

The FSA ultimately opted not to condense the survey feedback into a comment letter, but instead, shared the survey feedback in its entirety with the task force. Thanks to all who took the time to respond!

FSA Survey Results – Feedback for AACSB Task Force

January 29th 2018, 11:05 am CST

1. On Increasing Involvement with Practice:

What specific steps can be taken to increase academically-qualified (i.e. SA and PA) accounting faculty involvement in accounting practice?

Providing and supporting faculty fellowships in practice, particularly in policy level positions do as to enrich understanding. Assign clinical faculty as mentors to develop an appreciation for practice. Sponsor faculty seminars.

Emphasize the intersection between new fields of research and growing/changing areas of practice. For example, research on narcissism and voluntary disclosure may dovetail with certain facets of forensic accounting. This has been shared to us by a world class Forensic Accounting Firm. The key is to look a non-traditional areas of research and emerging areas of accounting practice. Big Data would be ripe for this type of convergence.

Faculty should be encouraged to co-author with professionals in practice.

It has to be valued and part of the tenure and promotion process. We already have great relationships with practice at our school. We have never veered from that but the research institutions have. Practice doesn't care about research as much as quality teaching and the resulting students.

Tenure-track faculty are going to focus on activities that drive P&T. So I see the question as asking how we get tenure-track faculty to focus on research projects that enhance their understanding of accounting practice. One way of doing this might be to have a panel of academically-minded practitioners and practice-minded academics identify a set of problem areas amenable to academic research. Such panels could present at doctoral consortiums connected to AAA section mid-year meetings.

The easiest way to become involved with accounting practice is through professional associations, like the state society of CPAs, the local chapters of IMA, ISACA, FEI, etc. Most these organizations have special membership categories for academics. State societies, for example, waive the requirement to be a CPA for academic members. These organizations are almost always looking for speakers to deliver CPE and are eager for faculty to deliver that. Also, most seek members to their boards of directors. Most offer scholarships and appreciate having academics on their scholarship committees. Another way to increase involvement with practice is to start or host discussion groups on campus. Another way is to ask the company campus relationship manager to connect you to a professional who would like to help deliver a specialized course (or part of a course).

This is one that will require a joint effort between academia and the profession. Allowing faculty to work at firms during sabbaticals or during school breaks would be a good start. Also, the culture that believes that academia is

separate from practice has to be changed. We need some faculty that can develop those relationships with the profession.

- Encourage faculty residencies/internships
 - Develop better access to data for research
 - Have panel sessions for feedback on research at the idea stage
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The long-term solution is for accounting doctoral programs to require candidates to have accounting experience and certification. Doctoral programs should no longer accept candidates who do not have any prior accounting education or experience. For the short-term, there is probably no hope of more practice involvement for current faculty who have never studied or practiced accounting and are only interested in research.

Sabbaticals can be used for this purpose.

Consulting. Teach CPE seminars for CPAs. Bring practitioners into the classroom as guest speakers.

Have members from practice invite faculty to be involved in projects or on committees

Two things come to mind: 1) Support faculty internships at firms and organizations 2) Reward faculty research that is the result of collaborating with firms and others in professional accounting roles 3) Require faculty qualification to include professional certifications and licenses along with terminal degree

Elevate the significance of practitioner oriented research. As long as premier journals ignore practice based research, accounting programs do not reward practice based research and practice based research is not considered "high quality" research, there will remain a certain divide between academia and accounting practice.

Measure the extent to which these faculty participate in the engagement, impact, and innovation factors that specifically involve accounting practice. That way, schools will emphasize the importance of having these faculty involved with accounting practice.

The accounting practice must be willing to help provide data and other resources to support academic research. The accounting practice must be willing to include SA and PA faculty in various research and education programs maintained by the practice outside of academia. More firms should begin hosting academics in house for temporary rotations.

This is really difficult (I think) to accomplish without strong support from practice. Faculty are being pushed in many directions -- improving teaching with new techniques and approaches, ever higher levels of research productivity, new topics to study and teach (data analytics, tax). Without practice actively seeking and encouraging engagement, it's difficult to accomplish.

Directors need to include them in more departmental activities. They must also be willing. Firms can help by bringing people to campus to have interactive discussions about issues important to practice and have an open discussion of what can realistically be covered in the classroom.

