

USM-CoB's Recent AACSB Reaccreditation What does it mean?

Many professors of accounting and business throughout the country will tell you that AACSB accreditation is a very expensive waste of time. Administrators, on the other hand, are primarily evaluated on successful accreditation. Students and taxpayers pay for accreditation. Do they know what they are paying for? Are they getting their money's worth?

USM recently announced its College of Business was reaccredited. The following report is an example of how nonsensical accreditation is. Let's reserve an analysis of the millions of dollars it costs USM-CoB to be a member of AACSB for another day. Today, let's focus on the criteria the AACSB uses to evaluate the academic quality of a college of business like USM-CoB. I'll do this from an academic perspective. After all, colleges of business are academic institutions.

A line of research I've taken up is entitled "A General Theory to Test Social Reality." Its purpose is to test the reliability of institutions' and leaders' behavior vis-à-vis their institution's and their leaders' representations. That is, do they keep their promises? Does what they say mesh with what they do? Do they tell the truth?

Administrators' and leaders' power to influence our daily lives deserves scrutiny and, if not in compliance with their organization's and their representations, they should be challenged.

A form of inference for testing social reality is:

$R \rightarrow O$

$\sim O$

Therefore, $\sim R$.

where R is an institution's representation of mission, goal, principle, policy, procedure, code of ethics, or rule and O is observation of a leader's or institution's behavior that reflects on its representation. (" \rightarrow " is read as If R, then O. Tilde, " \sim ", indicates negation.) The form of inference structures valid reasoning—if the premises are true, i.e., well-justified, so too is the conclusion.

Test hypothesis: If the AACSB is a reliable authority on academic quality, then it complies with, and persuades its members to comply with, its standards and advice, for example, the AACSB complies with and persuades USM-CoB not to plagiarize others' words and ideas.

Test proposition: The AACSB complies with, and persuades its members to comply with,

its standards and advice. In our study, which can be viewed in detail (see citation below), AACSB did not comply with its rule to persuade USM-CoB not to plagiarize others' words and ideas. As a matter of fact, Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy was plagiarized by USM-CoB and is still posted on USM-CoB's website. (<http://www.usm.edu/business/academic-integrity-policy>)

The evidence offered in the research cited below demonstrates that it is false that the AACSB complies with, and persuades members to comply with, its standards and advice.

Test conclusion: Therefore, the AACSB is not a reliable authority on academic quality.

The AACSB could advocate AND practice the principles and standards it espouses for public consumption. But it does not practice its principles. Academics understand accrediting agencies like the AACSB are merely exercises in copying other school's accreditation documents.

Here's a test you can undertake quite easily. Ask for details of accreditation visits at your college of business. See how far you get. The AACSB supposedly represents an imprimatur of quality education, but ask how many parents of business students have ever heard of the AACSB or know any details about reports from the AACSB of the schools their children attend.

So, before cheering USM-CoB's successful AACSB reaccreditation, ask what it means. Do you know any more than what AACSB public relations provides in its advertisements?

"A General Theory to Test Social Reality," provides the structure and guidance for actual tests of social reality which, to date, include "Is Accreditation A Reliable Authority On Academic Quality?" and "University and AACSB Diversity." The research reports are free online at the Social Science Research Network. See, <http://ssrn.com/author=397169>