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The Institutions of International Business Education

INSTITUTIONS HAVE BECOME A RELEVANT and salient part of international business research, and institutional theory has permeated not only international business but also the disciplines that make up the field: marketing, management, accounting, finance and economics. Given the importance of institutions, this issue is devoted to the institutions that make up our profession: the flagship *Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)*, the chapters of the Academy of International Business (AIB) and the majors we design in our schools for international business students. These institutions, and more, are the building blocks of our profession, determining our collective engagement with research, teaching and service.

The first article, written by Anne-Wil Harzing from the University of Melbourne and Isabel Metz from Melbourne Business School, deals with the *Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)*. It is the premier journal in the field of international business and the only journal owned by the Academy of International Business to date. Therefore, the actions taken by the journal and its editorial policy determine the future of scholars in the field. Tenure and promotion in selected universities, to some extent, depends on the ability of scholars to publish in *JIBS*. Harzing and Metz specifically examine the gender and geographic diversity of the editorial board of *JIBS* over the last couple of decades and reach the following conclusions: (1) the editorial board has grown in size to match the increase in submissions and the practice of other top management journals, (2) *JIBS'* editorial board has become more international, (3) non-U.S. and non-Anglo members are still underrepresented in editorial boards and (4) *JIBS'* editorial board has become less male centric as compared to its peer journals (27 percent of the *JIBS* editorial board was female in 2011, representative of female proportion in AIB membership).

In the second article of this issue, Cheryl A. Van Deusen and Shaun Brophy from the University of North Florida investigate the contribution of AIB chapters as well as some of their best practices. While AIB has established itself as the premier organization for international business academics, consultants and business people since 1959, the chapters' practices are still diverse and largely independent. There are currently 16 regional chapters in AIB with diverse representation across the world. Of the 16 chapters, five are U.S.-based and a total of eight (50 percent) are Anglo-based. Large portions of the world, most notably Africa and Russia, are missing altogether and/or underrepresented. Various defunct chapters were also identified: Pacific Northwest US (1976–1986), Scandinavia (~1976–1979), Egypt (~1976–1980), Russia (1992–1997), Chile (1994–2001), South Africa (1996–2002) and the Pacific Basin (~1979–2001). Needed by some active chapters are: (1) working and updated websites outlining recent activities, (2) better reporting and coordination with AIB, (3) training and development of AIB chapter officers, (4) learning and coordination among chapters. Best practices identified in chapters include: awards for best papers and reviewers for both student and faculty authors, doctoral dissertation support, corporate sponsorships/participation, joint research conferences, student conference rates and travel support, outlets for conference research such as proceedings and journals, AIB conference submission and review system, convenient conference registration and payment system, affordable fees, interactive and functional website, presence on social networks, collaboration among chapters.

The final article in this issue, by P. Candace Deans from the University of Richmond, discusses how one university incorporated the Middle East in its international business curriculum. The example may be a good template for those interested in expanding to this area of the world. A case is made that the Middle East is an important region of focus. The Arab Spring has lent itself to new opportunities in the Middle East and the Gulf for more cooperation, focused research collaboration and future potential for economic and social exchanges. Deans' article dovetails well with *AIB Insights* Volume 10 Issue 2, in which different models for internationalizing the curriculum were discussed.¹

What the three articles in this issue have in common is a focus on the institutions of international business education, research and teaching. The 2011 Nagoya meeting concluded with strategic intent to broaden our appeal and increase our membership services and value. *AIB Insights* is committed to providing current and thoughtful ideas relevant to the international business academic community. We look forward to featuring additional AIB member submissions on practitioner and pedagogical tools and models. Please keep them coming.



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¹ Back issues of *AIB Insights* are available on the AIB website: <http://aib.msu.edu/publications/aibinsights.asp>

Gender and Geographic Diversity in the Editorial Board of the Journal of International Business Studies

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EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS of academic journals are often considered the gatekeepers of knowledge because they have significant influence on what is published and, hence, what informs theory development, research and practice (e.g., Braun & Diospatonyi, 2005; Raelin, 2008). Therefore, editorial boards should be sufficiently diverse in their backgrounds to facilitate the publication of manuscripts with a wide range of research paradigms and methods (Feldman, 2008; Özbilgin, 2004). Several years ago, we embarked on a large-scale study of gender and geographic diversity in editorial boards of management journals (see Harzing & Metz, 2010; Metz & Harzing, 2009, 2012). This short article looks in detail at the development of gender and geographic diversity over time for the international business community's flagship journal: the *Journal of International Business Studies* (*JIBS*).

Methods

For our main research project we collected data for 57 journals for 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009. Five-year gaps in the data collected were chosen to allow time for changes to occur, while generating enough data points over the 20-year period studied. For *JIBS*, we supplemented this analysis by collecting yearly data from 2000 onwards. The composition of editorial boards was taken from the first issue of the year in

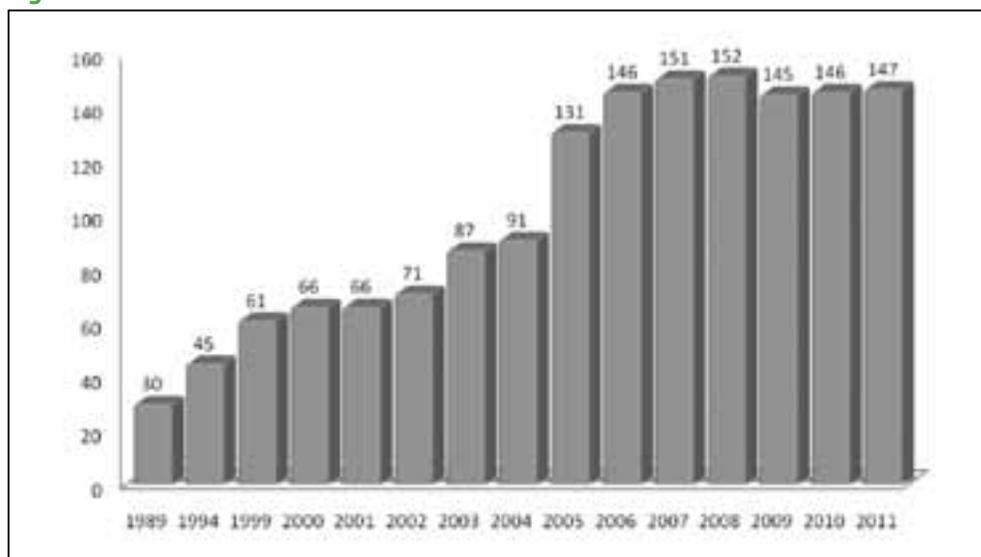
question and all editorial board (EB) members were coded for country and gender.

The country was determined based on the EB member's current university affiliation. Obviously, this coding method does not always accurately reflect the nationality of the EB member in question, as many academics work in a country different from their country of origin. However, we assume that embeddedness in particular networks would be based as much on current location as on the academic's country of origin. Moreover, without collecting detailed information on the actual career histories and networks of all editorial board members, it would be impossible to establish whether current or home country networks are stronger.

For this article, we distinguish between non-U.S. editorial board membership and non-Anglo editorial board membership. The first includes all editorial board members not affiliated with a U.S. university. The second includes all editorial board members not affiliated with a U.S., Canadian, British, Irish, Australian or New Zealand university. Gender was determined based on the editorial board member's given name wherever possible. If first/given names were gender neutral, we were always able to ascertain gender through an Internet search.

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Figure 1: Increase in Size of the *JIBS* Editorial Board over Time



Geographic and Gender Diversity

Immediately apparent from Figure 1 is the rapidly increasing size of the *JIBS* editorial board. Between 1989 and 2006, the size of the editorial board has increased five-fold, from 30 to nearly 150 editorial board members. In particular, substantial increases took place in 1994, 1999, 2003 and 2005. In most cases, these coincided with a (recent) change in editorship. However, the board increased also by 40 members mid-way through Editor-in-Chief Arie Lewin's term.

