Southwestern University

Department of Economics and Business

Re-envisioning Business Programs in Liberal Arts Worlds:

2006 Summit Proceeding & Outcomes

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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS & BUSINESS

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Overview

*"The best way to judge a business program is by
judging the students they produce."*

– Summit Participant, pre-work response

Given the ever-changing face of business in today's global economy, the discourse on the form and function of business education has grown in both the academic community and popular press. Questions regarding *how*, *what*, and *who* should we be teaching in business programs continue to provoke much debate. These conversations, however, typically focus on MBA and executive-level programs, excluding the increasingly popular undergraduate programs in business. Yet, the same basic questions being raised of MBA programs are just as applicable, if not more so, to undergraduate business programs who face unique dynamics and serve a different population of students than do graduate programs in business.

Undergraduate business programs at liberal arts institutions pose particularly interesting challenges for educators, as they work to bridge two different educational approaches: 1) the management education field's dominant paradigm which studies and advocates traditional forms of business education, meaning technical functional skills building, siloed (rather than integrated) course studies, and quantitatively measurable outcomes and, 2) the liberal arts paradigm, which promotes a more integrated and inquiry-based form of education that is less technical in nature and more broadly based.

To further explore what business education in liberal arts institutions could and should look like, Southwestern University convened a national dialogue which brought together multiple stakeholders, including teacher-scholars, administrators, and business practitioners. The three-day summit held November 8-10, 2006, included 24 individuals for a face-to-face dialogue, with an additional 41 participants contributing ideas and questions virtually to the conversation. The summit was made possible by a generous grant from the James S. Kemper Foundation, an organization that has long believed in the virtues of having liberal arts values in the business world.

The following document frames the summit's proceedings, including details about the dialogic process in which participants engaged, major outcomes from their conversations, and questions and ideas that were raised that could generate future inquiry.   The summit and this document represent only a beginning to this conversation however. The report concludes with next steps and specific ways that others can engage with us to continue exploring what it means to have business programs in liberal arts environments.

We hope that you will join us as we move our dialogue and action steps forward.

To join our electronic mailing dedicated to this continued conversation please contact the moderator:

Dr. A.J. Senchack (senchack@southwestern.edu).

Summit Background

Summit Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the summit was to bring together multiple stakeholders, including teacher-scholars, administrators, and business practitioners, to explore how to improve on and innovate within existing liberal arts business programs. Using a dialogic process, which we will discuss in more detail below, we aimed to create a space where participants could collectively explore the myriad of ideas around business and liberal arts that we each bring to the table. Our goal was not to necessarily reach – nor to even seek – a one-size-fits-all prescriptive answer regarding how we should teach business in the liberal arts. Rather, our process aimed to name and describe what we collectively see as goals and methods for creating "great" business programs in liberal arts schools. Within the overarching, guiding question, **"What is the relationship between business programs and liberal arts institutions?"** the summit was designed to address additional questions such as:

- How can liberal arts colleges best integrate business programs into other activities and programs on their campuses?
- What would a revised curriculum look like if it integrated business and liberal education?
- What is the best way to prepare undergraduate students for careers in business?

Summit Context

Our dialogue was situated in the larger context of two other ongoing conversations: 1) management education and 2) liberal arts education. The management education field's dominant paradigm studies and advocates traditional forms of business education, meaning technical functional skills building, siloed (rather than integrated) course studies, and quantitatively measurable outcomes. The liberal arts paradigm, on the other hand, promotes a more integrated and inquiry-based form of education that is less technical in nature and more broadly based*. Some business educators, deans, university presidents, liberal arts educated business practitioners, and visionaries are increasingly exploring what it means to bridge these two educational approaches – so that graduates not only have a grounding in the traditional business areas, but are also well-rounded individuals who are capable of being engaged and productive citizens across multiple contexts. This summit sought to extend these emerging conversations about how we can blend both the best of the traditional business preparation with the best of a liberal arts educational approach.

> * For a more extensive analysis of the meaning of liberal arts, which informed our dialogue, please refer to Dr. AJ Senchack's discussion paper "On Liberal Arts Education in the Business Curriculum- Part I: A Discussion Paper for the 2006 Summit on the Liberal Arts in Business," available in Appendix A or **http://www.southwestern.edu/laab**.
>
> Essentially, the paper 1) suggests an established, operational definition of liberal arts education that is inclusive of business education, 2) outlines briefly what some of the learning outcomes of a blended curriculum might include, 3) sketches out several of the conceptual approaches or themes being offered as a way to blend a liberal and business education, and 4) describes existing courses that blend the two areas. As the paper implies, we are working from the assumption that business programs do have a role in liberal arts institutions because success in today's business world requires multidisciplinary skills and perspectives and liberal arts institutions are ideally designed to create such graduates.

Summit Design and Process

## Participants: Bringing the Whole System Together

A unique, 'whole systems' approach informed the design of the summit. While other dialogues have brought together individual stakeholder groups around the topic of business and liberal arts (i.e., 2003 Elmhurst College's Liberal Arts in Business Education Symposium, which brought together business leaders and college presidents to talk about liberal arts education[1]), the Southwestern University summit sought to broaden the conversation to include the multiple stakeholders who are impacted by, and invested in, the future of business and liberal arts programs. As such, representatives from four different stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the summit, namely: 1) teacher-scholars; 2) administrators; 3) business students; and 4) business practitioners.

The rationale behind bringing these various groups together is that having multiple stakeholders in the room raises a fuller spectrum of perspectives, insights and questions than if any one of these groups met alone. For example, much of the current business-in-liberal arts curricula has been created with little or no input from successful business practitioners. Bringing their voice to the table helps ground conversations around business education content and liberal arts pedagogy in the real-world experiences and needs of the business world. Likewise, business faculty, administrators, and students each bring a distinctive viewpoint on what is needed for a successful business and liberal arts program – increasing the range of ideas and possibilities that are on the table to be explored.

While the blended systemic perspectives generate richer ideas than single stakeholder groups, our summit system should not be accepted as fully balanced or statistically representational of liberal arts realities. For example, students, women, and racial minorities were unfortunately underrepresented. Religious voices were not systematically included. While the ideas represented here generate a powerful platform for integrated dialogue between several core groups, the process will continue to benefit from diverse perspectives.

For a list of participants and the breakdown of participants by stakeholder groups, see Appendix A.

Figure 1: Face-to Face-Participants
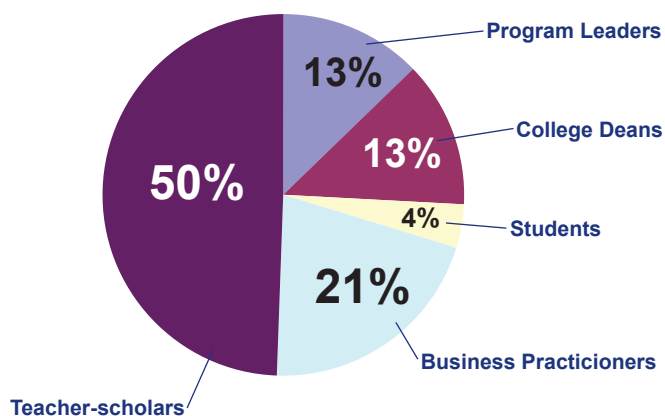
Figure 2: Total Participants (*including virtual*)

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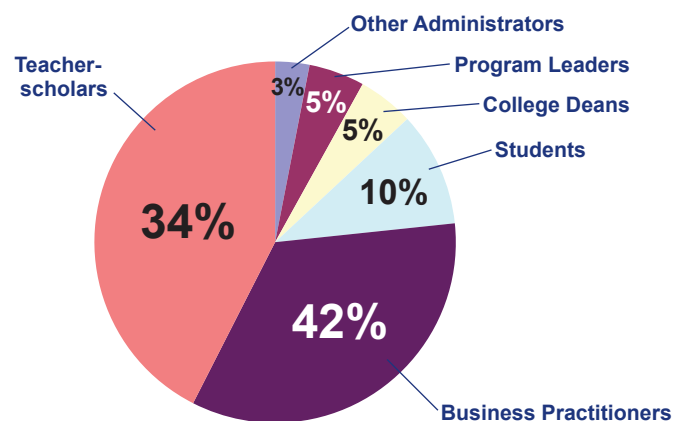
[1] For more details about this symposium, see: **http://www.cic.edu/projects_services/infoservices/business.asp**.

Summit Pre-Work

The real work of the summit did not begin on November 8, but rather many months prior. In June 2006, all participants (virtual and face-to-face) were asked to respond to a set of pre-summit questions:

1. What <u>competencies</u> should all undergraduate liberal arts student be expected to have as they graduate?
2. How do these competencies translate to a <u>liberal arts business major</u>?
3. What should business majors at liberal arts colleges be <u>capable</u> of upon graduation (three separate areas interest us particularly: *core skills, bodies of knowledge, base of experience*)?
4. How should liberal arts business programs be <u>taught</u>, e.g., program objectives, teaching approaches, courses?
5. What kinds of <u>learning experiences</u> should be occurring?
6. What are the <u>criteria</u> we should be using for a *great* liberal arts <u>business program</u>? For great liberally educated <u>business students</u>?
7. Where do <u>best practices</u> happen today and what makes it a "best practice"?

Twenty-six participants (14 face-to-face participants and 12 virtual participants) replied with their reflections to these questions. Dr. Mary Grace Neville, Summit Program Chair and Lindsey Godwin, Summit Writer and Editor, synthesized these responses, attempting to lift up ideas that were heard across the responses rather than to emphasize particular individual's perspectives.

A report titled, "What We Heard," was then distributed to all participants (See **Appendix C** for full copy of the report). This report helped not only shape the design of the summit, but it also provided the groundwork for participants at the summit to learn where there was already common ground among certain ideas, as well as areas where differences in opinion provided opportunity for further discussion.

The report organized participants' responses into the following sections:

1) Competencies We Would Like Liberal Arts Business Graduates to Have;
2) Ways to Build and Support the Development of these Competencies;
3) Criteria for Great Liberal Arts Business Programs;
4) Schools Recommended as Potential Sources of Best Practices;
5) Issues Ripe for Further Discussion.

Essentially, this report captures participants' beliefs coming into the summit regarding the types of skills they felt business students from liberal arts programs should have: 1) measurable skills, 2) personality traits, and 3) abilities for future actions and behaviors. These skills range from basic literacy in general areas such as English, math and communication, as well as competencies in traditional business areas such as accounting, economics, management and finance. Other abilities such as critical thinking, flexibility, personal awareness, ethical reasoning, leadership ability and decision making are also cited as being important.

Additionally, the report summarizes participants' suggestions for curricular and pedagogical approaches in business and liberal arts programs to develop such skills, including 1) practical experiences, 2) opportunities for reflections, 3) conceptualization activities, and 4) application opportunities.

While many of the responses revealed a basic level of agreement across participants regarding these various issues, there were also some paradoxes, tensions and dilemmas that were reflected in the pre-summit responses. As such, the report concluded with a summary of various issues which organizers saw as rich opportunities for further discussion at the summit.

Three Days of Dialogue and Discovery

The months of preparation and pre-summit work culminated in a dynamic three-day dialogue on the Southwestern University campus, November 8-10, 2006. Linda Reid, a professional facilitator with experience across a wide array of organizational settings, facilitated the diverse group of 24 individuals for the three days. The following summary of each day provides an overview of both the process participants engaged in, as well as the ideas and outcomes they generated.

Day 1

The summit formally launched on the evening of November 8, 2006 with a welcome reception that provided participants the opportunity to meet one another. Southwestern University President, Jake Shrum, opened the session with welcome remarks on behalf of the University. Dr. Mary Grace Neville, Summit Program Chair, added to the welcome remarks by reiterating details about the summit's purpose and design. Part of the evening's activities, she also explained, would include immersion in a 'liberal arts experience' to help participants connect with the philosophy and culture of liberal arts institutions. Specifically, after the reception concluded, participants were invited to join in Southwestern University's "Writer's Voice Series," which was hosting former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky as a featured speaker. In preparation, Southwestern University English professor Dr. Elisabeth Piedmont-Martin gave summit participants an introduction to and an interpretation of some of Pinsky's work.

