# The new corporate social responsibility: a call for sustainability in business education

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**Abstract:** Researchers have studied the role of social responsibility in organisations for decades. Despite this extensive work, the teaching of corporate social responsibility in the classroom across the business curriculum remains somewhat limited. In order for educators in business to catch up with corporations who are increasingly focusing on issues and stakeholders beyond the bottom line, there must be an increased and integrative focal point on sustainability. This paper makes a call an increased focus on sustainability across business disciplines and makes recommendations on how they can be implemented.

**Keywords:** sustainability; business education.

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## 1 Introduction

Business practice changes more rapidly, in general, than does the teaching of business (Schwartz, 1992). In this sense, the academy exerts a conservative influence on business, educating students to know and implement a well-researched and relatively stable set of principles for good practice. Business faculty refer collectively to this set of principles as the common body of knowledge. Curricula are designed to deliver the common body of knowledge and graduates are assessed to assure they have mastered this knowledge. Thus a contribution made by schools of business is to provide a considerable measure of consistency of attitude and behaviour among graduates. Society expects teachers to reflect and transmit the core values of a culture (Schwartz, 1992).

Alternatively, the academy can lead a societal transformation. The role of the academy to reflect and transmit core values may be of even greater importance when a society is undergoing change. In the recent past, a group of economists educated at the University of Chicago is credited with leading the dramatic transformation of the political economy of Chile (Mulligan, 2003). A current example of the transformative role of education is the high level of interest of the government of China in providing modern business education to its citizens (Monaghan, 2006).

In this paper, we compile evidence that sustainability has emerged as a principle and practice expected of and by the business community, and thus that business schools have an obligation to respond by incorporating sustainability into more aspects of our curricula. Business schools are targeted for this call to action because they are the training grounds for the people who will be making many of the decisions regarding corporate sustainability efforts. We offer suggestions for a cross-curricular integration of sustainability into business courses, encompassing not only the ‘soft side’ management courses but also the ‘hard edge’ quantitative courses in management, accounting and finance.

Students need to understand issues related to the long term and systemic impact of corporate actions in ways that go beyond the functionally-focused analysis which persists in business education. In making this call, we recognise that the promotion of corporate citizenship and sustainability are not universally accepted by scholars and the business community (Zadeck, 2001). It is argued that although there are still unresolved disputes in much of academia regarding the proposed subject matter, there is a pressing need to increase the coverage of sustainability in business education. In this paper the definitions of sustainability will be reviewed including present evidence that society and the business community posit sustainability as an expectation. The limited presence of sustainability in current business curricula will be covered as well as to identify opportunities for implementing sustainability more widely in business courses. Solutions will be proposed that will enable business faculty to address sustainability holistically across the curriculum.

## 2 Sustainability defined

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) described sustainability as an activity, particularly economic behaviour, that provides current goods without degrading the physical environment or, more generally, without diminishing the ability of future generations to survive and thrive. The concept of sustainability is an extension of earlier thoughts of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Bowen (1953) defines CSR as the obligation of business to pursue those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society. CSR is thus presented as an affirmative obligation, presuming an active contribution beyond mere economic contributions and legal compliance. More generally, CSR can be said to prescribe corporate citizenship behaviours for business firms.

A related but alternate version of the CSR acronym has been established to represent corporate sustainability reporting (Ballou et al., 2006). One of immediate concerns to business organisations is the survival of the business itself. Ballou et al. (2006, p.65) relate sustainability in this sense to the twin obligations of a business to achieve overall strategic business objectives and meeting stakeholder expectations. This definition reflects a model of business performance presented in standard management texts (e.g., Griffin, 2005) that goes beyond success in a single business cycle (i.e., successful transformation of inputs to outputs accepted by customers) to measure success over the long term (i.e., continued investment in the firm by stockholders and support of the firm by stakeholders as a legitimate player in the business arena). This sense of sustainability also relates to the strategy discipline's concept of sustained competitive advantage (e.g., Barney, 1991), meaning an advantage that persists over time rather than quickly being overtaken by rivals.