Since 2006, the size of the *JIBS* editorial board has hovered around 150. This substantial increase in EB size over the years mirrors the general trend in our overall sample of 57 journals, where the average size of the editorial board increased steadily over the years from 40 academics in 1989 to 64 in 2004, jumping to 87 in 2009. However, the size of the editorial board for *JIBS* was *below* average in 1989, but well *above* average in 2004 and 2009. In 2009 *JIBS* had the 10th largest editorial board in our sample, placing it in the company of journals such as *Strategic Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Journal* and *Management Science*. Most mainstream management journals seem to have large editorial boards, no doubt to cope with the large and increasing number of articles submitted to these journals.

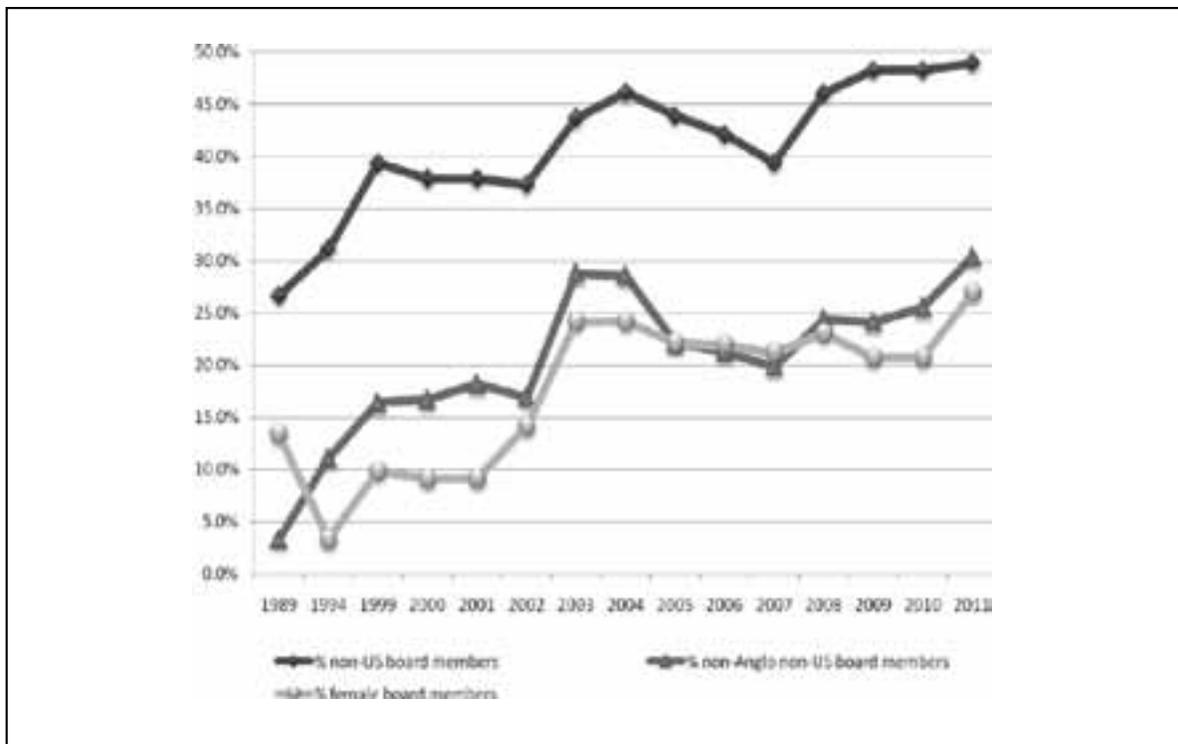
In terms of geographic diversity, Figure 2 shows that the proportion of non-U.S. board members at *JIBS* has almost doubled over time, from just over 26.7% in 1989 to 49.0% in 2011. In 2009, *JIBS* had a lower proportion of U.S. editorial board membership than nearly all of the 38 U.S.-based journals in our sample. Only *International Studies of Manage-*

ment & Organization (ISMO), *Journal of World Business* (JWB) and *Industrial Marketing Management* (IMM) had lower proportions of U.S. board membership. ISMO has always had a very diverse editorial board, probably reflecting the long-standing editor's European heritage. JWB has substantially increased its geographic diversity since 1994 (when it had a 100 percent U.S. board membership). We suspect that one of the main reasons for this increase at JWB is due to the decision made in 1999 by the new editor-in-chief to appoint associate editors not only for content areas, but also for geographic areas (Asia-Pacific and Europe). In the case of IMM, the large non-U.S. board membership is a very recent phenomenon which accompanied the substantial increase in the size of the editorial board between 2004 and 2009 (from 96 to 247).

What is even more interesting is the development over time with regard to Anglo (i.e., Canadian, British, Irish, Australian or New Zealand) versus non-Anglo, non-U.S. board members. In 1989, virtually all non-U.S. board members came from Anglophone countries. There was only one non-Anglo board member (INSEAD Professor Yves Doz, who is a Harvard PhD graduate and worked at Harvard University for four years in the late 70s). Over time, the proportion of Anglo board members remained fairly stable, whilst the growth in non-U.S. board membership came mostly from non-Anglo countries.

Current non-U.S. AIB membership lies at 61%. Hence, the *JIBS* editorial board might still not be considered to be fully representative of the geographic diversity of the international business community. Further, a more fine grained analysis shows that non-U.S. Anglo board members are similarly represented in the *JIBS* editorial board and in AIB membership (approximately 18 percent). Therefore, it appears that the major underrepresentation at *JIBS* is still amongst non-U.S., non-Anglo mem-

Figure 2: Increase in Geographic and Gender Diversity of the JIBS Editorial Board over Time



bers. However, many of the non-U.S. AIB members might have joined recently and be at a junior level. Hence, it might take some time before these non-U.S., non-Anglo AIB members qualify for editorial board membership.

The gender diversity of the *JIBS* editorial board has similarly increased over the years, reaching nearly 27 percent in 2011. It was already fairly high in 1989 (13.3 percent), when in fact *JIBS*' proportion of female editorial board members was higher than the average for our journal set (9.4 percent). However, the 1989 proportion was based on only four female editorial board members. In 1994, with only 3.3 percent female editorial board membership, *JIBS* dipped well below our sample's average for that year (13.7 percent). Since 1994, female editorial board membership increased again, most notably in 2002, 2003 and 2011 (see Figure 2). In particular, from 2003 onwards, the proportion of female editorial board membership at *JIBS* has been above the average for our journal set.

Female membership for AIB is not known with accuracy. However, using 2011 membership data kindly supplied by the AIB Secretariat, we sampled 100 Women in the Academy of International Business (WAIB) members and 100 non-WAIB members. Based on the gender distribution in these groups (75 percent female for WAIB members and 10 percent female for non-WAIB members), we would estimate the proportion of female AIB members to be around 25 percent. Hence, the *JIBS* editorial board seems to be largely representative of the gender composition of AIB membership.

The Impact of Editors

Major changes in editorial board membership tend to take place only after a new editor is appointed. A steep increase in both non-U.S. board membership and female editorial board membership is recorded in 1999, most likely dating from the appointment of Thomas Brewer as the new editor in 1997. However, over the duration of this editor's tenure, both the proportion of non-U.S. board members and the proportion of female editorial board members declined slightly again, as the very gradual increase in the size of the board mainly came from new male U.S. board members. The modest increase of the editorial board in 2002, however, was nearly entirely composed of female U.S. board members. In sum, whilst geographic diversity declined gradually, gender diversity increased from a low base.

