

A Different Model for Doctoral Education in Accounting and Auditing: Student and Faculty Reflections

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SUMMARY: One proposed solution to the accounting and auditing faculty shortage is to expand the supply of AACSB-accredited professional or executive accounting doctoral programs ([AACSB 2003](#); [Trapnell et al. 2009](#)), programs that are more flexible than traditional Ph.D. programs and are targeted to experienced professionals. This paper provides information about non-traditional doctoral programs and discusses the four co-authors' personal experiences in such programs. We believe that the insights will be useful both to prospective doctoral students (i.e., current practitioners and executives seeking to transition into academic careers) and to academics considering the development of such programs, or even hiring graduates from such programs.

Keywords: doctoral program; executive education; faculty shortage.

Doctoral faculty are the lifeline of academic business schools. However, unless the production of business faculty stays abreast of the exploding growth of business schools across the globe, this lifeline will atrophy, leading to inevitable decline in the quality of business education and research.

—Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International ([AACSB 2003](#), 10)

INTRODUCTION

Practitioners and academics have expressed concern that the shortage of academically qualified (AQ) accounting and auditing faculty may have serious implications for the education of

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We thank Dorsey Baskin (co-editor), Jeff Cohen, Joe Hair, Rich Houston (co-editor), David Hyatt, Neal Mero, Divesh Sharma, Doyle Williams, and an anonymous reviewer for very helpful comments on the paper.

*Submitted: July 2011
Accepted: December 2011
Published Online: December 2011*

future accountants and the supply of talent to the accounting and auditing profession (e.g., [ACAP 2008](#)).¹ The faculty shortage is particularly acute in the auditing and tax areas ([Plumlee et al. 2006](#)). The shortage has been attributed to a combination of factors, including a shortage of accounting doctoral students, a projected increase in retiring faculty, increased demand for Master's in Business Administration (M.B.A.) programs, and increased accounting undergraduate enrollment ([Plumlee et al. 2006](#); [Leslie 2008](#); [Reigle 2009](#)). Despite extensive attention, the number of new accounting doctorates continues to decline ([Behn et al. 2008](#)), and practitioners cite the Ph.D. as a significant hurdle to pursuing an academic career ([Boyle et al. 2011](#)).

Recommendations to address the faculty shortage include expanding the supply of AACSB-accredited professional or executive doctoral programs ([AACSB 2003](#); [Trapnell et al. 2009](#)), programs that are more flexible than traditional Ph.D. programs and that may be completed while the student is still employed elsewhere. Such programs may be of particular appeal to experienced practitioners who are seeking to become AQ faculty at universities that are not top-tier research institutions (see [Hunt et al. 2009](#)).

The purpose of this paper is to provide information about more flexible, emerging doctoral education alternatives based on the experiences of three current or former non-traditional doctoral students and one Doctorate of Business Administration (D.B.A.) faculty member. We believe that our experiences and insights will be useful to two key groups. First, current practitioners and executives who are considering a transition to an academic career may benefit from the students' perspectives, including factors that led to the decision to pursue a non-traditional doctorate and experiences during the program. Second, faculty who are considering the development of such programs, or are seeking to hire graduates of such programs, may find the information about the nature of these programs, including their benefits and challenges, to be helpful. The next section provides background information, followed by the four coauthors' personal reflections and concluding comments.

BACKGROUND ON NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

In recent years, many parties have attempted to address the faculty shortage in accounting. Such efforts include attracting practitioners into Ph.D. programs, increasing funding for doctoral study, addressing the acute shortage of auditing and tax faculty (e.g., [ADS 2010](#)), attracting practitioners into professionally qualified (PQ) faculty roles (e.g., [AACSB 2010a](#)), and attracting doctoral faculty from non-business disciplines into faculty positions in business ([AACSB 2010b](#)).² Beyond such actions, recommendations also include expanding the supply of professional or executive doctoral programs ([AACSB 2003](#); [Trapnell et al. 2009](#)).³ Executives inclined to transition

¹ As defined on the AACSB website (<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/glossary.asp>), "A faculty member is academically qualified by virtue of formal educational background [i.e., doctorate from an AACSB-accredited institution] and continued intellectual contributions [i.e., publications]."

² As defined on the AACSB website (<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/glossary.asp>), "A faculty member is professionally qualified by virtue of academic preparation (normally at the master's level) and significant professional experience relevant to the teaching assignment." PQ faculty may be in part-time, adjunct faculty roles, or in full-time lecturer positions. In most AACSB-accredited institutions, PQ status is not adequate for pursuing a tenure-track faculty position, in part because AACSB accreditation guidelines focus on the percentage of teaching done by AQ faculty. Thus, the key issue for many schools is attracting AQ faculty.

