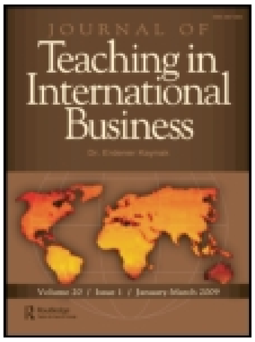

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International Accreditations as Drivers of Business School Quality Improvement

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Business schools are under pressure to implement continuous improvement and quality assurance processes to remain competitive in a globalized higher education market. Drivers for quality improvement include external, environmental pressures, regulatory bodies such as governments, and, increasingly, voluntary accreditation agencies such as AACSB and EFMD. A case study based on French management schools is presented to demonstrate this impact, and globally, management education is shown to have benefited from specific accreditation standards. Future challenges include the risk of standardization and institutional isomorphism, research relevance and quality, and the consequences of globalization on accreditation criteria.

Keywords: Globalization, International accreditations, Business schools, Quality improvement

1. INTRODUCTION

Management education plays an important role in preparing professionals to be able to contribute to business activity in a globalized environment. During the past century business schools have been under pressure to improve their practices. Some quality initiatives were based on voluntary actions such as the founding of AACSB in 1916 "by a group of leading business schools with the goal of enhancing the quality of management education at the collegiate level" (Trapnell, 2007, p. 67). Others, such as the authors of the Gordon-Howell report (Gordon & Howell, 1959), were more prescriptive in their recommendations and it is quite sobering to be reminded of their criticisms over 50 years later:

> [A]cademics at some schools were more akin to quacks; and the curricula offered were narrow, simple and weak. The calibre of staff and students alike was condemned, with the authors calling for more research and less consulting work by faculty, improved regulation, fewer case studies, more theory and analysis, and more teaching of ethics. (The Economist, 2009, para. 4)

Three decades on, Porter and McKibbin (1988) argued for a more relevant management education, with increased emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills. Following their report, in 1991, AACSB introduced mission-based standards. Recently, business school critics have argued for a less scientific and more practice-oriented curriculum, with emphasis on broader,

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humanistic courses (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002, 2004; Friga, Bettis, & Sullivan, 2003; Mintzberg, 2004; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). Indeed, Hamel (2007) pointed out that the business school model has not really been modified since its inception over 100 years ago.

Basically, critics have been calling for an appropriate management education for students. Improving the quality and relevance of management education has therefore become a priority for business schools around the world (AACSB International, 2011; Bruner & Iannarelli, 2011; Beehler & Luethge, 2013). This article examines the background to these pressures for increased attention to quality in business schools, the role of mandatory and voluntary accreditation processes, a case study based on French management schools, and the impact of specific accreditation standards on organizational processes. In the conclusion, the author discusses future challenges for accreditation agencies and business school deans in their search to improve management education.

2. EXTERNAL PRESSURES ON BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Various external forces have impacted business schools in recent times, compelling them to focus on continuous improvement processes. Table 1 shows the main external pressures for quality and some of the resulting positive impacts.

2.1. Supranational Organizations

Since the Second World War, several supranational organizations have been actively involved in promoting the overall development of higher education on a global scale. Quality improvement has been a key objective driving the activities of organizations such as the OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the World Bank, the WTO (World Trade Organization) and the EU (European Union). In contrast to the organizations cited above, the EU has pursued an alternative social and political agenda in encouraging and supporting cooperation among European universities over the past 40 years to improve higher education institutions. Consequently, it has also played a critical role in the internationalization of European higher education and in promoting continuous improvement policies. The EU states on its website that:

TABLE 1
External Pressures for Quality Improvement and Resulting Positive Impacts

External Pressures for Quality Improvement		*Resulting Positive Impacts*
Supranational organizations	*Business School Processes*	Strategic management
National governments		Organizational processes
Marketization		Innovation
Rankings		Quality indicators
Globalization		Internationalization

> [t]op-quality education and training are vital if Europe is to develop as a knowledge society and compete effectively in the globalising world economy. Education policy as such is decided by each EU country, but together they set common goals and share best practice. (http://europa.eu/pol/educ/index_en.htm, para. 1)