2. On Increasing Involvement with Practice:

What specific steps can be taken to more fully integrate practice-qualified (i.e. IP and SP) accounting faculty into academia?

The Bridge program is very helpful. Assign mentors to assist in developing teaching skills.

We attempt to bring back practitioners who graduated 5-6 years ago. They have experience, but remember their College days.

I have some degree of first hand knowledge of this having joined the faculty at XXXX after being a partner at [a Big Four firm]. I've been in the fortunate position of having existing relationships with the faculty prior to joining which has helped immensely with the integration process.

Once again, it has to be valued at the school. You can't just have partners teach all the classes. Academic professors should be mentored to interact with the firms as well and they should have incentives for tenure to do so.

Host a research conference for SA's to present their research to an audience of academically-minded IPs and SPs. At any given time, there is surely a set of working papers for which authors would really appreciate practitioner input.

Most importantly, the practice-oriented faculty must feel respected and appreciated. Their views should be solicited and considered during faculty meetings, etc. Similarly, they be given the opportunity to appreciate academic research by being invited to workshops, search committees for academic faculty, curriculum committees, etc. and thanked for their efforts. Department committees should almost always represent IP/SP and SA/PA faculty.

This is one that may be easier to accomplish at city-schools vs. rural schools. Having professionals teach a course is very beneficial for the students and it brings a very good benefit to the faculty, too. These arrangements result in these professionals being classified as supporting, which some programs have to be concerned about.

- Have orientation and mentoring/guidance programs in the new environment
 - Delineate responsibilities more clearly and also address the role of research/scholarship
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Attempt to involve practice-qualified faculty in research projects of the academically-qualified faculty.

SA faculty can coauthor with IP and SP faculty on articles aimed at reputable practitioner journals and more practitioner-oriented academic journals.

Give them voting rights in departments Have them advise student organizations Use some part-time accountants as adjuncts

Provide workshops to show them what kinds of research would be valuable from a practice oriented faculty member. Also, how to write this kind of research and submit it.

1) Collaboration on research and teaching innovation with SA and PA faculty 2) Ensure the promotion and long term contracts mirror the depth and breadth of contributions of tenure track faculty 3) Encourage more co-authorship with folks at peer institutions

Recognize the value of experience. The greatest interference on this front are accrediting bodies like the Southern Association of Collegiate Schools (SACS) which requires a masters to teach undergraduate courses and a PhD to teach graduate courses. AACSB to a lesser extent makes this difficult with the SA and SA+PA requirements.

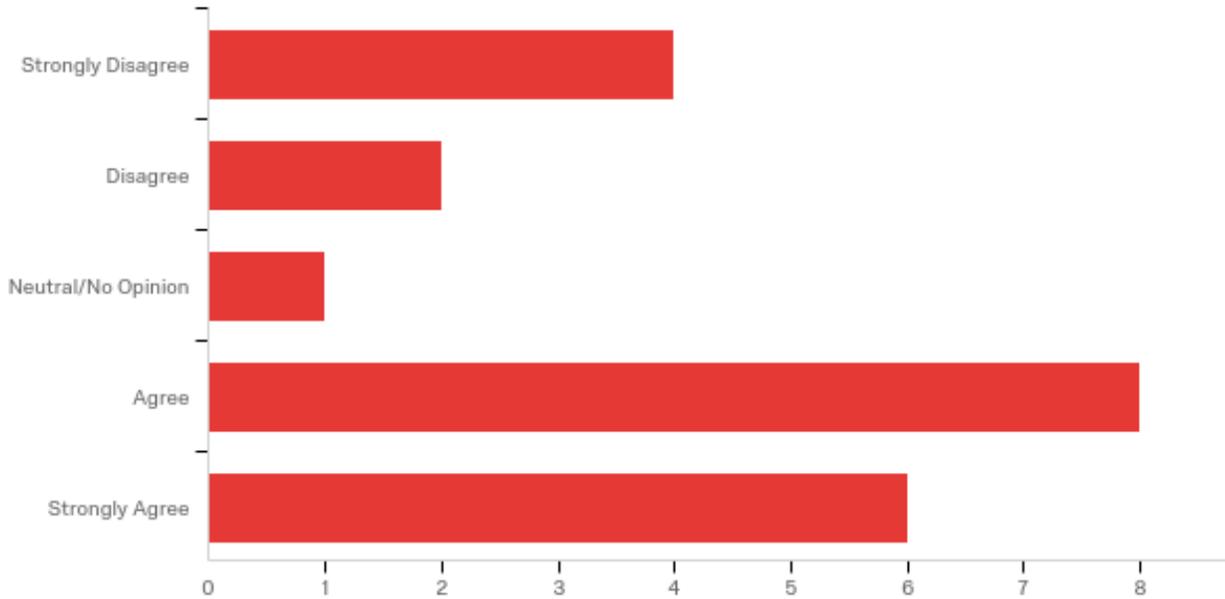
Training session or seminar that helps them with the transition. Assigning him/her a mentor during the first one or two years that helps with the transition.

