

We Must Find the Courage to Change

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The Thought-Leader Series of five articles in the March 2014 issue of the *Journal of Business Logistics* made it clear that major changes are required in both Logistics and Supply Chain Management programs and indeed in business schools. The articles provided further evidence of how ill-advised metrics in the hands of fools not only result in a misuse of financial resources but also squander “the efforts of some of the world’s best minds” (Economist 2013a). We address the problems that these “Thought-Leader” pieces reveal, briefly review the criticism of business schools, and describe how the metrics used to evaluate performance are driving the wrong behavior. We offer recommendations for change including: stop competing based on flawed ranking systems; focus on providing students with a quality cross-functional education; encourage faculty members to conduct problem-driven, big-idea research that impacts management practice; and change the incentive system for faculty and administrators. Faculty members in Logistics and Supply Chain Management have a unique opportunity to make substantial contributions due to the boundary-spanning nature of these fields and the traditional emphasis on applied research. We should not ignore these strengths. Implementing our recommendations will not be easy but we must find the courage to change.

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INTRODUCTION

The March 2014 issue of the *Journal of Business Logistics* contained five articles in a Thought-Leader Series. In the first article, “Can We Stay Ahead of the Obsolescence Curve? On Inflection Points, Proactive Preemption, and the Future of Supply Chain Management,” by Fawcett and Waller, the authors make the case that all institutions go through a life cycle that ends in decline and posed the question: “Will we as a discipline also fall prey to predatory change?” (Fawcett and Waller 2014, 17). The authors suggest that “proactive preemption” might be viewed as an alternative to obsolescence and ask “Decline or renewal—which will we choose?” (Fawcett and Waller 2014, 22). The remaining four articles in the Thought-Leader Series unwittingly provide support for the need for change.

In the second article, Zinn and Goldsby (2014, 23) pose the question “How critical is it that the professional identity of logisticians remains intact?” Logistics has become a source of competitive advantage in many organizations and it is also critical for economic development. It represents 8.5% of the economy in the United States, approximately \$1.3 trillion (Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals 2013). So, it is important that logistics expertise continues to be developed. Zinn and Goldsby (2014) make the point that the merging of Logistics faculty into academic departments that combine purchasing and operations has “potentially serious consequences for the future of Logistics education and research” (p. 23). Their solution is that logistics faculty should expand where they publish logistics research to include nonlogistics journals. One of the traditional strengths of logistics has been that the research has been more applied than

in other business functions, and logistics journals have encouraged this type of research (McKinnon 2013). Publishing our best research in other journals is a catch-22. How will logistics journals ever reach premier journal status if we publish our best work in nonlogistics journals? And, will it not be necessary to change our research to meet the requirements of the other journals? Zinn and Goldsby (2014) state: “Only publication in journals broadly accepted as ‘A’ will boost the standing of logistics research in business schools where there is a logistics program and in the broader academic community” (p. 26). They recommend that logistics faculty publish in journals highly ranked by the *Financial Times*, a newspaper from the United Kingdom, and *Businessweek*, a weekly business magazine. Neither of these lists includes one logistics journal. What qualifies these two publications as experts to evaluate the quality of academic research and thus determine the appropriate outlets for publication? Who should determine the quality of logistics or supply chain management research and where it should be published? Does the journal in which the article appears serve as a reasonable proxy for quality? These questions point to a major problem that our profession needs to address, if we are to avoid the obsolescence curve described by Fawcett and Waller (2014). We will come back to this later.

In the third article, Christopher and Ryals (2014) state that our identity as a profession and the discipline requires managerial relevance from our research. They also identify a problem in business schools of “separate and distinct” silos in terms of academic departments. It is our belief that this silo mentality is encouraged by the pressure to publish in “A” journals since the editors of these journals are more interested in publishing research dedicated to the vertical rather than the horizontal, where the biggest opportunities for improving practice exist. At all levels, we see how vertical thinking, the silo mentality, can result in unintended consequences and inadequate performance. Christopher and Ryals (2014) recognize this when they stated: “a truly integrated systems approach to education would better serve our students and the broader business community” (p. 34).

