of data the most strongly i.e. has the maximum distance from the line to the nearest points in each class. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

In cases where we have multiple classes of data—e.g. in the case of students’ grades—we can use a series of “one on one” SVM multi-class classifier. With this approach, we create SVM classifiers between all classes and each other (for a grading scale from A to F, this would employ 10 total SVMs to classify the five different grades). From here, we classify a given data point with every SVM in our set of one-on-one SVMs and pick the majority class.

GRADE PREDICTION RESULTS

To perform the classification, we use historical grade data from 18 semesters totaling 683 students ($N=683$). The grade data were compiled from statistics courses offered at the Craig School of Business at California State University, Fresno from 2006 to 2015. This dataset was chosen such that the structure of the class had not changed significantly over this time period, allowing for this dataset to be compiled into a single, large dataset. In this class, students were evaluated based on four unit examinations and one final exam. The overall distribution of grades for the entire dataset is summarized in Figure 3 below.

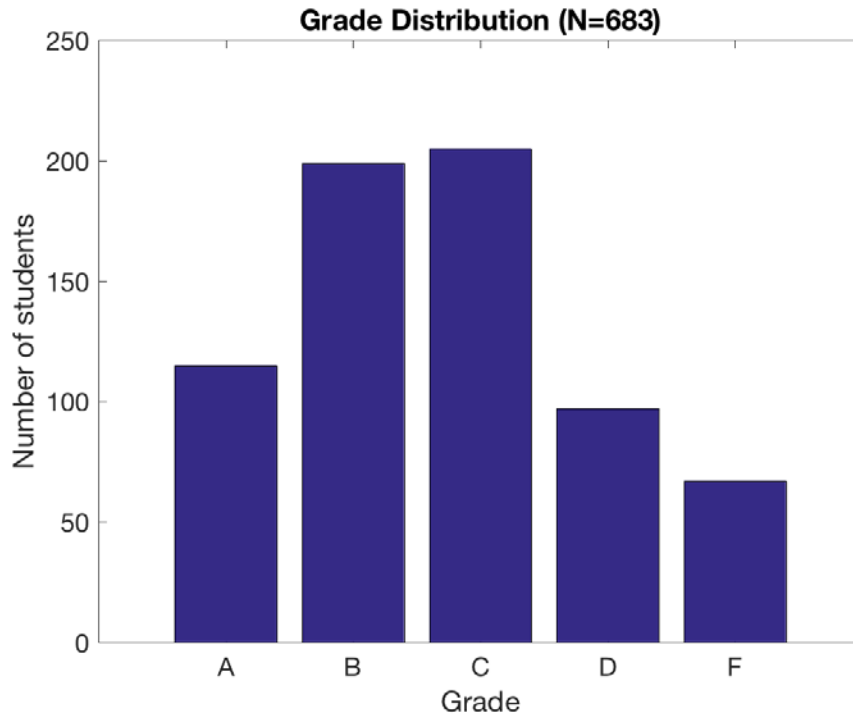


Figure 3: Grade distribution for dataset. The distribution exhibits very little skew, with most students receiving B's and C's in the course.

To perform the grade prediction, we use the three classifiers described in the previous section: Naïve Bayes, K-nearest neighbors, and SVM. We can think of each classifier as looking at a given student whose grades we would like to predict, and seeing which class of grades they are most likely to be a part of. In essence, we are predicting a given student's grade based on how students in the past have performed.

The errors rates of the classifiers are the average error rates found by using 10-fold cross validation. “*k*-fold” cross validation is a process whereby the dataset is partitioned into a training set (~90% of the dataset for the study presented here) and a testing set of the remaining data (10% of the overall dataset), and the error rate calculated for *k* different training and testing sets drawn from the same data. For comparison, we also predicted students' grades using a simple average of their exam scores. The simple average classifier averages a student's performance across exam scores and maps this average to the corresponding final grade (e.g. a student with a 91% average on the first three exams will have a predicted final grade of “A”).

Along with comparing different predictors, we have also compared the prediction accuracy using different amounts of information. It is natural to want to predict a student's grade throughout the semester, so we have tested all of the classifiers using one to four exams to mimic predicting students' grades with limited information. The error when performed on the training and testing datasets for each classifier for each progressively more exams is shown in the plots below (Figures 4 and 5).

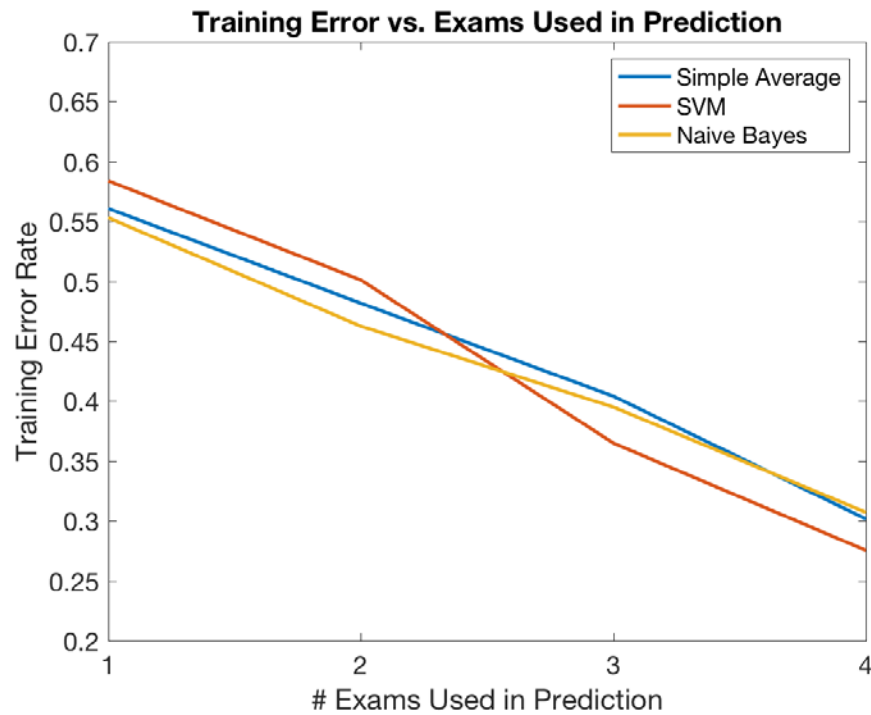


Figure 4: Summary of training error for our predictors. The SVM and Naïve Bayes classifiers slightly outperform our baseline simple average classifier. Notes: K-nearest neighbors is excluded since it is not practical to find a training error for this classifier.

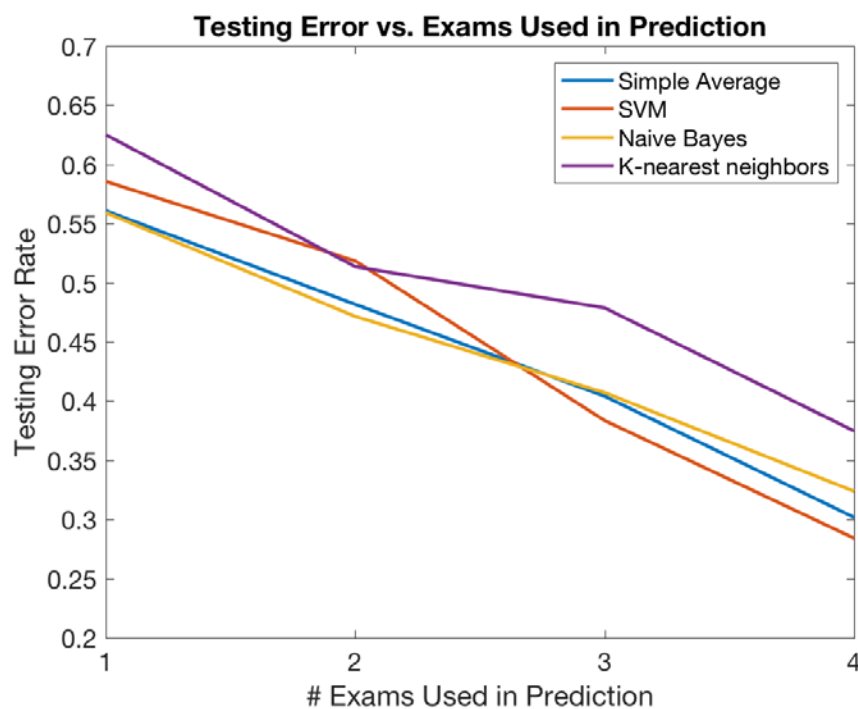


Figure 5: Summary of testing error for our predictors. The simple average has comparable performance or outperforms the classifiers besides SVM.

DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS

The results show that from the perspective of obtaining the lowest error rate, a SVM is the best classifier for data of this kind. Furthermore, it is the only classifier that consistently outperforms a “simple average” approach to predicting a student’s grade. This could be due to several effects. First, the SVM classifier actually creates 10 different one-on-one classifiers and picks the class through a majority vote approach. By building multiple classifiers, we are able to achieve a more optimal classifier for each class of data, compared to Naïve Bayes or *k*-nearest neighbors where we use one classifier for all data classes. Secondly, due to the large variability of student performance within each class of data—that is, two students who receive a “B” could have vastly different exam grades—the *K*-nearest neighbor classifier and Naïve Bayes will have diminished performance. For *K*-nearest neighbors, we are assuming if a student performs closely with other students on each exam, that student will also perform similarly on the final exam as the nearest other students. Thus, this student will receive the same final grade in the class. Similarly for Naïve Bayes, we are relying on each class of students to have strong separation based on their exam scores. In the real classroom, these assumptions are simply not true: students perform better or worse than expected on exams for a wide variety of reasons, some beyond the classroom setting. Other than variability in testing performance, student grades exist within a spectrum: while a student who earns a 79% and another who earns an 80% have very similar performance in the class—and thus are viewed the same by an SVM or *K*-nearest neighbors classifier—the former would receive a “C” and the later a “B,” showing that very little numerical separation in performance can and does lead to disparate grades.

The other main reason for the diminished performance of the classifiers in comparison to the simple average classifier is issues with the data set. While the pedagogical approach in this statistics course used to test these classifiers had the same structure over several years, exam difficulty did inevitably vary between years. These classifiers rely on greater consistency between exams in different years. For example, we are assuming that the grade distribution in 2007 is similar to that in 2014, and, furthermore, that the distribution of student performance on individual exams does not differ significantly between years. Because these assumptions only hold to a limited extent, the performance of our classifiers ultimately suffers, and, in general, it becomes nearly impossible to predict student performance based solely on grade data if there a larger than expect variability in data drawn from different years.

The primary application of this work is empowering students and instructors to actively predict a student’s final grade in a class based on their performance before the final exam. For instructors, this is useful for identifying students at risk of performing poorly in the class so they can recommend or require additional tutoring. Currently in higher education, there is mounting pressure to increase student performance. As shown in Pandey (2011), it is very easy to identify under-performers in a dataset using a Naïve Bayes approach to prediction. With many schools launching special programs to increase the proportion of first generation or students from underrepresented backgrounds, the ability to actively predict students’ grades throughout the semester and identify those who are struggling would be essential in the effort to optimally allocate resources for additional tutoring for at-risk students. On the students’ side, being able to predict

their final grade based on exam scores would allow them to better allot their study time between courses, as well as make informed decisions about enrolling or remaining in a given course. By employing machine learning, we can provide more statistically accurate and justified information to students and teachers, and in turn enhance the classroom experience on both sides.

However, while this technology does have many advantages for students and instructors, we must keep in mind the practical constraints at hand for implementing such a workflow. For a very large set of data—say, across several thousand students over many years—calculating a SVM or Naïve Bayes predictor can be somewhat computationally expensive for a desktop computer or mobile device. Furthermore, such datasets may not be available due to significant changes in a course’s structure over time or may be difficult to obtain due to the format of historical grade data. Lastly, as shown by the results presented here, a simple average classifier performs nearly as well as significantly more complicated algorithms at a fraction of the computational cost. In essence, bigger is not always better when it comes to classifying data of this type. As a corollary to this, because we intuitively use a simple average classifier when predicting students’ grades, a more complex classifier may not perform significantly better. While our results validate the simple average approach, it also shows that it is a good proxy for much more complex methods: indeed, the accuracy gained from using a method such as a SVM may not be worth the additional computational cost. Overall, based on our results, machine learning does show promise for use in grade prediction, it will be necessary to increase the accuracy significantly beyond a simple average classifier to make it an attractive technology for use in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Machine learning stands to revolutionize education in the near future: by employing machine learning to tasks such as designing curriculum, customizing pedagogy, and tracking and predicting student performance, we will be able to enable a new era of engagement with students. This study puts forth an example of using machine learning to predict students’ grades in a quantitative business course. The results show that while machine learning is promising for predicting students’ grades, the gains from employing supervised learning algorithms may not be worth the additional computational cost. Overall, while machine learning is a very powerful technology—especially when applied to education—there is still much work to be done in applying it in the classroom.

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VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

“We [American colleges and universities] champion tolerance, except for conservatives and evangelical Christians. We want to be inclusive of people who don’t look like us—so long as they think like us.”

—New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof (2016a)

Higher education leads the way in working toward a more diverse, representative, welcoming, and supportive environment that increases inclusiveness, promotes greater equity, and enriches the learning experience by creating an atmosphere where all community members can flourish in an open marketplace of ideas, opinions, and beliefs (Haidt et al., 2015; King, Jr., Mitchell, McIntosh, & Bell-Ellwanger, 2016). Pluralism is a well-established value in the academy, and it enjoys broad backing—except for individuals who do not share the overwhelming liberal political bias in higher education. In support of this position Kristof (2016b) cited Dr. George Yancey, a black, evangelical Christian sociology professor at the University of North Texas, who said “Outside of academia I faced more problems as a black. But inside academia, I face more problems as a Christian, and it is not even close.” While this quote suggests, unsurprisingly, that higher education may be unwelcoming to religion, particularly Christianity (Larson, 2010), the more important point is that higher education seems to have created an intellectual monoculture in many disciplines (Etchemendy, 2017) that are unreceptive to those with viewpoints, understandings, ideologies, and political beliefs not endorsed by the political left.¹ Even having ideas thought to be inconsistent with a person’s ethnicity can be problematic. French (2016), for example, noted that affirmative action was less robust for African-Americans and Hispanics who held notions seemingly incompatible with their ethnicity:

there are times when admissions committees will ideologically cleanse the minority applicant pool of minorities who are seen as ‘less diverse’ because of expressed interest in ‘white’ professions such as, say, investment banking. If you’re a Mexican American who writes an admissions essay about defending the rights of migrant farm workers, you’re a dream candidate. If you’re a black candidate who aspires to work for Goldman Sachs, you’re ‘less diverse.’

¹ Throughout this paper, we use the terms conservative, right-wing, and Republican as synonyms. Likewise, liberal, left-wing, and Democratic are represented as alternative expressions. Since the early 20th century, the Democratic Party has been the left-leaning party, and the Republican Party has been the right-leaning party (Levendusky 2009). We recognize that there are degrees of political affiliation but feel that this bifurcation is most helpful in discussing political viewpoints and viewpoint diversity.

These scenarios suggest that thinking differently or challenging the liberal hegemony in today's academy may have problematic consequences for those whose interpretations and political ideology can be classified as non-liberal, specifically conservative.² We define political ideology as the set of attitudes, which contain cognitive, affective, and motivational components, that explains how society should function to achieve social justice and social order (Jost, 2006). Since the 1800s, the left-right distinction has been used to describe differences in political ideology, which originated from the way the French parliament was seated (Bobbio, 1996). While abstract, this differentiation has been classified as the most parsimonious and useful way to characterize political views and has proven useful in virtually all cultural contexts (Jost, 2006), and represents the most compelling and predictive approach for arraying ideologies (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Knight, 2006; Poole & Rosenthal, 1984; Schwartz, 1996). In the United States, conservatives emphasize personal responsibility and empowerment of the individual to solve problems, limited government, transcendent religious beliefs, fairness defined by equity, free markets, property rights, and individualism (Detomasi, 2008; Schlenker, Chambers, & Le, 2012; Tetlock, 2000). In contrast, liberals tend to emphasize the duty of the government to alleviate social ills, protect civil liberties, individual rights and human rights, secular beliefs that oppose the Judeo-Christian tradition, fairness defined by equality, concern for the environment, and a preference for egalitarianism (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Schlenker et al., 2012; Schwartz, 1996). Humor columnist and provocateur, Dave Barry, suggests that Republicans (conservatives) think of Democrats (liberals) as godless, unpatriotic, elitists, while Democrats view Republicans as ignorant, NASCAR-obsessed, gun-fondling religious fanatics.

This paper examines how these differences in liberal and conservative worldviews play out in higher education within the context of viewpoint diversity. We do this by first by scrutinizing various diversity dimensions followed by a discussion of viewpoint diversity. We then present data on the numbers of liberals and conservatives in the professoriate and then consider the consequences of such an imbalance. Finally, we offer recommendations for addressing the overwhelmingly liberal bent in the academy followed by a conclusion and summary.

DIVERSITY

Support for diversity (the multitude of individual differences that make people unique and different from others, Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010; often discussed using such terms as inclusion, pluralism, equity, cultural diversity, multiculturalism) in higher education is practically a universal value and is consistent with its significance in other domains. For example, biologists indicate that the greater the genetic diversity within a species, the greater the species' chances of long-term survival (e.g., Frankham, 2005); financial planners and investment counselors communicate the

² Moving beyond the academy, Holmes (2016) noted that liberalism in America today has abandoned the precepts of open-mindedness and respect for individual rights, liberties, and the rule of law upon which the country was founded, and becoming instead an intolerant, rigidly dogmatic ideology that abhors dissent and stifles free speech. Holmes argues that today's liberalism has forsaken its American roots, incorporating instead the authoritarian, anti-clerical, and anti-capitalist prejudices of the radical and largely European Left resulting in a closing of the American liberal mind.

value of having a diversified portfolio (e.g., Goetzmann & Kumar, 2008); organization scholars point out that workplace pluralism helps members address questions and issues from different angles leading to better group problem solving and greater success in completing tasks (e.g., Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009); and governmental agencies at the local, state, and federal levels emphasize diversity with numerous equal employment opportunity regulations and initiatives advocating the appreciation of differences across numerous factors (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n. d.).

Kreitner and Kinicki (2010) identified four levels of individual differences that are often addressed in diversity discussions (see Figure 1). This figure illustrates that people fundamentally differ in their personalities. They also are unlike in demographic features, referred to as surface-level dimensions that are often addressed by governmental entities in cases of discrimination and that are not under an individual's control. Additionally, distinctions occur in socioeconomic (external) factors where persons have significant influence. The outer layer lists several areas that typically address organizational and institutional variances.

Figure 1. Layers of diversity. Adapted from Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010, p. 36.



As can be seen in Figure 1, viewpoint diversity, specifically political viewpoint diversity, has not been included in traditional pluralism conversations. Unlike race, gender, age, and many other dimensions where attitudes and behaviors towards individuals become constrained by social norms (Himmelfarb & Lickteig, 1982; Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954; Sigall & Page, 1971), there are relatively few similar pressures to mitigate disapproval of those with different political viewpoints and beliefs. Because liberals tend to dominate today's academy in many areas of higher education (Jaschik, 2017) partisans commonly feel free to express animus and engage in

discriminatory behavior toward those with opposing ideological views (Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, & Wetherell, 2014). This should not be surprising since similarity attracts (the “birds of a feather” effect) is one of the most well-established findings in social psychology (Byrne, 1969). In classic research by Rokeach (1960), participants rated their impressions of target persons whose race and opinions on issues were either the same as or different from the participants’ own. Rokeach found that differences in opinions were more important than racial differences in determining liking for the targets; participants preferred targets with similar opinions over targets with dissimilar opinions, regardless of the targets’ race. Iyengar and Westwood (2015) likewise found that compared with the most salient social divide in American society—race—political viewpoint diversity elicits more extreme evaluations and behavioral responses to ingroups and outgroups. Indeed, many progressive faculty members may be antagonistic not only to conservatives but also to ideas and studies that challenge liberal views or advance conservative ones. A further discussion of viewpoint diversity is now warranted.

VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY

The First Amendment (addressing freedom of speech) is first, not only because it is listed first in the amendments, but instead because it articulates the first freedom and the nature of that free expression. It guarantees the liberty essential to humans as rational beings and the maintenance of a democratic government. The Supreme Court in *National Citizens Committee/or Broadcasting* (1978) affirmed that the First Amendment seeks diversity of “viewpoint” (p. 797). Such free speech protections promote a multiplicity of ideas and encourage people with a variety of perspectives to speak out and participate in American life. Viewpoint diversity involves an honest consideration of multiple, often competing for claims that privileges a vigorous and spirited debate of ideologically different ideas which are to be judged on their logical soundness and intellectual merit. In the case of *Street v. New York* (1969), the Court affirmed that “the constitutionally guaranteed ‘freedom to be intellectually ... diverse or even contrary,’ and the ‘right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order,’ encompass the freedom to express publicly one’s opinions which are defiant or contemptuous” (p. 121). Similarly, according to Justice William Brennan, speaking for the majority in *Texas v. Johnson* (1989) indicated: “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable . . .” (p. 414). Additionally, in *Perry Education Association v. Perry Local Educators’ Association* (1983) the Supreme Court all but ruled that viewpoint discrimination is never permitted under the free speech clause. Thus, the First Amendment is needed to protect minority viewpoints, unpopular viewpoints, and viewpoints that people despise or would prefer to eliminate from academic or public discourse. Speech that enjoys widespread support does not need any protection.

To illustrate the importance of viewpoint diversity, consider that Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have strongly encouraged viewpoint diversity in the media, not by directly mandating content, but by limiting concentration of media ownership which is seen as a means to the ultimate end of furthering substantive viewpoint diversity (Ho & Quinn, 2009), and in turn fostering broad democratic goals of an informed citizenry, deliberation, and accountability (Baker, 2005). “In limiting broadcast ownership to promote economic competition,

we also take major strides toward protecting and promoting our separate policy goal of protecting competition in the marketplace of ideas—viewpoint diversity” (Federal Communications Commission, 2003, p. 13,639). Some media rules and regulations have been promulgated to further viewpoint diversity and to avoid convergence:

- *The “broadcast-newspaper cross-ownership” rule, promulgated in 1975, restricts common ownership of a newspaper and broadcast station (television or radio) in the same market (Federal Trade Commission, 2003);*
- *The “television-radio cross-ownership” rule limits the number of television and radio stations an entity may own in a single market (Baker, 2005);*
- *The “national television ownership” rule caps the aggregate television audience any single entity may reach 39% (Federal Communications Commission, 2007);*
- *The “dual network” rule prohibits a merger between any of the top four networks (i.e., ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC; 47 C.F.R., 2008); and*
- *From 1970 to 1995, the “financial interest and syndication” rules barred television networks from having a financial stake in syndication of programs (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004).*

The existence of viewpoint pluralism on societal conditions nurtures minority perspectives (Bork, 1971) and is beneficial because it motivates majority members to think more deeply about the issues at stake (Crano, 2012; Duarte et al., 2015), and “enhances the national debate” (Marshall, 1986, p. 70). There is even evidence that politically diverse teams produce more creative solutions than politically homogeneous teams about problems including “how can a person of average talent achieve fame” and how to find funding for a partially-built church ineligible for bank loans (Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965). Pairs constituting one liberal and one conservative produced more creative solutions to these problems than did liberal-liberal or conservative-conservative pairings.

There is abundant evidence that viewpoint diversity can and often does lead to novel solutions to a variety of problems (Crano, 2012; Mannix & Neale, 2005), and self-identified conservatives may be more diverse with regard to their political beliefs than liberals (Feldman & Johnston, 2014; Klein & Stern, 2005; Stenner, 2009). A diverse faculty enriches experiences, fosters empathy, cultivates and shares talents and perspectives, and offers unscripted opportunities to open minds and inform thinking. Unfortunately, when there is a lack of viewpoint diversity in the academy students are disadvantaged by missing non-liberal interpretations of society, ethics, and human meaning. But are there meaningful numerical differences in colleges and universities between liberal and conservative worldviews?

LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

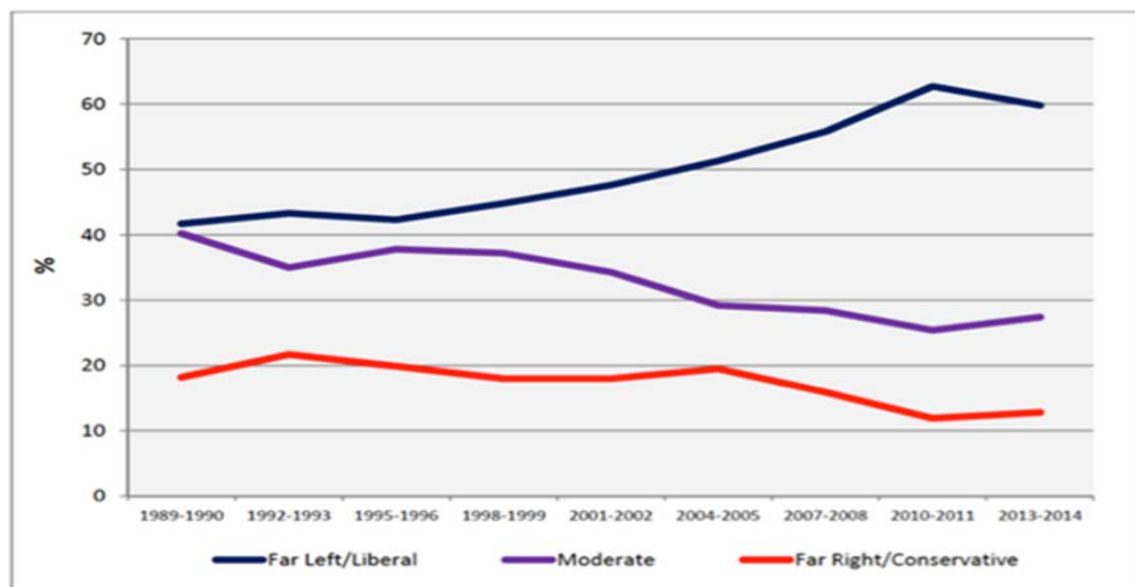
Numerous reports have chronicled the substantial decline of conservative professors on college campuses (Abrams, 2016) and have noted a striking change regarding viewpoint diversity with liberals and progressives dominating universities. Moreover, Willick (2016) has observed that “Despite (or perhaps because of) it’s almost religious reverence for racial and sexual diversity, the academy has allowed political diversity in certain quarters to wither to the point of vanishing.” The rapid disappearance of the right of center leaning faculty—the “plight of conservatives” within the academy—has led to conservative professors now being characterized as members of a

“beleaguered minority” (Jeffers, 2015), and Wilkinson (2007) speaks of the “leftist death-grip in academia.”

It is not that this idea has recently surfaced since Newcome (1943) found at Bennington College in the 1930s that conservative students felt isolated from the larger campus environment; Buckley lamented the preponderance of liberal thinkers in 1951 at Yale; Bloom mourned the plurality of professorial viewpoints in his 1987 best seller; Sacks and Thiel (1998) wrote how left-wing multiculturalism had hurt campuses; Horowitz (2006) sought to guarantee equal rights for conservative faculty and students; and more recently Haidt and colleagues (2015), Shields and Dunn (2016), and Etchemendy (2017) have voiced concerns about rising intellectual monocultures and ideological uniformity in higher education.

There has been a pervasive shift to the political/cultural left in higher education as indicated below in Figure 2, such that many of these institutions are now bastions of liberalism. In the 15 years between 1995 and 2010, the academy went from leaning left to being almost entirely on the left. The red line mark of 12% in 2014 is primarily made up of professors in schools of engineering, health sciences, business, and agriculture; the percent conservative for the humanities and social science departments is closer to 5%.

