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Submit to All-Academy Theme Chair: **Jacqueline A-M. Coyle-Shapiro**, *London School of Economics & Political Science*; j.a.coyle-shapiro@lse.ac.uk

All Academy Theme PDW Proposal

**Improving Lives Via Responsible Research:
A Debate to Illuminate an “Ecosystem-Path” Forward**

Organizers (year of Presidency)

Anne S. Tsui (2012) Mendoza College of Business University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN 46556 Email: atsui@nd.edu Phone: 574-631-3504	Paul Adler (2015) Marshall School of Business University of Southern California Los Angeles, CA 90089 Email: padler@marshall.usc.edu Phone: 213-740-0748	Debra Shapiro (2016) Robert H. Smith School of Business University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 Email: dshapiro@rhsmith.umd.edu Phone: 301-356-8287
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AOM Past President Panelists (year of Presidency)

Ray Aldag (1992) Wisconsin School of Business University of Wisconsin-Madison Madison, WI 53706 Email: raldag@bus.wisc.edu Phone: 608-469-6898	Tom Cummings (2006) Marshall School of Business University of Southern California Los Angeles, CA 90089 Email: tcummings@marshall.usc.edu Phone: 213-740-0733	Angelo DeNisi (2009) AB Freeman School of Business Tulane University New Orleans, LA Email: adenisi@tulane.edu Phone: 504-865-5414
Michael Hitt (1997) Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77845 Texas Christian University Ft. Worth, TX 76129 Email: mhitt@mays.tamu.edu Phone: 979-450-1080	Thomas W. (Tom) Lee (2008) Foster School of Management University of Washington Seattle, WA 98195 Email: orcas@uw.edu Phone: 206-543-4389	Jone Pearce (2003) The Paul Merage School of Business University of California, Irvine, CA 92697 Email: jlpearce@uci.edu Phone: 949-824-6505
Bill Starbuck (1998) Lundquist College of Business University of Oregon Eugene, OR 97403 Email: starbuck@uoregon.edu Phone: 541-343-6464	Jim P. (Jim) Walsh (2010) Ross School of Business University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109 Email: jpw Walsh@umich.edu Phone: 734-936-2768	

Sponsor: All Academy Theme Program (PDW)

Abstract

Recently a group of prominent scholars from several major business disciplines released a position paper entitled “A Vision of Responsible Research in Business and Management: Striving for Useful and Credible Knowledge.” This PDW offers participants an opportunity to hear responses to the position paper from eleven former Presidents of the Academy of Management and to debate its implications for the Academy and for their own scholarship. This position paper argues that there is need for a research ecosystem that does more to encourage and enable responsible research—that is, research that is both useful and credible— because such an ecosystem is needed to maintain trust of our key stakeholders and the flow of resources from them and, ultimately, to enable management scholars to improve lives. More specifically, the position paper argues that more useful research will be that which addresses problems of concern to the broader society and that more credible research will be that which uses methods of highest rigor. The position paper also diagnoses why it is challenging to pursue both of these goals and provides possible remedies for easing the challenges. This PDW is organized to generate discussion and debate on the prospect of creating such a responsible research ecosystem so that management research can contribute to improving people’s lives.

Why the workshop should be of interest to the specified sponsor

The Theme of the 2018 Academy of Management meeting is “Improving Lives. Improving Health and Well-being in Society: How Can Organizations Help?” Our proposal directly addresses this Theme by stimulating a discussion about how we, through transforming our research ecosystem, can better orient our research to improving the lives of the people around us. With the inclusion of eleven former Presidents of the Academy, we hope to give even more visibility to the 2018 AOM meeting Theme in general and to the specific topic we address within that broad theme. Given the presidential interest and the importance of the meeting theme, a discussion and debate of how responsible research is defined in the position paper would be of interest to many AOM meeting attendees. The PDW provides an opportunity to share and debate all perspectives—namely, the possibility that the development of an ecosystem for responsible research is desirable, undesirable (due to unintended negative consequences), or in need of cautionary adjustments. Responsible research should be relevant for all divisions and interest groups. It is about encouraging research to focus on solving our society’s pressing problems like those identified in the United Nations Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals through business engagement and commitment. It is about how the research ecosystem and all its interconnected stakeholders (academics, business, government, funders, accreditation and ranking agencies, etc.) can *work together* to increase the health of the research enterprise which in turn can contribute to the health of businesses and other forms of organizations. Therefore, this PDW is an ideal fit with the All Academy Theme “*Improving Lives: Improving Health and Well-being in Society: How Can Organizations Help?*”

Description of the workshop's format

We request a 2-hour PDW time slot.

