

Revamping the Business Education Curriculum to Meet Specialized National Accreditation Standards in Small Historical Black Colleges and Universities

By

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Abstract

The commitment required of a small Historical Black College and Universities (HBCUs) business program to gain accreditation through a specialized accrediting agency is significant, both in financial commitment and the faculty resources needed to maintain the program. There is certainly a direct link between educational quality and the attainment of accreditation. Specializing accrediting bodies thus play an important role in improving the quality of American higher education. The objective of those external accrediting bodies is to provide an external validation of the extent to which quality exists or does not exist in a business program. Accreditation comes with packages of benefits with values added to the program that met the rigorous standards and evaluation criteria of the accrediting agency. The beneficiaries are the stakeholders of the program mainly: the Students, Employers, and the Society, forming a triangle that touches all aspects of the accreditation needs of the program. In this paper I will summarize data collected between HBCU accredited and non accredited business schools including the area of faculty deployment, program offering, course preparation, qualification, and teaching area of discipline.

1. Introduction

Quality in higher education has been a topic of national debate. There is a continuing concern for maintaining and improving quality education even in small schools as can be seen in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) as presented in this paper.¹ This important concern should be shared between institutions and accredited bodies as well as various constituents of higher education.

Specializing accrediting bodies thus play an important role in improving the quality of American higher education. The issue of integrity in higher education refers to an institution being able to demonstrate that it does what it purports to do: in terms of the purpose, goal, evaluating the program as well as implementing outcome assessments. It is true that HBCUs have been under-resourced for decades and no one knows the obstacles confronting HBCUs better than those directly working with HBCU institution.

In this regard, an effective collaboration to gain accreditation will serve the mutual needs of the business programs, business leaders, and the students. The beneficiaries are the stakeholders of the program mainly: the Students, Employers, and the Society, forming a triangle that touches all aspects of the accreditation needs of the program, (Figure 1). The researcher developed the acronym **SES** to demonstrate the factors that benefits from accredited program.

In reality, continuous monitoring of the SES Triangle Benefit Factors ensures the effectiveness of the program. To the student the accreditation ensures that a significant Self-Evaluation and peer review has been completed. Similarly, students are able to transfer course credit more easily from accredited business program both national and international.

¹ *This project was made possible by Award from UNCF/Prudential Summer Faculty Curriculum Grant.*

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quality, HBCU's business programs would continue to be stigmatized. To further compound this frustration, institutional budgets and institutional size made the pursuit of accreditation an unattainable aspiration even when the business program leadership is willing to make a change. According to DeLoatch (1995) "The challenge for HBCU business schools, particularly programs not accredited is to find the necessary financial resources, by convincing the upper reaches of their respective administrations to get behind their efforts."² There's certainly a struggle for resources all the time in HBCU institutions, but the most important thing is that any of the HBCUs is going to be measured by the standard that is out there measuring other institutions.

As a result of the above concerns the researcher investigated and evaluated a number of small HBCUs schools and the result was used to prescribe a method, a process towards excellence through the revamping of their business program in order to meet specialized national accreditation standard. This researcher's institution is one of the small HBCU's business programs that recently received its specialized national accreditation. The research showed how small HBCU schools can be improved for accreditation standards through positive curriculum changes, recruitment and faculty deployment. Table 1 below shows areas of concern in most small HBCUs schools that can lead to an accepted quality Business Program.

Table 1.

<p><u>Curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. General Education RequirementsB. Business Core Requirements <p><u>Faculty</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">C. Deployment of FacultyD. Qualification of Faculty

The table identifies four areas that were assessed as an accepted quality standard. These were further grouped into two categories of curriculum and faculty. A comparative analysis of both accredited and non-accredited small HBCU schools demonstrated that there is a need to improve curriculum innovation, recruitment and deployment of faculty in small HBCU's. Through a combination of rebranding, reinventing themselves, revamping the curriculum and good salesmanship that communicates vision and a genuine interest in educating young adults, they still attract students.³ The deficiencies that were found conformed to the concerns expressed by this researcher on curriculum innovation and faculty recruitment, qualifications, and deployment. HBCUs have been under-resourced for decades and no one knows the obstacles confronting HBCUs better than those directly working with the institutions.⁴ A survey questionnaire was administered to each target institution to verify:

