

# Entrepreneurship and Educational Leadership Development: Canadian and Australian Perspectives

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## *Entrepreneurship and Educational Leadership Development: Canadian and Australian Perspectives*

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**ABSTRACT:** This article reports the entrepreneurial activities of two university faculties, one Canadian and the other Australian, that were designed to meet the educational needs of students and to garner the resources necessary for program delivery. A conceptual framework for educational entrepreneurship, containing six dimensions, is proposed. The dimensions are: innovative behavior, networking, time-space communication framework, local-global perspective, educational organizations as knowledge centers, and integrated face-to-face and Internet-based learning. Major considerations suggested for entrepreneurial initiatives include access, equity, quality, and sustainability. Educational entrepreneurship is defined as the strategic focus on creating short and long-term opportunities for learning that will make a significant difference for individuals and their societies. Elements of educational entrepreneurship highlighted are strategic planning, the capacity to make responsible but timely decisions, business acumen, faculty development, and strategic alliances. Entrepreneurial leadership must be found among academic and support staff, as well as students. Impact on students is discussed. Other lessons learned include the need for a multi-faced approach to institutional change that incorporates a clearly articulated educational vision, well developed policies and procedures to guide action, sustainable funding plans, and evidence-based practices. Although educational entrepreneurship is reported to be difficult to achieve and seen as vulnerable to changes in personnel and political influences from within the organization and beyond, it is seen as providing a more equitable access to graduate studies and promoting growth in social and human capacity.

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**Keywords:** Canada, Australia, educational entrepreneurship, educational leadership, leadership development, postsecondary institutions, higher education

Institutions of higher learning in Western nations look very different from how they appeared even a decade ago. Student numbers have increased dramatically and technology has reshaped how teaching and learning occurs. University revenues no longer come primarily from government. Rather, resources for teaching and research initiatives come from a combination of government, student, research grants, private sector funds, and industry partnerships. Universities traditionally were focused on producing work-ready, knowledgeable graduates, and engaging in the creation of new knowledge through research. Over the past decade, the traditional responsibilities in teaching and research have become more complex with the increased consciousness of strategically positioning institutions to enhance their market share within a highly competitive educational industry. This means universities that have reputations for excellence in teaching and research will be in a better position to attract international students, thereby increasing their funding sources. The international education sector was reported by Merrill Lynch as being worth \$2.2 trillion business worldwide (Savage, as cited in Feast & Bretag, 2005, p.64) with the Australian sector's worth in excess of \$5 billion to the economy (Tilbrook, 2003). Australia has become a favored educational option, particularly for Asia-Pacific students, due to its well established education system, its inviting and tolerant multicultural society, and the national qualifications framework (Marginson, 2003). Additionally, immigration policies which encourage highly skilled graduates to stay tend to influence students preferences for particular university destinations (Marginson, 2003). Higher education is reported to be the third highest service export industry in Australia. Therefore, it is timely for entrepreneurial university leaders to, not only source new markets, but also to address issues of sustainability, quality of programs, teaching and research, staffing, professional development, and technology (Tilbrook, 2003). In short, university administrations have taken on attributes of corporate sector management such as focuses on marketability and sustainability.

The University of Calgary in Canada has been no exception in the general reformation of higher education that began in earnest in the latter part of the 20th century and continues unabated. In particular, the Faculty of Education in the University of Calgary has shifted from primarily regional initiatives to teaching and research endeavors that serve southern Alberta where the university is located but also much of Canada and a wide variety of international venues.

The Curtin Business School within Curtin University of Technology is situated in Perth, Western Australia. The Curtin Business School was one of the earliest Australian innovators in the international education market, establishing business degree programs in the Asia-Pacific region in the 1980s. Since that time, the Curtin Business School has

grown its offshore operations significantly with partnerships now in Africa through the African Virtual University Program (Curtin University of Technology, 2005c), China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mauritius, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam (Curtin University of Technology, 2005b). The growth in students has precipitated a rise in the numbers of sessional lecturers being employed to assist with service teaching. Curtin Business School administrators and leaders are now in a position of reflecting on their entrepreneurial activities with the view to consolidating ongoing quality of teaching and learning, ensuring the relevancy and innovation in programs, and engaging in succession planning that supports sustained program viability.

This paper describes the context of the work of the University of Calgary Faculty of Education and Curtin University's Business School as two case studies in culturally diverse environments. This paper describes the context of the work of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Education and, in particular, provides an overview of its entrepreneurial programming in the Graduate Division of Educational Research. The Curtin Business School case explores how they have reinvested in teaching, professional development, and ongoing curriculum renewal to ensure sustainability of programs within a competitive context. A conceptual framework for educational entrepreneurship is offered along with a definition of educational entrepreneurship. The work of the Graduate Division of Educational Research in campus and distance-delivery teaching is summarized, and an overview of its cost-recovery programming is provided. The second case outlines some of the issues the Curtin Business School has addressed and the initiatives that were implemented in the adoption of a "learning organization" approach. This is followed by a series of observations and lessons learned that may prove valuable for others interested in pursuing similar work.

## Conceptual Framework

This report draws on the perspectives offered by authors in several related areas. First, although Malecki, Nijkamp, and Stough (2004) were referring to entrepreneurship in the business sector, their description of successful entrepreneurship was perceived to apply equally to the development of educators who are able to cope and lead in a rapidly changing environment. Their statement that, "A sine qua non for successful entrepreneurship is innovative behavior, in terms of both production and adoption of new insights, knowledge, technologies or logistics" (Malecki, Nijkamp, & Stough, 2004, p. 1), summarizes very well the knowledge and skills currently required by leaders in a range of educational settings, including schools and universities.

