

Diving into the Dean Pool

Meet four new administrators who've just taken on the task of managing a thriving business school. Each brings to the job a unique set of credentials, and with it, a fresh outlook on what it means to be a dean.

by Tricia Bisoux

The newest class of deans is diving headfirst into the whirlpool of responsibilities that accompany managing a business school. They are strategizing, globalizing, amortizing, publicizing, and visualizing in those spare moments between the advisory board meeting and the lunch with the student body president. They are adopting new technologies, emphasizing ethics, integrating curricula, and sometimes even achieving the impossible to keep their schools moving in the right direction.

The dean's role has perhaps never been so extensive, so intense, or so integral to a school's ultimate success. After all, business schools are increasingly being run like businesses, which means that their deans are serving as both scholars *and* academic CEOs.

During this time of transition for business schools, management education is experiencing what *BusinessWeek* magazine calls a "boomlet" of new deans with extensive careers and experience outside academia. Meet four new administrators whose curricula vitae reflect a nontraditional path to the dean's office. Although they each have different visions for their schools, all agree on one important point: It just may be the most remarkable time to be a business school dean.

Brian Barefoot
President
Babson College
Wellesley,
Massachusetts



The Financier

Ask Brian Barefoot, inaugurated last September as the new president of Babson College, if he ever thought he'd return to academia after 30 years on Wall Street, and his answer is immediate: "Not a chance in a million years." After all, Barefoot admits that his own motives for earning his MBA from Pace University in 1970 were less than scholarly.

"I wasn't interested in the MBA to further my knowledge. I was interested in getting the credentials," he says without apology. "I didn't learn anything, to tell you the truth. I was not by any reasonable definition a committed student. I got my MBA at night, and I did it as quickly as I could. I was much more interested in a career on Wall Street than in academics."

But even he has to admit that this seems to be the right place and the right time for him to take Babson's helm. "Babson College is all about business and innovative approaches to education. These are the factors that have differentiated Babson for a long time," says Barefoot, who himself is an alumnus of the college. "I really don't think anyone else would have hired me for this job. But at Babson, I know enough to make a difference."

Barefoot's 30-year career in financial services includes tenures as an executive vice president at PaineWebber and senior managing director at Merrill Lynch & Co. He has served on the governing board and board of trustees at Babson College and has received its Cruickshank Alumni Leadership Award for his contributions. Now, Barefoot finds

himself far from Wall Street as the president of Babson, even though he has never taught a single course in finance. He is part of a growing group of corporate leaders interested in the *business* of academia.

"I met a historian who wanted to know more about the administrative side of the academic equation, so he got an MBA and became the business manager of a small school and is now the president of a university. What he loves about the university is not the academic side of it, but the challenges of running it like a business," says Babson, who views his own position similarly. "I like academia, too, but I enjoy a different aspect of it."

The fact that more business schools have become true businesses explains why he and others like him are where they are now, he adds. "Colleges and universities have gotten bigger, and running them requires more business management skills. If you start out in academia, you're a junior professor, associate professor, and then a full professor. Then you might become a dean. But you've never had profit-and-loss responsibilities, and you've never been trained to think long-term for an organization," he says. "You're trained to think of what you want a program to be, but not about what it costs to get it there."

As president of Babson, Barefoot has three main goals. First, he plans to create a more integrated curriculum. Second, he hopes the school can change the way business defines entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship can be about conceiving, promoting, and implementing good ideas throughout an organization, not just about starting a business, he says. "Most people think of entrepreneurship and think of a startup company," Barefoot points out. "We're trying to get people to think entrepreneurially even within large corporations."

Finally, Barefoot hopes that the management skills he has learned on Wall Street will help create a culture at Babson that's less averse to change, more willing to take risks. However, he realizes that such a transformation will not happen overnight.

"Academic institutions often place a large emphasis on process and not much emphasis on results. As a result, the decision-making process is slower, it's very consensus-driven, it's risk-averse. In fact, you couldn't pick an industry—if you want to consider education an industry—that is more at the opposite end of the spectrum from the world on Wall Street," says Barefoot.

"I've learned, however, that you have to adapt to your environment if you're going to be successful. You must be willing to make compromises while you work on trying to change the culture. Presumably, that's why you were hired in

the first place,” he says. “That’s where multiple experiences come in handy, because I’ve observed what it took to get things done in different companies.”

