

## **Responsible Research in Business and Management (RRBM)**

New Orleans meeting

Sunday, February 5, 2017, 2:00 - 5:30 pm

Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Room Marlborough A

2 Poydras St, New Orleans, LA 70130 (Venue of the AACSB Deans Conference)

### Attendance:

**Scholars:** A. Rashad Abdel-Khalik (accounting, UIUC), Jerry Davis (management, Michigan), Bill Glick (management, Rice), Anne Tsui (management, Notre Dame)

**Deans:** Ingmar Bjorkman (Aalto, Finland), Gerry George (SMU, Singapore), Ira Solomon (Tulane), Xiaobo Wu (Zhijiang U, China), Sri Zaheer (Minnesota)

**Institutions:** Dan LeClair (AACSB), Matthew Wood (EFMD)

### Minutes

#### I. Welcome and introductions (Dan LeClair)

Dan welcomed everyone and asked everyone to tell in one minute “One thing that you did (or read) that has an impact.”

Ira: Disputes the idea that academic work does not have much impact, as Kahneman and Tversky clearly have. Accounting and finance research have also a real impact on practice.

Rashad: Agree with Ira: “fair value accounting” has really big impact, also studies of fraud.

Bill: in OB, job design has had a big impact.

Xiaoabo: Research at his school helps entrepreneurs in immature economies. Inclusiveness.

Jerry: his book on “the vanishing corporation” may be relevant! It is about changing nature of work and organizations.

Matthew: Uber in Dublin: almost employee-free! “B-school impact system” examines 120 indicators to see impact of b-schools on those indicators in that region. E.g., Sobey School in Halifax has \$320 M impact on region!

Ingmar: How does impact come about? Books might emerge AFTER the real impact is done. Effects on HR... books, consulting, appearances at practice conferences have impact.

Anne: need concrete measures of impact! Biggest impact of her work may be the 2015 article in Global Focus on responsible research.

Gerry: One of his major projects is the re-design system of care for mother-to-child HIV transmission in Africa. He did the practical work, and then wrote a research article about impact areas. The real impact is on the ground, not in the journal papers. Phenomenon-induced research can combine impact and contribution to knowledge.

2. Dan concluded that he saw real progress in the two years of this project. It moved from abstract ideas to potential concrete actions. It is moving in the right direction.

#### II. Review of current status and discussion on the white paper (Bill Glick led the discussion)

1. The latest version is dated November 30. There are already some suggestions for change. For example, Sri asked us to clarify that the concept of “reliability” may not apply to all business research since most business is social science (unlike physics) and the problems are complex and messy (this relates to principle 6, and we can clarify this point).

2. Ira said that the White paper should not claim “little impact” in existing research. (Anne subsequently pointed out that the impact of finance and accounting research is

acknowledged on page 11 of the white paper. Ira said that this is good but it is not in the right place. Anne agreed that it could be moved to an earlier place in the white paper, perhaps in section A Background, page 2).

3. Ira pointed out the need to influence the university presidents. For example AAU has clear measures of impact that dominate these 62 universities. They include funding and citations. Sri responded that in some universities, the president does not know much about the business school. The faculty in the school defines P&T criteria including impact. Rashad agreed that the business school can steer its own direction. (Anne supplement: Howard Thomas in an email to Anne also emphasized the need to seek the endorsement of influential business leaders, government and think tanks. Especially, we need the support of presidents, vice chancellors and provosts to create the enabling conditions for responsible science. We may invite them during the open discussion phase after consultation).
4. Bill asked whether and how do we align our group with the "open science" movement. Center for Open Science (<https://cos.io/>) has eight standards to promote transparency and openness (TOP) among journals. Within each principle, there are four levels of implementation. Level zero means that the journal does not adopt that principle and level 3 means a high level of adoption. The focus of the Center for Open Science is on the reliability of knowledge. To avoid hypothesizing based on results, researchers can pre-register their hypothesis-testing studies; then do the research and report. Anne added that some management journals also have TOP-like policies, e.g., SMJ and MOR. Alignment with COS satisfies one of the two aims of the white paper, but we still need to push forward with our initiative on "societal impact".
5. Sri pointed out that the white paper has multiple messages. We may need to simplify it by focusing only on IMPACT. Rashad disagreed. We still need to keep quality if not as the central theme. Anne emphasized the importance of "reliability" because the "impact" depends on reliable or solid knowledge. Bill also said that we can't entirely delete the quality message. Ingmar suggested that we consider shortening or putting Section D online. (Anne supplement: The quality issue has been discussed in depth by the team via email. We finally agreed that responsible research must include both credible and useful knowledge and that resulted in the current focus on both.)
6. We discussed the idea of having a shorter version of the white paper since the current paper is too long for some audiences. Ira said that the message of the white paper should be sharpened. We agreed to explore the idea of a 5-page version (keeping the long version).
7. Xiaobo asked about a Chinese version. Matthew agreed to translate the short version into Chinese, French and Spanish when it is ready for wide dissemination.
8. Bill concluded that the website should be ready soon, and we hope the consultation can start as soon as the website is ready. He has invited the community founding members (the 27) to try out the website. So far, Jerry has tried it and found it to be user friendly.
9. Other ideas about the white paper being discussed:  
Ira: how does medical research model parallel what we do? It values both basic and translational. The latter is to problem-solving, phenomenon-based research. Our B-schools vary in how phenomenon-driven they are.  
Ira: Some finance, accounting, operations research DO have impact. We acknowledge that we HAVE had impact, but the future should be more, e.g., finance solving social problems!  
Dan: We need more models, more diversity. Some irrelevant research is fine too! But we