With the appointment of Arie Lewin in 2003, another significant increase in non-U.S. board membership occurred. In this particular year, the proportion of Anglo non-U.S. board members declined, whilst the proportion of new non-Anglo, non-U.S. board members increased sharply. It must be said though that half of the increase of non-Anglo, non-U.S. board members consisted of INSEAD academics, which in many cases were academics with an Anglo background. Gender diversity also increased sharply in 2003. In fact, this year saw the largest increase in female board membership in *JIBS*' history with the number of female editorial board members increasing from 10 to 21. However, we again see a steady decline in the proportion of non-U.S. board mem-

bers – and in particular of non-Anglo, non-INSEAD board members – over the duration of the editor's tenure. This was partly due to the increase of the EB size without a corresponding increase in the proportion of non-U.S. board members. Over the years (2003–2007) the editorial board increased from 87 to 151 members. However, the number of non-U.S., non-Anglo board members remained fairly stable and, hence, the increase came mainly from U.S. and Anglo non-U.S. board members. Gender diversity fared slightly better, but even in this regard there was a small decline over the time of the editor's tenure. It appears that non-traditional board membership needs to be actively monitored if it is not to slip back to traditionally low levels.

When Lorraine Eden was appointed in mid 2007, non-U.S. board membership (and in particular non-Anglo, non-INSEAD board membership) experienced another steep increase. INSEAD board membership decreased from its peak of 7–8 percent in 200–2005 to just over 1 percent in 2008. This year saw the largest increase in non-Anglo, non-INSEAD board membership in *JIBS*' history with the number of non-Anglo, non-INSEAD board members increasing from 21 to 35. In terms of gender diversity, there was an increase in the proportion of female editorial board members (albeit only a small one). In contrast to the two previous editorial periods, geographic diversity did not decline during this editor's tenure. However, gender diversity declined slightly because the small shrinking of the editorial board over this editor's tenure was mostly made up of women.

Under the most recent editorial team – John Cantwell and Mary Yoko Brannen – we again find a similar pattern: both geographic and gender diversity received a boost. In terms of geographic diversity, however, the proportion of non-U.S. board membership increased only marginally. The main difference is in the composition of non-U.S. board membership with non-Anglo board members replacing Anglo board members. For the first time in *JIBS*' history the number of non-Anglo, non-INSEAD board members (42) considerably exceeds the number of non-U.S. Anglo board (27) members. Female editorial board membership reached historically high levels as well, as for the first time in *JIBS*' history it is similar to the proportion of female AIB members. So far, it is too early to tell if a pattern exists in the non-traditional board membership at *JIBS* and if the decline in non-U.S. board membership and/or female editorial board membership, evident after the three previous changes in editorship, will recur. But even if it does, both the representation of non-U.S. board and the representation of female editorial members have, overall, experienced a significant upward trend at *JIBS*.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our brief article has shown that over the years the *JIBS* editorial board has steadily increased its geographic and gender diversity. In terms of geographic diversity, the proportion of non-U.S. editorial board members at *JIBS* has almost doubled over time, and in 2009, *JIBS* had a lower proportion of U.S. editorial board membership than nearly all of the

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38 U.S.-based journals in our sample. The gender diversity of the *JIBS* editorial board has similarly increased over the years, and from 2003 onwards, the proportion of female editorial board membership at *JIBS* has been above the average for our journal set.

Female editorial board membership is now very similar to the (estimated) proportion of female AIB members. However, in spite of the increase of non-U.S. editorial board members, AIB members from non-Anglo countries are still underrepresented on the *JIBS* editorial board. This might be caused by a pipe-line effect. We believe that many of the non-Anglo AIB members may have joined recently and are at a relatively junior level. Typically, junior academics in non-Anglo countries are more aware than their senior colleagues of the need to connect to international academic networks to be known in their field. Hence, it might take some time before these AIB members are invited to be editorial board members. It is clear though that non-Anglo editorial board membership has increased more rapidly in recent years (see below).

We also showed that editors influence the level of diversity of the editorial board. With every newly appointed editor, both geographic and gender diversity increased. Initially, non-U.S. editorial board membership was mainly drawn from Anglophone countries (i.e., Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand) or institutions (i.e., INSEAD). However, under the two most recent editorial teams non-Anglo board membership increased dramatically. With regard to the most recent editorial team, this might well be due to the co-editors' international life and career histories, which have given them easy access to a greater variety of international networks.

Finally, our analysis showed that although all editors increased the diversity of the editorial board at the start of their terms, non-traditional (i.e., non-U.S. male) editorial board membership often regressed at a later stage *during* their tenures. It appears that non-traditional editorial board membership needs to be actively monitored if it is not to slip back to traditionally low levels.

Based on our examination of the *JIBS* editorial board membership over the last 22 years, we draw several broad conclusions and make recommendations. First, in contrast to what Stremersch and Verhoef (2005) find for top marketing journals, the *JIBS* case shows that an emphasis on diversity in editorial boards – and as a result diversity in terms of authors – can coincide with achieving high impact. *JIBS* has consistently increased its relative standing in the field of business and management. Although we are fully cognizant of the many drawbacks of the journal impact factor measure (see Harzing, 2010), it does provide some comparative information on the extent to which the average article in a journal is cited. In 2001, *JIBS* was ranked 19th in Management and 21st in Business, whilst in 2010 its position had risen to 8th in Management and 3rd in Business. Hence, at the same time that the *JIBS* editorial board became more diverse, the relative standing of the journal also increased. Whilst we do not wish to imply causality, it is clear that diversity and high standing can go hand in hand.

Second, from our *JIBS* case study it is evident that the appointment of each new editor provides an impetus to increasing both geographic and gender diversity in the editorial board. Our large-scale study also shows that journals with rotating editorship, in general, have more diverse editorial boards than boards with non-rotating editors. In fact, this influence of a new editor on editorial board diversity is especially evident for gender diversity, with journals that have the same editor since inception usually showing the worst records in terms of gender diversity. Hence, these findings support the case for limiting the length of an editor's term on the basis that new editors might bring with them new experiences and perspectives that result in positive change. The increasingly high burden on editors through constantly rising submission rates, and the resultant negative impact an editorship might have on their research output (Aguinis, de Bruin, Cunningham, Hall, Culpepper, & Gottfredson, 2010), suggests that limiting the length of the editor's term might be beneficial for the editor's own career.

In conclusion, the geographical and gender diversity of editorial boards can increase (and has increased) over time, but this increase needs to be continually managed. Specifically, it is important to regularly monitor the geographical and gender diversity of the boards of scholarly journals to raise awareness and achieve sustained positive change.

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Endnotes

¹ Gender was determined based on given names. When the given name was ambiguous a Google search was conducted. This normally provided the homepage of the academic (with picture). Failing this, gender was established through a search on Facebook or Google images.

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AIB Regional Chapters: A Review of Best Practices and Future Possibilities

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ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (AIB) members are potentially privileged to both benefit from and contribute to the increasing internationalization of business school curricula. For this to be maximally true though, the Academy of International Business must itself be fully internationalized. Currently, this apparently is not the case, as is indicated by wide variation in participation and viability across the AIB’s 16 regional chapters. In this exploratory study, through primary and secondary data sources, we collected chapter-specific data from the regions in order to identify active chapter locations, to explore variation across these chapters, to promote a best practices mindset and to foster communication across regions with the aim of strengthening the impact of the AIB as a whole.

Internationalization, AIB and Its Chapters

Internationalization of business schools has been an ongoing objective that has become even more important with accreditation organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Foundation Manage-

ment Development (EFMD) recognizing and emphasizing the importance of globalization. Table 1 identifies several of the key accreditation organizations for business schools both within the United States and across the world. We believe that the AIB regional chapters, sometimes referred to as regional associations, can play a vital role in helping academic institutions to achieve global integration of their curricula. Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify the current location, positions and best practices of the AIB regional chapters. These best practices are identified so that other regional chapters may consider implementation to increase the memberships of AIB and their respective regions.