2.2. National Governments

In many countries national governments guarantee and control the quality of the education in their particular countries, but this traditional role is also changing. Indeed, the quality assurance issue is a good example of one of the consequences of the public sector reducing financial support for higher education. Increasingly, transnational recognition is being provided by the private sector such as independent, usually peer-established, accreditation agencies. Indeed, competition amongst business schools is making international accreditation a necessity (Times Higher Education Supplement, 2002). European governments have increasingly integrated quality assurance into their national education policies. Many countries have been compelled to restructure their systems to align them with the demands of the Bologna accord. This has been an opportunity for some to introduce more control of what programs are offered to students. In France, for example, new auditing processes were introduced to conform to the European desire to improve quality assessment (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). As a result, the accreditation of many Masters programs was refused and French universities were compelled to manage their program development in a more rigorous way. The new quality assessment processes have been introduced in conjunction with increased institutional autonomy, leading to universities being more accountable (Luijten-Lub, Van Der Wende, & Huisman, 2005). Some have argued that whilst the pressure for more quality has led to more effective management of universities, there may be a danger of uniformity of programs and development strategies across institutions (Dameron & Manceau, 2011).

The drive for quality improvements and external control has therefore impacted the administration of higher education institutions. Changes have been particularly marked for non-Anglo-Saxon universities. The new organizational model has been referred to as the "managerial university," or "entrepreneurial university" (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Deem, 2001) with "the emergence of a new logic of power, decision-making, and day-to-day administration in higher education" (Teichler, 2007, p. 69). Universities are now compelled to make strategic decisions, with a considerable emphasis on quality improvement. The new governance model means that presidents, vice-chancellors, and deans need to manage their resources, in particular their faculty, in a more strategic fashion. In some countries, this represents a fundamental change to the roles of the different actors in the university. Franck and Opitz (2006) discuss the "bureaucratic" and "market" models of higher education, with particular attention to implications for professors.

The new university managers are "drawn mostly from academic ranks but embedded with a new spirit of business enterprise and continuous re-engineering" (Mollis & Marginson, 2002, p. 322) since they need to have a good understanding of the academic context (Taylor, 2010).

2.3. Marketization

Business schools, by their nature, have always been more impacted by market forces than other areas of the university. In recent decades this marketization has intensified as competition has become globalized. On the micro-level, therefore, this development has had a profound effect on individual behavior. Levin (2005) has pointed out how students, the main consumers or clients in higher education, can now search the globe to find the educational service which meets their needs, provided that they can pay the price. At the same time, students are also treated as commodities. Both factors have changed the way that institutions view and treat their students. The dangers both for students and institutions have been discussed by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010) who point out how "prospective students cannot 'see' the real activities taking place in courses, and therefore need to rely heavily on symbolic aspects of HE" (p. 77) which are determined heavily by marketing and brand building as well as other external signs of quality such as accreditation labels.

As in any market some players have distinct competitive advantages. According to student surveys, academic quality and degree reputation play a significant role when students look for universities abroad (Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2007). Well-established institutions, especially in the United States, can use their reputation for excellence, their financial muscle, and their marketing savvy to recruit successfully around the world (Kirp, 2003). These prosperous institutions are well-placed to have a distinct advantage in an increasingly competitive market.

Institutions have increasingly become involved in transnational education in recent years (Naidoo, 2008), raising questions of academic quality control and degree recognition (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Australian and UK universities have been particularly active in offering degree programs abroad. Indeed, the capacity to export educational services can be considered a sign of advanced internationalization (Adams, 2007). The motives for this type of activity are usually economic and the financial benefits can be transferred back to the home university to fund further development such as research. This model is well-demonstrated by the Australian universities (Adams 2007). Branches are part of cross-border activity enabling universities to offer their programs abroad, often at the Bachelor level, with the prospect of recruiting the most able students onto Masters programs at the offshore or even home campus.

As the very nature of higher education institutions changes and becomes so much more diverse, quality control and assurance become central issues. Questions have been raised about who should ensure the quality of the institutions and the academic degree recognition (Knight, 2005). The market for higher education, and especially business education, has expanded considerably in the past decades (Beehler & Luethge, 2013). The diversification and massification of higher education have led to increased numbers of students in higher education (Trow, 1999; Teichler, 2007). The established players are facing fierce competition from new entrants who are often well endowed financially, such as in the Middle East. The need to address issues of quality assurance has become even more urgent.