The broader meaning denoted by the word sustainability is the survival not just of a single business entity, but rather of humanity. Clearly, this use of sustainability in the context of CSR demands consideration of stakeholders well beyond the boundaries of the organisation and its shareholders. Gray (2006) provides a clear example of this expanded usage of the term, referencing the United Nations' definition of sustainability as future generations' ability to meet their survival needs. This includes protection of the natural physical environment and also implies a measure of social justice and equity in access to natural resources.

A degree of sustainability for the organisation and other stakeholders being the broadest interest, we define CSR as actions initiated by an organisation in order to be a good citizen, to benefit society in ways broader than minimum economic activities, to act proactively in ways that protect and promote the interests of stakeholders beyond the borders of the firm and its owners.

## 3 CSR is an expectation of society and the business community

CSR involves corporate citizenship actions on the part of business firms. These citizenship actions extend beyond the historic function of the firm to transform inputs to outputs or to earn wealth for owners. In this sense, they are extra-role behaviours, in the same way that organisational citizenship behaviours represent actions of individual employees that contribute to the advancement of the organisation beyond the fundamental relationship represented by the employee's job (Moorman, 1991).

Early work on CSR demarcated actions expected of a firm in pursuit of its normal operations from such extra-role actions. For example, Carroll (1979) defined CSR with reference to four areas: economic, legal, ethical and discretionary or philanthropic. Economic responsibilities define the firm; legal responsibilities constrain the firm. Ethical responsibilities take the firm a step beyond the legal minimum or maximum.

Carroll's terminology for the fourth category makes it clear that philanthropy is a choice for the firm, rather than an obligation.

And indeed, through the past century, firms typically chose not to engage in actions beyond those required. Exceptions were notable as exceptions: Andrew Carnegie's corporate philanthropy and Robert Wood's commitment to stewardship of social responsibility were the few, while the majority of firms did only what the law and union pressure required (Preston, 1986). This view was most strongly articulated by Nobel prise winning economist Milton Friedman (1970): 'there is one and only one social responsibility of business, to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud'. In this view, Freidman is not arguing for unethical behaviour, rather he is arguing that it is not the business executive's right to use shareholders money for societal betterment. This view narrowly defines a corporation's stakeholders as being primarily the shareholders. Others who defended this view in the 1980s were the corporate raiders, T. Boone Pickens and Sir Jimmy Goldsmith (Annenberg/CPB Project, 1989).

From the 1960s, however, the broader perspective began to gain adherents. The Civil Rights movement succeeded in shifting society's enacted values to greater consistency with its espoused values (Schein, 1988), concurrently reinforcing the position that organisations within a society are responsible to act in ways consistent with that society's values. The environmental movement similarly promoted a shift in the attitudes and behaviours of not only individuals but corporations organisations as well. For example, the chemical industry, far from resisting environmentalism as bad for business, adopted and promulgated voluntary restrictions consistent with environmentalism and made the restrictions binding on its members (Hoffman, 2001 quoted in Davis and Marquis, 2005).

Of course, institutional response of this sort has not occurred quickly. Indeed, the chemical industry example emerged over a twenty-year period. Yet recent commentaries suggest that environmentalism today is regarded as a generally-accepted commitment appropriate for businesses in general to incorporate into their strategies and practices. One current example is Wal-Mart's adoption of 'green' operations, not only for its store operations but to the extent of shifting its stock of light bulbs available for consumer purchase entirely away from incandescent and fully into compact fluorescent bulbs because of the energy savings that individuals and the society, will gain (Fishman, 2006). It has been argued that engaging in a strategy that creates a positive social responsibility image allows companies to charge a premium and attract better employees (Zadeck, 2001).