ultimately want to have social impact.

Ingmar: Public-funded schools are more attuned to impact, e.g., in Europe, both government and donors care about social impact. Also, it is a good message for younger scholars: they want to make a difference!

Jerry: Why should state taxpayers fund research for hedge fund managers??

Sri: In the US, business schools are mostly self-funded and so we do what we want.

Ira: Shift the emphasis of a portfolio of b-school research in the direction of social impact. So, the aggregate outcome at the school level should include social impact.

Rashad: The problems we face now are not readily amenable to just market-based solutions. It is possible that the problems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century economy are more susceptible to “trust the market,” but the problems emerging these days go beyond that and require different thinking.

Gerry: He heard a talk by Jeffrey Sachs on the changes in economic development and social inclusion, and that behavior of the past is inconsistent with addressing these goals for the future. What we have done in the past won't necessarily help in the future.

Gerry: Deans can have an impact on how folks are evaluated. This is not about CSR; it's about the whole meaning of business!

Ira: Delphi part feels to be CSR-centric, should it be deleted? Should it be put in an online appendix? (Anne supplement: the Delphi report is online now as an appendix to the white paper. We may downplay the Delphi reference in the white paper, which is an easy fix.)

Sri: Tone down the "A journals is bad" stuff (Anne supplement: we should be clear in the white paper that we are not saying the A journals are bad, it is mandating publications in these might be a problem). MIT is less bad on this issue...(but that may be 30 years ago).

Bill: Some B schools in China care about impact, e.g., Tsinghua

Xiabo: different model in China. Chinese-language journals have more focus on practice.

### III. Consultation on white paper (Jerry Davis led the discussion)

1. Anne clarified two purpose of the consultation: a) to seek further feedback to improve the paper, and b) to get buy-in by seeking co-signers of the white paper before wide dissemination.
2. Who should we invite for this stage? The following are mentioned:
  - a. Team member nominations based on the critieria given, which focus on lead scholars in the field including journal editors (expect about 100)
  - b. Bill will invite CIME and AACSB Board (about 40)
  - c. Matthew can invite the EFMD board (about 20)
  - d. Ingmar can invite the CEMS members (about 30)
  - e. Sri said that deans should be invited as scholars and not as deans
  - f. Bill mentioned journal editors (Anne supplement: We have asked team members to include journal editors in their invitations)
  - g. Rashad said we might need some input from the business community. Anne said that she might ask Aspen's BSP to help with some business leaders to comment on the white paper and offer support. Dan reminded us that this is not a movement for business, but b-schools. Business has spoken already!
3. We agreed that the key groups to seek consultation and support of the white paper are senior scholars, journal editors, deans as individual scholars, and some business leaders.

