Changes in Business Core & Accounting Course Requirements: AACSB Influences

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RESEARCH QUESTION

- Do AACSB standards influence curriculum at both accredited and non-accredited universities?
Senetti & Dittenhofer (1997) examine the costs of managing curriculum within accounting programs. They conclude that the costs of managing curriculum include:

- Resource costs
- Academic reputation
- Economic
- Societal
- Professional
BACKGROUND

- Sennetti & Dittenhofer (1997) look at managing curriculum through specialization within the accounting curriculum. They conclude that three factors influence the amount of specialization:
  - Funding source—public universities are more likely to specialize; more responsive to societal changes
  - Classification—Research universities are less likely to specialize; less focused on undergraduate programs
  - Accreditation—AACSB accredited universities are less likely to specialize; have to meet standards
MODEL

- Curricular change can then be modeled as a function of
- Funding source (public/private)
- Classification (research/non-research)
- Accreditation (AACSB/non-AACSB)
HYPOTHESES—BUSINESS CORE

• There are differences in the business core between AACSB accredited and non-AACSB accredited universities.

• AACSB standards influence business core curriculum at AACSB accredited universities.

• AACSB standards influence business core curriculum at non-AACSB accredited universities
HYPOTHESES—ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM

• There are differences in the accounting degree course requirements between AACSB accredited and non-AACSB accredited universities.

• AACSB standards influence accounting degree course requirements at AACSB accredited universities.

• AACSB standards influence accounting degree course requirements at non-AACSB accredited universities.
METHODOLOGY--DATA

• Random sample of universities with accounting programs in 1996/97 academic year
• First 25 responses for AACSB accredited and Non-AACSB accredited
• Physical catalogs obtained for 1996/97 academic year
• Requirements for Business Core and Accounting Program collected in terms of courses and credit hours
• Same process followed for the 2012/2013 academic catalog obtained for each university online
METHODOLOGY--ANALYSIS

- Comparisons in courses required and credit hours required between AACSB accredited and Non-AACSB accredited universities for both business core and accounting programs
- Differences in requirements between 1996/1997 and 2012/2013 academic years were determined
- The differences in requirements were compared to curriculum management changes in the AACSB standards
- Assess if curricular changes were consistent with standard changes for both AACSB accredited and Non-AACSB accredited universities
## Differences in Required Business Core Courses—1996/1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More AACSB Require</th>
<th>More Non-AACSB Require</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Math (22%)</td>
<td>• Management Principles (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organizational Behavior (24%)</td>
<td>• Decision Science/Quantitative Methods (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management Information Systems (24%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Production Operations Management (56%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Intermediate Economics (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Speech (24%)</td>
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## Differences in Required Business Core Courses—2012/2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More AACSB Require</th>
<th>More Non-AACSB Require</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Organizational Behavior (20%)</td>
<td>• Business Communications (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Production Operations Management (39%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business Ethics (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Speech (34%)</td>
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DIFFERENCES IN REQUIRED ACCOUNTING COURSES
BUSINESS ACCREDITATION ONLY—1996/1997

MORE AACSB REQUIRE

• Accounting Information Systems (36%)

MORE NON-AACSB REQUIRE

• Intermediate Accounting III (28%)
### Differences in Required Accounting Courses

**Business Accreditation Only—2012/2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More AACSB Require</th>
<th>More Non-AACSB Require</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• None</td>
<td>• Taxation II (22%)</td>
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</table>
### Differences in Required Accounting Courses

#### Separate Accounting Accreditation—1996/1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More AACSB Require</th>
<th>More Non-AACSB Require</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Accounting Information Systems (43%)</td>
<td>• Advanced Accounting (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Philosophy (22%)</td>
<td>• Accounting Electives (22%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DIFFERENCES IN REQUIRED ACCOUNTING COURSES
SEPARATE ACCOUNTING ACCREDITATION—2012/2013

MORE AACSB REQUIRE  MORE NON-AACSB REQUIRE

• Auditing (28%)
• Accounting Information Systems (43%)

• none
COMPARISON OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- In comparing the business core requirements between AACSB and non-AACSB universities at both time periods, differences exist supporting the first hypothesis.
- In comparing the accounting degree requirements between AACSB and non-AACSB universities at both time periods, differences exist supporting the fourth hypothesis.
AACSBB STANDARD BUSINESS CURRICULUM
MANAGEMENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES 2003

