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Faculty and Staff Notes

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An Evaluation and Analysis

While nearly a quarter of the marketing majors get their first jobs outside the area of marketing. Moreover, very few marketing students know in advance which specific type of marketing job they will eventually land (such as marketing research, marketing management, retailing, sales, advertising). Finally, a person's first job does not usually indicate what he or she might be doing later in life. In summary, not many undergraduates are in a position to make prognostications about what specific vocational skills they will need for the remainder of their career.

The concluding argument against vocational marketing education is perhaps the most cogent and salient of them all. That is that, on the whole, vocational skills are difficult if not impossible to teach in a traditional academic setting. Most business people already know that one cannot learn vocational skills vicariously. The only way to really master such skills is to do them. There is really not much to conceptualize or examine analytically in the case of most vocational skills. They often are just a matter of practice. Such practice can take place in a classroom environment, but it is less real and meaningful if it is done there. The best pedagogical method for teaching these skills is to have the student take the job and do it under the supervision of an experienced worker.

It would seem obvious, then, that the people who should be teaching vocational business skills are not those in academia. Rather, these skills should be taught in industry itself. Industry has the people who know these skills firsthand. They have the funds and incentives to keep up with changes in skill areas; they are the ones who need the trained employees; they offer the best opportunity to put these skills to direct use in a situation where they can be practiced repeatedly with careful monitoring of the results. Moreover, industry is in a position to perform this task more economically and efficiently than it can be accomplished in the world of higher education.

The attempt on the part of a minority of people in industry to pass vocational training costs onto higher education plays into the hands of some college administrators who want to expand their institutions without considering the quality of the graduates being turned out or the suitability of the educational program to the resources and talents of the institutions. The inefficiencies are such that the result is likely to be higher long-run costs to society for vocational training and many personal disappointments on the part of students and employers.

The Role of Business Education In Higher Learning

Given the negative aspects of the two extremes, pure vocationalism and abstract teaching, it is clear that business education can serve its most useful function in a middle position, i.e., a *realistic* introduction to each of the major subject areas within business administration without attempting to teach specific vocational skills. More specifically, business education should be treated eclectically, much as liberal learning programs treat the various components of the liberal arts. In this manner the university can perform the task it does best by introducing the student, in a relatively short period of time, to many topics that concern educated people.

In such a program some emphasis must be placed on learning about the subject areas that the student does *not* intend to work in for the rest of his or her life. The one area the student is planning to work in should receive not only the same introduction that the other areas receive but some concentrated study. After graduation, on-the-job training will allow the student to eventually learn more about the particular vocational skills than the professor (who in most cases has never performed the task) will ever know about it. Nonetheless, the

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MEMO

The *West Michigan Management Memo* is published twice a year, in the spring and fall, and is sent to all contributors to the Enrichment Fund. Every two years a dinner is held to honor those leaders who helped found Grand Valley State and who by their interest and involvement continue to enrich the development of the institution as well as the quality of life in our community. The fund enables the Seidman College to support activities and programs designed to increase understanding of our economic system, facilitate exchanges of ideas between students, faculty and businessmen and, in general, enrich the business and academic communities. Persons interested in more information about the *Memo*, the published articles, or the Enrichment Fund should contact the Dean's Office, F. E. Seidman College of Business and Administration, Lake Huron Hall, Grand Valley State, telephone 895-6611, ext. 271.

Faculty and Staff Notes

Dr. Jitendra M. Sharma, Professor of Management, participated in the AACSB's (American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business) two-and-a-half-day workshop to "Internationalize the Business School Curriculum" at the University of Illinois (Chicago Circle) recently. **Dr. Earl Harper**, Associate Professor and Chairman of Management, participated in the AACSB's workshop on the same topic at Georgia State University.

Dr. Donald Klein, Professor of Accounting and Chairman of the Accounting Department, received his C.P.A. certificate recently. Don is a C.M.A. and spent the 1979-80 academic year on sabbatical working with Seidman and Seidman to complete one year of practice required for the certificate.

Dr. R. Bryant Mills, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Director of the B.P.A. and M.P.A. programs, will be

on sabbatical during the fall semester of the 1981-82 academic year. He will complete post-doctoral study in the Labor Relations Institute at Michigan State University.

Dr. Benjamin Rudolph, Associate Professor of Marketing, will also be on sabbatical during the upcoming fall semester. He will be involved in completing research in the areas of mass transit marketing, real estate usage, and industrial private branding and expects to prepare several articles for publication.

Dean Marvin DeVries spoke at the annual meeting of the Wolverine Council on April 4 in Battle Creek. This council includes all chapters of the National Management Association in Michigan. The title of his talk was "Current Economic Conditions, the Reagan Administration, and the Future of Capitalism."