2009 Presidential Address

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ACADEMY IN THE NEXT DECADE

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The Academy of Management is a growing, thriving association, with membership around the globe. Yet the Academy faces challenges in the next decade, some the result of the Academy’s success. I identify a few key challenges I believe the Academy will face and discuss how these are actually opportunities for growth and evolution. I also suggest some ideas for dealing with these challenges, ending with a note of optimism about the future of the Academy, due primarily to the dedication of the leadership and members of the Academy.

This past August the Academy of Management instituted some changes in how its annual meeting was structured. The professional development workshop sessions began earlier; the competitive or scholarly portion of the meeting kicked off on Sunday morning with awards, announcements, and the presidential address; one day was devoted to all-Academy sessions, whether competitive sessions or PDWs; and the meeting ended with a gala on Tuesday evening, instead of closing Wednesday at noon. None of these changes were monumental, and there had been numerous messages to the membership announcing them, yet many people arrived in Chicago and were confused that there was no Wednesday program. Many people wondered what the nature of this Sunday morning session was, and some started worrying that their session was scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, which might then become the new “Wednesday morning” (i.e., with no one attending). Yet despite this confusion, we had record attendance, the opening and closing sessions were well-attended, and everything worked just fine. It seems that our members may complain about change, but they are really quite adaptable and capable of dealing with new challenges. That is why I am confident that we will be successful in dealing with a series of challenges I wish to discuss here.

I am certain that the Academy will view these as opportunities to improve; we will all work together to become a stronger, more relevant organization to stakeholders, such as our faculty members, student members, nonmember faculty and students, and practicing managers worldwide. But first we have to face the fact that challenges exist, and raising these issues is the reason for this paper. Specifically, I will discuss four challenges that I believe the Academy will face as we prepare to go forward. The impetus for identifying these four issues has really been the strategic planning process that the Academy leadership has been involved in for the past year, along with my own thoughts and observations as we went through these discussions. I will talk a bit more about that process later, but, for now, it is important to state the four challenges that I hope we will seize as opportunities:

1. Globalization of the Academy
2. Arguments about the value of our research
3. The role of the Academy vis-à-vis business schools
4. Other (often ignored) dimensions of diversity within the Academy

As I discussed these issues with colleagues, several of them reacted by noting that most of these issues were about different ways of discussing and dealing with diversity in an organization. In our research we typically discuss diversity in terms of race and sex, and I don’t mean to marginalize those discussions by dis-
cussing diversity in broader terms. I am using the term diversity in its most basic way—I am talking about dimensions on which we differ from each other.

As I continued to develop these ideas and discuss them with others, I thought more about how we in the United States, as well as much of the rest of the world, have dealt with diversity historically. There has been and always will be people who react to diversity with prejudice and bigotry (if not genocide), but even among those who are more rational, it seems that there have been (at least) three modes of dealing with people who are “different.” The first one I call “ghettoization.” Here the reaction to a group of newcomers is to say they can come into our country (or city or organization), but they must live separate from the rest of us: they must live in neighborhoods designated for them or only in certain cities, or they cannot have full membership rights within an organization.

“Assimilation” is what I call the second type of reaction. In this case the message to the newcomers is that they can live with us and join our organizations, but they must change so that they are more like us and so less different. Assimilation might involve learning a different language, dressing in a different way, or studying problems in a different way, but in each case newcomers must make themselves more like the existing group in order to be accepted. When my grandparents came to the United States, they were told they must speak English so they could be more “American.” As a result, by the time we got to my generation, no one could speak Italian (except to swear), and I have always thought this was a great personal loss.

Finally, we can have what I call “true integration.” In this case the response to newcomers is to say that not only are they welcome to join us but we welcome their ideas, their values, and their culture, and we see them as a way for all of us to grow and develop. That is, in this case we believe that the country, organization, or whatever will change and actually grow and improve because of the influence of these newcomers. To use a very simple example in the history of the United States, because of the waves of immigration, many Americans now view pizza, chow mein, and nachos as American foods (of course, chow mein really is American!).

I will refer back to these three possible responses as I discuss the challenges that I see the Academy facing, but, as I stated earlier, my thoughts about these challenges were stimulated to a large extent as a result of the strategic planning discussions the Board of Governors has been involved in. Therefore, it is useful to say something about that process and its outcomes.

