

CR³ Conference: The Power of Responsibility

Stream 2

Responsible Management Education: Beyond Complacency and Contestation

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Sustainable development has been claimed to require systemic changes to corporate practice, notably through the adoption of corporate responsibility (CR). This has also raised discussion about the need for a new management subject position: the socially responsible manager. This new understanding is expected to give rise to managers and leaders who are ethically responsible, effectively utilizing emancipatory rhetoric and discourses of corporate citizenship – all while maximizing profits and shareholder value. In this context, business schools are invited to play an important role in shaping how managers and corporations perceive their relations with society at large and the societal expectations of ethics. The past five years have seen a clear increase in standalone courses in management ethics, sustainability and CR; at the same time CR has established itself as a central topic in management and organization research; and educational accreditation and standardization bodies have been involved in efforts of incorporating the ‘globally accepted values’ of CR into their accreditation processes, building on the voluntary adoption of global governance initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the UNPRME (United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education). While the adoption of the ethos of CR through initiatives such as UNPRME by an increasing number of educational institutions is encouraging, such initiatives do not necessarily imply change in how management education is carried out. This raises questions both in terms of *what* is being taught at business schools in order to produce responsible management subjects, but also *how* CR is being taught.

At the same time management education and MBA programs have come under increasingly heavy critique suggesting that such curriculum changes amount to little but lip-service (see Grey 2002, Swanson 2004, Ghoshal 2005, Sliwa & Cairns 2009). Such critical accounts argue that responsible management education in its current form serves to legitimize business as usual, rather than contributing to change in the practice of either business or the educational institutions. This also raises questions about how management educators are to give voice to dissenting voices and discuss problematic features of management in the context of ethics and CR, without pushing the students into negativism and cynicism.

The stream will offer an opportunity for dialogue about the role of management education in educating a new generation of leaders and managers capable of understanding the complex and often contested relationship between business, society and nature. We invite both empirical and theoretical contributions as well as critical evaluations of (ir)responsible management education. Importantly, we

are seeking contributions and insights from diverse disciplines. Issues addressed may include but are not restricted to the following themes and questions:

- What may constitute 'responsible management education'?
- How can business schools and business scholars help managers and future managers better integrate social responsibility and ethics into their work? How should the moral and ethical duties of business scholars and business schools in society be redefined?
- What are the societal consequences of business and management research and the ethical responsibilities of researchers/educators?
- What are course designs that successfully integrate the values of sustainable development? What kinds of exercises best promote students' learning?
- The use of critical pedagogy and ecopedagogy in teaching – e.g. Habermasian, Freirian, poscolonial, feminist or/and post-structural perspectives
- What views and values on CR and ethics are promoted/tolerated in management education? What voices are marginalized and silenced? How are we to engage the voices that are marginalized within business discourse in the classroom?
- How to engage students in critique against aspects of business conduct – and possibly CR – without leading to negativism?
- The disembeddedness of CR/ethics teaching at business schools; integrating ethics into the whole curriculum
- The tension and relationship between CR/ethics teaching and other subjects
- Multiple problems of double binds: challenges caused by tensions between personal ethics and professional ethics, double standards within and across courses, conflicting values in researching and teaching, etc.
- The role and effect of global governance initiatives such as UNGC and UNPRME