³ For additional insight into Ph.D./D.B.A. differences, see <http://www.bestbizschools.com/doctorate/differences.asp>

into a second career in academia may find the features of such programs accommodating, including being practice oriented, part time, shorter than traditional programs, and lacking the requirement to leave current employment.⁴

In the U.S., AACSB-accredited alternative doctoral programs are emerging under two primary paradigms—the executive doctorate and the Doctor of Business Administration. Executive doctorates, designed as an extension of the M.B.A. to enhance top executives' research and problem-solving skills, are offered at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Pace University in New York, and Georgia State University in Atlanta. The academic research orientation of D.B.A. programs, such as the program at Kennesaw State University, prepares students for either careers in academia or expanded organizational roles. Below, we summarize four AACSB-accredited programs that are among the few new (Kennesaw State and Georgia State) and established (Case Western and Pace) programs in this emerging category (see Table 1 for a summary; we encourage interested readers to consult each program's website for the most current information about the program).⁵

Case Western Reserve University

Case Western's Doctor of Management (D.M.) program has been offered since 1995. With total tuition (for the entire three-year program) of \$150,000, this program is the most expensive of the four programs.⁶ The three-year lockstep program is designed for leaders with at least 15 years of work experience and a graduate or professional degree who can attend monthly residencies and commit at least 30 hours per week. The program is primarily intended to prepare practicing executives to solve broad business issues, and secondarily to obtain appointments at teaching-based universities. A review of their graduates' profiles over the 14-year history (<http://weatherhead.case.edu/degrees/doctor-management/alumni>) indicates that approximately one-third of the 156 total graduates are listed as being in academia, and they are evenly divided between those in administration and those in the classroom, including three graduates listed as accounting professors.

Georgia State University

The three-year Executive Doctorate in Business (E.D.B.) program at Georgia State University was established in 2009 for full-time executives. The \$103,000 program is similar to that of Case

⁴ As discussed in more detail below, such programs may have a research orientation that is somewhat different from traditional Ph.D. programs (e.g., possibly more focused on practice-oriented research, or possibly somewhat less focused on advanced econometric techniques).

⁵ We highlight these four programs, as they reflect a mix of newer and older programs, and we are most familiar with these programs. We encourage interested readers to consider other institutions that may offer similar programs. One useful resource is http://www.bestbizschools.com/doctorate/professional_doctorate_degrees.asp, which provides links to a number of additional D.B.A. and executive doctorate programs (e.g., Cleveland State University, Louisiana Tech University, and Oklahoma State University).

⁶ Financial support for students entering non-traditional programs typically is very limited. For example, we are aware of only a small number of scholarship opportunities, and it is possible that an employer might cover part of the cost (e.g., if a lecturer were pursuing a D.B.A. and had committed to teach at his/her present school after earning the degree).

TABLE 1
Characteristics of Selected Non-Traditional Doctoral Programs

University	Degree	Year Began	Location	Approx. Total Tuition	Primary Concentrations	Number of Years	Meeting Schedule
Case Western Reserve University ^a	D.M.—Doctor of Management (previously E.D.M.)	1995	Cleveland, OH	\$150,000	Management	3	4 on-site residencies and 2 auxiliary sessions each semester; 2 summer research residencies
Georgia State University ^b	E.D.B.—Executive Doctorate in Business	2009	Atlanta, GA	\$103,000	Management	3	24 days per year in 3-day weekends
Kennesaw State University ^c	D.B.A.—Doctor of Business Administration	2009	Kennesaw, GA	\$90,000	Accounting Management Marketing	3	2- to 4-day weekend each month (10 months per year)
Pace University ^d	D.P.S.—Doctor of Professional Studies in Business	1972	New York, NY	\$60,000	Finance International Business International Economics Management Marketing (select 2)	4	1 Friday per month and 1 night class per week for first 3 years

^a <http://weatherhead.case.edu/degrees/doctor-management/>

^b <http://robinson.gsu.edu/execdctorate/>

^c <http://coles.kennesaw.edu/dba/>

^d <http://www.pace.edu/lubin/lubin-academic-programs/executive-education/executive-doctoral-program/>

Western, and requires participants to be on campus for a long weekend each month. The focus is on applying research methods to real-world business problems. Of the 58 student profiles in the first three years of the program, five indicate an affiliation with academia and three of those are in accounting. Four other students currently work in industry accounting (<http://robinson.gsu.edu/execdoctorate/index.html>). Thus, the employment information appears to match the program's working professional target.