Schools must begin placing increased value on the impact of teaching and service in addition to the impact of academic research (which IP and SP either don't participate in or participate in to a lesser degree). Schools must offer ways to advance up the promotion chain to IP and SP faculty. IP and SP faculty must be able to participate in school governance (e.g., serve in administrative roles, serve on committees, etc.). Standards must allow for flexibility as to faculty coverage ratios to decrease emphasis on SA and PA and increase recognition that IP and SP faculty can have on student success.

Need to continue to provide convenient and cost-effective programs to integrate IP faculty (and move them to SP). Not all schools can help potential IP faculty make the transition.

They can talk to faculty or faculty can proactively talk to them about what they are doing in the classroom and with students outside of class that perhaps can be the topic of research, either academic or practitioner oriented. Also, encourage them to take Ed psych classes or other teaching oriented classes from schools of Education.

3A. On Including Accounting Practitioners in the Accounting Accreditation Process:
The task force has proposed active engagement of practitioners in the accounting accreditation process, specifically as members of every peer review team and on accreditation committees. To what extent do you agree with including practitioners in the accreditation process?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	19.05%	4
2	Disagree	9.52%	2
3	Neutral/No Opinion	4.76%	1
4	Agree	38.10%	8
5	Strongly Agree	28.57%	6
	Total	100%	21

3B. Please provide comments to explain your rating above:

Practitioners can provide good input regarding new areas for curriculum and course development. They might even suggest some research topics!!

Let's face it. Without the CPA firms and other partners, we don't have jobs. Accreditation is supposed to provide high quality education to the students who will be future employees for practice. Research is great but many schools have lost their way. Practice wants quality education, not theoretical research.

1. Few practitioners have a sufficient understanding the academic enterprise to serve in this capacity. 2. Based on my experience in helping a Big 4 firm design in-house training materials, there may be a high variance in practitioners' opinions about how accounting education should be designed and delivered. If so, I would be concerned that PRT guidance might be overly influenced by idiosyncratic beliefs of a PRT member.

Practice is moving so fast that it is more important than it has ever been to have insight into how accounting education should change to keep pace with the profession and industry. Assurance of learning tells us how well we are teaching what we teach, it does nothing to say if that is what we should be teaching. Practitioners can help with that. Data also show that the success of graduates in pursuing and passing the CPA exam depends, in part, on the campus environment. Having practitioners involved with accreditation will encourage faculty to take the involvement of practitioners seriously and will lead to a more practice-friendly campus environment. Accounting is as strong a discipline as it is because it enjoys 1) the strong support of professional associations and 2) a state licensing system for a career that about half our graduates pursue. We should maintain these relationships and therefore this strength. How many other disciplines have the pleasure of placing nearly all its graduates with good employers long before they graduate? Involving practitioners will help us keep and strengthen academic relationships with industry.

I think it would be good to have their consultative views. However, most practitioners do not really understand academia and that may cause some issues. There are some practitioners that would do an exceptional job. It would be critical that there would be some type of training for the practitioners and that they understand that their consultative views would be the greatest benefit.

This makes very little sense, given the limited understanding that most practitioners have of how universities work. At most, they should be involved in an advisory capacity at the front-end, not on the team. Additionally, I doubt that you will find enough numbers of practitioners to do this on a regular, committed basis unless they are retired. This idea is well-intentioned, but poorly conceived.

Involving practitioners is a beginning step towards lessening the gap between academe and practice. Practitioners can offer valuable insight and advice for accounting programs.