Pinsky's poetry reading and commentary, combined with the introductory lecture, provided participants with a taste of the cross-curricular linkages that define a liberal arts education. One of Pinsky's poems, "Shirt" (available at: **http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/shirt**), was also particularly relevant to the conversations that were to take place over the next two days. The poem explores an ordinary shirt through the lens of history and business labor and production. Making reference to everything from Korean sweatshops, the Triangle Factory fire, slave labor in cotton fields, to low-wage inspectors, weavers and salesmen, Pinsky reminded listeners how complex the history of a single commodity in today's world market can be – a topic which would echo in conversations at the summit for the next two days.

In the question and answer time that followed Pinsky's reading, he was asked his opinion about how poetry was being taught in schools today. Pinsky's provocative response alluded to the fact that he thought educators often did things backwards by first going to analysis and then trying to move students to a higher level of reflection. He stated that rather we should, "First teach our students to love poetry, and then teach them how to write and analyze it - No one ever fell in love with a poem by diagramming its sentence structure." His idea that there must first be an emotional or personal connection to a subject was invoked repeatedly during the summit, especially as participants shared their hopes for teaching business in a way that students would not only understand the basic principles of business, but really find a way to use business as a tool to create the kind of world in which they wanted to live.

Day 2

The second day opened with the facilitator, Linda Reid, describing the dialogue process the group would use for the rest of the summit. She reminded participants that by coming together collectively, rather than resting on answers formed alone, they could build upon their individual ideas and create even more powerful ideas together. Then, after reviewing the agenda and target objectives for the following two days, Linda opened the conversation with a question for the group: **"How do we want to work together for the next two days?"** Recognizing that each participant was coming from a different geographic place, personal background and individual understanding of business and liberal arts, Linda invited participants to collectively generate ground rules that would help set the tone of the discussion for the rest of the summit; these included:

COMMUNITY GROUND RULES

- Approach conversations as an open dialogue rather than a closed discussion
- Notice when you are judging
- No whining
- No idea is too outrageous
- Because we may use different language, address the intent of comments
- Address each other by name
- Bring a sense of genuine curiosity to others' point of view
- Allow each other space to say things "incorrectly"

These ground rules established a framework for trust and collaboration that multiple participants cited as unique to any other forum in which they had previously engaged. Specifically, they noted that by creating these guidelines together, they felt a sense of ownership for the dialogue's dynamics and helped hold each other accountable to following them during their convening.

After the ground rules were captured and posted, the conversation turned to making individual introductions so that people could better know who was in the room. Rather than sharing traditional biographical profiles with each other, the design of this exercise reflected the summit's objective to create a collaborative space where individuals could share their personal insights and opinions. Sitting at four tables, each with six participants per table who represented a mix of the different stakeholders in the room, individuals shared what brought them to the summit and what they hoped to get out of their time together. The mixing of stakeholder groups at the tables helped enrich the perspectives explored in each conversation; however, distinctions between stakeholder groups were not emphasized during any of the report-outs.

Once introductions were made, the discussion moved toward exploring our "Highest Hopes" for the future. Linda asked that constraints be left at the door for a moment, such that we allow ourselves to imagine possibilities rather than obstacles – which so often bog down our imaginations when thinking about change. Guided by the question, **"What is your hope for the future (at a global level) and what are the essential ingredients needed to make these hopes a reality?"** participants paired with each other to share their answer to this provocative question. This particular session generated a tremendous amount of energy among the group, as participants spent time above and beyond the allotted time in the summit's agenda to really explore their ideas on this topic.

A report-out from these paired conversations revealed ideas in **Table 1**:

Table 1

HIGHEST HOPES	ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS
• Respecting the worth and dignity of each other • Social policies and organizational designs that accommodate the needs of people • Settlement of disputes by peaceful means • Polarization replaced by an acceptance of diversity • People have 'met' each other/interacted with each other • Tolerance, understanding and acceptance – ability to agree/disagree from an informed place • Effectively deal with the aging and growing population • Access for all to healthcare, education, food, shelter • World culture of sustainability • Maximum degrees of choice for all people • Exchanges where each gets as much/more than they put in • We act with the future in mind (sustainably) • Next generation is better off than current • Education is re-envisioned as life itself • Clean environment • Eliminate biases of all kind • Diversity and difference are truly embraced and celebrated • Civility is the norm • Balance of technology and interpersonal connection • Captivating, sharing and using wisdoms from around the world • World Peace	• Increased awareness • Accepting and acknowledging social woes • Understanding, acceptance, education and dialogue • Exposure to other cultures • Education via shared experiences and exposure to others • Cultural awareness • Organizational structures foster solutions and creativity • Value the other • Frameworks of 'order' create degrees of choice • Living in ways that are reused not consumed • Acting in a mindset of "renting" versus owning • Flip education so that finding meaning in life is priority and professional development is secondary • Create humility, emphasis on common good • Create awareness of all, promote tolerance • Create awareness of all levels of diversity • Nourishment for people physically, intellectually, spiritually • Maintaining human contacts • Connection across the globe – blend east and west values • Raising up positive examples of what we have done already to inspire us

After sharing their report-outs of their highest hopes, participants reflected on the implications of this exercise:

- **Some of the Deans present commented that their non-business faculty would have generated almost an identical list to describe their hopes for the future.** To them, this was an important insight for participants to consider, as it implied that at a high-level there may be very strong consensus among faculty across the disciplines regarding their overall hopes for the world. Even if the methods and philosophies faculty are using to teach students differ across departments, **this common ground could help foster important conversations about curriculum and collaboration between business faculty and the rest of the school.**

- A representative from the summit's funding agency asked the faculty present, "Is this how all business faculty think?" Several faculty responded that all business faculty do not necessarily think this way, rather traditional business programs emphasize technical-functional business education approaches and do not necessarily link those skills to a higher purpose like liberal arts educations attempt to do. **Faculty present commented that, compared to business-school faculty, the responses reflected what was unique about liberal arts business faculty – their emphasis on not only business knowledge but also connection to the broader world.**

- Some of the business practitioners present commented on the important role that business could play in making many of the highest hopes a reality. Specifically, **looking at ways to leverage technology and using the market to create opportunities for wealth creation in impoverished areas, were just two of the ways that they saw business mechanisms moving the world toward these lofty visions.**

After a lunch break, participants reconvened to build upon their highest hopes and explore the question, **"What do undergraduate business students need to know to make our highest hopes a reality?"** Groups struggled to distinguish business students from young people more broadly. Therefore, **Table 2**: *What Young People Need to Know How to Do* reflects the broader report-out from these individual table conversations.

Table 2

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO DO	
• How to interact with others respectfully and effectively • Know themselves and experiences impact one's decisions • Know own challenges for further development • Learn multiple languages • Apply teamwork to solve problems • Understand the responsibility of individuals to make a positive impact • Apply critical thinking skills • Understand that ambiguity is OK • Engage in life-long learning • Recognize there is a world of differences – how big the world is • Give permission to both take risks and fail	• Cultivate ethnocentric awareness • Know when/how to ask for clarification • Balance life and work – harmonize life roles • Use probabilistic (statistical) thinking to assess risk • Know what constitutes integrity and embody it • Think strategically and solve problems creatively • Know about cultures and our physical world • Take different perspectives • Know ethical frameworks and act on that knowledge • Understand leadership and 'followership' • Understand what resources already exist and how to use them • Know how to communicate effectively across a variety of means

Participants commented that this exercise built upon the work begun and captured in the pre-summit "What We Heard" document (see **Appendix C**). This activity echoed again the idea that what business students need to know to be successful in their lives parallels what graduates of other programs need to know as well. While business students do need to have a mastery of basic business functional areas, participants felt that the list of general skills and abilities generated here again offered possible common ground for business faculty to collaborate with faculty across different disciplines on curriculum development. The ideas suggest more conversations can occur about how faculty can most effectively shepherd the learning process, far beyond curriculum design.

The conversations then moved toward exploring the question, "**How should the education process prepare students so they have the skills they need?**" A report-out from these individual table conversations revealed in **Table 3**.
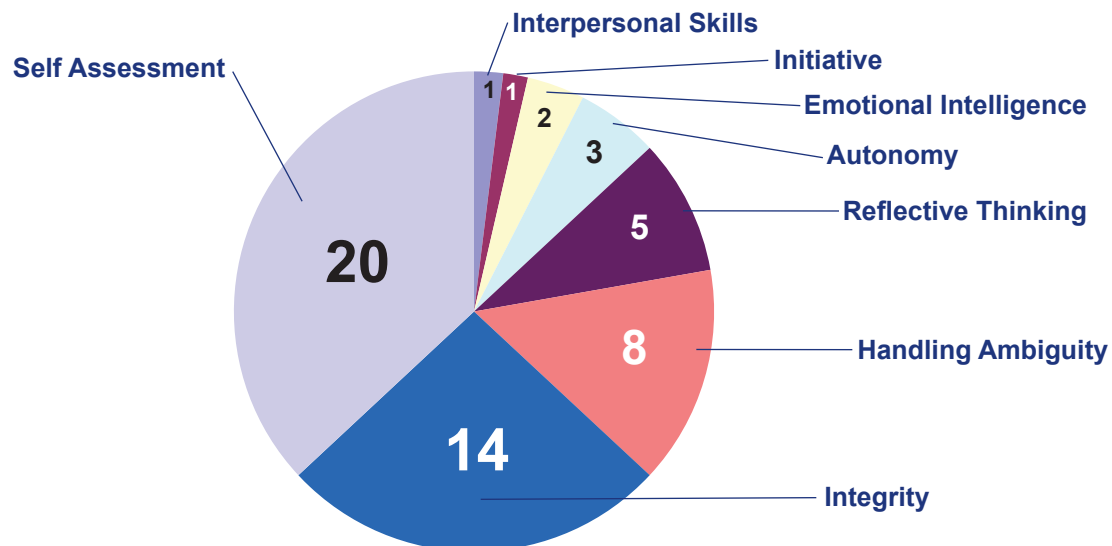
Table 3

HOW EDUCATION SHOULD PREPARE STUDENTS

- The whole school, i.e., faculty across different departments, needs to come together as a collective effort
- Schools need to align intention and impact
- Faculty need to integrate learning objectives and assessment
- Faculty need to help students understand the interconnectedness of courses; recognize that general education requirements are not an obstacle to what they want to do, but rather give students a meta-view of their education where they see how all their learning is necessary and links together, including how general classes impact specialized courses, i.e., French for business.
- Students need to grasp accountability and self-directed learning
- Faculty need to prepare themselves to be knowledgeable across areas
- Business departments can look to models that already exist, specifically the model in education departments where they use a competency model for student evaluation, including rubrics to measure students' knowledge base while working with departments across the campus that are providing content knowledge for education majors
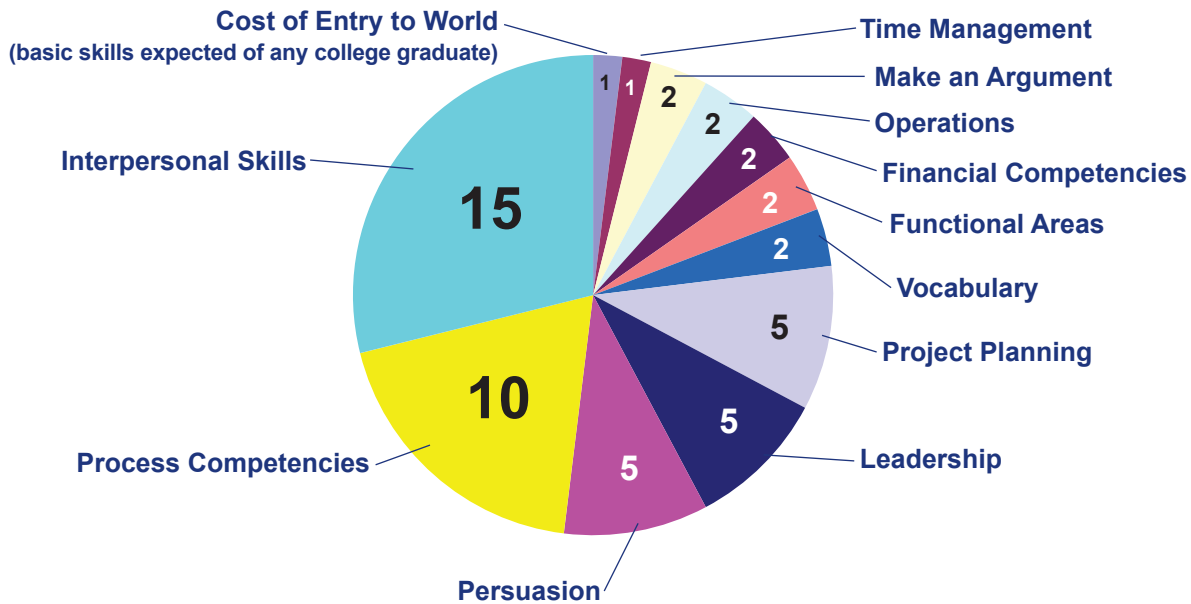
Building on all the ideas that had emerged throughout the day's conversations, Day 1 concluded with participants moving toward the generation of **a competency model** for liberal arts business majors. For this exercise, each table spent time generating their own list of competencies they felt were important for business liberal arts majors to develop during their education. These discussions built on the competency list that emerged in the pre-summit work (see **Appendix C**: "What We Heard") including: 1) Personal traits or qualities students should develop; 2) Measurable skills and knowledge students should acquire, and; 3) Future actions, decisions and behaviors that we would like students to demonstrate.

