

CHOOSING A BACHELOR-LEVEL BUSINESS PROGRAM: FACTORS IMPACTING THE DECISION

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ABSTRACT

In the increasingly competitive environment in which colleges and universities are striving to attract students, understanding why and how prospective students make their choices is becoming more critical. Understanding the choices of programs within a college or university is also increasingly important. The review of the literature revealed that most studies were about choosing undergraduate business programs in on-site environments, not a mix of on-site and online. At a major private, non-profit university's business school, questions were raised about prospective students choosing among three bachelor-level business programs. What led them to choose their particular program? Which sources of information were most influential in their choices? What role did Advisers play in their choices? In a sample of 182 out of 1985 students enrolled in the three programs, study participants were asked about the purpose of their enrollment, their enrollment process, and their perceptions of the similarities and differences in the programs. Possibly because the participants in this study were mid-career students, the results had great alignment to the studies in the literature examining choosing graduate schools. Participants were seeking the keys to better opportunities for promotion, a sense of accomplishment, and better ability to change careers.

JEL: I210, M00, M3

KEYWORDS: Business Education, Consumer Behavior, Student Choice

INTRODUCTION

The environment for business schools in the United States is rapidly changing. It is becoming more competitive as colleges and universities seek out students to fill their classrooms, often by entering markets that are new to them. For those schools already in these markets, defending their market share becomes a critical challenge. From a strategic perspective, it is vital that these schools look at both their competitive advantages and disadvantages in their niche educational market place. One critical aspect of this process is looking more closely at current customers, the students. Advantages in niche markets come from knowing and serving customers better than new entries. In order to meet, even exceed expectations, those expectations must be known in a systematic manner. National University is the second-largest private, non-profit university in California and the 12th largest in the United States. Since its founding in 1971, the University has focused on serving mid-career students; the average age of Bachelor level students is 32. Since its inception, the University has operated on an academic calendar that is a compressed schedule of one semester's work completed in one month. In the last 20 years, the University has been a pioneer providing higher education in an online environment; two-thirds of students are now taking their classes online. This niche of older students who wish to receive their education online is now targeted by both private and public universities. National is challenged to defend its position in this niche, even expand its presence. The School of Business and Management is the third largest school in National University. In January 2016, 1736 students were in class in 115 different classes. Of these students, 952

were undergraduate students and 784 were graduate students. The School offers a full range of programs and courses. The three largest bachelor level programs are the Bachelor of Arts in Management (BAM), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), and the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership (BSOL). During 2015, faculty in the School of Business and Management were concerned with fluctuations in enrollments that were not easily explained. Total enrollments were changing up-and-down as well as relative enrollments among the BAM, BBA, and BSOL. Anecdotal evidence raised questions about how students chose their programs, as well as students' understanding of the differences among the programs. It was clear that the School did not sufficiently understand its customers' perceptions of the programs, their priorities and how they made their purchase decision. The balance of this paper is organized as follows: The second section presents a review of the related literature, the third section describes the methodology used in the research, the fourth section presents the results and discussion, and the final section offers concluding comments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Why do students choose their academic degree program? Specifically, what are the factors that influence degree choice? The present review of the literature explores factors that influence student choice in college majors. Choosing a major is an important decision in the life of a student as it impacts study continuity, success or failure, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, financial return, and student social status. Beggs, Bantham, and Taylor (2008) define a "good" major choice as the major best capable of helping the student to achieve their educational and post-educational goals. They add that matching students' abilities and interests with the abilities required for the major is important in the selection process by undergraduate students. Additionally, with the increasingly competitive landscape in higher education, colleges and universities are constantly seeking to expand their market share by staying ahead of the curve with knowledge about the wide range of variables that influence student choice.

The literature highlights the fact that students use a wide range of criteria when choosing a degree program. Babad (2001) presents the category of educational elements including learning material, previous courses attended, assignments, perceived difficulty, and teacher's characteristics. Entry requirements, including specific criteria utilized by admissions to determine acceptance into a program, is yet another category discussed by Briggs (2006). With regard to the job market, opportunity to gain practical experience, ease of finding a job, salary of job after graduation, and skills achieved are the subject of the work presented by Deuren and Santeman (2012). Also noted in their findings are personal attributes including interest in the subject, expectation to learn something new and fit with personal capabilities.

