

IN SEARCH OF THE IDEAL MARKETING CURRICULUM: A MULTI-UNIVERSITY COMPARISON

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Over the years, business schools have continuously investigated the relevance of their programs to students and employers (Davis, Misra and Van Auken 2002; Finch, Nadeau and O'Reilly 2013; Koch 1997; Lamb, Schiff and Moncreif 1995; Lamont and Friedman 1997; Pharr and Morris 1997; Ursic and Hegstrom 1985). Universities subject to various accreditation requirements may be subject to "program reviews" every 5 years or so. This is an opportunity to go through a comprehensive update of all courses in the program. Due to the volume of classes, this activity can range from a major examination of content and topics to a perfunctory check, altering dates and one or two topics, e.g. updating the topics as it relates to technology.

Over the past decade, campuses in the California State University (CSU) system using the quarter-system have contemplated a shift to the semester system. In the past, this involved referenda providing each campus with the opportunity to decide on whether or not to convert to semesters. Five or so years ago, all campuses still on the quarter-system were mandated to convert to semesters. This set off a series of activities aimed at eventually implementing this change.

Colleges in the university are encouraged to see this as an opportunity to "revision" their programs. Resources are being provided to bring about this process with the anticipation that departments will use this opportunity to revamp their programs to conform to changes in the 21st century.

A vital first step to the process is to determine the direction in which the discipline is headed. What are the new developments in the field of marketing that practitioners are grappling with? What are necessary skills needed by students in order to compete for marketing jobs as they graduate? How do programs match up these skills with the courses in the curriculum?

Aggarwal, Vaidyanathan and Rochford (2007) examined the quality of undergraduate marketing students. They studied the SAT/ACT scores of incoming freshmen in Marketing, GMAT scores in comparison to other business majors, starting salaries of marketing versus other business majors and the undergraduate majors of CEOs in the S&P 500 firms. Their results were quite disheartening, resulting in recommendations for attracting better quality students to marketing.

Current curricula seem to conform to findings from Ursic and Hegstrom (1985). In surveying recruiters, alumni and students, this study looked at relative importance of marketing courses and prescribed not only required and elective courses, but also methods of teaching and skills and abilities that should be developed. So Lamb, Shipp and Moncrief (1995) went further into identifying skills lacking in marketing programs of the period and recommending teaching methods that would develop those skills.

When Gray, Peltier and Schibrowsky (2012) examined the *Journal of Marketing Education* issues from 1979 to 2012, they found that there was a total of 85 articles on "curriculum redesign content integration," "curriculum redesign method integration," and "curriculum redesign reviews" overall. So, the issue of curriculum remains important to the journal and its readers.

In examining the practitioners' perspective, Finch, Nadeau and O'Reilly (2013) compared the responses of an expert panel from the Canadian Marketing Association and the top 20

Table 1: Comparison between Marketing Programs from Aspirant Schools

Classes Using Titles in CSU Pomona	Arizona State University (120 units)	Indiana (120 units)	Wisconsin (120 units)	Washington (180 units)	Washington State (120 units)
Special Problems – Lower Division Marketing Students – 2 units	MKT 302	M344			
Marketing Analysis and Control		M346			
Buyer Behavior	MKT 402		Marketing 305	MKTG 450	MKTG 407
Marketing Research 1	MKT 352	M303	Marketing 310	MKTG 460	MKTG 368
International Marketing					
Marketing Problems (Capstone)		M450	Marketing 460		MKTG 495
Services Marketing Strategy or Business-to-Business Marketing Strategy or Competitive Marketing Strategy	MKT 442 or MKT 452 or MKT 462				
Principles of Marketing Management – Business core	MKT 300	BUS-M370	Marketing 300	MKTG 301	MKTG 360
Elective Units	9 units of electives – Choice of 12 courses	9 units of electives – Choice of 12 courses	9 units of electives – Choice of 13 courses	12 units of marketing electives – Choice of 16 courses	6 units of marketing electives – Choice of 14 courses

marketing programs in the US as well as 8 leading marketing programs in Canada. Their factor analysis results grouped items into 1) Knowledge Cluster: Strategic Marketing, 2) Knowledge Cluster: Communications, 3) Knowledge Cluster: Channel Management, and 4) Knowledge Cluster: Marketing Context. There was an additional section on “meta-skills.” This study is useful in that it identifies specific areas of improvement that can be incorporated into a revised marketing curriculum.

Table 2: Marketing Management Major (excluding Principles of Marketing) Semester Conversion Comparison with CSU Schools

Classes	Pomona* (180)	Fullerton (120)	Los Angeles* (180)	Long Beach (120)	San Diego (120)	SFO (120)
Special Probs.	IBM 200					
Mktg. Analysis & Control	IBM 320	MKT 353			MIS 301	
Marketing Research	IBM 408	MKT 379	MKT 446	MKT 470	MKT 470	MKT 632
Buyer Behavior	IBM 411	MKT 370	MKT 342	MKT 490	MKT 371	MKT 633
International Marketing	IBM 414					
Marketing Problems	IBM 421	MKT 489				
			High perf. Prof. skills			
			Mktg Management	MKT 494		MKT 649
Electives						
Tracks	22 units	6 units	12 units	9 units	18 units depending on specialization	12 units

*These programs are in the process of converting from quarters to semesters. Thus, they will be reducing their total units from 180 to 120.

In the interest of time and efficiency, our initial search consisted of the *Journal of Marketing Education*. We are still in the process of conducting the review of the literature.

This paper reports on our survey of Marketing programs among some aspirant schools from other parts of the country, as well as California State University schools. Table 1 shows comparison between our school and those of aspirant schools. These include Arizona State University, Indiana University, University of Wisconsin, University of Washington and Washington State University. The table shows that courses in common to all the schools include Principles of Marketing in the business core and Marketing Research. Buyer Behavior was in the core for all the universities except for Indiana and a capstone class was included for all except for Arizona State and University of Washington. Number of courses for the programs ranged from 6 in Washington State to 8 in Indiana, compared to our 11.

Table 2 shows how various schools in the CSU system compare with regards to their required courses for their program. We have chosen to simplify our comparison by focusing on just the required courses of the program, thus excluding Principles of Marketing because it is in the business core. We should note that Pomona and Los Angeles are both in the process of converting to the semester schedule and will be reducing their units to 120. The table shows that all the universities included in this comparison had both Marketing Research and Buyer

Behavior in the core. Only Pomona had International Marketing. Electives ranged from 2 classes in Fullerton to 10.5 classes in Pomona. Obviously, the number of classes and the mixture of core and electives are in the process of change in both Los Angeles and Pomona as it struggles to convert their schedules.

This study is a preliminary investigation of what existing marketing programs are like. As our university goes deeper into conversion, it is anticipated that classes will be redesigned, "revised" if you will, by taking into account current literature on curriculum development and feedback from alumni and advisory boards. The final structure of the curriculum will reflect changes that will enhance our students' chances in the job market as well as tie in to program assessment activities. This position paper is hoping to generate discussion among our peers regarding improvements in the program.

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