### IV. Dissemination strategy (Gerry George led this discussion)

1. Gerry reviewed the plan for the discussion of the white paper at the various professional associations. They are listed in the document “approaches to the dissemination of the white paper”. Current plans include panels at AMA, AIB, EURAM, and AOM (if accepted). New plans include INFORM, CEMS conference in May/June 2017 Barsalona, to be organized by Ingmar and Bill, the EFMD meeting in Berlin in June 2017, to be organized by Matthew, Bill, and Howard. It might be too late for the AACSB International conference in Houston April 2017. We can explore the possibility for 2018.
2. Rashad has written to the AAA president about a session at the AAA conference in August 2017, and will explore the possibility of Australian-New Zealand Accounting and Finance Association meeting in July 2017. Another group is the Australian Business Deans Council. We should find a way to reach them. Anne subsequently found out that the President of ABDC is Prof. Ian Palmer, Pro Vice Chancellor of RMIT University Melbourne campus. We also need to reach out to our Finance team members for initiating discussion at the Finance associations.
3. We discussed a conference for journal editors. Bill reported that Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) in Houston might be willing to provide funding for this conference. We need to identify the editors of all the relevant journals. We can start with the Financial Times list (50) and supplement it with other key journals. Bill will work on a proposal to LJAF. We need at least a year to plan this conference. Having LJAF, AACSB, EFMD, PRME, and AspenBSP as co-sponsors of the conference will signal the importance and attract the attention of the editors. We might also explore support from the Center for Open Science. Ira encouraged us to sharpen the focus so journal editors will join this effort.
4. We discussed that we might invite the associations’ journal committees since they set policies for the journals. (Anne supplement: we might send invitation to the presidents of professional associations and ask them to send delegates among the editors of their journals and their journals committees.)
5. Sri suggested that AACSB can nudge schools in that direction (impact broadly defined). Faculty stories in media get attention; this is work that speaks to a broad public! Gerry said that the world is moving in that direction also.
6. We discussed the other ideas on the dissemination document:
  - a. Champion schools: Jerry said that he will work on his dean. Sri said that it would be a big deal if Michigan would become a champion school. Michigan is well positioned to engage in RRBm. Ira cautioned that we must not create the impression that RRBm will drive up the cost of research. Others responded that it won’t and it may in fact attract funding from business through collaborative research.
  - b. Awards: Sri said that this is a good idea. The community can identify best RRBm research papers and the accreditation organizations can help in identifying the best RRBm schools. It can be included in the EFMD awards program. AACSB is beginning to add awards and potentially can consider this also. Jerry reported that INSEAD has a high level “Society for Progress” Award, which was given to Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz, James March, Klaus Schwab (king of the World Economic Forum); Indra Nooyi of Pepsi; and Rick Locke for his work on human rights in supply chains. Each received a gold medal and \$100,000. The funding came from several donors. (See <http://societyforprogress.org/themedals.html>) The aims promoted by this medal are very consistent with RRBm, and indeed another award may be

- redundant (esp. if we don't have a spare \$1 million to throw around every year).
- c. Research grants for RRBM research: It is a good idea perhaps target at PhD dissertations. We need to explore funding sources. Possibilities include private foundations (e.g., Ford, Carnegie) and publishers. However, we want to be careful about engaging publishers some of them have very strong profit motive and take advantage of scholarly work.
- V. Other matters/ideas (open discussion)
1. Gerry brought up the idea that we need a person to manage the project and to help the organizing work of all the dissemination efforts. Dan offered one idea (Cabells?). Matthew said that EFMD has a person who manages some programs for EFMD. He will find out if this person can take on this project.
  2. Rashad wondered if we might approach the Gates Foundation. We are not sure that this project fits the mission of Gates Foundation.
  3. Anne wondered if we should apply for a 501c3 status like the Center for Open Science. Sri said that the project needs an institutional home. Bill agreed that foundations prefer grants to be given to institutions. Rashad said that at his school, there is a center for Ethics and CSR. It has a multimillion-dollar grant and is looking for a cause. Rashad will discuss with the center director.
  4. Matthew concluded by saying that this is the best academic group he has worked with.
- 5:35 meeting adjourned.

#### **Action items from the meeting:**

1. Further refine the white paper to clarify the primary purpose as improving societal impact of research supported by reliable and credible knowledge. **Subsequent discussion among Anne, Bill and Jerry: the current version is good for consultation. The paper starts with the vision 2030 and the principles, which are both positive and forward-looking. We can make a few small changes in Section A: Background now. We will make more changes with further suggestions from the consultation. We will proceed with the Nov 30 version (after fine tuning Section A) unless there is strong disagreement from any team member.**
2. We agree to write a shorter version after we have completed the consultation and ready for wide dissemination and open discussion (stage 2) while keeping the original white paper (long version) for reading by those interested. The consultation will be based on the long version and the purposes are to seek a) feedback on the paper and b) support by agreeing to be co-signers on the white paper. The short version is to seek endorsement and support of responsible research in business and management and commitment to the seven responsible research principles.
3. Expand the consultant base by ensuring a good sample of association leaders and journal editors in their disciplines, some presidents or provosts, as well as funding agencies and business leaders supportive of research. We need deans to make recommendations and we invite them as individual scholars and not in their official roles. Anne will send reminder to team members for more names from finance, accounting and deans.
4. Develop a proposal for an editors' conference for LAJF (Bill to take lead). We need a volunteer to work with Bill on developing this proposal. Preferably we need members from accounting, finance, marketing, or operations to ensure coverage of all disciplines.

5. A few of the team at dinner in New Orleans after the meeting