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw State's three-year Doctor in Business Administration was launched in 2009 and is primarily designed to prepare graduates to assume tenure-track faculty positions at AACSB-accredited universities, although some students are focused on consulting or other areas of business. Primary concentrations are in Accounting, Management, and Marketing (with certain sub-areas [i.e., business ethics, international business, family business, information systems, and sales]). Applicants are required to have 10 years of experience; the first two cohorts had an average of 23 years of experience. The \$90,000 program requires monthly residencies during long weekends (10 months per year). The 56 students in the first three cohorts reflect the focus on academic careers. Forty-four of the first 56 students list full-time or part-time academic employment. Thirteen of the 56 students are in accounting, 12 of whom entered the program in order to obtain tenure-track positions. At the time they enrolled, seven were full-time lecturers and five others had adjunct experience.⁷

Pace University

With total tuition of nearly \$60,000, Pace's Doctor of Professional Studies (D.P.S.) program is the least expensive, but the meeting schedule effectively limits potential students to those in the New York area, since it requires one night class per week and one Friday class per month. Founded in 1972, Pace offered the first U.S. executive doctorate and has 164 D.P.S. graduates, currently with 13 to 18 students enrolled per year (<http://www.pace.edu/lubin/lubin-academic-programs/executive-education/executive-doctoral-program/>). Approximately 35 percent of the program's graduates pursue academic careers (<http://www.pace.edu/lubin/lubin-academic-programs/executive-education/executive-doctoral-program/successful-participants/successful-academics/>). Based on the Hasselback (2009–2010) directory, four graduates serve as accounting faculty at regional universities.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Various authors have provided insight into the nature of traditional Ph.D. programs (Meyer and Titard 2000; Mangan 2006; Myers 2006; Bergner 2009). We provide information on emerging non-traditional programs based on the experiences of four individuals with first-hand knowledge:

⁷ See <http://coles.kennesaw.edu/graduate/dba/information-sessions.htm> for profiles of the students in the first two cohorts. Information on the first three cohorts was obtained from Kennesaw State University D.B.A. personnel and discussions with D.B.A. students.

the coursework student, the student who has completed all but dissertation (ABD), the Doctor of Management graduate (now a professor), and the D.B.A. faculty member.

The Coursework Student (Coauthor #1)

In 2006, a perfect storm led me to my first adjunct teaching job. I had pursued a very satisfying career in auditing at a public accounting firm and later in management accounting at an agricultural consulting firm, spending almost 30 years in practice. Then, three things happened: my youngest child decided to finish high school at an out-of-state school, I read an article about CPAs transitioning into academia (Myers 2006), and I saw an ad asking businesspeople to consider teaching a class as an adjunct at a local university. One email and a phone call later, I began teaching two night classes per semester. One year later, a chance encounter with a friend led to a full-time job as an instructor at another nearby university.

As a full-time instructor I loved my newfound challenge—making a difference in my students' lives in the classroom, in the curriculum, and in connecting them with practitioners. At first, I fended off colleagues' inquiries about obtaining a doctorate with a laugh, and then with a description of the impracticality of it all. However, as I learned more about AQ and PQ status, I realized that academia has certain unique barriers that my CPA credentials, professional experience, and hard work would never overcome.

Why did I ultimately decide to embark on a costly, time-consuming endeavor at a time in my career when others are focused on retirement? I think the answer partially lies with my competitive Type A personality and partially in the circumstances. As much as I was accepted and valued by the business school at my institution, I frequently felt segregated by some factions within the rest of the university into an unfamiliar caste system that valued employees based on degrees held rather than job performance. I was not prepared to be relegated to second-class citizen status. After exhaustive Internet searches for a doctoral program at an AACSB-accredited university that did not require full-time residence, my dean told me about a new program at Kennesaw State University that appeared to fit my circumstances perfectly. After on-campus visits convinced me of the program's leadership and vision, I began the application process and the transformation from practitioner to academic.

The major factor that led me to choose a non-traditional program was the fact that I could continue my current job while obtaining a degree. The cost of the program is considerably more than a traditional program, but by keeping my current job I am better able to afford it. Before deciding to commit, I performed a cost-benefit analysis, which indicated that the expected payback on my investment was likely to be just a few years.

I chose the program specifically because the doctorate is granted by an AACSB-accredited institution and because it offers a concentration in accounting. I knew that AACSB accreditation was an essential element in fulfilling my goal of being academically qualified. The accounting concentration was important because I knew that having faculty support would enrich the classroom learning environment and my future research stream. As a side benefit, the seven members of my cohort in the accounting concentration have become a part of a support team that will undoubtedly extend past the program experience.

The course work is delivered through a combination of two-, three-, and four-day on-campus weekend residencies. The preparation for the residencies includes reading and summarizing numerous journal articles, researching and writing five- to 20-page research proposals, and learning quantitative research methods. We were correctly advised that it would consume every waking minute.

After over a year, I could not be happier with how things turned out. To be sure, there have been challenges. The grueling application process included an impromptu classroom presentation of a unique idea, an interview to make sure that you knew what you were getting into and were likely to stay the course, and a make-or-break research proposal showcasing your new idea and research skills.⁸

The monthly class sessions are led by a number of visiting scholars who bring a range of expertise you are unlikely to find in a single university, and a group of in-house faculty who direct our progress and are dedicated to the task of making the program work. The diversity of our instructors' backgrounds provides richness to the program. Our monthly cohort meetings provide a fast-paced, challenging, yet caring environment imparting broad-based knowledge that inevitably finds its way into my classroom lectures.