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However, with no support from the literature, they claim that the name supply chain management has “tended to encourage a supply-focused viewpoint” rather than a focus on demand (p. 29). They make the case that “we need a new response to a changing business environment, which we term demand chain management” (p. 29) and that a holistic integrated supply chain strategy is the integration of marketing and supply chain management. Since every firm in a network of companies up to the final customer is a supplier to the final customer and derives its income from the final customer, supply chain seems like an appropriate name for this network of companies. It is difficult to understand how a name change to demand chain management solves the problems of academic silos and lack of cross-functional integration in companies (Saunders 2014). In fact, one might argue that it exacerbates the confusion caused by the constant renaming of the subject matter. Other professions seem to understand the importance of the brand. For example, Marketing has been called Marketing for more than 100 years although the domain has changed substantially from the first courses taught at the University of Michigan and University of Pennsylvania in 1904.

Christopher and Ryals (2014) appear to use logistics and supply chain management as synonyms referring to an organizational function. They view the integration of Marketing and Supply Chain Management as the cornerstone for business performance, but ignore the fact that the inclusion of other business functions such as Sales, Operations, Purchasing, Finance, and Research and Development in cross-functional, cross-firm teams is key to driving business value (Cooper et al. 1997; Lambert and Enz 2012). How can one reasonably expect that a network of companies can be managed with fewer business functions than are needed to manage a single company?

In the fourth article, Petersen and Autry (2014) recognize that departments in business schools compete for resources, which is the reason for not seeing much collaboration across departments. For example, at The Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University, the cross-functional, cross-firm supply chain management framework developed by faculty in the Department of Marketing and Logistics over a period of 22 years, is ignored by the production/operations and purchasing faculty in the Department of Management Sciences.

Petersen and Autry (2014) state that “academic business institutions have the propensity for identifying and ‘promoting’ leading scholars into administrative roles” (p. 42). It is hard to know upon what data this assertion was made. In fact, the exact opposite case can be made. For example, at Petersen and Autry’s own institution, the dean has one article with more than 100 cites, not a record that most would consider to be representative of a “leading scholar.” With notable exceptions (e.g., the deans at Harvard University, University of Arkansas, University of San Diego, and Vanderbilt University, to name just four), it appears that the “leading scholars” are not promoted to administrative roles. Consequently, business school administrators rely on journal rankings to make promotion decisions perhaps because they are not capable of reading the articles and judging quality or they lack sufficient time (McKinnon 2013). “The dean may not know much about research but at least he or she can count” (Worrell 2009, 127). The same might be said about most department chairs. In the defense of administrators, it can be argued that the bulk of the research is so narrow and specialized that it would

be difficult for anyone outside the specialty area to judge the quality. Once again, this raises the questions: What is good research? and Who should judge the quality of our research?

In the fifth article, Van Hoek et al. (2014) identify the problem that procurement, operations, and logistics managers are viewed and evaluated based on cost reductions. They suggest that supply chain management professionals need to manage the links with the horizontal (functions) and the vertical (CEO), but at the end of the day, the authors deal exclusively with procurement. They refer to procurement and supply chain management professionals as if they were the same. Perhaps it was manuscripts like this that led Christopher and Ryals (2014) to believe that supply chain management is too focused on supply. One observation can be made: there is a lack of precision in terminology that makes communication difficult.

As pointed out by Fawcett and Waller (2014), “the keys to sustained viability is leadership’s (1) understanding of and commitment to the needed change, and (2) willingness to allocate resources that alters the driving force/resisting force dynamics” (p. 18). As shown above, four of the five “thought-leader” pieces unwittingly support the conclusion that we are in desperate need of change. Will we find the courage to do so or will we destroy ourselves from within?

The calls for change are not new. For example, in the 1980s when Lester Thurow was the Dean of the Sloan School of Management at MIT, he said “If our B-Schools are doing so well, why are American companies doing so badly?” (Businessweek 1988). The problem has been described widely in the management field (Harmon 2006; AACSB 2008; Aguinis et al. 2014), but little has changed. In fact, it can be argued that the situation continues to get worse with time. In the next section, we will provide a brief review of the opportunities and imperatives for change. It is followed by a synopsis of the broader problems that exist in business schools. Then, we present a way forward, and the implications for logistics and supply chain management. The paper ends with a summary of our recommendations and a call for change.

OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPERATIVES FOR CHANGE

In the article “Marketing Renaissance,” 14 distinguished marketing scholars provided their insights on the “current challenges, opportunities, and imperatives for improving marketing thought and practice” (Brown et al. 2005, 1). While the focus was on marketing, there was a message for faculty from all business functions. The underlying concern was that “many strategically important aspects of marketing are being taken away by other functions in the organization” (Sheth and Sisodia in Brown et al. 2005, 11), a problem that is shared by other business functions, including Logistics (Fawcett and Waller 2014). The response to these threats should not be to strengthen competition among functions but to encourage practitioners and scholars to expand their horizontal vision and make connections across disciplines. For example, Brown urges marketing scholars to “position their contributions more to business in general rather than limit them to marketing practice” (Brown et al. 2005, 1). The most significant problems in business require cross-functional solutions, which mean that our research needs to find ways to leverage

synergies across functional silos. The drive for business excellence and the requirement for more collaboration with key customers and suppliers makes the implementation of cross-functional, cross-firm processes a necessity (Lambert 2014). As noted by Brown, “thinking in terms of processes and across disciplines would do wonders” for scholarship (Brown et al. 2005, 3).

The narrow and deep focus of academic research, is “far a field from the day-to-day” trade-offs that managers have to make in business (Brown et al. 2005, 3). Methodological rigor has been emphasized at the expense of both theory development and practical relevance, “retarding the progress of the marketing discipline” (Webster in Brown et al. 2005, 4). In addition, researchers tend to choose tactical performance variables such as sales volume or market share over more meaningful predictors of sustainable business growth because they are easier to observe and measure. And, some authors (e.g., Flynn et al. 2010) resort to managers’ perceptions of financial performance rather than asking respondents to provide the actual numbers or at least the percentage increase or decrease in the numbers if there are issues of confidentiality.

Another type of silo that academics have created is based on the research methodology used. Researchers tend to categorize themselves as behavioral, modelers, managerial, survey-based, or case study researchers, and publications tend to favor specific methodologies (McAlister in Brown et al. 2005). These silos have created an inconsistent and adversarial view about what comprises relevant research, quality research, and rigorous research, and diminished intellectual stimulation since articles are reviewed by researchers who think alike (MacInnis in Brown et al. 2005). Webster argues that academics “renew respect” for conceptual thinking as opposed to methodological rigor and encourage research that redefines the boundaries of the discipline, because “the major challenges are conceptual, not methodological” (Brown et al. 2005, 6). Raju recommends that “We should be more open to studying problems that matter, even if we need to make some limited compromises in terms of the precision with which we study these” (Brown et al. 2005, 18), and paraphrasing Lodish (1974) he continues: “Approximate answers to important problems or issues are just as useful (if not more useful) than precise answers to wrong, well-defined, narrow problems” (Raju in Brown et al. 2005, 18).

A risk of perpetuating the focus on narrow business issues and methodological rigor is that knowledge, essential for business success, can be lost forever (Wilkie in Brown et al. 2005). Marketing (and indeed all business subjects) should be taught as an art and a science (like cooking) to foster its creative dimension (Sheth and Sisodia in Brown et al. 2005). The responsibility for creating the conditions that are necessary for advancing and transmitting integrated business knowledge is on senior academics (Webster in Brown et al. 2005). There are few incentives for business leaders to step outside the comfort zone that their functional silos provide. Similarly, young scholars cannot be expected to have the wide perspective on the total business discipline nor the time to develop integrated business conceptualizations if their promotions are dependent on the number of papers published in a limited set of specialized journals. Pearce and Huang (2012) make the case that the decline in actionable research “is not just an incentives problem, but that producing

theoretically important actionable research is difficult and so more likely an ability problem” (p. 259). For example, it is not the lack of financial incentives for a successful career that stops most college level athletes from playing in the National Football League, it is that few of them have the ability to play at this level. “Despite all of the doctoral consortia, reformed doctoral training, and junior faculty mentoring available, very few are going to be able to do this difficult work” (Pearce and Huang 2012, 257). When combined with the growing pressure to publish only in journals used in business school rankings, the result has been more publications that lack relevance for practicing managers.

