

Title: Reflection and Reinvention of Faculty and Student Interaction

Abstract: Faculty and student interaction lies at the heart of the educational experience. This interaction is evolving as the composition of the professoriate and student body changes. Traditionally, the professoriate consisted mainly of tenured professors, this model is changing to increasingly include contingent faculty (Ginsberg, 2011). The role of the student is also evolving. Traditionally college students were viewed as apprentice learners needing an education. Today, students are increasingly viewed as customers whose needs are to be satisfied (Gerber, 2014). Given the changing composition of the professoriate and student body, adjustments in the education model need to be made so to effectively serve both constituencies.

Key Words: Faculty, Student, Reinvention

## Introduction

Within business schools, the interaction between a faculty member and student is an important component to the educational experience. This interaction is where learning is facilitated, and the facilitation has been impacted by the evolution of business schools. Many factors are influencing business schools as they continuously adjust to changes in their external environment and internal constituencies. I shall discuss the exponential growth of business schools and how they are now reacting to market pressures. These pressures are causing changes to the faculty and student body and ultimately how the two groups interact.

## Theoretical Foundation

The growth of U.S. business schools began in the 1950's (Simons, 2013). As their graduate and undergraduate enrollments soared, business education became a business itself (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Wilson & Thomas, 2011). Anchored within universities, the presence of business schools provided a relatively new subject discipline compared to the traditional content taught in colleges. This often created tension between the business school and the university. On the one hand the university valued the additional revenue and enrollment but on the other hand, business schools didn't always fit in well with the larger university (Augier & March, 2011). The alliance between the university and its business school worked well during times of growth and when there was sufficient funding. However, time marched on and pressures on universities began to build. These pressures impacted higher education in general and business schools in particular.

Market pressures on higher education have been building. One of those pressures is a decline in public funding for colleges and universities. States face competing demands for their

financial resources and as spending on healthcare and other services expanded, spending on higher education declined (Gerber, 2014). This decrease in funding comes at a time when universities are continually called upon to update and expand their academic, athletic and student oriented facilities. This has forced universities to go in search of additional sources of money to supplement their budgets. Increasing revenue from student tuition is one source of income, and business schools remain a popular and excellent source for student recruitment (Gerber, 2014). Universities are also leveraging their professor's academic research and intellectual property (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) to help fill the funding gap.

There are also new entrants into the higher education market and this leads to greater competition. Traditional universities are facing increased pressures from for-profit institutions. These for-profit universities exist because of the new methods of instruction made possible by technology. These changes mean that courses are now routinely taught through distance learning by faculty in an online format (Gerber, 2014). For-profit institutions began to focus on the niche of part-time students who are often full-time working adults. Many of these students are returning to school after years in the workplace. This is a market segment that traditional schools had not focused on (Tierney, 2011). These for-profit institutions now compete with traditional universities for students and the for-profit schools do not have the same expenses that are required of maintaining a traditional college campus. Market factors are also influencing the composition of the faculty.

University faculties are evolving. Traditionally, universities have relied upon a full-time, permanent, tenured or tenure track professoriate. With this model, faculty create their own syllabi and courses, control their own research agenda, and participate in the decision making of the institution (Ginsberg, 2011). The composition of faculty is changing due to these new

market pressures put on universities. Private, public and for-profit institutions are now increasingly relying on a new mix of instructors that provide increased flexibility and lower cost. Today, more than two-thirds of college instructors are not on the tenure track and are hired on a year-to-year contract (Bok, 2017). Contingent faculty can be fired at any time, and are less expensive. An oversupply of Ph.D.'s provides an ample number of people able to teach on annual contracts (Ginsberg, 2011). The pressures on colleges to be fiscally responsible and flexible has caused them to change their faculty mix and to give them more options at a lower cost structure. Terms such as 'educational entrepreneurialism', and 'academic capitalism' reflect the university's engagement in market-like behaviors (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This corporatization model is a response to the need for increased flexibility and lower costs in higher education.

With changes in the professoriate, there comes changes in who does the job components associated with being a professor. With fewer full-time, permanent faculty, faculty are experiencing less control over the curriculum and course development. Greater reliance on part-time and contingent instructors has impacted course delivery and curriculum development. There may now be a separation between who develops the course and writes the curriculum with who teaches the course. These factors 'unbundle' the job of the professor to other professionals who specialize in one component of the professor's job. (Gerber, 2014). Professional course writers develop the courses so that part-time and contingent faculty can step in and teach courses. These changes influence the educational process. Also changing, is the composition and expectations of the student body.

The students that are served by higher education are also more complex. There are dichotomies in the student population. Universities may no longer primarily serve traditional

undergraduates. They also serve part-time working adults returning to school for their first degree or subsequent degree. Students may be working towards completing a certificate or other professional qualification, with no intention of completing a college degree.

Students have for generations, sought an education in order to improve their lives. However education is now being viewed more as a private investment than a public good. Students invest in their own education with the expectation that the time and money spent in school will pay off financially and personally. They assume that additional education will translate into better job opportunities or a better work/life balance. How students are viewed by their universities is also changing. Universities, needing tuition revenue, are increasingly viewing students as consumers or customers of the university (Gerber, 2014). This notion has many implications. Students may no longer be viewed as apprentice learners, but as consumers for whom programs are designed.

Together, these pressures are changing the nature of management education. A core interface of education is the association between the professor and student. Market forces are putting pressure on educational institutions to provide programs that students want, and deliver the curriculum in a less expensive and flexible format. The university, professoriate and student body are evolving. I am interested in discussing how the consequences of these changes will inform best practices in teaching and create a more dynamic learning environment that reflects the needs of both professor and student.

### Session Description

In this roundtable session I will discuss the changes that are taking place in academia regarding students and professors and gather feedback on how different business schools manage

this important educational interface. The first ten minutes of the presentation will discuss the changes outlined earlier in this paper. After the context is established, we will address the impact of these changes on the educational experience. I will engage the participants with discussion questions. For example, how does a business school's need to be more market driven impact teaching? How does viewing students as customers (compared to apprentice learners) change the educational environment? I hope to gain insight into how other academics view these changes in higher education. These are important questions that can have an impact on the student's educational experience.

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