

AACSB Task Force Calls for Enhanced Globalization Strategy and Action

Management education is at a historic inflection point. For all the attention to globalization thus far, business schools around the world remain at the verge of experiencing its true transformative impact on their structures and strategies. Such was the message delivered to attendees at the 2011 AACSB Deans Conference by representatives of the AACSB Globalization of Management Education Task Force.

The plenary session, featuring a panel of Task Force representatives, coincided with the advance release of the Task Force's comprehensive report, *The Globalization of Management Education: Changing International Structures, Adaptive Strategies, and the Impact on Institutions*. Panelists included Task Force chair Bob Bruner, dean and Charles C. Abbott Professor of Business Administration at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, as well as other task force members; Arnoud De Meyer, president of Singapore Management University, and Hildy Teegen, dean of the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business. Ben Wildavsky, who is widely known in higher education circles for authoring *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Shaping the World*, served as the moderator of the session and introduced the discussion by framing some of the parallel themes found in the broader realm of higher education.

According to the Globalization of Management Education Task Force, business schools have just begun to realize the full potential of the opportunities presented. Bruner opened the panel discussion by introducing the report and summarizing some of the key studies underlying the report's findings. These studies, he noted, reinforced the notion that all schools, "from the most prominent... to the most localized, need to stretch further" with regard to globalization. De Meyer elaborated on this point, explaining that the task force is not intending to "argue that every business school has to become a global business school," but that he does believe "business schools have no choice but positioning themselves vis-a-vis globalization."

De Meyer named several drivers of this imperative, characterizing the industry as being at a "tipping point" that will redefine the value provided by business schools. "Most of the students that we currently are training in some way or another will have to live in a world where the competition comes from outside [the country], or the collaboration inside the organization will be with somebody from outside [the country]," he noted. The landscape of educational providers is also changing, with countries that previously experienced a brain drain now able to "offer competitive packages for faculty to return,... not only financially, but also the research environment or a good environment to work in."

Teegen explained that while the early chapters in the report focus on broad globalization trends in the industry, the report then goes on to explore "the range of ways that schools are involved in the process

of globalizing.” She noted the need for business schools, like the firms they study, to resist tendencies to jump on bandwagons focused on hot markets or to engage in an ethnocentric approach to operations abroad. Rather, it is important for schools to clearly connect “the panoply of activities that they’re involved in with their core strategy” and to undertake “a sober assessment of their core competences.”

Panelists also addressed the strong message in the report that schools need to pay additional attention to appropriately globalizing their curricula. They noted the agreement among the task force members that there was no “global canon,” but rather that business schools should focus on giving students the frameworks and paradigms that will allow them to ask the right questions as they face unfamiliar business contexts, and to think about cross-border differences in a meaningful and consistent way.

Throughout the discussion, the three panelists also identified several areas particularly in need of additional focus. Teegen noted the need for adequately prepared faculty and professional staff. De Meyer noted the difficulties schools face in assessing student learning outcomes such as the ability of students to ask the right questions, as noted earlier, but also the students’ openness and adaptability in new environments. Additionally Bruner stressed the need for business school leaders to come together as an industry to incorporate heightened performance expectations into accreditation standards and to “advocate the kind of world in which there is more mobility for institutions, for students, and for ideas.”

For information on obtaining a copy of the report, please visit the [AACSB Globalization of Management Education Resource Center](#). Complimentary electronic copies and a 10% discount on print copies are available exclusively to individuals at AACSB member schools via the [AACSB Exchange](#).