After their brainstorming, representatives from each table shared their ideas with the whole room, and a composite list of possible competencies were generated and posted in the room. To hone the list of competencies, the group used the Nominative Group Technique (also known as "hot-dot voting") where each participant was given six possible votes (represented by six stickers) and then they were asked to 'vote' for the competencies they felt were most important to focus on for further discussion. They could vote for six different competencies or cast all their votes for one competency about which they felt strongly. The top competencies selected are summarized in the following three figures (with the number of 'votes' each competencies received listed):

Figure 3: Personal Traits or Qualities Students should Develop (votes received)

Figure 4: Skills and Knowledge Students should Acquire (votes received)

Cost of Entry to World
(basic skills expected of any college graduate)

Interpersonal Skills

Process Competencies

Persuasion

Leadership

Project Planning

Vocabulary

Functional Areas

Financial Competencies

Operations

Make an Argument

Time Management

Values shown in pie: 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 5, 5, 5, 15, 10

Figure 5: Future Actions, Decisions, and Behaviors (votes received)

Understand Human Behavior

Ability to Act

Organizational Literacy

Social Responsibility

Developing Others
(giving & receiving feedback)

Managing Expectations

Working Across Organizational Levels

Leadership at all Levels

Values shown in pie: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 5, 8

The primary insights drawn from this exercise were that there was a beginning consensus on some of the skills and competencies that business students from liberal arts programs should have. However, participants and organizers alike reflected on the need for further conversation to not only refine what the competencies should be, but also how to effectively teach them in a liberal arts environment by engaging faculty across the disciplines to collectively develop these skills in students. Doing so represents a political challenge on many campuses because different disciplines, as well as different competencies within disciplines, require different modes of knowledge.

Day 3

The final day of the summit opened with participants sharing reflections with each other on the one thing from their own college experience that makes them proud that they went to that school. After sharing responses to this question, Linda invited each participant to self-select into groups for the morning to further explore a particular area of work. The group topics were drawn from the conversations that had emerged throughout Day 2 and included:

1. Constructing New Directions for Business Majors
2. Moving the Competency Model Forward
3. Integrating Business Faculty into the Larger University Community
4. Moving the Summit's Emerging Conversations Forward

Discussions among these four groups focused on both further developing the ideas in each area and articulating next steps that need to happen in each area. **Table 5** summarizes the ideas that emerged from these conversations.

Table 5: Next Steps

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR BUSINESS MAJORS	MOVING COMPETENCIES FORWARD	INTEGRATING BUSINESS FACILITY	MOVING CONVERSATIONS FORWARD
• Need to create more dialogue between business & academics • Identify pedagogies that already work • Clarify the core competencies business majors should have (link to moving competencies forward) • Work to promote the benefits of liberal arts through the media • Create a 'road show' of the benefits of liberal arts & business for both students & faculty at different universities to help foster conversations on campuses • Look to creating an advisory board of biz practitioners for liberal arts business programs • Connect the gap between what recruiters look for, i.e., technical functional expertise and what CEOs say they want, i.e., leaders and broad thinkers	• Clarify competencies by surveying alumni from business and liberal arts programs to get their input on the current list and to solicit other ideas, also share the list with other business faculty and recruiters for their feedback • Engage faculty across departments to leverage current curriculum - both by building on areas where necessary competencies are already being taught and re-evaluating curriculum that does not build students' competencies. • Define assessments for competencies (especially those life skills which can be difficult to quantify) by talking to alumni, board of directors, and businesses who hire graduates • Look to existing models (such as those in education departments) for how competencies are taught and measured • Infuse self-directed learning into the competency management	• Work at a grass roots level at each of our campuses to find connections and begin dialogues across departments • Explore curricular alliances, i.e., course that can be cross-listed and joint faculty appointments • Move from a separation model of business in curriculum to an integrated one • Create dialogues where all faculty across departments can share how they are fulfilling the mission of the school, e.g., holding a summit or something similar on individual campuses	• Look for funding from foundations and corporations to continue conversations; look at institutes already exploring this topic • Foster a national faculty network to share best practices and resources • Develop programs that help develop faculty skills and expand their knowledge beyond their discipline in order to maximize opportunities offered by liberal arts environments • Create a listserv to share resources and ideas, eventually develop a web-page or clearing house to share resources • Look for opportunities at professional conferences to convene conversations, present papers, facilitate and workshops

The day – and the summit – concluded with participants sharing what ideas had changed for them as a result of participating in the summit as well as their various appreciations to individuals and the group as a whole.

Future Dialogue and Study

While many of the conversations pointed in the direction of actionable next steps (which we will discuss further below), another outcome from the discussions was simply raising up tensions and issues that are rich material for future dialogues and research.

Tensions and Dilemmas for Dialogue

Some of the tensions and dilemmas that were articulated throughout the three days included:

- *Intellectual versus individual development* - As was raised in the pre-summit responses and echoed throughout the summit, there is a desire for education to focus on both developing the student's *knowledge base*, e.g., accounting, economics, and management, as well as developing *personal characteristics*, e.g., citizenship behavior. The questions remain, however, how might we evaluate or decide how to *balance* our desire to develop the student as a whole person (reflective, spiritual, ethical, etc.) as well as preparing them with basic level of content mastery (writing, presenting, math, basic business and other concepts) during the course of an undergraduate program? Every institution has limited time and resources, so what trade-offs do we make?

- *Standardized versus in-context curriculum* - Carried forward from the pre-work was the conversation around how to *balance* our mixed interest in wanting to recommend *normative, standardized curricula* across all "great" liberal arts business programs, along with our desire to leverage unique institutional and faculty gifts to create *individualized, student-centered, self-directed learning experiences* within the classroom. We referred to the latter as "in-context" curriculum because of the unique circumstances each college, teacher, and student hold. In advancing contextualization, we inherently risk other stakeholders' desires for standardization, e.g., for accreditation, for institutional rankings, for evaluation. Yet, in standardization we risk losing flexibility, creativity, and continuous innovation in programmatic development.

- *Business expertise versus broader education* - Yet another tension that was brought up in the pre-summit responses as well as during the summit was the tension between balancing the time a student focuses on *business courses* versus *general education courses*. Which parts of business expertise will we sacrifice for more general education? How realistic is "blending" other disciplines with business teaching? How much of "introduction to" is enough versus proficiency in an area (within or beyond business)? How important are all of the ideal experiences we believe students should have, i.e. internships, language requirements, business course, multiple discipline overviews, etc.?

- *Western versus non-western values* - Early in the summit the issue emerged, how to integrate non-western viewpoints and other wisdom traditions from around the world into our traditional western paradigms. Given that all summit participants were from the U.S. and thus embedded in a traditional western mind-set (which is also representative of the dominant perspectives in business and academia in the U.S.), the question was raised how to bring in other viewpoints to the conversation and to our classroom discussions. Non-western traditions, values and wisdoms represent an entire body of knowledge that was underrepresented in the conversations at the summit and poses a potential area for further exploration.

- *Society's versus liberal arts educators' expectations for business and liberal arts graduates* - Some raised the idea that there may be a gap between the skills that society expects from business graduates in order to succeed in the traditional business world, i.e., functional business areas and the skills and abilities

educators ideally hope to instill in their students, i.e., interpersonal skills, and appreciations like tolerance and ethical development. Related to the tension discussed above between individual development and skill development, this tension also raises the question of how to balance measurable learning outcomes with more ambiguous ones.

Questions to Study and Research

From these tensions and other discussions, many rich questions arise for future dialogue and research including:

- What are the threshold competencies business majors need to succeed in the job market?
  Who is responsible for ensuring students have these competencies, i.e., the students, the faculty, a particular course, the University as a whole, etc.?

- What are the personal traits and abilities students need to develop beyond traditional business skills to be effective over the course of their life?

- What are the long-term benefits of coming from a liberal arts background in the business world and how do students effective articulate those to recruiters?

- What is the most effective internship model for students in business programs?

- How do we support, i.e., professional development, business faculty to become informed about disciplines beyond their own?

- How do we bring in non-western traditions and wisdoms into our pedagogies?

- How do business faculty effectively partner with faculty in other disciplines to create cross-curricular alliances? At the same time, how do business faculty maintain the integrity of a core business curriculum separately and not lose its focus amid other liberal disciplines?

- What is the full range of benefits and drawbacks (including tacit) of being an AACSB accredited program?

- How do we bridge the gap (even if it is only a perceived gap) between what corporate recruiters are looking for in new hires and and the skills that liberal arts candidates posses?

- What is the impact of this new generation's internet culture on their values and abilities and how does this impact their preferred modes of learning?

These are only the beginning of many questions that we hope to continue exploring together.

Action Steps and Ways to Engage

In addition to the provocative questions raised, the summit also created several action plans to continue moving forward the work and conversations begun. The three major action areas are outlined here, including details regarding how interested individuals can connect with the various projects.

Developing a Competency Model for Liberal Arts Business Majors

Building on the work generated at the summit around creating a competency model for business majors at liberal arts colleges, several next steps were identified to move this particular project forward. These include:

- Validate the emerging list of competencies generated at the summit (which are detailed above in **Day 2** outputs) via surveying business alumni, a wider audience of business faculty, and faculty across liberal arts disciplines broadly.

- Connect with faculty across schools to explore where these competencies are already being taught and how business faculty in particular can build upon existing curricula.

- Refine further the way we assess these competencies, i.e., how we will know they are doing "it," by talking to alumni, board of advisors, business colleagues, etc.

Ways to Engage:
The faculty at Southwestern are continuing to work on developing a competency model at their university and invite you to join with them if you are interested in exploring this area of work further.

To connect with this action project - or to share a competency model you use at your own school or organization - please contact: **Dr. A.J. Senchack** (senchak@southwestern.edu).

Continuing the Conversation

Another area of work coming out of the summit will be the task of engaging larger audiences. The immediate next steps for this include:

- Look for opportunities and plan presentations (via paper sessions, workshops, dialogues) at the various professional conferences we attend, i.e., Academy of Management, AAC&U, etc.

- Host conversations at our individual campuses (formally or informally) to engage both additional business faculty as well as faculty from other disciplines in the conversation around business programs in liberal arts institutions.

Ways to Engage:
If you are interested in helping move these conversations forward, we invite you to identify professional associations you are a part of and propose special sessions at your respective academic meetings, i.e., workshops, paper sessions, dialogues, etc. To share what you are proposing and/or look for partners to join in with you on your proposals, you can post an announcement on our newly formed listserv (which includes participants from the summit, but is open to others who wish to join). Also, once you have presented at an event, we invite you to share the outcomes and highlights from those conversations with the listserv as well.