Figure 2. Data from the Higher Education Research Institute illustrates a significant leftward movement of the professoriate, based on a survey of college faculty members conducted every other year since 1989 and posted in the Heterodox Academy (Haidt et al., 2015).

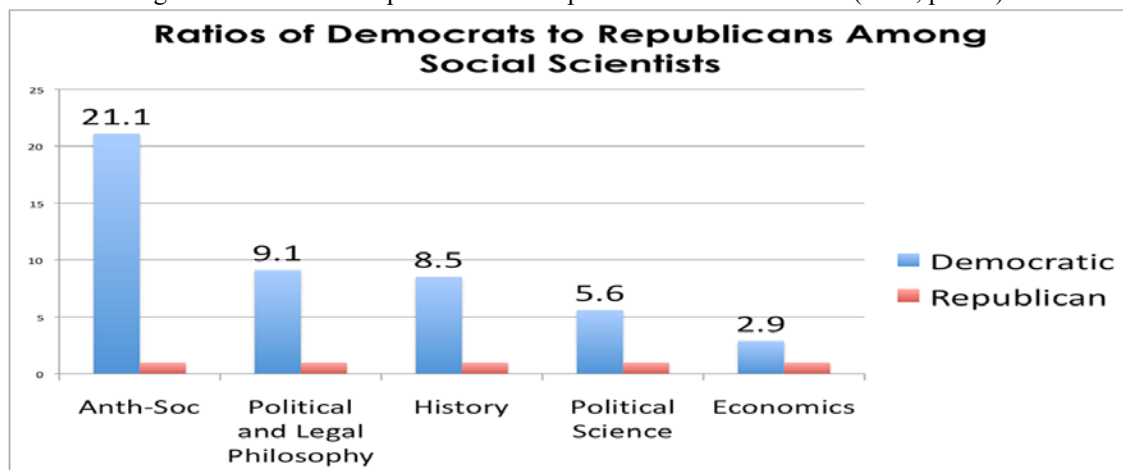


A study by UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute (Egan, Stolzenberg, Lozano, Aragon, Suchard, & Hurtado, 2014) found that all undergraduate faculty nationwide, 59.8 percent identify as far left or liberal, compared with far right or conservative at 12.8 percent. Egan et al. (2014) found that 14.6 percent of faculty members identifying as far left at private research universities as the most left-leaning, and only 0.3 percent as far right. The most significant

conservative contingent can be found at religious, non-Roman Catholic four-year colleges where 22.4 percent identify as conservative and another 1.3 percent say that they are far right. In the South and throughout the Great Plains, the ratio of liberal to conservative professors hovers around 3 to 1. On the west coast, the ratio was 6 to 1, and in elite universities in New England liberal professors outnumbered conservatives 28-to-1, up from a 5-to-1 ratio in 1989 (Walker, 2016). This evolution from the center may be problematic for non-liberals since Ivy League universities set the trend for America's other schools.

In a study by Duarte et al. (2015), 58-66 percent of social science professors identified as liberal, while only 5-8 percent identified as conservatives. Figure 3 taken from Klein and Stern (2005) illustrates this dramatic difference. This decades-long shift to the left is endemic, and as students influenced by their liberal professors became graduate assistants, then faculty members, liberalism became further entrenched in higher education. On the other hand, Smith, Mayer, & Fritschler (2008) in their book, *Closed Minds? : Politics and ideology in American Universities* argue that students' worldview is primarily influenced by their peers, rather than faculty members (p. 207). Gross and Simmons (2006) further found that only about 1/5 of self-identified Republican college students say they do not feel comfortable discussing their political views on campus. This seems a relatively low number if freedom of speech is indeed being suppressed on campus (p. 77).

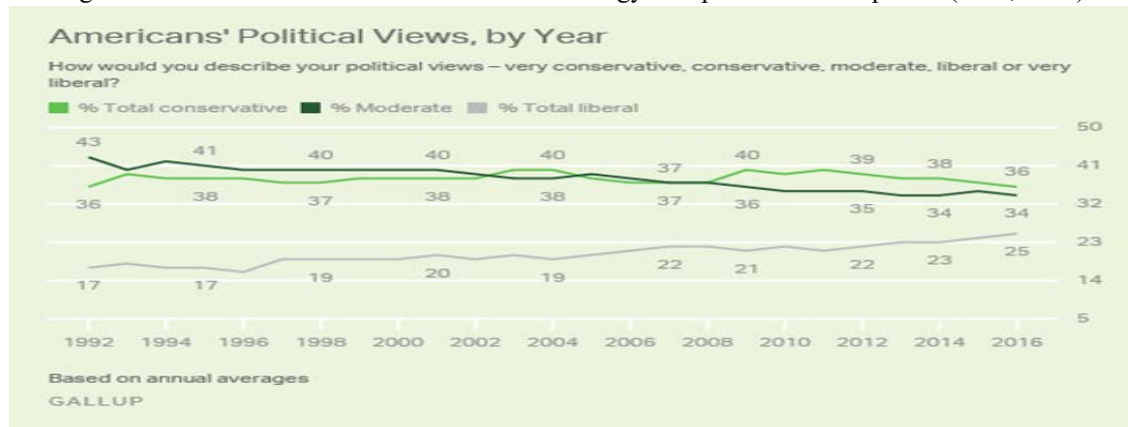
Figure 3. Illustration of political bias adapted from Klein and Stern (2005, p. 264).



This trend toward liberal political orthodoxy has made U.S. universities captive to a narrow ideology seemingly out of touch with mainstream America (Jensen, 2017; Smith, Mayer, & Fritschler, 2008). Gallup data since 1992 (see Figure 4) have found self-identified conservatives have long made up about 40 percent of the American public. Self-identified liberals have made up about 20 percent although recently the percent of liberals is 25 and the percent of conservatives is 36 (Saad, 2017). These numbers suggest that the academy is not representative of American society and potentially making it more difficult for public universities to secure funding. The proposed Coburn Amendment, for example, would have placed severe limits on political scientists' access to federal funding but did not make it into the 2014 spending bill (Mervis, 2014).

Similarly, in March 2014, the U. S. House Science, Space, and Technology' Subcommittee introduced a bill which proposed \$150 million in cuts in National Science Foundation funding to social and behavioral sciences but, once again, it did not make it into the final bill.

Figure 4. American's Self-Identified Political Ideology. Adapted from Gallup Data (Saad, 2017).



These legislative initiatives may be a harbinger of things to come, and the academy must be sensitive to political threats to social science funding. Moreover, many ordinary citizens may come to view the liberal elites in higher education as inconsistent with the values of contemporary America and to have little experience of the real world and therefore make them irrelevant (Bartholomew, 2017). Furthermore, this imbalance gives rise to suspicions regarding universities' ability to make students more capable people and citizens and harms them by limiting the depth and range of ideas to which they are exposed. In support of this view, is a current Pew Research Center study (2017) finding that while a majority of the American public (55 percent) continues to say that colleges and universities have a positive effect on the country, a majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (58 percent) now say that colleges and universities have a negative effect on the country, up from 45 percent in 2016. By comparison, 72 percent of Democrats and those who lean Democrat, believe colleges and universities have a positive effect. This represents little change from recent years.

Duarte et al. (2015) and others (e.g., Gross, 2013) point out that the underrepresentation of conservatives in today's academy may negatively impact students' inclination to enter the professoriate because they see it as unwelcoming. And sometimes professors express outright contempt for conservative views, which aside from being discourteous, lowers professors' credibility with level-headed individuals across a wide range of political views and motivates students to go elsewhere (Nisbett, 2015). It appears that some liberal professors may be drawing their inspiration from Saul Alinsky's (1971) motto that "ridicule is man's most potent weapon" (p. 128). Thus, conservatives are often viewed as pariahs and students recognize this early on in their undergraduate and graduate studies, and this will likely encourage those who do not share the majority ideology to choose a different vocation. Bloom (2011) noted, "Nobody wants to be part of a community where their identity is the target of ridicule and malice." Perhaps, also, the

academy is just not of interest to conservatives today. While this is possible, we are unsure how this may account for the somewhat sudden shift in the conservatives entering higher education. Self-selection plays a role in the overrepresentation of liberals in colleges and universities and contributes to the political homogeneity of the academy but so do other factors outlined below.

It should be noted, however, that politics is not always an issue in the classroom. Depending somewhat on the subject matter, many faculty members provide instruction without political discussion. Gross & Simmons (2006), in particular, found that engineering professors tended to focus on the subject area rather than engage in political discussion. Shields & Dunn (2016) in *Passing on the Right*, found in their research that students were more likely to be influenced by their peers on campus, rather than indoctrinated by faculty members at the university.

COSTS OF A HOMOGENEOUS LIBERAL CULTURE

Many people recognize that people loathe ideas that conflict with their own and judge less positively others who are dissimilar in some way from themselves (e.g., Byrne, 1969; McGregor, Lieberman, Solomon, Greenberg, Arndt, et al., 1998), and so engage in a variety of strategies to maintain their worldview (Proulx, Inzlicht, & Harmon-Jones, 2012). Some consequences include a negative impact on pedagogical issues, motivated information processing, defense against worldview-violating groups, increased political scrutiny, creating hostile environments less flattering to conservatives, and prejudice and discrimination.

Negative impact on pedagogical issues.

Maranto, Redding, and Hess (2009) suggest that ideologically uniform views and beliefs are problematic because they: 1) limit the questions academics ask and the phenomena they study, hindering their pursuit of knowledge and their ability to serve society; 2) delegitimize academic expertise and the academy in general among large swaths of voters and policymakers making it more difficult for scholars to contribute effectively to policy debates, and harder for citizens to believe in their public educational institutions; 3) give rise to suspicions regarding universities' ability to make students more capable people and citizens, and harms them by "limiting the depth and range of ideas to which they are exposed"; and 4) makes universities "intellectually dull places where careerism and profit-seeking" prevail and the energy of contending ideas is absent; for example, such topics as separate bathrooms for the transgendered and open borders are debated in newspapers and Congress, but generally not in academia, where a single acceptable view is presumed. Coming from a different angle, Duarte et al. (2015) documented how political diversity and dissent would improve "the reliability and validity of social psychological science" and prevent researchers from falling into "scientific hell, where scientific standards are clouded by political passions" (Tetlock, 1994, p. 510).

Motivated information processing and related concepts.

A family of related terms encompasses a set of similar phenomena, all of which involve people favoring their point-of-view. *Confirmation bias* refers to seeking information that confirms one's beliefs, hypotheses or expectations (e.g., Nickerson, 1998). *Myside bias* happens when

people appraise evidence or examine hypotheses in ways biased towards supporting their attitudes (Stanovich, West, & Toplak, 2013). *Motivated reasoning* denotes the occurrence where people often seek out evidence partial to their pre-existing views. This driven information processing—which sometimes comprises selectively attending to, ignoring, or distorting information to support existing beliefs (Kunda, 1990; Mercier & Sperber, 2011) and is neither more common among conservatives nor among liberals (Bartels, 2002; Crawford et al., 2013; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Therefore, when liberals or conservatives form impressions about social groups, they are likely to confirm their previously established beliefs regarding the group and the validity of their own ideological beliefs, and to uncritically evaluate information that confirms their prior beliefs and preferences (Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Ditto, Scepansky, Munro, Apanovitch, & Lockhart, 1998).

Defense against worldview violating groups.

The desire for a consistent worldview can also lead to intolerance against groups whose values conflict with, or threaten, one's values (Brandt & Reyna, 2010; Chambers & Melnyk, 2006; Henry & Reyna, 2007; Sullivan et al., 1981). Although research regarding this topic has often focused on conservatives and other groups with whom they disagree (e.g., Reyna et al., 2006), the inclination to defend one's beliefs against worldview violating groups applies equally to conservatives and liberals. Though liberals and conservatives differ in the moral values that form the basis of their worldviews (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009), both endorse moral values with similar intensity (Skitka & Bauman, 2008), indicating they will be similarly prone to defend against attacks on their worldview.

Increased political scrutiny.

The political imbalance in higher education makes some wonder if universities have been hijacked by poisonous identity politics. Such tribalism does not serve the academy well and invites governmental scrutiny and intervention. For example, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill recently to restore free speech and equality. The legislation makes it illegal for universities and colleges to disinvite speakers based on their political beliefs and also barred universities from charging higher fees for conservative students to host speakers under the pretense of needing increased security to protect them from mobs. In California, a Republican-sponsored bill currently being debated would end the restrictive “free speech zones” at California's public universities. Under this proposal, anyone would be able to speak freely anywhere across campus. Liberal administrators would no longer decide when and where students can speak their minds. And recently, Iowa state senator Mark Chelgren introduced a bill to require that no professor or instructor be hired by a public state university if his or her most recent party affiliation would “cause the percentage of the faculty belonging to one political party to exceed by 10 percent” the percentage of the faculty belonging to the other dominant party (Hemmer, 2017). “I'm under the understanding that right now they can hire people because of diversity,” he told the *Des Moines Register*. His proposed legislation would institute a hiring freeze at state universities until the

number of registered Republicans within the faculty falls within 10 percent of registered Democrats.

Moreover, some states prohibit discrimination based on political affiliation or other political activity. These include California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, and New York. For example, the Connecticut General Statute § 5-227 indicates that “No person in the classified service or seeking admission to it may be appointed, demoted or dismissed or be in any way favored or discriminated against because of his political opinions or affiliations or as the result of a discriminatory employment practice as defined in section 46a-51. No question in any application, questionnaire, examination or other evaluation form used in connection with carrying out the provisions of this chapter may relate to political or religious opinions or affiliations of any applicant or eligible person on any candidate or reemployment list established and maintained by the Commissioner of Administrative Services.”

Fearing that criticisms of academia’s liberal slant will lead politicians to impose partisan quotas or a kind of ideological affirmative action, many academics deny that colleges and universities should host a variety of viewpoints (Maranto & Woessner, 2012). In one particularly unpersuasive defense of the status quo, the liberal-leaning American Association of University Professors (AAUP) report *Freedom in the Classroom* (2007) argues that any attempt at ideological diversity inevitably could lead to “‘equal time’ for Communist totalitarianism or Nazi fascism,” given the “‘potentially infinite number of competing perspectives.’” Seemingly, the left-leaning AAUP finds conservative perspectives no more (or less) plausible than those doctrines of Stalin or Hitler (AAUP, 2007).

Mitigating a standardized left-wing political view intent on redirecting higher education into political activism with an overemphasis on the trilogy of race, class, and gender may lead to U.S. citizens taking academic perspectives more seriously. This is important because today’s higher education appears out of step with mainstream America where there is often ridicule and disdain of the academy and their endorsement of heavy unionization, comprehensive regulation, high taxes, free-flowing welfare, universal healthcare, lax policing, open borders, a passive military posture, etc. “It’s ineffably sad that today ‘that’s academic’ often means ‘that’s irrelevant’” (Kristol, 2016a). Such continued scorn could translate into decreased state and federal aid and support.

Hostile climate.

Historically, universities and colleges provided an open exchange of ideas, devoid of disparaging remarks about people with different viewpoints but when nearly everyone in a field shares the same political orientation, certain ideas become the accepted view, dissent is discouraged, errors can go unopposed, and discrimination occurs. Those with opposing views are labeled as evil or ignorant or stupid, rather than as individuals with beliefs worthy of consideration. Where freedom of speech and expression were once inviolable, today liberalism employs speech codes, trigger warnings, *ad hominem* attacks, boycotts, and shaming rituals to stifle freedom of thought, expression, and action. Moreover, the liberal academy has been so focused on attaining diversity by race and gender (undoubtedly valuable) perhaps they were unaware that they were creating a hostile climate for people who *think* differently.

This has manifested itself in liberals' research agendas which often denigrates conservatives. For example, compared to liberals, conservatives are less intelligent (Hodson & Busseri, 2012), less cognitively complex (Jost et al., 2003), more simple-minded (Conway et al., 2016), and prone to engage in low-effort thought processing (Eidelman, Crandall, Goodman, & Blanchar, 2012). They are more rigid, dogmatic, and inflexible (Jost et al., 2003). Conservatives are often prone to expedient, closed-minded, and authoritarian solutions (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998; Kruglanski, 2004; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996). Their lower IQ explains conservatives' racism and sexism (Deary, Batty, & Gale, 2008), and their support for inequality could explain why they are happier than liberals (Napier & Jost, 2008). They are hyper-responsive to threatening and negative stimuli (Oxley et al., 2008), and they adopt their political beliefs to soften their fears and concerns (Jost et al., 2003). Inbar and Lammers (2012) asked psychologists "Do you feel that there is a hostile climate towards your political beliefs in your field?" Of 17 conservatives, 14 (82%) responded "yes," while 18 of 266 liberals (7%) responded "yes." Such research may be nothing more than liberal academics trying to legitimize their prejudices against conservatives. This hostile climate toward conservatives provides a straightforward explanation why conservatives hide their political opinions from colleagues. Academics rely on the opinions of their colleagues—who judge their papers, grants, and applications for teaching positions—and as judgments are typically made by multiple reviewers (most of whom are liberal), outspoken conservatives encounter an extremely serious problem. Hence, the more conservative respondents are, the more they hide their political opinions.

In another arena, Inbar and Lammers (2015) observed that professional talks (in psychology) often contain jokes disparaging Republican politicians (and only Republicans), and speakers sometimes openly mock conservative beliefs. Such conduct in a professional setting can alienate colleagues who do not share the majority's political beliefs. This behavior sends a signal to both students and novice researchers that there is only one acceptable political ideology in the field. Indeed, Birmingham (2017) noted that "Junior faculty play it safe—conceptually, politically, and formally—because they write for job and tenure committees rather than for readers." Publications serve careers before they serve culture.

Prejudice and Discrimination.

Mummendey and Wenzel (1999) define discrimination as "an ingroup's subjectively justified unequal, usually disadvantageous, evaluation or treatment of an outgroup, that the latter (or an outside observer) would deem unjustified" (p. 159). Thus, the well-known psychological principle of in-group favoritism (Allport, 1954), sometimes known as in-group-out-group bias, in-group bias, or intergroup bias, which is a pattern of favoring members of one's in-group over out-group members and denigrating others who do not fit into those groups may account for discrimination.

In fact, in-group favoritism occurs frequently and on such trivial things as whether people "overestimate" or "underestimate" the number of dots shown on a display (Billig & Tajfel, 1973), on the basis of a completely random coin toss (Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980), or t-shirt color (Bigler, Brown, & Markell, 2001). One of the most significant studies on ingroup-outgroup bias was performed in the schoolroom of an Iowa teacher, Jane Elliot. On the day following the

assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, Elliot decided to address the problems of racial prejudice by dividing her third-grade class into groups based on eye color. As profiled in the PBS Frontline Documentary, “A Class Divided” (Peters, 1985), Elliot showed how easy it was to transform the 7-year-old students in her class into bigots by making the brown-eyed children the targets of discrimination by the “better” blue-eyed children. In only a matter of minutes, the “superior” blue-eyed children began ridiculing their classmates, calling them “stupid” and shunning them in the playground during recess. Then she reversed the situation and showed that the brown-eyed children when on top, exacted the same punishments onto their blue-eyed classmates. Brandt et al. (2014) found a similar outcome, not with different eye colors but with opposing ideologies: *both* liberals and conservatives were willing to express animus and engage in discriminatory behavior toward those whose values and goals conflict with their own, and at virtually identical levels (Brandt et al., 2014). Dissimilarity breeds discrimination.

It seems then that viewpoint diversity about political attitudes may lead to prejudice and discrimination against non-liberal groups who may represent new, potentially threatening views. The outgroup in higher education are the non-liberal colleagues and applicants and research suggests that discrimination exists in hiring, promotions, and terminations. Additionally, the literature on political prejudice demonstrates that strongly identified partisans show little compunction about expressing their obvious hostility toward the opposing side (e.g., Chambers, Schlenker, & Collisson, 2013; Crawford & Pilanski 2014; Haidt, 2012). Partisans routinely believe that their hostility towards opposing groups is justified because of the threat posed to their values by dissimilar others (for a review, see Brandt et al., 2014).

If left unchecked, an academic field can become a cohesive moral community, creating a shared reality (Hardin & Higgins, 1996) that blinds its members to other interpretations. While choosing like-minded people may be a natural human behavior, it often results in discrimination. According to Klein, “Once you get a department above 50 percent (in ideology), they’ll tend to keep people out who oppose them. So, it’ll tend to go from 50 to 60 to 70 to 80 percent ...” (Watson, 2014), and when people are largely interact with like-minded others their views become more extreme (Lamm & Myers, 1978). Such numbers often generate prejudice and discrimination which can be expressed in evaluation of others, promotional decisions, in the allocation of resources and hiring.

In hiring a new member of an academic department, most existing members will tend to support candidates with common values, beliefs, and commitments. Once a majority of decision makers see the world a particular way, they are more likely to eliminate those who are not like them in favor of those who are. Data from a variety of independent and diverse samples have revealed that intolerance knows no ideological bounds and that both liberals and conservatives express intolerance toward groups with whom they disagree (Lambert & Chasteen, 1997; McClosky & Chong, 1985; Yancey, 2010), make negative attributions for groups whose values are inconsistent with their own (Chambers et al., 2013; Morgan, Mullen, & Skitka, 2010; Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002), and distance themselves from people who do not share their moral convictions (Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005). Given what is known about the psychological tendency to favor arguments that support individuals’ preexisting beliefs (Kunda 1990), concerns about political bias in the hiring process may be warranted.

In *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia* (1995), the Court found viewpoint discrimination occurred when the university refused to provide funding for a student religious newspaper when it funded secular student communication forums, which the court found to be in violation of free speech. The political motivations that lead to the de-recognition of religious groups also robbed students of the chance to learn about the beliefs of different religions. The Supreme Court found the university's actions to be impermissible viewpoint discrimination. The Court noted that "The government must abstain from regulating speech when the specific motivating ideology or the opinion or perspective of the speaker is the rationale for the restriction" (p. 828-829). Viewpoint discrimination occurs when entities (e.g., universities, the government) deny a speaker access to a forum "solely to suppress the point of view he [sic] espouses on an otherwise includible subject" (*Cornelius v. NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.*, 1985, p. 3451).

In *Rosenberger*, the Court classified the university's actions as viewpoint discrimination because the university did not exclude religion as a subject matter, but instead disfavored student journalism with a religious viewpoint. Viewpoint neutrality is the requirement that the government does not favor one speaker's message over another's regarding the same topic (*Flint v. Dennison*, 2007). Viewpoint is discerned by reference to opinion or ideology. Viewpoint discrimination is seldom permitted and is routinely subjected to the strictest standards of scrutiny.

Experimental field research has demonstrated bias against studies that contradict liberal progressive beliefs. Abramowitz, Gomes, and Abramowitz (1975) asked research psychologists to rate the suitability of a manuscript for publication. Identical methods and analyses were employed for every reviewer; however, the result was experimentally varied between subjects to imply that either a group of left-wing political activists on a college campus was mentally healthier—or that they were less healthy—than a comparison group of non-activists. When the leftist activists were said to be healthier, the more liberal reviewers rated the manuscript as more likely publishable, the statistical analyses more sufficient, than when the otherwise identical manuscript reported the activists less mentally healthy. The less liberal reviewers showed no such bias. Likewise, a study by Iyengar and Westwood (2015) underscored how powerful political bias could be. In an experiment, Democrats and Republicans were asked to choose a scholarship winner from among (fictitious) finalists, with the experiment tweaked so that applicants sometimes included the president of the Democratic or Republican club, while varying the credentials and race of each. Four-fifths of Democrats and Republicans alike chose a student of their party to win a scholarship, and discrimination against people of the other party was much greater than discrimination based on race. Such partisanship in education has increased substantially over the past four decades (Haidt & Hetherington, 2012; Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012).

Ceci, Peters, and Plotkin (1985) found a similar pattern. Research proposals hypothesizing either "reverse discrimination" (i.e., against White males) or conventional discrimination (i.e., against ethnic minorities) were submitted for evaluation to 150 Internal Review Boards. Everything else about the proposals was held constant. The "reverse discrimination" proposals were less likely to be approved than conventional discrimination proposals. In these two field studies (Abramowitz et al., 1975; Ceci et al., 1985), the discrimination may well have been unconscious or unintentional. Inbar and Lammers (2012) found hostility toward and willingness

to discriminate against conservatives is widespread among social and personality psychologists. One in six respondents surveyed reported being somewhat (or more) inclined to discriminate against conservatives with regard to inviting them for symposia or for reviewing their work. One in four would discriminate in reviewing their grant applications. More than one-third would discriminate against conservatives when making hiring decisions. The more liberal respondents were, the more they said they would discriminate. In a replication and extension of this research Honeycutt and Freberg (2017) found similar patterns of in-group/out-group bias that characterized *both* self-reported liberals and conservatives across a wider variety of academic disciplines but this seems particularly problematic for conservatives because their small numbers do not enable them to act upon their willingness to discriminate. Considering the substantial majority of liberals on the faculty and the explicitly expressed willingness on the part of a sizable minority to make political ideology a deciding factor in hiring, it is likely the number of political conservatives on campus will continue to shrink. Thus, willingness to discriminate is not limited to small decisions and is strongest regarding important decisions, for example, faculty hiring, and grant applications. The combination of basic research demonstrating high degrees of hostility towards opposing partisans, the field studies demonstrating discrimination against research projects that are unflattering to liberals and their views, and survey results of engaging in political discrimination all point to the same conclusion: discrimination is a reality. Maranto and Woessner (2012) go so far as to suggest that conservatives should bypass impenetrable islands of leftism (e.g., sociology, social work, women's studies, and ethnic studies) that may be impervious to outside perspectives because they openly advocate a distinctly ideological worldview.

Another way discrimination can be shown the concept of *disparate impact* which involves an apparently neutral employment practice (e.g., an interview; tenure decision) that disproportionately excludes certain categories of people (see *Griggs v. Duke Power Company*, 1971); for example, setting a height requirement of 6 feet to become a professor might be fair in form because the requirement is applied to all candidates, but discriminatory in operation since such a requirement would tend to excessively reject Hispanics, Asians, and women who are genetically shorter in stature when compared to Whites or Blacks. Although traditionally used for examining differences based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability status, if it could be shown that such a practice (or practices) unintentionally discriminates against those holding non-liberal perspectives in a college or university setting then illegal viewpoint discrimination could be demonstrated. Such a charge could be buttressed by showing that a significant imbalance in political interpretations is present in a department. In *Teamsters v. United States* (1977), the case was based in large part on pervasive statistical evidence, and the Court indicated that statistics could be used to make a *prima facie* case of discrimination and that significant under representations were often a tell-tale sign of purposeful discrimination. Although disparate impact cases typically involve Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964 as amended), it might also be shown to be discrimination based on violations of the First Amendment. The *Griggs* case has significance for universities because of the large imbalance between liberals and conservatives in higher education (as illustrated in Figure 3) could suggest the presence of discrimination, and courts, scholars, and legislatures have more recently tackled these non-traditional forms of discrimination (Rosenberg, 2009).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The stifling homogeneity of many of today's universities means that subjective opinions and values will become universal, they will seemingly become objective truths, and the idea that anyone might view something differently—and be justified in doing so—is alien and threatening. Rising political polarization is escalating an “us versus them” attitude that motivates people to accept the most negative version of the opposing side's viewpoints and the most flattering version of their own. These views are misleading and counterproductive, especially within universities where the clash of ideas could be so conducive to learning and growth and where the free exchange of ideas is their *raison d'être*.