Established in 1959, the AIB has become the world’s leading association of academics, consultants and researchers specializing in the field of international business. Transcending the conventional boundaries of academic departments and managerial functions, the AIB has a goal of creating and disseminating knowledge about international business and policy issues in order to enhance education and practice and to advance professional standards. To that end, the AIB sets forth in its constitution the following three objectives (<http://aib.msu.edu>):

Table 1: Accreditation Organizations by Geographical Scope

Scope of Accreditation	Accrediting Organization
International	AACSB – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (also national) ACBSP – Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (also national) IACBE – International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education
USA National	AACSB – Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (also international) ACBSP – Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (also international) CHEA – Council for Higher Education Accreditation DETC – Distance Education and Training Council
USA Regional	MSACS – Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools NEASC – New England Association of Schools & Colleges NCACS – North Central Association of Colleges & Schools NCCU – Northwest Commission on Colleges & Universities SACS – Southern Association of Colleges & Schools WASC – Western Association of Schools & Colleges
European	AMBA – Association of MBAs EFMD – European Foundation for Management Development EQUIS – European Quality Improvement System

- (a) facilitating exchange of information and ideas among educators and between the business and academic fields;
- (b) encouraging and assisting research activities which advance knowledge of international business operations and increase the available body of teaching materials; and,
- (c) cooperating whenever possible with government, business and academic organizations for the furtherance of its basic objectives. However, to avoid the compromise of the intellectual integrity of its members as well as the independence and impartiality of the entire organization, the Academy shall not adopt a partisan position on any matter involving particularistic interests, either private or public.

Currently, the AIB global community consists of 3,493 members in 79 countries; the membership is organized into 16 regional geographical chapters that are named for the sub national, national or multicountry areas that comprise a given region (<http://aib.msu.edu>). Most AIB members' primary affiliations are with the chapter in which they work or reside, though members may choose to affiliate with another chapter by notifying the AIB Secretariat. "The primary purpose of a Chapter is to provide AIB members of a particular geographic area with opportunities for the exchange of ideas, for the presentation of research, for professional contacts, and for discussion of matters of mutual interest and concern at times and places convenient to members of the chapter, provided they do not conflict with the AIB Annual Meeting" (<http://aib.msu.edu>). The AIB website lists the following fundamental chapter activities:

1. Recruiting new AIB members.
2. Holding annual meetings, whether singly or in conjunction with other academic or professional associations.
3. Communicating among chapter members through newsletters, proceedings and other means.
4. Liaising with other academic associations and research bodies in their geographic area.
5. Working with other organizations interested in the advancement of international business scholarship, education and practice.
6. Providing a regular and orderly transition among chapter officers.

All chapter activities are open to all members of AIB, though members may vote and hold office only in their primary chapters. A new chapter can be formed by contacting the AIB Secretariat if there are 15 paid members from a new geographical area.

Per the requirements of the AIB Executive Board (and in some cases, fiscal or regulatory agencies), the AIB Executive Secretariat maintains permanent records of all AIB activities, including AIB chapter activities. Chapter records are to include (<http://aib.msu.edu>):

1. An annual report of the chapter's activities shall be provided in writing to the AIB Executive Secretary not later than three weeks prior to the AIB Annual Meeting.
2. An annual budget for the following calendar year shall be provided in writing to the AIB Executive Secretary not later than three weeks prior to the AIB Annual Meeting.
3. A full accounting of calendar-year revenues and expenses shall be submitted in writing to the AIB Executive Secretary not later than February 15 of the following year, together with the necessary documentation, as specified by the AIB Executive Secretary.

Figure 1 identifies the locations of the 16 chapters which are considered active as of 2011. The next section discusses data collection, followed by results. The discussion involves the best practices which emerged from the data, concluding with future possibilities.

How We Collected the Data

Data for this study include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected through both primary and secondary sources. We emailed questionnaires to each of the 16 current AIB regional chapters, as listed on the AIB website (<http://aib.msu.edu>), inquiring about key regional characteristics and requesting details regarding annual conferences. Given the geographic diversity of the regional chapters and the subsequent differences in academic calendars around the globe,

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Figure 1: Map of AIB Chapter Locations 2011 (<http://aib.msu.edu>)



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we emailed reminders approximately every two weeks. Over a 10-week period, after a total of 5 requests, 12 of the 16 (75 percent) regional associations returned the questionnaires, and data from these are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

In addition, both primary and secondary data sources from the AIB Secretariat were used to triangulate the accuracy of responses. For example, at the AIB conference each year, there is a chairs' meeting for all regional chapters. The minutes of those meetings provided data for review. Also, each regional chapter is supposed to file annual reports with the AIB Secretariat that include financial and administrative data detailing their activities during each year. However, although the AIB website may indicate, for example, the current membership for a regional chapter, it does not indicate when that regional chapter last updated its information. Interestingly enough, the secondary historical data from the AIB Secretariat identified seven regional associations that were formed during the past three decades but that are no longer active or viable today. These include Pacific Northwest US (1976–1986), Scandinavia (~1976–1979), Egypt (~1976–1980), Russia (1992–1997), Chile (1994–2001), South Africa (1996–2002) and the Pacific Basin (~1979–2001). It is

possible though that these regional chapters could be revitalized in the future, and it appears that Russia regional association is in the process of becoming active again. Lastly, the AIB Secretariat was a valuable source of primary data as we sought to complete gaps in the data and to triangulate contradictory data from the regional associations. Regardless, even after multiple discussions, some data could not be located through personal interviews or a review of historical data.

A cursory examination does not indicate that there are any significant differences between questionnaire respondents and non-respondents. Table 2 presents key characteristics collected from both primary and secondary sources to include the year the chapter was established, the approximate number of members, the last year an annual report was filed and if the chapter publishes a journal.

The Current State of the Regional Chapters

The results indicate that eight regional chapters (50 percent) list their website addresses on the AIB website (see <http://aib.msu.edu/community/chapterlist.asp>). Some of those regions, however, have outdated

Table 2: Key Characteristics of AIB Regional Chapters (ranked by membership)

Chapter / Website	Year Established	Number of Members	Annual Report Last Filed	Journal Publication
Western Europe	1973**	500	2010	--
Northeast U.S. http://facultyfp.salisbury.edu/aibne/	1973**	416*	2006	--
UK & Ireland www.aib-uki.org	1980s; Ireland in 2007	270	2010	No, but publishes a book annually with Palgrave Macmillan
Southeast Asia www.ln.edu.hk/aibsear/main/index.html	1984	250	2010	--
Southeast U.S. www.aibse.org	1976	230	2010	IB: Research, Teaching and Practice
China	2004**	196*	2009	--
Australia & New Zealand	2007	171	2010	--
India	2003**	160***	2010	--
Latin America www.aib-lat.org	2008	158	2010	--
West U.S.	1973**	150	2010	--
Canada	1957	100	2010	--
Japan	1970s	100	2010	--
Southwest U.S. www.aibsw.org	1990	80	2010	--
Korea	1976**	77***	2010	--
Midwest U.S. www.aib-midwest.utoledo.edu/	1973**	65***	2010	International Business Research and Practice
Middle East & North Africa www.uowdubai.ac.ae/aib/	2009	32	2010	No, but considering one

* Data from <http://aib.msu.edu/statistics.asp> community/chapterlist.asp

** Earliest reference in AIB minutes (personal communication, AIB Secretariat, September 30, 2010)

*** Data from the chapter's 2010 Annual Report (<http://aib.msu.edu/community/chapterlist.asp>)

information on their websites. Doing a cursory Internet search, we were unable to find websites for any other regional chapters.