There have been a number of studies focused on exploring the wide range of factors related to student choice of college degree and major. Gordon (1995) notes that approximately 20 to 50 percent of students enter college as undecided. Further, an estimated 75 percent of students change their major at least once before graduation. According to a College Student Journal survey of more than 800 students (Beggs et al (2008)), factors that played a role included family and peer influence; assumptions about introductory courses and characteristics about the major. Beggs et al assert that while these variables may be valid factors, students base their choice on assumption rather than through an understanding of their own personal goals and values. One of the more comprehensive studies on degree choice is presented in the research of Maringe (2006), pointing to four broad categories, each of which are influential in a student's degree program choice. The first category is information-gathering sources. Included in this category are the guidance provided by parents, friends, faculty members, and advisers. The second category is perception about specializations. This includes student views about the content of the program and level of difficulty of the program. The third category is summarized as important criteria for selecting the right specialization. The opportunity to gain practical experience and ease of finding a job are central within this category. The fourth category focuses on the format and timing of the degree offering. This includes the option to enroll in onsite, online, or other modalities.

E. St. John (2000) asserts that there is no college decision that is more thought-provoking, gut wrenching, and rest-of-your-life oriented, than the choice of a major. First year students, many times, are working to understand their own identity. For the majority of their lives, they lived under someone else's guidance and may not yet be able to come to legitimate conclusions about themselves. This raises the question without knowing one's self, how can one effectively choose a major? According to Perry's student development stages, students in their first year will experience dualism, in which the world around them is made up of dichotomies (good vs. bad, right, vs. wrong, and yes vs. no.) Students in this stage believe there is one right answer to everything, including the choice of major (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn 2010). Dualistic students tend to look to others for the answers (adviser, parents, peers, and faculty) rather than draw conclusions based on their own research, personal goals, and self-reflection. The study by Evans et al (2010) highlights the importance of student development theory and important role that enrollment counselors play within each student's degree choice process. Bloom (2008) discusses the importance of positive advising techniques including appreciative advising, which is asking positive, open-ended questions when helping students consider goals, passion, and interests. Given that many of the previous studies have focused on traditional learning environments, future research is needed, including the present study, to determine if the same variables that affect student program choice in those settings affect adult learners in fast paced learning environments.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This research has been designed to gather information from current students of the Bachelor of Arts in Management, Bachelor of Business Administration, and Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership. The information sought related to student priorities when enrolling, as well as their experience of the enrollment process, especially when choosing their academic program. Additionally, the research was seeking student perceptions of the differences among the three programs and how well their program has met their expectations. This inquiry was summarized in the following research questions: 1) What led them to choose their particular program? 2) How do they see the programs as different and similar? 3) Which sources of information were most influential in their choices? 4) What role did Advisers play in their choices?

Research Instrument Development and Implementation

A new survey instrument was created for this research. The instrument development process was in three stages. First, the researchers generated open-ended questions that addressed the areas of the inquiry. Second, the initial instrument was piloted in a class that included students from all three programs. The purpose of this pilot was to test the instrument and to generate a selection of answers to each of the questions in order to provide closed-ended questions for the larger survey.

Instrument

The instrument was administered utilizing the research capability of National University, Office of Educational Effectiveness and Accreditation (OEEA), to identify students currently enrolled in the three programs, a total of 1985 students. Invitation emails were sent to all such students. These emails explained the research and provided a link to the online survey instrument on Qualtrix. Once on the Qualtrix survey page, students had the opportunity to provide informed consent prior to beginning the survey. The National University OEEA had the capability to identify those who had not yet completed the survey, so several reminder emails were sent. Since the survey was administered from mid-December until mid-January, these reminders were helpful in boosting the response rate. A total of 177 students completed the survey, a response rate of 9%. At the close of the survey, OEEA produced a basic report plus a file of the raw data.