We do not advocate for the views of bigots, rapists, or pedophiles in academic institutions, nor perspectives where there is so much evidence in support of them that it would be perverse to believe otherwise. For example, geologists are not obliged to accept colleagues who believe the earth is flat but can be challenged and questioned civilly. But political or moral beliefs often do not have a truth value. A belief that the earth is flat is factually false; a belief that abortion should be prohibited is not. It may also be that many aspects of conservative thinking can serve as inspiration for interesting research questions that would otherwise be missed. Finally, some ideas become widely accepted, perhaps entrenched, without significant evidence. Such entrenched beliefs often arise because they support particular political or moral agendas; if the beliefs are falsified, the moral beliefs will be threatened and thus questioning such perspectives can be threatening to those who hold them. We support the view of former sociologist and New York Democratic Senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who pointed out that “Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their facts.”

Jacques Mallet du Pan, the political journalist and supporter of the French Royalist cause in the French Revolution, summarized the typical fate of extremists: “the Revolution devours its children” (1793/2002, p. 113), suggesting that individuals participating in leading a revolution sometimes are the ones badly affected by it. The liberal college professors of today were the radical students of the 1960s and 1970s, who protested “the man” and bucked authority. One of the reasons college faculty members and administrators fail to stand up to student demands today is that they once wore those shoes. Thus, in this sense, the revolution devours its children. This would be enormously unfortunate since good people in higher education may be hurt by a backlash suggested by du Pan's observation.

We would like to think that there is a simple solution to the problems the academy faces today regarding viewpoint diversity and viewpoint discrimination. Things can be done. However, that will incrementally change higher education for the better. A beginning point might be to acknowledge the problem and raise awareness about it. Viewpoint diversity can be increased almost overnight by inviting speakers from a wide range of perspectives—political, economic, and ideological—even when considered offensive to faculty members and students. Seek feedback from non-liberals. Expand institutional diversity statements to include politics. Faculty could add a statement to their academic websites acknowledging that they encourage collaboration among people of diverse political views. Eliminate pejorative terms referring to non-liberals and criticize others' scholarship when they use those terms. As an editor or reviewer, do not permit such terms

to pass without comment. Support adversarial collaborations that encourage competing for ideological camps to explore the boundary conditions on each other's claims. Conservative academics need to demonstrate their commitment to Truth rather than a particular ideological viewpoint who must be willing to criticize both Republicans and Democrats on both style and substance and to do so in a calm and scholarly manner.

If the academy is already comfortable with and actively seeking to diversify its faculty by ethnicity, race, and gender, then why not by diversity of thought and opinion as well? Some have even suggested affirmative action for conservative professors to increase political pluralism in some disciplines (Haidt, 2011; Marohn, 2016). However, Smith (2015) argues against affirmative action in a way many conservatives would endorse. He argues that affirmative action type programs never perfectly cancel out bias. "If colleges and universities start giving jobs preferentially to conservatives, it seems like they could end up with a lot of low-skill conservatives. Conservative researchers might simply be ignored and disrespected, with the assumption that 'he [sic] checked the box to get in'" (Smith, 2015). This is considered a major problem with race-based affirmative action, and it seems like it would apply for political affiliation just as firmly.

Prominent social psychologist Roy Baumeister (2017) provides some possibilities that may challenge liberal progressives. He notes that social psychology used to study task performance. Today, social psychology is devoted almost entirely to studying how people think and feel. A conservative presence in the field might re-ignite attention to what makes people and organizations produce and perform well. According to Baumeister, Marxism did much better in academic theories than in practice. Many professors detest business and the people who do it, even though most of their students will work in business. Business has made American society rich enough to afford universities. Having some respected speakers and researchers to espouse pro-business views would inform and elevate how academics understand a huge part of life and culture. A second topic would be to invite speakers to campus who profess advocacy of traditional family values. Baumeister indicated that it might be good to have the conservative pro-family view represented. A third topic would be to have the academic culture include a minority viewpoint that holds a positive view of America and its traditions. Often, liberals are critical of American culture and its history, however, when compared to many other countries and historical periods, the United States is still the better place to live.

While liberals evaluate organizations based mainly on the fairness of the process, conservatives tend to look at performance outcomes. Speakers might address this difference within moral foundations theory (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Researchers have found that people use five sets of moral intuitions (MoralFoundations.org, n. d.):

- **Care/harm:** *Relates to our evolution as mammals with attachment systems and ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. It underlies virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.*
- **Fairness/cheating:** *Relates to the evolutionary process of reciprocal altruism. It generates ideas of justice, rights, proportionality, and autonomy.*
- **Loyalty/betrayal:** *This foundation is related to humans' long history as tribal creatures able to form shifting coalitions. Loyalty motivates virtues of patriotism and inspires self-sacrifice. It is active anytime people feel that it's "one for all and all for one."*

- **Authority/subversion:** *This foundation was shaped by humans' long primate history of hierarchical social interactions. It underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.*
- **Sanctity/degradation:** *The psychology of disgust and contamination shaped this foundation. It underlies religious notions of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal, more noble way. This supports the common belief that the human body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities.*

In other words, individuals are predisposed to care for others and see the harm as morally wrong. They have an innate sense of fairness and the need to reciprocate. Humans tend to display loyalty to their groups as well as identify authority figures to whom it is natural to show deference. And they have a sense of what is right and wrong to do to their bodies. Across four studies using multiple methods, Graham et al. (2009) found that liberals consistently showed greater endorsement and use of the Care/Harm and Fairness/Cheating foundations compared to the other three foundations. On the other hand, conservatives approved of and employed the five foundations more equally, often even discounting the first two when the other three were threatened. For liberals, fairness means sharing resources equally, but for conservatives, fairness means proportionality—that people should receive in return based on the level of effort they put in. In a broader sense, this research suggests that liberals tend to speak for the weak and oppressed, while conservatives speak for institutions and traditions, even at a cost to those at the bottom of the social hierarchy. It would be helpful if the academy might examine issues through the lens of these five factors.

Books and articles assigned for students to read—especially for courses in history, English literature, in addition to the humanities and social sciences—should include authors whose positions are at odds with those of most academicians and student bodies. Professors should balance *The Nation* magazine with Reason magazine, *The American Prospect* with *The American Spectator*, National Public Radio with Conservative Talk Radio programs, and PBS news with Fox News.

Viewpoint diversity, however, is subservient to the more profound principle of free speech, which should be applied indiscriminately across the academy. Indeed, free speech is the *sine qua non* of the academy. It is what tenure was designed to protect, and yet today some faculty and students want protection from allegedly offensive speech and disagreeable ideas and opinions—defined differently by different interest groups—demanding things such as trigger warnings, safe spaces, micro-aggressions, and speaker invitations, to discrimination in faculty hiring practices. What perhaps began as well-intentioned measures at curbing prejudices and reducing bigotry with the aim of increasing tolerance, has instead metamorphosed into thought police attempting to impose totalitarian measures that result in silencing dissent and unorthodox views of any kind. The result is the very opposite of what free speech and a college education are all about and what Nawaz (2012) calls “regressive liberalism” (p. 210), where freedom of speech and expression are sacrificed.

One of the first acts of totalitarian regimes is to restrict dissent and free speech, so perhaps it should be called totalitarian liberalism. The justification of censorship laws in the consequentialist argument that people might be incited to discrimination, hate, or violence if

exposed to such ideas fails the moment these individuals are asked: “What happens when it is *you and your* ideas that are determined to be dangerous” (Shermer, 2016)?

Universities should not restrict citizens’ speech just because it finds their opinions and beliefs “political,” “controversial,” “offensive,” “distasteful,” or “hateful” because such terms are often a proxy for suppressing the ideas presented or a guise for disagreement with the views expressed by others (Heins, 1996). Respected comedians like John Cleese, Jerry Seinfeld, and Chris Rock refuse to perform on college campuses because of the thought and belief police that seem to populate American colleges and universities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In India, there’s a popular parable that tells of six blind men who argue at length about what an elephant feels like. Each has a different belief, and each persists with his interpretation. “It’s like a rope,” says the man who touched the tail. “Oh no, it’s more like the solid branch of a tree,” contends the one who touched the trunk. The discussion continues on and on. The moral of the story is that these individuals have credible understandings and they tend to focus on certain elements in supporting their judgment. Similarly, both liberal and conservative political viewpoints have something valuable to offer. It is important for the left to acknowledge that the right’s emphasis on laws, institutions, customs, and religion is constructive. Conservatives recognize that democracy is a significant achievement and that maintaining the social order requires imposing constraints on people. Likewise, liberal values also serve worthwhile roles: ensuring that the rights of weaker members of society are upheld; limiting things such as pollution that corporations sometimes pass on to society; and promoting innovation by supporting different ideas and various ways of life. If the academy I could see that those they disagree with it are not immoral but simply emphasizing different moral principles as suggested by moral foundations theory (Haidt, 2012), some of the antagonism will subside, and it could be a win-win for both conservatives and liberals and, most importantly, for higher education.

Others (e.g., our adversaries) see events based on their particular individual or group experiences, their desire to project a positive image, and, among other things, their political ideology, but do not recognize that those same biases are influencing their judgments and inferences. Individuals often believe that their take on the world enjoys particular authenticity and is shared by other openminded perceivers and seekers of truth and that they see issues and events “objectively,” as they are in “reality,” while others do not (Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002). What is needed is perhaps a dose of intellectual humility (Hoyle, Davisson, Diebels, & Leary, 2016).

Diversity is a value long-established within academia and enjoys broad support. However, political viewpoint diversity is often not welcome in American colleges and universities. Domination by researchers with a narrow outlook, moral perspective, worldview, or political perspective risks creating disciplines riddled biased viewpoints and interpretations, in addition to biased and unjustified claims and conclusions (Jussim, 2012; Prentice, 2012; Tetlock, 1994). Critics indicate that this lopsidedness in worldview results in prejudice and discrimination against non-progressives and that liberal opinions now tend to silence other viewpoints in higher education leaving some wondering how students can be well educated when they only hear one side of an argument.

We are reminded of the words of John Stuart Mill (1859, p. 31):

He who knows only his side of the case knows little of that. ... Nor is it enough that he should hear the opinions of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. He must be able to hear them from persons who Actually believe them ... He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form.

For Mill, the adversarial system of competing ideas served democratic principles but was also was a vehicle for the finding of truths, as well as for the vitality of the positions reached. Diversity and dissent are critical values to instill and uphold, and while many individuals agree in theory, most do not in practice (Nemeth, 2012). There is a strong consensus in higher education that diversity is important. Although most discussions of diversity involve race typically, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation increasingly *viewpoint* diversity is taking center stage. Universities have traditionally been a vanguard of freedom of expression and a free exchange of ideas but today's academia seems increasingly hostile to conservatives who do not support an increasingly liberal, leftist ideology. These institutions appear to downplay the importance of diversity concerning people with different understandings, opinions, perspectives, and political beliefs regarding social, intellectual, philosophical, legal, and moral problems.

By engaging with diversity in all its forms, the academy will be able to see things from different angles and expand their perspective to better understand the full complexity of the world. Recognizing diversity across a variety of issues is essential to know the world through fresher, clearer, more well-informed eyes. Individuals' viewpoints and worldviews are often limited by what they have seen in their own lives, so when they make a sincere effort to understand how people from different backgrounds understand the world around them, they learn new modes of thinking and encounter challenging questions they may not have previously been aware of. In seeking out new perspectives, a person's resulting opinions will be stronger, they will become keener observers of the world, and they will recognize that there are always new things they can learn more about. Whatever opinions one holds now can continually be improved, updated, and amended.

Academia cannot allow selective or convenient diversity, inclusivity, and tolerance and should instead have a vested interest in alleviating all forms of discrimination and protecting the pluralistic tradition within universities. Listening and being exposed to viewpoints that differ from one's personal views can often make individuals more tolerant (Mutz, 2006), so a lack of ideological diversity in academia will only serve to reinforce intolerance and discrimination toward ideological out-groups. As scholars attempt to find truth through their research, and as faculty work to instill these truths in the minds of their students, it is imperative that "we start to recognize the courage of minority voices and the value of the open airing of competing views, and that we achieve some clear understanding of the role of trust that allows the passionate interchange to occur" (Nemeth, 2012, p. 24). A good starting place would be with the conservative (or non-liberal) minority in academia.

In *Passing on the Right*, Shields and Dunn argue that the solution might not be in the faculty hiring process, but rather before (2016). Shields and Dunn (2016) offer a couple of solutions. First, that universities could attract more conservative scholars by advertising for positions that could be

more appealing to them, for example, rather than history perhaps military history or political history. Second, as the University of Colorado has already done, provide appointments for visiting professors in conservative thought.

Nemeth and colleagues (e.g., Nemeth, 2012; Nemeth & Staw, 1989) in what has become known as minority influence theory provide some empirical support for Mill's assertions. They have repeatedly shown the value of minority views and dissent, not merely for its truth or persuasiveness, but rather for the thought that it stimulates. While dissent stimulates creativity and a broad range of thought and ideas, majority views tend to stimulate convergent thinking. People focus on the issue from the perspective of the majority and narrow the range of considerations, often convincing themselves of the majority positions. "Dissenters, rather than rogues or obstacles, provide value: they liberate people to say what they believe, and they stimulate divergent and creative thought *even when they are wrong*" (Nemeth, 2012, p. 362, italics in original). Heterogeneity, especially when it involves differing perspectives or viewpoints, improves decision making. Minority viewpoints appear to be important in creating cultures of innovation.

As the academy becomes more homogenous, however, dissent will likely decline, and many conservative professors feel closeted and identify with the experience of many gays and lesbians who in the past had to hide who they are (Shields & Dunn, 2016). Liberals and conservatives need to rethink the place of conservatives in academia. Liberals might consider the idea that conservative professors are rarely combatants in a right-wing war against universities. Likewise, conservatives should curb its war against higher education, especially since it inadvertently helps cement progressives' troubled rule over academia.

In summary, it should be noted that many of the observations here apply to full-time tenured (or tenure-track) faculty. It would be important to note whether these remarks also apply to adjunct faculty members who are significantly increased in number in higher education as colleges and universities employ them to reduce labor costs. Birmingham (2017) notes that "Part-time adjuncts are now the majority of the professoriate and its fastest-growing segment. From 1975 to 2011, the number of part-time adjuncts quadrupled," with many teaching classes at multiple institutions. A Congressional study in 2014 that found that "89 percent of adjuncts work at one or more institution; 13 percent work at four or more [and] adjuncts' median pay per course is \$2700." We believe that given the increasing numbers of adjunct faculty in the academy that assessing their viewpoint diversity would be a fruitful endeavor.

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USING MULTINATIONAL COOPERATIVE STUDENT PROJECTS TO ENHANCE SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

Continued growth in international experiences for U.S. college students is a favorable trend. However, the most substantial increase has occurred with short-term study abroad programs. Many of these programs include extensive travel instead of involving a single site. There is great danger that if not properly managed, these types of international educational experience will default into little more than an organized group tour.

In these types of programs it is challenging to induce student participants to engage meaningfully with local residents as the traveling group tends to form into its own portable society. In addition, the current state of wireless communications means that students participating in these types of programs can easily stay plugged into their home social networks which further reduces meaningful interactions in the cultures being visited.

Incorporating well designed research projects into short-term study abroad programs holds the potential to offset some of the inherent limitations of such programs. Research projects can serve both to prepare the students for the trip and promote meaningful cross-cultural interaction while the program is underway.

In this paper, the authors provide suggestions based on their experiences with short-term travel abroad programs which incorporated student research. Several potential problems are identified and suggestions are given for project design.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Business related study abroad programs have become a common offering at most U.S. business schools. In addition to rounding out an individual's education, an expanded world view is generally expected to lead to greater effectiveness in later professional pursuits.

At the same time, International academic linkages have become wide spread. Most U.S. business schools now have multiple international partnership school relationships either established directly or through various consortia.

While these developments have made long-term overseas study an increasingly widely available option for business students, an increasing number of students choose short-term study abroad experiences. These types of programs are convenient for students since they can usually be scheduled in a way which does not significantly impact the student's program of study.

However, the potential for gaining insight into other cultures is potentially lower for short-term programs – particularly for those in which students from a single institution travel as a group.

Unless the participants in such programs meaningfully interact with those of other cultures who they met along the way, there is likely to be only limited benefit with regards to understanding other cultural perspectives.

Increasingly, educators are coming to realize that just being in the foreign culture is not enough (Brubaker, 2007). Study abroad students may need significant guidance to reap the benefits of an international experience. For short-term study abroad programs this can be more important since there is less time for “trial and error” learning.

Although it can be argued that short-term study abroad programs do not hold as much potential benefit as do longer term experiences, it is clear that the growing availability of short-term study abroad programs has enabled a larger number of students to have at least some type of academically formatted international experience. It seems clear that the current conditions in higher education mean that these short-term study abroad programs may be the only viable option for many types of students (Spencer and Tuma, 2002). For students who cannot participate in longer-term programs, a well-designed short-term program can provide a significant benefit while minimizing life disruptions.

The near global availability of wireless communications appears to be diminishing the benefits of even longer-term immersion programs (Coleman and Chafer, 2010). Internet access, text messaging, and inexpensive phone service cause many students to fail to adequately “de-link” from the home culture. Essentially, these communication technologies have fundamentally changed the nature of almost all foreign culture experiences.

However, while telecommunications technology advancements may have had a negative impact on traditional “immersion” experiences, they have also made possible various types of remote interactions between student groups located in different countries. Indeed, current availability of video conferencing technologies have made face-to-face video collaborations a possibility for nearly everyone (Green 2011). Clearly, decreasing price and increasing quality of video conferencing has opened the door to a wide array of potential educational applications (Collier 2012).

The opportunity then is to use available technologies to enhance short-term study abroad programs so as to offset the problem of inadequate de-linking by encouraging meaningful intercultural interaction. It can be argued that existing telecommunications technology provides a relatively good substitute to face-to-face foreign location experience (Savicki, 2010). Thus we can design hybrid experiences in which program participants interact over a longer period of time, first via telecommunications technology and later face-to-face. Thus the benefits of longer term interaction can be provided even when on-site program time is limited.

For most business student, there is a strong likelihood that some sort of international team work will be expected in the workplace. Thus, any program elements which parallel the conditions of such international and intercultural teamwork has a direct benefit. For short-term study abroad programs, properly designed research projects can meet this objective. Specifically, joint research project which have students in multiple countries working together can provide an experience in which most of the important issues will be encountered.

The literature on managing international/intercultural teams is growing rapidly, with much comment in the practitioner literature (Bachmann, 2006). In addition to general guidance on the international management team dynamic, one can easily locate sources focused on specific bi-cultural management group interactions (see Hedderich, 2010). Thus, managers and international educational program participants can be trained for an expected intercultural interaction using readily available materials.

RESEARCH PROJECT OPTIONS

Various strategies are commonly employed to encourage meaningful cross cultural interaction during short-term study abroad programs. When partner school relationships exist, joint educational and recreational outings involving visiting and resident students can be very beneficial. Visitor-resident pairings and in-home host accommodations are also effective. But for business students, nothing more closely mimics potential future multinational work teams than a multinational cooperative student project.

To provide benefit to the student, the project must increase the likelihood that the student will interact with individuals from another culture and will come to view their own home culture from a different perspective. The authors have used multiple types of project in this effort. These types of projects differ in terms of both required student effort and the complexity of execution.

The true value of incorporating research projects into short-term study abroad programs is the benefit the projects have on the program participants. While these student projects will typically yield relatively modest impacts in terms of research results, the process of conducting a well-designed student research project in these settings can be substantial.

Pre-departure Country Research

The most basic of projects is one in which the student is asked to investigate some aspect of a foreign culture or system. Clearly this can be done both in advance of a short-term study abroad program and/or while the program is underway.

Assignments to research the cultures and systems of countries to be visited before departure can be helpful. But, the problem of student motivation can be significant. Unless the students have adequate structure and incentive, such projects will likely not receive the attention they deserve.

At the U.S. authors' institutions, many of the short-term study abroad programs are conducted in the break between the end of the Spring Semester and the start of the Summer Semester. Where the study abroad program involves course credit, required participation in the course which begins prior to departure generally provides adequate motivation.

In the case of the U.S. authors' institution, it is usually the case that a set of early pre-departure class meetings is held in the months prior to departure. These meetings typically involve cultural training, so it is natural to integrate basic country research projects and presentations into these class sessions. However, it is important that the supervising faculty members have, or have access, to country specific expertise to ensure that inaccurate information is not transmitted to the class via these student reports. For this type of project, substantial completion would ideally be reached early enough before departure to allow for feedback or grading prior to departure.

Internationally Themed Projects Spanning Program Period

An increased level of project complexity has the student engaged in the project before, during, and after the study abroad period. The nature of such a project can be quite varied, but the objective would be to have the student research some element of the culture of one or more of the countries to be visited prior to departure, have the investigation enter a hands-on, in-person stage during the travel portion of the trip, and then have the student prepare a retrospective report after returning to the home environment.

An example of such a project might be examining the differences in retailing in the home country and the country to be visited. The student would investigate cultural, economic, and regulatory issues which could cause differences in retail operations before departure. Then while underway, the student could visit multiple retail establishments and make observations. Upon returning the student would prepare a report summarizing his or her observations.

As with most elements of the short-term study abroad program, it is important to consider issues of student motivation. Clearly this type of project requires that grading would not be completed until after the final report were submitted after return. This is no small issue, since when most study abroad groups return to their home country, the group breaks up at the airport and the sense of being in a class quickly dissipates. Monitoring and mentoring is necessary to ensure completion of en route elements – particularly for first time travelers abroad.

Because many short-term study abroad programs tend to concentrate on visiting urban environments abroad, care should be taken to ensure that students are not confusing urban and suburban differences when making their comparisons. This issue will vary in importance depending on the individual student background.

Multinational Team Projects Spanning Program Duration

The most valuable, and complicated, type of project for the short-term study abroad program is one in which participants are required to work with individuals from a different culture in executing some type of project. Fortunately, readily available communications technologies now allow the design of meaningful multinational cooperative student research experiences even when the two groups are not at the same location throughout the entire program. For business students whose careers will likely entail working in international teams, this type of project is particularly valuable since it replicates many of the elements which one might encounter in the actual workplace.

For this type of project, an international partner school relationship is essential. Fortunately, many short-term study abroad projects already involve partner school visits building on existing relationships.

As a practical matter, it is usually not possible to expect a workably high level of foreign language skills from American students – particularly among participants in short-term programs. While U.S. based student groups frequently have only modest foreign language skills, this is often not an issue because of the global lingua franca status of English. Particularly with European partner schools, English can be used as the joint language of interaction in practically any

International Business related programs. This too mimics the existing situation in multinational workplace teams.

Ideally, the multinational student group projects would be designed and overseen jointly by faculty at the participating partner schools. Here existing partner school faculty relationships can be helpful, but frequently partner school faculty members interested in international relationships are willing to participate even without extensive prior personal faculty interaction.

Ideally, the projects would be conducted by multinational teams comprised of students at the two participating partner schools with each team having representatives from both. Students from the two schools can be assigned to teams at the outset of the project before the travel portion of the program. And, even before meeting face to face.

In nearly every instance, video conferencing capabilities exist which enable a kick-off session in which faculty leaders at all locations are introduced, the student participants make initial contact, and the nature of the research projects is outlined. If the schools involved have dedicated video conferencing facilities, so much the better. But, even improvised classroom video conferencing will serve adequately.

Once established, the student teams would then be expected to interact remotely via video conferencing or social media in the period before the travel portion of the program. Then they would work together in person during the campus visit. And, then perhaps continue the project remotely again after the travel portion of the program has ended, depending on the precise design of the projects.

We have found it very beneficial to have the student teams make a joint presentation of their research efforts during the portion of the program when the members of the groups are present at the single campus location. With significant cultural and national differences in presentation formats, attire, and audience participation, this activity can be both entertaining and informative to the participants.

Because of regional differences in expectations concerning presentations, both faculty and student participants should discuss the details of any presentations in advance. Past experience has shown that norms of even the layout of presentation slides can vary significantly from country to country. We have in the past asked that the student teams have completed a working draft of their presentations in advance of the on-site collaboration. This assures both that the projects stay on schedule and that any significant differences of opinion among the group members arises early enough for some type of resolution.

An optimal situation would be one in which the research activities, presentations, and any written reports were required, graded course components for all team participants. However, due to different academic calendars and grading systems, this may not always be possible.

In any case, the participating faculty members should strive to specify clearly in advance if and how the research efforts will be integrated into their respective courses or program activities. Clearly many different options exist in this regard, but clarifying expectations in advance will reduce participant anxiety. It need not be the case that the project be of identical grading weight for participants at both (all) partner schools. But, all involved should have a clear idea of the expectations in advance.

In cases of reciprocal visits, where groups at host schools later visit the campus of the groups who earlier were visitors, members of the initial program leadership should be sure to schedule adequate program time for a secondary face to face work period at the second school. This will usually require cooperation with multiple faculty members at both schools since reciprocal visits will frequently be managed by different individuals.

The selection of research topics can be left to the students themselves. However, it may prove beneficial to specify at least a general topic or theme selected from a timely issue with a high level of media coverage in the multiple country settings involved. This approach will not only ensure adequate sources for reference, but will also allow cross cultural comparisons concerning perspectives on the issues selected.

Surveys

While literature-based research can provide many of the benefits of research in cross cultural issues, basic field research holds the additional benefit of forcing the student participants into a larger number and variety of cross cultural interactions.

Site visits and surveys are both ideally suited to use in a traveling short-term study abroad setting. Both will tend to force the program participant to interact with individuals outside the program cohort. While there is significant variation around the world, student researchers conducting surveys are generally fairly well received throughout Europe.

Nonetheless, faculty planning to have students use public encounter surveys should check regulatory and legal constraints well in advance. Typically, faculty colleagues at partner schools are able to provide basic information, but the program administrators may need to address any formal legal requirements.

In our experience, partner school faculty colleagues can help with cultural norms concerning public space interactions and how best for a student researchers to present themselves to potential survey subjects. Naturally, mixed teams of guest and local students working together can prove most effective in avoiding trouble and maximizing the experience.

If the research topic in question is suitable for public encounter surveys, then the creation and administration of the survey can itself provide the students with experiences which can significantly increase their understanding of cultural differences in communication.

If a survey were to be used, the survey instrument should be constructed well in advance of the planned data collection period. While English is a suitable language in many areas, it is an interesting exercise to have student participants have the survey instrument translated into the languages dominant in the areas to be visited.

If the student cohort has the required language skills, the process of translation of even a basic survey instrument can be enlightening. Differences in cultural norms concerning the propriety of certain types of questions, differences in income distributions, and even difference education systems will challenge the student's home culture bias.

Here again, a cooperative team structure is valuable with the cohorts from the different partner schools interacting remotely before the travel phase in the development of the survey. Then in person, during the overlapping in person period, and then perhaps finally remotely to analyze any data collected and prepare a report of findings.

Frequently faculty members of the participating schools will collectively have the required language skills to polish any student translation attempts. However the nuanced difference between assisting a student effort and providing translation services should not be ignored.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have provided observations and suggestions from our own experiences using student research projects to enhance the student's experience during short-term study abroad programs. While the experience upon which our observations are based are drawn from multiple-country traveling cohort type programs, the suggestions given should apply equally well to single-location short-term study abroad programs.

The main objective is to use the research activities, and the interactions they require, to maximize the potential benefits to the program participants. By beginning a research project prior to the short period abroad, and by including some type of post travel summary component, the program can offer a somewhat longer-term intercultural experience.

While the range of project design may be limited by faculty resources and existing inter-institutional relationships, most any short-term study abroad program can be enhanced through the inclusion of some type of student research. Faculty members involved in short-term study abroad programs should explore their options to introduce or expand the use of student research.

