12-1-2012

Developing Entrepreneurial Leaders

Marguerite Schneider
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

REVIEWS & RESEARCH OF NOTE

Developing Entrepreneurial Leaders

Marguerite Schneider[1]

Co-Editor
[1]*School of Management, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey, USA*

When it comes to curriculum change, faculty members can be both part of the problem as well as part of the solution. First, inertia and infighting often rule when curriculum change is mentioned, which is a highly unpleasant experience for those of us who don't enjoy such activities. The end result is that curriculum change, which "should be" initiated by faculty, is instead often initiated by new deans and other new administrators. Sometimes administrators succeed, sometimes they fail, but most frequently they succeed in a very superficial way, with only nominal or marginal changes made. (We all know of instances in which course descriptions and course names have been made more contemporary—to then be taught using the same old materials framed in the same old mind set.) Second, change brings risk of failure. We tend to expose our vulnerabilities to our students when we shake things up with new courses, materials, and pedagogies.

The end result? While most business degree programs have changed a bit, I believe that they tend to remain the same more than they have changed. I was trained in my top-rated MBA program in the 1980s to be a staff specialist, skilled in analysis but not in creativity. It is really only in the most recent decade of my life that I am developing my creative side, because my creative switch was simply sealed shut by the flood of financial analysis, definitive models, and abject memorization of material in that program.

Times have changed, and it is time to change our degree programs. Fewer of our students will be staff specialists, as fewer of these positions now exist. Many will actually be interacting with customers, rather than being guarded from them in offices behind watchful "secretaries," and many will need to start and lead new businesses, including those whose mission will be social entrepreneurship. Starting new businesses and developing creative ways to solve societal problems are not merely means for students to become rich and famous; they are about jump-starting mature socioeconomic systems that are in downward drift. As educators, we have a social responsibility to do our part in encouraging the momentum to switch away from downward drift. We can and should be part of the solution.

D. Jeffrey Lenn has provided us with much food for thought in his excellent review of a collection of essays by Babson College faculty entitled *The New Entrepreneurial Leader: Developing Leaders Who Shape Social and Economic Opportunity,* by Danna Greenberg, Kate McKone-Sweet, and H. James Wilson, who edited and contributed to the volume. As Dr. Lenn states, Babson College is an exemplar of entrepreneurialism, so there is much wisdom that can be drawn from its faculty. Dr. Lenn does a superb job explaining the three principles promoted in the book for revamping business education—cognitive ambidexterity, responsibility and sustainability, and self and social awareness. These principles are derived from management theory and experiences of the authors at Babson, so they are grounded in theory and in reality. Dr. Lenn also shares a bit of his own wisdom in response to this "must-read" book, and in so doing, provides us with a basis for future scholarship and further change in business degree programs.

Address correspondence to Marguerite Schneider, School of Management, New Jersey Institute of Technology, University Heights, Newark, NJ 07102-1982, USA. E-mail: mschneid@adm.njit.edu