In the end, reacting quickly to a changing environment is at the heart of business, something business schools need to incorporate more fully into their curricula and business processes, he concludes. “Business schools say, ‘We’ve been doing this for 100 years. We have Latin in our logos,’” says Barefoot. “But the world is changing. If you’re going to be an innovator, you can’t benchmark against something that has already been done. You’ve got to look to something that doesn’t exist yet,” he says. “It’s my job to create an environment where we can decide what innovations will offer our students a better education and give them more capability. Then, I’ll rely on Babson’s academic community to deliver.”



Gail K. Naughton

Dean

San Diego State
University College
of Business
Administration

San Diego,
California

The Entrepreneur

If there’s anything Gail Naughton has learned in her years as a biotech entrepreneur, it’s how to change to meet the times, rather than to expect the times to conform to expectations. Deep-rooted complacency, she says, is the beginning of the end of any enterprise, including a business school.

“We all have to rethink our businesses on a very real-time basis now,” says Naughton. “If you look at the Fortune 500 companies of 1990 versus those of today, you’ll see that many of the big players have slipped because they didn’t continuously look at their companies and ask, ‘Do we have the right strategy for today?’”

“Businesses need good strategic thinkers. I don’t believe business schools traditionally have taught strategy as well as they could. I’m not talking about writing business plans. I’m talking about knowing all the real-life challenges of running a successful business.”

—Gail K. Naughton

Naughton, who began her role as dean of SDSU’s business school last August, believes that raising this question is no less crucial for business schools. “Many business schools suffer from a general complacency, a mindset that has absolutely transferred into some businesses. I don’t feel that any of us can afford to think like that anymore,” says Naughton. “We can’t be complacent. We have to develop a culture in all schools—and particularly in schools of business—where we challenge our current thinking and really look toward the future with a longer-range vision. We can’t assume that our offerings and training will be suitable today and tomorrow just because they were five years ago.”

Naughton’s first interest was actually not business, but science. After she received her Ph.D. in the medical sciences from New York University in the late 1980s, she was an assistant professor of biology at New York University Medical Center from 1985 to 1987. In her research, she made a discovery involving “bioreactors,” mechanisms that simulate body conditions to spark the growth of tissue. That discovery led her to start her own company, Advanced Tissue Sciences, in 1987, and begin to procure government grants for the project. Naughton now holds more than 70 U.S. and foreign patents in tissue engineering. In 2000, she was the first woman to win the Intellectual Property Owners Association’s National Inventor of the Year award.

Even so, she felt no number of patents or awards gave her an edge in the business world. She knew that if she wanted to promote Advanced Tissue Sciences in the biotech industry, she needed management skills. So, in the late 1990s, she entered the executive degree program at UCLA and earned her executive MBA in 2001.

“If you’re a scientist by training, you’re often pigeon-holed,” she explains. “Even though I was president of a company, I was still considered a scientist. I also realized that I had very little business exposure to anything outside biotech. I wanted to be exposed to a group of business leaders, so I chose an executive program that had a peer group in which I would be the only person from the biotech industry.”

Once Advanced Tissue Sciences was up and running, Naughton installed qualified business managers to oversee its day-to-day operations and was looking for her next challenge when SDSU approached her about the dean’s position. SDSU’s location in San Diego, the third-largest biotech center in the country, and its emphasis on entrepreneurship and

global studies made it the perfect next step for her, she says. She also finds that her dual-disciplinary background in business and the sciences has special relevance to SDSU's goals to strengthen its ties to the biotech community and promote its offerings to the community.

"If I had been hired to lead a brand-new school that needed to attract faculty and develop coursework, I wouldn't have been the right person," she says. "But SDSU already has strong programs, especially in entrepreneurship and global studies. For instance, we're negotiating now for a Ph.D. in entrepreneurial management. We have a number of MBA programs we offer overseas, particularly in the Pacific Rim. Recently, we added three colleges in Mexico and Latin America to our joint degree program. My role is to help the school expand on those strengths, to meld that with our expertise in entrepreneurial management, and soon, with management programs for the biotech sector. I want to help the school think more creatively, respond more effectively to the San Diego community, and raise awareness about how good San Diego State really is."

Business may once have been considered a discipline separate from the sciences, but that is no longer the case, says Naughton. The principles of business, leadership, and management permeate all fields. It's time business schools make the most of a growing interest among other disciplines to import management education into their own curricula.