Throughout 2009 the Board of Governors went through a strategic planning exercise with the help of an Academy member, Alan Glassman. This process continued through December 2009, involving the board as well as the leaders of several divisions of the Academy not traditionally represented on the board. This was done to help ensure that a full range of voices was heard. The meetings were quite revealing, and everyone involved has remarked on how useful they were. One of the more interesting observations was that the Executive Committee members, the larger Board of Governors, and the division leaders all agree on the major issues facing the Academy and even on the general direction of actions we should take. This is not to say that everyone agrees on everything, but it has become clear (to me at least) that our leaders at every level are dedicated to doing what is best for the Academy and its members. I saw no evidence of any type of “us versus them” thinking within this group. For me this is further reason for general optimism about the future. So what do I believe that future will be like?

It is clear that today's Academy of Management is not your father's (or mother's) Academy world. Ten years ago our annual meeting was held in Chicago and was attended by roughly 4,500 members, of our total membership base of about 10,000, and most of these people were from North America, with a few from Europe and even fewer from Asia. This past year we had over 10,000 attendees, working from a membership base of over 19,000 members, and there were people from over 70 countries in attendance. But in many ways our annual meetings, and the Academy itself, really haven't changed very much in those ten years. The Academy has always been run by and for members in North America. Yet, today, over one-third of our members are from outside North America, and this is the portion of the membership that is growing the fastest.

At the same time there are increasing attacks on the value of the research done by our members. Some critics claim it is irrelevant, and
some claim it is actually harmful. Some of these attacks come from our members themselves, although there is surely no shortage of critics outside our profession. In addition, since we are still mostly an organization of faculty members, our members face new pressures from their home institutions as budgets get tighter and universities are less and less willing to tolerate the peculiarities of business schools in their midst. Finally, there are issues associated with differences across departments, both in terms of their emphasis on research (versus teaching) and especially in terms of their focus on specific sets of journals for their publications. This somewhat different type of diversity threat may pose unique challenges to the Academy in the future.

The nature of these challenges makes it clear that the solutions of the past are not likely to be those that are effective in the future. We must find a way to take these challenges and use the opportunities they present to help improve the Academy. I don’t claim to have the answers to what we need to do, but I know we need to start talking seriously about these issues.

GLOBALIZATION OF THE ACADEMY

The overall number of Academy members is growing, and most of that growth is new members from outside North America. It is interesting to note, however, that a scholar trained (or even born) in the United States, for example, who moves to Australia is considered an Australian member. But these are not the people I want to focus on. My concern is more for members who are trained (and work) outside North America. Many of these members live in Denmark, France, Germany, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, although we have members in ninety-three countries around the world. These members have different views on the issues we should study and how we should study them, and we must find a way of meeting their needs and, in so doing, fully integrating them into what has become a truly global organization.

In some ways this challenge gets right to our identity as an organization. We call ourselves THE Academy of Management, but many members from other parts of the world refer to us as the American Academy of Management. Perhaps that is true. Perhaps our organization will always have an American flavor because this is the country where it was founded. But that doesn’t mean we should accept that fact and move on. What do we aspire to be? Do we want to be an American or North American organization that simply has international members, or do we want to be a truly global organization? We need to decide. Likewise, we need to decide what the nature of the relationship will be between the Academy and its affiliates (such as the Ibero-American Academy) and associates (such as the European Academy, the Brazilian Academy, or EGOS—the European Group and Organization Studies Group). Early discussions in the strategic planning sessions seemed to point to a desire, on our part, to be leaders in a global consortium. Of course, that assumes that others would want us as leaders, or even as participants in such an effort.

Furthermore, we must face the fact that we have not been very welcoming to members who are trained differently from how we train faculty in North America. Our journals are dominated by North American–trained scholars, who share a specific model of how research should be conducted and reported. For all others we have insisted on assimilation: we will accept you if you adopt our models of how to do research. This is actually an area where things have been changing, although slowly. We have had journal editors living outside North America, we have had associate editors who were trained and live outside North America, and we now have many members of the editorial boards of our journals who were trained outside North America. Furthermore, we have had several members of the Board of Governors who were trained and who live outside North America. These changes will make a difference over time, but the Academy must still deal with the challenge of how to accommodate other research models within our journals. Here I am referring to differences in terms of the philosophy of science and preferences for inductive versus deductive approaches. I am not referring to the perceived preference for quantitative versus qualitative methods in our journals (which, incidentally, I don’t believe to be the case) but, rather, to differences in how one approaches a research problem and defines a research question.
Although we still have members who believe that if a paper does not have numbers it is not “real” research, most of our members now realize that a good qualitative paper can provide insights into a problem that we can never gain by looking at one more LISREL table. The challenge is to further educate our members about the value of adopting different research models. We literally need to educate them on how to see the contribution from a study that is done differently from what they are used to.

