ALL-ACADEMY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

Responsible Research Call to Action:
Improving Lives by Improving Research Impact

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Abstract

There is increasing attention to the problem of the research-practice gap of our scholarship in the Academy. In early December 2017, the Board of Governors of the Academy of Management approved a report completed by the Practice Theme Committee of the Academy on the topic of "Measuring and Achieving Scholarly Impact." Caring for the practical impact of our scholarship underlies the theme of the 2018 AOM meeting: Improving lives. The theme is to encourage us as scholars to help organizations pay more attention to the health and well-being of employees and other stakeholders. This strikes at the heart of our research activity. How can we make sure that our research strengthens organizational capacity to improve the lives of people who work in them, and those who are the beneficiaries of their products and services and the production process? The purpose of this AAT PDW is to advance the call for "responsible research" that produces both credible and useful knowledge to enable organizations as a force for good in our societies. Concerned about the persistent gap between research and practice and the credibility risk of our scholarship, the Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management (cRRBM) published a position paper in December 2017, and issued a call to action for improving lives by improving research impact. In this PDW we will take up the call by identifying specific actions for sustaining a responsible research ecosystem that supports the vision of "responsible research for better business and a better world."

Primary Sponsor: All-Academy Theme Committee

Interest of PDW to All-Academy Theme Committee

The Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management (cRRBM) arose in response to the growing crisis of integrity and relevance in business school research. Our vision is to create a world in which "business or management research is used widely in practice by business and other non-business organizations to improve the lives of people in our societies" (rrbm.network/position-paper). This vision aligns directly with the 2018 All-Academy theme of "Improving Lives." Consistent with the All-Academy theme, we focus on addressing grand challenges of great importance to society, such as understanding the changing nature of work; examining the social sustainability of business organizations including their impact on the health and well-being of employees, customers, and community; alleviating poverty, creating greater prosperity and reducing economic inequality; enhancing environmental sustainability; and understanding the broader impact of firms in society beyond the creation of shareholder value.

We believe that most, if not all, AOM members desire to make an impact on practice through both their teaching and their research. Our own members' lives will be improved by engaging in research that is meaningful, timely and can potentially change practice and make the world a better place. This search for meaning is universal and, thus, this PDW should be of interest to members of all AOM divisions in addition to being a good fit with the 2018 meeting theme.

Description of Workshop Format

We are requesting two hours for the workshop. The first 30 minutes will be used to introduce the participants, the topic and the RRBM principles, and allow participants to organize into breakout groups. We will have advertised the session across Academy listservs and posted information about the website (rrbm.network) on the Academy program so that participants who are interested can read more about the RRBM initiative prior to the session.

The next 45 minutes will be used for breakout sessions led by facilitators (many will be the founding members of RRBM, who took part in the writing of the position paper). The facilitators will have prepared a draft of some actions that could be taken on each of the topics prior to the session and will distribute copies to participants. The group will discuss, revise and add to the draft statements and specify implementation actions.

The next 30 minutes will be for report-outs by breakout groups. We will conclude (15 minutes) by sharing new initiatives underway by the cRRBM, encouraging participants to continue the discussion through the RRBM community and to commit to actions they can undertake to help drive systemic change supporting the RRBM vision. The structure of the PDW and the time allocated for different activities are outlined in the table below.

Activity	Time allocation
Introduction and overview of RRBM principles	30 minutes
Breakout sessions facilitated by cRRBM leaders	45 minutes
Plenary presentations from breakout discussions and identification of specific calls for action	30 minutes
Sharing of RRBM projects and participant follow-up after the workshop	15 minutes
Total time for the Workshop	*120 minutes*

Overview of the Workshop

The RRBM vision is premised on the belief that business can be a means for a better world and better lives if it is informed by responsible research (rrbm.network). Responsible research is the production of credible knowledge that informs progressive government policies and impacts positive business and management practices to improve the lives of people around the world. It has two components: a focus on integrity and a focus on relevance. Integrity addresses the credibility of knowledge published in business and management journals; relevance addresses the impact the knowledge has on those who need to use it (business and society). The cRRBM developed seven principles to guide responsible research. These are viewed as a wheel with six spokes. At the center of the wheel (P1) is the principle "service to society." The other six principles serve as the spokes, three of which (P2, P3 and P7) aim at improving the *usefulness* of knowledge from the research, and three of which (P4, P5, and P6) aim at improving the *credibility* of research findings:

