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## Education

### It's time to take a scalpel to the business school

In this week's Thought Leadership, University of Indianapolis School of Business Dean Dr. Karl Knapp says business schools need more faculty with real-world business experience.

Business schools need to change—and if you ask me, it's time for a major makeover to keep Indiana's employers and economy humming. Though perhaps a better word for the needed change I'm prescribing is surgery—as we should take our cue from the structure of medical schools.

Imagine attending a medical school where the professors, with their doctorate degrees, had never treated a patient. It seems alarming as well as comical, but this is the reality for most university business schools, where students learn from professors with little real-world experience. Technical knowledge is not sufficient to result in student success.

I'm not the first to notice the disconnect. The Harvard Business Review first brought attention to this gap in 2005. I spent 18 years in various industries before becoming an educator more than 20 years ago. My background in business gave me a vital perspective and understanding—and it's something that I can give to my students with every class I teach. It's also something I look for when hiring faculty at the UIndy School of Business, where the average professor has 14 years of experience in their field.

Let's revisit the medical school model. Professors treat actual patients with students monitoring their every move. Professors stay current in their field and actively shape the future of best practice. Faculty research is relevant and advances the field, too. It is a powerful combination—fusing the practical with the theoretical.

Many business schools have recognized the gap, but that's not enough. Merely hiring experienced professionals to teach alongside traditional research faculty is like putting a bandage on the problem without treating the disease. To adopt the medical school model, business schools need experienced faculty who also have doctoral degrees. Doctorates

provide the foundation for research. Faculty members must be able to both teach and conduct research that advances the field in areas that are relevant to today's organizations.

Just like the medical school model, it is essential that business students get experience working alongside faculty on real 'patients'—the businesses themselves. While simulations and case studies are important tools of experiential learning in foundational classes, as students develop employable skills, they must be given opportunities to apply those skills in the real world. More than just case studies and internships, students learn best when they're solving genuine business problems—again, with experienced faculty alongside, just like medical students who see real patients alongside their professors.

I say with confidence that this model at the University of Indianapolis is the most impactful learning that

students experience. Plus, it has the added benefit of sharpening the skills of professors by keeping them engaged with current organizational problems.

Experiential learning is all the more vital because

the essential technical skills students learn in business school today are likely not going to be enough for long-term career success. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person changes jobs 12 times and has at least three different careers. Lasting success requires a base of skills that are applicable across industries and professions. It requires developing a truly educated workforce.

An educated person isn't someone who knows technical things—an educated person is someone who knows how to think. This requires a broad interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on developing critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. It's the very



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Dr. Karl Knapp serves as the Dean of The University of Indianapolis School of Business. Knapp has 17 years of industry experience managing in the areas of information technology and strategic planning in both the financial services and high-tech manufacturing industries. He joined UIndy as a professor in 2006. Knapp has won teacher of the year honors four times at two different universities, including as UIndy's Teacher of the Year in 2010. Knapp has authored articles and book chapters on diverse subjects like supply chain management, outsourcing, information technology, organizational culture, enterprise resource planning systems, and the learning styles of midwestern college students.

definition of a liberal arts educational core. Teaching students to think creates the foundation for a lifetime of success. Students who think don't blindly follow the crowd. They evaluate information with a critical eye. Students who think consider ideas in their current and historical context. They make the best decisions in uncertain times. More than ever, Indiana's businesses need students who think as individual contributors and leaders.

So, let's bring out the proverbial scalpel to business schools so that

more Hoosiers can attend business schools that operate like medical schools. Indiana needs a workforce that is better educated, with the skills to excel in a first career as well as the base of knowledge to succeed for a lifetime. Business students deserve faculty who have a combination of practical experience and research capability that a doctoral degree provides. By doing so we create a more prosperous future and, pardon the pun, a healthier Indiana. ●

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