- A. Background Information about the institution's enrollment size, and the degree granting status.
- B. Curriculum in terms of Credit Hours for Common and Major Core Requirements.
- C. Faculty Deployment in terms of teaching load, course preparation, and discipline of teaching.
- D. Faculty Qualifications in terms of degree earned, teaching and work experience.

² Dr. Eugene M. DeLoatch, (<http://www.Eng.morgan.edu>) Chaiman of the nine-member council of Engineering Deans of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

³ *Against Steep Odds, HBCU Leaders Rebuild Trust in Their Institutions* by Lekan Oguntoyinbo, August 27, 2010 <http://diverseeducation.com>

⁴ *Changing the HBCU Narrative: From Corrective Action to Creative Investment—Remarks by Secretary Arne Duncan at the HBCU Symposium at the North Carolina Central University Centennial*

Research Design

Descriptive Research was employed in this study as a result of funding from the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). A survey instrument was designed and used for this research in order to investigate and analyze Business Programs in small selected Historically Black Colleges and Universities. A sample size of ten (10) HBCU Institutions from the South East of the United States was surveyed. The survey questionnaire entitled, “Revamping the Business Education Curriculum to meet Specialized National Accreditation Standards in small Historically Black Colleges and Universities”, was administered and targeted small selected 4-year Bachelor Degree granting institutions offering programs in Business administration. Please see appendix for questionnaire. Some of the categories that were included in this survey instrument are based upon Common Core and Business Core Requirements for graduation, date of most recent curriculum review in the business program, recruitment, qualification, deployment of the faculty, as well as financial resources for program sustainability.

Data Collection

After narrowing down the target institutions, a specific contact person was identified and a survey questionnaire was administered. All the respondents were either the Chair or Dean of the business program in the target institution.

Data Analysis of Selected HBCU Business Programs

Table II Business Programs below, presents the number of institutions surveyed. The table shows 5 accredited and 5 non-accredited institutions with their respective major offering areas.

It shows that all accredited institutions (100%) of them offer accounting as a major compared to (80%) from non-accredited institutions. This trend is not unusual as faculty recruitment in accounting is a major problem facing most schools in academia and accounting is always required as a common core requirement in business program. Inevitably, that may make non-accredited institutions to go on and offer it as a major. However, majority of non-accredited institutions (60%) grants major in General Business compared to (20%) from accredited institutions. Further more, general business faculties can easily be recruited with less dollar amount making it possible for non-accredited institutions to offer such program than the of the accredited institution. Employers most often want students with specialization than a generalist degree

Table II Business Programs

Institution	Majors										
	Accredited	Acct	Bus Admin	MIS	Mgt	Mkt	Int'l Bus	Bus Edu	Econ	Org Mgt.	Fin
Institution # 1	X			X	X	X		X			
Institution # 2	X			X	X	X	X				
Institution # 3	X			X	X				X		X
Institution # 4	X			X	X	X	X				
Institution # 5	X		X				X	X		X	
Non-Accredited											
Institution # 1	X			X	X						
Institution # 2	X			X							
Institution # 3	X		X	X							
Institution # 4	X		X		X						
Institution # 5			X	X					X	X	

In the area of Management Information Systems, both accredited and non-accredited institutions each grants (60%) in this area but in Management, (100%) of accredited institutions offer management as a major compared to only (40%) from non-accredited institutions.

The trend is more pronounced in the area of Marketing and International Business where Table II above shows accredited institutions offering (60%) each in marketing and international business respectively while non-accredited institutions does not offer any of those program. Offering in other areas such as

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Finance and Business Education are even more staggering for non-accredited institutions according to the Table II above.