In the midst of the pressure cooker of academic papers, regression coefficients, and stacks of reading, my mind is beginning to think about things in a new way—a scientific, theory-driven, analytic way—that I never would have thought possible. Surprisingly, although I entered the program to maximize my potential in the area of teaching, thinking that research was something I had to do in order to “check a box,” I have discovered that research is actually more fun than I could have ever imagined. I am finding answers to questions I previously did not know existed and explanations for behaviors that previously seemed irrational.

Fortunately, I am developing a research stream that interests me. Much of my work involves factors linked to financial statement fraud and the executives involved in committing such fraud. Having worked in both public accounting and industry, I am intrigued by the incentives that drive individuals to behave in ways that conflict with their ethical values. By researching related theories and evidence, I have learned about accounting, but also about how accounting interacts with psychology, organizational behavior, and corporate governance. As a result, I now see even everyday stories from CNN or *The Wall Street Journal* in a new light.

I continue to teach Auditing and Intermediate Accounting at a small regional AACSB-accredited university, and I also continue in my role as director of the M.B.A. program. I like the combination of research, teaching, advising, and administration. The research informs and supplements my classroom activities. The administrative role is a natural extension of my coordinating and directing activities in industry, and it is fulfilling because I am working to mold an entire program into a better experience for our students. Advising provides enjoyable interactions with students in an effort to impact their future. Recently, a student came to my office to talk about her future plans. We strategized and developed a plan for her. Before the student left my office, she was so overwhelmed that she said, “I think I might just cry.” This experience paints a picture of why I find a career in accounting education to be so fulfilling. For me, accounting practice cannot compete with the feeling that comes from helping students achieve their goals and knowing that I have made a difference in their lives.

⁸ This “Research Interest Overview” is a critical component of the application process, and not something typically required by traditional Ph.D. programs. As described on the Kennesaw State website (<http://coles.kennesaw.edu/graduate/dba/admission-process.htm>), “After completing the [research] workshop, you will prepare a 15–20 page Research Interest Overview (RIO). This overview is the most critical component of your application . . . We would like you to draw from your professional experiences to discuss a research question that has sparked your curiosity and that might be an appropriate topic for you to study as a D.B.A. student. This essay will enable the admissions committee and potential research supervisors to evaluate the types of problems that are of interest to you and how they might fit with the D.B.A. experience . . . The Admission Committee will review the Research Interest Overviews using a double-blind procedure.”

The ABD (Coauthor #2)

Over a 20-year career, I have served as CEO, president, COO, and CFO for start-up, middle-market, and Fortune 500 companies. I had never seriously considered a career in academia, primarily due to a lack of information concerning this career path and its benefits. While serving in a role that required me to live in an apartment away from my family during the week, I began to identify activities to keep me busy at night. One idea that rose to the top of my list of interests was teaching. At that time, I did not know what it took to become a professor or how an institution goes about hiring one, so I looked up the names of the deans/program directors at two local institutions and made some calls. Ultimately, I accepted adjunct M.B.A. teaching assignments at both institutions, while working full time as an executive.

After serious consideration, I decided that I wanted to make a career transition and pursue a tenure-track position. I learned that faculty who did not hold a doctoral degree made significantly less than their terminally degreed counterparts, had a more demanding teaching load, and typically did not have tenure opportunities in AACSB-accredited institutions. I concluded that I needed a doctorate if I were to realize the full benefits of an academic career.

As I began my journey, I was perplexed by the lack of information on how to make such a transition. I contacted a respected accounting professor and researcher who I had known while pursuing my undergraduate degree in accounting, and I asked for his advice. I also spoke with the dean from the same institution. Both of these individuals proved to be outstanding mentors and invaluable resources.

After these meetings and subsequently conducting some additional research, I had a clear set of goals to accomplish. I first needed to be completely open to following the protocol of the academic world. I needed to be humble and build relationships that would prove to be a key to success. In some ways it was like starting over, but my executive experiences enabled me to navigate both the technical and political aspects of this system.

Second, I needed to learn more about the academic environment and teaching. To facilitate this process, I attended the AACSB Bridge Program and was pleased to find that there were many other professionals who wanted to make this same career transition.⁹ I learned about how the academic world operates administratively and obtained specific classroom management and teaching skills. This program made me a better academic and teacher.

My third goal was to find, be admitted into, and complete an AACSB-accredited doctoral program with a concentration in accounting. This program also needed to allow me to continue to serve as an executive to fund this transition due to family and financial commitments. I also had an interest to be in a program with other executives of a similar age and background. Finding such a program was very challenging. After extensive research and frustration, I was able to identify the four programs described in the section above.