2.4. Rankings

Business school rankings began to be published during the 1980s. These rankings have been criticized for not using consistent and relevant criteria in their assessment processes (AACSB International, 2005). Nevertheless, despite some negative effects, such as encouraging schools to allocate additional resources to marketing efforts rather than to recruiting faculty or updating the curriculum, the rankings have driven business schools to improve some of their activities. Intense competition between business schools has been heightened by the increasing popularity of rankings. In the French market, for example: " . . . rankings appear to be cause and consequence of the new competition between business schools" (Blanchard, 2009, p. 595) making potential students more savvy consumers of education.

As the national rankings began to include international accreditation as a criterion, French schools sought international accreditation to gain more visibility in a complex market (Dameron & Manceau, 2011). A school's ability to export and operate abroad is now recognized by accreditation agencies and rankings as an indicator of internationalization and participation in a global business education market. Schools are judged like business units as they move along the various stages of internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977).

2.5. Globalization

Further pressures to adapt and innovate have come from globalization through the accreditation organizations, rankings, and the demands of international students, faculty, and university partners.

Globalization has changed the worldwide higher education landscape dramatically in the past 20 years, especially for business schools. Globalization has been defined as "the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century higher education toward greater international involvement" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). Globalization has also led to the emergence of an international higher education industry (Naidoo, 2006). Kaskarelis (2009) has identified the "free market" as a basic driving force behind globalization. Accordingly, universities and business schools have had to adopt different internationalization strategies in order to cope with this shifting context of globalization (Massoud & Ayoubi, 2007). Different institutions have seen the issues in different ways and have developed different strategies and different means of dealing with the many ramifications of globalization. Maringe and Foskett (2010) have underlined this diversity in the global higher education landscape. Quality assurance and continuous improvement policies have become an inevitable consequence of globalization (Van Damme, 2001).

3. MANDATORY AND VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION

Various external factors, therefore, have driven the quest for improved quality in higher education, and particularly in business schools. However, accreditation organizations have emerged as the main agencies that encapsulate many of the external forces for quality improvement. Basically, two types of external accreditation exist: mandatory and voluntary. "[International] accreditations have tended to focus on institutional improvement, while national systems are often regulatory or administrative in nature" (Bruner & Iannarelli, 2011). Mandatory accreditation therefore is enforced and imposed by regulatory organizations, usually national governments or in some cases regional bodies, such as in the United States or the "Länder" in Germany. In contrast, voluntary accreditation is often organized in peer-driven organizations and, by its nature, is not legally imposed.

For management education, the main voluntary accreditation organizations operating on a global scale are: AACSB International (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development) and AMBA (Association of MBAs). For the purposes of this article, only the roles of AACSB and EFMD with its EQUIS

(European Quality Improvement System) accreditation have been included. AMBA limits its accreditation to MBAs and Masters programs. The EFMD also accredits programs, but both the EQUIS process and the AACSB accreditation processes cover institutions as a whole. Interestingly, these associations have themselves had to confront the consequences of the globalization of higher education and they now compete in an increasingly competitive accreditation market (Durand & McGuire 2005; Scherer, Javalgi, Bryant, & Tukel, 2005).

The main differences between mandatory and voluntary accreditation reside precisely in the idea of conformity to external rules in contrast to making a deliberate, strategic decision to submit an institution to outside scrutiny and to be compared to global best practices. Indeed, voluntary accreditation goes beyond compliance (Scherer et al., 2005). Accreditation systems, such as AACSB and EQUIS, are mission-driven and allow schools to justify their strategic directions given their local educational and business environment. At the same, however, schools have to demonstrate how they compare to top institutions around the world by benchmarking their activities according to specific standards and criteria.

4. INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION: A FRENCH CASE STUDY

Within the context of this article, the case of the French business school presents an interesting example of the positive impact of international accreditation systems such as AACSB and EQUIS. In the past decade, international accreditation has become a key strategic objective for the French business schools as they compete both at home and abroad. Both AACSB and EFMD were well placed to offer their quality labels to schools in France. During the 1990s, the AACSB ran a pilot scheme for accrediting non-US business schools to determine how the standards, based on the US business school education model, could be modified to take into account the wide diversity of management education systems around the world (Flesher, 2007). ESSEC, one of the top French "Grandes Ecoles de Management" (GEM), based near Paris, was the first school outside North America to achieve AACSB accreditation in 1997 (Nioche, 2007). This was a clear sign to other GEMs that this accreditation was within their reach. Another factor drove the French schools toward the AACSB accreditation path. Following its pilot study, the AACSB introduced new standards in 2003 which reflected a new philosophy in its accreditation processes (Thompson, 2004). The new standards enabled applicant schools to demonstrate quality within their own cultural and educational environment, rather than conform totally to a US-centric model. For the GEMs this was an opportunity to show the international community the quality of management education in France.