We would encourage pre-registration but impose no limit on the number of participants.

Participants will be asked to read the position paper beforehand and come ready to discuss their reactions.

Time allocation:

15 minutes Introductions, brief history of position paper, goals of the session: Anne Tsui

30 minutes Presentation of past presidents' views on the position paper: each 5 minutes

30 minutes Group discussion at roundtables (panelists rotate among the tables) on three questions:

1. How responsible research contributes/does not contribute to improving the lives of people in the society, in business or other forms of organizations, and in the Academy?
2. What does creating an "ecosystem for responsible research" mean?
3. What can I do personally to promote responsible research or to redirect the conversation?

30 minutes Discussion groups report their responses, 5 minutes from each table.

15 minutes Discussion-inspired concluding remarks: Debra Shapiro and Paul Adler

Overview of the workshop

The workshop will begin by introducing the panelists, briefly defining “responsible research” (consistent with this definition in the “position paper”), and explaining why designing a research ecosystem to emulate responsible research is critical to enabling management science to have legitimacy and, thereby also, to improve lives. Eight past presidents will share their reactions or perspectives on the position paper which, as a set, include arguments for *and* against the paper’s viewpoint. After each past president’s perspective is presented (briefly described below), the participants will discuss their reactions guided: (1) by the three questions in the round tables and (2) by the eleven past presidents (three organizers and eight panelists) who will serve as facilitators in the round table discussion. After the discussion, each roundtable will share some key ideas associated with how to overcome concerns and/or challenges associated with the aims of responsible research. To enhance the chance that these ideas can gain traction, all participants will be introduced to the website “RRBM.network” (Responsible Research in Business and Management) where they can continue the dialogue and share actions or experiences associated with conducting responsible research.

Brief Introduction to the Idea of Responsible Research

Between fall 2014 and summer 2017, a group of 24 leading scholars in five business disciplines of accounting, finance, management, marketing, and operations/supply chain from 23 universities in ten countries formed a community to discuss how to improve both the credibility and usefulness of research in business schools. They were supported by four institutions: The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), United Nation Global Compact’s Principles of Responsible Management Education (EFMD), and Aspen Institute’s Business and Society Program (Aspen-

BSP). The community wrote a White Paper (referred to in this PDW Proposal as the “position paper”) and engaged in a six-month consultation with leading scholars and selected business leaders. The position paper begins with a vision of business schools and scholars worldwide having successfully transformed their research toward *responsible science*, producing credible knowledge that is ultimately useful for addressing problems important to business and society. Research is the foundation of business education and practice, yet research in business schools has been criticized in the past two decades or more for being weak in integrity and low in relevance. Responsible research produces credible knowledge that can be used to inform government policies and business practices that help improve people’s lives. The position paper proposes seven principles to guide research toward usefulness and credibility. It ends with a call for actions to transform the business and management research ecosystem from the current focus on publishing in a well-defined set of journals as the primary measure of scholarly contribution by individual faculty members or by the school as a whole toward a research ecosystem that emphasizes achieving humanity’s highest aspirations for a better world.

Members of the research ecosystem include many stakeholders including university and school leadership, senior scholars, journal editors, business executives, funders, accreditation agencies, students and alumni, and society at large (as taxpayers and beneficiaries of responsible business education and organizational practices). Responsible research depends on an ecosystem that supports, recognizes, and rewards, in a coordinated fashion.