I was surprised that there were not more flexible programs, given the shortage of accounting faculty in the U.S. and the high level of interest in teaching full time by my classmates in the AACSB Bridge Program. One of the instructors at the AACSB Program was pivotal in my discovering a new D.B.A. program that he was directing at Kennesaw State University. I was pleased to discover that it is AACSB accredited as a business school and accounting program. In addition, the program had a

⁹ According to the AACSB website (<http://www.aacsb.edu/bridge/default.asp>), "The AACSB Bridge Program was created to provide a clear path for business leaders to move from the corporate office into the classroom. The program is open to senior-level business professionals of all industries and disciplines that meet the initial requirements for professionally qualified status (PQ) at AACSB-accredited schools. Since its inception in 2006, hundreds of executives have successfully completed this intensive five-day program."

research focus, included an accounting concentration, and was flexible. Interest in the program from other executives was high, and the application process was very rigorous and competitive. I was pleased to be accepted into the first cohort of the program.

When I began my doctoral studies, I was convinced that I was doing so primarily to meet the terminal degree requirement for a tenure-track position and was not overly excited about doing academic research, as my love was for teaching. I also was skeptical as to what I would learn in a doctoral accounting program at this advanced stage of my career. After reading, analyzing, and discussing thousands of pages of academic literature and learning numerous theories, it became apparent that the academic process of defining a construct and developing theory-based hypotheses was critically important to business and the advancement of knowledge. I found myself saying, "I wish I had this knowledge when I was an executive because I would have made better decisions." With this exposure to research, I concluded that the dissemination of what has been learned from academic research would add significant value to practice. I also found that I began to actually enjoy working on research, even more so than teaching. Was it possible that I was becoming an academic? I now find myself still loving to teach, but also having a deep respect for research. I often spend full days engulfed in a research project that I need to be pulled away from because I would otherwise not leave my desk.

About 16 months into the program, I became completely convinced that being an academic was the best job in the world for me. My dissertation chair, committee, and faculty have had a significant impact on my life and career. They are world-class researchers who understand practice, and how executives think and operate. They ensure that the program is challenging and rigorous so as to prepare me to produce high-quality academic research. They have changed the manner in which I think and have shown respect for the professional backgrounds of my classmates. I believe that one of the most critical keys to success for a doctoral candidate is to select the right dissertation chair and build relationships with others in the program. I am not sure if I was lucky, smart, or both, but I could not have selected a more respected, accomplished, proficient, and professional dissertation chair. I owe him a great deal of gratitude.

My last goal in this transition was to adjust my lifestyle to be in line with my new career, which would provide a significantly lower, but quite comfortable level of compensation than I had earned as an executive. Surprisingly, this objective was not as difficult to achieve as I had anticipated. An accounting professor's starting salary is much higher than I had thought, and there are opportunities to earn additional compensation. I have found that the opportunity costs of not serving as an executive are far outweighed by the satisfaction I receive in the classroom and in performing research. I now have much more time to spend with my kids and to pursue the things in life that are most important to me. Now that I am ABD, I have secured a tenure-track position with much higher compensation than I earned as a PQ faculty member. I also am able to continue to serve on the Board of Directors of a public healthcare company and a not-for-profit healthcare system.

I still am able to feed my competitive drive and have been able to achieve many satisfying accomplishments during my doctoral program. I have received an award for teacher of the year, had several articles accepted for publication, and received research grants from The Institute of Internal Auditors and The Institute of Management Accountants. I am absolutely thrilled with my decision to pursue an academic career.

The D.M. Graduate, Now a Tenured Associate Professor (Coauthor #3)

I spent 28 years in the accounting field before embarking on a career in academia. I very much enjoyed this first career, most of which was spent with a Big 4 public accounting firm, including 10

years as an audit partner. However, for many years I had plans for a second career in academia; it was just a matter of timing.

I knew that I could not secure a full-time position as a college accounting instructor without a master's degree. So, a few years prior to my earliest planned exit date from practice, I enrolled in an executive M.B.A. program. While in the M.B.A. program, I was wrestling with whether I should stay longer in practice (to become more financially secure) and teach at the college level as a PQ instructor upon retirement, or whether I should pursue a doctorate. The decision to pursue the doctorate was more of an emotional one than a financial one. If I stayed longer in practice, I would be more financially secure. On the other hand, if I did not obtain a doctorate, I knew my ability to fully experience an academic career would be limited.

Before making the decision to pursue a doctorate, I sent emails to a few chairs of accounting departments at colleges and universities that were advertising for full-time accounting professors. In the email, I outlined that I was a Big 4 partner and that I was considering pursuing an alternative doctoral program, without naming names of the doctoral programs I was considering. I then asked, hypothetically, whether I would be considered for a professor position, like the one advertised, after earning a doctorate. As I recollect, most said "no," indicating that their hiring profile consisted of graduates of traditional Ph.D. programs.¹⁰

I had thought that my accomplishments in practice, coupled with an alternative doctorate, would put me in an enviable position to begin my career in academia. Testing whether what I was planning would work was a wake-up call to be careful about how I was proceeding with my plans. I began to realize that, upon graduation, not every school would be interested in me and that it would be very important to figure out what schools would be a good match. In addition, I decided to make sure that whatever non-traditional doctoral program I entered, it needed to have the possibility of being well respected in the academic marketplace. Those criteria eliminated from consideration any doctoral program at a non-AACSB-accredited school.