Deployment of Faculty:

Program must demonstrate an effort to deploy faculty resources among the disciplines, units, courses, and major fields in such a way that every student attending classes will have an opportunity to receive instruction from full-time faculty trained in that discipline. From table III shown below, the deployment of faculty in their field of study and teaching area, accredited institutions shows remarkable progress compared to those of non-accredited institution in terms of qualification, and area of deployment. Faculty credentials were positioned to match area of teaching in accredited institutions compared to non-accredited institutions. Due to the dollar cost, any move for any institution to go through accreditation to improve curriculum, must take a hard look on the cost. Most HBCU schools are not financially capable to fund the budget requirement needed by the specialized accreditation agencies.

Table III Deployment of Faculty in Accredited and Non-Accredited Institution

Accredited

Fac	Institution #1		Institution #2		Institution #3		Institution #4		Institution #5	
	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching
#1	Bus./ Fin.	Econ./Mgt.	Bus. Ed.	Bus. Ed.	Mgt.	Mgt.	Mgt./Int'l Bus.	Mgt.	Mgt.	Mgt.
#2	Acct./High Ed.	Acct./Stats.	Int'l Mgt.	Int'l Mgt.	Acct.	Acct.	Acct.	Acct./Fin.	Acct./Law	Acct.
#3	Mgt./High Ed.	Mgt./Bus..	Economics	Econ / Quant.	Fin.	Fin./MIS	Econ.	Econ.	Bus. Ed.	Bus. Ed.
#4	Bus./Mkt.	Mkt./Bus.	Law	Bus. Law/Ethics	Econ.	Econ.	Mgt./Int'l Bus.	Mgt.	Bus. Admin.	Bus. Admin.
#5	Mkt.	Mkt./Bus.	Mgt.	Mgt.	Econ.	Econ.	Mkt.	Mgt./Mkt/ Int'l Bus		
#6	C. Science	CIS	CIS	CIS	Acct.	Acct.	Acct.	Acct./Comp.		
#7	CIS	CIS	Acct.	Acct.	Fin.	Fin./MIS	Mgt.	Bus. Cal.		
#8	Info. Sys.	CIS	HRM	Mgt.	Fin.	Fin./MIS	MIS	MIS/Intro to Comp		
#9	Mgt.	Mgt./Law	Acct.	Acct.	Int'l Econ.	Mkt.	Law	Bus. Law		
#10	Acct.	Acct./Fin.			Mgt.	Mgt.	Mgt.	MIS		
#11							Fin.			

Non-Accredited

Fac	Institution #1		Institution #2		Institution #3		Institution #4		Institution #5	
	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching	Field of Study	Field of Teaching
#1	Mgt.	Mgt.	Acct.	Acct.	Acct.	Acct.	Bus./Acct.	Acct.	Econ.	Econ./Mgt
#2	Mgt.	Mgt.	Bus. Ed.	Mgt.	Bus.	Bus.	Econ.	Econ.	Bus Ed/ Admin	Mgt.
#3	MIS	MIS	CIS.	CIS	Econ.	Econ.	Mgt.	Mgt.	Mgt.	Mgt.
#4	HR	Mkt.	Bus. Ed.	Bus	CIS	CIS	Acct.	Acct.		
#5	Mkt.	MIS			CIS	CIS	Acct.	Acct.		
#6	C. Science	HR			Bus.	Bus.	Mkt.	Bus.		
#7	C. Science				Bus.	Bus.	Bus./Acct.	Bus.		
#8	Bus. Admin.	Law			Acct.	Acct.	Mgt.	Mgt.		
#9	Law	Acct.			Bus.	Acct.				
#10	Bus. Admin.	PR/HR			CIS	CIS				

Course Preparation:

Table IV below shows course preparation for faculty members in both accredited and non-accredited institutions. Course preparation is used to ensure that the ratio of course load to course preparation is at minimum so that faculty member will have some release time to research and deliver quality instruction rather than scheduled with different course preparations. The table shows disparity in course preparation from non-accredited institutions when compared with accredited institutions.