In addition, it is quite obvious that our annual meeting itself has been designed primarily by North American scholars for North American scholars. During a Board of Governors meeting last year, someone raised the question of how we could change the meetings to make them more welcoming to non–North American members. A board member from Europe suggested that we could simply recognize that August is vacation time in Europe, and so we could hold the meetings in July. Although this would require a major adjustment for many of us, it would not be impossible to do, and it would represent a rather simple but concrete way of telling European members that they are really welcome. There is, in fact, a newly formed task force charged with investigating how we could make the annual meeting more welcoming to members from all over the world. It will be interesting to see what they come up with, and it will be interesting to see what we do about their proposals. For too long we have demanded assimilation from our non–North American members. The future clearly lies with true integration so that all members can learn from each other and so we can have a venue where all members feel comfortable coming and sharing their ideas.

Over the years some members (and some leaders) of the Academy have asked why, if we really want to be a global organization, we don’t hold our annual meeting outside North America. A number of years ago, Mary Ann von Glinow proposed such a move; although we didn’t quite follow through, her initiatives did lead to the first annual meeting outside the United States—in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The question of a non–North American annual meeting was actually a large part of our strategic planning discussions. The board began seriously talking about holding the annual meeting outside North America in 2015, which would be the seventy-fifth annual meeting. Everyone was excited about the idea and everyone supported it, but we needed to collect some data in order to determine exactly where this 2015 meeting could be held. Unfortunately, the data we collected suggested that the idea might be problematic. We identified those cities outside North America where there were a large number of conventions and conferences, concentrating mostly on Western Europe because of the concentration of membership there, but we also considered several Asian cities. We discussed accessibility for Ph.D. students, as well as who might attend a meeting outside North America, and we obtained information about facilities and cost.

We learned, for example, that one European city that would be a great place for a conference wanted $1.2 million for the convention center facilities (versus $75,000 in Philadelphia, for example) and another $580,000 for meeting rooms. A potential site in Asia wanted $1.5 million for the convention facilities, plus we would have to pay for the utilities, while in another city the hotel with the largest block of rooms was twenty miles from the convention center—a problem for many of our members who have become used to venues where all hotel rooms are within a few blocks of the meeting site.

The disappointed board members digested the information and discussed the possibilities. We could dramatically change the nature of our annual meeting, eliminate some traditional activities, and probably even raise dues enough to cover the added costs. All of these were possible, but not optimal. In the end, when all the discussion was over, the board voted unanimously to hold the 2015 meeting in North America. But the discussion and the process led us to conclude that we should try a different tack. Although we may not be able to move the annual meeting outside North America right now, we formed a second task force charged with organizing a second annual meeting outside North America no later than 2015 (and hopefully sooner). This meeting would be smaller in scope, could be organized by divisions or around a theme, might be cosponsored, and would probably be held around January.

This task force has been formed and is being chaired by Eero Vaara, a longtime member from Finland. The members met face to face once during the August meeting, and they have been
having virtual meetings ever since. A few issues have come out of this group already. One is that the Academy is seen as a competitor by some groups, and not all of our colleagues around the world want to see any type of meeting in their backyard. Partially as a result of this feedback, the group has suggested that perhaps instead of holding a meeting in a place where we have a lot of members (for ease of access), we should hold the meeting in a place where we don’t have many members at all. Perhaps we could use this meeting as a form of outreach to actually bring some innovative teaching and research to parts of the world where faculty cannot afford to attend our regular annual meeting. In any case, this new meeting should be organized and structured differently from the annual Academy meeting. We hope this will allow us to experiment with meeting formats and program elements that could eventually be incorporated into our regular annual meeting as well and so make all of our meetings more useful to members.

The task force continues to deliberate, and we’ll see what it finally recommends, but it does seem clear that the Academy will have some type of event outside North America in the next five years or so. This strikes me as an excellent example of how we can take the challenge of globalization and turn it into an opportunity. Through the decision-making process we affirmed our belief that globalization is a good thing, which we should embrace in our meetings, and that we should take this as an opportunity to explore new formats and structures for our meetings. These structures might be based on more plenary sessions or a series of smaller, intense sessions focused on a few papers that are discussed in great detail, or they might be based on some other structure completely. Our colleagues from around the world have a great deal of experience with different meeting formats, and they can teach us a lot about those alternative formats. Thus, they would become truly integrated within the Academy, and the Academy would grow and improve as a result of this new knowledge.

