

*Innovative session: Open Mike V: A forum for discussing how our teaching transforms “From Ambition To Impact”*

Innovative Session Proposal for the 2017 Annual Meeting  
of the International Association of Business and Society (IABS)  
in Amsterdam, The Netherlands – June 29 – July 2, 2017

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**Overview**

The International Association for Business and Society (IABS) was founded on, and has a long-running tradition of, providing opportunity for its members to discuss issues related to enhancing student learning. Our contribution to this pursuit involves creating programmatic space for the discussion of how teaching addresses the issue of transforming “from ambition to impact.” Consistent with the values of IABS, this pursuit should emphasize sensitizing students to the human, cultural, social, and environmental aspects of business decision-making and, beyond sensitization, equipping them to better organize their thinking around what are generally regarded as abstract concepts. Such a professional quest is very often half (or more) of what we do within the professoriate; thus, having time and space to discuss academic expectations and our various challenges and successes in addressing “from ambition to impact” 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 an animated discussion surrounding their teaching and the pursuit of eudemonia

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through teaching at the Open Mike III session. And last year, in Park City, Utah, at Open Mike IV a dozen IABS conference attendees engaged in a thoughtful discussion around how our teaching focused on "business and society at a crossroads." Based on the success at IABS conference over the past four years, Open Mike V is proposed as an opportunity to extend this conversation by focusing on how our teaching addresses the issue of "from ambition to impact" – the 2017 IABS conference theme.

Some reviewers expressed worry regarding the seeming lack of structure or focus of the Open Mike session during its initial run, prompting the session facilitators to discuss some conversation starters. However in Open Mike I, II, III and IV, rather than the facilitators directing the conversation with pre-planned questions or topics that were at the ready, session attendees quickly 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?" This having been said, the practice of having provocative questions 'in pocket' has been maintained, should discussion for any reason lag.

The session facilitators have consistently stood ready to diplomatically re-direct the conversation to others that had not yet contributed and/or to limit the time that an individual 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 has emerged a very professional, respectful, and collegial atmosphere throughout each Open Mike session.

At the suggestion of one reviewer of the 2013 proposal, the session facilitators posted a targeted announcement of the session on IABS-L a few weeks before the meeting and, if accepted for program space at the 2017 conference, this session will be similarly 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. This approach 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 V: A forum for discussing how our teaching transforms "from ambition to impact"," any and all attendees will be invited 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, and appropriate for the year's conference theme.

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Given the unstructured format of the "open mike," this session features three seasoned educators who stand ready to respond, support and/or assist in whatever manner is needed in order to facilitate engaged conversations about teaching. Agreeing to serve as coordinators, facilitators and "open mike" participants, as needed, are Craig Dunn, Western Washington University, Jamie Hendry, Bucknell University, and Jim Weber, Duquesne University. The qualifications, background and expertise provided by these session organizers are here outlined:

*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 (WWU). From this foundation, Craig's teaching and research have ventured into the areas of managerial ethics and values, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, the meaning of work, and social entrepreneurship. Craig currently holds the Wilder Distinguished Professorship of Business and Sustainability at WWU. He 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.

*Jamie Hendry:* Since 2003, Jamie has taught Bucknell's hallmark, experiential Management 101 course (Introduction to Organization and Management), which includes periodic writing and discussion exercises in which students reflect on the experiences they have in the process of building an organization, understand them through the lenses of management theories, and then use those experiences and reflections to design the next phase of the course. Jamie was also a member of the team that developed Bucknell's undergraduate curriculum in Managing for Sustainability, and she now chairs that program. Jamie's Business, Government, and Society course and her Management Strategy and Policy course have had substantial sustainability content since 2003. She is developing and will teach the University's first Introduction to Managing for Sustainability course, following which she will develop and teach the first Triple Bottom Line and Performance Management course at Bucknell.

*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.

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**Goal of the session**

There is one overriding goal for this session – to provide those attending the annual IABS meeting in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, the opportunity to discuss with their colleagues issues surrounding the topic of “from ambition to impact” through teaching designed to enhance student learning. Of keen interest may be the fact that the premier accrediting body for business schools, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), has organized their current standards around the three threads of *engagement*, *impact*, and *innovation*. While traditional academic criteria such as citation indices have oftentimes been used to catalog impact, AACSB has become much more proactive and is now supporting endeavors of business schools to measure impact not only in terms of research, but just as importantly in terms of teaching and service. Given that IABS members are very likely to be associated with schools that have sought and secured AACAB accreditation, and who are similarly struggling with establishing the means by which to document impactful teaching, we would be delighted were some portion of this ‘open mike’ session to end up equipping session participants with practical wisdom as to the best practices for measuring the effects of teaching – a takeaway of immense practical benefit to both participants as well as to those conducting assessment of student learning outcomes at the participants’ home institutions. But as noted earlier...this will be an ‘in pocket’ objective that will emerge only if seen to be beneficial as the discussion develops from the session participants themselves.

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.*