Table IV Course Preparation**Accredited**

Fac	Institution #1		Institution #2		Institution #3		Institution #4		Institution #5	
	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations
#1	6	4	5	3	6	6	5	5	6	4
#2	6	4	3	3	8	6	7	5	6	6
#3	6	4	8	5	8	6	8	5	4	4
#4	6	4	8	5	8	6	8	4	8	6
#5	6	4	8	5	8	6	8	6		
#6	5	2	5	3	8	6	8	4		
#7	5	2	2	2	8	6	4	4		
#8	5	2	2	2	8	6	6	3		
#9	6	4	2	2	8	6	3	2		
#10	5	4			8	6	2	2		
#11							4	2		

Non-Accredited

Fac	Institution #1		Institution #2		Institution #3		Institution #4		Institution #5	
	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations	Course Load	# of Preparations
#1	10	8	N/A	N/A	8	6	6	6	9	6
#2	8	4	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	8	6	5
#3	8	4	N/A	N/A	4	2	10	6	8	6
#4	8	6	N/A	N/A	10	8	10	10		
#5	10	4			8	6	10	8		
#6	2	2			10	6	10	6		
#7	4	2			6	4	10	8		
#8	2	2			2	2	8	8		
#9	6	4			4	2				
#10	8	4			2	2				

Faculty Qualification:

Effective teaching at the collegiate level requires strong subject matter and experience on the part of faculty. This can be evidenced by advanced academic credentials beyond the Bachelors degree with professional experience, research publications, and a demonstrated teaching excellence. According to Alade, A.J. (2009), pointed out “*That providing Leadership in Program Development and Accreditation*

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Initiatives in the School of Business demands both commitment on the part of the administration in terms of resources and adequate planning.”⁵

Table V Institutions by Highest Degree Qualification

Accredited

Fac	Institute #1		Institute #2		Institute #3		Institute #4		Institute #5	
#1	Ph.D		Ph.D.		Ph.D		Ph.D		Ph.D	
#2	Ph.D		Ph.D.		DBA		Ph.D		JD	
#3	Ph.D		Ph.D.		Ph.D		Ph.D		Ed.D	
#4	Ph.D		J.D.		Ph.D		MBA		MBA	
#5	MBA		MBA		Ph.D		MBA			
#6	MS		M..A.		MBA/CPA		MBA			
#7	MS		M..A.		Ph.D		MBA			
#8	Ph.D		M..A.		Ph.D		Ed.D			
#9	MBA/JD		MBA		ABD		JD			
#10	MS				Ph.D		MBA			
#11							MBA			
%	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters
	55%	45%	44%	56%	85%	15%	45%	55%	75%	25%

Non-Accredited

Fac	Institution #1		Institution #2		Institution #3		Institution #4		Institution #5	
#1	Ph.D		Masters		Ph.D		Ed.D, MAC, MBA		Ph.D	
#2	Ph.D		Masters		Ph.D		Ph.D		Ph.D	
#3	MBA		Masters		Ph.D		DBA		MBA	
#4	MBA		Masters		Ph.D		MBA, JD			
#5	MBA				MBA (CIS)		MBA			
#6	Masters				MBA		MBA			
#7	Masters				MBA		MBA			
#8	Masters				MBA (Acct)		MS			
#9	Masters				MBA					
#10	Masters				MS (Technology)					
%	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters	Terminal	Masters
	20%	80%		100%	40%	60%	36.40%	63.60%	66.34	33.34

Table V above shows that all accredited institutions meet the requirements of having at least (40%) terminal degree requirement of instructors by major accrediting agencies such as ACBSP compared with only (20%) in non-accredited institutions. Thus, there is persistence lack of terminal degree holders in majority of non accredited institutions as shown above. This is in line to the concerns of this project and to the lack of small HBCUs in attracting qualified instructors in their business program which is a major setback for most HBCUs seeking national accreditation.