Other recent examples are initiatives by energy producers to commit to environmentally friendly exploration and production standards. In one instance, Texas energy utility TXU, in proposing a leveraged buyout, voluntarily reversed its intent to build eight new coal-fired generating plants. A representative of an environmental group that had long opposed TXU's plans for the coal-fired plants attributed the utility's new stance to its recognition that environmental responsibility is required to win society's approval in the 21st century (Marketplace, 2007, February 26). Similarly, it was recently announced that several energy producers were joining a coalition of business firms seeking to propose legislation for environmental standards that will be more restrictive than the current federal position (Marketplace, 2007, February 7). In this case as well, observers attribute the actions of these firms to a growing sense of inevitability, based on perception that society will eventually demand such actions of producers and of firms in general.

Not just in the environmental arena, but more broadly, there appears to be a current spirit of the times that supports, encourages and pushes firms to adopt socially responsible (or responsive) positions. This social expectation has been perceived in Europe for some time. Historic differences are well known between the US free market orientation and the European view that the demands of the market must be balanced with the interests of society (Economist, 2007a, b). In England, for instance, Gray (2006, pp.65–66) comments on 'the increasing awareness and concern about social and environmental issues' and 'a growth in demands for social and environmental accountability', noting that 'the UK has led the way in the production of stand-alone voluntary reports on social and environmental issues', even while he critiques such reporting. Perhaps recognising Europe's forward stance on corporate social responsibility, Wal-Mart's CEO chose London as the venue to deliver his speech on Wal-Mart's new environmental initiative (Hudson, 2007).

Similarly, in the USA, such business oriented publications as Business Week (e.g., Engardio et al., 2007) inform readers of the value of social responsibility. Fortune magazine has begun ranking corporations according to their implementation of socially responsible practices (Demos, 2006). A recent search of the Wall Street Journal archives on the term 'social responsibility' found over 1,000 articles, nearly 400 in the last year and 75 in the last two months alone. The Harvard Business Review regularly includes feature articles addressing CSR (e.g., Brugmann and Prahalad, 2007; Porter and Kramer, 2006).

It is reasonable to conclude that responsible business executives will incorporate CSR into their planning and decision making. It is a social trend whose tipping point (Gladwell, 2002) has arrived. It is less likely that business executives in the future will see their firms as solely economic entities, but rather than they will define their managerial responsibility to include pursuit of societal valued goals as well as pursuit of economic goals in socially valued ways. If this is true, it raises the question of how well current business school curricula are preparing graduates to undertake this responsibility.

## 4 CSR'S limited presence in current curricula

The presence of CSR in today's standard business curriculum is limited. The topic is typically mentioned within courses on business ethics and some colleges feature CSR as a stand-alone course at the master's level (an example is Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas). However, a clear challenge is that these courses are segregated from others in the curriculum, and that the business curriculum as a whole is dominated by emphases that conflict with CSR.

The challenge for educator in business is that so much of the curriculum is tied to the bottom line. We teach strategies to increase profits, methods to reduce taxes, techniques to increase the performance of the organisation and its employees. Very little in the curriculum discusses how these things impact society. In some of our courses we discuss the role of stakeholders such as the government and community, but it is generally within the context of overcoming these obstacles in order to increase profits.

Of course, business curricula reflect the structure of the corporation and its historic focus on profits. Some argue that it is good business to be ethical and while that may be true in a lot of cases, it can also be good business to be unethical. Selling sub par or dangerous products can be very profitable in the short run. In the long run there is always the chance that changes in reputation, government intervention or lawsuits could hurt a corporation's profitability. Most corporations do not have the luxury of focusing on the long run. Publicly traded companies must report their earnings quarterly and any slip in earnings will almost always result in a significant fall in the stock price.

Why would a company knowingly engage in behaviours or actions that are harmful or inappropriate? In part because managers are taught to make decisions using a cost benefit analysis. Managers are taught examine the cost of certain actions and determine if the resulting consequence will be beneficial to the bottom line, but not to others in the process. This view also ignores the long term impact from the use of limited resource as well as the environmental implications. We observe many US companies with major lay offs as jobs are relocated overseas. In many parts of manufacturing, companies cannot afford to stay in the US. But when these layoffs occur, lives are disrupted and people do get hurt. To be fair, managers do consider the impact of their decisions on employees, but ultimately it becomes a question of whether or not a division can help the profitability of the company and in some cases it is a question of whether or not the company can survive, which if they could not then no one would have employment. These decisions raise serious questions about the sustainability of the US corporation as a viable entity.