But this is not the only way we can leverage our global membership to improve the Academy as a whole. Colleagues from Europe and Asia can teach us about better ways to organize conferences, and colleagues from Europe and other parts of the world can introduce us to new research models, but there is more we can learn. Our colleagues in Latin America are far beyond most of the rest of us in terms of integrating social responsibility and social entrepreneurship into their business curricula. For example, one South American school has its students working on developing and actually rebuilding a depressed neighborhood that is adjacent to the school. The idea of a “triple bottom line” is much more prevalent in that part of the world, and we can learn a lot about the theory and practice associated with heightened social responsibility by relying on these colleagues.

Certainly, we are a large and well-organized group that has something to offer colleagues around the world, but those colleagues have a lot to offer us as well, and we must view globalization as an opportunity to learn, rather than just a chance to teach. This will involve everything from making our annual meeting more welcoming to planning an alternative conference outside of North America to educating our members about alternative research models. We also need to increase the diversity of backgrounds of individuals on our editorial boards so that our journals will be more welcoming to other types of research. Finally, it means continuing to work to bring non–North Americans into the leadership of the Academy. We have an amazing resource in our globally diverse membership, and we must seek every possible way to leverage that resource to make our organization better.

THE VALUE OF OUR RESEARCH

The second challenge I want to address deals with business schools and research. University administrators value research activities that bring in grant money; most business school faculty members don’t do a lot of that, so we don’t get the respect we deserve in our larger university environments. Also, our colleagues from the sciences often see our research methods as weak, and our colleagues from the liberal arts believe that we are too closely tied to business and our research is too applied and not theoretical enough for us to be real scholars. Therefore, it is somewhat ironic that, at the same time, our research is being criticized by people both inside and outside the Academy for being too academic and not relevant enough. Frankly, I have heard more than enough claims that our
research is not relevant. I believe these issues are more complex than most critics acknowledge, and I believe that our research is (mostly) relevant.

One problem with many of the criticisms I have seen is that the critics focus on single studies and point to their abstract nature or lack of relevance. But as Tom Lee pointed out in his presidential address last year, we really need to look at research programs and streams rather than individual studies. A prime argument for looking at programs of research rather than individual studies is the work of Daniel Kahneman. Although most people in our field are familiar with Kahneman’s work (mostly coauthored with the late Amos Tversky), many of them have never read the individual studies on which Kahneman’s larger arguments are based. For example, one typical study asked thirty-one students responding to an ad on campus to rate the appropriateness of the following statement: “At the end of a long game of chance, John could have won the whole pot if a die that he rolled showed a six. The die that he rolled was loaded to show six 80% of the time. John rolled it and it showed a two. John almost won the whole pot.” The authors reported that 43 percent of respondents found this statement appropriate (Kahneman & Varey, 1990: 1106).

This paper was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* in 1990 and, as of 2009, was cited sixty-eight times—a respectable citation rate but nothing remarkable. This is very similar to the kind of study conducted by some management professors that is criticized for having little real-world relevance. After all, what do we care about how people determine whether or not something almost happened? But, of course, this was a single study. Several years later these results were summarized by Tversky and Kahneman, along with the results of many other such studies, in a paper entitled “Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty.” This paper, published in the *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* in 1992, has been cited 1,109 times to date and is the type of paper most of us are more familiar with. Of course, an earlier summary paper, published by Kahneman and Tversky in *Econometrica* in 1979 and titled “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk,” has been cited 5,292 times.

I am not making light of Kahneman’s research, and I’m not really suggesting that every stream of research is as important or influential as his (after all, Kahneman did win the Nobel Prize in Economics), but I think it is essential that we consider whole bodies of research rather than individual studies before we begin leveling criticisms about relevance. As a profession, therefore, perhaps we should be encouraging young scholars to develop coherent research programs, rather than rewarding them for publishing the “five required A-level articles” necessary for tenure (or whatever the local standard might be).

But I believe that there are other forces operating here that make a discussion of research relevance more complicated. We live in business schools, and we like to think of ourselves as operating on a “business” model and being able to “talk to” real-world managers. But we are not managers; we are scholars, scientists, and educators, and we operate with a different model. A recent book by Gary Pisano (Pisano, 2006) and a presentation by my colleague Bert Cannella (Cannella, 2008) outline issues that arise from the fact that science and business do not operate the same way.