To join the listserv, or post a message to it, please contact the electronic mailing coordinator: **Dr. A.J. Senchack** (senchak@southwestern.edu).

Sharing Ideas and Resources

Finally, another area of work emerging from the summit involves exploring ways that we can effectively collect and disseminate resources and ideas with each other - and with a larger audience. The next steps with this area of work involve:

- Look for centers and institutes already in place that explore these ideas, i.e., The Center for Liberal Arts and Society (**http://www.fandm.edu/clas.xml**).

- Look at projects such as Project Kaleidoscope (**http://www.pkal.org**) - which is a national alliance working to build strong learning environments for undergraduates in math and engineering, and science – as an example for creating a similar project aimed at identifying best practices and creating a national resources base for business and liberal arts education. Such a project would also be a first step toward creating a national faculty network to share resources and ideas.

- Develop a clearinghouse for sharing resources, programs, curriculum, course profiles, etc.

Ways to Engage:
To join in this area of work, the faculty at Southwestern invite you to collaborate with them on developing the Liberal Arts and Business Resources website they have agreed to host: **http://www.southwestern.edu/laab/laab-resource_bank.html.**

To share resources and best practices you already know about, you can contact the listserv coordinator: **Dr. A.J. Senchack (senchak@southwestern.edu)**.

If you are interested in exploring grant opportunities to fund a larger-scale resource-sharing project like Project Kaleidoscope, or are interested in creating a clearinghouse website for Business and Liberal Arts resources, please contact: **Dr. Mary Grace Neville (nevillem@southwestern.edu)**.

Conclusions

The 2006 Business and Liberal Arts Summit generated a rich array of conversations - raising news questions as well as moving toward action steps. The summit, however, was merely the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue at the national level to further explore the question: **What is the relationship between business programs and liberal arts institutions?** The pre-summit work, as well as the three days of dialogue and discussion at Southwestern University, advances previous conversations on this topic by bringing together multiple stakeholder groups to explore a myriad of perspectives regarding how to create effective business and liberal arts programs. While participants only began to scratch the surface of the many of the questions raised on this topic, they advanced the growing dialogue on the form and function of business and liberal arts curricula.

As documented here, the summit lifted up key areas that are prime for future dialogue, research and discovery. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the fact that many of the discussions that took place during the summit reflected a hopeful message about the promise that business programs offer within in liberal arts institutions. Participants' insights and reflections reinforced the idea that business programs are not at odds with the philosophy of liberal arts schools. Rather, business programs in liberal arts colleges provide unique opportunities for students to gain mastery of not only functional business areas, but also a broader multi-disciplinary knowledge base that will help them succeed in whatever career path they choose - which is the goal of all educational institutions. The significance and difficulty of building respectful relationships among faculty from all disciplines within campus communities must be understood.

Again, the conversations and action projects that emerged during the summit are the initial starting point from which we hope that years of continued discussions and work evolve.
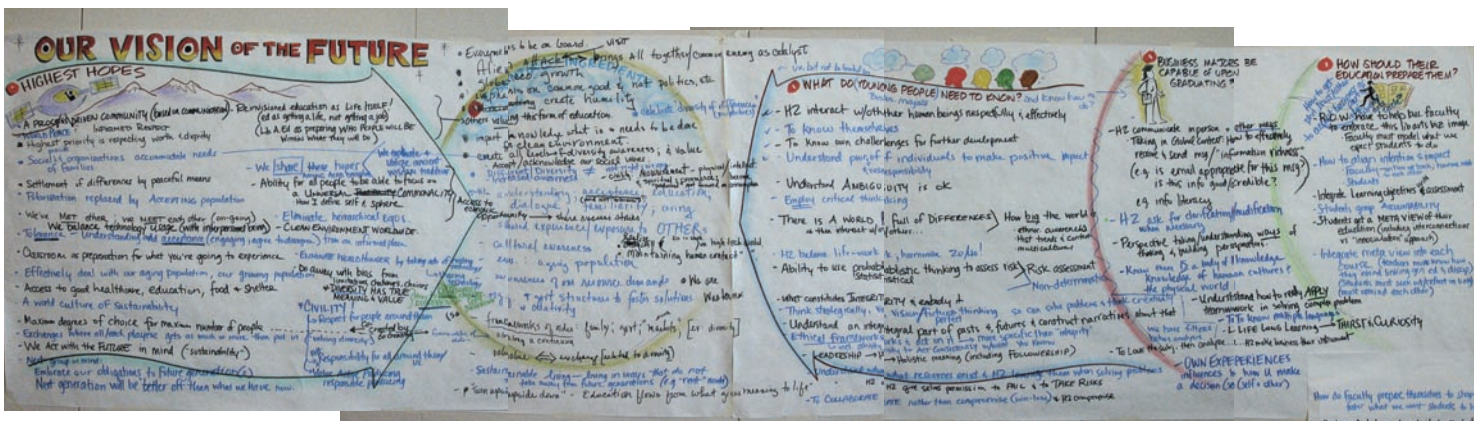
Appendix A:

Participant List

and

Virtual Participant List

BUSINESS IN LIBERAL ARTS SUMMIT:
ENVISIONING BUSINESS PROGRAMS IN LIBERAL ARTS WORLDS

November 8 – 10, 2006
Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas

PARTICIPANT LIST

Teacher-scholars

Dr. Diane Baker	Millsaps College
Dr. Calvin Boardman	University of Utah
Dr. Byron Chew	Birmingham-Southern College
Dr. Ira Dolich	Southwestern University
Lindsey Godwin	Case Western Reserve University
Dr. Jerry Gustafson	Beloit College
Dr. Don Parks	Southwestern University
Dr. A.J. Senchack	Southwestern University
Dr. Jennifer Leigh	Gettysburg College
Dr. Cecilia McInnis-Bowers	Rollins College
Dr. Jeff Nesteruk	Franklin & Marshall College
Dr. Mary Grace Neville	Southwestern University

Business Practicioners

Kevin Hedges	Attorney
Judith Manriquez	GX Creative Communications
Tom Shockley	American Electric Power (Ret.)
Beverly S. Silas	HBMG
Ken Smith	Dell Inc.

Student

Mitch Barnett	Southwestern University

College Deans

Dr. Sam Hines	College of Charleston
Dr. Jim Hunt	Southwestern University
Dr. LaVonne Neal	University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Program Leaders

Dr. Ryan LaHurd	The James S. Kemper Foundation
Dr. Mike Frandsen	Albion College
Fred Ohles	The Council of Independent Colleges

BUSINESS IN LIBERAL ARTS SUMMIT:
ENVISIONING BUSINESS PROGRAMS IN LIBERAL ARTS WORLDS

November 8 – 10, 2006
Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANT LIST

Teacher-scholars
Dr. Betsy Gatewood
Dr. John F. S. Bunch
Dr. Sandi L. Dinger
Jim Donaldson
Dr. Richard Fetter
Dr. Ron Fry
Dr. Jamie Hendry
Dr. John Kilpatrick
Dr. Keiko Krahnke
Dr. Robert Ledman
Dr. Gary Lemon
Dr. Jim Marroosis
Dr. Kevin McCarthy
Dr. Sandy Piderit
Dr. Walt Potter
Dr. Roger Putzel
Dr. Bridget Puzon
Dr. Larry Stimpert
Dr. Charles Wankel

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Brittany Hanley
Lori Higginbotham
Cesar SanMiguel
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College Deans
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Business Practicioners
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John Cimino
Kathryn Clubb
Sam Coats
Larry Haynes
Brian Heymans
Marianne Ibrahim
Henry Joyner
Michelle Klingemann
Lauren Niver
Mark Orzechowski
Jonathan Owens
Luis Partida
Dennis Perz
Andy Ross
Richard Sechrist
Gwen Sherman
AJ Thomas
Tim Trevino
Joe Widner

Program Leaders
Richard Eckman

Other Administrators
Justin Gould
Roger Young

Appendix B:

Discussion Paper

This paper, titled, "*On Liberal Arts Education in the Business Curriculum–Part I: A Discussion Paper for the 2006 Summit on the Liberal Arts in Business,*" is a discussion paper, prepared by A.J. Senchack, Lucy King Brown Chair in International Business and Professor of Business at Southwestern University, for the summit.

The paper 1) suggests an established, operational definition of liberal arts education that is inclusive of business education, 2) outlines briefly what some of the learning outcomes of a blended curriculum might include, 3) sketches out several of the conceptual approaches or themes being offered as a way to blend a liberal and business education, and 4) describes existing courses that blend the two areas.

On Liberal Arts Education in the Business Curriculum:
A Discussion Paper for the 2006 Summit on the Liberal Arts in Business

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Revised
January 2007

On Liberal Arts Education in the Business Curriculum:

A Discussion Paper for the 2006 Summit on the Liberal Arts in Business

A.J. Senchack
Lucy King Brown Chair in International Business
and
Professor of Business
Southwestern University

From my perspective, the ideal outcomes of our 2006 Summit are to reach agreement and normative judgments on the (1) student competencies, (2) objectives, (3) structure, and (4) content of blending or infusing liberal arts education into the business curriculum. To that end, this paper attempts to provide a survey of what the relationship between a liberal arts and business education might look like. The intent is to facilitate and enrich our November 8-10, 2006, summit process. My personal objective for these three days is to envision an innovative business program with a distinctly humanistic and creative perspective. Such intent also emphasizes personal development and the non-cognitive qualities that I believe our students will need to become leaders in their workplace and community. I hope you share a similar objective and also have a rejuvenating and educationally valuable experience!

This discussion paper has four objectives: (1) to suggest a definition of liberal arts education that's inclusive of a business curriculum, (2) to outline what some of the learning outcomes or competencies of a blended curriculum might include, (3) to sketch out conceptual approaches or themes that blend a liberal and business education, and (4) to describe existing courses that blend the two areas. In addition, at the end of each section, a series of "thought questions" are provided on which to reflect.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION?

While the idea of integrating or uniting liberal arts and business education has spurred much discussion over the last 50 years, confusion and uncertainty still appears to dominate this endeavor. Regarding liberal arts specifically, debates continue to rage over what books to read (the correct composition of reading lists) and also whether the content of a liberal arts education refers to a *method of inquiry* and/or to a *body of texts* (e.g., Hutchins's "Great Books"). In part, a lack of a clear definition of what a liberal arts education is shoulders some of the blame.[1] Is it, for instance, a specific set of disciplines that prizes knowledge purely for its own sake? Or, is it any education with non-utilitarian goals, i.e., doesn't prepare one for a particular job or profession? Or, is it simply a "broad education?" Part of the problem in clarifying this situation is history tells us there is only **a**, and not **the**, liberal arts tradition. That is, starting with ancient Greece, what has been a liberal arts education differs in purpose and structure over time. What we find is a tradition full of variety, discontinuity, and innovation (Kimball, 2003).

One way to gain an appreciation of how the definition of liberal arts has escaped definition is to follow the phrase "liberal arts" throughout its 2,500-year history.[2] Another, more expedient approach, is to track and record only the *extant* definitions used contemporaneously. Regarding the latter, Table 1 contains a small snapshot of some of these for your reference. However, I was attracted to a definition that appears to meet our discussion needs. Therefore, as a beginning point for our conversation, I propose the Association of American Colleges and University's (AAC&U) definition of liberal arts education:

> A *philosophy of education* or a cultivation of an *intellectual framework* that can be *applied* to *any field of inquiry* such that individuals become empowered, minds are liberated from ignorance,

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[1] In fact, to many, the terms "liberal arts," "liberal arts education," "liberal learning," "liberal education," and "arts education" have different meanings, but they have been used in so many ways that it seems hopeless to delineate any differences. Therefore, I will be using these terms interchangeably in this paper.

[2] Bruce Kimball (1986, 1996, 2003) does a most admirable, although controversial, job of this for the more curious.

and social responsibility is cultivated. ...challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities (italics mine).