In business schools, students are taught to make decisions based on the best return on investment. One of the more egregious historical examples of using cost/benefit analysis in decision making comes from the Ford Pinto, which would explode when the back of the car was hit at higher rates of speed. Ford was aware of the problem, but an analysis performed by Ford's engineers found that the cost of settling lawsuits with people that were injured or killed by the car blowing up would be cheaper than the cost of replacing the defect (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987).

These decisions may be limited not only by faulty assessment of costs and benefits, but also by difficulty in recognising consequences that may not appear for years after a decision is implemented. For example, in the 1930s the preservative Thimerosal was developed by the pharmaceutical industry. Thimerosal, which according to the FDA is approximately 50% mercury by weight, was used in children's vaccines for decades. It allowed for the vaccines to be stored longer in larger batches which saved a great deal of money. Unfortunately it also thought, although not proven, to be related to the dramatic increase in autism rates. It's estimated that one in 166 children has autism, up from one in 2,500. This increase came during a time in which the centres for disease control have increased the number of shots recommended for children; vaccinations containing Thimerosal. In 2001 at the request of the CDC, Thimerosal has begun to be removed from vaccines for children under six, in the US but not overseas. Since the removal of Thimerosal, autism has begun to fall for the first time in decades (Geier and Geier, 2006). Clearly, the pharmaceutical companies were not engaged in anything illegal. Instead they engaged in a practice of saving costs without full awareness of the consequences of their actions.

So what can be done, given the structure of corporations to encourage CSR particularly in the classroom?

## 5 Implementing CSR more widely in business courses

One reasonable and responsible approach would be for each of us, as individual instructors, to identify opportunities to incorporate CSR into our courses where it is appropriate and feasible. It is first important to recognise that some progress is being made in business education.

There are some positive indicators that business curricula are changing to respond to the increased call from stakeholders for stronger coverage of sustainability. The positive indicators include formulation of principles, attention by accrediting bodies and development of instructional materials.

Specifically related to sustainability, principles of responsible management education (PRME) have been promulgated to promote teaching and research related to sustainable enterprise. There are currently 139 colleges that voluntarily adhere to these principles. More broadly, the United Nations Global Compact site lists 248 colleges and other organisations as 'academic stakeholders' committed to promote the ten principles of the Global Compact, which include specific attention to social equity and environmental responsibility (although not economic value per se; Global Compact, ten principles). The 139 participants in the 'principles of responsible management education' represent a small proportion of colleges offering business education given that there are more than 500 AACSB schools. Similarly, small numbers of colleges are involved in the Global Compact; the 248 participants include only 15 from the US and only seven from the UK. This is also some progress being made with accrediting bodies who are increasingly promoting the broad agenda of corporate social responsibility.

In recent years AACSB International (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) have jointly established The Global Foundation for Management Education, which includes three white papers relating to ethics education, the role of business schools in CSR and the role of business schools in society among twelve issues confronting modern business education. But AACSB does not mandate any particular courses, and sustainability per se is not among the list of topics for which they encourage coverage in business curricula. Additionally, the AACSB initiatives do not have an impact on the other 1,600 schools which are not accredited by AACSB. This is increasingly more instructive materials available to educators.

An increasing number of cases are available that describe responsible and sustainable business activities (e.g., CasePlace; BSD Global). Specialised texts are also appearing on the market (e.g., Doppelt, 2003; Laszlo, 2008). The majority of textbooks in traditional course subjects such as management, marketing, accounting and finance devote less than a chapter to sustainability-related topics; the subject itself is frequently not included in indices.