Science (and so academia) is seen as operating under a model of “the commons,” where (1) information is shared openly and ideas are discussed freely, (2) validity is valued (i.e., not all ideas are equal), and (3) issues and answers are often complex. Business, on the other hand, operates under a model where (1) secrecy is valued, (2) there is an emphasis on results and utility, and (3) leaders need answers—not ambiguity.

The fact that universities, especially those in the research community, operate on the model of the commons can lead to problems. Many people do not understand the model, some are threatened by it, and many others see it as inefficient. Business leaders often see our processes as a waste of time, and some political leaders fear the commons is a breeding ground for ideas and ideologies that they do not want to see spread. But science can only progress through its reliance on the commons model. Therefore, it is critical that we retain this model even though, from a purely business perspective, it has several shortcomings, such as (1) the absence of easily measurable outcomes (other than the publication of even more papers!), (2) the absence of clear connections to a given "cus-
tomer,” (3) the fact that this model challenges some basic ideas concerning individual gain, and (4) the fact that the scholars who participate in the commons are often poorly equipped to explain it to others—managers or even students in some cases!

These differences may ensure that there will always be some disconnect between the outcomes of our research and what practicing managers need, but we can certainly do a better job at our end to help narrow this gap. For example, we as scholars don’t usually work with real-world managers to develop a research agenda. This is the goal of “Project Gnosis,” an effort undertaken by the Practice Theme Committee to bring managers and scholars together to generate more usable research, but we can probably do more of this kind of thing. We can also do a better job of training our students to translate their research findings into useful knowledge. Obviously, some business schools are quite good at this, and some of our members are very good at demonstrating the practical relevance of their research findings, but most business schools are content to train students to be pure scholars without concern over showing the relevance of their work. Finally, we are simply too enamored with jargon. I have heard managers who read our journals complain that we spend too much time on details of measurement and analyses, but this is what we need to do in order to establish to our readers that they should have confidence in our findings. We could, however, try to explain things in the simplest terms possible, rather than use terms coined by our members. With all due respect, it took me a while to figure out that “mimetic isomorphism” really referred to one firm copying what another firm does!

I don’t want to suggest that we move too quickly along any of these lines, however. Pisano (2006) also warns against the pure monetization of research. In fact, he argues that overconcern for monetization is the primary reason the biotech industry never really fulfilled its potential. So while I’m not sure we should become too enamored with measurable outcomes in our research endeavors, I do believe that we must do a better job of connecting our research to the world around us. We must also work to educate all of our constituents that the world is a complex place and the problems we face require complex answers.

None of this means that our research is irrelevant; we just may not be doing a good enough job explaining its relevance. In fact, consultants and management “thought leaders” have to get their ideas from somewhere, and many of them get their ideas from our journals, or from books where authors take ideas from our journals and explain their applied value. In either case there are individuals involved who are simply more talented at reading our sometimes arcane papers and extracting the kernel of useful information from them.

So how can we alter these threats to make them opportunities? One idea is that it would be helpful if we could persuade our colleagues to judge and reward faculty on the basis of programmatic research and real contributions. I’m not sure I believe that unpublished papers, regardless of their brilliance, can make much of a contribution, but I am quite sure that not every paper that has been published makes an equal contribution to the field. This would require more heroic decisions on the part of tenure and promotion committees, but the simple truth is that if we reward our faculty for publishing one-shot studies with little external validity, we should not be upset when others question the contribution our research makes. But, perhaps more critically, we can stop fighting among ourselves and work together to find ways to improve the relevance of our research and our ability to communicate that relevance. That is, we must strike at what seems to me one of the worst forms of ghettoization—the separation of those who generate new knowledge from those who apply and disseminate that knowledge. It is hard to imagine that fully integrating some members of the practice community into the Academy would do anything but make us a better organization.

Before leaving the issue of the relevance of our research, there is one further point worth discussing. The question has been posed regarding whether the Academy should expand its set of journals. When the Academy first established *AMJ* and, later, *AMR*, a decision was made to publish papers from every division of the Academy. Thus, these two flagship journals were very broad in their scope. But over time a number of other journals have come into being that are more focused than these two Academy journals. Journals such as *Strategic Management Journal* and *Personnel Psychology* target
much narrower audiences, but that is part of their appeal. Their readerships are much more focused, and so a paper published in one of them may stand a better chance of influencing a specific part of our profession.