The other global accreditation organization, EFMD, set up the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) in 1997 in direct competition to AACSB. In fact, this was an important reason why the latter organization was forced to revise its accreditation standards if it wished to compete on the global market. The EQUIS accreditation system has had a noticeable influence on the internationalization of the French GEMs since the standards require schools to demonstrate internationalization on an institution-wide basis. This requirement has brought considerable changes to the GEM model. Schools began to internationalize their faculty by recruiting abroad and by insisting on French faculty with fluency in English. Research has become a critical dimension for schools to gain international recognition (Dameron & Durand, 2008; Thietart, 2009). Schools have been scrambling to improve intellectual contributions both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Above all, under the EQUIS standards, schools must show that they undertake joint research outside their home country. The ability to attract and recruit international students has become another key component in the accreditation process.

According to the authors, accreditation has helped to make the schools more professional, with improved leadership and strategic management, and a sustained focus on research. Schools have used accreditation to improve their brand image as a sign of quality and as an important argument to be used in a very competitive recruitment market. As the French schools increasingly recruited international students on a fee-paying basis, accreditation labels became a necessary tool to signal the quality of the education being offered, especially to potential candidates abroad who knew little, if anything, about the elite French GEMs. Schools have been able to use accreditation as a lever to obtain additional funding. Furthermore, driven by the accreditation criteria, especially the EFMD EQUIS process, schools have gained management autonomy and broken away from the restrictive chamber of commerce system.

At the same time, Scherer et al. (2005) and Dameron and Manceau (2011) have identified some challenges for schools in their race to gain international recognition through accreditation. As the gap between teaching and research grows, business schools run the risk of losing one of their prime competitive advantages compared with the French universities, namely their close cooperation with the business world. Some schools are also making accreditation their strategic goal rather than using this to achieve broader institutional objectives. Finally, schools are tending to follow similar strategic development agendas thus confirming the trend towards isomorphism in the French business school field (Blanchard, 2009).

On the French market, both the national quality agencies and the international accreditation organizations are forcing schools to prove their research record. In turn, the schools are expecting their faculty members to become increasingly proficient and productive in research activities and in publishing in peer-reviewed journals that are recognized by the international academic community (Scherer et al., 2005).

5. ACCREDITATION STANDARDS DRIVING IMPROVEMENT

International accreditation is generally agreed to have impacted positively on business school organizational culture, effectiveness, and quality (Lejeune & Vas, 2011); has encouraged a search for excellence (Cornuel, 2007); and is usually well-received (Whittenburg, Toole, Sciglimpaglia, & Medlin, 2006). At the institutional level, it is possible to identify a number of dimensions which have been positively impacted by the implementation of the accreditation standards promoted by AACSB and EQUIS. These positive impacts have been summarized in Table 2. For the sake of this discussion, standards from these two accreditation schemes have been identified to show how they have led to managerial and organizational improvements, thereby contributing to a better educational experience for their students and future business professionals.

AACSB introduced mission-based standards in 1991. This fundamental change in philosophy has impacted the way in which schools think about their strategic direction and their vision for future development. As a result, schools have become more focused in their strategic management. The standards require that schools involve a wide range of stakeholders in the process of establishing a mission statement. As a result, schools have improved their use of resources by focusing participants on working toward shared objectives. Mission-driven standards have also

TABLE 2
Impact of International Accreditation Standards on Business Schools

	Accreditation Criteria Driving Quality Improvement	*Accreditation Scheme*	*Improvement Outcomes*
1.	Mission	AACSB	Institutional direction, vision, focus
2.	Governance and autonomy	EQUIS	Shareholder support, effective and strategic management
3.	Strategy and operations	AACSB EQUIS	Deliberate processes for future development
4.	Student participation in learning	AACSB	Coaching, mentoring, pedagogy
5.	Student achievement and success	AACSB	Assurance of learning, curriculum, program goals and objectives
6.	Faculty qualifications	AACSB	Doctoral qualifications, diversified profiles
7.	Faculty research	AACSB EQUIS	Broad intellectual contributions and internationalization
8.	Internationalization	EQUIS	Infusion of internationalization into all activities
9.	Corporate links	EQUIS	Business community engagement, professional academics
10.	Diversity and responsibility	AACSB EQUIS	Differences valued, local culture context respected

improved the professional management of schools and have therefore ensured that schools use their resources in an effective way. "[T]he mission statement will provide continuing guidance to maintain the school in a focused pursuit of goals chosen to give lasting direction to its operations and achievements" (AACSB International, 2012, p. 27).