What can be concluded, then, regarding the attention given to sustainability in business curricula? Is the glass half full or half empty? Focusing specifically on course programming, two recent studies offer mixed results. Jones Christensen et al. (2007) surveyed the Financial Times Top 50 global MBA programmes; out of 44 respondents, one school reported requiring a stand-alone course in sustainability, and twelve reported requiring a course that combines sustainability with ethics and CSR. The researchers spotlight one school that has integrated sustainability, together with ethics and CSR, throughout its core curriculum and into extracurricular sessions and activities as well. Navarro (2008) reports that 40% – fewer than half – of 50 top-ranked US MBA programmes include a component relating to corporate ethics or social responsibility, much less to the more complex and precise topic of sustainability. Nevertheless, several of these colleges are affiliated with the UN's Global Compact and with PRME, and make their teaching and research innovations and experience freely available as part of their commitment to promote the sustainability agenda.

Thus even as it can be acknowledged that progress has been made, concern can be expressed: much remains to be done. Accordingly, with the intent of furthering the adoption of sustainability-related course content among business schools, we offer additional suggestions and ideas that may be found feasible by readers of this special issue – including suggestions for teaching sustainability across the curriculum in business programmes, as well as increasing cross-disciplinary efforts between business schools and other college faculties, e.g., other applied programmes such as engineering, architecture, and design (Cooperrider, 2008); the sciences and even the liberal arts.

In this section, we present a range of ideas representing recent advances in theory and practice, applicable to a wide range of disciplines within the business curriculum. We include ideas from and for: accounting, marketing, finance, economics, entrepreneurship, strategy, decision science, organisation behaviour and management. We acknowledge that our presentation is incomplete, omitting important advances and areas; we hope that responses to our paper will enable a broader collection and aggregation of resources, more widely applicable and thus even more useful than this initial listing. At the same time, we encourage readers to consider the implementation of CSR across broader areas of the curricula.

### *5.1 Accounting*

Accounting faculty are increasingly aware of the CSR issue. For instance, Ballou et al., (2006) report the likelihood that accountants and auditors will soon be expected to report and audit both social and environmental information for the organisations they serve, and they offer suggestions for how accountants (both internal and external) can respond to this expectation. We anticipate that instructors of accounting will incorporate this emerging topic into their advanced courses, much as earlier they added in the then-novel Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). We join Ballou et al.'s call for accounting faculty to continue to develop, propose and discuss appropriate approaches for CSR reporting, much as in the past decade they engaged in similar discussion of accounting for organisational learning and intellectual capital (e.g., Lev's proposals for accounting for knowledge-based enterprises, undated).

### *5.2 Marketing*

The field of marketing seems always to be addressing in its classes the most recent phenomena that connect organisations with their publics. We anticipate that marketing faculty may already be incorporating CSR into class discussions, using such recent phenomena as Bono's Product Red campaign (Weber, 2006). Discussions of brand equity and corporate reputation may be enhanced by Eccles et al., (2007) suggestions for practical methods to assess, monitor and manage reputation, including illustrations using well-known corporate examples. Because of the connections between marketing and strategy, marketing faculty may also find innovative ways to apply some of the suggestions offered in the strategy section below.

### 5.3 Finance

We consider that the field of finance may lead the way in developing models to quantify and manage the economic risk associated with decisions relating to CSR. In a previous section we highlighted the problematic consequences for firms that attempt to reach decisions on CSR by applying traditional forms of cost-benefit analysis. We suggest that options theory offers a useful expansion of traditional decision approaches, yet it remains unknown and unapplied by some faculty in other departments whose professional development did not emphasise finance and economics. We therefore encourage finance faculty to partner with faculty from other disciplines, in the hope that collaboration may enable more outside of the finance field to understand and apply options thinking to their own area and its contributions to CSR.

### 5.4 Economics

Our analysis above of the adoption of CSR by firms is consistent with new institutional economics (NIE). We are unaware of research applying NIE to corporate entities or to the CSR decision, but we suggest an opportunity exists here. Perhaps the economics of renewable forms of energy as an example could be more emphasised in the coursework.