Therefore, if the Academy decided to publish more journals, should we try to publish more focused, area-specific journals? Perhaps AMJ and AMR should each be divided into micro and macro versions. Some have suggested that the Academy should publish a “B-level” journal to accommodate more of our members’ research as it gets tougher to publish in our “A-level” journals. Don Hambrick has suggested that perhaps the Academy should publish a journal for useful replications, arguing that replication is at the heart of science, and in our field we really don’t have an outlet for research that attempts to replicate earlier important findings. Yet another suggestion forwarded by current AMJ editor Duane Ireland is that we should consider acquiring an existing journal that serves one of our audiences better. This is an interesting (and clearly strategic) idea that has generated some serious discussion, and even some ideas for candidates.

THE ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS

A third challenge I want to briefly touch on relates to whether we—the Academy of Management—should be doing more to help business schools. Most of our members live in university settings, and, as I noted, business schools are vulnerable to many types of attacks in those settings. Traditionally, the Academy has not really seen easing the lot of member institutions as part of its mission. Traditionally, the Academy has not taken advocacy positions on important issues. Even the Academy code of ethics deals with behavior within the Academy but does not deal with the behavior of members in their home institutions (as opposed to the American Psychological Association, whose code of ethics applies to all behavior of its members). And, traditionally, the Academy has not worked to clarify the contributions of management departments within universities, nor has it gotten involved in university politics. Should this change? Perhaps.

Perhaps the Academy should broaden its involvement in the lives of its members, but this would require a whole new way for us to think about the Academy. We have avoided advocacy positions because there was always a concern over determining for whom the Academy was speaking. How would we deal with the diversity of views and opinions if we wanted to become more involved? These questions have all been raised as part of the strategic planning process as well. People are beginning to question assumptions about what the Academy can and cannot do—and should and should not do. Frankly, I do not pretend to have the answers to these questions, but I believe that it is extremely positive that we are at least starting to ask them more formally. We must, finally, ask ourselves if the Academy will be ghettoized by dealing with only a small part of our lives (i.e., journals and the meetings), or if will it become fully integrated in the lives of business faculty.

One last thought about the role of management departments and schools of business within larger university settings. As a business school dean, it has become clear to me that many business schools have tried to build walls around their institutions. They have enforced ghettoization by defending their turf and not always being good university citizens. I believe that business schools have this all wrong and that, by forming our own ghetto, we have helped fuel the jealousy and the problems we face in universities. For example, why do all students (at most universities) take English and history but not business? The business model has led to revolutions, wars, progress, and destruction; shouldn’t everyone understand something about the way business operates? Wouldn’t it be interesting if every undergraduate were required to take an introduction to business course? I believe this would not only be useful to the students but would open up our world to the rest of the university so that everyone could understand us better.

In general, though, I believe that the challenge of the nature of the relationship between the Academy and business schools is already in the process of becoming an opportunity for discussion. We should all take time to consider exactly what relationship we think the Academy should have with the business school community. We must realize, of course, that the Academy represents just one functional area within the typical business school, and often not the most influential area. Yet in many discussions
with the leadership of AACSB (the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business—an international accreditation body), it has become clear that those leaders see the Academy of Management as the best organized of the academic organizations they deal with. Therefore, if we so choose, the Academy may be able to play a role in the internal workings of business schools. We must now decide, as a body, how integrated into the lives of our members we want to be.

**OTHER DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ACADEMY**

The final challenge I want to discuss relates to some dimensions of diversity within our organization that we don't often discuss. But, before doing that, it is important to say something else about diversity in the Academy. I have been using “diversity” in a very broad way—to discuss any dimensions on which our members might differ. I have spent a lot of time discussing diversity in terms of nationality and culture, both relative to where our members live and how they are trained, because this is an emerging challenge we must face. But none of this discussion should suggest that I am not concerned about the more traditional dimensions of diversity as we typically use the term in our research and in the United States in general. These diversity challenges have been with us since the beginning of the Academy of Management, and they remain with us today. We will always have challenges relating to the diversity of our members in terms of race, religion, gender, disability status, and sexual orientation. Over time, some of these have become more or less salient, but they all remain important. The only reason I have not spent more time discussing these challenges is because I assume that we all recognize the need to address issues of diversity along these dimensions. Perhaps naively, I assume that we believe these issues are important and worthy of our attention, and I simply want to point out that there may be other diversity issues and challenges facing us as well.