⁵ *The Role and Impact of HBCU Business Schools, A proposal for revamping the School of Business.*
<http://www.umes.edu/sbt/DrAlade.pdf>

2. Data Analysis:

The researcher thoroughly examined the data generated and provided a scoring process to satisfy the standard as required from some accredited agencies such as Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The following method was used in determining the ranking of the Institutions under study.

Rank 1: This means that the school's program is *unacceptable*.

Rank 2: This means that the program is *very weak* in that area.

Rank 3: This means that the program is *somewhat weak*.

Rank 4: This means that the program is *close to being acceptable* but still needs some minor monitoring.

Rank 5: This means that the program is *acceptable*.

Table VI Evaluation Summary- Accredited Institutions

	Inst #1	Inst #2	Inst #3	Inst #4	Inst #5
General Accepted Standard For Business Education					
Curriculum					
General Education Requirement	5	5	5	5	5
Business Core Requirement	5	5	5	5	5
Faculty					
Deployment	5	5	5	5	5
Qualification	3	4	4	3	4
Faculty					
Course Preparation	5	5	5	5	4
Course Load	5	5	5	5	5
Total Score	28	29	29	28	29
Average Score	28.6				
Percent (%)	93%	97%	97%	93%	97%
Average Total	95%				

Table VI Evaluation Summary- Accredited Institutions, above shows an average ranking score of 28.6 among the accredited institutions with a total average of (95 %) ranking both in Curriculum, Faculty deployment, and Faculty teaching preparations.

Table VII Evaluation Summary- Non-Accredited Institutions

	Inst #1	Inst #2	Inst #3	Inst #4	Inst #5
General Accepted Standard For Business Education					
Curriculum					
General Education Req.	5	5	5	5	5
Business Core Req	4	3	3	2	3
Faculty					
Deployment	1	2	2	1	3
Qualification	1	2	2	1	3
Faculty					
Course Preparation	5	N/A	5	4	4
Course Load	5	5	5	4	4
Total Score	21	17	22	17	22
Score Average	20				
Percentage %	70%	56%	73%	57%	73%
Total Average	65%				

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The case of non-accredited institutions Table VII above is very shocking. The table shows an average ranking score of 20 and a combined average of (65 %) in curriculum, faculty deployment, course preparation, and faculty qualification. Table VIII Outcome Assessment below, reveals more in depth close analysis of this disparity

Table VIII Outcome Assessment

Institutions	Maximum	Total Score	Total Average Ranking Faculty/Curriculum
Accredited	30	28.6	95%
Non-Accredited	30	20	65%

3. Findings:

1. Majority of HBCUs accredited institutions offer courses in those areas where African Americans are needed most in the work force such as Accounting, and Information Technology, Management, and International Business compared with non-accredited institutions.
2. There is lack of resources to attract qualified faculty with terminal degree in non-accredited HBCUs.
3. Curriculum does not respond to the changing need in the business industry.

Solutions:

These areas need to be addressed in order that HBCUs business program can meet the specialized accreditation standards.

Curriculum:

Leadership can have a preliminary inventory finding fact from specialized agencies without any cost if they choose to be affiliated with that particular organization in the future. Such an inventory will help the business program to recognize their deficiencies and came up with a strategy to:

- Present the need and the importance of accreditation to the administration
- Mobilize the business faculty so as to win support and commitment leading to program accreditation
- Analysis of the program to the understanding of the weaknesses, and direction leading to a comprehensive Self-Study **only** with the approval of both the business faculty and the administration for major curriculum changes.
- Small mini-grants on the part of the business faculty will go a long way to smoothen some financial problems such as consultations and travel expenses needed for a comprehensive Self-Study leading to initial accreditation.
- An advisory council made up of business people from industry and government in order to keep a handle on the currency of what the envisioned curricula will look like must be put in place for consultations and advisory purposes.

Faculty Recruitment:

Inadequate fund always betrays the good intentions in addressing the concerns of most HBCUs in faculty recruitment. Institutional budgets to recruit qualified faculty members make the pursuit of accreditation an unattainable goal. Effective instruction at the college requires strong subject matter-expertise on the part of the faculty. Thus faculty recruitment becomes a problem when the financial resources are not there to recruit qualified instructors.