This definition arises out of an important AAC&U 2002 national initiative, called *Greater Expectations*, that calls for a dramatic reorganization of undergraduate education to ensure that all students receive an education of lasting value, relevant for the 21st century.[3] The report shares AAC&U's vision of a New Academy based on an engaged and practical liberal education and fostered by intentional practice at all institutional levels. Importantly, the AAC&U report seems to be a manifestation of Kimball's (1996) somewhat controversial opinion that liberal arts and pragmatic education were converging at the end of the 20th century.

Questions to Reflect on:

1. *Why should a liberal arts education be blended or fused with business curricula?*
2. *SEMANTICS: What does "to blend" or "to fuse" mean in our case?*
3. *What are the advantages and disadvantages of blending or fusing the two areas?*
4. *What should be the aim or goal of a blended liberal arts and business education?*
5. *How would such a blending or fusion proceed?*

WHAT DOES A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION OFFER THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM?

This section is the most difficult one to organize in a cogent manner. There are so many assumed and reported learning outcomes or competencies that are purported to be hallmarks of a liberal education. Certainly no "perfect list" exists for our consideration. At this point, suffice it to suggest only a general framework for organizing our thoughts about potential learning outcomes and to provide a selected list of outcomes and characteristics in Table 2 (a "list of lists"). As shown, many outcomes are very similar, overlapping, or worded differently. So, for my purposes, let me propose the following general schema to jump start our conversation on another guiding principle of the summit: what learning outcomes should be expected from a reinvented or reconceptualized business curriculum that integrates the liberal arts into it:

1. *Content: Breadth of Knowledge and Understanding*
2. *Skills: Intellectual and General Abilities.*
3. *Values: Character and Personal Development.*
4. *Social Responsibility: Leadership and Civic Engagement.*

May I suggest that you review Table 3's AAC&U's "Statement of Liberal Learning" before you begin thinking about desired outcomes? Finally, let me also ask you to reflect on the extent to which business professors already have adopted these (liberal arts) learning outcomes as part of their courses, whether they are explicitly or implicitly stated in a syllabus or class. That is, it appears to me that, if we use "*method of inquiry*" rather than "*body of text*" as our defining definition of liberal arts, then are we not already "practicing liberal arts?"

Questions to Reflect on:

1. *What student outcomes are we envisioning or desiring for a business major?*
2. *What structures enable the development of the skills and knowledge (outcomes) desired?*

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[3] The AAC&U is the oldest and largest national organization for liberal arts institutions. It has initiated programs and published many monographs that are useful for, among other things, connecting liberal education to experiential learning, work, and citizenship. I found their resources to be invaluable in researching this discussion paper. In fact, I can strongly recommend that you read two of its easily accessed monographs as background for the 2006 Summit: (1) *Greater Expectations* cited above (a must read!) and (2) Sheldon Rothblatt's 2003 *The Living Arts: Comparative and Historical Reflections on Liberal Education*.

3. *How can the learning outcomes and the value of a blended business major be best communicated to students, i.e., affect their consciousness, as they begin and continually throughout their business major (the need for reinforcement)?*

    Suggestion: Use academic advising time with our student as a liberal learning experience/ platform to intentionally reinforcement their liberal arts education they are receiving. (Advising as liberal learning) to our non-business colleagues? to administrators? to admissions office, student affairs, etc.?

4. *Do we need a more comprehensive understanding of the context in which students will live and work, e.g., global in scope, more complex in required skills and knowledge, culturally sophisticated. In turn, then, what outcomes of the curriculum should be designed to produce a student prepared for such a society? What will students need for their multiple roles?*

5. *What do the empirical studies say about whether or not we are realizing the expected or desired outcomes of liberal arts education?*

BLENDING THE LIBERAL ARTS AND BUSINESS CURRICULA

Another guiding principle of our summit is to discuss how we might integrate or blend liberal arts and business. This section briefly describes conceptual themes or approaches being proposed by scholars and educational thinkers. As the following section illustrates, some have actually been introduced into business curricula.[4]

To begin, let me acknowledge my indebtedness to Byron Chew and Cecilia McInnis-Bowers for opening a new world of possibilities to me by introducing the notion of *blending* liberal and business education. To them, it's time to move beyond all the talk and challenges of bridging the gap between liberal arts and business education. They believe general education and business cannot continue to be viewed as separate learning experiences; that such separation negates the student's ability to become a liberally educated leader and manager; that a "seamless approach" is much more desirable; and that the two domains share definite cohesive and connected learning outcomes. Therefore, business studies should be approached as liberal education and end the traditional, artificial distinctions between liberal and practical education.[5]

Thanks also to Jeff Nesteruk (2005), who has also influenced my thinking. He, too, concurs with Chew and McInnis-Bower's views and further suggests three reforms to improve the business curricula:

(1) *reframe* business to enlarge its scope of inquiry by exposing its roots in the liberal arts and to show how business is often an extension or application of liberal arts knowledge or thinking.

(2) *question*, through a critical perspective and inquiry, the underlying assumptions and the usual means and conventional ends of the various business disciplines.

(3) *reconceptualize* business as "area studies," such as American or Environmental Studies, by showing business disciplines are more structurally akin than to each other and to the traditional liberal arts disciplines. This arises chiefly because these disciplines operate within a truly multidisciplinary framework understanding more focused domains of practical experience.

Entrepreneur Education and the Liberal Arts[6]

A recent curricular initiative receiving a great deal of attention involves infusing the arts and sciences with entrepreneurial ideas and learning,[7] Ray (1990) perhaps best motivates this fusion by describing arts education

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[4] I can also recommend as excellent background reading Chew & McInnis-Bowers (2004) and Nesteruk (2005).

[5] The separation between the two arises from liberal education's focus on broadening knowledge and thinking in contrast to business studies narrowing its focus to developing applied skills and to realizing specific, practical objectives. This dissociation exacerbates the problem business students have in either perceiving the value in general education courses or appreciating its cohesive and connected learning outcomes.

[6] This section draws from the published research of Drayton, Higdon, and Hines, which appears in a special issue of *Liberal Education* in winter, 2005, and from Gatewood-Page (2005).

[7] This initiative is perhaps best reflected in a symposium, the Kaufman Consortium for Liberal Education and Entrepreneurship, held at the College of Charleston in 2004, and at a pre-conference session at the 2005 annual AAC&U meeting, Working Convergences: Liberal Education, Creativity, and the Entrepreneurial Spirit. A Spring 2005 *Peer Review* issue was also dedicated to articles on innovative and creative examples of the ways institutions have infused entrepreneurial spirit into their programs and curriculum.

as a metaphor for a multifaceted entrepreneurship. For instance, the artist is a humanities' entrepreneur, the stage director is a performing arts entrepreneur. He further suggests that the entrepreneurial spirit can instill new life to the traditions of a liberal arts education more broadly.

Gatewood (2005) adds that the concept of entrepreneurship embodies the value of freedom that is also at the core of liberal education. In fact, we are living in a world where the best opportunities are increasingly entrepreneurial – opportunities at the boundaries between disciplines. She further notes that liberal education attempts to shake the shackles of parochial thinking by broadening one's perspective. So, too, entrepreneurship is cultivates broader perspectives to see new possibilities.

Even though entrepreneurship has traditionally been bound to business programs, liberal arts and entrepreneurship seem destined to find each other. After all, both involve using creativity, responding to change, and dealing with ambiguities or uncertainties that ultimately can lead to innovations and more imaginative solutions to problems. The belief, then, is entrepreneurship and the liberal arts are mutually reinforcing and enriching concepts, and the fundamental elements of liberal education are essential to develop an "entrepreneurial mindset." For instance, the potential entrepreneur needs to appreciate different perspectives and methods of inquiry and to develop critical thinking and communication skills as well as ethical norms.

In addition, entrepreneurship education includes not only for-profit, but also the more recent concept of *social entrepreneurship*, which plays the role of change agents in the social sector. The needs of the traditional and social entrepreneur are not so different; in fact, they have a special affinity – both need the same basic skills, knowledge, vision to realize their goals and both desire to educate responsible citizens and mitigate social ills. The arts and social entrepreneurship do indeed appear to provide a natural and vital link to business that deserves serious consideration.

Therefore, it appears that we need to explore how to lift entrepreneurial ideas and learning out of the business program and infuse them into the traditional liberal arts curricula and to life. Similarly, reverse osmosis dictates that we should lift traditional liberal arts learning out of liberal arts and infuse them into entrepreneurship and business studies. This endeavor will identify the points of connection, controversy, and creativity and lead to a richer curriculum.

The Humanities in Business

In simple terms, the humanities involve the study of the arts, literature, philosophy and history. Alternatively, the humanities study diverse aspects of *human life* in world cultures such as the arts, languages, literature, history, philosophy, and religion. Such study encourages interdisciplinary or integrative approaches to knowledge, values, society, and ideas. Moreover, beyond the traditional boundaries of disciplines, interdisciplinary endeavors raise issues surrounding race, ethnicity, gender, class, ideology, and rhetoric. Finally, the humanist is concerned with questions of *value*—intellectual, aesthetic, and moral—inherent in ideas.

Blending the humanities into business is requisite, even if outcomes are difficult to measure. The power of the liberal arts is always latent, always potential (Vargish, 1991). Success in the workplace and life demands not only mastering technical, professional knowledge, but also acquiring good judgment and wisdom to make decisions, the capacity to relate sensitively and effectively to others, and the ability to respond imaginatively to the daily, complex personal and professional situations. Engaging the humanities and infusing it into business will develop *self-reflection* necessary for good judgment, well-examined values, and thoughtfulness."[8]

Literature in Business

Good literature can educate better managers and provide valuable insights and leadership lessons. The business curriculum can also benefit from reflections on the way we live, the way we organize and work, and the wisdom presented through the eyes of literary writers. Literature can be used to illustrate the basic principles of management and models of good corporate practices, while simultaneously forcing students to rethink what they know in a completely different way. What better way to stimulate higher learning than by drawing parallels between literary characters and business leaders, by relating historical characters and their dilemmas to today's management situations, and by weaving timeless lessons into a refreshing and intellectually stimulating guide for modern managers.[9] What better way to motivate blending literature and business than by encouraging

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[8] Taken from Syracuse University's Humanities Council home page: **www-hl.syr.edu/cas-pages/HCHome.htm**, downloaded May 27, 2006.

[9] For books containing literature in business ideas, see Burden, et al. (1977), Bursk, et al. (1962), Corrigan (1999), Czarniawska-Joerges & Guillet de Monthoux (1994), and Whitney & Packer (2000).

students to reflect on what today's business leaders have in common with King Lear or Henry V? Or, what does Peter Drucker have to do with Macbeth? Or, what is the similarity between Faust's thoughts about business development and Ralph Waldo Emerson's thoughts on the subject?[10] [See Cal Boardman's course, Foundations of Business Thought, described in the next section.]

The Arts in Business

Conventional business wisdom says that if you don't know where you are going, then any map will do. In other words, clear objectives are a must in any managerial action; otherwise, you will end up confused and inefficient. But, going forward, this "wisdom" will increasingly *not* apply to many business activities. For instance, in designing a new product or facing volatile competitive conditions, management must embrace exploration, adjustment, and improvisation, i.e., utilize the creative process. Such situations need imaginative and creative thinking—to solve problems that generate deeper insights and more reliable perceptions, new ways of seeing problems and framing questions, and new vantage points for looking beyond our limitations and into future. Can such learning be taught and, if so, where can we find it – in the fine arts curricula.

How else can you explain "The MFA is Now the New MBA," exhorted by the *Harvard Business Review* and simultaneously proclaiming the MFA as one of the hottest degrees in the business world. According to the HBR, corporations are recruiting top arts graduates for their artistic aptitude and creativity to help spur innovation and intrapreneurship. To differentiate a product and service in today's saturated marketplace of infinite choices, companies must make their offerings transcendent – physically beautiful and emotionally compelling. As GM's Robert Lutz puts it "(Business) is becoming more right brain…I see us being in the art business. Art, entertainment, and mobile sculpture, which, coincidently also happens to provide transportation" ("Breakthrough Ideas," 2004).