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ON OR OFF: TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

As university business practices move toward international or global extensions, more and more colleges and universities are considering locating their teacher training programs in off-campus school-based locations. In this positional paper, the author examines the pedagogical effectiveness of off-campus school-based teacher education programs. Results suggest that off-campus school-based programs provide teacher candidates real life, real time opportunities to experience the everyday routine of a neighborhood school, community and students. Benefits include (1) Teacher candidates can benefit from the unofficial curriculum that can make learning meaningful; (2) Teacher candidates are able to experience multiple perspectives of a professional and working school; and (3) Mature teacher candidates are given the opportunity to enroll and complete the teacher training program given the flexibility of school based location and schedule. The author posits that off-campus teacher training programs might have more advantages for the teacher candidate than on-campus programs.

INTRODUCTION

According to Nakagawa, Asakawa, Yamada, Ushikubo, Yoshida, and Yamaguchi (2012), off-campus teacher training programs maximize flexibility to allow for a greater balance with life, family, work and other commitments. It allows programs to be more realistic and hence more desirable (Morton 1952). Off-campus collegiate instruction has expanded in recent decades, extending access to college and university education to non-traditional populations such as students who live a distance from the main campus, and others who find it difficult to enroll in courses at residential campuses (Alberta Education, 2017). To ensure quality, areas such as New York State (New York Department of Education, 2012) created standards to governing off-campus instruction. These standards assure that all off-campus instruction meets the quality standards required of all college credit-bearing instruction in the State. It ensures full integration of all instruction into a system of comprehensive, statewide planning for higher education.

The traditional way of higher education instruction has been on-campus programs where students travel to a university to attend classes. These teacher training programs, which are accredited one or two-year programs, typically consist of on-campus courses. Included are school placements, which a classroom teacher as well as a university supervisor mentors. Teacher candidates are required to make the connection between often-contradictory places with little or no direction on how to negotiate such multifaceted relationships (Mary, 2011).

This is where off-campus school-based teacher education programs differ from on-campus teacher education programs. Off-campus programs allow teacher candidates to begin their studies and complete their teaching degrees by taking classes at one of the off-campus sites located in a school. Similar to on-campus programs, off-campus school-based teacher preparation programs typically consist of similar courses including classroom placements. The difference is that with

off-campus school-based programs a teacher candidate receives their classes in a local school system, either public or private. By making this change to off-campus programs, the candidate benefits through the immersion into the school, and all of the cultural and policy aspects associated, instead of just being able to learn about the environment at the university.

There are many benefits to school-based teacher training programs. Three of these benefits appear to be:

- (1) A teacher candidates may benefit from the unofficial curriculum that can make learning meaningful.*
- (2) A teacher candidate is able to learn multiple perspectives of a professional and working school.*
- (3) A mature teacher candidate can receive the opportunity and understanding with enrolling and completing the teacher-training program at a school-based location.*

TEACHER CANDIDATES CAN BENEFIT FROM THE UNOFFICIAL CURRICULUM THAT CAN MAKE LEARNING MEANINGFUL.

It is important to understand the school routine in order to create discipline and good behavior so that learning can take place (Lies, 2012). Unlike the school-based teacher training programs, the on-campus teacher training programs lack the opportunity to experience the daily opening exercises, period bells, recess breaks, fire alarms or shut down practices. They do not experience the inclusive nature of the makeup of the school nor are they part of the daily extracurricular activities that occur.

The off-campus school-based teacher candidate receives a real life minute-to-minute understanding of what occurs in a school as opposed to a theoretical basis that occurs in a university classroom. A teacher candidate is able to benefit from experiencing the consistent orderly schedule and become familiar with the school atmosphere by the time they complete the teacher-training program.

For off-campus school-based instruction, a school routine occurs five days a week. Instead of sitting in a university classroom all day without schoolchildren, off-campus school-based instruction allows the teacher candidate to experience day-to-day activities occurring in a school. Candidates witness concepts such as lock down drills, fire drills and student social and academic interactions. These observations may not be officially part of the university curriculum. However, often this unofficial curriculum can make learning meaningful. In this sense, on-campus learning programs may hinder teacher candidates in this opportunity to experience the everyday routine of a “real” school. To ensure this some have established off campus education policies to ensure that adult students are provided an environment to learn about their world through a comprehensive process of gaining practical experiences related to life skills, interest, talents and career opportunities (Banbury Personal Interest Projects 2012).

The off-campus school-based itinerary enriches the learning experience of what the expectations of a new teacher will be. Such issues as how to get to the school, the number of students in the school, the name of the principal, school hours, recess, school buses, parking, etc.,

become part of the off-campus school-based teacher candidate's world. This includes the candidate learning how to navigate within the school, the location of the staff lounge, lunchroom, and even the library and gym. Perhaps, similar to some teachers, they will even drive around to find the closest Starbucks coffee shop so they can grab a coffee before school starts. All these are part of an off-campus school-based itinerary that one engages with, enjoys and explores. A teacher candidate does not do this to get good marks from a professor. Rather, these actions are natural and intrinsic. It provides a sense of social and emotional readiness, which often is a sign of productive learning. A teacher candidate may feel more relaxed and less anxious knowing his or her placement is what is being studied and applied. This realization adds depth to a teacher-training curriculum. These important and necessary learning bits and pieces, which would be novel to a new teacher entering the profession from on-campus learning, are part of the off-campus school-based benefit. It gives students the opportunity to gain further knowledge alongside their peers, giving rise to a more constructivist approach to learning, which they can later utilize throughout their teaching career (Moran, Vozzo, Reid, Pietsch, & Hatton, 2013).

TEACHER CANDIDATES ARE ABLE TO LEARN MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES OF A PROFESSIONAL AND WORKING SCHOOL.

According to Kraglund-Gauthier, Young, and Kell (2014), when a person invests time, effort, and money into something, he or she will form an emotional attachment. This can occur even though the desired outcome is not yet visible. This phenomenon may explain why having teacher candidates traveling daily to the local school for off-campus school-based teacher training may create a better connection towards the profession. This connection is the result of an investment of time and energy. Doing the same ritual everyday becomes a habit. A habit is like an autopilot; one does not need to think consciously because the subconscious is assisting in the immersion into the profession.

Hansen and Feldhusen (2016) stated that off campus training program is an experiential method of learning that integrates a learner's classroom studies with recognized on-the-job work experiences. When a teacher candidate in an off-campus school-based program feels at ease to go into the local school and becomes familiar with the environment, he or she understand the school culture. They become more aware of professional ethics, school themes, cultural events, sport or music activities, etc. that are important to the development of the teacher. When the school is crowded with school buses or parents picking up their children after school, the teacher candidate is able to get multiple perspectives of a professional and working school. The teacher candidate whether it is passing by the schoolyard or hearing children laughing and/or arguing that these are real life situations. These are real schoolchildren, precious and special, needing good teaching, coaching, counseling, instructing, and modeling to mold them into well-rounded human beings. They are not just concepts in a textbook. The teacher candidate learns that these students need to be able to excel and to achieve to their potential regardless of race, religion, abilities, age and gender. The teacher candidate gains a real life meaning to these concepts through experiencing the school-based learning community. Students' needs are no longer a part of a textbook. They are real.

If it is together that we grow and together that we achieve (Sze & Cowden, 2009), it is important that off-campus school-based teacher-training program candidates are not being “housed” off-campus in a local school where there is no interaction. Teacher candidates do not simply switch from a university classroom to a school. To do so is warehousing. These programs must be part of the school environment. They need to participate in the day-to-day activities such as opening exercises, announcements, standing for the national anthem, prayers where applicable, and information given by the principal. Teacher candidates need to be part of the audience hearing these announcements, as if they were actual members of the school. All the professors’ lectures and course work need to stop during this time. It needs to be a real life environment that brings theory and practice together so that the teacher candidates can experience a true daily internship on the path to becoming a teacher.

TEACHER CANDIDATES ARE ABLE TO ENROLL AND COMPLETE THE TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM DUE TO THE FLEXIBILITY PROVIDED

“Seeing all in one glance” is the phenomenon of “outside of time” (Eden, 2014). When teacher candidates are experiencing the off-campus school-based teacher training, they are at the same time learning about the school... They are learning and experiencing at the same time. This provides a steady, sustainable framework for a teacher-training program to be successful. Off-campus school-based teacher candidates integrated in the local school no longer have to be in the dark in regards to daily school based activities. With off-campus school-based teacher training programs, teacher candidates experience actual situations concerning actual school students, teachers, caretakers, support staff, principal, etc. They are learning from being in the environment and not merely from a textbook. Being able to obtain this knowledge is to understand the real life of the school.

This is especially beneficial to the mature teacher candidate. In a competitive job market, many people are returning to take courses or to study for an advanced university degree hoping to get ahead, stay afloat or receive a promotion. Some have issues and conflicts at work, while others are considering leaving their jobs to seek a more satisfying career. There are also people who lost their jobs due to budget cuts and have decided to go back to school for a professional degree. Still others just saved enough money for the tuition and decided that it was time to come back to school. No matter the reason, these adults have been away from the school systems and the memory of their childhood or teenage years’ understanding of a schoolteacher may have faded and no longer be relevant. Most of these adults returning to the university may find the change in the school environment very different compared to ten or twenty years ago. Returning to a university can be daunting. Attracting working professionals are part of the design of many off-campus programs (Yorkville University, 2017). People from the workforce for years have been focusing their energy, efforts and skills in their trades. In addition, stay-at-home mothers or fathers have been focusing on taking care of their families and children. Being in the sandwich generation, many also have the obligation and responsibility to take care of their aging parents. They are used to real life environments. As such, the real life environment of the off-campus school-based teacher-training program may be a better fit than an on-campus one. Inserting a teacher-training program

outside of the university campus and establishing it inside a local school provides these mature students a sense of the on-the-job training they are used to having. The move away from a perceived “serious” higher education university-based teacher training program to a familiar school-based neighborhood they can identify with, creates cohesiveness and may eliminate the psychosocial anxiety an on-campus program may create. In looking through another lens, it also allows them to determine through experiencing, whether this is the career for them.

CONCLUSION

As university business practices move toward international or global extensions, more and more colleges and universities are considering locating their teacher training programs in off-campus school-based locations. The pedagogical effectiveness of off-campus school-based teacher education programs warrants this move. Off-campus teacher training programs allow for the routine experience for future teachers to get a feel of what their careers will be like in the future. This is a major difference from the traditional on-campus training. Off-campus programs provide teacher candidates real life, real time opportunity to experience the everyday routine of a real school, real community and real students. It creates a sense of belonging to the profession. Off-campus school-based instruction further provides opportunity to adult learners, who have been in the workforce and decided to enter this profession, to experience whether this is a good change for them. It gives them an understanding of what current learning practices, compared to what it was in their day. This helps to bridge the gap from their high school graduation to current practices.

For this to work, school-based teacher-training program candidates should not be “housed” off-campus in a local school. They must actually be part of the school environment. They must experience the day-to-day routines, expectations and commitments of a real teacher. School-based teacher training programs need to be real life situations that bring theory and practice together so that the teacher candidates can experience a true internship on the path to becoming a teacher. Anything less is warehousing.

As a sound pedagogical and business practice, off-campus school-based teacher-training programs might have more advantages to on-campus programs. Of consideration in the decision to locate off-campus school-based teacher training programs needs to be its cultural impact on students and the community.

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HUMAN ENERGY MAXIMIZATION IN A CUSTOMIZED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability and thriving are key terms that are driving how energy sources, such as solar, wind, water, and geothermal, generate survivability in the era of globalization. Rarely are those terms used to define human energy expenditures; however, human energy is the most readily available energy source for it serves as a primary catalyst in the fueling or degrading of the sustainability and survival of all other resources. Additionally, humans live, learn, and earn in spaces where they expend energy by mere existence. Most humans are unaware of the impact their personal energy has on the utility and fortitude of the spaces where they reside (Roberts, 2015).

For years, green energy campaigns focused on energy that is extracted, generated, or consumed without significant impact to the health or welfare of the environment. The planet has a natural tendency to regenerate green energy even when pollution occurs, if it does not eradicate the environment itself. Such energy also measures the utility of natural resources and can be applied this can occur with humans. Humans can overcome polluted experiences if the right resources are infused into their experiences, because it regenerates their talents, skills, abilities, hopes, and dreams (Roberts, 2015).

The research in this study explored how customization of a leadership development program using an innovative business model, termed the Human Utility Business™ (HUB™), can awaken latent human energy and inspire workers towards consistent high performance (Roberts, 2015). For this research, human energy was measured in the form of productive and/or transformed behaviors, relationship constructs or deconstructs, engaged learning, securing awards and recognition, employment, or leading themselves and other with minimal entropy.

Terms like “energy efficiency” and “renewable energy” were accounted as natural resources for sustainability in the HUB™ model to customize curriculum for a leadership development program. Participants were motivated to sustain (energy efficiency) and thrive (renewable energy) in their work performance and work relationships. The HUB™ model is heuristic and built on extensive partnerships and Lean Six Sigma™ methodology that ignited participants’ passions and performances. The model is organic in nature and concentrates on the movement of individual energy as it interchanges within groups.

The strength of the HUB™ model was in measuring the utility of humans to adapt to diverse and inclusive environments while they become self-aware of how they relate to others at work. The HUB™ model inspired leadership and stewardship, which are core elements of a diverse and inclusive society. The HUB™ curriculum offered opportunities for participants to make informed decisions about their behaviors and purposefully decide on the impact their behaviors have on

those with whom they work. Possibilities of relationships that may appear now and in the future, were explored in the HUB™ curriculum using 3D simulation technology and role play. Participants could simulate real-time and possible work situations to intentionally make decisions to create preferred futures based on their and others' professional and personal expectations. The HUB™ content was not team building; it was purposeful amortization of the energy found in the life of each individual participant.

HUMAN ENERGY MAXIMIZATION IN A CUSTOMIZED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

As indicated by Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014), leadership development programs can serve as a catalyst to reward the entire organization, not just the individual participants. Gurdjian, Halbeisen, and Lane (2014) reported that billions of dollars are being spent annually for employee leadership development programs but there is often a failure to see leadership capabilities in those that attend. Rowland (2016) wrote that leadership development programs have failed to produce results because most programs are academic-focused rather than experiential.

Experiential leadership programs, similar the one researched, use the HUB™ model. This model allows participants to immediately apply leadership behaviors, intuition, and critical thinking within their workplace environments. This active learning, applying, and assessing customized leadership had a different human utility business concept than what had been used previously when it was implemented within a university within the Southeast region of the United States.

Four years prior to the inception of the leadership development program, the university staff, within a department devoted to diversity and inclusion initiatives, created leadership curriculum focused. This program centered upon the enhancement of leadership knowledge through monthly workshops that were offered to women or those ethnically under-represented within management ranks of the university. The exclusion of other workers was done purposefully with the rationale to focus upon the enhancement potentials of female and/or under-represented groups. The workshops were based in theoretical leadership development and did not include experiential learning or learning outcomes that assessed the leadership potential of participants. Since there was no assessment established that allowed to gauge leadership potential or career movements of the participants, the investment of those who attended the workshops was more exploratory in nature.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A prior leadership development program at a university, in the southeast region of the United States, was not comprehensive nor contained measurable outcomes to measure the leadership advancement of program participants. Using the former program as a foundation, the University administrators created a minority faculty and staff initiative to in the advancement of these individuals into to leadership positions. However, the leadership development program was theory-based and lacked the practicality of the day-to-day nuances faced by leaders in the workplace. The problem is that there is not longitudinal leadership development program (LDP) research that links LDP participation to the energy participants use to manage and sustain their

leadership behaviors post program completion. Stone and Major (2014) noted that research related to university leadership development programs was not aggressive and several gaps exist. One thing that must be understood is the impact of LDP's at the individual and institutional level within higher education. As discussed by McRee and Haber-Curran (2016), there is a need to understand and study leadership development in higher education. Therefore, the current study seeks to fill those gaps.

The objective of this qualitative phenomenological study was to show how an effective leadership development program, using a novel human utility business model (HUB™), designed specifically for employees at a university helped in identifying the talent and promotion ability of the university's diverse workforce. The HUB™ focused on human energy embedded in employee performance. The model is organic in nature and concentrates on the movement of individual energy as it interchanges within groups.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Overall Significance of The Research

The intent of the research was to provide university officials with data not yet explored at the institution in regards to the potency of using a customized leadership development program to energize the talent, aspirations, and career potential of all employees regardless of their demographic category. The results of the learning outcomes and the assessment of the program content could generate additional knowledge and future research on employee leadership development programs nationally and eventually internationally and add more information to the existing body of knowledge for organizational leadership. Research outcomes may also address a need for further employee development program models from an engrained employee perspective using a new business model, Human Utility Business™.

Significance of The Research To Leadership

Four significant leadership aspects were pertinent to this study. First, evaluating: a) the organization's unique stakeholders and their perceptions about their leadership potential; and b) university leaders and their influence on the culture and end results. Second, this study revealed if participants had preconceived leadership images of themselves and how that may be affecting their performance. Third, assessing the customized leadership development program to determine the viability of the content and activities and the resiliency of participant performance in leading self and others. Finally, a customized leadership-development program can be cost effective in terms of employee retention and talent management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature discussed the viability of a customized leadership development program using a human utility and human energy context. In general, leadership development program (LDP) literature strengthened the reasons for developing customized programs for the

current and emerging workplace. Few research was found with empirical data on a customized program with longitudinal results. No literature was available that demonstrated research or studies in a customized leadership development program with a concentration in the maximization of human utility and human energy. As discussed by McRee and Haber-Curran (2016), there is a need to understand and study leadership development in higher education. Leadership development programs have not been a priority in higher education leading to a dearth of research in this area (Stone & Major, 2014). Therefore, the aim of the current study is to research a leadership development program within a university setting.

Leadership development programs have foundations in the early 1980's via a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation that emphasized the goal of enhancing participant knowledge and building leadership skills (Black & Earnest, 2009). Stone and Major (2014) discussed that LDP programs are important to an organization's success and long term viability in an uncertain environment. Leadership development is an essential function within higher education and important for all members of the institution, including faculty and staff (Robinson, Sugar and Miller, 2010). Leadership development programs give organizations a way to identify the leaders of the future in addition to training opportunities, tool development, and expanded mentoring opportunities (Parker, 2009). Black and Earnest indicated that one of the hallmarks of a leadership development program is the enhancement of leadership skills through group development. This skill development takes place in a multitude of areas. Singh and Dali (2014) noted that it is important to develop connections with all LDP stakeholders.

Clarke (2011) discussed that management careers are impacted in four areas including: (a) human capital, (b) individual, (c) personal, and (d) family factors and each area should be addressed by an LDP. An LDP program sends a strong message of support to participants and helps establish attitudes that are important to both the individual and the organization (Clarke, 2011). Steinhilber and Estrada (2015) commented that there is a need for leadership development programs to have strong study design, define the target population for the program, and have strong evaluation methods. Through a leadership development program, participants should learn from others, develop role models, consult the work of others in leadership competence development, and be evaluated regularly to increase self-awareness and make changes as necessary (Steinhilber & Estrada, 2015). Goldman, Wesner, Plack, Manikoth, and Haywood (2014) designed a study that demonstrated the value of the transfer of knowledge and behaviors that occur with LDPs. Participants in their study exhibited confidence and increased performance in terms of work tasks, conflict resolution, and relationship-building after participating in a one-year LDP. This research was conducted longitudinally to see if participants kept the pace of increased performance and confidence for an extended period of time after attending the one-year LDP. The importance of value creation in an LDP program is an important component and relates to the notion of human energy at multiple individual and organizational levels (Stone & Major, 2014).

Rowland (2016) found that successful LDPs must be experiential and be comprised of content and activities that allow participants to have real-world experiences. The practical application of experiential LDPs replicates the precise context of what they experience in their particular work space (Rowland, 2016). Rowland (2016) stated that most LDPs that are not experiential, but are more academic and theory-based, which create the transfer of practical

application. The HUB™ model used in this study followed Rowland's (2016) experiential concept. Participants engaged in a three-year LDP that included activities that took place in the departments in-which they worked.

Stone and Major (2014) discussed that research related to university leadership development programs was not aggressive and several gaps exist. Research conducted by Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014), at a university in South Africa on a LPD for staff, was the closest research literature to compare with the research in this study using sustainability concepts. Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014) used participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) as their main method of research and concentrated on sustainability of the program and the participants to use what they had learned. Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014) based their research on: a) the facilitators expertise and experience; b) the sustainability of the program content derived from pre- and post-program feedback from participants; c) and sustainability of the participants to managed their leadership behaviors and careers and to influence their non-participating colleagues towards leadership behaviors during and after participants attended the program.

The results of the Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014) research was to create a strong case for a linear leadership development model that required participants to learn in a precise iteration of steps. Human behavior is not precise which may require viable LDPs to be more experiential as Rowland (2016) found. This study followed Rowland's (2016) example of experiential LDP content using the HUB™ model. The HUB™ model is pioneering work that concentrates on how human energy can be maximized in a customized leadership development program and the propensity for the resilience of that energy to create a system of leadership behaviors in individual contributors as they operate in a typical (not precise) collective workforce (Roberts, 2015).

In using the HUB™ model, consideration was given to how people are moving fluidly around the planet in both virtual and real space while cross-pollinating their energy and filling spaces with tasks and relationships they may not be mature enough or objective enough academically, emotionally, socially, or occupationally to handle. The convergence of people and their nuances was the focal point of mainstreamed diversity and inclusion content into HUB™ programming and services to increase the development of leadership socialization. The HUB™ model is organic in nature and collaborative in concept. The model examines the performance of human energy as it is absorbed and emitted by phenomenological experiences (Roberts, 2015). Workshops and activities for the HUB™ model were designed to intentionally awaken latent human energy and provide the right voltage that motivated participants to from low performance to high performance in the shortest amount of time. The HUB™ model is heuristic and built on extensive partnerships and Lean Six Sigma™ methodology to ignite peoples' passions and performances. The model concentrates on the movement of individual energy as it interchanges within groups (Roberts, 2015). Brandon, Joines, Powell, Cruse, and Kononenko, C. (2012) indicated that energy for performance can help participants of LDP programs achieve their best. The HUB™ model has a connection with leadership development programs in that, interconnectedness within groups is important to explore shared experiences within a program (Singh & Dali, 2014). Therefore, research understanding how the HUB™ model interacts with a leadership development program within a university is important.

METHODOLOGY

To fully understand how a customize leadership development program based in emerging leadership concepts of human energy portability provided the tools for promotion, required a depth of immersion beyond the quantitative method. To adequately address the research question, a qualitative phenomenological study using semi-structured interviews was used to understand the lived experiences of participants in the leadership development program.

Population and Sampling

The sample consisted of participants of the leadership development program between the years of 2013- 2016. These years span the inception of the program until a shift in the managing occurred. Those that participated in the corporate leadership development program during those years were invited to participate via email; regardless of Tier completion. A total of 17 leadership development program graduates agreed to participate in the survey.

Data Collection, Treatment, Validity, and Reliability

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted both via face-to-face interviews and remote interviews (via Skype) due to the distributed network of some of the participants. The researchers chose to interview face-to-face when practical and Skype for participants that were not local to the researchers' area. Creswell (2009) indicated that for valid and reliable information, 5-25 participants are ideal, or until a hermeneutical circle is achieved; both of which were achieved. To streamline the interview process and to maintain reliability, one researcher interviewed and recorded the participants using standardized instructions and an interview protocol (see Table 1). To verify accuracy, member checking was utilized to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions and the research team's interpretations of the interview (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Table 1

Interview Protocol Questions

Order	Questions
1	What has the LDP program meant to you personally and professionally?
2	How has the LDP program impacted your time management, energy, and emotions?
3	In what ways have your leadership skills been impacted by the leadership concepts taught in the program?
4	Do you believe that the LDP program impacted your career potential? How?
5	Do you think the LDP program has given you the resources to be promoted?
6	Is there anything you would like to add about the program we haven't covered?

NVivo 10 was used to assist with the data analysis. To begin answering the research question, each interview summary was examined twice and relevant and significant phrases or sentences were identified and logged into the software. Common themes were then identified using NVivo and keyword searches were run to verify all themes were captured. After coding was completed, themes were collected and the frequency of occurrence of the theme in the interviews was noted. A word frequency analysis was performed against each segment of coded text to determine theme relationship which then allowed the themes to be classified into major groups. Finally, a conceptual framework was built from the themes and supported through excerpts from the interview.

ANALYSIS

The data yielded a substantial amount of information to answer the objective of the study which was to show how an effective leadership development program using the human utility business model (HUB™) designed specifically for employees at a university helped in identifying the talent and promotion ability of the university's diverse workforce. The research team coded and themed the interview transcripts at both the aggregate and participant level. The results yielded seven themes related to the leadership development program (see table 2). The themes bore a pattern related to the areas of personal growth, self-reflection, relationships, networking, planning, criticism, and communication. A brief description of each theme, along with interview excerpts provide an understanding of how the human utility business model (HUB™) designed for a university impacted the workforce.

Table 2
Leadership Program Identified Themes

Theme	Source (n=17)	References
Self-Reflection	10	15
Personal Growth	9	11
Networking	8	9
Planning	8	8
Relationships	7	9
Criticism	6	7
Communication	4	7

Theme 1: Self-Reflection (10 sources [58% of Respondents]/ 15 References)

The leadership development program at a university utilizing the HUB™ model indicated that self-reflection was an outcome of the program. Comments indicated that self-reflection led to self-improvement and increased the participant's leadership competence. Self-reflection also helped the participants understand the energy they used mentally, emotionally, and physically to create and lead themselves and others.

...it gave me an opportunity to look at myself. Find weaknesses you know. What to work on. How to improve myself. So, it has been important to me personally and professionally.

It was a lot of introspect [sic]. I got to learn more about myself and in learning about myself helped me learn how to be a better leader to my staff. Um...there's some tears during the sessions and stuff but I think it really helped bring out the best in me and the people who went through the program with me.

In these interview summaries, self-reflection helped the participant understand behaviors on a deeper level and how those behaviors translated within the workplace. Participants could see the impact of self-reflection in not only their own lives, but those of the other participants as well. The self-reflection resulted in personal and professional growth.

Theme 2: Personal Growth (9 sources [52% of Respondents]/ 9 References)

As observed from the interview summary excerpts, growth occurred both professionally and personally; which would be indicative of the whole leader concept of leading personally and professionally. Participants indicated that the program enhanced their growth and allowed them to communicate on a deeper level. Participants shared that limitations of self-awareness felt prior to them going through the program were diminished or gone and their perceptions of their potential enhanced significantly.

I totally came out of my shell, I have learned how to carry myself in a different manner, how to talk to people, and realize that each person is different and wear different hats because one person might...

I feel like I did a lot of growing personally throughout the program.

The interview responses indicated that participants experienced new levels of confidence and esteem, as they perceived their value and worth to themselves and others. The participant's statements showed that their perspectives were broadened by sharing the leadership development experience with other workers from a variety of backgrounds who worked throughout the organization. This experience also widened the narrow view they had of the worth of their individual contribution and that of their colleagues. By participating in the program with a variety of dimensions of diversity, their perspectives of what they thought they knew about themselves (self-awareness) and others expanded considerably.

Theme 3: Networking (8 sources [47% of Respondents]/ 9 References)

The interview summary excerpts indicated that participants learned more about the organization through participating with others in the program who worked a variety of roles globally. Their perception of the organization prior to attending the program had been limited to who they interacted with locally. By engaging with colleagues who worked throughout the organization, participants learned more about their organizational culture, the talent and work potential of fellow employees, and the functionality of leadership within their institution.

I think that the program allowed me to connect more with fellow employees that I would not have had connections with in the past...

