

Innovative Session:

Open Mike IV: A forum for discussing how our teaching addresses “business and society at the crossroads”

Innovative Session Proposal for the IABS 27th Annual Meeting
in Park City, Utah – June 16-19, 2016

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addresses “business and society at the crossroads”**

Overview

The International Association for Business and Society was founded on, and has a long-running tradition of, providing opportunity for its members to discuss issues surrounding their enhancing student learning. Our aspect of this pursuit is the discussion of how our teaching addresses the issue of “business and society at the crossroads.” This pursuit should emphasize sensitizing students to the human, cultural, social, and environmental aspects of business decision-making and, beyond sensitization, equip them to better organize their thinking around these abstract concepts. This professional quest is often approximately half (or more) of what we do as professional educators, thus having time and space to discuss this academic expectation and our various challenges and successes in addressing business and society at the crossroads through our teaching seems warranted.

Background / History

In preparation for IABS 2013, a group of IABS Fellows envisioned a session at the conference for conference participants to meet, talk, share, and support each other and our teaching. The first Open Mike session was afforded conference program space and more than a dozen IABSers took advantage of this opportunity in Portland, Oregon. The following year ten IABS conference attendees participated in the second Open Mike’s lively discussion session in Sydney, Australia. Again, at IABS 2015 in Guanacaste, Costa Rica, a group of ten IABSers participated in a lively discussion surrounding their teaching and the pursuit of eudemonia through teaching. Based on the success at IABS conference over the past three years, Open Mike IV is proposed as an opportunity to continue this conversation by focusing on how our teaching addresses the issue of business and society at the crossroads – addressing the 2016 IABS conference theme.

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Some reviewers worried about the lack of structure or focus of the Open Mike session in 2013 prompting the session facilitators to discuss some conversation starters. However in Open Mike I, II and III, rather than the facilitators directing the conversation with pre-planned questions or topics that were at the ready, session attendees took the initiative and asked questions focusing on the conference theme and their teaching, such as: “How much do you open up or tell about your personal life with your students? “Is there something new that you tried out in this past year that worked especially well?” And, “I am worried about student engagement in class, how do you motivate students to prepare for class discussion?”

The session facilitators were ready to politely re-direct the conversation to others that had not contributed yet or limit the time that a person would speak, but neither “guideline” had to be enforced. Every session attendee was given the opportunity to speak and at one point a non-facilitator asked directly if the newer faculty members in attendance had something to share. There was a very professional, respectful, and collegial atmosphere throughout the session.

At the suggestion of one reviewer of the 2013 proposal, the session facilitators announced the session on IABS-L a few weeks before the meeting and, if accepted for program space at the 2016 conference, this session will also be publicized to IABS members by the session facilitators.

Session Description

The “open mike” concept is loosely patterned after a common feature at nightclubs, comedy clubs, and other types of entertainment businesses where people can come “up to the microphone” (the mike) and say pretty much whatever they want. It provides equal opportunity to seasoned performers, as well as novices. It does not restrict what can be sung, said or performed. It is in its purest form – an open forum.

In the innovative session entitled “Open Mike IV: A forum for discussing how our teaching discusses business and society at the crossroads,” we invite any and all attendees who want to stand up to the “mike” and share their thoughts, raise issues, voice concerns, probe others for answers or suggestions, or whatever. The session does not have a set timeline, pre-planned presentations or speeches, or time devoted to wrapping up the session. In fact it does not even have a mike or a performance platform. Rather, it is an unencumbered block of time devoted to conversation that is relevant to and initiated by its participants.

Given the unstructured format of the “open mike,” this session features two seasoned educators, ready to respond, support or assist in whatever manner is needed for the conversations about teaching. Agreeing to serve as coordinators, facilitators and “open mike” participants, as needed, are Craig Dunn, Western Washington University, and Jim Weber, Duquesne University.

The qualifications, background and expertise provided by these session organizers consist of:

Craig Dunn: A primary focus on business and society issues has characterized Craig’s work first at San Diego State University and now at Western Washington University. From this foundation, Craig’s teaching and research have ventured into the areas of managerial

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ethics and values, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, the meaning of work, and social entrepreneurship. Craig has served on the Advisory Committee of Washington Campus Compact, a state-wide organization dedicated to advancing service-learning within the region. He additionally is on the institutional team of the CASTL Leadership Program, a teaching and learning initiative sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning. He has received numerous awards for his teaching excellence and has also been recognized by various business and community groups, which has led to his service on many non-profit and governmental boards of directors. Craig is a senior consultant with the Centre for Organization Effectiveness.

Jim Weber: An educator for more than 30 years, Jim has been primarily responsible for developing and offering courses emphasizing practical business ethics, organizational ethics, global business, and business, government and society at the graduate and undergraduate levels in an online and face-to-face format. He has served on various undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees, directed an online graduate program, and written book chapters and journal publications focusing on various elements of teaching, curriculum development and outcome assessment. Along with Anne Lawrence, Jim has co-authored numerous editions of the market-leading textbook, *Business and Society: Stakeholders, Ethics, Public Policy* (Irwin/McGraw-Hill). He has also developed and delivers one-day and half-day corporate ethics training programs to various business organizations and professional associations.

Goal of the session

There is one overriding goal for this session – provide those attending the annual IABS meeting in Park City, Utah the opportunity to discuss among their colleagues issues surrounding the issue of business and society at the crossroads through teaching to enhance student learning.

We would be pleased if this session leads to a continuation of the conversation, perhaps online, after the session and conference have concluded, even possibly resulting in collaborative work that may lead to publication, new course development, or innovative classroom delivery. We just want to get the conversation started and see where it takes us.

Note to the Conference Program Chair: Given the flexibility of the session and the potential that the conversation may not naturally end at any set time, we simply ask for a block of time to be allocated to this session that best serves the conference attendees and works within the conference schedule.