In a casual conversation during my executive M.B.A. program, knowing that I was contemplating a doctorate, a professor recommended that I take a look at what Case Western was offering. It looked as if their Executive Doctor of Management (presently conferred as Doctor of Management) program would suit my needs. An on-campus interview plus discussions with graduates of the program confirmed my initial impressions.

Over the next three years, I attended on-campus residencies every three weeks and in between completed my doctoral assignments as scheduled. It was a rigorous program that always challenged my way of thinking and writing. While particularly tough at times, I thoroughly enjoyed the program. The cohort delivery style helps students complete the program, as classmates provided each other with moral support, which often was much needed to keep our respective convictions to make it through.

I mentioned earlier being humbled by the feedback that I received during my hypothetical faculty search. Similar humbling experiences happened to me during the doctoral program, from the rejection of papers submitted (including a professor's comment in the margin, "you are ruthlessly too concise") to all-out rejection of summer work intended to define and design a

¹⁰ See Coauthor #4's discussion below of the likely marketability of the D.B.A. degree from an AACSB-accredited institution. It appears that D.B.A. graduates will be focused more on seeking employment at AACSB-accredited regional universities, rather than the primarily top-tier research institutions contacted by Coauthor #3. We believe that market receptivity to the D.B.A. will increase further as program graduates prove to be capable researchers and instructors.

second-year research project (this time, “you need to start over, what you came up with will not work”). While painful at first, I learned that the professors were exactly right, and I believe that my academic work clearly improved throughout the program.

I place some emphasis on saying “academic work” in that those who are considering a transition into academia must let go in some ways of what has brought them success in practice (e.g., in written communication, being concise and to the point is generally a positive attribute in practice), and instead listen to and embrace the advice from doctoral faculty on what is required to do doctoral-level research. In hindsight, I underestimated how much listening, learning, and improvement would be required on my part to meet even a minimum standard for earning the degree. To give the reader a sense of how much pressure I felt the closer I got to having my dissertation approved, when my primary doctoral committee advisor told me, via phone, that I was “all set,” that I could proceed with getting the dissertation wrapped up in final form, I literally laid down, feeling all the pent-up energy draining from my body. And this from a former audit partner who signed opinions for publicly held companies.

Having earned the doctorate, I was able to secure a permanent faculty position, one that required a doctorate from an AACSB-accredited institution. I have thoroughly enjoyed this second career, and I am now entering my tenth academic year (counting the three years as a PQ temporary faculty member while pursuing the doctorate). I find it extremely rewarding to seemingly make an impact on students’ lives (one really never knows for sure) by helping them to learn and advising them on career choices. Working with fellow faculty members on research projects and committees is much better than I had ever imagined. In addition, interacting with the business community, in the role of professor rather than as a practitioner, also is very enjoyable.

In summary, my advice to others considering such a transition is as follows:

1. Spend time thinking about how important it is for you to earn a doctorate. I think that it needs to be an emotional decision, in that it is something you desire from a “you only live once” point of view. It also needs to feel right in your gut, as opposed to merely resulting from a calculation that the cost of a doctoral program pays for itself when considering the incremental compensation for an AQ professor.
2. Teach on an adjunct basis at a local university to see whether teaching is rewarding to you. It will remind you that it is not the same as being an instructor in training programs in a corporate setting.
3. Make sure that the doctoral program is offered by an AACSB-accredited institution, and consider whether it fits your needs from a personal standpoint (i.e., time and logistics).
4. Upon entering a doctoral program, leave your ego at the door; become a student again, and listen to your professors.
5. While in the doctoral program, have your sights on where you want to teach, and establish relationships with those institutions before you graduate.
6. Congratulate yourself from time to time for having the courage to pursue your dreams.