Second, the work of Fuellhart and Glasmeier (2003) suggested that the concept of networking, a long-standing construct in the field of education that also has roots in the business sector, is more important than ever in an era when access to information can be a primary factor in determining the success or failure of organizations. In other words, professional and academic networks can facilitate information acquisition that contributes substantively to the ability of organizations and individuals to adapt successfully to changing internal and external conditions.

Third, Van Geenhuizen (2004) offered a useful framework for understanding how individuals in organizations communicate across two dimensions (time and space) using four different modes. That is, communication occurs synchronously and asynchronously and it also occurs locally and in a distributed format. For instance, synchronous communication occurs locally in a face-to-face context and it also may transpire across a wide geographic area via electronic communication systems. Similarly, asynchronous communication that is technology-mediated can take place locally and, in addition, it can occur among individuals who are dispersed across nations. Van Geenhuizen's space-time framework is closely related to Webber and Bohac Clarke's (2004) description of a support infrastructure for an international educational development network that facilitated "learning through space and across time" (p. 273).

Fourth, Van Geenhuizen's time-space framework serves as a useful lens for considering Adams and Sperling's (2003) discussion of distributed learning that is available to a global citizenry that is able to move beyond ethnocentrism toward cross-cultural collaboration. Adams and Sperling suggested that the Internet allows educators to utilize global information resources and to establish an international network of faculty members who are able to help students become global citizens. Ideally, students working within Adams and Sperling's educational network would be able to move toward what Banks (2004) called cosmopolitanism, a level of understanding that incorporates, "...the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within their own cultural communities, within other cultures within their nation-state, in the city culture of their nation, and in the global community" (p. 304). Moreover, Banks highlighted the importance of expanding the definition of literacy in the following way: "Literate citizens in a diverse democratic society should be reflective, moral, and active citizens in an interconnected global world" (p. 300). Fifth, within many countries and certainly within Canada, postsecondary institutions are perceived to be major sources of knowledge creation and sites of essential learning opportunities. Canadian academics reportedly understand the importance of access to postsecondary education and adequate resources for colleges and universities, but they are concerned about the level to which the work of universities is supported by government (Government of Canada, 2003).

Significantly, Canadians seem to believe that Internet-based learning has strong potential and that it can be used to realize the benefits of internationalizing educational programming (Government of Canada, 2003). However, this is not only a Canadian phenomenon. For example, Huynh, Umesh, and Valacich (2003) noted the mass movement in the United States of small business, big corporations, and postsecondary institutions toward e-learning, thereby creating a highly competitive environment. Huynh, Umesh, & Valacich also claimed that strategic alliances among postsecondary institutions and businesses are perhaps "the most promising and viable model of all" (p. 56). These authors also underscored the need for sustainable financial models.

Exploring educational entrepreneurship raises issues of sustainability of institutional reputation linked to the quality of programs. In the Australian context, this has led to an examination of how the workplace environment is structured for learning, program renewal, and academic development. The work of Burns (2002) on the adult learner within the workplace indicated that the new economic paradigm in which workers, in this case academics, were now situated required flexibility, quality, innovation, and knowledge at all levels. In the new economy, individuals who were capable of rapid learning and willing to undertake training in complex tasks were critical to the organization. In the Curtin Business School's case, this translated into the need for business academics with high levels of discipline knowledge and expertise to engage with educational professional development, collegial networking, and collaborative problem solving related to increasing the effectiveness of teaching and curricula. This transformation was contingent upon those same individuals working towards the development of a learning enterprise which required swift adaptation to economic needs and directions, and the commitment to ongoing reflection within the organization. Burns (2002) posited that a learning organization had to develop a focus on how to *create conditions for learning* instead of investing in defined structures that become obsolete over time. This means that learning in universities was not only the domain of the students, but also of their lecturers. Universities as a collective, must redefine themselves and their role within the wider community as the environment becomes increasingly unpredictable and dynamic. An example of this in Australia has been the increasing push from industry and government for universities to include generic skills development in programs in addition to their traditional role in providing students opportunities for knowledge acquisition (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006; Hager, Holland, & Beckett, 2002). The key skills outlined included communication, the ability to work effectively in teams, and critical thinking.

In order for universities to appropriately respond to the changing context, support, training, and incentives must be provided to academics and students, as well as administrators. In discussing how to respond to changing environments, Burns (2002) espoused a double loop of learning activities that encompassed feedback, information flow and support to those within the organization. Ramsden (2003), exploring the issue of how to establish academic development within higher education, indicated that accomplished ...

teachers do not segregate practice and theory; on the contrary, they seek productive relations between them to establish better ways of helping their students to learn .... The key to professionalism is learning how to fuse theory and practice. ...For most lecturers, this will mean working with people who are active in research and whose approach to staff development is driven by a spirit of stimulating inquiry. ... Good academic development engages us in the excitement of discovery and makes learning about teaching as exhilarating as doing research (p. 245).

Teaching-related problems encountered within the workplace should therefore become the basis for self-development and collaboration with other academics. The new paradigm requires a re-examination of traditional ways of operating, e.g. Burns (2002) statement that, within the new paradigm, training becomes learning, and hierarchical, top-down control moves towards more collegial approaches. Members of the organization (academics, students, and/or administrators) should begin to see a more comprehensive interweaving of work (i.e., the business of the organization) and life; therefore, making learning experiences more authentic. Burns also defined the paradigm shift as moving from a structured organizational framework to one that is more interactive, requiring commitment and cooperation, rather than control. Goals and procedures are a shared enterprise that ultimately led all stakeholders to a sense of mutuality.