From the obvious – business skills are valuable to managing the performing arts organization's operations and finance – to the less obvious, we need to adopt the other perspective and consider what the arts can contribute to business studies and the firm.

Questions to Reflect on:

1. *Will we need to work on overcoming the skepticism of our liberal arts colleagues who may view our incursion as an intrusion into their turf?*

2. *Should we create a "liberal studies minor" as an optional choice for business majors (like Babson College)? Or, will this defeat our "blending" effort?*

3. *Should we allow liberal arts majors the option of taking courses, minoring or double majoring in business?*

4. *In our advising and advertising, should we encourage our business majors to take on only non-economic and non-accounting minors that emphasize the humanities, arts, and natural sciences (and, perhaps, not include the social sciences as a potential minor)?*

5. *How do we best articulate and organize the relationship between liberal and business education? And, what do we call the resulting education model?*

6. *Should we study other professional education programs, e.g., engineering, law, medicine, pharmacy, etc. to see what ideas they are exploring to blend liberal arts into their studies?*

7. *Have you engaged key stakeholders, such as trustees, alumni, and the community, in discussions about the importance of liberal education the business curriculum as well as in today's society? If so, how?*

8. *How can we work together to further amplify and expand the national conversation on liberal education in business on our campus and with the public?*

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[10] Boardman & Sandomir (2005) offer an admirable book of essays on business in literature that blanket the ages from ancient philosophers (Aristotle and Confucius) to more modern authors (Gandhi) and motivates their business application through a serious of questions at the end of each essay.

COURSES EXEMPLIFYING THE LIBERAL ARTS IN BUSINESS

This section describes existing courses that exemplify the embedding of liberal arts in business education. They were found either in my search of the literature or from speaking to the professor who designed the course. In most cases, the course instructor is one of the summit participants, and I know they would love to talk to you about what they are doing!

My attempt, though, is to present a cross-section of courses that appear to be representative of this summit's guiding principles. Unfortunately, there are other excellent courses not presented, but limited space prevents me from describing all of them. For example, for additional course descriptions see Bobko-Tejeda (2000), Chadwick-Emery (2002), Chew & McInnis-Bowers (1999, 2004), Nesteruk (2005), Baker (2006), and Simmons (2006), while good examples of liberal arts-business programs are Babson College (2006), Bentley College (2006), and McInnis-Bowers (2006) at Rollins College. I have much gratitude for all those colleagues who so willingly shared their experiences and syllabi.

Calvin Boardman (University of Utah): Foundations of Business Thought

In my mind, Cal Boardman is the summit's innovative, educational entrepreneur, who is one of the first professors to explore the recent (reintroduction of)[11] blending of the liberal arts/humanities and business. His Foundations course design has influenced many of us and so deserves a special note of thanks! From his syllabus, we learn that

> This course introduces the student to the cultural, historical and philosophical thought surrounding the issues of business throughout the ages. By examining the words of great authors, students get a sense of the timeless nature of business. They discover that the issues currently facing individuals and business have their origins in writings centuries old through a flight through the 'wormhole' of philosophy, literature, economics, politics and literature. This voyage is mapped out, not by commentators on the subject of business; rather, our 'navigators' are the original authors (and passages) themselves..."

To illustrate embedding the humanities (literature) in business, take his introduction to business development:

> A company's growth is tied to many commitments...But, there is one commitment upon which all other commitments rely: the development of new business.... Goethe's poem *Faust* is the story of a man who craves development.... in his "deal with the devil," Mephistopheles, he must accept that in the business of marshalling powers for the good of man, there is a darker reality such modern thinking produces. It is the darkness created when advancing civilization fails to preserve the good values, traditions, and environments that preceded it. Henry David Thoreau as the leading character in his magnum opus *Walden* stands in colorful contrast to Faust. He makes no deals. Life is to be lived close to the earth, not as a seeker of the forces and capital that give rise to business development, but as a seeker of realities that given rise to inner human development. Unlike Faust, he does not believe that a search for human truth must eventuate in the development of industry and infrastructure.

Kelly Shaver (College of Charleston): "The Psychology of Entrepreneurship"

Dr. Shaver, a trained experimental social psychologist, teaches psychological principles of entrepreneurship. His course recognizes that, from the time a person recognizes an initial business idea to the time that a firm is organized, most of the critical processes involve the psychological characteristics and actions of individuals. Therefore, the course examines those psychological processes such as the psychology of risk, overconfidence, optimism, anchoring, attribution theory, and other biases in decision making; the relationship of achievement motivation to entrepreneurial behavior; how entrepreneurs are similar to and different from other people; personality traits and factors that influence entrepreneurial behavior; and the theory of new venture creation

(syllabus downloaded May 30, 2006, **http://spinner.cofc.edu/~shaverk/psyent.html**).

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[11] If I have this right, Cal and his boundless curiosity are influenced, in part, by an incredibly special volume of business books, *The World of Business*, that were written by three Harvard Business School professors in the late 1950's. In four volumes, Bursk-Clark-Hidy (1962) trace the history of business – its origin and development – through an unbelievable set of writings that go back as far as 2000 B.C. The books are organized by business disciplines and contain essays on business from historical luminaries as Confucius, Gibran, Plato, Shakespeare, Voltaire and many more ancient and more contemporary authors. A true blending of liberal arts and business to be envied!

Idee Winfield (College of Charleston): Sociology of Economic Life:
Social Entrepreneurship and How to Change the World.

Professor Winfield, an associate professor of sociology, developed a course to promote social entrepreneurship through liberal education. It integrates social science concepts, community-based service learning, and social entrepreneurship by combining economic sociology concepts with case studies of social entrepreneurial organization's efforts (Ashoka Fellows) to mitigate social ills. The intent is to show how social science learning can help create innovative solutions to social problems. This is done by providing a way to see the world that goes beyond individual experience and to explain human behavior in the context of social, political, economic, and cultural systems. The students' experiential learning involves working with a social entrepreneurial organization or program or creating their own business plan for a social entrepreneurial endeavor (Winfield, 2005).

Diane F. Baker (Millsaps): Renaissance Readings

The Millsaps MBA program invites liberal arts and sciences faculty to teach one-hour seminar courses, called Renaissance Readings. Two Renaissance Readings courses are required of every student.   Faculty choose a topic in their area of expertise that has relevance for business managers. Eighteen different topics are offered periodically and include

> *Leadership and Morality: The Paradigms of Greek Tragic Heroes* –
> The Greek drama and its use in reflecting on moral choices for society and its individuals,
>
> *Confucianism for Leaders: Religion, Business and Leadership in East Asian Societies* –
> Values of classical Confucianism as resources for leaders in a global marketplace,
>
> *The Tragedy of the Commons: Anthropology, World Capitalism, and Development* –
> Development of foreign markets and the potential negative consequences of globalization on
> local, indigenous cultures,

Faculty motivate business students to make the connection between their knowledge and business applications. The courses are designed to encourage critical thinking, values analysis, and self-reflection as the class encounters different perspectives and ideologies.

Danna Greenberg and Elizabeth Goldberg (Babson College):
Foundations of Management and Entrepreneurship.

To bridge liberal arts and management courses at Babson, cultural studies is used as a cross-disciplinary mode of critical inquiry throughout the curriculum. Cultural analysis and its assumptions are used as a critical tool for students (1) to recognize their own conceptual frames and biases, (2) to examine the simplicity of their perceptions about business and their own management success, and (3) to enable them to reframe these views by acknowledging the powerful impact that culture, structure, politics, and identity categories have on individual and organizational successes. For example, students are taught to recognize how and why two organizations may use the same data to justify vastly different decisions because of their differing political and cultural systems and how these systems impact the decision-maker's interpretation of the data. (Goldberg & Greenberg, 2004)

Questions to Reflect on:

1. *How do faculty, who are not trained in the liberal arts, begin to know how to blend liberal arts into their business classes? Where does the requisite "faculty development" come from? Do such faculty need to "self-learn," based on a pure desire to improve the curriculum for their students?*

2. *Will business faculty not trained in the liberal arts want to devote the necessary time and effort to learn new material and pedagogies if the reward system to do so is not there?*

3. *What and how much should "off-campus learning" experiences be used, e.g., service learning, volunteerism, internships, community-based learning, etc.?*

4. *Should we begin to examine the best pedagogies for a new, blended curricula?*

5. *To encourage and to allow our business majors more time to explore outside the business department, should we purge our business curriculum of excessive technical content that can be learned on the job by well-educated graduates?*

6. *How do we dissolve the boundary between liberal arts and business? For instance, have faculty from "both sides" collaborating on interdisciplinary curricula and team teaching? Do in consultation with our liberal arts colleagues? Just do it on our own?*

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Table 1

Selected Definitions of a Liberal Arts Education

1. "The late Joseph Katz defined general education as 'the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives – whether as parents, citizens, lovers, travelers, participants in the arts, leaders, volunteers or Good Samaritans.'" (AAC, 1988, in Gaff, 2004)

2. "To students, liberal arts means their courses are not professional and that their studies are in a wide array of fields, and the liberal arts are the method by which we seek to discover the truth about the most important matters of human life through reason and reflection." (Agresto, 2002)

3. "Liberal education is best defined with its most literal meaning: It is education that liberates, that frees the mind from the constraints of a particular moment and a set of circumstances, that permits one to see possibilities that are not immediately apparent, to understand things in larger context, to think about situations conceptually and analytically, to draw upon a base of master knowledge when faced with specific situations." (Lemann, 2004)

4. "A liberal arts education refers to studies in a college or university intended to provide general knowledge and develop intellectual capacities. A liberal arts education prepares students to work in a variety of jobs. This is different from other types of education where students develop professional or vocational skills for a specific job." (Downloaded November 22, 2005 from **www.iseek.org/sv/2005.jsp**)

5. "At Swarthmore, you will develop your ethical and aesthetic values as well as your analytical abilities. You will understand better your responsibilities as a citizen of your community, your nation, and our world. You will become a more interesting person.

   Picture a Renaissance man or woman who is good at many different things and explores new interests as they come up. The sciences, social sciences, and **even** (*my emphasis*) engineering are part of the liberal arts here. (Swarthmore College web site, downloaded April 22, 2006)

6. "A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions." (AAC&U, 1998) See Table 1 for a complete description [NOTE: This also is an similar, but earlier, definition of liberal arts education than the one found in the 2002 *Greater Expectations* initiative, which is being adopted by this discussion paper. I found it interesting to see how the definition has morphed over time to it present state.]

Table 2

Characteristics/Outcomes of a Liberal Arts Education: A List of Lists

A. *How does one recognize liberally educated people? (10 qualities)*

- They listen and they hear.
- They read and they understand.
- They can talk with anyone.
- They can write clearly and persuasively and movingly.
- They can solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems.
- They respect rigor not so much of its own sake but as a way of seeking truth.
- They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism.
- They understand how to get things done in the world.
- They nurture and empower the people around them.
- They follow E.M. Forster's injunction from Howard's End: "Only connect…"

B. *The ideal liberally educated student of the 21st c. is a lifelong learner who is*

- open-minded
- intellectually curious,
- self-actualizing (with capacity for attaining personal growth, physical and mental health, and spiritual well being)
- tolerant
- courageous

C. *The seven liberal arts habits of highly effective leaders are…"*

- living and working by values
- setting a clear direction
- communicating effectively
- motivating people
- executing the plan
- measure, assess, and reassess

D. *… liberal education outcomes in all students, including….*

Knowledge of human cultures and the natural and physical world
- social sciences, sciences and mathematics, humanities, histories, and the arts

Intellectual and Practical Skills
- written and oral communications
- quantitative literacy
- information literacy
- inquiry, critical and creative thinking
- teamwork and problem solving

Individual and Social Responsibilities
- civic knowledge and engagement – local and global
- intercultural knowledge and competence
- ethical reasoning and action
- foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Integrative Learning
- the capacity to adapt knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and questions.