Using the posting of annual reports (required by the AIB Secretariat) as a measure of activity, 14 regional associations (88 percent) posted a report for 2010, which is the most current report required at the time of this research. The Northeast U.S. regional association has not posted a report since 2006, and China has not posted one since 2009. In addition, we received no response to our five requests for primary data from these regional chapters. It may be that there is a learning curve for new officers of existing regional chapters or for new regional chapters with respect to the documentation posting requirements of the AIB Secretariat. The election of new officers could also have affected the response rate to primary data requests. For example, the Northeast U.S. chapter has a 2011 conference scheduled for October. The lack of response from a region may also indicate they have lapsed into inactivity, although this can easily be rectified with the election of officers committed to reviving the regional chapter.

Table 3 presents specific details about the regional chapters' annual conferences. The AIB regional chapters from China, Korea, India and Northeast U.S. did not return the questionnaires, so the data (where

available) presented for those regional chapters was collected from secondary sources (i.e., from the AIB Secretariat) and thus may not represent their current statuses.

Discussion of Best Practices

Table 4 presents a summary of best practices used by chapters to increase awareness, membership, conference participation, and communication and collaboration.

Per the available primary, secondary and anecdotal data, 12 regional chapters (75 percent) hold annual conferences, and 10 of those regional chapters present best paper awards annually. Eight regional chapters present additional awards, such as best student paper, best reviewer, and/or most innovative doctoral paper. Other conferences may wish to consider offering these awards to increase their number of conference submissions and conference participants. Finding sponsors for these awards is a useful mechanism for creating links between businesses and academia. This in turn provides access to executive participation in conferences and as well as potentially increasing funding support.

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Table 3: Annual Conference Data for AIB Regional Chapters (not available for all chapters)

Chapter	Length (Days)	Submissions Via	Member, Non-Member & Student Fees (2009)	Best Paper and Other Awards	Independent or Jointly Held with	Non-Venue Sponsors
Southeast US	2.5	AIB online	\$175, 225, 100	Overall; Student; Best Reviewer	Some years with Southern Management Association	Universities cash payments from UNF, Stetson, Rollins
West US	1	email	Free	—	AIB Latin America	—
Southeast Asia	2.5	email	300, 450, 175 USD	—	Hong Kong Inst. of Business Studies	—
UK & Ireland	2	Open Conference	£250, £250+ membership, £150	Overall; Student; Doctoral; Most Innovative Doctoral	Independent	Best Paper: Palgrave Macmillan; others vary
Australia & New Zealand	1	email	Free	Overall	Independent	—
Middle East & North Africa	3	Open Conference	400, 500, 300 USD	Each track; Case Study; Student; Best Reviewer	Independent	Best Overall Papers (2): Emerald
Latin America	1	AIB online	50, 50, 50 USD	Overall; Finalist	AIB West U.S.	Best Paper: INNOVAR; Finalist: GCG
Japan	2	email	5,000, na, 4,000 yen	Overall; Best Book	Japanese Assn. of Int. Business Studies	—
Southwest US	3	email	\$50, 75, 25	Overall, 1st & 2nd Runners Up	Federation of Business Disciplines	—
Canada	3	ASAC	250, na, 60	Overall; Student; Best Reviewer	Administrative Sciences Assn. of Canada	Best Paper: alternating schools
IndiaAR	3	NR	NR	Overall	UNCTAD (2009)	NR
Midwest USAR	3	AIB online	\$145, 145, 50	Regular Track; Student	MBAA International	Best Paper: Emerald

AR Data from the chapter's 2010 Annual Report (<http://aib.msu.edu/community/chapterlist.asp>)

Table 4: Summary of AIB Regional Chapter Best Practices

<p><i>To increase awareness, membership, communication, and collaboration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host, and keep current, a detailed chapter website • Keep reports and other information current with the AIB Secretariat • Participate in the Regional chapter chairs' luncheon at the AIB conference • Publish a journal (that is not restricted to conference presentations) • Host an annual conference • Host other, topic-specific events
<p><i>To increase annual conference participation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a best paper award • Present additional conference awards (best reviewer, best student paper, etc.) • Cultivate corporate involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ General sponsorship, or sponsorship of conference awards ◦ Have industry practitioners as guest speakers or panelists • Host conferences jointly with other organizations or other AIB chapters • Host conferences in more attractive venues or more convenient travel hubs • Offer a discounted student rate • Publish conference proceedings • Use an electronic conference submission platform • Offer an online conference registration option

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The UK and Ireland regional chapter has been very proactive in finding external sponsors for their annual conferences (besides finding university sponsors to host their conferences). For example, in 2009, IBM sponsored the UK/Ireland regional chapter's annual conference. To our knowledge, they are the only regional chapter so far to find blanket corporate sponsorships. Three other regional chapters, however, do report having corporate sponsors for some of their best paper awards, and, like the UK/Ireland regional chapter, many AIB regional chapters have university institutions providing financial support for meetings as well as venues for hosting conferences.

Holding joint conferences with other associations within the geographic region of the chapter is beneficial in that it may provide additional services for members as well as provide economies of scale cost savings. The Southeast U.S. chapter is fortunate to hold joint meetings with Southern Management Association (SMA) in most years because SMA is large enough to offer placement services and to attract textbook and software vendors. To be able to piggyback on these activities is beneficial for members in that they can attend two conferences for the price of one in terms of travel and hotel expenses and time away from the office. Across the AIB regional chapters that responded to our questionnaires and indicated holding annual conferences, this joint-meeting tactic is popular, given that eight (50 percent) hold their conferences with other (non-AIB) associations. Two of the AIB regional chapters, Latin America and West US, reported holding their conferences jointly with other regional chapters within their geographical scope, and three regional chapters hold their conferences independently.

Hosting conferences in attractive venues seems to increase conference participation. Selecting a popular venue in the region or an attractive travel hub seems to increase conference participation. In addition, building a graduate student base by offering a student conference rate seems to help regional chapters grow and thrive in the long run. Several of the regional chapters offer a student rate that is designed to cover the out-of-pocket variable costs for meeting rooms, equipment rentals, proceedings and gifts in addition to food and beverage. This idea was gleaned from AIB's membership fee structure in which low income professors and students receive reduced rates. Six of the ten regional chapters that reported their conference fees also indicated discounted rates for students, thus at least 44 percent of regional chapters utilize this practice.

One of the regional chapters that does not offer a discount is Latin America; however, they charge only US\$50 for each participant, regardless of status. The other two exceptions, West U.S. and Australia/New Zealand, charge no conference fees;

they are free to all attendees, not just to students. These strategies are designed to increase participation by all types of members as a method of building support for the regional chapter.

Publishing conference proceedings or a journal also appears to increase chapter activity. If an AIB regional chapter sponsors a journal, this also increases participation at annual conferences, especially if the journal articles are selected solely from conference submissions. International Business: Research, Teaching & Practice (www.aibse.org/Journal.htm), the journal of AIB Southeast US, was established in 2007. Initially it was open only to submissions that were presented at its annual conference. The AIB Southeast US Executive Committee and Journal Editorial Board set it up this way as a means to increase conference participation, to subsequently increase conference submissions, and ultimately to allow greater rigor in the review process. Beginning in 2010, the journal began accepting outside submissions along with the best papers from the conference for blind review. Currently, one other regional chapter, Midwest U.S., publishes a journal, and it is still closed to submissions other than conference presentations. A number of regional chapters reported that they are currently publishing their proceedings, but these publications are not, to our knowledge, refereed journals. For accreditation purposes (more details are presented below), blind, peer reviewed journal articles are typically weighted more significantly than refereed conference proceedings although most conference submissions are put through a blind review process as well.