Clearly, institutions of higher learning face significant challenges as they strive to become more innovative, networked, communication savvy, cosmopolitan, and technologically literate. For instance, Deem's (2001) cautions about the potential dangers inherent in new managerialism, academic capitalism, and entrepreneurial universities are well worth considering, particularly her call for balance in attention to local-global educational issues. Nonetheless, as was noted by Ebersole (2003), higher education has no choice but to address increasing demands for access, rising costs, and technological advancements in ways that respect existing institutional values and the need for quality.

Table 1

*Dimensions and attributes of entrepreneurship in educational organizations.*

Dimensions	Attributes
Innovative behavior	Generation of knowledge and skills
Networking	Information acquisition Successful adaptation to changing conditions
Time-space communication framework	Synchronous and asynchronous communication  Local and distributed communication Learning across space and through time
Local-global perspective	Local-national-global cultural literacy  Principled, reflective, engaged citizens
Educational organizations as knowledge centers	Sources of knowledge creation for students, faculty members, and support staff  Sites of essential learning  Attention to access, resources, and community needs
Integrated face-to-face and Internet-based learning	International  Competitive environment  Strategic alliances

Table 1 is the basis for the following definition of educational entrepreneurship as it is used in this document:

*Educational entrepreneurship focuses strategically on creating short- and long-term opportunities for learning that will make a significant difference for individuals and their societies. Financial return sufficient to ensure quality programming is an important consideration in educational entrepreneurship but not its raison d'être. Rather, the primary purpose of educational entrepreneurship is the building of human and social capacity to lead responsible, constructive educational initiatives. Coupled with educational entrepreneurship is the necessary consideration of incorporating and structuring sustainability to ensure that the programs, teaching, and outcomes are of a consistently high standard. Therefore, educational entrepreneurship can also include academics as well as students as 'learners' within the learning organization.*

### **Key Considerations**

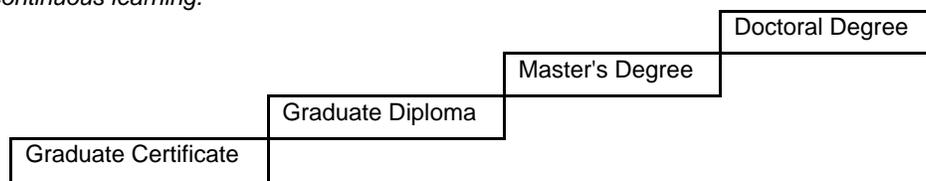
This account of educational entrepreneurship at the University of Calgary is offered by a central figure in many of the programs described below from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Education. Similarly, the case study from the Curtin University Business School is told by an educational leader within the division. Clearly, other participants in the work will concur with some of the points made and hold varying perspectives on others. Also, the educational programming in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary described below was the result of sustained effort by many faculty members, support staff, and students over several years and was not the product of the work of any one individual. Further, this is a record of educational programming at a specific time; it is important to emphasize that the work is ongoing and that programs will continue to evolve to meet the demands of an ever changing environment. The teaching and learning initiatives and professional development in the Curtin Business School is the work of the Department of Academic Development in partnership with educational experts from the Faculty of

Education within Curtin University. The success of the initiatives was a result of engagement and interest from many valued faculty, divisional administrators, and support staff within the Curtin Business School.

Readers may find the following definitions useful. First, courses as used in the following account refers to units of academic study that in Australasia, for example, are described as “papers” or “units.” Tuition periods are increasingly variable within Australasia with the most common being the semester (two per year) or trimesters (three per year – usually in offshore locales), although there are intensive short units, summer and winter schools and so on. The descriptor administrators refers to academics serving in positions such as department head or dean, although it is recognized that the term “administrator” is used in some countries to refer to nonacademic support staff. Distance-delivery in this document describes a form of program delivery that encompasses “distance education,” “online teaching,” and “open learning.” A sessional is an instructor hired on a short-term contract to teach one or more specific courses. Post-degree continuous learning (PDCL) at the University of Calgary is a formalized academic structure that allows degree holders to study toward a graduate certificate or a graduate diploma that may be used within a laddering framework as credit toward a master’s degree and/or to specialize at the post-master’s or post-doctoral levels.

Table 2

*Post-degree continuous learning.*



### **The Two University Contexts**

The University of Calgary is a comprehensive research institution in Alberta, Canada, and it is comprised of 16 faculties, 53 departments, and over 30 research institutes and centers. Nearly 2000 full-time equivalent faculty members serve approximately 26,000 full-time equivalent students. The Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary was one of the founding faculties when the university was created in 1966 (University of Calgary, 2006). Its three Divisions—Division of Teacher Preparation, Division of Applied Psychology, and Graduate Division of Educational Research (Faculty of Education, 2006)—currently serve approximately 900 undergraduate students and 1250 graduate students. The university is located in the city of Calgary, a western Canadian urban center with a population of nearly one million people.

Curtin University of Technology is the largest university in Perth, Western Australia, with over 31,000 students. Almost 11,000 students are international students studying in their home countries or at the Australian campuses. Curtin Business School is the largest division of five within the university. The Curtin Business School has seven faculties or ‘schools’ namely, Accounting, Business Law, Economics and Finance, Information Systems, Management, Marketing, and a postgraduate school consisting of the Graduate School of Business, and numerous research centers. The Curtin Business School has approximately 15,000 students—approximately 55% to 60% of these are international students. The Curtin Business School’s programs have accreditation from over twelve professional associations. The European Foundation for Management Development’s European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation was achieved in 2001 for all undergraduate and postgraduate programs (Curtin University of Technology, 2005a). The Curtin Business School’s faculty comprises approximately 250 full time and ~600 sessional tutors.