The group made some awesome connections and relationships interdepartmental and that was one of the major benefits that I came out of the program with.

The participant statements like the above demonstrated that they had very little interactions with others outside of their immediate and local areas of the organization prior to attending the program. The program consisted of employees throughout the entire global organization. By getting to know their colleagues who worked nationally and internationally, they could understand better who worked in the organization and how they could engage with workers more distant from their local work environment.

Theme 4: Planning (8 sources [47% of Respondents]/ 8 References)

The interview summary excerpts indicated that the participants used the time management tools learned in the program to plan their preferred futures. The responses contained statements that demonstrated that participants learned new ways of managing their time to get the future results they desired but had not achieved prior to attending the program. Strategically planning the present time and managing that time well was meaningful to them according to the interview summaries.

Time management...what I learned is to be able to plan better.

The other concepts were really laying out a plan and that makes a big difference from not wasting time and helps you to use your time more wisely and we learned how to do that and many different ways. There are a lot of different ways of doing things.

Comments in this theme showed that learning to effectively plan and manage time was important to the participants. Their interview statements showed that having a variety of time management tools and planning techniques helped them be more creative in planning desired outcomes. The responses demonstrated that strategic leadership, which includes strategic planning, was an important lesson learned by participating in the leadership development program.

Theme 5: Relationships (7 sources [41% of Respondents]/ 9 References)

The interview summary excerpts indicated that securing lifelong friends at work was an important outcome of attending the leadership development program. The interview responses contained statements that though securing people to trust and befriend was not a listed program outcome, it was something that they experienced and was one of the most meaningful experiences of participating in the program. Their statements indicated that securing new friendships was one of the key reasons they enjoyed attending the program each month.

I have made a lot of lifelong friends which I didn't expect to do. The type of friends where you don't have to see them every day or talk to them every day but when you do, you are right where you left off. To me that is a true friend. That I got out of it and I did not anticipate that. I did not expect to form true friendships out of the program and that to me was a bonus.

...but it is the lasting relationships is more than sitting around the conference table or a particular meeting. Or working on a project and moving on. I now feel I have a team of people here who I have questions or one to bounce ideas off of, they are there. That is the most meaningful part of the experience.

The statements about workplace friendships showed that before participating in the program, the participants' circle of friends at work were limited to who they knew locally. By participating in the program with colleagues from around the world, participants could draw from the wellspring of behaviors and talent throughout the organization. The implications of this recurring theme are that individuals who get the opportunity to engage with people throughout the organization have a better opportunity to build lasting relationships, which is an ideal leadership competency.

Theme 6: Criticism (6 sources [35% of Respondents]/ 7 References)

The interview summary excerpts indicated that some of the participants expected more career movement after completing the leadership development program. Their interviews contained statements of having little support from higher-level leaders who did not feel that the program was worthwhile. Participants who made statements in this theme felt that there should have been more screening in who could attend the leadership development program.

I think we are still in the infancy stages. I don't see a lot of correlation between the program and your actual promotability at work. I will be very candid to say that don't think that we did enough screening as well.

As a matter of fact, one of the leaders in my chain of command, did not have a positive image of the program and thought it was a waste of my time. I am still in the same position that I have been in, and do not feel it has helped me at all.

The comments above demonstrate that some of the participants felt that a certain employee “type” should have attended the leadership development. The employee “type” as indicated in the interview statements was defined as employees who aspired to a higher level of leading self and others, or those selected by higher-level managers. The participants who commented about who should attend the development program did not see value in people learning leadership at a variety of roles within the organization. These statements fit the leadership and elite theories that purports that those who see themselves as power holders or leaders might use the energy embedded in their perception to decide who else should have opportunities to become power holders or leaders (Zuba, 2016).

Theme 7: Communication (4 sources [23% of Respondents]/ 7 References)

The interview summary excerpts indicated that participants became more self-aware of their communication styles and engagement with their leaders and colleagues. Before participating in the program, the participants stated that they were unaware of how their communication behaviors affected their relationships and promotability. Learning how to communicate effectively was a key component of the leadership development program they attended.

...you can't communicate the same way with every single person; everyone's different. So just communicating with every single person in a way that's gonna make them feel more comfortable was one of the biggest things that helped me in the program.

Communication was one of the things I started working on. Mainly upward communication. When I did the 360 review, the results were people on my level and below me had a very different view than the people above me. So I came up with the conclusion...which is true...that I do not communicate with them.

One of the key elements that reoccurred in each theme was communicating effectively with leaders and other colleagues. Being in the program with a diverse group of fellow workers from different parts of the organization and leadership span of control challenged their communication behavior and style. Their normal way of communicating had been limited to who they worked with and normed with daily in their work environment. Having the opportunity to experience people with whom they were unfamiliar allowed them to use effective communication tools and communication energy to build lasting relationships, lifelong friendships, and express themselves to be understood.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research was to show how an effective leadership development program designed specifically for an organization's employees helped in identifying the talent and promotion ability of the university's diverse workforce using a business model focused on human energy embedded in performance. The findings indicated that there are several positive outcomes to employing a HUB™ model in workplaces and specifically a university setting.

Theoretical Applications

As discussed by Van Wart (2004), good leaders know themselves. The findings of the current study added to that body of research through the outcomes derived from the participants of a whole leader concept model. Through self-reflection and personal growth, participants in the leadership development program increased their self-worth and esteem. Matzler, Bauer, and Mooradian (2015) found that self-confidence and self-esteem are important components of leadership. McGurk (2010) indicated that it is important to take time out for self-reflection on one's own leadership and this separated good and great leaders. The findings of the current study would add support to these finding. Second, the current study added to the literature related to communication and networking. The findings indicated that an outcome of the current study was related to increasing communication effectiveness at all levels of the organization. As stated by Men (2014), workplace communication plays a vital role in developing employee attitudes, increase esteem, create relationships, and build organizational culture and values. The findings of the current study support this notion and demonstrate that increased communication can remove silos within the workplace as well as creating the aforementioned attitudinal outcomes. This adds to the growing body of literature on the importance of workplace communication at all levels of the organization. Finally, Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014), leadership development programs can serve as a catalyst to reward the entire organization, not just the individual participants. Steinhilber and Estrada (2015) commented that there is a need for leadership development programs to have strong study design, define the target population for the program, and have strong evaluation methods. Rowland (2016) indicated the need for experiential learning as part of leadership development programs. The findings of the current study found congruence with the findings of Zuber-Skerritt and Louw, Steinhilber and Estrada and Roland on the importance of leadership development programs and experiential learning to increase leaders' skills. The study adds to the body of literature on leadership development programs.

Practical Applications

The results indicated that there are several positive outcomes of the research that can relate to the university setting and other workplaces. Practically, the current study showed that by using an experiential learning model as part of a leadership development program, growth can occur. This is important for human resource managers as increasing the quality of interactions in the workforce and building a strong corporate culture is important to employee happiness and effectiveness (Men, 2014). Therefore, human resource managers may want to use the results of this study to develop their own leadership development program. Second, the results of the study show the importance of leadership development at all levels of the organization. The leadership development program was unique in the sense that it was open to employees at all levels of the organization. Regardless of role, employees could participate and the result showed the reduction of silos within the university setting. This is important for university leadership that seeks to increase engagement among faculty and staff. Finally, the results of the study serve as a strong example for the whole-leader concept. As indicated by McGurk (2010), self-reflection is one of the keys to strong leadership. The results of this study could be used by leaders at all levels to

advocate for and show employees the importance of self-reflection. Through strong self-reflection, critical thinking, communication, and the development of strong workplace relationships, a strong culture can be built within any organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several recommendations for future studies. First, the data indicated that self-reflection and personal growth are important within leadership development programs. Future studies should specifically focus on these outcomes and offer recommendations for how to develop and build these components in a leadership development program. Second, the study focused specifically on those participants that either completed or were currently in one of the leadership development tiers. Future studies could focus on co-workers and leaders of the participants to investigate if and what kind of impact the leadership development program had on both the participant and the workplace. Finally, this was the first study to study a human utility business model within a leadership development program at a university. Future studies should investigate the merits of such a program in other settings.

CONCLUSION

As indicated by McRee and Haber-Curran (2016), there is a need to understand and study leadership development in higher education. The objective of this study was to show how an effective leadership development program using a novel human utility business model (HUB™) designed specifically for employees at a university helped in identifying the talent and promotion ability of the university's diverse workforce. The results indicated that there are several outcomes by employing a HUB™ model within the university setting and that the model works to develop the whole leader which has a positive impact on the workplace.

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A SYSTEM ANALYSIS, DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY: UDESIGN CUSTOM T-SHIRTS ORDER ENTRY SYSTEM

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CASE DESCRIPTION

The primary purpose of this case study is for Systems Analysis and Design, Systems Development, and Database courses. The primary learning objective is for students to integrate the knowledge they have gathered from class discussions and readings, and apply the knowledge to the development of a computer information systems solution for a small business. Students examine realistic dialog and Interview Notes, as well as existing documents. For Systems Analysis and Design courses, the students should be able to follow this realistic case study of a small, custom t-shirt business and conduct the planning, analysis, and design phases of the System Development Life Cycle (SDLC), using either a traditional or object-oriented approach. Generally, approximately 30 minutes of class time is spent introducing the case specifics. As time permits, 1-2 hours of additional class time is allotted for students to work in their teams. However, the students will have to commit to several hours of outside class time to complete the case. Deliverables would include process and data diagrams and modeling, and user interface designs, and should require approximately 12-15 hours to complete, outside normal class time. In System Development courses, e.g., capstone courses for a computer information systems major, students can use this case study to not only analyze and design a solution, but actually develop the solution using various windows or web-based tools. The entire project should require approximately 20-25 hours to complete. For Database courses, this case could be used to illustrate database design techniques, resulting in the creation of appropriate data models and physical database designs. This should require approximately 10-12 hours to complete. The case study is of moderate difficulty – ranging from a three to five, and is designed for junior and senior level students, but could also be used for graduate courses.

CASE SYNOPSIS

Dr. Thomas Waggoner, an information systems professor at the local university, receives a call regarding an order he had placed with a local custom t-shirt shop. In the course of the conversation, he determines that the t-shirt shop could greatly benefit by using a computerized system to track customer orders. He discusses the idea with the students in the Project:CIS student organization. Dr. Waggoner brings his students to the shop when he picks up the order, and they start interviewing the owner about his requirements.

CASE

Dr. Thomas Waggoner's cell phone rang.

"Tom?" asked the caller, following Dr. Waggoner's greeting. "This is Ryan from Udesign Custom T-shirts. I just have a couple of questions about your order for the Project:CIS student organization."

"Hi, Ryan. Sure, what do you need?" responded Dr. Waggoner.

"First, did you say you wanted the Iris Blue or Ice Blue color for your t-shirts? Also, did you want the logo on the back or the front, and did you need 8 large t-shirts or 18?" asked Ryan.

"I thought you had written all those details down when I talked to you last week," answered Dr. Waggoner. "Let me see if I can find my notes. Did our order get misplaced?"

"Well, yes and no. To be honest, I didn't have anything to write with when I took your order, but I thought I could remember everything. I actually ended up forgetting about your order until this morning when I noticed the graphic file for your logo on my computer. I apologize, and I will put a rush on it, so you should have it by the end of the week."

"Ok, I guess it is a good thing you noticed the graphic file. We needed Iris Blue, the logo on the front, and there were 8 large, in addition to 6 medium, and 11 extra-large."

"Thanks!" said Ryan. "I need to figure out a better way to keep track of orders. Things are just so busy, and I can't find the time to get everything organized."

"Well, if you are able to get our t-shirts finished by the end of this week, I might be able to help you develop a more efficient way to keep track of your orders," offered Dr. Waggoner.

"That's a deal. What do you have in mind?" asked Ryan.

"I think some of the students in our Project:CIS organization should be able to develop an automated system which will help you with your customers and orders. I can ask them to meet with you when we pick up the t-shirts, so they can start to get an understanding of your business and the information you need to maintain."

"Sounds great – thanks, again!"

Dr. Waggoner met with the officers of Project:CIS later that week, and when they went to pick up their t-shirts, the students were ready to interview Ryan and start thinking of a system solution. After the meeting they compiled their notes and developed the following detailed requirements.

Udesign Custom T-Shirts: Detailed Requirements

When a customer wants to place a custom screen-printed t-shirt order, Udesign will take the customer's first and last name, phone number, and email address. For the purpose of this system, a unique customer number will also be needed. They will then start working with the customer to create a logo, or they can use a logo the customer has already designed. If Udesign creates the logo, they charge a design fee of \$45.00. They will develop an initial sketch of a proposed logo, then make changes based on customer feedback. When the logo is approved by the customer, Udesign will start processing the t-shirt order. If the customer uses their own logo, they will provide a graphic file, usually in PDF or EPS format, and Udesign can then start processing the order. The system should be able to store the graphic file in the database.

The customer will indicate what type of t-shirt (short sleeve, long sleeve, three-quarter baseball style). They will also specify the color of t-shirt, the location of the logo (front, back, front pocket area). The logo can be in more than one position (e.g., large logo on back and small logo on the front pocket), and there may be one logo

on the front and a different logo for the back. One logo printed on the t-shirt is included in the basic price. If two logos are requested, there is an additional \$1.75 per shirt charge.

The customer will also specify the number of shirts needed of each size (Youth Small, Medium, Large; Adult Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large, 2XL). The price of a youth t-shirt is \$7.00, and the price of an adult t-shirt is \$8.50. There needs to be a separate line-item representing each t-shirt size on each order (a one-to-many relationship).

The order will have an order number, order date, and order finish date. The total price of the order should be calculated and displayed on the sales order – a report which the system needs to generate for each order.

Appropriate and user-friendly data entry/edit user interfaces will need to be created. The system should generate a sales order for a specified order. An example of the current, paper-based sales order is provided in Appendix A. In addition, the system should provide a report of orders that need to be processed within a specified date range based on order finish date.

Dr. Waggoner explained to his analysis and design students what Udesign really needed was a database system which would maintain information about each custom order. The system should also generate daily reports on what orders need to be processed.

After gathering the detailed requirements for the system, Dr. Waggoner assigned the members of Project:CIS the requirements shown below. The students currently taking systems analysis and design began developing data and process models and designing the user interfaces. To aid the students in the development of users interfaces, U-Design's logo is included in Appendix B. As the semester progressed and the analysis and design phases were completed, Dr. Waggoner asked the Project:CIS students who were enrolled in the system development class to use the specifications and start creating the working system. By the end of the semester the system was completed and implemented, and Udesign Custom T-Shirts was able to keep track of their orders much more efficiently.

Requirements for Systems Analysis and Design:

1. Prepare a system proposal that includes an executive summary, the requirements of the system, and identification of your team members.
2. Develop appropriate process models (Use Case Descriptions/Diagram or Data Flow Diagrams – context level, level 0, level 1) per your professor's instructions.
3. Develop the appropriate data model (Class Diagram or Entity-Relationship Diagram) per your professor's instructions.
4. Develop preliminary screen and report designs for each user interface identified above.
5. Prepare a one-page "pre-implementation review" outlining lessons learned - what went right and what went wrong on this project.

Requirements for Systems Development:

1. Complete the above requirements, or refer to the packet of materials provided by your professor.
2. Using Microsoft Access, Visual Basic, or other appropriate development tool, develop a comprehensive, user-friendly, working system that will meet the requirements of Udesign Custom T-Shirts.
3. Prepare a user manual describing how to use the system.
4. Prepare a one-page "post-implementation review" outlining lessons learned – what went right and what went wrong on this project.

Video Resources Describing the Custom Screen Printing process:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOtL0E52qkI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z3zdV-z34g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVDEXMMa424>

APPENDIX A

Sales Order

UDesign Custom T-Shirts					
Sales Order					
Sales Order #	2331	SO Date	09-23-XX	Date Needed	09-30-XX
Customer Name	Brian Whiteside		Phone	443-660-0006	
Email Address	bwhiteside@hmail.com		Color	Iris Blue	
Shirt Type	Short sleeve		Logo	(a) pocket, (b) back	
Quantity	Size	Base Price	Extra Charge	Price Per Unit	Ext. Price
3	YL	7.00	1.75	8.75	26.25
3	AS	8.50	1.75	10.25	30.75
7	AM	8.50	1.75	10.25	71.75
10	AL	8.50	1.75	10.25	102.50
8	AXL	8.50	1.75	10.25	82.00
Design Fee (if applicable)					
Design Fee (a) pocket logo				45.00	45.00
Design Fee (b) back logo				45.00	45.00
Total Cost					\$403.25

APPENDIX B

Udesign Custom TShirts Logo



TEACHING WITH BUSINESS CASES: IS IT FOR YOU?

Ahmed Maamoun, University of Minnesota Duluth

ABSTRACT

A business case is a description of an actual situation, usually involving a decision faced by the decision maker, in an organization. Most likely, a case is based on primary research, interviewing managers and staff. The case method of teaching is the set of educational techniques and “tricks of the trade” that instructors use in the classroom to help students reach particular learning objectives. Students are required to put themselves in the decision makers’ shoes. In the real world, the answers to complex problems cannot be Googled or found in textbooks, nor will everyone agree on the “ideal answers” to difficult questions. Managers rarely have access to all the relevant data pertinent to decisions. Similarly, cases usually do not contain all the information instructors and students would like to have. Therefore, they push students to make decisions with available information (exactly like the business world). The case method prepares business students for the real world that stipulates critical thinking and persuasive arguing skills. The purpose of using teaching cases to aid business students attain analytical and critical thinking skills these specialized policy analysis skills. Many instructors have little use for case teaching and keenly resist its inclusion in their courses. There is a number of reasons for this resistance. One is the importance of being in control via lecturing. Some instructors regard the case method to be “soft,” lacking in rigor. Other instructors feel they have too much material to cover and do not have time to use cases. Or they may feel they do not have the “right personality” to teach with cases. This paper is about the author’s personal experience with teaching with business cases. The pros and cons of the case method will be discussed. The advantages and limitations will be presented. Tips on effective case teaching will be offered.

Key Words: Case Study, Effective Teaching, Effective Learning, Leadership, Teaching Style.

INTRODUCTION

As someone who has been teaching college since 2003, I believe that teaching is about fostering good habits of critical thinking. Since English is my second language, I have always felt that the students can read the textbook instead of listening to me reiterating whatever concepts and theories from the required readings. It is not telling students what is in the textbook. It is about provoking them to think, to develop skills needed to present and defend recommendations; to argue persuasively for a point of view, while recognizing that no set of strategies is necessarily “correct”. Teaching is not about the instructor. It is about learning, aka the student. The instructor’s role is to push students to reach new positions, think critically, question authority, and challenge the underpinnings of theories. Teaching is not a science; it is an art. Teaching excellence involves utilizing this art to create a reciprocal relationship between the instructor and the student. Not all teaching should be done by the instructor. Not all the learning should be done by the students. And here is where the case method comes in. It is a decent vehicle to get both instructors and students

to learn. The passive reception of notions or information constitutes little or no education at all. In other words, the student must actively get involved in the learning process. The process is nothing like absorption or fitting factual tidbits into a pattern; it is about creativity and critical thinking.

WHAT IS A CASE STUDY?

A case is a description of authentic circumstances, usually involving a decision faced by the decision maker, in an organization. Most likely a case is based on primary research, interviewing managers and employees. The beauty of a case, in my opinion, is that it is not an arm chair thing. The case method of teaching is the set of academic techniques and “tricks of the trade” that instructors use in the classroom to help students reach explicit learning objectives with the case study as a basis for discussion. In the real world, the answers to challenging problems cannot be found in textbooks, nor will everyone agree on the “right answers” to complex questions. The case method prepares students for a business world that requires critical thinking skills and the ability to develop sound arguments. Students are exposed to the real business situation and have to think like the decision maker and come up with solutions and recommendations.

The idea of using cases in college education probably originated at the Harvard Law School around 1870, and by 1910 all the leading law schools used “case method teaching” (Kimball 1995). The second school to adopt the case method was the Harvard Business School during and after the First World War. Then the case method became popular in business education in the 1930s and 1940s. In subsequent decades, other professional fields began adapting case teaching to their own teaching curricula. Case teaching is also used in arts and sciences tutoring at graduate, undergraduate, and even secondary levels of schooling.

Christensen’s definition of a teaching case, although developed for business school use, is certainly encompassing: “A case is a partial, historical, clinical study of a situation which has confronted a practicing administrator or management group. Presented in narrative form to encourage student involvement, it provides data—substantive and process—essential to an analysis of a specific situation, for the framing of alternative action programs, and for their implementation recognizing the complexity and ambiguity of the practical world” (Christensen & Hansen, 1987). For me a business case is essentially a short story that involves several different levels of analysis, so it can be about a manager, it can be about a company, or it can be about an industry. The story may or may not have an ending (decision) and if it doesn’t have an ending, the students will be required to come up with the ending and think like the manager in the story and make the best decision possible. That’s what a business case is. And instead of having characters that are fictional it has managers and decision makers that are involved in some sort of business activities.

The purpose of using teaching cases to help students acquire these analytical skills is threefold: 1) To help students acquire the habit of questioning the underpinnings of theories and their relevance to the business world. 2) To encourage students to use the terms and concepts they learn in the classroom to analyze and solve business problems. 3) To familiarize students with the intellectual and experiential basis of decision making, evaluation, implementation, and control. Some instructors emphasize group interaction or problem solving, that is, discussion and persuasion, group dynamics and teamwork, or other processes that prepare students to cope with

the context-dependent, ambiguous, interdisciplinary nature of the real world. Other instructors emphasize intellectual performance, the quality of conceptualization, reasoning, data analysis, and argument demonstrated by students. Case analysis in legal education underlines analogical reasoning and the formal logic of applying rules to facts. Cases in clinical medical practice underscore the mastery of scientific thinking in the light of patient symptoms and conditions. Cases in administration and policymaking highlight associative reasoning and pattern recognition, the interpretation of complicated bodies of information through the lenses of heuristic models (i.e., synthesis, intuition, judgment, and application). The challenge for business schools lies in creating rigorous learning environments to nurture knowledge, skills, and attitudes which enable students to become responsible business leaders. These powerful learning environments which stimulate problem-based and action-oriented learning require a non-traditional instructor who coaches the students along critical thinking and towards insightful exploration.

Though the case method is well established in countless instructional programs, it remains deeply controversial in many others. Many educators have little use for case teaching and actively resist its inclusion in courses and classes. There are various reasons for this resistance. One is the importance of establishing the legitimacy of one's own methods. In scientific realms, where the lectures, problems, and laboratory exercises are the primary means of teaching, the case method may appear to be "soft," lacking in rigor. In the "legitimate" university or professional school, faculty present a body of knowledge that students are required to repeat on demand. The author acknowledges these concerns and suggests teaching with cases to supplement the conventional teaching methods of lecturing and problem solving. The role of the instructor is to be a creator of challenging learning environment which allow the students to not only acquire valuable business knowledge and skills, but to develop their personality towards superior business leadership thus molding the future direction of the 21st century. In a way, I see business instructors -including myself- responsible for averting the next bubble or recession! If business students across the world are taught to make the "best" decision in any given situation, the likelihood of a recession or economic slowdown could be reduced. Sound far-fetched? Well, these business students will make decisions that will shape the world economy and play significant role in financial institutions and shape public policy for decades to come. The most candid and clear framework for business schools to take students' education seriously is the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) which were issued in 2007 by the UN Global Compact (Appendix A). The PRME can be seen as a manifesto for business schools to "help shape the attitudes and behavior of business leaders through business education, research, management development programs, training, and other pervasive, but less tangible activities, such as the spread and advocacy of new values and ideas. Through these means, academic institutions have the potential to generate a wave of positive change, thereby helping to ensure a world where both enterprises and societies can flourish" (PRME, 2007). The next sections are dedicated to ideas and tips to make the most of the case method.

TEACHING AND THE CASE METHOD: PREMISES AND PRACTICES

- Does working in teams produce a better learning environment? From experience, the answer is: Yes. However, I have found that size matters! The smaller the class, the more

effective the case method is. That's why I avoid using cases in the large core classes and save them for electives. Students are more mature and can admire the teaching method. Eight groups each with four or five students would be ideal for improving critical, analytical, and reasoning skills.

- The positioning of the case within the course is imperative. I typically position the case to supplement the chapter discussed. For example, if the most recent chapter was primarily on "Targeting" or "Segmentation", students will relate to the case more if the decision pertained to these topics. Instructors will be in a better position to convey essential facts, information, and improve intellectual understanding of theories and their applications.
- Proper preparation is required to make case teaching and learning effective. This is a twofold process: both the instructor and the students have to be prepared. Preparation goes beyond reading the case! Reading the case thoroughly several times is a good start, but is not enough. Taking notes, thinking critically, answering the case questions are further steps essential for proper preparation. Having the students do that before coming to class is something I have struggled with for years. Instructors can overcome this by assigning more points to class participation during case discussions. A better approach is to instill a fun and exciting atmosphere when discussing cases. There might appear to be an enigma in the view that unplanned discussion requires careful preparation. Case discussion features spontaneity, revelation, and the discovery of new conduits to learning. How can an instructor prepare for a spontaneous discussion? The answer lies in a subtle but vital difference between preparing for a lecture, where instructors plan what they will say, and preparing for a case discussion, where they envision what students might venture to. The case preparation guidelines used by the author are shown in Appendix B.
- Teaching notes or instructor's manuals are materials intended to be helpful for instructors. They should make the instructor's life easier. However, they should be kept from students' eyes. The quality and rigor of teaching notes will vary significantly from one author to another. Most of the time, you will have to tweak it or even write your own. I tend to answer the case questions before even checking the answers in the teaching note. This helps provide a more personal approach to the case discussion.
- Put the students in the driver's seat. These bright young men and women will be decision makers on the ground in the near future. I usually start the discussion by saying something like: "If you were in the position of ... What would be your analysis? What would be your alternatives and which one would you select and why?" This approach gives the students the necessary confidence to put themselves in the shoes of the decision maker and make the best decision given the available information. Establishing a baseline or a starting position is helpful. A case typically requires students to reach a decision or conclusion. The instructor may want to start the class by polling students concerning their initial judgments. For example, the instructor may say: "How many of you would [take action X]?" This

approach will divulge the inconsistency in students' views, and will more importantly highlight the significance of reaching a decision or conclusion. The instructor/facilitator may also want to play a role and ask students to respond to them as a role player. One version of this technique is for the instructor to play the devil's advocate to provoke students to think and go outside the box. This should stimulate interest in or curiosity about a subject or problem, and enhance "appreciation" of unfamiliar issues or material.