For any regional chapters currently publishing only their conference proceedings but considering expanding those publications into more widely-circulated, refereed journals, they should know that the cost

could be less prohibitory than expected. With current technology, self-publishing is now highly viable. Indeed, it is probably worthwhile to investigate this option even for regional chapters that want only to continue publishing their proceedings in hard copy instead of CD format.

The process of submitting conference papers and panels electronically allows regional chapters to manage the submission process systematically. Two regional chapters (Southeast US and Latin America) are currently using AIB's conference submission system. Three other regional chapters reported using either ASAC or Open Conference to receive submissions. These submission processes allow participants to upload their submissions, receive a tracking number and view reviewer feedback. They also provide incoming conference chairs with a systematic approach for evaluating conference submissions.

Detailed financial analyses of annual conference expenses are beneficial to keep regional chapters financially viable. Information such as the breakeven number of participants and contribution margin are critical so that the regional chapter can keep conference expenses low, and subsequently, registration fees low. By keeping conference fees affordable to AIB members, regional chapter participation should increase. With most universities reducing travel and research support, this is beneficial in maintaining or growing participation at annual conferences. Conference fees for 2009, where reported, are included in Table 2. These fees ranged from \$0 to \$400 for a 1–3 day conferences for members, and most regional chapters have variable rates that are even higher for non-members.

As the prices for catering food and beverages at the larger hotel chains has become almost unaffordable, some of the regional chapters have in fact reported moving their conferences to smaller hotels to reduce costs and to keep conference fees from increasing. Scheduling conferences to begin early afternoon or to end prior to dinner can also help keep costs low.

Regional chapter websites with current and accurate information are very helpful in attracting new members. One potential barrier to having regional chapter websites is the issue of where to host them. In some cases, each time chapter officers changed after elections, the website host location changed, and that proved to be problematic. One regional chapter purchased a static web location to avoid this situation, but this required financial resources, which are becoming scarcer. Today, an even better opportunity exists in that the AIB Secretariat is willing to host regional chapter websites at no charge. This eliminates issues regarding host locations and facilitates maintenance of current information for any regional chapter of AIB. This process should be available in the near future for all regional chapters.

Another recent innovation for some regional chapters is online conference registration via a Pay Pal account and/or the acceptance of credit

cards. This is particularly useful to participants from international countries who do not have bank accounts in the host country. Convenience for members and participants is a priority over the 3–4 percent (on average) online payment fee assessed by the credit card companies. Regional chapters could choose whether to absorb this fee or to pass it on to members. Members may still send in bank checks to avoid this fee or choose the credit card on-line option.

A really useful learning experience for the regional chapters continues to be the annual chapter chairs' luncheon held at the AIB conference. This is an opportunity for all regional chapters to share what is going on in their region and to exchange ideas. From these meetings, regional chapters have been able to share innovative ideas and best practices as well to discuss challenges facing the regional chapters. Most regional chapters have one of their officers participating in the AIB conference, and this person could represent the regional chapter at the luncheon, even if they are not the current chair of the chapter.

What the Future May Hold

Given the scarcity of resources within universities and colleges, especially in recent years, travel funds have been reduced or eliminated. In the US, economic conditions have resulted in higher unemployment, which has subsequently decreased the tax base from which public universities and colleges are funded. College endowments and institutional giving have also been depressed at most universities, although recently they have begun to rebound (Gorski, 2011). These funding setbacks for universities are consistent across the world.

In most cases, however, faculty still need to remain qualified for accreditation purposes. As mentioned previously, a brief review of international accrediting organizations, including a list of accreditation organizations, is provided in Table 1. Conference fees may be tax deductible in some countries (e.g., the US) as non-reimbursed business

““ *Regional chapter websites with current and accurate information are very helpful in attracting new members.* ””

expenses in the event that an institution has no support available for travel and conferences. Thus, the AIB regional chapters should have the potential to attract more participation in conferences. For example, in order to remain academically qualified (AQ), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2011) requires that faculty must have two refereed publications within a five year period. Conference submissions and proceedings, although not directly acceptable for maintaining AQ status, should lead to blind reviewed feedback that can be incorporated along with discussant and participant comments into

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a final publishable article. Being a reviewer for the regional chapter's conference is another way to remain current in the theoretical and empirical extensions which have developed.

Professional qualifications (PQ) are also possible through attendance at conferences geared toward maintaining currency. Therefore, regional chapters should consider including panels and working sessions that are attractive to the institutions in their geographical domains in order to create a win-win situation whereby conference participation increases and PQ status is enhanced for faculty. This also dovetails nicely with a method of attracting industry practitioners by their involvement as guest speakers and panelists.

The AIB Secretariat informed the regional chapters several years ago that each regional chapter would receive a membership fee per member who designated a specific region in their AIB membership application or renewal. This decision by AIB has evolved to let the regional chapters apply for funds that are available for special purchases or projects to benefit regional chapters. Thus regional chapters should consider projects which may be eligible for funding. As one example, the Southeast U.S. regional chapter hosted a doctoral consortium for the first time with the 2010 conference. The regional chapter received partial funding in order to provide a stipend and hotel accommodations to the doctoral consortium participants. This level of support attracted doctoral candidates from several countries.

One potential future project would be to approach the AIB Secretariat for funding for a yearly Annals of Best Papers publication from each chapter holding an annual conference. Competition among the chapters to submit high quality papers into the review process with recognition at the annual AIB meeting could be fruitful as well as fun.

From a cooperative approach, better networking among the chapters on an informal basis can further promote best practices rather than the structured mechanisms previously discussed. Collaboration through social media networks such as LinkedIn or Facebook may be helpful tools.

Final Thoughts

Most, if not all, members of the AIB are currently and continually faced with dual professional challenges: to contribute to the internationalization of the curricula of the institutions with which they are affiliated and to develop their personal knowledge and awareness in order to remain effective and competitive in their respective disciplines—all of which continue to become increasingly international in scope. Clearly, active membership in the AIB is a highly viable means to accomplishing both objectives.

In order for this to remain true though, the internationalization of the AIB must at least keep pace with the globalization of the economy. Inasmuch as national economies are integrated across the globe, so too must the regional chapters of the AIB be integrated. In both cases, that

integration is highly and probably necessarily dependent on communication and information flow.

Clearly, especially in the wake of a global financial crisis, financial factors will have a large impact on the activities and effectiveness of all AIB regional chapters. However, it is also clear from the data that we presented that many regional chapters have collectively implemented a number of unique tactics that cost little or nothing and that presumably might very effectively expand their scopes and memberships. We hope that this article will bring these tactics to the attention of all AIB regional chapters, but more so we hope that this article will first inspire all AIB regional chapters to increase their inter-regional communication efforts, and second convince them (especially the less active regional chapters) to stay current in the sharing of their activities and practices.

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International Business Curriculum: Incorporating the Middle East

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THE MIDDLE EAST INCREASINGLY has become important during the past few decades for its role in global politics and business opportunities, and for its impact on the global economy. The oil and gas industries have provided much wealth to many countries in this region, and that, in turn, has provided these countries with resources to develop their economies, educational systems and infrastructures in ways that lay a foundation for future prosperity. Dubai, an Emirate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has become a hub of business activity between Europe and Asia. The recent financial crisis impacting business in Dubai, for example, has had subsequent implications for business around the world. Although much turmoil still exists in many parts of the Middle East, other parts are experiencing positive economic and social advancement (*The Economist*, 2009). Recent unrest and riots in this part of the world in early 2011 present some uncertainty as to the future stability of this region and its implications for the rest of the world. Its importance, however, to global economic trends and business activity will continue to be significant and likely will be even more so as this current transition produces new political and business models.