The D.B.A. Faculty Member (Coauthor #4)

I have been actively involved with our non-traditional D.B.A. program for over three years, including the initial course development efforts. My expectations going into the program were very unclear in terms of student quality, program quality, and marketability of the degree. While I was acutely aware of the shortage of AQ faculty in accounting and auditing, it was not clear to me how

well our newly developed and still emerging D.B.A. program would be able to prepare people for careers as AQ faculty. Three-plus years in, my initial concerns have been resolved, and I am very pleased with our progress. The students are excellent, the program is sound, and the initial market tests of the Kennesaw State D.B.A. degree in accounting have been encouraging (of course, the job search process is likely to be easier if the D.B.A. student already has some type of relationship with the target university). I think that we are doing a very good job of preparing AQ faculty for positions, primarily at AACSB-accredited regional universities.¹¹

To provide some context for my reflections, I will first describe the program's structure. First, student demand for the program has been extremely high, and the D.B.A. students go through an intensive screening process before admission. As discussed previously, one of the key elements of the process is the submission of a research proposal, which is blind-reviewed by members of the D.B.A. accounting faculty. We primarily look for clarity of thought, intellectual curiosity, and the ability to motivate and articulate a research question, but not for a detailed discussion of precisely how the research question would be addressed.¹² I am frequently amazed that I am reading high-quality proposals written by people with little or no research training. With the size of the program carefully managed (to ensure quality), and the student demand high, competition for spots in the program is intense (i.e., 15–20 percent acceptance rate for the D.B.A.).

Second, once in the program, the students across all business disciplines (primarily accounting, management, and marketing) stay together through much of the first year of the program, as they learn key business theories and statistical methods. I believe that this approach provides the students with a very useful breadth of exposure to business research, as well as the opportunity to collaborate across disciplines.

Third, as the students transition into their specific disciplines and research seminars, they coordinate their course choices with their expected area of research focus. We have a “macro” focus for those most interested in organization-level research and a “micro” focus for those focused mainly on individual-level or small-group-level research. So far, most of the accounting students have taken the micro track, with its focus on behavioral research in auditing (where the faculty shortage is acute) and corporate governance. However, with the addition of some new accounting faculty who conduct financial accounting research, I expect more students to pursue financial accounting and archival research (e.g., research using existing databases of company financial information or stock prices) in the future. Of course, this will require quite intensive econometrics training that the behaviorally focused students to date have not pursued. We have access to the key databases used in financial accounting research, but the limitation on pursuing financial accounting research up to now has been our faculty mix.

¹¹ Some may ask whether a three-year, part-time program should be recognized the same way that a four- to five-year, full-time traditional Ph.D. program is recognized. Perspectives on this issue likely will vary widely. I offer three observations related to this issue: (1) the 15–25 years of professional experience that non-traditional doctoral students have provides them with a huge advantage in identifying relevant research questions and in accessing certain types of data, (2) the dissertations and proposals I have seen so far (primarily behavioral work) are consistent with the quality that I saw in my traditional Ph.D. program, and (3) I do not foresee many non-traditional doctoral program graduates targeting top-tier research institutions for employment. Rather, I believe that institutions with a more balanced focus on research and teaching will be more consistent with the interests and backgrounds of most program graduates.

¹² Thus, the purpose of this proposal is to evaluate candidates' ability to identify and frame an important and interesting research question. The D.B.A. program will further develop these skills, in addition to providing in-depth training in research methods.

Finally, the dissertation can be a two-paper model, and each dissertation committee has two primary members and a third reader at the end of the process. The dissertation proposal defense is a public presentation, followed by a traditional workshop session for questions and answers. The dissertation committee can include Kennesaw State D.B.A. faculty, as well as “Global Scholars” from other institutions. When thinking about second members of committees that I am chairing, I often reach out to a close colleague (coauthor) at another university whose research expertise fits nicely with each student’s interests. It has been rewarding to see new coauthor relationships develop as the students are in the program.

My greatest takeaway from the last three-plus years is that the quality of the students far exceeds what I expected, on several dimensions. First, because the students have significant work experience, they possess tremendous business expertise. Thus, they have many relevant, timely potential research questions in mind from day one of the program. My sense is that the D.B.A. students often have the research questions first, and we teach them how to better formulate and address the questions. By contrast, my own experience as a traditional Ph.D. student was the reverse of this. I learned the research skills first and then (because I had only three years of practice experience) I had to figure out what to do with those new skills. Coming up with the questions was the hard part for me, at least initially.

Second, the transition from practitioner thinking (every setting is unique) to academic thinking (theory and patterns can explain a lot of commonality across settings) takes place very quickly. The students clearly begin to see the world differently after being exposed to the major theories underlying business research (e.g., agency theory, institutional theory). Frankly, the students’ mastery of theory and their appreciation of the use of different theories across areas of business often exceed my own understanding. I am learning new theories from my students, and I am learning about differences in research styles and approaches across business disciplines. Once the students’ academic thinking takes root, I find that the students quickly develop a portfolio of research projects. They are curious and want to explore. I find that I am sometimes encouraging the students to keep the number of projects manageable, and to get some projects completed before starting more. I work with many of the students to publish papers during the program, often starting with practitioner-focused articles while academic projects are being developed.

Third, I believe that perhaps the greatest determinant of success in an academic career is project management skills, specifically the ability to get work done in an unstructured environment. I have seen brilliant people publish very little and great project managers develop into prolific researchers. To date, I have found the D.B.A. students to be outstanding project managers, which is not surprising given their significant professional backgrounds. I hear students discussing timelines to get to the dissertation proposal defense, plans of attack to move papers to journal submission stage, etc. In short, the group is very focused and organized.

