



November 28, 2007

To: AACSB Strategic Directions Committee  
From: The Federation of Schools of Accountancy (FSA) Board  
Re: Interim report from the AACSB Strategic Directions Committee (dated October 4, 2007)

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the SDC's report. Our Board's comments are limited and relate to Issue #3, regarding faculty qualifications (recent relevant experience and "mission qualified" (MQ) status).

***Issue #3: Accreditation Standards-How can we ensure that our accreditation standards and processes reflect the global landscape of management education and continue to support and encourage high quality management education?***

- ***Standard 10 should be revised providing additional flexibility in meeting its guidelines allowing for either: (1) a broader definition of professionally qualified faculty; or (2) a new category for "mission-qualified" faculty. However, objective expectations should be retained.***

We do not believe that we have enough information regarding the ultimate objective of changing the definition of "professionally qualified" faculty or adding a new category for MQ faculty to provide an overall opinion as to the appropriateness of these changes. However, we do want to point out a few concerns that we believe should be addressed as these potential changes are considered.

We do not believe that changing a standard only because it has become harder to meet the standard (i.e., faculty shortages) is an appropriate motivation for change. However, we do recognize the practical challenges of meeting the PQ standard as written. Many high quality accounting program have faculty members that are neither AQ or PQ but contribute greatly to the mission of the program. This is most often the case for faculty members in the last few years of their career. A faculty member who has many consecutive years of demonstrated excellence in teaching and technical currency may not necessarily need to maintain relevant practical work experience or certain other PQ criteria. If the MQ classification is designed to address this deficiency, it may well be appropriate.

However, we believe that the MQ classification is fraught with potential problems and could produce unintended consequences. Accounting may be the only business discipline that has a clearly identified underlying profession. A move toward MQ qualification may reduce the interaction between the accounting profession and academia. Some level of allowed MQ faculty may be appropriate, but it is clearly not a substitute for PQ status in accounting. The AACSB has not operationalized the allowed percentages they would support so we cannot yet respond to this issue with any level of specificity.

We look forward to future discussion of these important issues.