Raju encourages marketing practitioners and academics to be “more comfortable with our own identity” because their field “has made many important contributions to the business world, to society, and to science” (Brown et al. 2005, 19). This is advice that would benefit those logistics scholars who want to change the name of our profession and/or publish their best work in journals of other fields to gain the respect of nonlogistics colleagues. In the words of Raju: “If we have a good article that fits equally well in two outlets, we may want to consider publishing it in a marketing journal rather than in an economics journal” (Brown et al. 2005, 19).

While the changes that are necessary in logistics can be addressed to some extent by senior logistics faculty, the issues faced by logistics faculty are symptoms of the broader problems that exist in business schools. The failings of today’s business education are systemic, and “cannot be solved by changes at one, or even a few, business schools” (Podolny 2009, 63).

WHAT IS WRONG WITH BUSINESS SCHOOLS?

Achieving higher rankings has become the goal rather than providing students with the best cross-functional learning experience delivered by faculty who are known for the positive impact of their research on management practice. Because business school rankings are believed to influence students’ choice of a business school, they have become the basis on which schools compete. The main components of school rankings are students’ starting salaries after graduation, GMAT scores, and the research productivity of faculty. Since rankings are slow to react to structural changes in curricula and program design, many deans focus on short-term measures in an attempt to move their schools up in the charts quickly (Podolny 2009). For example, if a business school admits students with more business experience, offers specialized programs that prepare students for higher paying industries such as consulting or banking, or trains students to master job interviews rather than focusing on academic excellence, its rankings will likely improve.

An unintended consequence of using rankings including starting salaries as the basis for competition is that it has lent “legitimacy to students’ claims that a school’s primary goal is to get them a high-paying job” (Podolny 2009, 65), rather than to provide a learning experience that will prepare them for professional success if they put in the effort. It is difficult to teach students with the “high-paying job” expectations the moral and ethical consequences of their business decisions, and this explains in part the recent financial crises, and the widespread mistrust that

society has in business schools. A revision of the ethical foundations of business schools is important because “MBAs occupy positions with enormous responsibility that have a huge impact on society, and their ability to do harm is very great” (Podolny 2009, 65). It is unlikely that a single faculty member can provide students a holistic view of business that combines both “hard” and “soft” disciplines such as ethics and leadership. And, the emphasis in quantitative research techniques has led faculty to specialize only in those problems that fit their area of expertise (Podolny 2009).

Since GMAT scores also impact the rankings, there is pressure to only admit students who will positively affect this measure. While a business school would not want to admit students who will not do well in the program, is there a level of GMAT score beyond which success in the business world does not improve? Are there other personality traits beyond a certain level of intelligence that should be considered? In fact, there has been research that indicates that higher GMAT scores are related to negative traits such as the unwillingness to take risks (uncertainty avoidance) and individualism (Aggarwal et al. 2013). Another “survey of hundreds of MBA alumni found no correlation between an individual’s GMAT score and that person’s post-MBA success as measured by starting salary and pay over the first 5 years after graduation” (Yeaple 2012), never mind during an entire career.

Business schools have implemented rewards to increase research productivity and to encourage faculty to publish in a select group of highly ranked journals to satisfy the criteria set by school ranking schemes (McKinnon 2013). Journal rankings are convenient for university administrators because they provide a quantitative metric for judging faculty productivity without the need “to read the papers and assess their individual merits” (McKinnon 2013, 10). However, the validity of journal rankings as indicators of research quality is questionable (Tsui 2013). Rankings favor research that is highly theoretical, emphasizes methodological rigor over practical relevance, and is written in a style that is inaccessible for practitioners (Brown et al. 2005; McKinnon 2013). The peer-review system is not sufficiently reliable to assume that all publications in top journals represent good research, and all poor research is left to low-tier journals (Bennis and O’Toole 2005; Starbuck 2005). Citations, which are the number of times that a published work is cited by other researchers, are the basis for ranking systems and are used to determine the impact of articles, researchers, journals, and even entire fields (Aguinis et al. 2014). Therefore, scholarly impact is defined and assessed exclusively by other scholars in what can be viewed as “an incestuous closed loop” (Hambrick 1994, 13) which excludes students, practitioners, government agencies, and society in general as key stakeholders of academic work (Aguinis et al. 2014). Moreover, a performance measurement system based on the number of articles produced and the number of citations accumulated can be gamed (Aguinis et al. 2014). Perhaps this explains why the number of authors per paper has increased to the point where it is rare to see single-author articles and manuscripts with two authors are not the norm.