Finally, I have had several conversations with our D.B.A. students about “competitive advantage”—what do they bring to the table that can be leveraged into research projects that other people simply do not have? My overall message to the students is that they need to think about ways to use their knowledge, relationships, etc. to create a unique stream of research. For example, many of our students have significant high-level contacts in accounting firms, investment firms, professional organizations, and even boardrooms. These relationships can be extremely useful if one is pursuing interview-based or experimental research in auditing or corporate governance. The first two D.B.A. students I worked with both were able to leverage their professional relationships into robust support for a variety of interview-based or experimental research projects. A traditional Ph.D. student is very unlikely to have such relationships, and the

traditional Ph.D. student is quite likely to focus on financial accounting research using publicly available databases.

For accounting faculty and institutions considering the development of a non-traditional doctoral program, I believe that such programs offer a host of potential benefits:

- **Faculty benefits**—Potential benefits include experienced and talented students to work with, the opportunity to mentor new academics, significant potential for collaboration on research projects (e.g., I typically have multiple papers with each of my students, and I strive to include my D.B.A. students in some projects with my off-campus co-authors), enhanced access to companies and organizations through D.B.A. students, and extra compensation (the Kennesaw State program uses an overload model, with extra compensation for all D.B.A. work, including dissertation committee service).
- **Institutional benefits**—Potential benefits include moving the school into the doctoral education arena (for those without a traditional Ph.D. program in accounting), generating resources for research across the business school, promoting the research culture of the business school, enhancing the reputation of the institution, and helping to mitigate the AQ accounting faculty shortage.

Of course, such programs also can bring challenges for faculty and the institution:

- **Faculty challenges**—Primary challenges for faculty can include the weekend residencies (on top of regular weekday responsibilities); managing the demands involved in providing high-quality mentoring to talented, driven, executive-level students; and navigating differences in research “style” across business disciplines (e.g., in a core D.B.A. course, the advice of a marketing or management faculty member may not be consistent with current practice in accounting research, and vice versa). In my view, the key to addressing these challenges is to involve faculty in the program who are flexible, responsive, and collegial, in addition to being strong researchers.
- **Institutional challenges**—Challenges for the institution may involve three issues: (1) managing a complex graduate program that cuts across academic departments, especially when the program uses an overload model; (2) balancing the incentives for having a large program (more financial resources, potential for large program profits) versus a small program (easier to ensure high program quality); and (3) garnering consistent support from university administration (e.g., dean and provost) as the program evolves and makes changes to best meet the needs of students, faculty, and the academic marketplace. Addressing these challenges requires: (1) a strong program leader who is very receptive to faculty input and can attract faculty into serving in the program; (2) a clear, well-accepted mission for the program regarding its size and focus; and (3) ongoing top administration buy-in and support. Overall, I believe that meeting such institutional challenges is much easier in an environment like Kennesaw State’s, where the culture is very entrepreneurial, the level of bureaucracy is low, and there is not a traditional Ph.D. program in business.

Ultimately, I believe that non-traditional doctoral programs can increasingly help to address the shortage of AQ faculty in accounting and auditing. Such programs are not likely to provide a flow of new faculty to top-tier research universities, where the focus is more likely to be on financial accounting research published in the top three journals, and where new faculty recruits typically come from other top-tier research universities. However, I believe that these programs can become increasingly important sources of AQ faculty for other institutions, which comprise the vast majority of U.S. universities. I believe that graduates of non-traditional programs will be very

effective teachers, will perform timely and relevant research targeted to quality journals, and will contribute through meaningful service efforts.

CONCLUSION

As the accounting and auditing faculty shortage continues, a new, more flexible model for doctoral education is emerging. We provide information on selected AACSB-accredited schools offering such programs, and we offer personal insights into such programs. While the observations in this article primarily relate to research issues, it also appears to us that participants in non-traditional doctoral programs realize a host of teaching-related benefits as well. The process of presenting research ideas, learning the accounting research literature, and engaging in scientific thinking and analysis all should serve to enhance candidates' instructional effectiveness, even if the program does not offer specific training in classroom teaching.

We hope that the insights will be useful to current practitioners considering academic careers, as well as to faculty interested in developing, or hiring from, such non-traditional programs. Ultimately, we hope to see more schools launch such programs, as the need for accounting faculty is great and the interest level in the existing programs appears to be quite robust. In addition, we encourage additional research on the causes of and solutions to the AQ faculty shortage in accounting. This paper examines the supply side of the issue (how to develop more AQ accounting faculty). Other work may examine the demand side, including the costs and benefits of AACSB accreditation standards that mandate certain levels of AQ faculty delivery of the program. While beyond the scope of this article, there appears to be room for a healthy discussion of the effects of AACSB accreditation standards on the delivery of accounting education.

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