With a constant focus on liberal education outcomes…
- across general education and majors, including *pre-professional* (my emphasis) studies
- at progressively more challenging levels of learning from first year through final studies
- using active, hands-on, collaborative, and inquiry-based pedagogies

- framed by milestones and capstone assessments that help students deepen, integrate and demonstrate their learning
- enhanced by well-designed programs of academic and social support for all students.

- living and working by values
- communicating effectively
- executing the plan

- setting a clear direction
- motivating people
- measure, assess, and reassess

E. *Student learning outcomes from the American Academy for Liberal Education accreditation protocols:*

- Effective reasoning
- The inclination to inquire

- Breadth and depth of learning
- Civic arts

F. *"...the traditional goals of Liberal Arts education (and identify them) as eight skills."*

- Thinking and/communicating clearly and effectively.
- Understanding the physical universe, self, and/or society.
- Knowledge of other cultures and/or other times.
- Awareness of moral, aesthetic, and spiritual issues inherent in life society,
- Searching for relationships among various forms of thought and feeling.
- Awareness of the intrinsic value of thought and learning.
- Independent action.
- Tolerance and concern for others.

G. "…the liberal arts provide the intellectual, social, cultural, and spiritual tools our students must have to be truly global citizens. As I see it, there are five key imperatives of a 21st century liberal arts education: Reflection, Connection, Inspiration, Action, and Openness."

H. *What should be the goal or aim of a liberal education?*

The first four have to do with learning and character:
- Intellectual breadth
- Sensitivity to diversity

- Intellectual depth
- Character and integrity

The other four are skills more than items of learning:
- Critical thinking skills
- Leadership and interpersonal skills

- Technological literacy

From college and university web sites:

University of Florida's liberal arts education home page:

"A liberal education will involve you in learning how to learn, to participate actively in learning throughout your life. You become

- more adept at *problem solving* (their emphasis), both by using sharpened analytical skills and by being able to approach situations from multiple perspectives.
- an excellent candidate for *specialized and professional training* in the health sciences, education, law, business and graduate programs. In fact, a liberal education forms the base of any successful career.
- (able to) *perceive the many connections* that exist between people, places, and ideas. At the same time, you are more able to appreciate the differences.
- (able to) more clearly *realize the complexities* involved in every day talk as well as formal presentations.

- ...*(not dependent) on politicians* or the media to tell you what is good governmental policy
- (able to) know better which questions to ask and you will be better able to distinguish between knowledge and wisdom.
- ...*more aware* of the increasingly interdependent and interconnected community of the nations of the world....
- .... *aware of the many dimensions and influences* of the various cultures within our country and throughout the rest of the world.
- better equipped to take a stance on controversial issues.

"What Skills Will I Learn by Taking Arts Courses?" Univ. College of Cariboo, Canada, www.cariboo.bc.ca/ae/LIBARTS.HTM, downloaded November 22, 2005.

- analytical and knowledge-building skills
- ability to cooperate with others and work in teams
- effective oral and written communication skills
- problem solving and pattern intelligence skills
- synthesis skills and the ability to express the results of analysis and evaluation
- ability to conduct research and organize material effectively
- information literacy and other skills associated with learning how to learn
- exercise independent judgment and ethical decision-making
- ability to meet goals, manage time, and complete projects successfully
- sensitivity to individuals and tolerance of cultural differences, and

- numerical skills
- self-confidence and self-understanding
- evaluative and critical thinking skills
- critical and reflective reading skills
- creative thinking skills
- ability to use equipment
- openness to new information technologies

"General Liberal Arts Experiences" CUNY (Brooklyn College), downloaded December 12, 2005 from www.depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/career/students/skillLiberalArts.htm.

- comprehending written materials
- making effective speeches and presentations
- analyzing and evaluating ideas
- cooperating with a work team
- helping people with their problems
- planning and organizing

- writing effectively
- problem solving skills
- using library and research facilities
- supervising and leading
- persuading others to accept your ideas
- organizing time effectively
- working independently

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Table 3

Statement on Liberal Learning

A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions. Liberal education requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities.

We experience the benefits of liberal learning by pursuing intellectual work that is honest, challenging, and significant, and by preparing ourselves to use knowledge and power in responsible ways. Liberal learning is not confined to particular fields of study. What matters in liberal education are substantial content, rigorous methodology and an active engagement with the societal, ethical, and practical implications of our learning. The spirit and value of liberal learning are equally relevant to all forms of higher education and to all students.

Because liberal learning aims to free us from the constraints of ignorance, sectarianism, and myopia, it prizes curiosity and seeks to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. By its nature, therefore, liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.

The ability to think, to learn, and to express oneself both rigorously and creatively, the capacity to understand ideas and issues in context, the commitment to live in society, and the yearning for truth are fundamental features of our humanity. In centering education upon these qualities, liberal learning is society's best investment in our shared future.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, October 1998.

"Statement on Liberal Learning," Liberal Education, spring 1999, pp. 6-7.

Appendix C:

Pre-Summit:
What We Heard

BUSINESS IN LIBERAL ARTS SUMMIT:
ENVISIONING BUSINESS PROGRAMS IN LIBERAL ARTS WORLDS

WHAT WE HEARD
Synthesis of Summit Participants' Pre-Work Responses

Compiled by Dr. Mary Grace Neville, *Summit Program Chair*
and Lindsey Godwin, *Summit Writer & Editor*

As we prepare for the upcoming Summit on Business in Liberal Arts, we wanted to remind you of our convening's goals, to share the synthesis we have generated based on your responses to the 'pre-work' questions, as well as to frame some potential areas for further exploration based on the ideas that have emerged to date. This report is organized as follows:

- Pages 1 - 2: Reviews the **context and purpose** of the Summit

- Pages 2 - 8: **Synthesizes the pre-work responses** we received from both virtual and face-to-face summit participants

- Pages 8 - 10: Outlines the **issues ripe for discussion** that we see emerging based on some tensions in the pre-work responses. We feel that this section holds the most interesting issues and <u>areas for innovation</u>. We ask that you thoroughly review and **reflect on this section**, your reflections on these ideas will help shape our time together.

Summit Context

As we have detailed in earlier correspondences, our purpose for convening this national dialogue is to bring together multiple stakeholders, including teacher-scholars, administrators, and business practitioners, to build guiding principles for improving on and innovating within liberal arts business programs. A generous James S. Kemper Foundation grant supports our process by allowing 28 individuals to convene for our face-to-face

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* **This is a synthesized report of the responses participants shared to the following pre-summit questions:**

1. What <u>competencies</u> should all undergraduate liberal arts student be expected to have as they graduate?
2. How do these competencies translate to a <u>liberal arts business major</u>?
3. What should business majors at liberal arts colleges be <u>capable</u> of upon graduation (three separate areas interest us particularly: core skills, bodies of knowledge, base of experience)?
4. How should liberal arts business programs be <u>taught</u> (e.g., program objectives, teaching approaches, courses)?
5. What kinds of <u>learning experiences</u> should be occurring?
6. What are the <u>criteria</u> we should be using for a great liberal arts <u>business program</u>? For great liberally educated <u>business students</u>?
7. Where do <u>best practices</u> happen today and what makes it a "best practice"?

summit at Southwestern University next month. Additionally, we have 41 virtual participants from around the country contributing to our exploration of business and liberal arts.

Our process will be dialogic in nature and will allow us to collectively explore the myriad of ideas around business and liberal arts that we each bring to the table. Our goal is not to necessarily reach – nor to even seek – a one-size-fits-all prescriptive answer regarding how we should teach business in the liberal arts. Rather, our process aims to name and describe what we collectively see as goals and methods for creating "great" business programs in liberal arts environments. It is our hope that our discussions are only the beginning of ongoing dialogues that will lift up interesting ideas and innovations within the liberal arts business classroom.

Our dialogue is situated in the larger context of two other ongoing conversations: 1) management education and 2) liberal arts education. As some of you know, the management education field's dominant paradigm studies and advocates traditional forms of business education, meaning technical functional skills building, siloed (rather than integrated) course studies, and quantitatively measurable outcomes. The liberal arts paradigm, on the other hand, promotes a more integrated and inquiry-based form of education that is less technical in nature and more broad-based[1].

Some business educators, deans, university presidents, liberal arts educated business practitioners, and visionaries are increasingly exploring what it means to bridge these two educational approaches – so that graduates not only have a grounding in the traditional business areas, but are also well-rounded individuals who are capable of being engaged and productive citizens across multiple contexts.

Our summit seeks to extend this emerging conversation about how we can blend both the best of the traditional business preparation with the best of a liberal arts educational approach. We hope to move towards building guidelines for what it means to have an innovative business curriculum in a liberal arts institution.

Thematic Synthesis

This section details the themes we[2] found among 26 pre-work questionnaires, 14 from face-to-face participants and 12 from virtual participants. We attempted to lift up ideas that we heard across the responses rather than to emphasize particular individual's perspectives. The ideas presented below could be themes heard across multiple questionnaires, and/or interesting ideas potent to the dialogue but only explained in one questionnaire.

We have arranged the responses into the following four sections:

> 1) Competencies We Would Like Liberal Arts Business Graduates to Have;
>
> 2) Ways to Build and Support the Development of these Competencies;
>
> 3) Criteria for Great Liberal Arts Business Programs; and
>
> 4) Schools Recommended as Potential Sources of Best Practices.

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[1] For a more extensive analysis of the meaning of liberal arts, which will also inform our dialogue, please refer to Dr. AJ Senchack's discussion paper "On Liberal Arts Education in the Business Curriculum- Part I: A Discussion Paper for the 2006 Summit on the Liberal Arts in Business" which is available at: **www.southwestern.edu/laab**.

[2] The "we" in this section refers to report co-authors Dr. Mary Grace Neville, program chair, and Lindsey Godwin, project writer and Doctoral Candidate in Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University. Both have extensive experience with qualitative research and grounded theory building, as well as researching management education programs.

Simultaneously, we identified tensions we heard within your narratives. We have outlined these tensions in more detail in their own section, "Issues Ripe for Discussion."

1. Competencies We Would Like Liberal Arts Business Graduates to Have

Pre-work responses included a wide array of competencies believed to be important for undergraduate students to have upon completion of a liberal arts business degree. We have grouped these competencies into 3 categories:

a) *Measurable Knowledge & Skills* – competencies that can be specifically and objectively measured;

b) *Personal Traits or Qualities* – competencies that students develop within themselves which are more subjective and less-measurable in nature; and

c) *Future Actions, Decisions & Behaviors* – actions students demonstrate throughout their lives and careers.

Each category is detailed in the table below.

TYPE OF COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
a) Measurable Knowledge & Skills	• **Basic Literacy/Competency in:** 　º Math skills 　º Reading/Analyzing text and data 　º Information literacy (including computer/technology skills) 　º Written English skills 　º Basic communication skills (oral and written presentations, critical listening) 　º Foreign language competency	*(Students should have the) ability to navigate with a basic literacy level within the major disciplines of thinking (natural science, social science, humanities)*
	• **Basic understanding (or at least awareness/appreciation) of major disciplines:** 　º Humanities & Arts 　º Natural Sciences 　º Social Sciences • **Basic understanding/competency in traditional business areas:** 　º Accounting 　º Business law 　º Economics (micro and macro) 　º Finance 　º Marketing 　º Management • **Global and cultural awareness of:** 　º Current issues 　º Historical context of current issues	*In addition to writing and speaking skills…. I believe foreign language skills, math, finance and accounting skills, and economics… are very valuable in our global economy*

TYPE OF COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES

b) Personal Traits or Qualities	• Critical Thinking & Analytic Ability
	• Creativity
	• Critical & Active Listening Ability
	• Ethical behavior/Moral awareness/ Moral imagination
	  º Awareness of right and wrong (or ability to ponder this)
	  º Willingness to act on "right"
	• Respect for diverse opinions/ideas ("Embrace multiple perspectives")
	  º Awareness "beyond the self" including other people and the environment
	  º Intercultural awareness, appreciation and sensitivity of diversity including: gender, religions, cultural, physical, social, and economic differences across peoples
	• Appreciation and respect for the natural environment
	• Adaptability/Flexibility
	  º Appreciation of non-linearity in the world
	  º Comfort with ambiguity
	• Interpersonal competency
	  º Self awareness
	  º Ability to work collaboratively with others
	  º Conflict resolution skills
		The most important competency under-graduate students should graduate with is the ability to think critically.
		