No identifiers were included in this information. This data was analyzed by the researchers to produce the findings in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research sought to answer the research questions about how students perceive the three bachelor level business programs, what contributed to their choice of program, and what contributes to their evaluation of their program choice. The data was collected between December 1, 2015 and January 15, 2016. Of the 1985 current students invited to participate, 195 engaged in the online survey instrument. Of these, 107 identified that they were enrolled in the BBA, 40 in the BAM, and 35 in the BSOL. 13 students appeared to not realize that the NU system had them as enrolled in one of the three programs. These surveys were excluded from further analysis.

Making Their Choice

At the core of the study is the question, *What led them to choose their particular program?* This question was specifically intended to address the circumstances under which a perspective student makes a decision about enrollment. Participants were asked how clear they were about which choice they would be making. 37% of all participants knew their choice at the time of enrollment, 28% had a preference, and 29% were unsure. Eventual enrollees in the three programs had similar clarity, except for BBA students who were more unsure at the time they engaged in the enrollment process. This data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: At the Time You Enrolled, How Clear Were You About Which Program to Choose?

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 Knew	15	38%	38	37%	13	36%	66	37%
2 Had preference	14	36%	22	21%	13	36%	49	28%
3 Unsure	7	18%	37	36%	8	22%	52	29%
4 Other	3	8%	6	6%	2	6%	11	6%
	39		103		36		178	

In this table, participants indicated their clarity regarding in which program to enroll. The participants were separated based on the program in which they did enroll. These programs are the Bachelor of Arts in Management (BAM), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), and the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership (BSOL).

For what purposes are students enrolling in these programs? Purpose tends to be a complex issue, especially with prospective students experiencing multiple purposes for taking such action. Participants were asked to rank their possible purposes for enrolling in the programs. Looking at the responses by program, it is striking the similarity of the rankings. Students in all three programs chose “Better opportunities for promotion” as the highest ranking choice of purpose for enrolling. BAM and BBA students’ second highest ranked purpose was “Sense of accomplishment.” BSOL students’ second highest ranked choice was “Better credentials.” This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: What Was Your Purpose for Enrolling in Your Chosen Program? (Rank Responses from 1 To 6.)

		BAM					
		High		Medium		Low	
1	Better opportunity for promotion	18	27%	11	17%	4	6%
2	Better credentials	10	15%	14	21%	9	14%
3	Better capability	8	12%	17	26%	8	12%
4	Sense of accomplishment	17	26%	12	18%	4	6%
5	Change career	10	15%	12	18%	11	17%
6	Other	3	5%	0	0%	30	45%

		BBA					
		High		Medium		Low	
1	Better opportunity for promotion	55	32%	23	13%	9	5%
2	Better credentials	19	11%	44	25%	24	14%
3	Better capability	16	9%	47	27%	24	14%
4	Sense of accomplishment	41	24%	33	19%	13	7%
5	Change career	33	19%	25	14%	29	17%
6	Other	10	6%	2	1%	75	43%

		BSOL					
		High		Med		Low	
1	Better opportunity for promotion	16	27%	8	13%	6	10%
2	Better credentials	14	23%	9	15%	7	12%
3	Better capability	7	12%	19	32%	4	7%
4	Sense of accomplishment	11	18%	13	22%	6	10%
5	Change career	9	15%	10	17%	11	18%
6	Other	3	5%	1	2%	26	43%

		Total					
		High		Med		Low	
1	Better opportunity for promotion	89	30%	42	14%	19	6%
2	Better credentials	43	14%	67	22%	40	13%
3	Better capability	31	10%	83	28%	36	12%
4	Sense of accomplishment	69	23%	58	19%	23	8%
5	Change career	52	17%	47	16%	51	17%
6	Other	16	5%	3	1%	131	44%

In this table the responses to the question about the purpose for enrolling in their chosen program are displayed by program. Participants ranked the purposes from 1 to 6. In this table the purposes ranked 1 and 2 were displayed together as High rank. Those ranked 3 and 4 were displayed as Medium. Finally, those ranked 5 and 6 were ranked Low.