- Maintaining order is crucial. There has to be a reasonable degree of class discipline. Not all participants can talk at the same time. If one group is presenting a case, their classmates must listen. Without order in the classroom, it is impossible to conduct a productive case discussion. The role of the instructor can be compared to the role of an orchestra conductor. There will always be some disruptive students. Some participants, especially older or more experienced ones, may have the desire to show off, establish credentials, and send the message "I really don't need to be here" to the instructor and the class. One method to handle such interruptions is to think of the disruptive student as a "resource person," asking them a difficult or probing question that tests their expertise or wisdom. The instructor may also want to play devil's advocate and demand elaboration or supporting analysis. The bottom-line is that instructors cannot allow a show-off or a disruptive student to dominate the discussion or intimidate his/her classmates. The instructor should try to contain or redirect the energies of such individuals without showing disrespect or frustration.
- Humor in case discussion adds value and creates a fun atmosphere. Humor can originate with the instructor and can be planned or spontaneous. Humor is an integral part on an instructor's personality and teaching style. I try to think of funny incidents that happened to me while preparing the case that might be relevant to the case discussion. Every class will have students who see the funny side of a situation. Such contributors are a wonderful asset and should be motivated to add a positive and exciting class atmosphere in which cognitive and analytical learning take place with a cheerful attitude. The instructor's personality/temperament makes all the difference in the world. It is often thought that good case instructors are gifted with a broad range of talents, including stand-up comedy. A successful case instructor is outgoing, witty, and have the personality of an entertainer! Dynamic, witty, and funny instructors are more appealing and are likely to have their input retained by students more readily than even-tempered, stern, and dull ones.
- Remembering who said what and in what context is a great way to tie things together. One of the most valuable skills or talents associated with closing a case discussion is auditory memory—the ability to recall what has been said during an argument and who has said it. The importance of this skill is not limited to closing, but it is certainly helpful then. If the instructor is able to identify certain comments and ideas with their originators or if the instructor is able to recall who initiated or contributed to a particular discussion, they would be endorsing the importance of individual contributions. Another crucial closing skill is the ability of the instructor to withhold their own opinions or judgments while allowing

students to develop their own. If students cover all key issues without intervention by the instructor, that is a bonus. If their perspectives are limited or faulty, the instructor steps in or even play devil's advocate, ask challenging questions, and provoking them to think critically. Appendix C lists some generic questions instructors can use to prompt discussion and make it flow naturally.

TEACHING AND THE CASE METHOD: RESISTANCE AND CONCERNS

- Conventional teaching is typically lecture based, with the instructor performing from a position of power or expertise. The instructor alone decides on the topics, issues, or material and knows for the most part how the discussion (if any) will flow. Knowledge is solely the asset of the instructor and flows one way: from him/her to student. The instructor is the focus of attention and is always in control. Conversely, case teaching is mostly discussion based. The instructor knows more than the students, but this knowledge is not definitive as students are expected to contribute to their own learning. Both the parties have the responsibility to foster a sound learning environment. Students are usually the epicenter of attention, and the instructor and students share control over topics being discussed. Some instructors are old school and adopt the rigid notion of: "I am expected to teach. Students look to me for my knowledge and expertise". Such instructors feel that the case teaching method would take away from their status and authority. Involving students in an open discussion rather than standing up there and lecturing the whole time is a scary idea to many educators. They will use arguments like: "It's inefficient. It takes too much time to get to the point", to justify distancing themselves from case studies. It is true that instructors may reach their points quickly in a lecture, but the question should be: Are they bringing their students along with them? The classroom discussion that is the essence of case teaching is intended to move students in a demonstrable way toward the points that the instructor seeks to emphasize. The premise of case teaching is that a larger number of students will be advanced toward instinctive mastery of complex ideas if they are actively engaged in discussion than if they are passive listeners or receivers.
- Many instructors acknowledge the merits of the case teaching method but use the lack of time argument to avoid using it. It is true that as educators we have an academic responsibility to cover the syllabus and make sure the relevant topics and theories present in the text book are thoroughly covered. This means less time is left for hands on discussions and debates. Some instructors could say: "I would teach with cases but I have too much material to cover". The counter argument is that success in covering material may occur at the expense of students' cumulative learning or understanding. Exposing students to ten topics, at which point they master two or three may be less effective than exposing students to five topics and taking the initiative to verify that most students have learned all five.
- As mentioned in the previous section, teaching with cases requires a certain personality: a combination of a public speaker/comedian/entertainer/leader/policeman/scholar. Some

instructors may correctly argue: “I don’t have the right personality”. Engaging students actively in the kind of give-and-take discussion that is at the heart of case teaching does indeed involve more aspects of a teacher’s personality than simply standing there and delivering a premediated lecture. However, I would argue that many aspects of effective case teaching could be acquired through experience as long as the instructor has a genuine interest in engaging their students and listening to and valuing their comments and opinions.

- To concur the previous point, some instructors recognize that they can learn how to use the method but would contend: “I don’t have time to learn how to do case teaching”. Obviously, teaching with cases requires some investment of time, effort, and trial-and-error experience. This is true with any instructional method per se, including the creation and delivery of a lecture. Any teaching vehicle requires effort and skill if it is to be effective. I believe any reasonable instructor would vouch for that. It is true that case teaching is not easy. Leading case discussions and promoting learning through the use of cases requires special skills such as skill in discussion leadership, patience, and the ability to sum up or illuminate without taking control of the learning process.
- Some instructors use their students as an excuse to avoid using case studies in their classes. “I teach undergraduates. My students are not mature or responsible enough to learn from cases”, they contend. The case method has been extensively and effectively used in a variety of subjects with high school students. Therefore, maturity cannot be the issue. Teaching “inexperienced” or younger students requires the instructor to select cases with which their students can relate to and patiently show them the way to learn from such cases.

CASE TEACHING STYLES

The instructor, as a human being, has a unique personality. This personality usually carries over into their teaching style. I am not in a position to imply that one style is better or worse than another. However, I can contend that style is an important element in teaching with cases as it encompasses the personality of the instructor as well as his/her vision of the learning process. Every case instructor must decide on their own teaching style: “What role am I going to play in the educational process and how am I going to execute that role?” For example, an instructor may choose to be merely a “facilitator”, holding that students are responsible for their learning and they should derive conclusions and make decisions on their own. On the other hand, an instructor may choose a “demonstrator” role who takes care of all the learning.

An instructor’s teaching style would fall somewhere between these two extremes, and their personality will figure out a middle ground determining the shared responsibility for learning with students. Some instructors will lean more towards the demonstrator role and adopt a dominant teaching style. Others would move towards the facilitator role and give students more freedom to contribute. It is also possible that the same instructor may move from one role/style to another depending on the position of the case in the course, the case difficulty, the time available, the level

of students, and the learning objectives. For instance, an instructor may adopt a more dominant role at the beginning of the semester and then move to a more liberal mode towards the end of the course as students gain confidence and accumulate knowledge. In brief, even within one class an instructor might use several teaching styles.

CONCLUSION

A case is a description of an actual situation, usually involving a decision, a challenge, and opportunity, a problem, or an issue faced by decision maker(s). It is based on primary research and field data. There are different ways of dealing with the challenges inherent in the case method. Every instructor needs to find their own “comfort zone”. Preparation is the key. Although some instructors might worry that extensive preparation can lead to a rigid and structured teaching approach, usually it is quite the opposite as flexibility is enhanced by preparation. Sound preparation by both the instructor and the student is the stark requirement for effective case teaching and learning.

The process of case teaching becomes a natural one over time. Instructors can excel in that field regardless of their personality and style. The key is to invest the time and energy to prepare and be dedicated to students’ learning. There is no one best way to teach with cases. Instructors complement each other. It would be very tedious if all educators followed identical practices and used the same teaching styles in the classroom. Then they would become teaching machines or robots. Nothing is more detrimental to the learning process. The world is changing, as never before, and case studies could be imperative conduits as regards to how business schools can provide a relevant and meaningful education geared towards a rounded understanding of the real world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Principles for Responsible Management Education

Principle 1 / Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2 / Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Principle 3 / Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4 / Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5 / Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6 / Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability. We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.

Appendix B: Case Presentation Guidelines

Each group in the class will be assigned to present one case and lead the discussion about that case. The purpose of your presentation is to lead the class through the analysis required to make an informed decision about what the retailer should do.

The structure of your presentation should be as follows:

- History: The history, development, and growth of the company over time.
- Problem identification: Clearly state the primary problem(s).
- Analyses: Conduct analyses that you feel will give additional insight into the current problems or that will help identify possible solutions. Possible analyses include external analyses of the general and competitive environments, identification of threats and opportunities, internal analyses that include evaluating strategic plans, financial indicators, and current strengths and weaknesses.

- Conclusions about discussion topics: Use the analyses you conducted to lead a discussion centered around each discussion posted for your case.
- Update on case: If possible, research what has happened since the case and report it to the class.

The format of your presentation should be as follows:

- You may use whatever form of media you wish – PowerPoint, the whiteboard, videos, role playing, games, etc.....
- You must make this an interactive session. You are required to call on your fellow students during your session, ask questions, and get them engaged. Also, other interactive exercises are encouraged. Everyone learns more if everyone is involved. Be creative!
- Your presentation / discussion should last at least 30 minutes, and no more than 40 minutes.
- You must answer all the case questions. Again, engage your audience while doing that.
- You DON'T have to turn in a summary of your presentation.

Grading will be based on:

- The clarity of the problem identification
- Use of Strategic Analyses:
 - Accuracy of concepts (appropriate use of terminology, application of concepts)
 - Strength of logic / argument (synthesis of materials, personal contribution of ideas)
 - Strength of support (completeness, depth and relevance of material)
- Completeness in discussing the questions related to the case
- Organization of the presentation (consistency across different sections, and engaging the rest of the class in a discussion of issues and alternatives)

Appendix C: Generic Questions during Case Discussion

Generic Process Questions

- Why? Can you explain it differently?
- Would you mind repeating what you just said?
- Would you like to add anything to what you have said?
- Is this what you meant to say?
- Do you agree/disagree with what your classmate said?
- Who would like to speak next?
- Who has something different/new to add to what has already been said?
- Who would like to summarize or conclude?
- Is it time to move on?
- How much time do we have left?
- Do we have enough time to?

Generic Analytical Questions

- What is the issue?

- How important is this issue?
- What position are we supposed to hold?
- Why did this issue arise?
- By when does it have to be resolved?
- What is your analysis?
- What alternatives do you suggest?
- What are your decision criteria?
- What is the best alternative?
- What outcome do you predict?
- What is your action/implementation plan?

Generic Conceptual Questions

- Which theory(ies), concept(s), tool(s), or technique(s) is (are) applicable or useful?
- Which theory(ies) might be relevant?
- Who can explain what relevant theory(ies), concept(s), technique(s) is (are)?
- What have you learned in this course (other courses) this year (in previous years) that might be applicable?
- What does the textbook (article, reading) say?

Generic Presentation Questions

- What information is there in the case to support this?
- Where in the case is there information regarding this?
- What information in the case is relevant to this issue?
- What information is missing?
- What assumptions have you made?

SELF-HANDICAPPING: FROM BUSINESS SCHOOL TO LEADERSHIP

Jordan Mitchell, University of Houston Clear Lake

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ABSTRACT

The concept of self-handicapping has been widely researched in the psychology and education literature, but remains absent from the business/leadership literature. Self-handicapping is the process where individuals attempt to externalize a potential failure by means of an excuse or reduced effort. Each creates obstacles to leadership success. It is caused by uncertainty and the need to manage impressions rather than focus on mastering competence. This process is often learned and reinforced in education and finally manifests itself in poor educational habits and leadership. It can be overcome in several ways. The authors believe that a focus on self-handicapping behaviors should be part of every business school curriculum with special attention devoted to the relationship between self-handicapping and leadership. To become exceptional leaders, students must learn what behaviors are preventing them from learning and growing as a leader.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership self-sabotage is a daily occurrence witnessed by most employees. It manifests itself in avoiding confrontation, inconsistent leadership, hiring the wrong people, tunnel vision, poor decision making, and blaming others for a leader's own poor behavior. This causes employees to become disengaged, apathetic, lose motivation, and avoid ownership. Most leaders know what they should be doing – making good decisions, building trust, transparency and accountability, engaging and motivating their workforce, and driving towards outcomes. Gallup research (Harvard Business Review, 2014) said that only one in ten leaders consistently do these things – so what gets in the way? We think it is self-handicapping.

What leads to self-handicapping is impression management. Impression management is behavior that employees use to shape how they are seen by others. This process may be conscious and strategic or unconscious and habitual. Jones & Pittman (1982) identified five tactics of impression management: ingratiation (favors, agreeing), self-promotion (boasting, taking credit), exemplification (staying late at work, appearing busy), intimidation (making threats), and supplication (playing dumb). Very little research has focused on the use of defensive impression management behaviors (e.g., excuses, justifications, apologies)(Decker & Mitchell, 2016).

When uncertain of their ability, leaders often provide excuses to change others' attributions about their ability. They then allow their excuses to turn into reduced effort and learning. Because these excuses are successful in impression management, leaders can keep using them habitually instead of finding effective solutions or building greater competence. This reduced effort leads to poor outcomes – namely, employee disengagement, not owning their own competence, and

ultimately poor performance with customers. It all starts with a simple excuse used to manage impressions. This process is a slippery slope that is called self-handicapping.

All leaders hope to find more of the 20% who are super producers using some magic *talent management or engagement formula*; but, usually don't. We suggest what is needed is an industry-wide conversation about self-handicapping. All employees want to have fun, do a good job, and work toward something useful – at least, in the beginning. All managers want to make things better. By not dealing with the effects of self-handicapping and its effects on employees, we have taught ourselves and impose on our employees a huge burden of self-defeating behaviors. Just think about moving half of those 80% folks over to the 20% column. How would that affect any leader's work day? There is virtually no literature in business addressing these issues (Crant & Bateman, 1993; Ishida, 2012; McElroy & Crant, 2008; Siegel & Brockner, 2005) but over 375 articles in the psychology and education literature which do (contact the authors for a complete bibliography).

Exceptional leadership can be accomplished by eliminating self-handicapping – it frees up enormous time that can be redirected to excellence. Individuals in the top 20% are more focused and more efficient because they have not started self-handicapping – they focus on being more competent rather than avoiding mistakes or looking incompetent – the things that lead to the use of impression management. Focusing on the right issues and being effective and efficient largely comes from not self-handicapping. Extensive effort is wasted on self-handicapping and it bogs organizations down. How to manage it should start in business schools.

WHAT IS SELF-HANDICAPPING?

Self-handicapping is the process where “people withdraw effort, create obstacles to success, or make excuses so they can maintain a public or self-image of competence” (Kearns, Forbes, Gardiner, & Marshall, 2008). *It provides an explanation for potential failure or sets the stage for an individual to receive more personal credit for success than might otherwise accrue* (this is enhancement) (Crant & Bateman, 1993). Self-handicapping is a before-the-event strategy with two varieties: *claimed* self-handicapping is an excuse for potential failure and *behavioral* self-handicapping is can be either reduced effort or the actual creation of an obstacle to success. Both can be internal or external to the person -- as shown in the table below – and excuses commonly lead to behavioral handicaps. Self-handicapping allows individuals to externalize potential failure and avoid the personal accountability for learning from it.

	Self-Handicapping Process	Internal	External
Claimed	<i>Excuse</i>	"I don't know how to use PowerPoint very well"	"My boss made me hire that employee"
Behavioral	<i>Reduced Effort</i>	Not learning how to use PowerPoint more effectively	Lack of mentoring/training the unwanted employee
	<i>Create Obstacle</i>	Produce a poor PPT slide deck	Assign new, unwanted employee to a failing project

Self-handicapping influences observers' impressions of a leader through two processes, one before the task (lowering expectations) and one after it (changing attributions about the individual) (Siegel & Brockner, 2005). If the leader performs poorly, self-handicapping may discount the blame ordinarily associated with failure (Snyder, 1990). People tend to use self-handicapping when others are watching them (and presumably would have knowledge of their behavior/excuse) (Kolditz & Arkin, 1982).

Claimed self-handicapping is common: leaders claim anxiety, lack of time, task difficulty, lack of authority, and lack of resources (whether or not these are actually true). Behavioral self-handicapping is used slightly less often (setting unrealistic goals, avoiding accountability, lack of sleep, drug and alcohol use, and reducing effort) (Hoffman, 2007). Internal handicaps (being unprepared, claiming an injury) are less likely to be used than external ones (the boss, peers, workload, the organization) because leaders must appear competent -- and some internal handicaps like drug and alcohol use violate norms of organizational conduct. Yet, behavioral self-handicaps are more effective because they are less disputable and more tied to actual performance (Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005). Self-handicapping does not always undermine immediate performance because it reduces the stress of self-evaluation and that allows the person to focus on the immediate task and perform better. There are positive short-term effects from self-handicapping (Drexler, Ahrens, & Haaga, 1995; Garcia, 1995; McCrea & Hirt, 2001; Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton, & Thornton, 1990); but, long-term performance is inhibited by reducing effort and creating obstacles to success. Frequent self-handicapping lowers observer impressions over time (Giacalone & Knouse, 1990).

HOW IT WORKS

When presented with new or complex task, leaders can take three stances: They know they will fail, they are uncertain of the outcome, or they will succeed even if it takes many attempts. Those who believe they will fail and those certain of success have no need to self-handicap. Yet, most business leaders will feel some degree of uncertainty. This uncertainty breeds self-handicapping, which serves as a comfort zone in those situations. A simple excuse can easily

become habitual due to the extreme effectiveness of self-handicapping – externalizing failure. This keeps blame away from the person, reduces any sanctions for failure, and may enhance attributions of the person. This makes it easier to self-handicap at a later time, rather than expending the energy needed to work on greater competence, or to put up the determined fight to solve problems and overcome challenges. In other words, self-handicapping in impression management is easier than learning, growing, and overcoming challenges. We all do it and it works to a certain level.

But, those excuses are the start of a vicious cycle leading to failure of leadership. A leader who routinely self-handicaps does not typically improve the impressions of his boss or peers over time. Self-handicapping directly leads to poor outcomes from employees – i.e., disengagement. First comes the excuse, “I can’t spend all this time to talk to employees on the way to meetings; I am too busy.” This may save time and change the boss’s impression at first; but, even more devastating is the reduced effort that follows. This means the leader is avoiding learning better ways to interact with his employees or fighting through the feelings keeping him from relating to employees on a one-on-one level. He may make it to meetings on time, pleasing his boss, but his behavior leads to a huge obstacle: disengaged employees. In the end, customers suffer.

You can see the pattern: uncertainty, excuses and expedient choices of leadership behavior, positive short-term outcomes from self-handicapping, reduced effort to learn and get better, obstacles to effective leadership with employees and customers, and ultimately, a bogged down career. We call this the ERO Spiral (for Excuses – Reduced Effort – Obstacles). The ERO Spiral is the hidden slippery slope to poor leadership for many. Great leaders stay off this slope.

There are several points of intervention with the self-handicapping process: the leader, the situation, his/her excuses, his/her behavior, and dealing with any self-deception (Decker & Mitchell, 2016). Changing how individuals think about themselves and how individuals react to others’ impressions of them helps reduce self-handicapping (Siegel & Brockner, 2005). A rather simple method to prevent people from using self-handicapping strategies would be to “turn off” negative attitudes and self-perceptions that create uncertainty and threat. Such an undertaking in a workforce would be arduous and frowned upon by most CEOs reluctant to fund such activities (though they may be doing it now through executive counseling). When a leader is taught to recognize uncertainty, know that it can trigger self-handicapping, and defer his/her reactions to it, he/she may have the power to overcome self-handicapping (Decker & Mitchell, 2016). Goal orientation is related to self-handicapping (Akin, 2014). Schwinger and Stiensmeier-Pelster (2011) have shown that students with a mastery orientation avoid self-handicapping because they view failure as an opportunity for personal growth and as a modifiable and controllable outcome. Those with mastery goal orientation simply do not handicap and are less uncertain than those without this goal framework.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

Business education has and is in the process of undergoing a transformation into a more applied curriculum. Many studies have recommended schools of business improve content relevancy and become more accountable to market needs (Keys & Wolfe, 1988; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009). The current makeup of business management and leadership courses in America

focus on management/leadership *theory*. While a theoretical approach to business education is necessary to provide problem solving skills, analytical skills, and historical context; curriculums would be well-served implementing a more practical element. As both employers and accrediting bodies move toward “behavioral, complex cognitive, and affective competencies,” teaching and academic resources must move in conjunction to serve that need (Revere, Decker, & Hill, 2012).

Rubin & Dierdorff (2009) have shown a misalignment between the outcomes thought critical by practicing managers and MBA program curriculums. Belasen & Fortunato (2000) suggested that the split between theory and practice is too great in business schools, with curriculum emphasizing theory and cognitive skills rather than application skills. Wren, Halbesleben, and Buckley (Wren, Halbesleben, & Buckley, 2007), using more recent survey data, concluded that there is an increasing emphasis towards teaching theory in business schools. Despite these criticisms, business schools have done little to respond and have continued to focus more on cognitive learning outcomes (Stokes, Rosetti, & King, 2010). Consequently, current critics suggest business education leaves students with little practice to become competent in the action skills necessary for good management (Alan T. Belasen & Rufer, 2007; Bennis & O’Toole, 2005). The misalignment between required career skills and academic teaching needs to be addressed. Studying self-handicapping is one way to do this.

HIGHER-LEVEL PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES

Management and leadership are enormously complex; competencies required are more relational and multidimensional than ordered and sequential, and more intuitive than intellectual (Alan T. Belasen & Huppertz, 2009). However, business educators and curriculum planners find it challenging to shift their pedagogical emphasis from knowledge acquisition to skill development (Chia & Holt, 2008; Mintzberg, 2004). There is more than one type of learning. Bloom (Bloom, 1956), identified three domains of educational activities: **Cognitive** (retention of facts to complex decision making and evaluation), **Affective** (growth in feelings or emotional areas), and, **Psychomotor** (manual or physical skills). Bloom identified many different levels within each domain; these categories and levels can be thought of as degrees of difficulty. That is, the first one must be mastered before the next one can take place.

Bloom (1956) found that over 95 % of what students encounter in educational classroom assessment require them to think only at the lowest possible level - the recall of information or declarative knowledge. That has not changed much in the decades since his initial research (Calhoun et al., 2009; Chia & Holt, 2008). A goal of Bloom's Taxonomy was to motivate educators to focus on all three domains, creating a more holistic form of education. The work of Dominguez, Teachout, & LaFrance (2009); and Pringle, Nippak, and Isaac (2010) suggest that the key discriminators in future leadership roles depend upon much more than just declarative knowledge (J. R. Anderson, 1976).

Rubin & Dierdorff (2009) found that six behavioral competencies underlie all managerial work and that practicing managers deemed two of these competencies to be significantly more important than the others: *managing human capital* and *managing decision making*. When Rubin & Dierdorff (2009) cross-referenced these competencies to MBA curriculum, they found the curriculums of most schools underemphasized both. They suggest that curricular design should

integrate leadership, teamwork, and human communication skills in the teaching program. But, they also urge this to be done at higher order competency levels – beyond declarative knowledge and theory.

Furthermore, Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor (2002) found that MBA students do acquire cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies, but not as part of a typical MBA curriculum. Navarro (2008) surveyed business schools and found a lack of emphasis on multidisciplinary integration, experiential learning, and teaching of soft skills such as engagement, negotiation, team building, etc. These themes have been echoed by researchers and practitioners in healthcare management, who noted that the same limitations apply to master's degree programs designed to produce a new generation of healthcare leaders (Friedman & Frogner, 2010; Shewchuk, O'Connor, & Fine, 2006).

It has become clear that business and management education programs have not done enough to include practical skills in leadership development, communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills so essential for successful management in their core curricula (Jones, 2002; Richards-Wilson, 2002). Much more has to be done to assist with an understanding the development of curriculum that teaches behavioral skills in business schools. One of the drivers will be assessment of behavior and affective outcomes (Calhoun, et. al., 2009) but another will be understanding the effect of self-handicapping and self-defeating behaviors on leadership outcomes (Decker & Mitchell, 2016) and practicing more effective leadership behaviors.

SELF-HANDICAPPING AREAS OF FOCUS

One example of a behavioral area of focus that will equip future managers/leaders is knowing what they do to sabotage their attempts at effective leadership – self-handicapping. Self-handicapping is triggered by expediency, avoidance, or apprehension. Expediency is when we are on “auto-pilot” and do the easiest and quickest thing in front of us. Avoidance comes from apprehension about facing something (e.g., avoiding confrontation or conflict) and can be a habitual behavior where one does not see a need to change (for the better). Apprehension is when there is anxiety or fear about doing something – so we don't do it. These fears can manifest due to competition, a fear of making mistakes, or shame (a lack of competence). Finally, the deepest source of self-handicapping behavior is self-deception. Self-deception is when our excuses turn personal and we start to blame others for our own mistakes.

Over years of self-handicapping, people can withdraw into a shell and enter into a “box”, where they move from blaming themselves for their mistakes to blaming people or things for all poor outcomes. Intervention at this stage rarely produces results due to the inability of the person to self-reflect, seek or listen to feedback, and his/her unwillingness to adopt new behaviors (The Arbing Institute, 2010).

Self-handicapping is an area of focus that business professors can supplement into their curriculum directed at helping students recognize, admit to, and adjust these behaviors that they do themselves causing poor education, leadership and management. These self-handicapping behaviors do not add to the effectiveness of the person in the long run and do inhibit the person from learning and growing. Over time, when business students turn into leaders, self-handicapping behavior serves to protect the individual in the short term, while causing ineffective leadership.

While there are many areas in which people self-handicap, we believe most can be categorized into 9 areas of focus for the business classroom:

1. **Avoiding Accountability:** *Avoiding difficult conversations and confrontation are the classic examples of avoidance of accountability. Others include: making excuses, blaming others, and poor presentation of self – physically and over social media.*
2. **Tunnel Vision:** *Maintaining a small-picture focus, avoiding “big-picture” thinking. Having a linear mindset rather than prioritizing tasks.*
3. **Lack of Awareness:** *A Lack of assessment of one’s traits, strengths, and weaknesses. Unaware of how he/she is perceived by others.*
4. **Poor Analysis & Decision Making:** *Making decisions without a proper frame or appropriate alternatives. Not knowing when to make a decision or not recognizing when added data no longer adds value.*
5. **Poor Communication Culture:** *A lack of transparency and trust. Lacking listening skills. Unable to take constructive criticism. Avoiding situations that put the person in a state of vulnerability.*
6. **Poor Engagement:** *Getting in the way of others’ commitment for work. Viewing everything as a transaction, poor networking, and talking about others behind their back.*
7. **Poor Talent Development:** *Hiring the wrong people, not cultivating talent from within, and avoiding coaching, sponsoring, and mentoring.*
8. **Micro-managing:** *Having a need to overly control situations, leading through fear. Being unable to cope with uncertainty or unexpected. Making decisions solely based on the need to control the outcomes.*
9. **Not Driving for Results:** *Confusing time spent on work with results-based outcomes, or confusing internal outcomes with customer outcomes. Avoiding challenge and risk. Spending time thinking about “what should happen” rather than taking action.*

It is important to note that the above categories are not completely distinct – some can easily blend into others. Also, they are not in any particular order.

CLASSROOM PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This new applied curriculum should not focus only on the knowledge of self-handicapping – this pedagogical approach would remain knowledge-based and devoid of application. But rather, teaching should incorporate a method of improvement – we use the Recognize – Admit – Adjust model. We have found that the key for leaders and students to reverse self-handicapping is to *recognize* what they do, *admit* to its impact on others, and then *adjust* - find and practice alternative behaviors to break these ingrained habitual tendencies. This requires self-reflection and practice. When they see the ERO Spiral and how “innocent” excuses lead down a road to disengaged employees and dissatisfied customers, they are often ready to find better ways. This process requires, knowledge, self-assessment, self-reflection, and practicing new skills and ways of thinking. The way out is to find what is triggering this behavior – every habit has a trigger. Self-handicapping is very alluring because it works on the short-term. The application of how to identify the negative outcomes of self-handicapping and turn away from those behaviors is essential when attempting to deal with uncertainty and the need for impression management rather than mastery of competence. In the classroom, roleplaying can serve as a great tool for practice.