To the extent that practitioners hire our students, I believe there is an inherent conflict of interest that is not present when the review team consists of academics. For example, practitioners from public accounting firms are looking for specific skills, whereas practitioners from industry might be looking for different skills.

We provide entry level accountants for industry and accounting firms so practitioners should have some input into accreditation processes. Their perspective is a little different from a pure academician.

Yes, these practitioners are becoming a bigger factor in the academic environment, both as instructors and also helping update curriculum

I have been fortunate to have several on several visit teams which included a firm practitioner. These practitioners were very insightful and rigorous in their review efforts. The Accounting Accreditation standards must value the preparation of future accounting professionals.

I think that practitioner involvement on engagement teams would be beneficial from a consultative perspective, but not sure how effective they might be in assessing other aspects of the review. For example, many off our advisory board members do not understand the way universities operate. Many, for example, do not understand why curriculum changes take so long to implement.

They can provide value regarding what is taking place in the field and whether the school is moving in that direction. They should be well studied in their field to provide this value. However, it is challenging to step in and understand curriculum, faculty, and university settings so it has to be someone familiar with an academic environment.

I agree involving practitioners would be helpful. What is less certain is whether practitioners have the time and extra resources to commit to participation in peer review team visits and on committees. Given that the firms do not appear to place value on the MAcc, for instance, they seem more focused on hiring people than insuring that we, as institutions of higher education, provide them with all the knowledge, skills, and abilities students need for success in the profession. Some firms have told us all they want is CPA eligible students, and they will teach them what they need to do their actual jobs at that point. I would hope participation in AACSB would help remedy that attitude but am unsure it will.

Practitioners' perspectives would be very helpful in the process, though practitioners would need to be carefully selected. Not just anyone would be qualified to serve on an accreditation team.

Practitioners often are unrealistic about the nature and volume of topics that can be covered in class. If practitioner focus is more on consultative issues than standards-related issues I think it would be great. Otherwise, a lot could go wrong in cases in which practitioners do not understand the academic environment, which is most cases--not their fault, just a totally different world.

4. Consultative versus Compliance Approach:

What specific steps could AACSB take to redirect the attention of schools and peer review teams away from compliance and more toward consultation in the accreditation process?

There must be more consistent communication between visits....

I like this idea. Help us to get better instead of making it a test we have to pass.

1. CIRs might identify and prioritize problem areas for which the school seeks consultation. What does the school see as its biggest challenges? 2. PRT members should be selected based on their expertise in high priority problem areas.

Contact with visiting team during the process.

Provide numerous examples of how schools demonstrate quality and make those examples as different as possible. For example, it seems that everyone has the same basic program learning goals. Share AOL goals and measurement systems for schools that follow very different approaches. Also, nearly everyone has a "target journal list". Provide examples of TJLs that are far from standard (i.e. they are majority practitioner journals, for example). Nearly everyone defines SA the same way - 2 or 3 pubs in the last 5 years. Provide examples of alternative definitions. If reviewers see tangible examples of the wide variety of definitions available actually being used, they may be willing to think more broadly when reviewing schools.

Training, training, and more training! Most academics feel it is their job to find some fault in the programs they are reviewing. Compliance is important, but the peer teams need to understand that the consultative part of the review is the most beneficial for the schools being reviewed. I get more from the general discussions with the team members during a review concerning what we are doing and what they are doing.

- Stop pumping up egoistic business team chairs and use performance surveys/ratings from schools more meaningfully - remind teams and chairs of their roles/responsibilities - Don't list standards as if this is the tax code. Delineate minimum requirements and leave it at that. Change the report format to enlarge the consultative section and minimize the compliance section. Teams are indirectly driven by the report format too.

The training of visit team members needs to emphasize this approach and to de-emphasize the audit mentality of many accounting visit teams.

I believe the accreditation teams on our last two reviews were very focused on the consultation role.

Since the goal is continuous improvement, the review process should help assure that accounting programs are improving and put in place artificial interpretations of the standards. For example, where do the standards mandate X number of publications by each faculty member or x number at a certain level (A,B, C)?

Do the bulk of the compliance stuff before the official visit. Could staff at AACSB do some of the compliance? or automate this to some extent?

