

MBA Research Leads to New Symposium on Implementing Curriculum Redesign

In early 2010, a three-year study of the future of MBA education by Srikant M. Datar, David A. Garvin, and Patrick Cullen resulted in a book titled "**Rethinking the MBA: Business Education at the Crossroads.**" The book examined the many ways in which business schools can redesign their curriculum to meet the opportunities and challenges facing MBA programs. Since then, Srikant Datar and David Garvin have been working with Patrick Cullen, now assistant vice president of knowledge and service integration at AACSB International, to create new services that focus on the implementation of MBA curriculum redesign. All of which comes at a time when there is an increasing interest in reviewing MBA curricula due to changing needs of students and the broader society, as well the requirements of business sectors that employ MBA graduates.

The first event of its kind to be offered by AACSB International, "Redesigning the MBA: A Curriculum Development Symposium" will help schools think strategically about their MBA programs in terms of purpose, positioning, and program design. Facilitated by Srikant Datar and David Garvin of Harvard Business School, the symposium will focus on the details of curriculum development and the implementation challenges that surround it. The content is based on cutting-edge research and best practices and will examine a range of innovative approaches to curriculum redesign. The symposium's format will allow business school deans, faculty, program directors, and administrators to learn from each other by providing a collaborative environment.

At the heart of the symposium are five sessions that will provide workshop environments in which to create courses or longer programs that will help students to develop critical knowledge and skills in recognized areas of need.

Gaining a Global Perspective:

- Identifying, analyzing, and practicing how best to manage when faced with economic, institutional, and cultural differences across countries.

Developing Leadership Skills:

- Understanding the responsibilities of leadership; developing alternative approaches to inspiring, influencing, and guiding others; learning such skills as conducting a performance review and giving critical feedback; and recognizing the impact of one's actions and behaviors on others.

Acting Creatively and Innovatively:

- Finding and framing problems; collecting, synthesizing, and distilling large volumes of ambiguous data; engaging in generative and lateral thinking; and constantly experimenting and learning.

Critical Thinking and Communication Skills:

- Developing and articulating logical, coherent, and persuasive arguments; marshalling supporting evidence; and distinguishing fact from opinion.

Experiential Learning:

- Influencing others and getting things done in the context of hidden agendas, unwritten rules, political coalitions, and competing points of view.

The symposium will be heavily oriented to helping schools implement change. A number of challenges associated with implementing curriculum redesign will be addressed, such as:

- Differentiation strategies
- Opportunities for specialization
- Relationship between re-engineering program architecture and changing the substance of the curriculum
- Mobilizing and motivating faculty and staff
- Experimenting with new pedagogies, which often involve team projects, group exercises, laboratories
- Broadening the faculty

The symposium will be held on March 21–22, 2011 in Tampa, Florida, USA. For more information on the symposium's content and registration, visit: aacsb.edu/mbasymposium.