Of great interest is who potential students talk with as they consider their program choices. All students talked with University Advisers, either in person, by phone, or by email. This depended on their distance from one of the University facilities. These participants were most likely to have consulted with current students. Many consulted faculty. Others consulted friends, family, employers, as well as gathered information on the Internet. 13% consulted no one else. This data is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Besides the Adviser, Who Else Did You Consult About the Specifics of the Programs Before Making Your Choice? (Mark All That Apply)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total		
1	Past students	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
2	Current students	10	43%	21	28%	7	30%	38	31%
3	Faculty	6	26%	20	26%	6	26%	32	26%
4	Other	3	13%	25	33%	7	30%	35	29%
	No One	4	17%	9	12%	3	13%	16	13%
		23		76		23		122	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, who they consulted prior to making that decision.

Assistance in Making Choice

University advisers were expected to have played an influential role in the choices made by prospective students as they complete the enrollment process. Overall, 65% of respondents reported that the advisers had been Very Influential or Influential. The BAM enrollees reported higher levels of being influenced, 71% and the BBA enrollees reported the lowest levels of being influenced by the advisers, 61%. This data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Rate How Influential Your Adviser Was on Which Program You Chose

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 Very influential	10	26%	19	19%	10	29%	39	23%
2 Influential	17	45%	42	42%	14	40%	73	42%
3 Not influential	7	18%	23	23%	9	26%	39	23%
4 Insignificant	4	11%	16	16%	2	6%	22	13%
	38		100		35		173	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, the degree to which they felt the Advisers influenced their decisions.

Looking more specifically at those interactions with advisers, what questions were asked by the advisers? Most often, these questions were about career goals and current life situation. Questions about career goals were more often asked of prospective students who would enroll in the BAM, 50% were asked. Only 44% of BBA students were asked this question. It is important to note that many students were not asked questions. Of these 63% were students who arrived at the enrollment process having already decided which program in which they wished to enroll. This data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Before Making a Recommendation About Which Program Would Work Best For Me, My Adviser Asked ... (Mark All That Apply.)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 My current life	16	28%	39	25%	12	21%	67	25%
2 My career goals	29	50%	68	44%	26	46%	123	46%
3 Other questions	6	10%	21	14%	10	18%	37	14%
4 No questions	7	12%	25	16%	8	14%	40	15%
	58		153		56		267	
Of no questions, who had already decided	5	71%	12	48%	8	100%	25	63%

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, the questions asked by their Adviser prior to making a recommendation about program choices.

In this discussion about what has contributed to the program choice, it is important to look at which types of information provided by the Adviser was most helpful to that choosing process. For BAM students, the “Class schedule” was most frequently cited. For these students, the second choice was “Length of the program.” BBA students were almost even in choosing “concentration (major) options,” “Classes within the program,” and “Length of the program.” BSOL students were most likely to cite “Length of program,” followed closely by “Availability online” and then “Class schedule.” The identification of “Length of program,” although identified by all three groups of students, is not a differentiator among the programs since they are each bound by the University’s requirement of 180 quarter hours. This data is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: What Information Did You Receive from Your Adviser That Was Most Helpful in Your Making Your Decision About Which Program to Choose? (Mark Up to 3 Responses)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 Career benefits	13	9%	20	6%	8	7%	41	7%
2 Learn from program	14	10%	15	5%	7	6%	36	6%
3 Courses of interest	10	7%	32	10%	12	11%	54	10%
4 Concentration options	14	10%	43	14%	8	7%	65	12%
5 Classes with program	14	10%	44	14%	11	10%	69	12%
6 Class schedule	20	15%	42	13%	15	14%	77	14%
7 Length of program	17	12%	43	14%	18	17%	78	14%
8 Availability of online?	11	8%	25	8%	16	15%	52	9%
9 Made recommendation	8	6%	13	4%	5	5%	26	5%
10 Transition program	1	1%	1	0%	0	0%	2	0%
11 Already knew program choice	14	10%	33	10%	7	6%	54	10%
12 Other	1	1%	6	2%	1	1%	8	1%
	137		317		108		562	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, their top three types of information that they considered being most helpful in making their decision about their program choice.