Faculty Development Training Alternative:

A retraining of existing faculty members becomes an alternative if the Leadership of the business program decides to improve the quality of the program. A less expensive but wise decision to take in

small “Fee-driven” budget institutions under discussion is to embark on retraining committed faculty members who will not desert the institution after the individual have received training such as an advanced degree. Committed faculty members can undergo faculty development to pursue advanced degrees in order to improve the program instruction. Thus Distance Learning Programs that will enable faculty members to pursue advance degree with no interference to his or her work could be a current viable alternative for junior faculty members who have no advance degree. While this may be a good option, the business leadership needs to ensure that the institution to which the faculty will be enrolled be regionally accredited. Similarly, the national specialized accrediting agency to which the institution hopes to receive its accreditation must validate the Distance Learning Program as an accepted program to ensure that faculty are professionally or doctorally qualified according to agency’s standards.

References:

This project was made possible by Award from UNCF/Prudential Summer Faculty Curriculum Grant.

Eugene M. DeLoatch (1995). Chairman of the nine-member council of Engineering Deans of the Historically Black Colleges and Universitie (<http://www.Eng.morgan.edu>).

Against Steep Odds, HBCU Leaders Rebuild Trust in Their Institutions by Lekan Oguntoyinbo , August 27, 2010 <http://diverseeducation.com>

Changing the HBCU Narrative: From Corrective Action to Creative Investment—Remarks by Secretary Arne Duncan at the HBCU Symposium at the North Carolina Central University Centennial

Ayodele J. Alade (2009) The Role and Impact of HBCU Business Schools, A proposal for revamping the School of Business. <http://www.umes.edu/sbt/DrAlade.pdf>

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Appendix:

Survey Questionnaire:

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) represent an important higher education of the U.S. Educational System. This survey is conducted to investigate the process of “Revamping the Business Education Curriculum to meet Specialized National Accreditation Standards in small Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).” I would appreciate if you would assist by furnishing me with the following information.

YOU NEED NOT INDICATE YOUR NAME OR THE INSTITUTION’S NAME.

Thank You Very Much

1. Number of students in the institution
 - Less than 500
 - Less than 1000
 - Less than or equal to 1500
 - Less than 800
 - Less than 1200
2. Number of students in the Business Program
 - Less than 100
 - Less than 300
 - Less than 500
 - Less than 200
 - Less than 400
3. Common core or general education graduation requirement- ____ hours.
4. Major area graduation requirement- ____ hours.
5. Please categorize your institution by the following scheduling system
 - Quarter system
 - Semester system
6. Please indicate total number of Faculty in the Business Program.
Full Time Faculty _____ Part Time Faculty _____
7. Will you have financial resources commitment from the Administration for the Business Education Leadership Unit for a self-study leading to a national accreditation?
 - Yes
 - No
8. Will the Leadership of the Business Program Unit receive support from the members of the faculty of Business for self-study leading to National Accreditation?
 - Yes
 - No
9. When was the last curriculum review in the Business Program Unit- ____ years

1. Please categorize your faculty based upon the following qualifications: Highest degree, Field of Study, Number of years teaching. **You need not indicate the name of faculty member.**

Faculty Member	Highest Degree	Earned	Field of Study	Number of years teaching
Number 1				
Number 2				
Number 3				
Number 4				
Number 5				
Number 6				
Number 7				
Number 8				
Number 9				
Number 10				

2. Please categorize faculty based upon deployment: Number of Courses Teaching in Business, Number of Course Preparations in Business, and Field of Teaching in Business. **You need not indicate the name of faculty member.**

Faculty Member	Number of Courses Teaching	Number of course preparations in business	Field of teaching in Business
Number 1			
Number 2			
Number 3			
Number 4			
Number 5			
Number 6			
Number 7			
Number 8			
Number 9			
Number 10			