### 5.5 Entrepreneurship

The field of entrepreneurship is incorporating social entrepreneurship into its classrooms (an example is Business 269 as taught at the University of Evansville). We suggest that such discussions incorporate examples of economic innovations such as those initiated by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus: microcredit and his recent efforts in social business enterprise. Prasso (2007) provides a detailed example of social business enterprise: French firm Danone is establishing yogurt factories in Bangladesh that will produce and sell yogurt. In addition to developing Danone's presence in new geographic-economic markets and its competence in nutrition-enhancing products and its anticipated revenue stream, the venture allows Danone to contribute two social benefits: the yogurt itself is fortified to improve its nutritional value to the typically undernourished Bangladeshi consumers, and in addition each factory will provide income (through microcredit-financed sourcing, employment and other effects) for over 1,000 in their local areas. Similarly, Brugmann and Prahalad (2007) identify productive collaborations between NGOs and corporations, suggesting co-creation as a new business model; Prahalad (2005) earlier proposed a model of the fortune at the bottom of the pyramid. These business and social-venture opportunities are consistent with long-tail economics (Anderson, 2004), i.e., the recognition that viable niche markets may be found by aggregating dispersed individual consumers. Perhaps entrepreneurship faculty can extend their impact by reaching out to areas on their campuses, e.g., political science, sociology, even religious studies, where may be found others who may see the societal benefit of such ventures and who would approach the issue from the NGO or non-profit side.

### 5.6 Strategy

As suggested earlier in this paper, we see CSR as a must-have topic for strategy courses because of its status as an emerging trend in the socio-cultural and political-legal sectors of the general environment. We strategy faculty will prepare our students for the real world by structuring discussions of corporate response to this issue. A useful model is Porter and Kramer's (2006) discussion of 'strategic CSR', which identifies opportunities for firms to affirmatively incorporate a social dimension into their business models. Porter and Kramer point out two value-adding approaches. Firms can use value-chain opportunities to benefit society within their current business models. Even more powerfully, firms also can innovate and create value by applying their capabilities to social issues in their environments, thereby improving not only the respective environment but also the firm's performance. Porter and Kramer offer several corporate examples, including Nestle, Whole Foods, Sysco and Unilever. In addition, strategy courses may incorporate the new micro-business models discussed in our section on entrepreneurship.

### *5.7 Decision science*

Given our earlier expression of concern about limitations of the traditional decision model to deal effectively with social responsibility, we call for new theory incorporating less- or non-quantified elements into decision making. There is opportunity to incorporate broader considerations into decision models; the particular gaps we see include extended time horizons (some extending across generations), the currently unquantified or intangible nature of social factors and the requirement to consider more stakeholders (i.e., the obligation to consider consequences to an extended, expanded external public rather than readily-identified customers or stockholders) in decision analyses. We anticipate this may involve a process similar to the historic development of real options theory (recounted in Kogut and Kulatilaka, 2004). Following Kogut and Kulatilaka (2004), we also suggest that decision science courses can benefit students by incorporating and emphasising repeatedly the distorting effects of decision biases on risk assessment. An example of a pedagogical approach useful for this purpose is offered by Barth et al. (2004).

Another opportunity for development of theory and modelling in decision science may be the influence of long tails (Anderson, 2004) on decisions; as we have suggested, we consider that use of expected values in the standard model may mislead decision makers by failing to adequately aggregate the tails of the normal distribution. However, perhaps this is less a consideration for theory and modelling, than for classroom practice. As case discussions of past disastrous decisions acknowledge, a small probability is not at all the same as no probability. Perhaps faculty can compile ideas on ways to bring this realisation home to students, following the example of Barth et al. (2004).