This article makes an argument for a more formal inclusion of business activities and related cultural implications of the Middle East in current business school curricula. The emphasis is on *business curricula*. An increased emphasis on the Middle East has been observed for international education curriculum in liberal arts programs in US universities (Open Doors, 2010). Preliminary research presented in this article reveals very limited inclusion of these topics currently in business school curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. This observation became evident during the development and implementation of a course, including a study abroad component, on the Middle East. Efforts were made to locate schools that had established a similar program in order to gain insights and to learn from their experiences. Very few study abroad programs could be found. This is understandable for countries where safety is a concern or riots and military action are taking place. However, there are other appropriate countries to visit within the Middle East where much can be learned and experienced through business interactions.

The Middle East represents an area of significant impact to global business, and its inclusion in business curricula today is scarce. It is not the intention of this paper to advocate focusing on the Middle East as op-

posed to places such as Latin America, Europe or Asia. The intent is to argue for inclusion of this part of the world in the curriculum in a similar manner as these other regions. Africa is possibly another region that is underrepresented. Some programs combine the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

This article provides a framework based on experiences of developing a course for business students that includes a Middle East study abroad component. Although the course described in this paper includes a study abroad aspect, it is not a necessary component for including content relevant to business school students.

Middle East Curriculum Resources

There is little research or literature that specifically addresses the Middle East in international business curriculum studies or study abroad for business programs. Several recent studies have focused on international business curriculum trends and issues in a general sense (Milhauser & Rahsehulte, 2010; Witte, 2010; Wymbs, 2010). Most of the research on study abroad is recent and addresses a broad base of students (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Some work addresses study abroad specifically for business programs (Howard & Keller, 2010) but with little focus on the Middle East. Other regions of the world, particularly Asia, are prevalent in these studies given the rise of countries such as China and India (Scott-Kennel & Salmi, 2008).

An examination of texts, cases and other curriculum resources reveals few with a Middle East focus. A few Harvard Business School cases are available. Some international business texts have a chapter or other relevant Middle East content, and some books that have relevant chapters for educators are available (Alon & McIntyre, 2010; McIntyre & Alon, 2005).

Even though including a study abroad component in a course or curriculum adds immeasurable value to the overall student experience, the objective of including Middle East issues also can be accomplished in the classroom environment alone through cases, guest speakers and readings from relevant articles and news publications. Technology today also provides an alternative means for bringing other parts of the

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world to the classroom. Lack of resources is a major factor in the under-representation of Middle East content in the curriculum. University of South Carolina recently (January 2011) offered a faculty development program to the Middle East through its CIBER (Centers for International Business Education and Research) program. Initiatives like these are needed and will promote curriculum enhancements and move the ball forward in this realm.

Middle East Content in Business Programs

Research was conducted to evaluate the current state of curriculum trends with regard to inclusion of the Middle East in business programs. An analysis of the *U.S. News and World Report* Best 50 Undergraduate Business schools and 100 Best Graduate Business Schools for 2010, the *Business Week* Top 50 Undergraduate Business Schools for 2010 and the current 33 participant schools in the CIBER program provided representative insights across a range of schools. There was overlap in schools across the three rankings that was later taken into account in the analysis. These schools are leaders in international business programs and are more likely to have the resources and student interest to develop programs for the Middle East.

These schools were evaluated to determine which have a study abroad program and/or a concentration or other significant component devoted to the Middle East. Promotional materials from each school's website were examined initially. The majority of these schools have a page that describes international programs, course offerings and study abroad opportunities. If this information was not readily available online or was unclear, additional information was obtained through conversations with appropriate school faculty or administrators.

The analysis of the *U.S. News and World Report* schools revealed only three institutions with study abroad programs to the Middle East. The *Business Week* schools had only two programs, and the 33 CIBER schools had six. Of these 11 schools, there was overlap across studies for three schools, leaving eight schools with a Middle East study abroad or significant business curriculum component. A further breakdown shows that of the programs identified, six were in MBA programs and two in undergraduate programs. These numbers do not include all schools in the United States and are not comprehensive, but the current trends are clear. It should be noted that two schools outside this sample were identified that have study abroad programs in the Middle East. The countries represented by at least one of these study abroad programs include Egypt, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Turkey and Jordan. These programs represent both full semester and short-term programs.

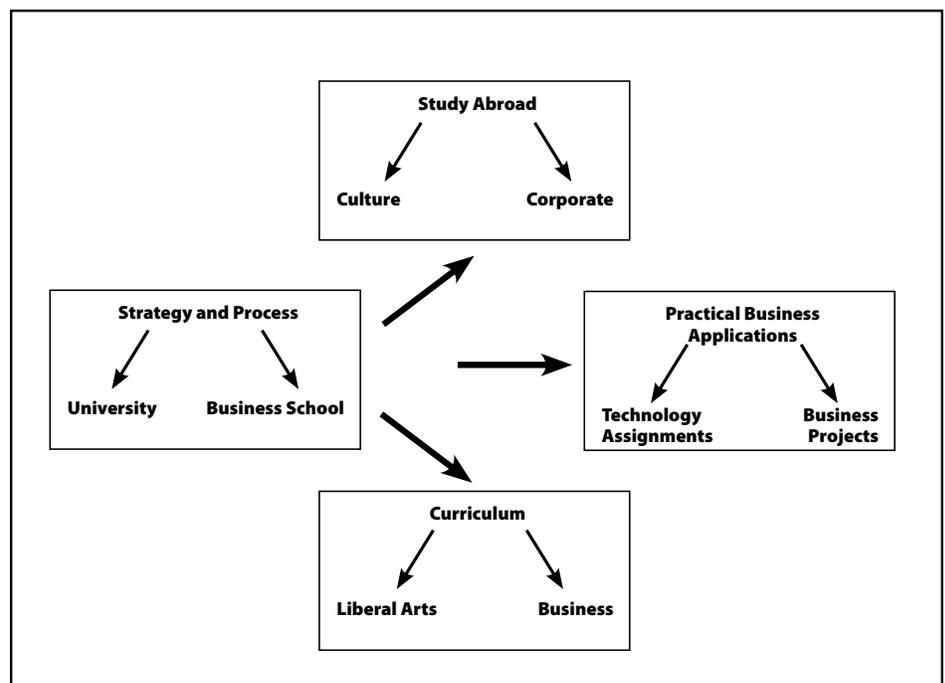
It is more difficult to determine the degree to which US schools are incorporating content related to the Middle East. Typically, no one person in the school has this information, especially if it consists of a single case study or a few articles in a few classes. Observations and many conversations with faculty across a wide range of schools indicate that very little about the Middle East currently is covered in business programs in the United States. Faculty also were randomly surveyed during some conference sessions with a captive audience of faculty interested in international business. About 50 faculty were included, and the results support this assertion.

In the following sections, the course development process for the Middle East course is presented to provide insights for other schools. Figure 1 shows the four pillars of program development (Strategy and Process, Curriculum, Study Abroad, and Practical Business Applications). Relevant dimensions of each of the four components are discussed.

Middle East Course Design Pillars

This course was part of a broader program developed in the business school at the University of Richmond titled "Global Business in a Digital World." This program focuses on emerging markets, with full-credit courses developed for each country or part of the world identified for the program. The program has been in operation for three years. Courses have been developed for China, India and the Middle East. The Middle East course has been taught for three years (2008, 2009 and 2010). The course consists of a classroom component that takes place during the semester, followed by a short-term study abroad. The study abroad component for this course takes students to Dubai (UAE), Abu Dhabi (UAE), Doha (Qatar) and Manama (Bahrain). These countries were chosen because of their value to business students. All three countries

Figure 1: Four Pillars of Course Design



have aspirations to become the financial hub of the Middle East. Other countries also are viable options for study abroad, but the criteria have changed since the recent disruptions in some of these countries. After three years of studying business in this part of the world and experiencing related cultural and historical aspects, the significance of including these dimensions in the business school curriculum is viewed as essential.