#### *Graduate Division of Educational Research*

The Graduate Division of Educational Research is one of the academic units in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. It currently serves about 900 students studying toward several academic credentials: Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master of Education, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy. The Graduate Division of Educational Research offers programs in the following academic areas:

- Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- Educational Contexts
- Educational Leadership

Educational Technology  
Gifted Education  
Higher Education Administration  
Interpretive Studies in Education  
Second Language Teaching  
Teaching English As a Second Language  
Workplace and Adult Learning

All of the preceding academic areas offer some or all degree programs in both on-campus and distance-delivery formats, with the exception of Interpretive Studies in Education, which offers only on-campus programs (Graduate Division of Educational Research, 2005).

#### *Abbreviated Summary of Challenges*

Major considerations for the Graduate Division in Educational Research continue to be access, equity, quality, and sustainability. These attributes have been foremost in the minds of faculty members and administrators as they have addressed various challenges encountered during the evolution of the Faculty of Education.

Graduate teaching in the early years of the Faculty of Education occurred on campus in a face-to-face format and was delivered by regular full-time faculty members. Degree programs were supported by traditional infrastructures such as library, registration, and office support services. Registration was limited primarily to students within commuting distance from campus. Then, over two decades ago, the Faculty of Education responded to demands from rural educators for access to ongoing professional development in the form of course-based master's degrees by sending regular full-time faculty members to communities throughout Alberta to deliver face-to-face graduate courses. On-site teaching was supported with materials that were mailed to students who had less access to library support than their on-campus peers. This strategy resulted in increased access to graduate programming among Alberta educators and greater numbers of students registered in master's degree programs in the specialized departments that preceded the current divisional structure of the Faculty of Education.

On-site graduate teaching in rural communities was followed by teaching in a telephone audio conference format. This made it possible for one instructor to teach students in multiple sites concurrently. Staffing by regular faculty members was supplemented by sessional instructors who also worked, for example, as school district superintendents and department of education personnel. Technical assistance was provided by support staff who handled telephone audio conference equipment. Students had reduced access to campus support services compared to students studying at the university but they received course materials that were mailed to them.

Growing demand for access to graduate programs led to the establishment of partnerships with two small postsecondary institutions in western Canada. This allowed greater access to master's degree programs in Alberta and in western Canada generally. Local instructors provided relevant practical experience but they had relatively weak connections to the university research culture. In time, these initial institutional partnerships and on-site teaching venues were replaced by a greater reliance on distance-delivery teaching.

Over the past decade distance-delivery programs offered by universities across North America and in other parts of the world expanded to include a variety of graduate degree offerings. Competition from other universities increased at the same time that the University of Calgary experienced an even greater demand for access to master's and doctoral degree programs. In response, the Graduate Division of Educational Research shifted from its reliance on telephone audio conferencing to the emerging field of online instruction. The support infrastructure for graduate students and faculty members was greater than in previous distance-delivery initiatives. That is, they were able to access digitized library materials, multimedia services, instructional design support, and increasingly powerful instructional software. Students from a wider geographic area could be accommodated in online courses and the program quickly grew to include students who were studying across Canada and internationally. Online instruction allowed for the introduction of synchronous and asynchronous communication among students and instructors. Significantly, reliance on smaller postsecondary institutions in western Canada to help deliver graduate courses diminished and was replaced by strategic alliances with universities in Europe and Australasia. This allowed for greater internationalization of courses and degree programs, plus a wider pool of instructor expertise. These changes were accompanied by the need for ongoing faculty member access to in-service and an expanded support infrastructure, particularly for faculty members involved in developing online courses.

Concurrent with the shift toward online distance-delivery programming, the University of Calgary faced budget reductions that also occurred in postsecondary institutions throughout the western world during the 1990s. Both campus and distance-delivery degree programs had to either reduce graduate student admissions or find alternate sources of revenue. This resulted in admissions to campus masters and doctoral programs being reduced and in

distance-delivery students being charged the full cost of delivering degree programs. An unexpected outcome was that distance-delivery students reported that, despite paying the full cost of their degree programs, the overall cost to students was much less than what it normally would have cost them to leave their places of employment to move to the city to study for graduate degrees in traditional campus-based programs. Full-cost tuition fees resulted in the development of a strong human and technical support infrastructure for students in distance-delivery programs that also supported students in campus-based graduate degree programs. Full-time faculty members could be hired to teach in both campus and distance programs, instructional expertise could be accessed from around the world, and students who in the past were unable to leave jobs and families to study on campus could undertake graduate studies from wherever they lived. In other words, the increased range in program formats resulted in increased access to graduate programs among nontraditional students working in situations that precluded participation in traditional campus-based studies.

The move to a wider range of teaching and learning formats and cost-recovery tuition fees for distance-delivery programs required approvals from a full range of university governance committees and administrators. It also necessitated the development of a campus-wide understanding that the institution must increase its decision-making agility in order to better meet the needs of students and faculty members. As well, the changes were the catalyst for ongoing substantive dialogue among faculty members about the value of traditional and emerging forms of graduate teaching, and also an extension in the skills and knowledge required of academics. That is, traditional teaching and research skills continued to be extremely important but the ability to cope with change took on ever-increasing importance.

Currently, master's and doctoral degrees offered by the Graduate Division of Educational Research are available in both campus and distance-delivery formats. Students from across Canada and in many other countries are working toward completion of academic programs, including post-degree continuous learning Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas, plus a distance-delivery Doctor of Education degree program implemented in 2003. As well, a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) initiative was launched nearly two years ago and is in the process of becoming established as a significant deliverer of professional learning in western Canada and beyond.

#### *Observations and Lessons Learned*

As with any form of institutional change, the shift by the Graduate Division of Educational Research from a traditional set of degree options toward educational entrepreneurialism with a primary focus on building human and social capacity was accompanied by a series of lessons learned. Indeed, the process of individual and institutional learning continues.