Specifically, although most of us are aware that business schools differ from each other on many dimensions, I'm not sure we always appreciate exactly what some of these differences mean. For example, we talk a lot about scholarship and research in the Academy, but not all schools have the same research focus. Some schools have undergraduate programs, which present additional teaching challenges, whereas others have Ph.D. programs, which provide challenges of their own. Differences in teaching loads, student expectations, endowment values—all of these influence what a faculty member must deal with. Over the years the Academy has broadened its focus to consider teaching and practice by establishing standing committees charged with bringing our members’ attention to these issues, but these differences only scratch the surface. If we consider seriously all the ways in which we differ from each other, eventually we have to ask whether we are all really members of the same Academy of Management. Does one size Academy fit all?

Let us consider the leadership of the Academy. Most of our past presidents and the vast majority of past and present members of the Board of Governors come from large, research-oriented schools; most of our members do not. Most of those leaders come from a small number of rather large divisions; many of our members do not. In fact, the realities most of our members face are not the same as those most of the leadership of the Academy faces. Therefore, the leadership does not always appreciate what it means to increase registration fees, or what it would mean to provide small research grants. In such a case, can the leadership really serve the needs of the membership? I would like to think it can, because, in my experience, the leadership of the Academy tries to appreciate the impact of any policy decision on a variety of members, but surely the question is worth asking.

Furthermore, even among these large, research-oriented schools, there may be important differences that we should recognize. Not all programs value publication in all journals in the same way—that is, there are differences in terms of which journals “count.” A few schools, in reviewing faculty for promotion, tenure, or any recognition, focus on how many papers the person has published. In some cases, if a faculty member has published a single paper in his or her career, but it is outstanding, this will be enough. Of course, in most cases schools are looking for some balance between quality and quantity. But still, there are important differences.

When I served as editor of *AMJ*, it became clear to me that most of us really don’t know
what the rest of the membership does. I continue to be struck by how insular most of our members really are. It sometimes seems as though we each live in a small “ghetto,” focusing only on the work of others in the same ghetto but knowing little about the ghetto down the road. This is potentially an insidious form of diversity that we don’t talk about much—but one that could pose an interesting challenge to the Academy. Do we really talk to each other? Do we value each other’s ideas? Do we even know what those ideas are? These are important questions to contemplate as the Academy evolves.

Over the years I have had conversations with faculty and graduates from different programs that have led me to suggest that we don’t all experience the same profession. In working on a paper recently, I stumbled across some interesting data, which raised questions in my mind. I was looking at the number of editorial board members from different schools, and I was struck by how much the results depended on which journals I looked at. These data were obtained by simply scanning the list of editorial board members for the journals in question for the most recent issue of the journal as of July 2009. I don’t want to overinterpret what these results mean, but they are interesting. Faculty members probably believe that the journals they are associated with must be good—maybe even better than other journals—and so they are more likely to direct students toward the journals they value and are associated with. The following list presents some data for a few journals that are clearly macro oriented.

- Harvard University
- University of Michigan (Harvard and Michigan tied at 22)
- University of Pennsylvania
- New York University
- Stanford University
- INSEAD
- University of Illinois (INSEAD and Illinois tied at 8)
- University of Southern California
- University of Texas at Austin
- Arizona State University
- Northwestern University (Arizona and Northwestern tied at 5)

This list shows the schools with the greatest number of editorial board members for Strategic Management Journal, Organization Science, and Administrative Science Quarterly. This is not to suggest that there are not many other excellent journals with a strong macro orientation. These three journals, however, are well-known to Academy members and include data on affiliation for board members.

The following list presents similar data for a set of more micro-oriented journals.

- Michigan State University (20)
- University of Minnesota
- University of Maryland
- Ohio State University
- Texas A&M University
- Purdue University
- Pennsylvania State University (Texas A&M, Purdue, and Penn State tied at 8)
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Iowa
- University of Illinois

Specifically, the list shows the schools with the largest number of editorial board members for the Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes. Again, this is not to suggest there are not other excellent journals. In fact, I wanted to include data from the Journal of Organizational Behavior, but this journal does not include data on affiliation of board members in the journal masthead.

Finally, the following list shows comparable data for two Academy journals that span the micro and macro aspects of our field, AMR and AMJ.

- Arizona State University (12)
- Texas A&M University
- Michigan State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of Southern California (Michigan, Penn State, and Southern California tied at 7)
- University of Florida
- University of Minnesota (Florida and Minnesota tied at 6)
- University of Iowa
- Purdue University
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Illinois
- University of Wisconsin (Purdue, University of Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin tied at 4)

Once again, there are other excellent journals that accomplish this as well, but these two flagship Academy journals seemed best for this discussion.

