

## Business School Faculty Trends by Discipline

Recently at the Associate Deans and Innovative Programs Conference (ADIP) in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, Dan LeClair, a widely-regard expert on business management education and vice president and chief knowledge officer of AACSB International, spoke to academic leaders on business school faculty trends. Bringing together data and information from a variety of sources, including AACSB's Annual Business School Questionnaire (BSQ) and Salary Survey, the presentation was designed to assist business school leaders in understanding how their faculties have changed.

While the full depth of the presentation is beyond the scope of one article, we have selected one slide to highlight. To learn more about other parts of the presentation, a more comprehensive description is available via AACSB's Faculty Trends Report.

### Changes by Discipline

An important component to the presentation was the below table, which demonstrates the changing numbers of full-time faculty by rank and discipline across 321 US member schools who responded to the AACSB Salary Survey each year between 2001–2002 through 2007–2008. (Although it is in the works, LeClair noted that similar data is not yet available for reporting for schools based outside of the United States.)

As highlighted in the presentation, the most obvious change shown in Table 1. is found in the tremendous increase in the number of full-time faculty members at the instructor level. As a whole, the percent increase ranged from 27.8% (quantitative methods) to 103.8% (finance), with one negative outlier of a -17% decrease for information systems technology.

**Table 1. Growth in Full-Time Faculty, 2001-02 to 2007-08**

	<b>Prof</b>	<b>Assoc</b>	<b>Asst</b>	<b>Inst.</b>
ACC	3.2	-1.7	-0.8	42.0
CIS/MIS	6.8	18.5	-23.3	-17.0
ECO	-8.9	0.8	30.6	30.2
FIN	8.2	-0.8	18.1	103.8
MGT	6.1	3.2	17.6	73.9
MKT	1.9	7.0	14.0	50.2
POM	15.1	-1.4	8.4	28.3
QM	-7.2	-14.3	13.5	27.8

Source: AACSB study of 321 U.S.-based member schools reporting Salary Survey data in every year from 2001-2002 through 2007-2008

In-as-much, instructors accounted for 11% of the total in 2001, but by 2007 that figure had risen to 14%. According to LeClair, the change is indicative of a trend towards alternative faculty models because the instructor category is a “catch-all” for a wide-range of titles that don’t fit traditional ranks. Similarly, the numbers have grown as more schools have introduced new types of faculty, such as clinical professors or professors of practice. When reviewing changes by discipline, such as those in accounting (ACC), information systems technology (CIS/MIS), economics (ECO), and production and operations management (POM), LeClair provided valuable insight as a component to his discussions.

In regards to accounting, LeClair commented that the flat growth at all levels is most likely reflective of several years of declining doctorate production. He suggested that this trend is disturbing because of both the increasing numbers students entering business schools, and that the discipline is not replenishing itself quickly enough to sustain for the future. Later in the presentation, LeClair demonstrated that this problem has been especially important to small schools, where his research shows a nearly 20% decline in the number of accounting assistant professors.

In 1999, during the e-commerce and dot.com boom, hiring in information systems technology was impressive—nearly 20% of new hires, (or 1 in every 5), were in the area. Many of these new hires were promoted to associate professor, but as the data table indicates, they have not been replaced at the assistant level. LeClair’s explanation to this? Since the dot.com bust, enrollment numbers in CIS/MIS have declined, resulting in a decrease of need for new information technology faculty. But, he continued, that management education should expect a comeback, although the comeback might not be reflected across information systems. He believes that information technology will rise within other areas, such as accounting (accounting information systems) and marketing (e-marketing).

In Economics, the most plausible explanation for the decrease of -8.9% at the professor category is the wave of retirement of a generation of economists. LeClair, an economist himself, half-jokingly suggested that the 31% increase in the assistant professor category could be due to the fact that economists have diversified their portfolios of research into other areas of business and management, such as accounting, strategy, and marketing.

LeClair also brought up production and operations management as an example of how business schools are becoming more flexible in the way we think about our disciplines, and as a result, new subcategories within disciplines are being added. For example supply chain management has grown significantly at both the instructor level (28.3%) and professor level (15.1%), with some business programs identifying the discipline as its own, while others classify it under the POM category. To LeClair, changes in the way business schools categorize faculty could have big implications in research and curricula development in the future.

---

Throughout the presentation, LeClair referenced three overarching trends he sees emerging across management education today—flexibility, leverage, and specialization.

First, LeClair commented, schools have been trying to develop a more flexible model of faculty by organizing and deploying specific disciplines in more fluid ways that reflect market realities. For example in some business schools, supply chain management might be composed of faculty with expertise across a variety of disciplines, such as management or information systems. Similarly, a discipline might be reorganized to support a vertical market, such as biotech.

Next, through supplemental data, LeClair demonstrated that the ratio of full-time staff to full-time faculty has been rising, and argued that it is because schools are trying to leverage their core faculty more effectively with supporting staff. In addition, LeClair pointed to the growing trend of business schools bringing ancillary services under one roof, (e.g., career services), which have been previously provided by the other departments within the institution.

Finally, LeClair discussed the emerging desire for business schools to focus specialization, which if designed and implemented successfully, enables faculty members to focus on their area of strengths, such as research or teaching. He believes there is increasing stress on the traditional model which expects every professor to be both a great scholar, and great teacher. In the session he claimed that breaking that mindset could lead to better teaching and better research if they are substitutes—but only if the research faculty support the teaching faculty.