#### *Elements of Educational Entrepreneurship.*

The features of educational entrepreneurship that proved most critical in the evolution of the Graduate Division of Educational Research included the capacity of faculty members and university leaders to undertake strategic planning. Particularly important in this domain is the ability to scan the immediate and distant environments for indicators of how postsecondary teaching and learning might change. In the case of the Graduate Division of Educational Research, ongoing environmental scanning allowed members of this unit to anticipate that government funding was unlikely to increase, that competition from Canadian and international institutions was imminent and unavoidable, and that the graduate study needs of educators in Alberta and beyond were not going to be addressed without significant institutional change.

Universities typically are slow to change (Ebersole, 2003) and Graduate Division of Educational Research planners found that it continues to be a major effort, even with the support of colleagues within the academic unit and across campus, to make decisions in a timely manner. For example, approval processes for PDCL programs challenged university understandings of master's degree formats and required in-depth discussions with many members of the university's governance system over several years. This and other challenges, e.g., modifications to how tuition fees are processed underscored the need for institutional agility that is difficult to achieve in large organizations. Nonetheless, the capacity to make responsible but timely decisions is central to the entrepreneurial goal of promoting the development of human and social capacity.

*Business acumen* is not normally considered to be a major factor in academic decision making. However, to address the need of the educational community to have greater and more equitable access to graduate studies, it was necessary to develop a viable and sustainable financial infrastructure. This meant planning and negotiating with colleagues within the Faculty of Education and in central university administration. It also meant planning for long-term financial stability that would allow faculty members and students to concentrate on teaching, learning, and research and not on fundraising.

Also, it is extremely important to provide ongoing opportunities for faculty development. This includes access to support from instructional designers, technical assistance, and support from colleagues familiar with educational change, varied teaching strategies, and adult learning. A significant component of faculty development was perceived to be timing. That is, if support and assistance could be provided when it was needed and on relatively short notice then, importantly, the overall amount of support required can be minimized. In other words, if faculty members have access to expertise at critical junctures in the academic year, then they rapidly develop the capacity to handle instructional and technical decisions independently.

*Strategic alliances* with other institutions may be valuable. For instance, the Graduate Division of Educational Research established formal partnerships with institutions in other countries, increasing the Graduate Division of Educational Research's capacity to provide unique learning opportunities to students and to expand research possibilities for faculty members. Partnerships made it possible for students to take graduate courses with in-depth Canadian and international components. In addition, faculty exchange possibilities emerged.

#### *Entrepreneurial leadership.*

Successful leadership in any learning organization is a fragile construct and it is difficult to overemphasize the importance of collaboration among administrators and faculty members. Support in many forms—philosophical, professional, and financial—came from the Dean of the Faculty of Education, making it possible for the Associate Dean of the Graduate Division of Educational Research and the program Coordinators to strive for entrepreneurial leadership in its most altruistic form. Equally important was the active support from the majority of faculty members in the Graduate Division of Educational Research, support that emerged as encouraging, cautionary, and constructive. This meant learning from collaborative decision making characterized by critical analysis, encouragement, and pastoral care. It also meant that *collaborative decision making* was punctuated occasionally with conflict and frequently with celebrations of successes and insights.

Leadership from academic staff is extremely important, but insufficient on its own to guarantee successful graduate teaching and learning. *Leadership from support staff* has emerged as a major factor in the successful evolution of educational entrepreneurship in the Graduate Division of Educational Research. A large number of support staff members emerged as key players in the planning and delivery of academic programs. They included the program officer, budget officer, administrative staff, secretaries, and technical support personnel. The work of these individuals continues to be a necessary component of educational entrepreneurship. Indeed, the importance of leadership from support staff is so great that failure to nurture it would jeopardize the ability of the Graduate Division of Educational Research to serve students well.

The current format of graduate degree programs in the Graduate Division of Educational Research and student demographics relies heavily upon the ability of the institution to provide students and faculty members with appropriate and accessible library materials. Thus, the role of *librarians* in offering integrated campus and distance-delivery programming is more important than it ever has been on university campuses. Print materials have not diminished in importance and students rely heavily on the ability of the university library to provide them with paper or digitized copies of academic reports. Moreover, the increased searchability of full-text library resources from across campus and around the world means that students and faculty members in the Graduate Division of Educational Research have the tools necessary for them to cope successfully with working and studying in the information age. The work of librarians, which so frequently is low-profile even to students and faculty members, is an absolutely critical component in the ability of educational entrepreneurs to do their work effectively.

#### *Content expertise and collegial support.*

Clearly, the building of social and human capacity is not possible without faculty members who possess the necessary knowledge, teaching expertise, and professionalism. Therefore, academic programs cannot succeed unless they are shaped by *content specialists and expert teachers*. This means involving appropriate academics in all major program decisions and providing them with the information they need to make informed decisions. It also means that, in the spirit of collegial governance, participation in program changes and alternative teaching formats should be voluntary.

As important as academic expertise is, it is insufficient unless accompanied by an adequate level of collegial support. Therefore, it is incumbent upon faculty members and administrators to attend to pastoral care because ongoing willingness to participate in collegial governance processes is dependent upon trust, shared ownership, and common aspirations. *Collegial support and pastoral care* do not preclude strong leadership by colleagues. However, they do require access to information and opportunities to participate in decision making within a respectful environment.

