

Chapter 10

Infusing a Practice-Based Mission Throughout a College of Business

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a case study of the Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business that demonstrates a mission-centric approach to the strategic and tactical operations of the college. The chapter begins with a review of the college's mission statement. The school's stakeholder value approach is evident in the curriculum implications of the mission. The college's ongoing connections with industry partners also supports the practice-based mission. Finally, the school's commitment to practice-based education is reflected in the faculty's experiential approach to teaching and dedicated effort to recruit and hire faculty members who have substantial industry and professional experience. Examples and practical tips are provided throughout.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a case study of the Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business at the University of Dallas (UD). The college is a professional school whose mission is to prepare its students, undergraduate, masters, and doctoral, to become competent and responsible managers who are also principled and moral leaders. The objective of this chapter is to underscore how a college's mission has not only shaped its founding, but has shaped the institutional logic of administrators and faculty with regard to its purpose.

The college is dedicated to practice-based education, the objective of this chapter is to convey how the practice-based mission is evident in multiple ways. The chapter reviews the origins of the college, and then illustrates how the practice-based mission is embedded in the curriculum, and human capital strategies. The chapter also details how the practice-based mission relates to the assurance of learning (AoL) process for the college. Finally, details are provided regarding the manner in which the practice-based mission supports the strategies and connections with industry partners.

BACKGROUND

A growing body of research has shown that mission statements are an increasingly important component for accreditation of universities and colleges of business (Palmer & Short, 2008). Successful strategies are rooted in carefully constructing a mission that takes into account an organization's stakeholders (Drucker, 1973). Importantly, mission statements are tangible statements of how an organization views itself, and how it intends to provide value to stakeholders.

Similar to both large and small business, institutions of higher education devote considerable attention to their strategies and mission statements. Some contend that mission statements represent one of six critical strategic variables for colleges and universities (Shirley, 1983). University administrators often consider missions to be a critical starting point for strategic management. Missions can be an aligning mechanism when engaging in long term planning, a source of inspiration for internal stakeholders, and provide an important signal shaping the perceptions of external constituents including accrediting agencies (Palmer & Short, 2008). For example, both the Higher

Learning Commission, the accrediting unit of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and the AACSB focuses on missions in awarding accreditation to colleges of business (Palmer & Short, 2008).

According to Herbert Simon's seminal article on the organizational design of business schools, the mission of business schools should be to offer managers a science-based education they can readily apply, and which will serve as a basis for continued professional learning over the course of a manager's career (Simon, 1967). In his review of Simon's influential work, Rousseau (2012) points to three key factors that Simon considered critical to achieving his vision for business schools. First, business school faculty should deeply understand the problems managers face and incorporate problem solving (e.g., client-based consulting projects, product design) into the school's educational experiences. Second, faculty research should focus on generating scientific knowledge to improve the world and guide managerial problem solving. Finally, the curriculum in business schools should be actionable, and be grounded in both science and the business context (Rousseau, 2012). The following sections detail how the Gupta College of Business is aligned with Simon's (1967) perspectives on the factors which are critical to the needs of students enrolled in business schools.

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