To this end, Naughton has initiated a joint degree program in business and the biological and chemical sciences. With the growing importance of biotechnology, she says, scientists will need to be good managers and understand the implications of business on a scientific project. The school also has formed a partnership with Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management in Evanston, Illinois, to offer a certificate in biotechnology. Furthermore, Naughton hopes to continue to put SDSU's focus on the "real issues" of business, rather than "just teaching students how to use Excel spreadsheets." It's important for management education to shake off complacency, she says, and instead, meet business where it lives today to prepare future business leaders.

"Businesses need good strategic thinkers. I don't believe business schools traditionally have taught strategy as well as they could. I'm not talking about writing business plans. I'm talking about knowing all the real-life challenges of running a successful business, from making sure you have the best product out there, to knowing your competition, to knowing the importance of good corporate governance, to making sure that your whole company culture reinforces creativity, ethical behavior, and the willingness to be flexible," says Naughton. "That's not traditional business training."

François Duvergé
Director General
ESCEM
Paris, France



The Civil Servant

François Duvergé's long career in civil service has afforded him rich opportunities to hone two crucial management skills: the arts of negotiation and collaboration. As the newest director general of ESCEM, Duvergé plans to put those skills to good use.

Building a spirit of collaboration and unified culture is, in fact, one of the primary challenges before him, says Duvergé. Founded in 1998, ESCEM is the result of a merger between two schools, the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Poitiers and Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Tours. The number of students, faculty, and administrative challenges essentially doubled when the merger took place, says Duvergé.

"ESCEM comprises two campuses in two distinct regions of France. We need to improve our openness to the local and regional economic environments of both campuses," Duvergé explains. "We must be careful that the cultures formerly identified with each campus are gradually replaced by a new, single ESCEM group culture."

Unifying the goals of a diverse community is nothing new to Duvergé. He has pursued that role since early in his education. In the mid-1970s, after studying economics and information technology, he decided to shift his attention toward issues of the body politic.

"I edged away from the economic models that had originally attracted me and turned more toward social issues so that I could better understand the real mechanisms of society," says Duvergé. "The social sciences were less precise, but often closer to reality than the sciences of economics. I was attracted to the public sector through a desire to tackle problems of common interest, rather than to pursue a high-flying career."

He continued his studies at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), a French institution targeted to educating senior officials. Duvergé went on to found the current French government tourist office, and then established and directed a consulting firm specializing in tourist development in rural France. He served many years as a senior official in France's Ministry of Tourism and the Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry. He has negotiated contractual relationships between the state and private sector; served as a liaison between 183 local and regional chambers and state authorities; and coordinat-

ed remote teams to promote tourism for France in more than 30 countries.

Such varied experiences in the complex structures of government have instilled in him an appreciation for what it takes to manage a large organization such as a business school, he says. For Duvergé, a good manager is not an authority figure, but an effective team-builder with his staff and faculty. “The role of a manager is based on the delegation of responsibilities to collaborators,” says Duvergé. “The role of a network leader requires a strong disposition for teaching, communicating, and the ability to direct energies. This can only be acquired through great personal involvement in the work and a reputation for ‘straight talking.’”

The only way to effect change among numerous and far-flung groups such as a student body, alumni base, faculty, and other shareholders, believes Duvergé, is to be a master listener, collaborator, and communicator. “My career has often taken me back and forth between public and private sector experiences,” he says. “In France, until recently, a career such as mine was considered very unusual. Nowadays, however, we recognize the richness that diverse responsibilities can bring. My experience gives a more global overview of the different tasks that managing a group such as ESCEM requires, and I feel better equipped to deal with them than if I had been an academic and worked my way through the university system.”

Although bringing two distinct campuses under the aegis of a single institution may seem as simple as changing their names, it is not something that can be done by decree, says Duvergé. “This progression must take place steadily and without being imposed through authority,” he says. “It’s a process that will take time and occur through each individual’s experience.”

Duvergé also lists among his current challenges his plans to diversify ESCEM’s curriculum, develop its research, and find ways to set the school apart as a resource center for businesses. To accomplish these goals, he believes it is important to regard ESCEM as both academic institution and business.