The obsession with journal rankings has created an overproduction of papers that are seldom read, are not comprehensible by the public, and are irrelevant for business practice (Harmon 2006). For example, analysis of articles appearing in the *Academy of Management Journal* and *Administrative Science Quarterly*

from 1960 to 2010 were found to have a low and declining practical value for managers (Pearce and Huang 2012). Other research has shown declining trends of readability, the ease of understanding of an article due to the style of writing, for the *Journal of Marketing* (Bauerly, Johnson, and Singh in Brown et al. 2005) and other major marketing journals (Crosier 2004). In addition, Pfeffer and Fong (2002) make the case that discipline-based parochialism has resulted in narrowing research agendas and in specialized faculty which explains the failure to develop truly integrated curricula.

A traditional strength of logistics journals has been that the articles have been both readable and focused on improving management practice. The risk for the future of Logistics as a discipline is that journals of young academic fields are less represented in the upper levels of journal rankings (McKinnon 2013). This could cause logistics academics to become “disloyal to the specialist journals in their fields” (McKinnon 2013, 6) and to break with the tradition of publishing practical and meaningful research. But, there is a way forward if we have the courage to change.

A WAY FORWARD

In this section, we offer a number of recommendations for improving the current situation: stop competing based on flawed ranking systems; focus on providing students with a quality cross-functional education; encourage faculty members to conduct problem-driven, big-idea research that impacts management practice; and change the incentive system for faculty and administrators.

Improving the quality of business schools requires that we stop competing on rankings (Harmon 2006; Podolny 2009). Achieving higher rankings by expecting ever higher GMAT scores should not be the goal but rather delivering a quality cross-functional education. Above some reasonable minimum GMAT score, the emphasis should turn to personal characteristics such as ambition, creativity, integrity, and leadership abilities. Also, the emphasis on rankings places too much importance on starting salaries which has resulted in too many graduates going to Wall Street and consulting jobs which “sucked a lot of talent out of other sectors—and out of businesses that actually produce things” (McGrath 2013). Finally, the rankings put too much emphasis on publications in journals on the *Financial Times*, *Businessweek*, and University of Texas at Dallas lists which has resulted in faculty who are narrow specialists not capable of contributing to an integrated program of study and in some cases lacking interest in teaching. We agree with the recommendation of Harmon (2006, 242): “University presidents, business school deans, and the AACSB should publicly condemn and refuse to participate in any business school ranking surveys on the ground that they represent a vulgarization of scholarly values.”

We should focus on graduating students who will be successful, which will increase demand for future graduates and lead former students who are grateful for the life-changing experience provided to them to be generous in their support of their *alma mater*. The emphasis should be on what the students will learn that will prepare them for long-term career success and not on the size of the starting salaries upon graduation.

Our advice to business leaders is to ventilate the silos in their organizations by implementing cross-functional teams (Lambert

2014), but you will not find organizations with more dysfunctional silos than business schools in the United States. We need to focus on developing students who have a holistic view of business, so we need to address the problem of our departmental silos. At all levels of leadership, there is a need for horizontal thinking which requires cross-functional integration, but most professors are experts in functions and teach their classes from that perspective. If integration of content takes place, it is accomplished individually by the student. Podolny (2009) recommended appointing teaching teams comprised of faculty with a diverse set of skills to develop and deliver courses. While this idea has merit, it will increase the costs of delivering the content and the degree of cross-functionality will be limited to the number of faculty members involved and their relative functional specialties. This leads us to recommend that all new business school faculty members be required to have completed the business core classes (as part of an undergraduate business program, MBA, or PhD), so that they are better able to integrate what they are teaching with other courses the students are taking. But, this only addresses part of the problem.