Principle	Research Implications for Business and Management Research
1. Service to society	*Research aims to develop knowledge that benefits business and the broader society, locally and globally, for the ultimate purpose of creating a better world.*
2. Stakeholder involvement	*Research values the involvement of different stakeholders who can play a critical role at various stages of the scientific process, without compromising the independence or autonomy of inquiry.*
3. Impact on stakeholders	*Schools, funders, and accrediting agencies acknowledge and reward research that has an impact on diverse stakeholders, especially research that contributes to better business and a better world.*
4. Basic and applied contributions	*Deans, journal editors, funders, accrediting agencies, and other stakeholders respect and recognize contributions in both theoretical and applied research.*
5. Plurality and multi-disciplinarity	*Deans, senior leadership, journal editors, funders, and accreditation agencies value diversity in research themes, methods, forms of scholarship, types of inquiry, and interdisciplinary collaboration to reflect the plurality and complexity of business and societal problems.*
6. Sound methodology	*Research implements sound scientific methods and processes in both quantitative and qualitative or both theoretical and empirical domains.*
7. Broad dissemination	*Schools value diverse forms of timely knowledge dissemination that reach a diverse set o potential users and that collectively advance basic knowledge and practice.*

The position paper further identifies specific actions that can be taken by various stakeholders of the research ecosystem to move our research focus toward addressing society's pressing needs. The interconnected nature of the components of the research ecosystem (e.g., journals, rankings, tenure and hiring criteria, accreditation, doctoral education) means that no one group alone can succeed in making the change. The entire research ecosystem needs to move in concert. Therefore, in this PDW we focus on enabling coordinated action. We do this by focusing on topics or areas over which we as researchers have the most control:

1. **Research-Practice Partnerships** (i.e., *generating* research that has impact). These move beyond "gap-spotting" to "problematizing" in framing and designing research (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) and shift practitioners from consumers to co-creators of research.

2. **Responsible Research Impact Standards for Reviewers and Editors** (i.e., *publishing* research that has impact). These address how we, as reviewers and editors, can affect impact by the way we review and the kind of research we support. This moves us beyond a paragraph or two on "implications for practitioners" to a core question of, what is the practical value/contribution of this research, and does this work credibly inform practice?

3. **Responsible Research Portfolio Approach** (i.e., portfolio approach for *rewarding* research that has impact). These move away from a one-size-fits-all approach that is currently forcing the entire world of researchers into a handful of journals to provide evidence of scholarly impact and contribution (when, in fact, they most often work against practical impact and contribution). The portfolio approach assesses impact and quality of business school scholarship using a diverse mix of contributions and centers of excellence in chosen areas of expertise.

Action Teams

Action teams will facilitate the call to action. Individuals on the teams will work together prior to the meeting to prepare draft documents of action items for the topic. These documents will serve as the basis for discussion in the breakout sessions. After the session the action teams will incorporate feedback from the session into the documents and oversee follow-up. It is important to note that they will not be responsible for implementation—ideally, individuals attending the PDW will commit to action. The role of action team members is to foster implementation and energize further action. For each action team, at least two members agree to attend the session and serve as breakout facilitators (right column of table).

Action Teams

Topic Area	Action Team	PDW Facilitators* (agree to attend and be on program)
Research-Practice Partnerships	Mary Uhl-Bien Sim Sitkin Sara Rynes	Mary Uhl-Bien Sim Sitkin
Responsible Research Impact Standards for Reviewers and Editors	Anne Tsui Bill Glick Jerry Davis Steven Rogelberg	Anne Tsui Bill Glick
Responsible Research Portfolio Approach	Sri Zaheer Ingmar Bjorkman	Sri Zaheer Ingmar Bjorkman

* Facilitators have committed to attending session and are not in violation of Rule of Three.

PDW Participants Contact Information

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Action Team Members (will contribute to the development of a preliminary set of actions for each topic area but are not committed to attend the PDW)

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References

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