“A school such as ESCEM is now a veritable academic business that must progress academically while still respecting the importance of financial management and profitability— aspects that faculty do not always champion. In the past, schools have gone under because of an overly academic director who had not fully integrated the need for financial management or because of an administrative director who could not win the confidence of his faculty, without whom a school cannot survive,” he says. “At ESCEM, I think we have found a fair balance.”

Tom Campbell

Dean

University of
California at
Berkeley

Haas School
of Business

Berkeley, California



The Senator

Don’t typecast Tom Campbell as a politician. As a former business law professor at Stanford Law School, he considers himself a teacher and academic above all else. Even during his seven years with the U.S. Congress, including two years as a California state senator, he continued to teach a 7 a.m. constitutional law class.

Campbell’s assumption of the deanship at Haas in May of 2002, after Laura Tyson’s departure to London Business School, certainly helped him to unite his political experience, his talent for teaching, and his legal expertise. His political and legal background, he believes, made him a front-runner for the position. And, as he sees it, it couldn’t be a better time to be the head of a business school.

“This time is absolutely unprecedented,” he says. “The challenge to business and free market economics is comparable to what the law profession went through after Watergate. After the recent corporate scandals, it’s a time when people are asking, ‘Why?’ Why does the economic system that seemed to be so victorious at the end of the Cold War now seem so fatally flawed? I’m becoming dean of a business school at exactly the time when people are asking, ‘Is there something to be learned, or are business schools simply teaching people to learn to do what the scandals have shown?’”

Campbell is determined to change the public’s perception of business. “My goal is to make it clear that there is tremendous virtue in the Western economic system, that it produces a huge amount of good. The cynic who says, ‘They all do it,’ is just wrong. I hate that phrase. I heard that enough in politics. They don’t all do it. We want that to be understood; we want students to learn the skills to be productive.” More important, says Campbell, he wants the public to know that there is value in business, not just the scandals in the news.

Campbell’s political career has taught him a few important lessons about management. For instance, a good politician, like a good manager, must understand the interests of different groups and attempt to spend more time moving toward shared goals and less time focusing on differences. Campbell

has overseen a staff of 22 as a Congressman and a staff of 600 as the director of the FTC Bureau of Competition. Attending to the needs of and interactions among multiple constituencies, he says, is key to getting things done in a large organization, be it in government or a business school.

“Politics helps you learn to work with different groups. You’ve got so many outside constituencies—the electorate, your political party, community groups, the business and labor groups—that are a significant part of your Congressional district,” says Campbell. “As a dean, you also have to divide your time into outside and inside activity. The more time you can spend outside the school the better, because the dean has the one role that no one else can fill, which is to represent the school in outside settings. If you’re very good, you can have influence far beyond your own campus.”

Campbell sees the students as his most important constituency. To make sure of their satisfaction—or to learn of their dissatisfaction—Campbell holds twice-monthly town hall meetings with students to hear what they’re thinking.

During these meetings, says Campbell, “MBA students hear undergraduate students hear Ph.D. students. I’ve gone to more student receptions than any other type of function. I also have lunch or dinner with the second-year MBAs and the weekend MBAs. For the town hall meetings, no one will tell you that you’ve got to go through channels; nobody screens you out. In exchange, I get to hear what the students have to say.”

Another primary goal Campbell has for Haas is to broaden its curriculum. Up to this point, Haas School of Business has had a reputation for entrepreneurship. This is all well and good, Campbell notes, but he’d rather be known as a source for a well-rounded, broadly based business education. To accomplish this goal, he plans to expand Haas’ faculty by nearly 50 percent, from 65 members to 90.

“I don’t want Haas to be viewed as a niche school. I want it to be known that students can get a marketing or organizational education here, as well as an entrepreneurial or technological education, which are our known specialties,” he says. “But for students to have a greater variety of electives, we need to have more professors with more depth. We need to have a critical mass of excellent faculty in each of the fields so we can generate student interest and gain a reputation in each of those fields. That will only come if we go broad and deep.”

In the end, says Campbell, political service was a great interest for him, but academia is still his passion. He always knew he’d return to education, and this knowledge helped him stand by his principles when voting in Congress, even when he knew a particular vote might hurt, if not end, his political career.

“As a politician, you have to be prepared to cast a vote that is hurtful to your political career. You can’t expect to go through a political life and always have every vote fit your best judgment *and* be helpful to your political career,” says Campbell. “When those two things diverge,” he adds with a laugh, “it always helps to have another job.” 