• Communication ability
• Ethical understanding and reasoning ability
• Analytical skills
• Use of information technology
• Multicultural and diversity understanding
• Reflective thinking skills
• Ethical and legal responsibilities in organizations and society
• Financial theories, analysis, reporting and markets

• Creation of value through the integrated production and distribution of goods, services and information
• Group and individual dynamics in organizations
• Statistical data analysis and management science as they support decision-making processes throughout an organization
• Information technologies as they influence the structure and processes of organizations and economics, and as they influence the roles and techniques of management
• Domestic and global economic environments or organizations
CHANGES IN BUSINESS CORE REQUIREMENTS—AACSB ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

- Math (66%)
- Computer Applications (69%)
- Management Principles (38%)
- Statistics (38%)
- International Elective (28%)
- Business Communications (43%)
- Organizational Behavior (53%)
- Management Information Systems (34%)

- Productions/Operations Management (31%)
- Decision Science/Quantitative Methods (28%)
- Ethics (25%)
- Introduction to Business (22%)
- Professionalism (22%)
- Speech (43%)
- Writing within General Ed. (22%)
CHANGES IN BUSINESS CORE REQUIREMENTS—NON-AACSB PROGRAMS

- Math (38%)
- Computer Applications (28%)
- Management Principles (28%)
- Statistics (28%)
- International Elective (22%)
- Business Communication (33%)
- Organizational Behavior (38%)
- Policy/Strategy (33%)
- Decision Science/Quantitative Methods (28%)
- Writing within General Ed. (22%)
CHANGES IN BUSINESS CORE REQUIREMENT

- Most of the changes in the business core requirements between the two time periods for AACSB accredited programs were consistent with AACSB standard changes—supporting hypothesis 2
- Most of the changes in the business core requirements between the two time periods for non-AACSB accredited programs were not consistent with AACSB standard changes—inconsistent with hypothesis 3
- AACSB standard changes are not universally perceived as aligning with the skills and abilities needed for business graduates
AACSB STANDARD ACCOUNTING CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES 2003

- The role played by accountants in society providing and ensuring the integrity of financial and other information
- The ethical and regulatory environment for accountants
- Business processes and analysis
- Internal controls and security
- Risk assessment and assurance for financial and non-financial reporting
- Recording, analysis, and interpretations of historical and prospective financial and non-financial information
- Project and engagement management
- Design and application of technology to financial and non-financial information management
- Tax policy, strategy, and compliance for individuals and enterprises
- International accounting issues and practices including roles and responsibilities played by accountants within a global context
CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS—AACSB ACCREDITED

• Advanced Accounting (34%)
• Legal Environment/Business Law II (38%)
• Accounting Information Systems (38%)
• Accounting Electives (47%)
CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS—NON-AACSB ACCREDITED

- Intermediate Accounting III (28%)
- Cost Accounting/Managerial Accounting II (33%)
- Taxation (22%)
- Taxation II (33%)
- Advanced Accounting (33%)

- Auditing (22%)
- Legal Environment/Business Law II (28%)
- Accounting Information Systems (50%)
- Accounting Electives (44%)
CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS

• Most of the changes in the accounting degree requirements between the two time periods considered for AACSB accredited programs are not consistent with AACSB standards—not supporting hypothesis 5

• Most of the changes in the accounting degree requirements between the two time periods considered for non-AACSB accredited programs are not consistent with AACSB standards—not supporting hypothesis 6

• Changes for non-AACSB accredited programs were bringing requirements closer to those of AACSB accredited programs

• Accounting program changes driven by another force--NASBA
There are differences between AACSB and non-AACBS business programs
- AACSB more focused on quantitative, information technology, ethical, and presentation skills
- Non-AACSB more focused on business communications

Differences provide better societal outcomes allowing different universities to pursue different focuses and specializations

Non-AACSB universities made fewer business core changes indicating that one reason accreditation may not have been pursued is the cost of curricular change
CONCLUSIONS—ACCOUNTING PROGRAMS

• Accounting programs show fewer differences between AACSB accredited and non-AACSB accredited programs
• Accounting program change seems to be driven by a force other than AACSB accreditation