To “foster greater integration” of business functions (Podolny 2009, 66), we must stop focusing exclusively on the vertical which is reinforced by the need to publish in specialized “A” journals. While Glen Urban stated that “academics aren’t relevant” (Sheth and Sisodia in Brown et al. 2005, 10) and much of the research published in “A” journals might lead to this conclusion, we are not suggesting that all research conducted in the vertical is without merit. However, cross-functional research needs to be encouraged (Brown et al. 2005) by rewarding professors who engage in this type of research. Deans need to encourage research that is cross-functional, process oriented, problem-driven, and focused on big ideas. To quote Kerin (Brown et al. 2005, 13), “my sense is that this research, regardless of topic, should explore multifunctional, business-level issues; identify cause-and-effect relationships; and, focus on metrics that matter to CEOs and corporate boards.” To facilitate this goal, new faculty hires should have the ability to conduct actionable, relevant research and an interest in doing so in order to make up for current faculty who lack the ability to conduct such research.

While we believe that more emphasis should be placed on cross-functional research and cross-functional integration of curricula, this does not mean that research within business functions should be neglected nor that the importance of teaching function specific content should be marginalized. As is the case with The Global Supply Chain Forum process view of supply chain management (Lambert 2014), the functions are not diminished and/or replaced by the processes because functional expertise is required to manage the business. The eight cross-functional, cross-firm processes are simply the coordinating structure which enables management to make more holistic decisions that are better for all stakeholders. Vertical research is necessary (but hopefully of practical use) and specific functional expertise needs to be learned by the students. But, faculty members should be responsible for helping students think horizontally so they can integrate the content across functions.

Business school deans should articulate a vision and work to remove the barriers to faculty entrepreneurship. Faculty should be encouraged to look for research funding from industry. The benefits would be twofold: research that addresses real business

problems and a faculty that are able to support executive education. Too often, faculty members act like teenagers crying to parents about the need for a bigger allowance. They think the dean is responsible for raising the money to support whatever research the faculty members decide is important. As unbelievable as it might seem to someone not in the profession, at some business schools there is an expectation among tenured faculty members, even those at the full professor rank, that they should receive summer stipends based on the number of “A” journal articles they have produced. Is it not reasonable to expect that faculty members at this stage of their careers would conduct research of sufficient practical value that businesses or organizations outside of the university would view it as worthy of financial support? Faculty who by the nature of their research do not interact with practitioners should be encouraged to engage in consulting activity to help them focus on solving business problems (Raju in Brown et al. 2005).

Rather than being rewarded for the number of “A” journal articles written, faculty members should be rewarded for the impact of their research on practice and the extent to which the research can be integrated into degree program curricula and executive education programs. For pay increases, and promotion and tenure decisions, articles should be read by those evaluating the faculty member and the impact of the research determined. To be considered a contribution, it must be shown that a publication has or will impact practice. Letters from outside reviewers should not be only from educators but also from an equal number of business executives who can speak to the quality of the work. The metrics used to judge the contributions of faculty members should be different as they progress through career stages. For example, senior faculty might develop and/or serve as directors of research centers, write books, or obtain large research grants. The specific metrics chosen to evaluate faculty members should be aligned with the institution’s mission. A single focus on counting the number of “A” journal articles and rewarding faculty members and the administrators to whom they report on this basis is naïve at best and destructive at worst. An article in the *Economist* challenged the process for selecting articles for “A” journals and suggested that: “peer review should be tightened—or perhaps dispensed with altogether” (Economist 2013a). “Researchers ought to be judged on the basis of the quality, not the quantity, of their work” (Economist 2013b).

IMPLICATIONS FOR LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

What are the implications for logistics and supply chain management? First, we should stop using the words “logistics” and “supply chain management” as synonyms. The name logistics should be used only to describe logistics activities in the supply chain. Logistics is a function that spans organizational boundaries and logistics research traditionally has focused on improving management practice. We should not lose this advantage. Deans should let each department select the top journals and discard the *Financial Times*, *Businessweek*, and University of Texas at Dallas lists. This would lead to more than one acceptable journal in which to publish logistics research. We also need to return to what has been a traditional strength, research that is focused