### *Cross-cultural acumen.*

Moving from service primarily to a local and regional educational community to service to a national and international academic community meant that the Graduate Division of Educational Research had to learn to operate effectively within several new cultures. *Basic cultural literacy* involved translating academic language and practices, e.g., course credit systems, academic calendars, credentialing requirements within different political domains, and grading systems. More complex considerations included varying expectations for academic rigour, cultural expectations for schools and educators, different conceptual frameworks for collegial governance, and occasional encounters with cultural or even academic ethnocentrism. *Language complexities* emerged even in other English speaking countries when similar educational terms were used but with different meanings. Also, cultural understandings of *timelines and policy requirements* were quite disparate among academics and graduate students in Canada and in other countries.

Interestingly, the *norms, values, and beliefs in different faculties* on the same campuses required what was essentially the development of cross-cultural literacy that was as complex as that required to work across different universities and even in other countries. For example, understandings of what constitutes a reasonable pedagogical framework and instructional delivery format for master's degrees vary considerably among members of university governance committees with representation from the social sciences, humanities, fine arts, sciences, and professional faculties. Similarly, interpretations of university documents and relevant government policies had to be negotiated and clarified so that curricular, financial, and human resource decisions could be made.

Traditional views of graduate study based on the assumption that universities should mandate rigid requirements for degree programs conflicted with the multiplicity of choices of graduate programs available to educators even in the university's immediate urban neighborhood. Therefore, many discussions occurred among faculty members about the need for both competition and collaboration among postsecondary institutions and also the value in nurturing the university's support base within the province of Alberta. The need to seek a balance between a *market appropriate graduate programs* and *definitions of academic rigor* led to cognitive dissonance sometimes as profound as that induced by culture shock.

*Learning to utilize new teaching tools* sometimes constituted almost as great a challenge as learning another language. Early adopters of the shift to new teaching tools with access to graduate studies, online teaching, alternate financial and technological support systems, and competition/collaboration with other institutions may be compared in some ways to second language learners with a facility for language acquisition. In contrast, late adopters might be understood as those who learn to get by in the second language but never become fully comfortable in the second language.

### *Student responses to educational entrepreneurship.*

Perhaps not every student in master's and doctoral programs nor every one of their instructors in the Graduate Division of Educational Research is entirely satisfied with a relatively flexible yet still substantive approach to graduate teaching and learning. However, the following quotes of what students have said about their experiences provide an indication of the general feeling among students. These students reported feeling satisfied with nearly all program components:

[The best parts of my graduate program included] the interaction with colleagues all over the world, and participation in on-line, cutting edge technology. I also greatly appreciated the flexibility of doing the program while remaining at home and not travelling.

The professors I had were all amazing: with content, ideas, and just genuine nice people. I still keep in touch with some of them. I also learned so much that could be taken back to schools and implemented. It literally changed how I taught and professional development activities that I can now deliver to others. I am now a leader ... in my school/ district and can readily help others.

This comment offers support for the efforts of faculty members and support staff to make access to graduate studies more equitable:

I was able to work full-time and take a graduate program without having to leave home or travel to a larger centre. I loved being able to work on my own schedule and time frame. When I was busy, I didn't sign up for a course and when I had time, I took two courses. The availability of corresponding or talking to professors was amazing!

The following comments from students who studied online through most of their degree programs support the veracity of claims that distance-delivery teaching can be as rigorous and comprehensive as face-to-face instruction:

I think I worked with some of the best minds I have ever met. [My instructors] were absolutely wonderful to work with. The texts and readings to which they introduced me were life changing and the ways they had us interact were amazing. At first I did not like the teleconferencing and the fact that I was interacting online, thinking that I needed face-to-face interaction in order to really learn. However, it quickly became apparent that we actually engaged in dialogue more intensively because we had to read the responses of others and then respond to each so we could not sit back and let others do the thinking. I have changed the way I teach as a result, so that students are compelled to engage more regularly in organizing the learning experiences as well as responding to them. It was a great learning experience.

The program was of supreme excellence and I have since recommended it to numerous colleagues - it exceeded all my needs, challenged me yet did not discourage me, it encouraged me to pursue my dreams and I now even consider a PhD with [the] University of Calgary.

My graduate studies was a transformational experience! One of the best times in my life. I am so thankful and impressed with GDER. The few constructive comments I have made are on things that would have made this amazing experience become a close to "perfect" experience for me.

Evidence of pastoral care in the student community is contained in these comments from graduates:

I completed my degree during a very difficult time in my personal life. I was very fortunate that all concerned with GDER were willing to be understanding and flexible when circumstances required those attitudes.

I loved my time there and I sometimes wonder why I left. It gave me opportunities to shine and expand my horizons. I will always look back on that time with pride. I am also amazed at how great the staff was in GDER, from the office staff to the academic staff. When I was looking for an MA program, I called [a different university]... I talked to many people as I kept getting forwarded to another person to answer my questions. At the end of that experience, I thought post graduate studies would be very bureaucratic as I never got a straight answer from anyone there. When I called the University of Calgary, one lady talked to me for 20 minutes and answered all of my questions to my satisfaction. She even laughed when I mentioned that she hadn't forwarded me to anyone else yet and assured me she doubted that would be necessary. After I got off the phone, I knew the University of Calgary was the place I wanted to be. I never changed my mind about that. Keep up the amazing work and keep helping people the way you helped me.

The interaction and discussion within the class. The course topics and curriculum. The philosophy of adult learning was honored and respected by the instructors so that students could tailor assignments to suit their work and learning needs. In the peer group learning experience we were all experts, not just the instructors. The spirit of learning and enthusiasm for adult education throughout the whole dept—staff and students.

In summary, student response has been generally positive to graduate programs that they perceive as innovative, part of local and global networks, and accessible across time and space. It is important to note that not all student experiences have been entirely positive. For example, occasional issues have arisen around student overload, an instance of plagiarism, and perceptions of instructor quality. Nonetheless, positive stages of academic growth have been noted among students in, for example, the distance-delivery Doctor of Education program as summarized in table 3.