Do away with percentages on qualification standards. Focus on SWOT analysis and efforts the school is taking to address OT

For Accounting engagement reviews, more focus could be placed on the College as a whole, while the accounting portion of the team could review specific policies or curriculum requirements unique to the accounting program(s). Also, some type of continuous reporting would be helpful. Perhaps something very similar to the AACSB Accounting Questionnaire.

I assume this redirection is both for business and accounting. I believe it would have to be for both; otherwise, it will create confusion during the visit. The specific steps really have to come from the top in setting the tone about the nature of the visit and communicated to the team leaders. Personally, I think it will be easy to complete this redirection.

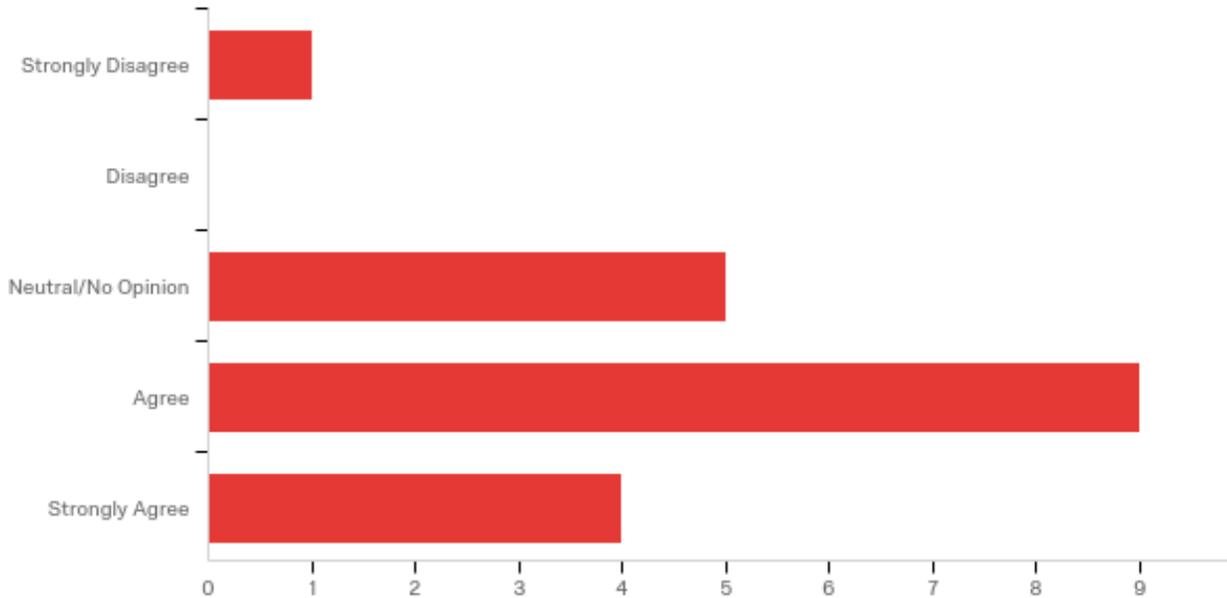
Take emphasis off hitting exact numbers or percentages and tables. Allow for more flexibility for schools in reporting how the school meets AACSB's requirements. Exposure draft is a solid step in this direction.

More education of volunteers. I think AACSB has done about as much as can be done in this area, but there are still individual volunteers who apparently don't get it. That's purely based on stories I've heard, it's not been my experience as a volunteer and as a school undergoing continuous improvement review, so I may be wrong.

Make report easier to complete, and redirect focus to the strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities section. Coming up with examples to prove compliance takes way too much time, and is of limited value.

5A. Shift Toward a Risk-based Approach:

What is the reaction to adjusting the accreditation process for already-accredited schools based on the presence (or absence) of certain risk factors? To what extent do you agree with a shift toward a risk-based approach?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	5.26%	1
2	Disagree	0.00%	0
3	Neutral/No Opinion	26.32%	5
4	Agree	47.37%	9
5	Strongly Agree	21.05%	4
	Total	100%	19

5B. Please provide comments to explain your rating above:

Not enough information ...

Consult on all things but require compliance on the risk areas so those areas don't get lost in the process.

I would like to see a few examples of what this might look like. It's not clear that this question is limited to the "risk-based approach" described on page 9 of the task force report.

Five years is too frequent for schools with a long history of quality to have to go through the peer review process. It is an investment of time and money that could be less frequent.