Business faculty are exploring many innovative pedagogical methods such as class projects (Weldy & Turnipseed, 2010), role-playing (Libin et al., 2010), action research (Raelin, 2006), business games (P. H. Anderson & Lawton, 2009; Salas, Wildman, & Piccolo, 2009), and service projects and internships (Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010) to enhance higher-order learning. All of these methods incorporate behavioral skills as well as affective and higher cognitive skills in the activity. Research indicates that class projects (Goretsky, 1984; Thomas, 2002), role-play (Alden, 1999; Baglione, 2006), and service learning (Eyler, 2001; McIntyre, Webb, & Hite, 2005) are more effective for higher-levels of learning and engagement (Gujarathi & McQuade, 2002; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; Young, 2002) and have a stronger connection to the real world (Newble & Cannon, 1991). The benefits increase when the project involves researching a real-world business problem or opportunity (Broderick, 2007; Goretsky, 1984). Allen & Hartman (Allen & Hartman, 2008) surveyed business leaders to determine their perspectives on the effectiveness and efficiency of 27 approaches to leader development. They found that the respondents deemed 10 approaches the most useful – all included behavioral performance. Other researchers have shown that skills such as self-efficacy, optimism, & resiliency (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008) and reflective leadership skills (Roglio & Light, 2009) can be successfully and efficiently taught in business school classrooms.

These are the issues that lead to a need for impression management and self-handicapping rather than a focus on the mastery of competence in the workplace. We also think that a focus, in the classroom, on declarative knowledge and theory can also lead to the types of performance goals causing self-handicapping.

PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR SELF-HANDICAPPING

Individuals strive to achieve for different purposes: mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance (Furner & Gonzalez-DeHass, 2011; Gardner, 2006; Mesa, 2012; Urdan, 2004). Some strive for mastery goals -- a desire to *develop* competence and continually learn. Others have performance-approach goals -- a concern to *demonstrate* competence by outperforming others, or performance-avoidance goals -- the desire to avoid appearing incompetent or less competent than others (avoiding mistakes). People with performance goals are more worried about external judgements and are often uncertain and self-handicap more. Those with mastery goals do not self-handicap – they don't need to because they see the task as a challenge to be mastered, and learn from mistakes.

Business will always be a competitive environment; but, the outcomes and assessment can be shifted to lessen self-handicapping. Classroom structure that includes involvement, teacher support, student cohesiveness, cooperation, and equity reduces self-handicapping (Garcia, 1995). Classroom structure that emphasizes our *Recognize – Admit – Adjust* model will help students understand and reduce or overcome their self-handicapping – current or future. Professors can build classroom environments that emphasize mastery of competence over performance-approach or performance-avoidance situations.

Classroom assessment of learning is typically competitive and enhances the goals of being best or avoiding error at all costs – not mastery. Success should be defined by improvement, with value placed on the process of learning and being more competent. The classroom should involve

a climate that helps students feel they can take risks, make mistakes, and reveal their lack of understanding in order to grow. This environment fosters mastery goals rather than performance goals. Plainly put, an environment emphasizing only performance goals will never produce excellence – because it fosters self-handicapping. And, this kind of classroom environment teaches students to go into business and continue to self-handicap. There are many ways to help students with low self-efficacy (and self-esteem) build their confidence – thus lessening the need to self-handicap. How individuals are introduced to new tasks is important; success in baby steps builds self-efficacy. Humility can be a sign of mastery goal orientation as these individuals know they can overcome obstacles and do not feel the apprehension others feel. Finally, there are measurement tools for self-handicapping (Strube, M., 1986).

Clearly, business schools have the ability to teach soft skills, measure impression management, and provide complex higher-level pedagogy which is learner- and mastery goal-focused (Forest & Peterson, 2006). What seems to be lacking is a clearly behaviorally-defined competency-based model which can influence pedagogy and inform assessment. One of the ways to use such a competency model with students is to show them how they self-sabotage themselves in gaining each competence and build methods (self-reflection, practice of new behaviors) to help them overcome these habits brought into school from their childhood. Roleplaying can reinforce new non-self-handicapping behaviors learned in the classroom.

As an example of a particular set of key behaviors to be used in role-play situations, let's take *Tunnel Vision: Interacting With People Only To Get What We Want*. After recognizing and admitting that this behavior is used - through self-reflection and discussion of possible negative outcomes - students can practice new key behaviors to overcome it. One can easily see here how important self-reflection is to determine why one interacts in this way – lack of empathy, fear of closeness, or lack of interest in others. Regardless of the habitual driver, this way of interacting disengages employees and is self-handicapping.

The key behaviors are:

1. *Shift your attention and focus on the speaker. Give them the impression that you're enthusiastic about talking to them – until the conversation is done.*
2. *Get out of your problems or planning ahead and listen to them. Ask open-ended questions about their interests.*
3. *Ask questions rather than tell. Be respectful of their opinions and how they feel.*
4. *Try active listening to shift focus: Repeat what they are saying in your head, summarize what you heard, and look for the message – their key words.*
5. *Give the impression that you are on the same team. Use words like “we, us, we're, our, and ourselves” to instantly build a bond.*
6. *Mimic the other personal facial expressions and body positions. Mirroring will allow you to feel what they are feeling.*
7. *Keep what you say short and to the point. When you go on and on about something, people tune you out.*

Here is another example of such key behaviors to be used in role-play to overcome *Avoiding Accountability: Confronting Peers Over Their Lack Of Accountability*:

1. *Do not deny or ignore the problem.*
2. *Develop a plan on how to deal with the situation. If you have support persons, warn them that you may confront the individual.*
3. *Stand or sit directly in front of the person and give him/her direct eye contact.*
4. *Express genuine concern for the person. You are educating them. Assume that the other person's intentions are good even if his or her actions are problematic.*
5. *Identify the specific conduct that is objectionable. Be very specific; express yourself clearly and directly. Express what emotions you feel or sense that others feel.*
6. *Ask that they cease the objectionable behavior. Speak tactfully, in a way you would like to be spoken to and be constructive. Confront gently.*
7. *State that this behavior is counterproductive to the mission. You can conclude with what would be a good next step for the person you're confronting.*
8. *Own your own message; don't apologize for your feelings or the organizational needs.*
9. *Avoid evaluating and interpreting the person (e.g., identifying him/her "controlling" or "complainer.")*

Clearly self-reflection here is used to identify why one avoids this confrontation – avoidance of conflict, not wanting to be the bad guy, or fear of retaliation. The above examples are meant to help professors start thinking about the flow of knowledge about self-handicapping to self-reflection about expediency/avoidance/fear/self-deception and practice of new, more productive behavior. This will help them incorporate overcoming self-handicapping in the classroom. For more examples see *Self-Handicapping Leadership: The Nine Behaviors Holding Back Employees, Managers, and Companies, and How to Overcome Them* (Decker & Mitchell, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Given pressures from employers, accrediting bodies, and students, business schools are making a transition from a purely theoretical curriculum to a blended theoretical/practical curriculum. The authors believe that as part of the practical portion, students would be well-served by learning what they do to hold themselves back – how they self-handicap. In the present article, we have outlined examples of self-handicapping, their triggers, and some steps on how to implement self-reflection and role-play in the classroom to begin behavior change.

By addressing self-handicapping while in school and before students embark on their career, professors will equip the student to better recognize self-handicapping behavior. Moreover, by practicing new non-self-handicapping behavior in the classroom – students will be more likely to admit to the impact of their self-handicapping behavior and find better ways to operate. This will significantly increase their leadership competence, ability to find careers, and improve the world of work everywhere.

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TRANSFORMING A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION: A CASE OF UTILIZING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TO ACHIEVE MARKETING SUCCESS

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CASE DESCRIPTION

The primary subject matter for this case is management and marketing of nonprofit organizations. Secondary issues examined include strategic management, marketing strategy, leadership, transformational leadership, and organizational change. The case has a difficulty level appropriate for first year graduate level courses. The case is designed to be taught in one class session equivalent to one and a half hours. It is expected to require between three and six hours of outside preparation by students.

CASE SYNOPSIS

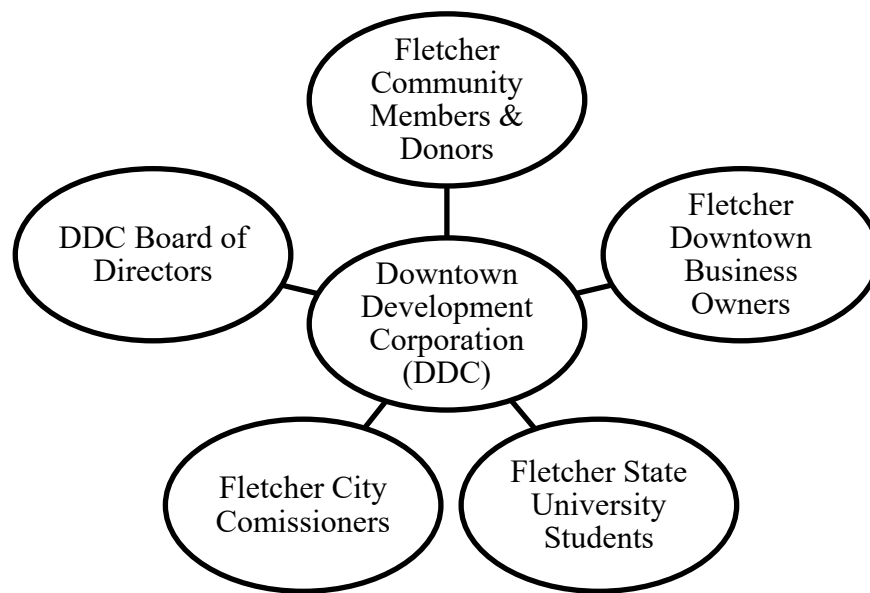
The Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) in Fletcher, NE was a non-profit organization that organized events in downtown Fletcher, a small community that underwent a downtown revitalization. The DDC hired consultants to develop a marketing plan for downtown Fletcher and the plan was received well by the DDC Board. However, shortly after, a city commissioner publicly questioned the organization's mission and activities resulting in public scrutiny of the DDC. The DDC was asked to make a presentation to the commissioners in order to justify its existence and receive funding for the next year. They were successful in securing funding, but the DDC had done nothing with the marketing plan. The board president grappled with challenges in the organization's mission and vision, resources, management, and leadership. She did not know how the DDC would be able to successfully implement the marketing plan in light of the problems. She wondered, "How should the DDC proceed with the marketing plan? Would the city and community members support the marketing plan and continued funding? Do I have the right Executive Director in place to successfully lead the DDC? If we lose city funding and community support, will we have to dissolve the organization?"

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) in Fletcher, NE was a non-profit organization that organized events in downtown Fletcher, a small community that underwent a downtown revitalization beginning in 2000. When re-hired as the DDC Executive Director by the Board of Directors in August 2014, Taylor Schaffer's task was to justify why the city of Fletcher should continue to fund the DDC. Schaffer tackled the daunting, and very public, task of infusing new life and purpose into an organization that was stuck in a rut. While she had many ideas as to

what the DDC could do and be to the community of Fletcher, she felt tremendous pressure to successfully turn the organization around with Board President, Molly Gordon, and a variety of stakeholders watching her progress (see Figure below). Over the past year, the DDC was publicly scrutinized and criticized by city officials and community members. Schaffer had to make some noticeable, positive changes fast, or this deteriorating situation would only get worse. The DDC faced losing funding from the city and public support. Without city funding, the situation would be detrimental as the DDC would have to dissolve. Schaffer had to act fast or the DDC may have to shut its doors.

Figure: Stakeholder Map



CITY OF FLETCHER

Fletcher, Nebraska, a town with a total population of about 20,000, was a vibrant, small city in central Nebraska. Fletcher was a diverse community with major employers consisting of a state university and medical center, to name a few. Fletcher's history is rooted in the "Wild West." Originally a military outpost, it was invigorated by a substantial influx of German immigrants in the late 19th Century. Fletcher's local economy was mainly comprised of the service sector which included education and health care as the largest industries. Also located in Fletcher were battery manufacturers, an auto parts maker, and an aircraft manufacturer.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S HISTORY

Efforts to revitalize Downtown Fletcher came to a head in 2000. After a dismal decade, people in the community were looking for progress to be made funneling life back into Downtown

Fletcher, an area rich in history and potential. With the city of Fletcher, university students and faculty, and community members working together, the downtown revitalization process began.

An integral part of this revitalization process was the formation of the Downtown Development Corporation (DDC). The DDC was started in 2001 as a privately and publicly funded organization initially tasked with raising funds to purchase nine dilapidated buildings in the heart of Downtown Fletcher. Once purchased, the buildings were gifted to a local developer, Freedom Group, Inc., who renovated these buildings and established successful businesses in them. These businesses included a brewery and restaurant, niche shops, salons, and clothing stores. Freedom Group was planning on breaking ground soon on a boutique hotel in the heart of Downtown Fletcher.

DDC'S CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

As the DDC's initial purpose was completed in 2007, the organization's mission shifted to promote Downtown Fletcher as a destination of choice. The primary way the DDC promoted the downtown area was through events located in the downtown area throughout the year. The DDC sponsored four major events every year, including a back-to-school walk of students from the Fletcher State University (FSU) campus, a summer sidewalk sale and barbeque, a fall beer and wine social, and a winter parade through Downtown Fletcher.

Regardless how long these four events had taken place, no quantifiable, historic measurements or data were collected by the DDC that would speak to the quantifiable success of these events. When asked for such metrics, the DDC was unable to deliver tangible results, and instead used 'averages' to communicate success. Furthermore, when trying to communicate the value of the DDC to various stakeholder groups, Schaffer was quick to mention that quality of life had improved and Downtown Fletcher had seen economic growth as a direct result of the DDC's efforts over the years, and yet provided no evidence to support such claims.

The DDC was located in the Fletcher Welcome Center, a building not located in Downtown Fletcher, where they shared space with the Fletcher County Coalition for Economic Development, the Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations. The DDC offices resided in the Fletcher Welcome Center since its construction was finished in 2007. Though the DDC was not located in Downtown Fletcher, its location in the Fletcher Welcome Center lent itself to working closely with the other community organizations. For example, the DDC assisted the Fletcher County Coalition for Economic Development in recruiting businesses to Downtown Fletcher.

The city of Fletcher was invested in the DDC's success. According to city records, the Fletcher City Commission awarded the group \$762,092 in subsidies since its inception, and the DDC requested \$64,386 from the city for the 2015 budget (see Appendix A for the 2014 and 2015 DDC budgets).

DDC Strategic Plan

The strategic plan of the DDC (which included its vision and mission), as stated on its website in 2014, was:

Downtown Fletcher Vision

The DDC envisions a downtown area that is both physically and economically dynamic. Beautiful, historic and well-preserved buildings will complement a thriving economic mix of businesses, residences and public services. An easy-to-locate downtown will be a gathering place for a wide variety of local community members and visitors. An exciting combination of unique shopping, dining, arts, entertainment, recreation and gathering places will draw individuals, families and professionals downtown, as a place to spend both money and time in a friendly and cheerful environment. A vibrant Downtown Fletcher will be pedestrian-friendly and will include design elements that visually unify the entire area, with increased connection to the Fletcher State University campus.

DDC Vision Statement

The DDC will be the binding force and catalyst for organizations impacting Historic Downtown Fletcher. DDC will strive to represent Downtown Fletcher through open communication and strategic planning which will enhance and secure the quality of life in the community. DDC will draw on a collaboration of funding from public and private sources. Our organization will foster awareness by recognizing, communicating and celebrating the accomplishments of Historic Downtown Fletcher.

DDC Mission Statement

The mission of the DDC is to foster awareness and promote Downtown Fletcher as a vibrant center of commerce, recreation, arts, government and history that serves the people of Fletcher, the surrounding region and visitors from around the world. The DDC will work to prevent the deterioration and enhance the viability of the community's cultural centers, historical landmarks and public infrastructure important to the community's economic and cultural well-being.

Other than the Vision and Mission Statements, the DDC did not identify a target audience or any marketing strategies and tactics in a comprehensive marketing plan.

Management and Leadership

The DDC was governed by a board of 13 volunteer directors from all sectors of the community. Directors are elected by members of the DDC and can serve a three year term. The Board President, Molly Gordon, was an associate professor at FSU. Other board members included three downtown business owners/employees, four community volunteers, four non-Downtown Fletcher business representatives, and one representative from a local high school. The Board's stated responsibilities included determining the organization's mission and purpose, selecting and evaluating the Executive Director, defining and implementing the strategic plan, and monitoring and promoting the DDC's events. However, most of the board members had not taken a very active role in leading the organization's efforts.

Schaffer was rehired as Executive Director in August 2014. However, in terms of an Executive Director, the DDC underwent a series of leadership changes within the past few months. Meredith Carter, a December 2012 FSU graduate with a degree in communication studies and a minor in leadership, was hired and begun as Executive Director of the DDC in September of 2013. She “resigned” the following July, after serving as Executive Director of the DDC for ten months (rumors around Fletcher were that Carter was actually fired though the press claimed that she resigned).

Carter replaced Schaffer, the DDC Executive Director who worked for the DDC for two years prior. Schaffer moved to Kentucky when her husband took a job there. They returned to Fletcher in March 2014 and then, in early August, the DDC rehired Schaffer as the Executive Director, less than a year after her departure from the DDC. While serving as the Executive Director of the DDC the second time, Schaffer also ran a photography business and was a direct sales representative for a skincare line. In addition to an Executive Director, the DDC also employed a part-time Assistant to the Director, a current FSU marketing major.

When asked his opinion on the change of leadership the DDC recently experienced, Mayor Jason Stevens, a former DDC board member, said he hoped the nonprofit identifies its long-term vision before choosing a successor. Stevens stated, “Instead of hiring a new director immediately, I hope the board takes time to think about where the organization is going. Once it thinks about strategy over the next year to two years, it may or may not need a director. And it may find other opportunities working with other organizations.” This comment sparked a public debate as to the overall value of the DDC to the Fletcher community.

The Bailey District vs. Downtown Fletcher

The Freedom Group, spearheaded by local entrepreneur Larry Lowman, used their renovations as an impetus for creating a historic district in Downtown Fletcher. This historic district, the Bailey District, was named after John O. Bailey who at one time owned much of the real estate in Downtown Fletcher. The Bailey District consisted only of about a ten-block area. Most of the growth, revitalization, and improvements made to Downtown Fletcher, came from the Bailey District.

Lowman spearheaded the revitalization efforts in the Bailey District. Lowman, Freedom Group President and owner of a high-end design business, never lived in Fletcher. Lowman lived most of his life in Flatsville, a small town located 30 miles south of Fletcher with a population of 1900 people. Although Lowman did not live in Fletcher (a serious point of contention for Fletcher residents), he had a specific, unique vision for what Downtown Fletcher should look like. Furthermore, Lowman planed his businesses and entrepreneurship initiatives in accordance with that vision, which was not necessarily agreed upon by the DDC, the city of Fletcher, and the Fletcher community. Fletcher residents questioned his motives, in that he cared enough to use the community to make money, but not enough to live and work there. Lowman owned several buildings in Downtown Fletcher that were vacant, some renovated and some not. Community members complained that Lowman was too controlling in his lease agreements and were, therefore, hesitant to rent a building from him or were unsuccessful in negotiating a lease.

Downtown Fletcher had a variety of businesses located there, including restaurants, retailers (clothing, jewelry, gifts, and kitchen/household), bars, the public library, professional and governmental offices, and art galleries. One restaurant/brewery is an award-winning, nationally-recognized business. In 2013, it was named the Small Brewpub and Small Brewpub Brewer of the Year and several of its brews won national awards throughout the years. In February, the Huffington Post named this brewery “The ONE Thing You Must Do” in Nebraska. The feature challenged its editorial staff with one question: “If you could only tell a visitor to do ONE thing in your whole state, what would it be?” Another retailer in Downtown Fletcher, a kitchen/household retailer, was named among Cottage Living Magazine's top 100 shops in the nation. It is important to note that many of the most well-known businesses in Downtown Fletcher were a part of the Bailey District, and in part owned by Lowman.

The Bailey District caused quite a bit of conflict and confusion not only among community members, but among downtown business owners. There was a great deal of confusion as to what businesses were considered a part of the Bailey District and what were not (versus Downtown Fletcher). The Bailey District was located along Main Street, between 1st and 17th Streets, but Downtown Fletcher encompassed a much larger geographical area including several blocks outward from and parallel to Main Street. Furthermore, there was an air of elusiveness surrounding businesses that were a part of the Bailey District, which quickly resulted in tension. Additionally, downtown businesses believed the community did not support the downtown enough and ‘out-shopped’ to other communities too much. Further, community members and business owners found it difficult to differentiate between the DDC and the prominent Bailey District. The messages both organizations communicated via their Facebook pages and websites got lost and were not effective.

When asked his thoughts on ways to infuse life into Downtown Fletcher, Mark Reed, longtime Downtown Fletcher business owner was not optimistic about the actual success of any such project, and stated:

I do believe it is a great idea but am not too optimistic of how downtown can/will work together to accomplish this. I have been located in Downtown Fletcher since 1983 and have seen many of us try to unite the downtown group in many efforts, without success. I have heard that there are already ideas on the table and city dollars available to help get it started. Don't let the wrong people get on this group to slow this down or confuse it so much that nothing happens. I do believe that any form of development of downtown is good. One suggestion I have is get control of the empty or overpriced buildings in downtown and get someone in them, the DDC has given a large percentage of the building to one individual who I feel tricked them into doing this, and is only in this to make money. He has had many years to prove himself without success. We need people to shop downtown and they need businesses to shop at, if the rent is too high, or the tenants don't meet the landlords strict qualifications, we will never get enough businesses down here for a large amount of people to shop at.

However, community members took pride in Downtown Fletcher and appreciated the revitalization efforts. Many community members grew up in Fletcher or lived in Fletcher for many years, and had fond memories of Downtown Fletcher. They were excited about and looked

forward to continued revitalization efforts, but grew impatient because the efforts had been too slow.

MARKETING OF THE DDC AND DOWNTOWN FLETCHER

In a concerted effort to renew their organization, the DDC hired a team of marketing consultants from FSU who would create a comprehensive marketing plan for the DDC to market and rebrand Downtown Fletcher.

The Consultants

Makenzie Wallace, FSU associate professor of marketing, Jason Stevens, instructor of management and marketing, and Jessica Morgan, FSU MBA graduate assistant, were hired to prepare a comprehensive marketing plan for the DDC. Stevens had a complicated role on the consulting team as he played many roles in the community; including being a city commissioner and the Mayor of Fletcher (city commissioners rotated the position of mayor). Stevens was an original member of the DDC Board of Directors (when the organization was formed and completing its first objective). Stevens brought a wealth of knowledge to the consulting team, but took care to balance his varying roles.

A major component of the agreement between FSU and the DDC was that the marketing consultants would conduct focus groups with a myriad of the DDC's constituents. These focus groups would provide the consultants with important information as to how the organization was viewed and what services it should provide to the downtown community. The DDC specifically requested that the consultants interview community residents, downtown consumers, Freedom Group employees, City Commissioners, downtown business owners, DDC donors, and DDC board members. The consultants also conducted two focus group sessions with FSU students. While students were not initially a part of the pre-determined stakeholders, the consultants felt like their voice should be heard as the DDC recently took steps to encourage the students to spend time in Downtown Fletcher.

The marketing consultants organized six focus group meetings. Focus group feedback was compiled and presented to the DDC board during the consultants' final marketing and branding plan presentation in the summer of 2014. The positive and negative themes that emerged from the focus groups were summarized (see Table).

Table: Focus Group Results

Downtown Fletcher Positives	Downtown Fletcher Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride and potential • Unique, impressive downtown progress • Fond Memories, experiences to rekindle • FSU students enjoy being a part of Downtown Fletcher • Tracks, tracks, tracks everywhere (railroad tracks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are all the people? • Where are all the businesses? • Why can't I shop after work or dinner? • FSU has no presence in Downtown Fletcher • Disparate looks, disparate efforts • Where do I get information about shops and events in Downtown Fletcher? • What is going on in Downtown Fletcher? • What's going on THIS weekend in Downtown Fletcher? • What is the "Bailey District?" • What is Downtown Fletcher?

The themes generated from the focus groups directed the consultants' approach in creating the DDC's marketing plan. Many people were quick to mention what businesses should be in Downtown Fletcher, ranging from frozen yogurt to coffee shops to shoe stores. However, people were also quick to mention that there were hardly any people in Downtown Fletcher. Another issue focus group participants mentioned was the difficulty they have shopping in Downtown Fletcher. Downtown Fletcher businesses closed 30 minutes after most Fletcher residents got off of work, leaving little to no time to shop in Downtown Fletcher. Focus group participants expressed frustration at the fact that they did not know how to get information on what was taking place in Downtown Fletcher. They stated that with the Bailey District Facebook page and the DDC Facebook page they were confused, especially with inconsistent posting from both organizations. People were unsure of what page they should "like" to get information as there were different pages for different events and none of the pages posted regularly. Participants also mentioned that they never heard about downtown events until after they happened.

The Marketing Plan

The marketing consultants knew that Downtown Fletcher experienced a significant transformation during the past decade. Major building renovations and new businesses made the historic area an exciting destination and community gathering space, but the consultants recognized a need to develop and market Downtown Fletcher as a unified, cohesive brand. Upon reviewing focus group feedback and relevant historical information with respect to the DDC, the Freedom Group, Downtown Fletcher, and the Bailey District, the consultants recognized that without a cohesive brand specific to Downtown Fletcher, confusion and dissent would persist. Regardless how successful the existing Bailey District branding may or may not have been, the consultants knew that it failed to resonate with community members and most importantly, business owners. The consultants felt that a unique Downtown Fletcher brand would need to be

supported by all downtown constituents. The consultants did not recommend that the Bailey District branding be removed, rather that it should work in conjunction with Downtown Fletcher's umbrella brand. Rather than viewing Downtown Fletcher as just another stop, the consultants felt it needed to be viewed as a place to hang out and at which to spend a day. In order to get people to want to come downtown and stay a while, the consultants strongly believed that Downtown Fletcher needed its own brand that resonated with everyone in the community. A brand that was tangible, visible, nostalgic, and obvious. The consultants believed that the marketing strategies presented in the plan provided a new direction and focus for DDC, while remaining consistent with its mission.

The marketing consultants also believed that the downtown businesses needed a comprehensive marketing strategy that could be used by all to promote their specific businesses and Downtown Fletcher as a unique experience. Based on focus group participants' observations that Downtown Fletcher was uniquely and distinctly home to many railroad tracks that evoked past memories and positive feelings of nostalgia, they recommended that the businesses utilize "The Tracks" umbrella branding to ensure a consistent look and specific branding tools to promote events and increase traffic. The plan included:

- *A logo,*
- *Corporate identity materials for the DDC,*
- *Electronic and social media marketing materials,*
- *Marketing materials for downtown businesses,*
- *Street banners and posters,*
- *An annual event calendar,*
- *A social media content calendar, and*
- *A series of blog posts to launch "The Tracks" brand.*

Finally, the marketing consultants recommended that the DDC embark on a new strategy of encouraging business development by working with the city of Fletcher in implementing a comprehensive beautification program. To facilitate this process and serve as a catalyst for new development, the consultants recommended that the DDC have a physical presence downtown.

A representative from the Freedom Group, serving as a liaison between the DDC Board and the Freedom Group, attended the presentation. Immediately following the presentation, she communicated the new marketing proposal to Freedom Group President Larry Lowman. Lowman was unhappy that The Tracks logo did not include the Bailey District logo. Stevens called him later that afternoon and offered to redo the branding to include the Bailey District logo. However, Lowman was not a fan of the rebranding efforts as he believed the Bailey District identity should be the only brand needed for Downtown Fletcher.