### *5.8 Organisation behaviour*

Insofar as courses in organisational behaviour (OB) include attention to organisation-level performance and satisfaction of stakeholder expectations, CSR can become an important element of that analysis. Additionally, OB courses that address behavioural decision making may include reference to CSR as an example of the type of threat that is often inadequately addressed by individuals and by groups, being both diffuse and distant.

### *5.9 Management*

Given the role of principles of management courses to introduce students to enduring themes across the spectrum of the management discipline, it is consistent that principles courses would introduce CSR during coverage of the business environment (i.e., socio-cultural and political-legal as well as international dimensions), business ethics, planning-decision making, and such coverage of strategy and entrepreneurship as the instructor incorporates.

## 6 Addressing CSR holistically across the curriculum

We have presented ideas for bringing CSR into the business curriculum in several areas. However, we caution that such a piecemeal approach will not fully achieve the goal of preparing our graduates for their responsibilities after graduation. Knowledge is more readily retained, accessed and used if it is linked by multiple connections to other knowledge in one's memory – a concept consistent with the organisational-learning construct of absorptive capacity (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). If the CSR concept is taught in an ethics course, it may be forgotten or its relevance may be uncertain to students who later take a decision science course in which the concept is not mentioned. Isolated lessons may never be reconciled by students following graduation. At best, we miss an opportunity by not addressing the reconciliation expressly in our courses; at worst, we waste our time and students' by offering them learning without a path to its utilisation.

To underscore the encouragement repeated throughout our discipline-level suggestions, the authors call for discussion among business faculty to identify methods for incorporating attention to CSR across the curriculum, in much the same way as some schools have incorporated ethics itself across the curriculum. Another example of cross-curricular integration is the handling of international issues in some schools.

We suggest that a starting point is certainly for each of us to address CSR in our own course materials, as we see it relating to the subjects we teach. However, in order for substantial impact to be realised, a concerted effort would appear to be needed. We observed earlier in this paper that the corporate community is being called to action by the appearance of the CSR topic across the board in their common sources of news and information, the business practitioner-oriented journals (e.g., Business Week, Fortune, the Economist and Harvard Business Review, as cited above). Lacking such pervasive institutional sources, we suggest a grass-roots movement among business faculty.

Consider what might happen if each one reading this paper or hearing this presentation were to discuss its implications with a colleague, particularly a colleague from a different discipline within the business faculty to share ideas on how CSR might affect a particular topic within each one's course or each one's research stream. It might follow that CSR would, in fact, be brought into the discussion in more classrooms and in more scholarly papers and presentations – that it would become part of our business academic zeitgeist. Moreover, as each of us would hear from our colleagues in different disciplines about their implementation of CSR in their courses, we then encourage faculty to expressly draw connections in their own courses between the presentation in the current course, and known presentations of related topics in other business courses: accounting, finance, marketing, management, strategy and decision science. In other words, we visualise each of us helping students to see and draw connections across disciplines to integrate their understanding and practice of CSR-consistent thinking and business action. In this way, over time, we can reinforce to students the importance of CSR in society's expectations of business and prepare them to conduct business consistently with societal obligation, more effectively by virtue of being univocal than by presenting the topic randomly and occasionally.

## 7 Concluding remarks

Corporate behaviour impacts all of us. Each of our students will probably work for a company, buy products, live in communities with corporations or will otherwise be impacted by the actions of corporations. These actions can impact entire communities through their employment practices, emissions or products. Those companies that behave in a socially desirable manner can improve the lives of those stakeholders, whereas companies that act less responsibly can actually decrease property values in the community and endanger residents as anyone familiar with, for example, Love Canal in the US would note. Business is embedded in society and requires society's approval to conduct its activities. If business fails to take society into account in its actions and decisions, society can push back. We have presented evidence that businesses are beginning to acknowledge this reality and are moving much of their focus to sustainability. We in the business faculty have an affirmative obligation to support this nascent business movement, by incorporating the ethical and practical issues of social responsibility, and sustainability into our courses and particularly by developing, testing, and presenting decision models that incorporate CSR's long-term and long-tail consequences.

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