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This We Believe About the Transformation and Future of Business Education

The business education profession serves learners by assisting them to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to function successfully in the business and economic environment. Business education has a rich history of education for and about business. While business educators honor the heritage that has provided a framework for our endeavors, **we believe that** vibrant, forward-looking professional business educators urgently need to initiate a significant transformation of the business education profession.

A Call for Transformation

The business education profession historically has recognized the changing needs of society, students, workers, and business. In the context of the changing needs of these stakeholders, the business education profession has endeavored to provide relevant learning experiences. In order for business education to thrive, **we believe that** concerted actions must be taken to ensure the continuing development of relevant, authentic business education for all learners. The transformation of the profession needs to reflect the change in learners, social context, and business education.

Learners

The characteristics of learners are varied, and their context has been transformed. Learners are diverse with a wide range of characteristics, abilities, and backgrounds. **We believe that** business educators must recognize generational, gender, cultural, ethnic, religious, economic, and learning style differences among individuals. **We believe that** the learning environment is transforming as learning now can occur in a global, virtual, connected world. Therefore, business educators must facilitate diverse learners' engagement in this new environment while recognizing that participation in the "connected" world is not yet universal.

Social Context

We believe that this global, virtual world has introduced new opportunities for teaching and learning that include high levels of collaboration and collective ownership of intellectual property. Furthermore, **we believe that** a global perspective and changes in societal attitudes have had profound effects on the social context for business education. Therefore, business educators must engage learners through work-based, project-based, collaborative, constructivist, and contextual learning; virtual communities and enterprises; online and web-based delivery methods; and other innovative instructional strategies.

Business Education

We believe that business education is inherently transdisciplinary. Therefore, students acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to function successfully in the global business and economic

environment through the integrated study of such content areas as economics, law, information and communication technology, and marketing. For example, the study of entrepreneurship, management, or financial literacy requires an understanding of economics, accounting, and many other business concepts. Therefore, business education must embrace the natural connections within business education and with other disciplines to foster collaborative instruction and research.

A Call for Action

We believe that education for and about business must assist learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to function successfully in the global business and economic environment. Therefore, in order to transform business education, **we believe that** business educators must

- Recognize the breadth and scope of business education.
- Recognize the learners' diversity, their electronic and virtual learning tools, and their connected culture as strengths to be used to enhance the teaching/learning environment.
- Use proven instructional practices that incorporate high levels of collaboration and recognize collective ownership of intellectual property.
- Ensure highly effective use of new instructional approaches, such as work-based, project-based, collaborative, constructivist, and contextual learning; virtual communities and enterprises; online and web-based delivery methods; and other innovative instructional strategies.
- Actively engage in professional development that empowers business educators to use new skills and knowledge to transform the learning environment.
- Take a leadership role in creating business education curricula that reflect the changing social context.

In order to transform business education, **we believe that** business teacher educators must

- Conduct relevant and rigorous research that informs practice.
- Incorporate sound research results into content knowledge and pedagogy that prospective teachers need to teach in transdisciplinary modes.
- Prepare prospective teachers to thrive within an environment that incorporates highly effective instructional strategies.
- Prepare prospective teachers to be skillful, to be entrepreneurial in their teaching, and to be ready to innovate given the new global, virtual environment and the diversity of learners.

In order to transform business education, **we believe that** professional associations must

- Explore and understand the changes in learners, social context, and business educators to transform their marketing, publications, workshops, and conferences.
- Provide the incentive and a forum for business educators to engage in this transformation.
- Support the development of excellent teachers by providing opportunities to be skillful, innovative, and entrepreneurial in their teaching, given their changing environments.
- Use the new "tools" to enable business educators to network, to engage in professional and leadership development, and to share ideas and best practices collaboratively.
- Ensure that all business education literature is available and indexed electronically so that it can be retrieved not only by business educators but also by other professionals.
- Strengthen existing partnerships and implement new partnerships among the varied professional associations to collaborate in promoting and sustaining the transformation of the business education profession.

Transformation and survival of relevant business education depend on quality leadership. **We believe that** strong, effective leadership must be cultivated and exercised so that the business education profession is able to accomplish this transformation. Managing this transformation professionally with enthusiasm and courage will produce the evolution, if not the revolution, required to revitalize business educators and business education.