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The contribution of Business Schools to society and the local community

Jerry Forrester
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Business Schools – a negative image?

"Business Schools have been challenged with reports of all kinds of wrongdoing"

Ramanantsoa

"It has been suggested that Business Schools may do more harm than good and that they neglect the human dimension of business and their responsibility to society"

Morsing and Rovira

The economic crisis that took place in 2008 and 2009 set off a (new) move of criticism of Business Schools in the Anglo-Saxon media. Some of the articles suggested that questionable values and methods, learned in MBA programmes, were behind the risky behavior of senior executives.

Fleury and Wood

‘Some observers suggest that Business Schools are partly responsible for the recent business scandals and unethical executive actions which frequent the popular press because they create a ‘profit first mentality’ without any regard for moral considerations’

Losada, Martell and Lozano

Business Schools – socially responsible institutions?

‘Business Schools are currently being asked to increase their awareness of and commitment to societal service’

Irwin, Salskov-Iverson and Morsing

The current context demands that Business Schools ask themselves whether they are also socially responsible institutions

Losada, Martell and Lozano

How are Business Schools responding to these challenges?

- Mission and Strategy
- Curriculum Change
- PRME
- Accreditation
- Community Engagement

There are many Business Schools, as well as other relevant business sectors, who have been reflecting on their responsibilities, vision and mission.

Ramanantsoa

‘A responsible Business School makes social progress its central purpose, through enabling students and staff to contribute significantly to that goal. It makes the integration of social, environmental and ethical considerations into the core strategy and operations of the school’

Bendell

Guiding Principles – Yale School of Management

Our founding mission to educate leaders for business and society has multiple interpretations:

- We educate purposeful leaders who pursue their work with integrity
- We educate leaders for all sectors of society – public, private, nonprofit and entrepreneurial
- We educate leaders who understand complexity within and among societies in an increasingly global world.

In all of these manifestations, the mission is a powerful means of thinking about how business leaders can contribute value to their organisations, communities and society at large

University of Hertfordshire – Graduate Attributes

- Professionalism, employability and enterprise
- Learning and research skills
- Intellectual depth, breadth and adaptability
- Respect for others
- **Social responsibility**

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Curriculum Change

There has been an increase in the % of Business Schools worldwide that require students to take a course following ‘Business and Society’ issues from 34% in 2001 to 69% in 2009.

Aspen Institute Centre for Business Education

As Business Schools provide the education for the next generation of managers, it is increasingly recognised as crucial that Business Schools proactively ensure that graduates are educated in business ethics

Sims, Swanson and Fisher

Why are more Business Schools taking CSR seriously?

‘Students drove this change more than anything.’

Fort

PRME – Principles for Responsible Management Education

The UN PRME initiative of the United Nations is a reaction to a set of challenges that Business Schools are facing today. The initiative formulates six principles which reflect the implications of the societal transformation process for Business Schools and provide guidance to Business Schools in integrating sustainability into teaching, research and operations

UN PRME 2008

PRME started with 40 Business Schools and today the figure is over 500 – including nearly 50 Business Schools in the UK.

Every two years participants have to produce a report charting their progress in adopting the six PRME principles.

‘PRME is the largest formalised effort to integrate responsible business throughout Business School curricula and research’

Escudero

PRME – reports on progress

Integrating Sustainability into Business Schools – Analysis of 100 UN PRME Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports.

Godemann, Herzig, Moon and Powell

This report sets out to address questions about the extent and the ways in which Business Schools that have published UN PRME SIP reports embed sustainability in their teaching, research and operational practices and how they manage and facilitate the integration processes.

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The vast majority of Business Schools which have signed the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education aim to embed sustainability within all areas (research, teaching, operations); however most emphasis is placed on teaching.

Overall, the evidence leads to a qualified rejection to the claim that Business Schools might sign the principles rhetorically but not change much internally. There is substance and some degree of change and development towards the integration of sustainability into Business Schools can be identified.

Overall, the analysis reveals that there is no one ‘recipe’ for the integration of sustainability into Business Schools. Every Business School has chosen its own way to integrate the UN PRME and to report their achievements.

Accreditation Standards

EQUIS

‘The School should have a clear understanding of it’s role as a ‘globally responsible citizen’ and its contribution to ethics and sustainability. This understanding should be reflected in the Schools mission, strategy and activities. There should be evidence that the School’s contribution is reflected in its regular activities, covering education, research, interactions with businesses and managers, community outreach and its own operation.’

Accreditation Standards

AACSB – new standard

‘The School must demonstrate a commitment to address, engage and respond to current and emerging social responsibility issues through its policies, procedures, curricula, research and/or outreach activity.’

Community Engagement

Examples:

Hertfordshire Business School
London Business School
Nottingham University Business School
Newcastle University Business School

Hertfordshire Business School – Social Enterprise Unit

The Unit exists to get staff and students engaged in voluntary activity. We can offer assistance, advice and consultancy on marketing, finance, project management and other disciplines involved in the management of people and projects.

If you're running a busy voluntary or other third sector organisation and need some help – can we assist?

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London Business School

At London Business School we believe it’s important to give something back to the community in which we love and work. The School supports volunteering activity by staff, faculty and students in Westminster, across London and throughout the UK.

The NUBS Community Engagement Programme

This volunteering programme is a joint initiative between the Business School, active communities and local businesses and community organisations. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from any year of study can take part in a range of different volunteering activities as part of this programme.

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Newcastle University Business School

Undergraduate business projects – helping your organisation

- Students have undertaken real-life consultancy projects with businesses, charities and organisations across the region as part of the final stages of their Business Management or joint honours Marketing and Management undergraduate degree.
- With the project representing 40% of their final year mark, it attracts highly dedicated students, whilst allowing them to put into practice the lessons learnt throughout their time at the Business School by providing free practical advice to business.

ENACTUS

An international non-profit organisation that works with leaders in business and higher education to mobilise university students to make a difference in their communities while developing skills to become socially responsible business leaders. Participating students form teams on their university campuses and apply business concepts to develop outreach projects that improve the quality of life and standard of living of people in need.

Engaging with small firms in the community

A new government initiative – the development of an ABS Small Business Charter for Business Schools in the UK.

Sixteen important steps for responsible Business Schools

These include:

1. Clarifying the social purpose of the institution.
2. Upgrade existing curricula and pedagogy to include teaching on social, environment & ethical issues.
3. Encourage research projects with solid, environmental and ethical themes.
4. Incorporating solid environmental and ethical expertise into recruiting faculty and research students.
5. Support students and alumni to organise and promote learning and action on these issues
6. Host events, reports and papers to stimulate debate on these issues.
7. Encourage and support staff to engage with issues affecting the local community
8. Ask departmental experts to lead staff training on these issues

Bendell

Further reading

Business Schools and their contribution to society.

MORSING & ROVIRA

SAGE PUBLICATIONS 2011

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Questions and Discussion