The marketing plan was presented to the DDC Board of Directors in early June 2014. At a meeting the following week between Wallace, Morgan, Gordon, and Carter (the Executive Director at that time), Gordon and Carter were quick to express their excitement with the marketing efforts. Carter hinted that the DDC was looking at moving their offices; however, was rather negative about the idea. Specifically, Carter felt that "how nice" their current offices were and the cost to operate at their current location were major reasons for remaining in the Fletcher Welcome

Center. Furthermore, Carter was extremely hesitant about committing to implementing the marketing plan, as she did not feel there was enough time to put the new plan in place, while keeping up with the four events the DDC currently hosted. Wallace and Morgan answered questions about the plan and offered their services as the DDC moved forward with the rebranding and marketing initiatives.

After Carter resigned and Schaffer was rehired, Wallace and Morgan again met with Schaffer to answer questions she had about the marketing plan. As they were not contacted to help with the rebranding to this point, Wallace and Morgan again offered their assistance to Schaffer with implementing the plan, as both were eager to see the DDC and Downtown Fletcher become a success, and were very excited about their marketing plan.

THE DDC MOVING FORWARD

After very public comments by Mayor Jason Stevens questioning the DDC's mission and activities, the DDC's funding request became a matter of great public interest. Although the Fletcher City Commission approved the DDC's funding request for the next fiscal year, they demanded results. Commissioner Edward Phillips stated in a public forum that he supported the DDC, what it accomplished, and all that it could accomplish for Downtown Fletcher and the businesses located there. However, Commissioner Sean Mortin questioned why some downtown business owners knew next to nothing about the DDC and what it did for their businesses. In fact, he went so far as to say that some downtown businesses did not know they were even a part of Downtown Fletcher and the DDC. The commissioners urged the organization to significantly improve their communication with downtown business owners and take a more proactive stand in the efforts to bring life to Downtown Fletcher. They took it a step further and said the DDC must reaffirm and communicate the purpose they serve to downtown businesses, the community, and the commissioners themselves.

Community members also voiced similar opinions and confusion as to what the DDC did and why the city of Fletcher funded an event planning organization. Scathing reviews from the local newspaper editor (see Appendix B) and community members called to question the DDC's purpose and urged the commissioners to cease funding and essentially disband the DDC. Comments from social media included:

- *Sean's right, what do they do. They receive all this money and don't seem to be enhancing anything downtown. Too much spent on wages for a do-nothing job.*
- *I believe most of the claims the DDC made last night are false. They can say anything, but a simple stroll down Main St. will reveal 14 empty buildings alone. The claim that they brought 50 businesses to downtown is a lie. The two wealthiest families in Fletcher own 95% of the buildings downtown. Why should the taxpayers have to pay to promote their properties? The buildings that bring in the majority of the revenue have existed long before there was a DDC!*
- *How much money from downtown businesses contribute to this fund? If you want downtown to survive make the downtown business contribute to this. Taxpayers have no business getting into private sector like this.*
- *I agree that the people who benefit most are Rollins and Stevens by using taxpayer money to increase the value of their properties! Stevens was the creator, treasurer, and board president of DDC, and*

now mayor. If this is not a conflict of interest...what is? The Rollins family owns most of the properties downtown. How greedy can they be?

- *Stupid decision. Time for new commissioners at next election, same with school board.*
- *Stevens also created the DDC! Obviously he doesn't have the entrepreneurial skills of his grandfather...but he does have his money. Our grandchildren will be stuck paying for this downtown nonsense, something else Stevens doesn't have to worry about!*

The DDC's budget approval process brought to light some major problems with the organization and how the community perceived the organization. However, the most shocking problem was that quite a few people, particularly downtown business owners, had no idea what the DDC was or did. As such, the DDC was asked to make a presentation to the Fletcher city commissioners in order to justify its existence and receive city funding for the next year (a majority of its funding – about \$64,000 annually – was provided by the city of Fletcher). The DDC was successful in securing funding for the next year, including about \$2,000 of the budget allocated to marketing.

Upon further reflection, the consultants and the Board questioned why the DDC did nothing to act upon the marketing plan. This reflection led to a discussion of the Board of Directors of the leadership and management problems within the DDC. Board President Gordon knew these challenges included:

- *Inexperienced management and leadership*
- *The DDC Executive Director's lack of training and education in business and marketing*
- *The Board of Directors' low change tolerance*
- *The confusing relationship between the DDC and The Bailey District*
- *A lack of representation of Downtown Fletcher businesses on the Board of Directors*
- *The lack of presence of the DDC in Downtown Fletcher*
- *The lack of understanding by Downtown businesses regarding if they were a part of the DDC and what the DDC did for their business*
- *A lack of communication between the DDC Executive Director and the president of the Board of Directors and its stakeholders*
- *The Board of Directors' "hands-off" mentality*
- *The lack of measurement of DDC's efforts*
- *The lack of long-term vision and strategic planning by the DDC*
- *An inability to create buy-in among varying stakeholder groups*

Armed with a five-month-old marketing plan that the DDC had not yet acted upon and growing public dissatisfaction with the organization, Gordon did not know what action she should take as Board President. The very existence of the organization was in jeopardy. She was overwhelmed, knowing that she had to answer to the DDC, the Board, the consultants, and various stakeholders (see Appendix C).

As she sat in her office, she thought, "I think I have to start at the beginning if I am going to make this organization a success. I do not think I can rely on what we have in place, because what we have obviously is not working. If people do not know what the DDC is, then we need to give them something they will recognize. We have to give them something that resonates, something tangible that we, as an organization, can promote and downtown businesses can

support. While I know we have to implement the marketing plan, all I can see are problems piling up and solutions in short supply. I have to get this organization back on the right track, but I am not sure how to see a solution amidst the problems.”

Gordon knew that a major part of convincing all of the DDC’s stakeholders, including the city commissioners, the Fletcher community members, and the downtown business owners, of why the DDC was an important organization to the success of Downtown Fletcher, she had to improve the organization internally. She knew that an organization struggling with confusion, disorganization, leadership changes, and conflict could not successfully complete its organizational mission and vision. She also knew that the limited resources and the organization’s dependence on volunteers posed an additional challenge for the DDC.

Gordon also knew that she had a great marketing plan that would make Downtown Fletcher a success; however, she did not know how the DDC would be able to successfully implement the plan in light of the problems the organization itself faced. Gordon pondered the following questions: Is the DDC successfully completing its mission and vision? Does the mission and vision of the DDC accurately define who we are and what we want to do in the future? To what extent is the DDC being influenced and controlled by the Bailey District, and to what extent should that relationship change? How do I convince the city of Fletcher that the DDC is important to the community and that we deserve continued funding? Do I have the right people in place to effectively and efficiently implement this marketing plan? Do I have the right Executive Director in place to successfully lead the DDC? Is the Board of Directors holding her accountable?

APPENDIX A

2014 and 2015 Downtown Development Corporation Budgets

DDC Proposed Budget – 2015

Income

City of Fletcher	\$64,386.00
Partnership Program	\$22,800.00
Fundraiser	\$20,400.00
Events/activities	\$1,200.00
Interest	\$180.00

Total Income **\$108,966.00**

Expenses

Personnel & Overhead	\$62,400.00
Part-time Staff & Interns	\$11,640.00
Outside Advertising	\$2,046.00
Memberships	\$1,800.00
Education & Staff Development	\$1,800.00
Downtown Business Networking	\$3,000.00
Office Expenses	\$15,600.00
Occupancy	\$4,680.00
Organization/Directors Expenses	\$3,000.00
Restricted Projects	\$3,000.00

Total Expenses **\$108,966.00**

DDC Budget – 2014

Income

City of Fletcher	64,386.00
Partnership Program	22,800.00
Fundraiser	18,000.00
Events/activities	1,200.00
Interest	\$360.00

Total Income **\$107,826.00**

Expenses

Personnel & Overhead	\$61,146.00
Part-time Staff & Interns	\$11,640.00
Outside Advertising	\$1,800.00
Memberships	\$1,800.00
Education & Staff Development	\$1,800.00
Downtown Business Networking	\$3,240.00
Office Expenses	\$15,720.00
Occupancy	\$4,680.00
Organization/Directors Expenses	\$3,000.00
Restricted Projects	\$3,000.00

Total Expenses **\$107,826.00**

APPENDIX B

Fletcher Daily News Editorials

Funding DHDC Fletcher Daily News July 27, 2014

With the Downtown Development Corp. searching for a new director and the City of Fletcher preparing to pass next year's budget, it strikes us as opportune to re-examine the relationship between the two entities. There is no \$64,000 question to answer, but there is a request from DDC for \$53,655.

To help assist commissioners and the public whether the request is worth granting, a little history lesson is in order.

When DDC was founded in 2001, it was done with enormous support from private individuals and the business community. Everybody believed the downtown needed revitalization, and Freedom Group had stepped forward to develop it. The downtown group was needed to raise enough money to purchase buildings and deed them over -- so Larry Lowman and his team could go to work.

The results, while some in town still grumble took too long, have been stunning. The old Bailey District is thriving today because of that collaboration. With Freedom's addition next year of a boutique hotel and a small convention center on Main Street, the jewel that is Downtown Fletcher will shine even brighter.

When DDC made the final payment in January 2009 on its initial debt, many thought the organization either was going to change course or even disband. Its mission, after all, had been completed. Quite successfully at that.

At the time, then-Director Sarah White said: "Even though the first phase of DDC is over, there's still a lot of work that can be done."

And a committee was created to identify that new task.

"To be truthful, I have no idea what will come out of the task force," White said. "They'll just be throwing out all sorts of ideas."

About the same time, members of the Fletcher City Commission were questioning how to justify continued support of DDC with tax dollars.

At the 2009 budget hearings, then-Mayor Betty Winslow originally suggested cutting the organization's funding in half.

"My simple desire is that they garner their own autonomy and figure out what to do and how to budget for future years," Winslow said. "It was never solely to be the city of Fletcher funding it. There was a purpose behind it, and for them to move forward and find other levels of funding."

DDC attempted to go down that road. It accepted a 10-percent decrease in city funding and began a massive effort to recruit donors. The effort did not pan out as planned, and the annual request from the city has remained at \$53,655 since then.

The group has continued to coordinate the volunteers who make the WinterFest Parade happen, the Blues, Barbecue & Bargains event, and the Wines & Steins fundraiser. DDC also used to coordinate the Taste of Downtown Fletcher, but that fell by the wayside two directors ago. The organization did get Gateway Markers built by Paul Faust to mark the boundaries, started a farmer's market, and raised a lot of money to build an estimated \$576,534 pavilion along the railroad tracks -- although failed to get permission from Union Pacific to erect it so that money sits in a bank account.

Currently, DDC's mission statement says the group "is to foster awareness and promote Downtown Fletcher as a vibrant center of commerce, recreation, arts, government and history that serves the people of Fletcher, the surrounding region and visitors from around the world. The DDC will work to prevent the deterioration and enhance the viability of the community's cultural centers, historical landmarks and public infrastructure important to the community's economic and cultural well-being."

While sounding ambitious, all of those identified goals already are served by others such as the Fletcher Convention and Visitors Bureau, Fletcher County Coalition for Economic Development, the Fletcher Area Chamber of Commerce, Freedom Group, the city, and the businesses and organizations located downtown. DDC staff and volunteers are present at a lot of events others host, but it appears to be a tax-supported cheerleading outfit.

We'd likely have a different opinion if the group had accomplished anything of note in the last five years. Or even if downtown entities had faith in the organization. Look at the composition of DDC's board of directors or its significant donors. Very few represent downtown Fletcher. In fact, the DDC office isn't downtown. DDC hasn't been able even to convince downtown businesses to be open during its signature events other than the Blues, Barbecue & Bargains.

Fletcher Mayor Jason Stevens indicated in Friday's Fletcher Daily News the group should determine its mission before hiring a new director. That's a blunt and candid assessment coming from a long-time DDC supporter and board member.

While the mayor's suggestion makes sense, DDC is free to do as it pleases. We would recommend instead the city stop funding an organization that is duplicative at best. Throwing public money at an entity that completed its necessary mission five years ago might reflect eternal optimism but does not show fiduciary responsibility.

Editorial by Peter Lewis, Editor of the Fletcher Daily News

**Downtown Decision
Fletcher Daily News
September 8, 2014**

The Downtown Development Corp. had its night in the hot seat at Thursday's city commission work session. After 14 years of relatively automatic contributions to support the majority of DDC's annual budget, commissioners demanded an accounting of what the group did -- and to justify continued contributions of tax dollars.

To the organization's credit, DDC board members and supporters showed up in good numbers. Handouts, neatly enclosed in three-ring folders, outlined the positive effect downtown Fletcher has experienced since the group was formed. Whether commissioners were impressed enough to direct the \$53,655 already allocated for downtown purposes to DDC will be discussed at this week's regular meeting. If awarded, the organization will have received more than \$815,000 in subsidies since 2000.

Taxpayers are waiting to hear if the commission believes that is a good investment, and whether there is enough return. When more than two-thirds of the group's \$90,000 annual budget is dedicated to staff, the pressure to perform is enormous.

Taylor Schaffer, DDC executive director, emphasizes the increase in downtown's sales tax collections as a sure sign of success. She said the group's efforts have helped increase that annual amount from \$300,000 to \$1.2 million in 14 years.

We do not doubt the raw numbers. In Thursday's presentation, however, nobody pointed out that the boundaries of downtown greatly expand for the purpose of deriving those figures. For example, the Eighth Street corridor is included all the way to Vine -- a very different map than the one presented in the packet. Six automobile dealers, one of which legitimately is in the "downtown" area, contribute significantly to the amount. And inflation alone during the time frame would account for more than \$100,000.

Curiously absent from the presentation was any reference to the Freedom Group, DDC's former partner in the initial revitalization efforts. We can appreciate not attempting to take credit for the development group's success, nor should they. But the sales tax increase would not have happened if Larry Lowman, the city and many other players had not targeted the Bailey District.

DDC was instrumental in the area's resurgence. We have never disputed that. In fact, this paper helped contribute to the initial fundraising Downtown Development Corp. spearheaded.

We are concerned that DDC and Freedom no longer work together. Whether egos, personality conflicts or the desire for control led to the divorce, the fence must be mended. The Freedom Group is going to build a \$15 million to \$20 million hotel/loft project that one DDC member appropriately described as a "game-changer." DDC's preoccupation with its \$576,534 pavilion as a centerpiece of the downtown-campus corridor had better not jeopardize the overall concept Freedom Group has for the Bailey District.

We believe DDC has been served notice by the city commission that it needs focus, and perhaps a rededication to purpose. The original function for which the organization was established is complete, and the group was allowed to skate for five years without much question.

A marketing plan prepared by FSU's Business Development Center is under review by DDC. That the plan needed to include items such as ensuring downtown businesses know what DDC is and what it does is troubling. But a strong advocate for the downtown area is critical and DDC should be the likely candidate to fulfill the role.

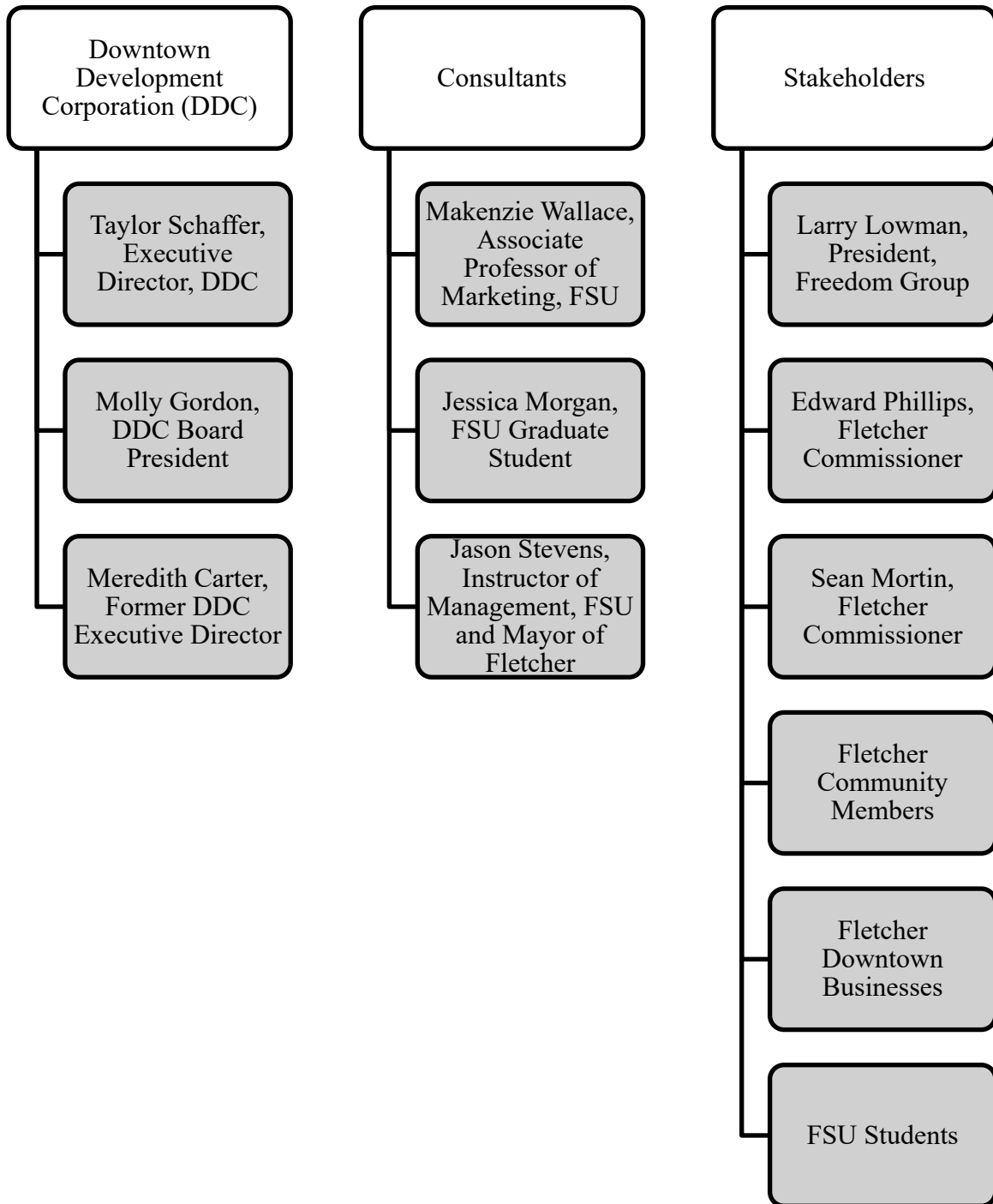
As commissioners appear likely to give DDC the funding for the upcoming year, we would expect them to lay out desired objectives. Re-establishing ties with the Freedom Group should be at the top of the list.

Next would be to stop claiming ownership of tasks it's not equipped to handle. Business recruitment and retention is the bailiwick of the Fletcher County Coalition for Economic Development.

Lastly, the DDC needs to move downtown. Even the aforementioned extended district boundaries don't go as far as Vine Street. Aside from visibility, it seems ludicrous to expect others to invest in and locate downtown when the namesake organization won't do so.

Failure to meet these goals should result in the city commission denying all public funding for the future. DDC staff needs to be accountable to the community, not merely their own board of directors.

Editorial by Peter Lewis, Editor of the Fletcher Daily News

APPENDIX C**Relevant Players**

SOCIAL ROBOTS, INC.

Prasad Padmanabhan, St. Mary's University

CASE DESCRIPTION

The case deals with the topic of currency hedging and can be used in a basic course in International Finance at the undergraduate or graduate level. Before assigning this case, it is assumed that the following topics have been covered in class: basic exchange rate concepts and terminology, basic international derivative instruments (forward markets, put and call options), and the concept of money market hedges. The level of difficulty can be adjusted to suit the needs of the instructor and the availability of class time to cover these topics (described below under case description). Ideally, the complete case can be assigned as a homework project and can be covered in one 90 minute of class time. Students have indicated that they have spent approximately 4 hours preparing the case in a group.

CASE SYNOPSIS

A US based firm was buying robots from a US based supplier but now is faced with a problem when the supplier decides to raise prices. The CEO has to decide between alternate suppliers in China and South Korea. Unfortunately, this involves dealing with exchange rates and creates exchange risk. A late entry from another US supplier creates a third opportunity for purchase. Students are required to consider different hedging alternatives (forward markets, money market hedges, and options. Payment is also made at different intervals. Students are required to select the best method by maturity and evaluate costs against another proposal by a US based supplier. Opportunity is provided for exploring whether “upfront” payment is better if a discount is offered as well as whether changes in the cost of capital influence hedging choices. Instructors can also assign this case using piecemeal hedging choices, thereby varying the level of difficulty of the case. Finally, they can easily convert this importing problem into an exporting one.

Students are exposed to a real world type dilemma when they compute exchange exposures in different currencies and learn about the different methods of currency hedging (forward market hedge, options market hedge, money market hedge). They will also realize that they should seek the best method by maturity since it maybe that the forward works best for 60 days but the options prove better for 180 days. Since both puts and calls information is provided, the student is allowed to decide which instrument is more appropriate in this case. Similarly, they also get to decide if a bid or an ask quote is relevant, or, for the money market hedge, whether they should consider borrowing or lending. They can also learn more about options – some options seem feasible but on closer examination, have already expired and cannot be used in this instance. Finally, students get to explore other aspects of the case, such as, quality considerations, insurance cost when in transit, after sales service, etc. Students can also be exposed to international negotiations. Can they pit one exporter against another?

CASE BODY

No parts may be used or reproduced in any form without the express written consent of the author. This case has been developed to illustrate a decision making situation and is not deemed to be an accurate depiction of reality. Names have been pulled out of a hat and do not intentionally bear resemblance to anyone living or dead...

Mr. Tom Madison, CEO of Social Robots, Inc. (a San Antonio based firm) put two Alka Seltzer pills into his mouth and reluctantly attempted to work on his current problem. Frankly, he was not sure what to do. He had never traveled out of San Antonio (except for the one time he went to Bangladesh, and that was an adventure worth forgetting!!), and now he may have to deal with the Chinese. This nightmare was keeping him from relaxing at home feeding squirrels.

Social Robots (SR) bought functioning robots from manufacturers and sold them to customers by adding some SR branding (much like a new car dealer would do). These robots are basically designed to assist people manage their social portfolio, etc. They also serve as an individual's personal assistant, and speak multiple languages. Much like a SIRI who walks. SR has been in this business since 2012 and has made a lot of money buying and selling robots. Last year (2016) SR recorded a profit of 15% on \$ 6 million in sales (approximately 500 units were sold last year).

The problem emerged recently when the US firm manufacturing these robots (US Robotics, Inc) informed all clients that costs would increase by 20% from the current \$ 10,000 per unit. This was a problem since it would potentially wipe out any profits to SR unless they could also raise prices. Tom was reluctant to do this since the industry now enjoyed cutthroat competition from other US based and foreign companies.

When Tom asked his COO, Mr. James Tobin, to provide potential solutions, Mr. Tobin immediately started going to work by conducting some painstaking research that kept him working many nights. He determined that they could order robots from the Chinese. Their catalogs looked attractive, but would they be able to meet SR's quality standards? Are there other US based suppliers who can provide robots at lower costs? If so, what would they be sacrificing? He was able to determine that they could get similar quality robots from the Chinese at lower costs, but that they would have to pay them in Chinese Yuan. Tom groaned when he heard James mention the Chinese. He was just recovering from the Bangladesh trip and now he had to go to China? And who would feed his squirrels? When he got back from his daydreaming activities, he realized that James was still talking - about currency risks and hedging; he better pay attention.

Tom had taken International Finance classes during his college days and knew that this venture involved exchange risks, and something called currency hedging. He did not want to visit that nightmare again! James informed him that a Chinese firm from Nanjing called Zhang Enterprises was willing to sell "equal quality" robots for 60,000 Yuan per robot, but they needed to be paid in Yuan and in Euros. He was considering a purchase of 500 robots (their current level of sales). James had also done some research and informed Tom that the Chinese were willing to accept a down payment of 50% of the cost, with the rest equally split up in payments 30 and 60 days from now. In addition, the Chinese firm requested that the 60 day payment be denominated in Euros at current exchange rates, since the firm was considering equity investments in Germany and these Euros would help.

While James and Tom were pondering on what to do while drinking beer at a local pub where they were frequent customers, they received a call from Lim Enterprises in South Korea. The CEO of this company, Mr. S.B. Lim suggested that they could supply the robots at 12 million Won per unit, and they would take no down payment. They also indicated that they were willing to receive 25% of the payments every 60 days in South Korean Won. While digesting this information, James received another call from a US based firm who offered to sell them high quality robots at \$ 9,500 per unit, but the monies needed to be paid up front. Upon receiving all this new information, he was not sure what to do. Which option was the best option to consider? Since they already had two beers each, they decided to sleep over it and postpone the decision for the next day.

Early next morning, since James knew that Tom would ask these questions, he decided to assemble the additional data required for analysis:

Exchange rates (Direct quotes in the US)

Exchange rate	Period	Bid	Ask
Chinese Yuan	spot	0.1613	0.1625
Chinese Yuan	30 days	0.1700	0.1725
Chinese Yuan	60 days	0.1722	0.1752
Euro	spot	1.3327	1.3356
Euro	30 days	1.3310	1.3320
Euro	60 days	1.3300	1.3312
South Korean Won	Spot	0.00089	0.00092
South Korean Won	60 days	0.00079	0.00082
South Korean Won	120 days	0.00072	0.00075
South Korean Won	180 days	0.00068	0.00071
South Korean Won	240 days	0.00065	0.00069

In addition, James, being real smart, decided to pull out the cost of borrowing in these currencies. He noted that money market hedges could be used as an alternative if they reduced costs.

Currency	Period	Borrowing	Lending
Chinese Yuan	30 days	7%	6%
Chinese Yuan	60 days	7.5%	6.25%
Euro	30 days	4.25%	3.75%
Euro	60 days	5.2%	4.1%
South Korean Won	60 days	3%	2.2%
South Korean Won	120 days	3.5%	2.6%
South Korean Won	180 days	3.75%	2.8%
South Korean Won	240 days	4%	3%
US	30 days	1.5%	1.0%
US	60 days	1.6%	1.1%
US	120 days	1.65%	1.2%
US	180 days	1.70%	1.3%
US	240 days	1.99	1.42%

As James was winding down, he received a call from Tom, who reminded him not to ignore currency options since they may be able to save money with these hedging instruments. James groaned since he had barely understood this instrument when he was taking the International Finance course in college. But, he better check on this alternative because Tom would ask for it. He found out that options were not available for many maturities he was seeking:

Currency options information (Unless otherwise stated, all options are American Options):

Option currency	Put or Call	Maturity	Strike Price	Option Premium
Chinese Yuan	Call	90 days	0.1611	5%
Chinese Yuan	Put	90 days	0.1611	8%
Chinese Yuan	Call	30 days	0.1611	3%
Euro	Call	30 days	1.3400	10%
Euro	Put	60 days	1.3400	8%
South Korean Won	Call	60 days	0.00070	4%
South Korean Won	Call	90 days	0.00075	6%
South Korean Won	Put	240 days	0.0078	9%

James called Mr. Gatt, Milley, the accountant for the company and determined that SR's cost of capital was 8%. Now he believed that he had all the information necessary for making the right decision. Should SR import from China or South Korea? Or buy from the new US firm? What other considerations will enter into this decision? If they import from China, they can hedge or not hedge. As he was assembling all the information, he received a call from the Chinese exporter. They indicated that they could offer a 15% discount if SR paid everything up front. Should James recommend acceptance of this offer? Can he use the forward rate for one maturity and the money market rate for another maturity? Decisions, decisions. James decided to postpone his weekend trip to a nearby forest to shoot game to give this problem his undivided attention.

When James brought these details to his attention, Tom heaved a sigh of dismay. This all looked so complicated. Oh well, he better get back to solving this problem. The squirrels have to wait.....(Aw nuts!).