Panelists’ Perspectives (in alphabetical order):

Ray Aldag: “There is little doubt that there is currently a crisis of confidence regarding research credibility. I will address what I see as some key assumptions, implicit or explicit, in this

dialogue. I think it is important that we not conflate research fraud with a specific research approach...”

Tom Cummings: “I want to offer a concrete explanation and description of the kinds of institutional arrangements and practices that are essential to doing responsible research across the business and management field. I can explicate what the design of an “underlying research ecosystem” needs to be to enact responsible research and how we can strategically change from the current ecosystem equilibrium to a sustainable learning community in the business and management field. I can draw on the work by the Center for Effective Organizations at USC, and, perhaps most heavily, on Eric Trist’s and Tavistock’s long and successful journey.”

Angelo DeNisi: “Surely no one would suggest that there are no exceptions to the statements made about Business Research. Some findings have been replicated (and repeatedly); our research *has* had an impact upon practice, and surely not all of our research has been prone to manufactured data. Responsible research may not be typical, but examples *do* exist. This would require, of course, some judgment about examples that are truly responsible, but if we cannot reach something close to consensus about such examples, then we cannot reasonably hope to change the ways things are typically done.”

Michael Hitt: “We clearly must take actions that ensure that scholarly management research sustains its legitimacy in the eyes of a broad set of stakeholders. Without such legitimacy, our profession will decline and our ability to influence the executive actions, business practices and our students will be impaired. One step required is to ensure the quality of our research and also that it meets the highest ethical standards in accordance with scholarly endeavors. In recent years, perhaps due to the increasing pressures to publish (or perish), we have discovered some serious breaches of the ethical standards of research in our field.”

Jone Pearce: “We have an obligation to conduct research that is useful to all members of society. Yet too often, our institutions have conflated that moral obligation of doing research that is useful to managers, investors, or other rich and powerful members of society. The rich and powerful can pay for research that meets their needs directly; the role of universities is to be independent of these financial blandishments and conduct research that is useful to all members of society. This societal purpose could be much clearer in business school and journal mission statements and actions than it is now. This important issue has been confused in this document with their apparent preference to change evaluations of the quality of how the research is done.”

Bill Starbuck: “In recent years I have come to believe that dishonesty is an important problem. I refer to the responsibilities of universities, professional societies, journals, and government agencies. Dishonesty is shockingly rampant and it is feeding on itself, in that new entrants to the field are being explicitly indoctrinated into dishonest research practices. Researchers must publish in order to retain their jobs and to receive tenure. But, editors and reviewers tell authors to make statements that the authors know to be false. A high percentage of authors decide to make the false statements because they believe they must to so in order to publish.”

Meeting attendance pledges from all PDW panelists

If the proposal is accepted I will be physically present to participate in the session and the discussion.

Best wishes,
Ray Aldag

If this PDW for the AAT Program is accepted, I commit to being physically present to participate in its delivery.

Tom

Thomas G. Cummings
Professor of Management & Organization
USC Marshall School of Business
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1424
213-740-0733

I state that, if this proposal is accepted I will be physically present to participate in the session and the discussion.

Angelo DeNisi

If the proposal is accepted I will be physically present to participate in the session and the discussion.

Warm Regards,

Mike

Michael A. Hitt
University Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Mays Business School
Texas A&M University

If this PDW for the AAT Program is accepted, I commit to being physically present to participate in its delivery.

Tom Lee

If this PDW proposal is accepted for the All Academy Program I will attend and present as indicated.

Jone L. Pearce
Dean's Professor of Organization and Management
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I intend to go to the Academy meeting in Chicago, and I will participate in this workshop. Indeed, I think the topic is incredibly important for the future of academic studies of business.

William H. Starbuck
Lundquist College of Business
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403
starbuck@uoregon.edu
541-343-6464

If this AAT-PDW is accepted, I will physically be present to participate in it.

James P. Walsh

If the proposed AAT-PDW is accepted, I will physically be present to participate in it.

Anne S Tsui

If this AAT-PDW is accepted, I will physically be present to participate in it.

Paul Adler

If the proposed AAT-PDW is accepted, I will physically be present to participate in it.

Debra L. Shapiro