Perceptions of the Programs

Prospective students were often comparing the three programs prior to making their choice. Prospective students who enrolled in the BAM were most likely to have also considered the BBA (60%) before making their choice. BSOL prospects were also most likely to have also considered the BBA (46%). 34% of those who ultimately chose the BBA, also considered the BAM. This data is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Which Programs Did You Consider Before Making Your Choice? (Mark All That Apply)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL	
1 BAM			12	34%	10	29%
2 BBA	18	60%			16	46%
3 BSOL	7	23%	9	26%		
4 Other	5	17%	10	29%	9	26%
None	0	0%	4	11%	0	0%
	30		35		35	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, which programs they considered for enrollment, in addition to their ultimate choice.

Participants considered the three programs and a number of other programs. In this process, they identified attributes for each of the programs that they used to differentiate their options. Of those who enrolled in the BAM, 21% identified managing people as the primary difference for the BAM. BBA enrollees identified their program’s primary differentiators as running all aspects of the business and opening more opportunities. Those who enrolled in the BSOL reported that the interest in leadership of that program was the primary difference from the other programs. This data is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: What Do You See As the Major Differences Among These Programs? (Choose As Many As Apply.)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 BAM-Manage people	22	21%	16	8%	11	15%	49	13%
2 BAM-Manage business	16	15%	24	11%	5	7%	45	12%
3 BAM-Specific info on management	13	12%	21	10%	2	3%	36	9%
4 BAM-Be a senior executive	7	7%	8	4%	3	4%	18	5%
5 BBA-Run all aspects of business	11	10%	43	20%	7	9%	61	16%
6 BBA-More recognized	11	10%	31	15%	7	9%	49	13%
7 BBA-Opens more opportunities	10	9%	42	20%	7	9%	59	15%
8 BSOL-Interest in leadership	9	8%	14	7%	20	27%	43	11%
9 BSOL-Want a specific degree	5	5%	10	5%	5	7%	20	5%
10 Other differences	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
11 No differences	1	1%	2	1%	7	9%	10	3%
	106		211		74		391	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, their thoughts about the attributes of each of the three programs that differentiated them from the others.

Contrasting the participants’ thoughts on the differences among the three programs, they also reported the ways in which they viewed the programs as similar. Those who enrolled in both the BAM (23%) and the BBA (23%) were most likely to agree that the three programs all operate in a business environment. Eventual BSOL participants were most likely (23%) to say that all of the programs include both management and leadership. For all respondents, they reported “all in business environment” (22%), “all deal with business problems” (19%), “all study business” (18%), and “all include leadership and management” (18%). This data is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: What Do You See As the Major Similarities Among These Programs? (Choose as Many as Apply)

	BAM		BBA		BSOL		Total	
1 All in business environment	28	23%	59	23%	20	18%	107	22%
2 All deal with business problems	22	18%	48	18%	22	19%	92	19%
3 All study business	21	17%	46	18%	20	18%	87	18%
4 All include leadership & management	18	15%	43	16%	26	23%	87	18%
5 Include many same courses	18	15%	27	10%	6	5%	51	10%
6 Each focuses those who know what they want	3	2%	6	2%	3	3%	12	2%
7 Each focuses on those who are set on their careers	1	1%	6	2%	3	3%	10	2%
8 Each focuses-want opportunities	12	10%	15	6%	10	9%	37	7%
9 Other similarities	0	0%	2	1%	2	2%	4	1%
10 No similarities	0	0%	9	3%	1	1%	10	2%
	123		261		113		497	

In this table, participants indicated, by the programs (BAM, BBA, and BSOL) in which they would enroll, their perceptions of the similarities among the three programs.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Conclusions

The data from this study both confirmed some expectations of the researchers and surprised in other ways. One surprise, consistently across all three programs, was that 37% of the respondents already had their choice of program clear before they first interacted with a University Adviser about enrollment. Another 28% had a preference before that first encounter. The combination of these two groups results in nearly two-thirds of the participants having either made up their minds or had a definite preference prior to talking with a University Adviser. It appears that adult students are more focused than traditional students that were discussed in the literature review. In terms of influential sources in addition to advisors, the data supported that a main source of influence for potential students were former and/or current students. These

sources were followed by faculty and family/friends. Family or friends had been expected to be more influential; and that faculty would be a more valuable expert source used by potential students. This was not the case and it was consistent with the anecdotal information received from students. These findings were consistent with the literature that peer influence is significant for program choice.

