Imagining a Responsible Business School

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This paper argues that business schools must go further than simply embedding climate change knowledge in the curriculum. Instead a genuinely responsible a business school has to undergo a radical transformation to embed human and planetary health as its primary purpose.

A responsible business school's core role is to create and communicate knowledge that "supports ecological and social flourishing" (Kurucz et al. 2013, 443). Its disciplinary contribution lies in generating a deeper understanding of the domain of organizations and work (across government, business and civil society) and the impact of this domain on wider society. A responsible business school models sustainable organising by grounding its decisions, policies and practices upon on social justice values and an ethic of care (Heath et al., 2019; Adams and Bell, 2016). Such a school consists of progressive organisational and business scholars who fulfil their responsibility for "shaping social and organizational realities and creating responsible and responsive organisations" (Allen et al, 2019, 786). Bringing about a responsible business school involves actively problematizing management education and being reflexive about the role business schools themselves play in perpetuating injustice, inequality and unsustainability (Rasche and Gilbert, 2015).

The journey towards becoming a responsible business school also involves a re-examination of philosophical assumptions and undertaking a paradigm shift from a business/corporate worldview to a human/ecological worldview (Painter-Morland, 2014). Knowledge for public or social good derives from an eco-centric orientation where humans are seen as connected with, rather that predominant over, the ecosystem. In this worldview business, society and nature are treated as nested systems, rather than discrete entities (Allen et al., 2019). Socially transformative knowledge offers a radical challenge to the dominant assumptions and deeply held beliefs that underpin our contemporary socio-economic systems e.g. consumerism, GDP growth, marketisation etc. The responsible business school must therefore provide a space for dialogue, contestation and the generation of radical alternatives (Painter-Morland, 2014). The creation of this purposive knowledge also requires a critical understanding of the embedded structures (neoliberalism, racism, populism, colonialism etc.) that perpetuate social and environmental injustice and also serve to shape the current discourse around sustainability (Allen et al., 2019).

To make a meaningful contribution to the reduction of social and environmental harm a responsible business school has to produce knowledge that delivers concrete changes in organisational and business practice. This requires a wider engagement beyond campus-based teaching and involves the co-production of knowledge across "sustainability-focused learning networks" of students, practitioners, policy makers, decisionmakers and citizens (Kurucz et al., 2014, 449). The creation of knowledge for social good also requires a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach given the scale and complexity of the 'grand

challenges' faced by contemporary society. Interdisciplinary teaching and research will require a radical rethink of functionally-oriented business school curricula and structures towards a more integrated and holistic approach to knowledge creation (Sharma and Hart, 2014).

However, there are significant barriers to realising a responsible business school. Business schools clearly do not exist in a vacuum but are embedded with in a highly institutionalised Higher Education sector where success is not currently measured in terms of social impact. It is important then, that we work collaboratively and draw on our collective power to bring about this challenging but essential transformation of management education.

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