Interesting approach, but not sure how well it can be operationalized.

This question is unclear

Cost-benefit analysis would indicate that this is an efficient move. More schools might be willing to seek (or maintain) accounting accreditation if the compliance burden were lessened.

I believe it will make the review process more efficient, while remaining as effective as before.

Already accredited programs could probably go to a "desk review" versus a face-to-face visit (unless major problems have arisen) since data is provided annually and a CIR is completed every 5 years.

agree to some extent - risks will vary by institution

I think three factors are the most critical in the risk assessment: Does the curriculum get regular updates to align with practice demands? Are resources available consistent with vision and mission? Is their practitioner interest in hiring graduates?

This makes particularly good sense if we have some type of reasonable continuous reporting mechanism.

My only concern is that leadership at schools turns over rather frequently and that it doesn't take much for new leadership to inadvertently neglect things that were in place just a few years ago.

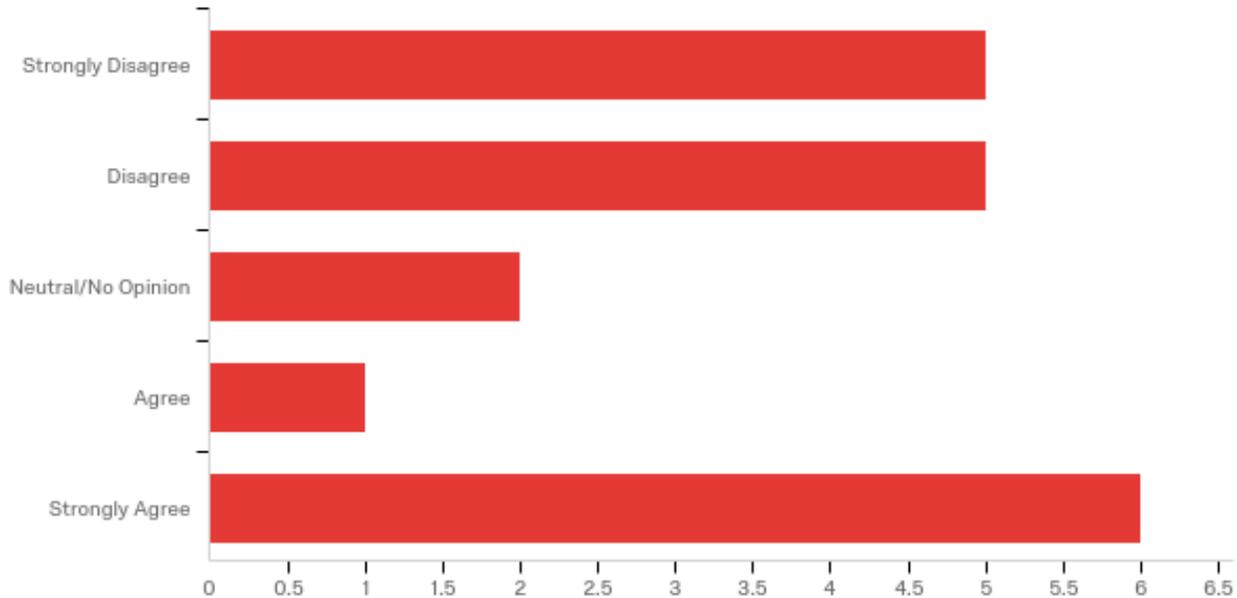
Falls in line with increased reliance on business report (which I like - even better, let us rely more on regional accreditation) and recognizes that school that have a history of success are less likely to need as much oversight by accreditors.

I do think this approach could be cost effective (important these days with funding problems) and not severely threaten the accreditation process.

Can focus on important areas, and redirect energy from zero value-added portions of the process to those which do add value.

6A: Decoupling Business and Accounting Accreditation:

What is the reaction to a school potentially being able to achieve AACSB accounting accreditation without having earned AACSB business accreditation? To what extent do you agree with decoupling business and accounting accreditation?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	26.32%	5
2	Disagree	26.32%	5
3	Neutral/No Opinion	10.53%	2
4	Agree	5.26%	1
5	Strongly Agree	31.58%	6
	Total	100%	19

6B. Please provide comments to explain your rating above:

This depends on situation. If the accounting area is strong, but business fails for an isolated reason (a bad niche MBA program), the accounting area should not be punished.