Table 3

*Stages of student development*

Level	Stage of Development	Expression of Concern	Behavioral Indicators
4	Group	How are others doing?	The learner looks at how others are affected?
3	Personal	Who am I as a learner?	The learner seeks an understanding of self.
2	Contextual	What forms of literacy are required?	The learner develops a skill set necessary for success.
1	Managerial	How is the course/program organized?	The learner engages in an environmental scan.

(Webber &amp; Bohac Clarke, 2004)

**The Curtin Business School's Case of Educational Entrepreneurship***Onshore Programs*

The Curtin Business School's main program, the Bachelor of Commerce, includes over 100 majors and double majors. The same degree progression found in the University of Curtin's Faculty of Education is also in place with graduate certificates and diplomas, master's degrees, and doctoral programs available to students. All units/courses (776 across the Curtin Business School) have an academic Unit Controller who is responsible for the development of outlines and materials, and coordination of sessional staff. There are many large classes with enrolment in excess of 100 students, even some in excess of 1,200 students. Coordinating large units requires considerable time, administrative capacity, and technological expertise in order to maintain parity and quality of teaching and assessments. Additionally, the Curtin Business School has adopted flexible delivery approaches to the extent where there may be up to six different tuition periods throughout the year, and 12 locations for the same unit/course. Online learning is also expanding. All units are required to have an online presence even if this is simply the unit outline. These challenges in program delivery, unit administration and teaching in different modes and locations have refocused many academics on the importance of good teaching and precipitating interest and engagement in professional development.

*Offshore Programs*

Predominately, offshore programs were established in a contractual arrangement with a partnered institution external to Australia. Curtin Business School academics were contracted to teach approximately half of the total contact hours while in-situ tutors taught the complement of the program over the duration of the trimester. Face-to-face teaching by the Curtin academic was in an intensive mode. Australian academics' offshore teaching duties were not configured into usual workloads; rather, for some, these offshore teaching visits represented a 33% increase in workload. Frequently, offshore visits were configured so that lecturers flew to offshore locations, commenced teaching on the Friday afternoon/evening, taught Saturday and Sunday, returned to Curtin on the Sunday evening, and taught their usual classes on the Australian campus on Monday morning. The positive to these offshore duties was that they offered considerable financial rewards to academics—a handsome per diem payment, a fee for the teaching, a fee for grading, and a five-star hotel stay for the duration of their teaching visit. In the early years, offshore teaching visits were perceived as highly lucrative; but as time moved on and the number of programs being run in many, and varied, locations increased, the novelty of traveling and teaching overseas wore off for many. This long-term increase in workload has had an impact, with many faculty members now questioning if they can continue these overloads without a deleterious impact on their teaching quality, personal motivation, energy levels and health, families, and research output. To compound matters, full-time faculty numbers have not increased significantly to keep pace with program expansion.

*Promoting a Learning Organization Orientation*

A learning organization orientation was adopted to support ongoing development of teaching quality with the view to facilitating sustainability of educational markets. The international student was now perceived as a valued client who made judgments about teaching quality based upon his/her learning experience. Hence, sustainability was being reconceptualized in relation to students' perspectives in the 'educational market' equation.

Curtin Business School academic development leaders adopted a multifaceted approach that was established

incrementally over six years. It overtly included the students', academics', and the organization's interests. The first step was taken in 1999-2000 with the establishment of a systematic student feedback mechanism (students' perspective) designed to inform teaching decisions, provide direction for professional development (academics' perspective), and to align us with accreditation requirements (organizational perspective). The second step was the creation of in-context, systematic professional development for academics instituted in 2001. A range of teaching-focused workshops was established to provide opportunities for academics to network, collaboratively problem solve, develop resources, and increase their repertoire of instructional strategies. In 2003-2004, through a strategic alliance with Curtin University's Faculty of Education, this professional development was aligned with the Graduate Certificate in Training and Development enabling academics to articulate directly into formal teaching qualifications with advanced standing. Although feedback was received from academics that this was desirable and practical, there has only been a small number who have availed themselves of this articulation pathway. Reports have indicated that some Heads of School have actively discouraged staff from undertaking teaching qualifications as it was perceived to be of lesser value to discipline-related studies and reduced their available time to engage in research. Unfortunately in these cases, there was an overall de-motivating effect on these teacher-leaders.

#### *The Student Feedback Mechanism and Reflective Cycle*

Until 1999 in the Curtin Business School, there was no systematic feedback obtained from students that could be utilized for ongoing continuous improvement of teaching. Educational experts were accessed to advise and undertake the establishment of a student feedback and reflective cycle. An instrument, in common use within Australian universities, was adopted with minor changes to wording of some of the items (Ramsden, 1991). Three open ended questions were also added to the questionnaire with the view to obtaining richer data from students. The instrument contained four scales related to the students' experiences within the unit and one scale that focused on teaching behaviors, although there were numerous items that had a teacher element within the other scales. All large units were surveyed in weeks 9, 10, and 11 of a 13 week semester on the Australian campus. All units in the offshore locations were surveyed each trimester. Administration, data processing, and analysis were undertaken by the independent Academic Development department in the Curtin Business School. Reports were sent to Unit Controllers and Heads of School and professional development support was available to all academics to guide reflection and the development of action plans. Leaders in the schools were expected to use these data and action plans to monitor, recognize, and reward teaching improvements and ongoing curriculum [re]development by their faculty members.