Participants from all three programs consistently indicated their reasons for enrolling. These may be loosely grouped into two categories of answers: degree will open doors and a difference it will make for them personally. The most often cited reason for enrolling was a better opportunity for promotion, a reason consistent with the fact our study group corresponds to adult learners that are full time working while taking their degree of choice. Changing careers and better credentials were also in this group. A sense of accomplishment, one of the main factors mentioned in the literature review, appeared only in the second group in this study, followed by better capability. Programs are designed to fulfill what the program creators consider to be a unique need. The results of the survey affirmed the key differences in the programs, as perceived by those who enrolled in those programs. The BAM was designed to primarily focus on the management of people and organizations. Managing people was the top descriptor chosen by those who enrolled in the BAM. The BBA was designed to provide a well-rounded exploration of running a business. The respondents who enrolled in the BBA were most likely to choose the descriptor of “run all aspects of a business.” Those who enrolled in the BSOL had the highest percentage of choosing “Interest in leadership,” which is the core emphasis of that program. These results are indicative that the programs are having success in communicating their core focuses to enrollees.

Since all respondents had enrolled in a program in a school of business, it was not surprising that the respondents consistently reported the programs being similar in terms of all being in a business environment, dealing with business problems, include the study of business, and include leadership and management. Many respondents noted that the programs included many of the same courses. Given this overlap in the experiences of these participants, more specific questions might have engendered more useful. The researchers assumed that most prospective students did not make their enrollment choice solely by themselves, they had assistance. What did surprise the researchers was that over one-third of enrollees had already decided on their program prior to talking with an Adviser. The data indicated that these respondents were most likely talking with current and/or past students. Some talked with faculty while others talked with family or friends. A few gathered information online. The most consistently influential person in choosing a program was the Adviser. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents rated the Adviser as Very Influential or Influential in their choice. This confirms an assumption that the Advisers, through the questions they ask and the recommendations they make, guide many of the program choices made.

Follow-Up Research

The data generated in this research leads directly to a set of follow-up questions that could be explored with this same population. Much was learned about the respondent’s purpose for enrolling, who they talked with, and what information was most helpful. This knowledge draws the researchers to the situations the prospective enrollees find themselves in as they begin to contemplate going back to school. What are the critical aspects of these situations that lead them to particular programs? How might the information about the University and its business programs be modified to help the prospects begin making their choices? How might the programs be changed to better meet their needs?

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BIOGRAPHIES

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Dr. Michelle Browning earned her B.S. in Education from Auburn University in Auburn, AL; MBA from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX; M.A. in Marital and Family Therapy with an emphasis in Organizational Behavior from Phillips Graduate Institute in Encino, CA; and Ph.D. in Policy, Planning and Administration from The University of Southern California (USC) in L.A., CA. She has worked as a Manager/Leader and Educator for 37 years including her present position as Professor for National University's School of Business and Management where she has served as lead faculty in Los Angeles for the past 13 years. Additionally, she serves as Program Lead Faculty for National University's Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership Program. Her research focus includes *Transformational Leadership, Strategic Planning, Emotional Intelligence, Multiculturalism, and Change Management*. She enjoys serving in the areas of Outreach, Student Recruitment, Executive Coaching and Organizational Strategic Planning. She and her husband have been happily married for 36 years and have 4 children. Her mission is to assist individuals toward the realization of their educational and professional goals.

Dr. Richard Weaver earned his Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems in 1994 from the Fielding Graduate University. Prior to that, he earned a M.Ed. from the University of Dayton and a M.B.A. from

Wright State University. He has worked in a variety of private not-for-profit and for-profit organizations in senior management roles plus served as a consultant for organizations of all sizes. He joined the faculty of National University's School of Business and Management in 1997 and is currently a Professor who is responsible for both undergraduate and graduate management programs. He teaches primarily strategic management, service management, performance management, and business ethics. His primary research interest is into the factors that impact managerial decisions. Contact information: email: rweaver@nu.edu. Mail: National University, 11255 North Torrey Pines Rd. LaJolla, CA 92037 USA.