on improving management practice rather than searching for research questions that address gaps in the literature. “This produces research designed to address a suspicion that a particular theory is wrong or narrower in scope than represented in the literature” (Pearce and Huang 2012, 257), which results in articles that address questions without practical importance and produce findings that are not actionable. According to Pearce and Huang (2012), “the supply of management research superstars has not kept proportional pace with the demand” (p. 258). The same might be said about the field of logistics and a contributing factor may be that we have moved away from a focus on solving business problems. Finally, we should publish in logistics journals and not forsake our specialty journals as implied by Zinn and Goldsby (2014). We should be comfortable with our own identity as logisticians (Raju in Brown et al. 2005). The names of real professions do not change every 10–20 years. For example, the subject that is known as Marketing has remained Marketing for more than 100 years.

Second, since the mid 1990s, we have endured a continuous stream of new names for the subject matter supply chain management with each proponent claiming to have breakthrough thinking. Many of the culprits are academics who want to appear leading edge by using new terminology for old ideas. Other culprits are consultants who try to differentiate their service offerings by the name of the service rather than how well they help clients implement the concepts. We should refrain from this mindless proliferation of names for supply chain management and focus on implementation. Because, supply chain management is all about cross-functional, cross-firm integration (Lambert 2014), faculty in this discipline are in a unique position to lead the effort to conduct research that integrates across business functions. Senior faculty with tenure should do the right thing, work on long-term, big idea projects that impact business practice. Research on big ideas can be facilitated by establishing research centers that “act as umbrellas for a diverse set of scholars and that address major substantive issues” (Brown et al. 2005, 22). Finally, journal editors need to place a priority on cross-functional research that impacts business practice rather than papers that address incremental advances in theory with findings that are not related to business practice nor useful in the classroom.

If scholars do not play the current game are their careers doomed? There is evidence that even without our suggested changes at the college level, challenging the current system does not need to be a career ending move. For example, Michael Porter of Harvard University has been recognized as “the most famous and influential business professor who has ever lived” (Colvin 2012, 165). And yet, Porter has rejected “the No. 1 rule of the academic game...that all advancement depends upon publishing as many articles as possible in the few dozen top-tier journals” (Colvin 2012, 166). Porter has published “just seven such articles...his many articles in *Harvard Business Review* don’t count” since it is viewed as a practitioner journal at most top business schools (Colvin 2012, 166). According to Google Scholar, Porter’s publications have over 240,000 citations, one book has more than 60,000 citations and one *Harvard Business Review* article has more than 10,000 citations. In total, he has over 30 publications with more than 1,000 citations each. We believe that Porter’s experience supports the case that challeng-

ing the conventional wisdom will not diminish the opportunities for success but may actually increase them. And, Porter is not an isolated case. In the period 2002 to 2011, Clay Christensen, Michael Porter, Linda Hill, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Henry Mintzberg, Rakesh Khurana, and Andrew Kakabadse had no articles published in the *Financial Times* list of 42 top journals and yet they were among the 21 full professors included in the world’s 50 top management thinkers (Martin 2012). It is not surprising that a majority of the 21 full professors included in “the world’s 50 top management thinkers” are connected to the Harvard Business School which has a history of focusing on solving business problems, has stayed the course regardless of the educational fads and would be on any reasonable person’s list of top 10 business schools.

SUMMARY

In summary, we recommend the following: stop competing based on flawed ranking systems; focus on providing students with a quality cross-functional education; encourage faculty members to conduct problem-driven, big-idea research that impacts management practice; and change the incentive system for faculty and administrators. We also make specific recommendation for logistics and supply chain management. Table 1 contains a summary of these recommendations.

The case can be made that the current system of ever-increasing tuition costs, needed to cover the expense of a growing number of administrators and salaries for faculty who increasingly are not involved in management practice, is not sustainable. And, we should keep in mind that “we are paid by people outside of academia to produce knowledge useful to them, creating moral obligations, as well as self-interested reasons to do better” (Pearce and Huang 2012, 260). According to U.S. Census (2013), 50% of individuals earn \$26,989 or less per year and 66% earn \$40,563 or less. Over 90% of wage earners make less than \$100,000 per year. Compare these numbers to what new assistant professors receive and it is clear that we as a profession have a responsibility to give taxpayers and students more value for their money. In other words, there is a moral imperative for change.