Unfortunately, implementation of the reflective aspect of the cycle has not been fully adopted by academics or endorsed by leaders in the schools which resulted in patchy application. Initially, there was considerable suspicion about how these data were going to be used; however, with more staff engaging with their data and reaping the rewards of improved student achievement, engagement, and feedback, these mistrusting reactions have declined in number. There is now a core group of faculty members in each school who has made significant advances in their teaching strategies repertoire, assessment practices, materials and resources, and interactions with students. These staff are advocates and leaders for teaching development in their schools. One such teacher-leader has improved her teacher scores from (~60% to ~90%) over five years and is now consistently receiving student satisfaction ratings of 100%. Positive shifts in student ratings were particularly high with lecturers who use the feedback and inform students of the changes made to their units and teaching and assessment practices. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement. School heads must endorse this cycle, not just through words, but also by using the data for strategic developments, to support and reward academics, and in the promotion process.

#### *Professional Development Support*

Professional development has been established by Academic Development, with academics able to access support and advice one-to-one, in small unit teams, or as whole-school groups. Professional development was also provided through workshops which articulated into formal teaching qualifications, if desired by the individual (and financially supported by the employer). These workshops were for the multidisciplinary groups from across all the business schools and focused on exposing academics to new and varied teaching strategies to enhance individual's repertoire. Faculty members were encouraged to practice their new strategies and discuss experiences prior to subsequent workshops. Teaching problems were aired and opportunities provided to share ideas and brainstorm solutions that worked in their context. Resources were also shared in these workshops so that "horizontal transfer" was facilitated (Joyce & Weil, 1986). Professional development was tailored to schools' needs and was designed in consultation with teacher-leaders in the school to specifically target aspects that had been identified as problematic or of interest to the faculty. This multifaceted approach to professional growth in the workplace has been successful in engaging individuals, groups, and whole schools. Success has been demonstrated in positive feedback from students, academics who were demonstrating more interest, enthusiasm and engagement with teaching matters, and increased participation in teaching-oriented reward systems.

#### *Learning Effectiveness Alliance Project*

In 2004-2005, leaders in the Academic Development department in partnership with the Faculty of Education, applied for, and won a Learning Effectiveness Alliance Project (LEAP) grant of \$99,000 (over three years) to fund collaborative projects focused on curriculum review—reducing an ‘overstuffed’ curriculum and updating content, integrating the teaching and assessment of professional skills (Hager, Holland, & Beckett, 2002), and refining assessment tasks and practices. An aspect of the funds targeted research into teaching. This project has been highly successful with teams of academics engaging and schools contributing equal funding to further support these activities. In 2004-2005, two schools did not apply for their share of the funding, but due to the success of the projects and increased interest in teaching activities, all schools established projects and received their funding in 2005-2006. Interviews with the participating academics in 2005 revealed that this project resulted in considerably more activity and resource development than would have been expected from these small funding pools. One school adopted a whole-school approach and proceeded to undertake an all-encompassing audit and mapping of their professional skills integration, assessment types and distribution in units, and content review across their three largest programs. This school has continued their work in 2006 to make changes that were identified as needed in the first project. All LEAP participants engaged with great goodwill, and industry, and enjoyed the interaction with their colleagues which, with their heavy workloads, had been a rare event in past years.

### *Observations and Lessons Learned*

Adopting a multifaceted approach, including a clearly articulated educational vision, providing timely educational advice, developing policies and procedures to guide action, funding projects and programs, and demonstrating ongoing commitment to evidence-based and innovative practice was essential for sustainability of quality programs, teaching excellence, and institutional reputation. One of the challenges was to attain buy-in for educational improvements at all levels of this business-focused organization, particularly with the priority competitor of ‘research’ snapping at the heels of time-poor and overloaded academics. In the LEAP research, academics reported that university administrators had sent mixed messages to faculty regarding the importance of teaching. Senior administrators paid lip service to teaching initiatives but rarely prioritized these alongside discipline-related research. They felt that only ‘business’ research was valued as this was heavily weighted in the promotion process and other recognition systems. Where heads of school did support and engage with teaching initiatives, gains were considerable in positive change to units, programs, and teaching. Increases in students’ satisfaction with learning experiences were also evident and the collaborative nature of the professional development and projects promoted faculty engagement, cohesion, and understandings of educational matters.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Graduate degree programming of the type described in this paper has the potential to strengthen the capacity of a large number of individuals to make positive contributions to their organizations and communities. With responsible nurturing, educational entrepreneurialism in the Graduate Division of Educational Research is likely to continue. Nonetheless, organizational growth is difficult to achieve and perhaps as or more difficult to maintain. It is vulnerable to changes in personnel and political influences from within the organization and beyond. Very good programs from other institutions in Canada and abroad exist and will emerge as viable competitors in western Canada. It is reasonable to anticipate that changes in university central administration or new provincial legislation will impact the work of the Graduate Division of Educational Research.

However, student and faculty member reports of more equitable access to graduate studies and the resulting growth in social and human capacity mean that educational entrepreneurship is worth pursuing. It is not only a question of social justice or reduced overall costs for students. It is about the long-standing mandate of higher education to disseminate knowledge and to increase the ability of students to make a difference.

Similarly, moving a large organization like the Curtin Business School along in the pursuit of educational excellence has been a complex, difficult, and time consuming task. Many teaching and learning developments and improvements were wrought as a result of academic goodwill and engagement with many initiatives. A curious aspect in this case was that while leaders demonstrated entrepreneurial capacity in sourcing international educational markets, the linkage between maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching (and reputation) and ongoing student enrolment (and associated increased revenue) did not appear always to be explicit to them in their strategic decision making and in the vision explicated to faculty. Greater focus on sustainability—a distinctly business-oriented concept—must continue as it applies to educational programs, student-centered learning processes, and ongoing academic development. Commitment to a sound educational vision encompassing the learning of students, academics, and the organization will ensure sustained good quality programs and continued market viability.

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