We must work with the Business College or accounting accreditation will never fly. The Deans have the power and they won't support a decoupling. Most Deans like having the kudos for a separately accredited accounting program.

An institution should have an opportunity to develop and accredit high-quality specialized programs while also serving other constituencies. For example, an institution may want to provide a broad, open-access, and potentially low-cost business education while also offering selective, invitation only (i.e. admissions or exam-qualified) sections to students pursuing specialized programs. Many universities, for example, offer honors programs where only qualified students are provided access to certain classes. An institution with the goal of strategically building expertise in specialized areas, like accounting, may be able to meet accreditation standards for the specialized program, including the non-specialized business curricula associated with the program, but not meet accreditation standards across the entire suite of business degree offerings. Truly separate accreditation should be voluntary but available to any who want to pursue it.

I think this would be a positive change. Many times, the accounting programs are the strongest programs in the college and, currently, if the college has issues, it reflects directly on the accounting programs. With separate accreditation, this would not be an issue. And, decoupling would provide the accounting programs with a more recognized (higher value) to their constituency than the current method.

Accounting programs frequently outdo business schools per capita. More often than not, they are the star units and are frequently held back by the control structure of business schools. Rarely is an accounting program the weak unit... empower the accounting units so that they are not so dependent on the business school's larger status

FSA was founded to encourage separate schools of accountancy. Internationally this movement is gaining momentum. The decoupling of accounting accreditation might help to encourage this movement. Separate schools of accounting are critical to the acceptance of accountancy as a profession. Accounting is generally the strongest area in a college of business and currently those strong programs are constrained from gaining accounting accreditation due to the weaker business programs.

We were put on continuing review due to issues in the business school that were entirely unrelated to the accounting program. There is no reason that those issues should have threatened our accounting accreditation.

Given that business schools currently must be accredited for accounting to be accredited, I think allowing accounting accreditation with business could be confusing. A school could potentially advertise that they were "members" of AACSB and that their accounting program is accredited and mislead the public.

unless schools are totally separate - different deans, such as XXXX

I think this pathway is very intriguing especially if we want to continue to support the notion of stand alone Schools of Accountancy

It would be very difficult for us to muster the resources to meet with accreditation reporting requirements as a stand alone unit. Additionally, much of the information would overlap that of the college. Given accounting programs' reliance on other business disciplines, I'm not sure how you could run a quality accounting program absent other quality business programs.

I always believe that the accounting unit is part of a system and the two have to work together on mission, strategy, etc. I may be misunderstanding this issue but it seems that the two should not be decoupled.

The two are linked in a number of ways. I would retain the requirement that business accreditation is needed for accounting accreditation. However, perhaps a school should be more able to apply for both at the same time.

No, I don't believe accounting can be viewed separately, unless it's an entity unto itself (like XXXX), which is rare.

Accounting often is top program in business school, and strong leadership can help accounting avoid issues common to business school. Consequences of losing accreditation in terms of placing students seem greatest for accounting.

7A. Lastly, please provide your thoughts on the revised accreditation eligibility procedures and accounting accreditation standards. *The Exposure Draft may be found here: Exposure Draft #1: Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Accounting Accreditation.*

Overall, I like the idea of Accounting as a "Learned Profession." I also like the word Global....Accounting is one of the most global professions there is. I do believe, however, that the standards miss the target on the definition of accounting as a learned profession. They seem to refer to lawyers, etc. I believe that accounting education should provide more insight how the profession impact the economy (i.e. like economists do). Poor accounting had a huge impact in starting the financial crisis; however, accountants do not discuss these issues (generally) since they are trained to consider the organizational level impact of accounting and not the macro-level (e.g. impact of bad bank accounting on systemic risk. These important policy issues are left to economists and finance experts; however, accounting also plays a role.

I like the revised documents. Good to emphasize Innovation, Involvement, and Engagement with practice.

I support the revisions. I particularly like the shift if faculty qualifications away from simply relying on someone having a doctorate degree to faculty who are engaged with the profession or who have relevant work experience outside of academe. I have seen far too many applicants for faculty positions that lack any real connection to the practice of accounting, broadly defined. My school does not hire someone who has never conducted an audit or been subject to an audit to teach auditing, but other schools do - because they put the need to satisfy AACSB faculty qualification standards above the learning experience of the students. It's time for accreditation standards to stop driving decisions that take away from the quality of a program.