The arguments presented in this paper are not new but the situation is becoming dire. Some have expressed the concern that the \$1.3 trillion in student debt and the \$100 billion of defaulted student federal loans might be an indication that education will become the next bubble to negatively affect the economy (Smialek 2014; Strauss 2014). However, student debt may not be the only potential hazard for academic institutions and it does not consider the quality of the education received at ever higher costs. There is also the problem of the resources squandered on research that has no practical application. “Even when flawed research does not put people’s lives at risk—and much of it is too far from the market to do so—it squanders money and the efforts of some of the world’s best minds. The opportunity costs of stymied progress are hard to quantify, but they are likely to be vast” (Economist 2013a). While the *Economist* article was addressing the problem of scientific research in general, Martin estimated the cost of not-actionable articles published in the *Financial Times* list of 42 “A” journals at \$600 million per year (Martin 2012). If we do not find the courage to change, we risk

Table 1: Summary of recommendations

Stop competing based on flawed ranking systems

- Condemn and refuse to participate in business school ranking surveys (Harmon 2006).
 - Select MBA candidates (who have achieved some reasonable minimum GMAT score) based on personal characteristics such as ambition, creativity, integrity, and leadership abilities.
 - Prepare students for long-term career success and not for the amount of the starting salaries upon graduation.
 - Discard the *Financial Times*, *Businessweek*, and University of Texas at Dallas lists and let each department select the top journals.
-

Focus on providing students with a quality cross-functional education

- Place emphasis on what students will learn in the program.
 - Foster greater integration of business functions and academic departments to help students think horizontally.
 - Require new faculty members to have completed the business core classes (undergraduate, MBA, or as part of PhD) in order for them to be able to develop and deliver courses that integrate materials across functions.
 - Place more emphasis on cross-functional research.
-

Encourage faculty members to conduct problem-driven, big-idea research that impacts management practice

- Encourage research that is focused on big ideas rather than on incremental ideas and closing gaps in theory.
 - Hire new faculty with the ability to conduct actionable, relevant research and an interest in doing so in order to make up for current faculty who lack the ability to conduct such research (Pearce and Huang 2012).
 - Encourage faculty to look for research funding from industry.
 - Encourage faculty who by the nature of their research do not interact with practitioners to engage in consulting activity.
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Change the incentive system for faculty and administrators

- Stop rewarding faculty exclusively for the number of “A” journal articles written.
 - Base rewards on the impact of the research on practice and the extent to which the research can be integrated into degree program curricula and executive education programs.
 - Expect different contributions from faculty members as they progress through career stages.
 - Choose metrics to evaluate faculty members that are aligned with the institution’s mission.
 - Read the articles produced by faculty members and determine the impact of the research when evaluating individuals for pay increases, and promotion and tenure decisions.
 - Require that the letters from outside reviewers not be only from educators but also from an equal number of business executives who can speak to the quality of the work.
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Specific recommendations for logistics and supply chain management

- Refrain from using logistics and supply chain management as synonyms.
 - Use the name logistics to describe logistics activities in the supply chain.
 - Return to our distinctive tradition of publishing practical and meaningful research (McKinnon 2013; Ryals and Christopher 2014).
 - Publish logistics research in logistics journals (Raju in Brown et al. 2005; McKinnon 2013).
 - Be comfortable with our own identity as logisticians (Raju in Brown et al. 2005).
 - Stop the mindless proliferation of names for supply chain management and focus on implementation.
 - Understand that supply chain management is not a business function but the management of relationships across the supply chain implementing cross-functional, cross-firm business processes (Lambert 2014).
 - Establish research centers that “act as umbrellas for a diverse set of scholars and that address major substantive issues” (Brown et al. 2005, 22).
 - Journal editors need to place a priority on cross-functional research that impacts business practice rather than papers that address incremental advances in theory and are not related to business practice.
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the possibility that regulations will be imposed on us and history indicates that we will not like them. For example, the banking institutions must deal with the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act because they could not police themselves.

The competition among business schools should be based on the quality of our graduates in terms of their career success and the quality of our research as measured by its impact on business practice. At the end of the day, a business school's reputation is determined by the quality of the people and the quality of the ideas they generate.

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