Under the EQUIS standards a school must demonstrate how the governance of the school is harnessed to help meet strategic objectives (EQUIS Standards & Criteria, 2013). A school is expected to benefit from sufficient autonomy to ensure that it can fulfill its mission and implement its strategic plan. In this way, institutions have become more effective and more professional in their strategic management.

Both AACSB and EQUIS lay considerable emphasis on strategic management processes and on operational implementation. Romero (2008) discusses the positive effects of strategy on performance (p. 246). The strategic management standards, together with a requirement for a clear mission statement and autonomy in managerial decision-making, have further enhanced the quality of institutional processes for future development. In this way, schools are better managed and pay more attention to continuous improvement processes.

International accreditation standards have improved the learning environment for students (Trapnell, 2007). Accredited schools must meet standards which ensure that students are given the necessary support to succeed in their learning. AACSB, in particular, requires schools to provide coaching and mentoring so that students are adequately guided in their studies. Faculty must engage in dialogue with their students and be available in the learning process. Under previous standards, AACSB put more emphasis on the inputs to the learning process, such as the quality of students on entry and mandatory courses in the curriculum. The shift has been to assurance of learning which focuses on program outcomes and students achieving learning goals and objectives. The process is summarized succinctly in an AACSB question to faculty:

"You're teaching, are they learning?". Furthermore, schools must pay particular attention to managing their curriculum development. By insisting on processes that are driven by the faculty, students should be exposed to up-to-date course content and innovative pedagogy. To meet the accreditation standards a school must maintain a high standard of quality in managing its degree programs and its assurance of learning processes.

Through its standards for faculty, AACSB has contributed to improving the level of academic qualifications by insisting on higher proportions of doctorally qualified faculty members to be considered as AQ (Academically Qualified). The standards have also recognized more diversified profiles for faculty. The PQ (Professionally Qualified) status officially recognized the added value of professionals who contribute positively to the quality of business programs. Indeed, the AACSB 2013 standards go even further in promoting diversity in faculty qualifications with four distinct types of faculty replacing the AQ/PQ distinction. The new standards recognize how faculty can be involved in contributing to the school's mission in different ways, as research academics, or as academics that become more engaged in business practices, or as practitioners who seek to gain doctoral qualifications, and finally as professionals who share their experiences in the classroom. In this way, AACSB accreditation enhances the crucial interaction between the academic and business worlds to ensure that students are exposed to relevant teaching and learning.

The AACSB and EQUIS accreditation processes have contributed to improving the way in which faculty members remain current in their fields (Trapnell, 2007). AACSB introduced a broad concept of "intellectual contributions" which has encouraged a diverse range of research outputs which are not limited to peer-reviewed journal articles (Thompson, 2004). Indeed, the introduction of this interpretation of publications motivated faculty to be more creative in their research output since books, book chapters, monographs, case studies, and other publications are recognized as valid additions to the aggregate faculty's portfolio of intellectual contributions. The publications standards implicitly acknowledge that in a global environment research output can take various shapes and forms. Furthermore, the EQUIS standards recognize the global higher education context by explicitly requiring faculty to publish in well-recognized international journals. Through these accreditation criteria, schools have been compelled to integrate internationalization into their strategies in order to remain competitive globally. Finally, accreditation has been shown to have a positive impact not only on faculty productivity, but also on their salaries (Hedrick, Henson, Krieg, & Wassell, 2010).

Indeed, globalization has had a considerable effect on business schools in the past two decades. The EQUIS standards specifically take account of the global dimension of management education by requiring accredited schools to demonstrate how internationalization infuses all their activities—including students, faculty, research, corporate links, curriculum content, and international partnerships. Business school quality has been enhanced by compelling schools to benchmark their activities against accreditation criteria which have been applied to some of the leading schools in Europe and elsewhere.