The differences in the schools represented in the three lists are quite remarkable. Only the University of Illinois shows up on all three. Oth-
erwise, without going into a detailed discussion of who is on which list, we can see that the editorial board composition of the Academy journals is most closely aligned with that of the three micro journals, but the schools represented on the three macro journals' boards are quite different. One can argue that a different set of journals would produce a different set of results (and that is certainly true) or that some of these journals have different missions than some others, but there are certainly differences apparent here.

Now there may be a lot of reasons for this, such as differences in the emphases in programs, where these different journals may be housed, or who the current journal editor is. Furthermore, I certainly don't want to suggest that it is "better" to be on one list than another. I simply want to point out that these data suggest at least the possibility that faculty and students at different schools are more likely to read (and publish) in different journals. Each reader can judge how reasonable a suggestion that is for him/herself.

But if there is something to these data, we must ask ourselves:

1. Do we really all read the same literature?
2. Do we all "know" the same things about our field (which would present a problem in deciding who should speak for the Academy)?
3. Do we really talk to each other about ideas, value each other’s ideas, or even know what those ideas are in some case?
4. Are we really members of the same Academy or just members of related ghettos?

This represents a different type of challenge for the Academy, and perhaps it is one that not everyone wants to deal with. Some will always see a benefit in considering themselves as elite and different from the rest of the group. Unfortunately, such attitudes do not serve anyone very well, and they emphasize how we are different rather than how we are similar.

So how do we turn this type of threat into an opportunity for the Academy? In general, the Academy must continue to strive to provide information about our field that is useful to all our members. If we are not doing this, we need to do something about it. If the Academy journals are not meeting the needs of all our members, we need to find out why. Do our journals publish the "best" papers in the field? If not, why not? When I served as editor, I tried to adopt an idea I got from Mike Hitt, my predecessor. Mike viewed the world of management journals as being competitive—in the best sense of the term. That is, each journal competes with all other journals to get authors to send their best work to that journal. This means that an editor must always be concerned about what she or he offers to prospective authors in terms of a competitive advantage. This might include faster turnaround on decisions, better reviewers, a broader readership, a shorter lead time before publication—all reasons an author might send a paper to that journal (first) instead of a different journal.

It is interesting that, earlier, I noted the Academy’s decision to publish broad journals rather than more area-specific journals. Some of our members see this as a disadvantage, since scholars working in a given area might see their paper as having a better chance in a journal that specializes in that area. But I actually see this as an advantage for Academy journals. As a micro OB/HR scholar, I would probably never read a strategy paper if it weren’t right next to the OB paper I was reading. I believe the Academy journals offer the broadest readership, and therefore the greatest exposure for one’s work, of any journal in management. In general, the more we learn about the competitive landscape for journals, and about who reads our journals and why they do so, the more we can work to make the Academy journals even stronger and more influential. If we are not all experiencing the same Academy, I believe we should do whatever we can to break down barriers among members. In that way we can draw on the expertise of all of our members to deal with the challenges that lie ahead.

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Despite the challenges we face, I am optimistic that the Academy will find a way to turn them into opportunities for further growth as an organization. I’m afraid that if we can’t do that, we run the risk of truly becoming irrelevant, and other groups or institutions will replace us. Furthermore, if we do fail, we will have wasted an incredible chance and an incredible resource; the diversity of our membership is an amazing asset, and we must leverage that. Given what I have seen of the devotion of the Academy leadership and the loyalty of its membership, I don’t believe that failure is really an option.
So what will the Academy look like in the future? It is clear that the Academy of the future will be much more diverse on many dimensions. This new organization will be one where all of our members are fully integrated and where each member values the contributions of every other member. That does not mean that everyone will agree on everything. In fact, I believe that in the future there will be more open and honest dialogue about differences we might have, since we will all be confident that everyone has the best interests of the Academy as a goal.

In closing, let me say again that I believe that our research is relevant to scholars and practitioners; I believe that we have a lot to offer members and potential members from around the world and that there is a lot we can learn from them as well. I believe that everyone involved wants to help the Academy maintain its position and grow as a global organization dedicated to improving the quality of management research and practice worldwide, and that this single mindedness is the reason why we will be successful in the pursuit of this goal. I think the next twenty years or so will be an extremely exciting time for the Academy, and I hope I can be around to see it.

REFERENCES