		(Students should have) tolerance for ambiguity, accepting chaos, being able to see long-term effects… the ability to think outside the box, think beyond the ordinary and question mass thinking.

c) Future Actions, Decisions & Behaviors	• Demonstrated leadership
	  º Within organizations
	  º Within wider society
	• Civic engagement
	• Continued engagement with life-long, self-directed learning
	• Questioning of:
	  º Status quo
	  º Mass thinking
	• Effective decision making demonstration:
	  º Analyze situations
	  º Seek out and use useful information
	  º Balance multiple perspectives
	  º Recognize impact of decisions on others/ environment
	  º Make sound decisions
	  º Articulate and defend decisions
		I believe the most important thing a student can gain from a liberal arts education is a genuine curiosity and love of learning… This drive for knowledge and understanding creates a lifelong student…
		
		(Students should demonstrate) citizenship/civic engagement

2. Ways to Build and Support the Development of These Competencies

In addition to articulating 'what' abilities liberal arts business students should have, there were also many responses regarding 'how' educational programs should go about developing the competencies detailed above. We categorized the suggested curricular and pedagogical approaches into four categories based on learning theory[3]:

    a) *Practical Experiences;*

    b) *Reflection Opportunities;*

    c) *Conceptualization Activities;* and

    d) *Application Opportunities.*

All of the specific activities listed below were mentioned by one or more people; however, no one respondent grouped activities as we have done below. The implication therefore becomes that <u>no one category can be considered sufficient</u>. Several respondents implied that the "great" liberal arts business programs will incorporate each of these different types of activities into a comprehensive set of experiences for every student.

Each category is detailed in the table below.

TYPE OF PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES

a) Practical Experiences	• Professional internships
	• Volunteer/civic projects
	• Interacting with professionals
	  º Interviewing
	  º Shadowing
	• Intercultural experiences
	  º Study abroad
	  º Multicultural exposure (teams, projects, etc.)
	• Required foreign language
	• Team projects and working groups
	• Faculty role-modeling in the classroom:
	  º Promoting critical stances
	  º Teaching from multiple perspectives
	  º Reflecting
	  º Asking
		I wish every liberal arts business student would have done an internship and a semester or year abroad
		
		It is also useful to utilize collaborative learning efforts where teams are given project as-signments. Learning to work within teams is vitally important in the corporate world

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[3] These categories are based on David Kolb's extensive research on experiential learning. Many respondents actually pointed specifically to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory as a guide for designing curriculum. Based on these responses, and the ability of these categories to effectively frame the ideas that were generated, we decided to use Kolb's work as a framing paradigm for this section.

TYPE OF PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES

b) Reflection Opportunities	• Mentoring by faculty
	• Use of self-analysis processes and tools
	  ◦ Myers Briggs
	  ◦ Learning Style Indicators
	  ◦ Other tools to give personal feedback to students & encourage self-exploration
	• Activities that engage both the mind and heart/soul
	  ◦ Encourage reflection
	  ◦ Space for questioning
	• Activities that have no one right answer
		(Learning experiences) should talk to the mind and soul simultaneously
		
		Students (should) critically assess their personality characteristics to understand factors that drive their decision-making process.

c) Conceptualization Activities	• Case studies
	• Lectures
	• Real-life examples used in classes
	  ◦ Outside speakers
	• Current affairs readings
	• Socratic method
	• Use of literature and arts in classroom
	• Creative/artistic projects and exposure
	  ◦ Wide use of literatures (including classic and fictional works)
	  ◦ Left-brain activities
	• Research projects
	• Writing papers
	• Interdisciplinary collaboration by faculty ("beyond bridges")
	  ◦ Embedded and integrated ideas across courses
	  ◦ Challenging the artificial divide between business and liberal arts/other disciplines
	  ◦ Making connections between classes
		(We should use) cases that emphasize complex and systems-oriented analysis
		
		(Students should have to do an) undergraduate research project

d) Application Opportunities	• Role playing
	• Individual projects
	• Individual-focused pedagogies
	• Be given business decisions to make
	• Opportunity for public speaking
	  ◦ Presentations
	  ◦ Debates
		Role-playing is an excellent method for learning skills or concepts.
		
		I have often thought that debate should be a required course for liberal arts students

3. Criteria for Great Liberal Arts Business Programs

*"The best way to judge a business program is by judging
the business students they produce."*
~ **Summit Participant, pre-work response**

One of the exciting challenges we will face during our convening is working to define what a 'great' liberal arts business program looks like, specifically how we balance teaching traditional business competencies and broader-based liberal arts ideas.

Although many responses to the question regarding how programs should be judged were vague, we have begun to draft emergent guiding principles for programs based on responses to-date. These principles will be only a starting point for our conversations in November, and we hope that you will reflect on them and offer alternatives and adaptations both before and during our convening.

Emergent Principles for Great Liberal Arts and Business Programs:
1. Great programs should be measured against their ability to:

  • Blend business training with theories and paradigms from other disciplines,
  • Provide a range of experiential learning opportunities within each course – or across most courses – throughout the program, and
  • Place graduates in a range of jobs (private-, public- and social-sector) after graduation.

2. Great liberal arts business programs blend:

  • The expectations of all liberal arts students (such as the ability to critically explore and question the world around them and the ability to appreciate diversity),
  • The expectations associated with business literacy (such as the ability to demonstrate basic competencies in fundamentals of business), and
  • The demands of 21st century moral leadership (such as the ability to balance moral responsibilities associated with leading in a complex multi-cultural world, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and then act with moral courage on "right," and the ability to manage effectively in ambiguous situations).

3. Faculty integral to great liberal arts business programs:

  • Foster students' curiosity,
  • Challenge students to recognize and question their underlying assumptions about our world, and
  • Care as much about who the student is becoming as about how the student performs today.

4. Schools Recommended as Potential Sources of Best Practices

The following institutions were specifically identified as places where innovation and best practices are potentially happening in liberal arts and business programs:

Babson, Birmingham-Southern, Bucknell, Carnegie-Mellon, Case Western Reserve, Charleston, Claremont, Franklin & Marshal, Gettysburg, Millsaps, Pitzer, Rollins, Skidmore, Southwestern, Susquehanna, Utah, University of Dallas, and Wake Forest.

While these schools were named as potential sources of best practice, rarely did a respondent elaborate on what the specific exemplar practice might be. Therefore, we suggest that additional investigation is needed to determine specifically what is each of these institutions' "best practices."[4]

Respondents implicitly and explicitly noticed how difficult it is to know where best practices are actually happening. Some suggested that best practices often happen 'off the radar' – in one classroom or in smaller programs that do not get national attention. One respondent suggested that best practices are difficult to find because people rarely succeed with "too-extensive attempts at full integration" (between liberal arts and business); with reasons including demands on faculty time, the unevenness of short-term results, the unwillingness of all faculty to participate and the under-funding and lack of administrative support that integrative programs often face. Based on this observation, summit conveners will likely recommend future research into the systemic constraints facing curriculum innovation.

Issues Ripe for Discussion

Perhaps the most exciting areas for us will be to explore the tensions that exist among the ideas we shared, rather than only focusing on the ideas where we easily concurred. This section frames emergent issues ripe for our consideration in November. The issues here emerge from the paradoxes, dilemmas, tensions, and contradictions we heard within the pre-work responses. **Rather than being exhaustive, please consider this list a springboard for our continued discussion.** Our hope is that we can build guiding principles around these and other topics.

1. **What is in a name?**
    Several respondents questioned how we should even refer to liberal arts business programs.
    Questions raised included:
    a) Should we be talking about teaching business or management?
    b) What are the implications for a program of saying it focuses on "business"? e.g., are we really teaching business (private enterprise) or are we also expecting to create capable citizens who can work in private-, public-, and social-sectors?
    c) What are the expectations (by employers and by students) associated with having a business degree versus a liberal arts degree concentrating in a different discipline?
    Clearly the dialogue would benefit from recommending some form of a guideline about the trade-offs inherent in how a school names what it chooses to do.

2. **How much business expertise vs. broad education is enough?**
    Given that a student generally only spends four years in a liberal arts college, how do we recommend balancing the time a student focuses on business courses versus general education courses? Which parts of business expertise will we sacrifice for more general education? How realistic is "blending" other disciplines with business teaching? How much of "introduction to" is enough versus proficiency in an area (within or beyond business)? How important are all of the ideal experiences we believe students should have, i.e., internships, language requirements, business course, multiple discipline overviews, etc.?

3. **To what degree is liberal arts business education dedicated to intellectual development (topical depth) versus individual development ("well rounded," whole person)?**
    As seen in the Thematic Synthesis section, many responses focused on both developing the student's knowledge base (e.g., accounting, economics, and management) as well as developing personal characteristics (e.g., citizenship behavior). How might we evaluate or decide how to balance our desire to develop the student as a whole person (reflective, spiritual, ethical, etc.) as well as

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[4]   Dr. AJ Senchack's discussion paper referenced in footnote #1 does explore some programs and courses in these schools.

preparing them with basic level of content mastery (writing, presenting, math, basic business and other concepts) during the course of an undergraduate program? Every institution has limited time and resources, so what trade-offs do we make?

4. **When (and to what end) do we standardize vs contextualize curriculum?**
Modern academic science advocates normative recommendations. Even at elementary level education, our society uses standardized ratings to evaluate programs and allocate resources. But much of what emerges in respondent's images of ideal is non-quantifiable. Therefore, another rich area for us to discuss will be how to balance our mixed interest in wanting to recommend normative, standard curricula across all "great" liberal arts business programs along with our desire to leverage unique institutional and faculty gifts to create individualized, student-centered, self-directed learning experiences within the classroom. In advancing contextualization, we inherently risk other stakeholders' desires for standardization (e.g., for accreditation, for institutional rankings, for evaluation).

5. **Who is our customer – students today or society at large?**
As we move to discussing how to measure success in our programs, there is opportunity to explore how we can balance our desires to measure success against traditional, quantifiable indicators, i.e., test scores, pay grade of graduates, job placement, comparison with other similar programs, etc., with other less easily measured, more abstract, outcome measures we have also indicated as being important, i.e., giving back to community, being good citizens, making good moral decisions, etc. Fundamentally, we are asking about the inherent mission of educational institutions – to <u>innovate</u> (and therefore potentially not "look good" in traditional comparable measures) or to <u>train</u> students and fulfill their expectations.

6. **How do individual faculty strengths shape an institution's program?**
While some respondents suggested faculty be allowed to "do what they do well," others suggested all faculty integrate ideas across curriculum using multiple approaches in the classroom. To what degree do we recommend leveraging a faculty's teaching or research gifts, and to what degree to we recommend training faculty towards broad capabilities specifically needed in teaching liberal arts business as we have defined it? What is the right balance?

7. **Can we develop students' respect for diversity and criticalness?**
Finally, a tension emerged between the dual desire to effectively develop students' as respectful, open-minded individuals, and to cultivate critical thinkers who constantly question. Seeking both "acceptance of other" and "constant questioning" suggests a challenge worth more consideration.

Conclusion

As you can see from the range of ideas and suggestions offered here, we are well on our way to a very rich and productive conversation in November. While there are many directions we can – and undoubtedly will – go with our face-to-face time together, we hope that you will continue to reflect on the two overarching questions that drive our dialogue:

- *What does a liberal arts education mean for teaching business?*
- *How will we know when we have succeeded in creating an innovative liberal-arts-business program?*

We hope that you will take time to share additional reflections with us prior to our convening, particularly people participating virtually so that we can include your ideas in our face-to-face discussions. We look forward to a very dynamic and productive face-to-face dialogue in November at Southwestern University as well as many conversations with you all over the months and years to come.

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