A concentration in Middle Eastern studies recently has been implemented in the liberal arts program at the University of Richmond (supported by Title VI funds). The program was under the development phase for about three years and currently is operational. The business course described in this article is one of the offerings for this Middle East concentration. This provides liberal arts students with a business perspective that adds to their understanding of this region of the world. In addition, this integration of liberal arts and business reflects the university's strategic initiative to integrate curriculum across the disciplines, including business, leadership studies, science and technology, and the liberal arts. More emphasis on experiential learning opportunities is a part of the strategy. A strategic evaluation of the Middle East component is necessary for business schools as they continue to redesign curriculum for the international business major, minor and overall curriculum.

In addition to supporting the strategic process discussed above, course design also includes these additional dimensions: (1) curriculum or academic content, (2) study abroad aspect and (3) practical business applications. The practical application synthesizes and integrates the academic and study abroad dimensions. These four pillars, as exemplified in Figure 1, represent the framework used for each course in the "Global Business in a Digital World" program. Unique features must be considered for each course in the series. Some of these features are not readily apparent during the first implementation. Many lessons learned are incorporated into the next iteration of the course. Likewise, much learning takes place in the country that is not anticipated before the study abroad. A major insight from the Middle East course was the lack of coverage of specific topics. These topics are identified and discussed in more detail in the sections below.

Curriculum Components

The curriculum or academic component is covered primarily during the semester course. Students attend classroom sessions one day per week during the semester for the normal 1 hour and 15 minutes. The curriculum consists of two parts: (1) the liberal arts aspects and (2) the business and economic dimensions. It is essential that business students be exposed to the cultural, political and religious aspects of doing business in the Middle East. These dimensions play a pivotal role in business success or failure. Business trends, financial considerations and technological infrastructure all impact the decision-making process from a business perspective. The academic components focus specifically on relevant issues in the Middle East and build on the student's foundation knowledge.

Liberal Arts Dimensions

Topics covered in the liberal arts portion of the course are taught by experts in the various disciplines (primarily faculty in liberal arts at University of Richmond). These topics include:

- Geography of the Middle East
- Historical Perspectives of the Middle East
- Politics of the Middle East
- The Role of Women in the Middle East
- Arabic Language and Its Impact on Business
- Islam and Its Role in Business Activity
- Sharia Law and the Legal Structure

These topics provide an overview and essential knowledge base that people doing business in the Middle East should understand. Coordinating speakers is less of a challenge for this program because the experts are faculty members in the same school and have a vested interest in promoting the Middle East concentration. This overview provides students with a basic understanding of these issues and recognition of areas that may require a deeper understanding during their employment and careers in the future.

Business and Economic Dimensions

With a basic understanding of the business environment (legal, political, regulatory, social and economic), a foundation is in place to better understand how these dimensions impact business decisions, negotiations and solutions to problems. Business topics also are essential to an understanding of the unique issues that make doing business different in this part of the world. Islamic finance, for example, is a topic that is gaining significance globally. Students who have knowledge in this domain gain competitive advantage in the marketplace. These business-related topics include:

- Business Negotiations in the Middle East
- Islamic Finance and Worldwide Trends
- The Role of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Countries and Global Trade
- Marketing Trends in the Middle East
- Technology Infrastructure and Trends in the Middle East
- Entrepreneurial Trends and Issues in the Middle East

Other business dimensions (e.g., ethics, sustainability, environmental issues and operations) are covered in the context of these topics or through the discussion of business cases. These business topics supplement the student's knowledge of core business functions. Books, cases, articles, blogs, podcasts and other online international business resources serve as additional preparation for students. Speakers or experts on these topics may come from law and business faculty or executives from the business community.

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Study Abroad Experience

The short-term study abroad is approximately two weeks and takes place during the winter break, typically starting two days after Christmas. This time frame works better for the students because this is usually down time for them, and most students use the summer for internships and work-related activities. The short time frame allows students who are not able to study abroad for a full semester to take advantage of an international experience. Two major components of the study abroad experience include cultural activities and business interactions with local companies.

Cultural Activities

The study abroad consists of an array of cultural activities in each city (Dubai, Doha and Manama). Typically, it is easier to work with a tour company to provide these experiences. City tours provide the lay of the land and visits to important landmarks. Students celebrate New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in Dubai and have the opportunity to experience the festivities with the local people. They have authentic Arabian food and interact with the Emiratis over tea. The cultural experience is not complete without a traditional desert safari, some time on the beach and indoor skiing at the largest mall in the world. Visiting mosques in each city is a must. Free time is built into the experience for shopping at the souks and bargaining for local goods.

Corporate Interactions

Company visits provide opportunities to learn about business trends and operations in this part of the world. Students visit a variety of industries in both the service and manufacturing sectors, including a manufacturing plant. As mentioned, all the cities visited have aspirations to become the financial hub of the Middle East. Comparisons of talks given by financial center leaders in each country are interesting learning opportunities. University of Richmond alumni located in each city were willing to participate in a dinner session with the students. Interacting with alumni who have experience within the culture and business environment turned out to be one of the most valuable aspects of the study abroad.

Practical Business Applications

The course requirements include a comprehensive project and a series of technology assignments. The intention of these practical applications is to help students synthesize what they have learned and then integrate that knowledge with critical thinking to understand or analyze a problem or issue from a business perspective.

Comprehensive Middle East Project

As mentioned, one of the requirements of the course is to complete a comprehensive project that incorporates the learning opportunities

from both the classroom component and the study abroad component. The project may reflect any aspect of doing business in the Middle East and may focus on any functional dimension. These projects are individual, and students may work with faculty from any functional area or discipline. The project may have a research focus or be activity based. Although the topics vary considerably, criteria are established in order to give some consistency across projects. Students tend to be excited about their projects and feel completing them is a valuable learning experience.

Digital Technology Applications

As the title for this series of courses indicates, digital aspects of doing business across borders are another important part of the course. Collaboration technologies, communication technologies and social media technologies are incorporated into the coursework to give students experience with these technologies across borders. They get hands-on experience utilizing technologies, the same as businesses that operate in many parts of the world. The potential is limitless for technological advancements to close the digital divide and to bring people closer together through new work flows and social networks. Technological enhancements will provide new ways for bridging cultural barriers. The students use technology applications in a series of assignments that are both individual and team based. Technologies utilized in this course are extensive and will be mentioned only briefly here with some specific examples. The major technologies used include wikis, blogs, podcasts, Twitter, Skype, social networks, video conferencing, electronic meetings and wireless technologies. For example, students use the wiki as the backbone text for the course materials. During the study abroad, they write a collective journal of each day's activities that can be edited and revised by everyone in the class in the same manner as content on Wikipedia. Skype is used for communication with family and friends in the United States. Experimentation with video conferencing and electronic meetings gives students hands-on experience with technologies being used by companies to speed decision making across borders and, at the same time, save costs for travel and travel-related activities. Students gain an understanding of how these technologies are being used globally and the value they can afford companies that use these technologies effectively. The technologies may pose opportunities or obstacles for companies, depending on the country and its unique business environment.

Future Middle East Opportunities

Including the Middle East component in business school curricula in some capacity is essential in today's global economy. Each school's needs and resources are unique, and what makes sense for one school's curriculum may not be appropriate in a different context. Business schools that do not have the resources for a study abroad component can identify other means (e.g., cases, research papers, speakers) for integrating Middle East content in their various courses and overall curriculum. Technology will play a key role in bringing these countries to the

classroom, especially in light of recent fears of safety and uncertainty. When a study abroad experience is possible, students will walk away with new perspectives and understandings of this part of the world and an enhanced competitive position in the marketplace. The aim of this article is to lift the awareness of the importance of including the Middle East component in some capacity in current business school curriculum. The benefits provide value to the student's overall learning experience.

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