In addition to internationalization, the EQUIS standards promote active partnerships between schools and the corporate world. An accredited school must demonstrate how representatives of the business community assist in fulfilling its mission. Through participation in the governance and on advisory boards, these stakeholders are expected to play an active role in the school's strategic development. (EQUIS Standards and Criteria, 2013, p. 67). Faculty are therefore encouraged to maintain active cooperation with the business world.

Finally, AACSB accreditation has furthered diversity and social responsibility in business schools. The standards actively encourage schools to demonstrate how they engage in promoting diversity among students, faculty, and administrators. Recognition is also given to strategies that enhance gender equality and take account of minorities. Both EQUIS and AACSB promote social responsibility not only in the classroom but also in the school's wider environment. EQUIS has a special standard covering ethics, responsibility, and sustainability, including the school's "role in developing the community and in acting as a catalyst for debate and dissemination of knowledge" (EQUIS Standards and Criteria, 2013 p. 65).

6. FUTURE CHALLENGES

International accreditation agencies have had considerable impact on business school strategies and processes (Beehler & Luethge, 2013). In future years, business school leaders will face certain challenges linked to these accreditation processes. Uniformity is one challenge (Kappler, 2013). Schools and accreditation agencies will need to ensure that "standards" do not lead to "standardization." Indeed, it is often the interpretation of standards that can result in standardization. Both AACSB and EQUIS attempt to promote diversity in strategic approaches and both systems take account of local, educational, and business environments and recognize that schools need to respect their cultural and historical context. In reality, however, the outcomes of international accreditation have led to a certain standardization and isomorphism as demonstrated by the case study concerning French business schools (Dameron & Manceau, 2011). Furthermore, Julian and Ofori-Dankwa (2006) argue that accreditation can lead to a certain "accreditocracy" and paralysis.

As costs rise and budgets are squeezed, schools will be increasingly challenged to demonstrate to accreditation agencies and to stakeholders at large the quality and the value of their research output. Quantitative measures, such as the number of peer-reviewed articles in top journals, will no longer suffice as criteria to indicate quality. New ways of assessing faculty intellectual contributions will need to be developed. Scholars have recently criticized the power of journal editors in their role of indirectly assessing faculty by accepting or refusing articles for submissions. In certain ways, deans are "outsourcing" the way in which faculty are judged (Mingers & Willmott, 2012) and these authors refer to the "Taylorization" of business school research because of journal rankings. International accreditation agencies, in their turn, use faculty publications in top-ranked journals as a measure of quality. AACSB, through its 2013 accreditation standards, is attempting to use broader measures of intellectual contributions and business school deans would do well to ensure that their faculty members are assessed on their performance by using a wider and more diverse range of measures.

In general, evaluations and assessments of business school quality need to be based on interactive processes that involve stakeholders from diverse constituencies to ensure support and acceptance (Kappler, 2013 p. 302). Both international accreditations systems that have been discussed in this article support open, peer-driven processes which include assessments based on peer-review team visits. Furthermore, the development and improvement of the standards themselves should also be based on an iterative process that involves different stakeholders. The AACSB Blue Ribbon Committee that worked on the new standards demonstrates best practice in developing new standards for business school accreditation. This is hardly surprising since the association itself identified the need to expand accreditation processes to adapt to a globalized management education environment (AACSB International, 2011).

As the accreditation agencies themselves continue to globalize their processes there is always a danger of criticism from those who see a reduced, rather than an enhanced level of quality (White, Levernier, & Miles, 2008; Julian & Ofori-Dankwa, 2006; Lowrie & Willmott, 2009). Deans and accreditation agencies need to address these criticisms head-on and to continue to argue more aggressively for standards that are appropriate to a globalized context and not just limited to a group of elite, Anglo-Saxon institutions with programs based on a purely US model of business education.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Michael Bryant, PhD, is currently responsible for International Accreditations at France Business School. Previously, he held the post of Dean, International Development, at ESC Clermont Graduate School of Management, where he coordinated the school's AACSB International accreditation projects (initial and maintenance). He has been serving on AACSB committees since 2007 (Pre-Accreditation and Initial Accreditation Committees). He has worked as mentor and advisor for business schools in Africa, Europe, and Latin America in their preparation for AACSB accreditation. Mike's research interests and publications include accreditation issues, the internationalization of business education, and the role of international experience in developing the interpersonal and cross-cultural skills required of today's managers. He obtained his Bachelor and Master's degrees in German Literature at the University of London. He earned an MBA at the University of Warwick and a PhD at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

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