The revised procedures and standards provide a much better description of what is needed to achieve accreditation and what is critical to continue as an accredited program. The standards are presented in a more understandable fashion with some excellent examples provided. The key is to provide a framework that programs can use to guide them, not specific rules that serve to force the programs to comply.

I am disappointed in how the accounting report is now kind of a tack-on to the business report. While this may be "efficient", it is not in the long-term interests of accounting programs to be tied at the hip to the business reports. It is one step closer to removing separate accounting accreditation, which we had fought for so long. It fails to recognize the numerous unique aspects of accounting programs that led to the need for separate accreditation in the first place. Not sure if FSA has done a good job in representing all schools -- it is a small coterie of insiders again, as seen in the leadership patterns of most of these types of organizations.

I think the eligibility procedures and standards are acceptable.

no specific comments - seems okay

I wholeheartedly support the changes proposed

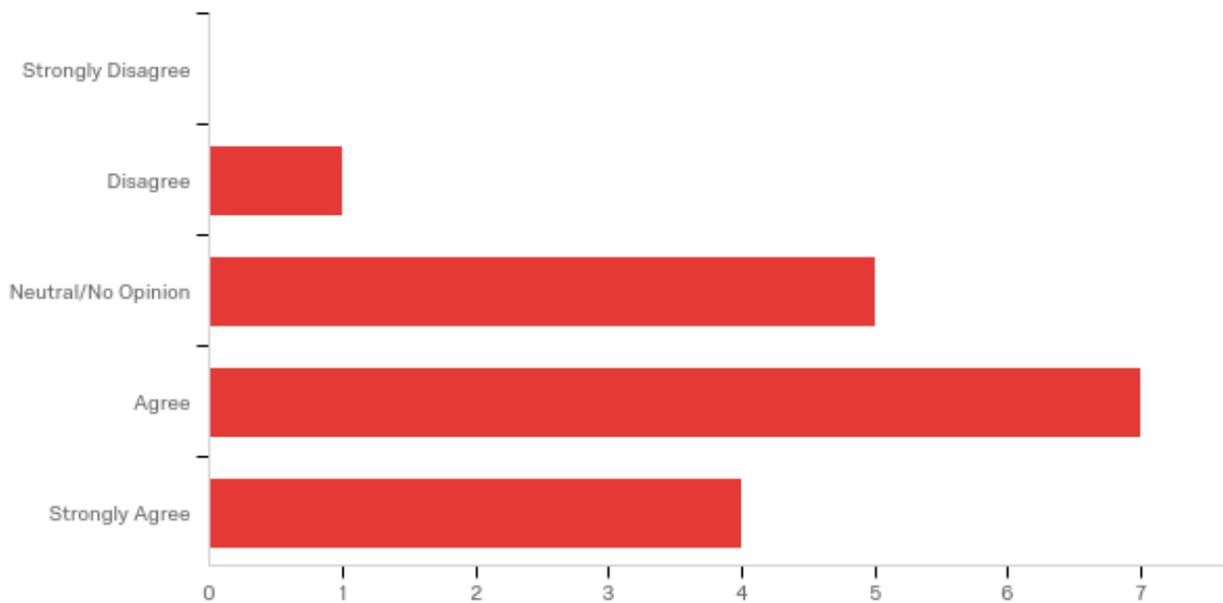
Accounting standards should build on Business standards and should require information only in addition to that provided by the college or affiliated business program as a whole.

I have no significant comments in this area. My only other comment regards streamlining. It seems easy on paper but am concerned that it may be more difficult to implement. I thought that the value and learning from the accreditation and quality of our overall product was much better and some of these may be compromised under this new - more streamlined approach.

Overall, I see this as step in the right direction. I have no specific concerns or comments at this time, having provided them in the past to the taskforce.

Sorry, wish I had time to review and comment.

7B. To what extent do you agree that the revisions/exposure draft improve the accounting eligibility procedures and accreditation standards?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
2	Disagree	5.88%	1
3	Neutral/No Opinion	29.41%	5
4	Agree	41.18%	7
5	Strongly Agree	23.53%	4
	Total	100%	17