

# THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education

## Letters to the Editor

[Home](#) [Opinion & Ideas](#) [Letters to the Editor](#)



May 15, 2011

### Accreditor Asks Much of Schools of Business

To the Editor:

Recently articles by David Glenn appeared in both *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The New York Times* citing serious concerns regarding business students, and their performance across a number of knowledge and skill dimensions. While "[Business Students, What Have You Learned? An Accreditor Wants to Know](#)," (*The Chronicle*, April 14), "[Business Educators Struggle to Put Students to Work](#)" (*The Chronicle*, April 14), and "[The Default Major: Skating Through B-School](#)" (*The New York Times*, April 14) were accompanied by a summary of interviews of three deans and a president of institutions that maintain AACSB accreditation, we are concerned with the broad implications that were made based on a distinct selection of anecdotal statements.

Since its founding in 1916, AACSB International (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) has set high standards for management education. Our peer-review process focuses on evaluating the overall high-quality and continuous improvement for each of our accredited business schools in the context of their stated mission and strategic plan. In support of quality academic-degree programs, our process provides a rigorous review and evaluation of schools' plans, recruitment, and deployment of high-quality human resources (students, faculty members, and support-staff members), and a strong commitment to accountability for student learning through our Assurance of Learning Standards. Accreditation reviews that occur every five years require attention to tracking student success and using this feedback for improvement.

The AACSB Assurance of Learning standards that were adopted in 2003 require schools to articulate clear learning goals or competencies on which students should demonstrate success; to assess student's outcomes on these competencies; and when deficiencies are discovered, implement curricula and instructional reforms to address any identified issues. AACSB-accredited business schools have taken these demands seriously, and like most within disciplines across all of higher education, they are making excellent process in embracing a culture of accountability and

change based on measuring the outcomes assessment of student learning.

To be effective business leaders in today's complex global environment, AACSB recognizes the ever increasing demands for students to enhance their communication skills, critical/analytical/decision-making skills, and interpersonal skills. In turn, AACSB's curricula standards guide schools' content expectations to include course requirements that address such skills, as well as an understanding of, and an appreciation for, cultural diversity in a global context. The standards also provide guidance on business content that must be addressed by all business students.

The era of accountability is under way and improvements are being made, and schools that are not embracing our expectations are being challenged. As AACSB focuses its attention on holding schools accountable for student learning, we recognize this is also a national and international trend across the entire landscape of higher education.

Business schools are often considerable in terms of their size of student body and number of faculty on most collegiate campuses, and despite this size, business curricula is delivered through a wide range of pedagogical methodologies with high degrees of success. To imply broadly that business faculty are not dedicated professionals devoted to supporting high-quality educational experiences to meet the needs of business is inappropriate and counterproductive.

AACSB is very proud of each of its 620 accredited institutions, which are located in 38 countries. Each institution maintains its own unique mission, serves its students and business partners in dedicated and meaningful ways, and continues to respond to the needs of business and students within their community. AACSB-accredited business schools are willing to stand up and be accountable for student learning, and when problems are discovered, they are willing to respond with significant solutions.

Jerry E. Trapnell  
Executive Vice President & Chief Accreditation Officer  
AACSB International  
Tampa, Fla.

#### Comments

Powered by [DISQUS](#)

Add a comment



**12080243** ([change settings](#))


31 comments 68 likes received

Post as 12080243

Showing 3 comments

Sort by  Follow comments: [by e-mail](#) [by RSS](#)

Real-time updating is **enabled**. [\(Pause\)](#)

 **12080243** 1 hour ago

Here's the practical answer to AACSB's representation of accountability. Dr. Ted Cummings, Dean of the School of Business, University of Houston at Clear Lake was the chairman of the AACSB visitation team for the last reaccreditation of the University of Southern Mississippi College of Business. In a sworn deposition, Cummings answered the following question:

"Q. (BY MR. BARGER--attorney) Is the study of the AACSB an appropriate subject of study for an accounting or business professor?

A. (Cummings) No." (Please feel free to call or write for a complete copy of the deposition.)

College of Business and USM administration used Cummings view that the AACSB is not an appropriate subject for study to punish me for my research of the AACSB. One study was, "University and AACSB Diversity" presented at the 2010 American Accounting Association Annual Meeting: <http://commons.aaahq.org/files...>

Several faculty, dean, and president at USM used Cummings view to seek termination of my employment. I kept AACSB, including Trapnell, informed of these events. They/he did nothing to correct Cummings view that the AACSB is not a proper subject of study. The AACSB played a crucial role in the misconduct reported in "University and AACSB Diversity." The misconduct certainly is an explanation for the behavior of Cummings and the AACSB. If the AACSB is not a proper subject of study, how can the AACSB claim accountability?

USM spent approximately \$2.5 million to fire me. They were not successful. If you don't have the resources to fight an assault on your freedom of speech, you will not be as lucky as I was—you will be fired with the AACSB's blessing. Details, including documentation like court depositions, are available at [www.usmnews.net](http://www.usmnews.net). Or contact me directly.

Chauncey M. DePree, Jr., DBA  
 Professor  
 School of Accountancy  
 College of Business  
 University of Southern Mississippi  
 m.depree@usm.edu

 **richardtaborgreene** 3 hours ago


Copyright 2011. All rights reserved.  
 The Chronicle of Higher Education 1255 Twenty-Third St, N

suppose most of the faculty study "business" because they want money  
suppose most of the students study "business" because they want money  
add those two  
what do you get---theft of \$13trillion from us all

yea...real nice people...real nice curricula...real nice research---it is ALL just a cover story one might well  
conclude Efficient markets efficient excuses efficient econ model cover stories, covering

.....greed

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

 **cirencester** 3 hours ago

Wouldn't it be more appropriate to call it Assurance of Competence, no matter how or where the student became competent? What's important is whether or not the individual is capable of performing at an appropriate level, whether that skill was learned at Fleece U or elsewhere..

1 person liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)