

## **CURRICULUM PLANNING FOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

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This article which is the first of a series of two, is intended to explore briefly some ideas concerning the structure of a business administration curriculum. Most schools of Business separate their curriculum into two major divisions: 1) the basic curriculum which is required of all students, and 2) the advanced curriculum which provides for study in various areas of professional specialization such as Accounting, Production Management, etc. Only the basic curriculum will be considered here and a discussion of the advanced program will be left until later.

Like any other planning, curriculum planning should begin with a clear understanding of the objectives to be achieved. The Modern Business and Economic curriculae in institutions of higher learning throughout the world are designed to produce graduates who are trained to do the jobs that are required by the economic system. Therefore the first task of any institution of higher learning is to define what kind of a graduate they want to produce. This can be done by answering the question — «What kinds of knowledge and skills should a graduate have so that he may become productive and useful in the shortest time?» Only after this question has been answered can specific objectives be set in terms of curriculum change and development.

Before thinking about specific courses which should be included in a business curriculum, it is well to think about a basic philosophy of Business and Economic education. It is difficult to make direct comparisons between American business curriculae and Turkish business curriculae because the environment in which the graduates work are different. Therefore the specific courses and the mixture of courses should be expected to differ. But at the same time there are many ideas contained in the broad

American philosophy that can be useful to the academies as guides to solving their problems of curriculum development.

The subject of curriculum development for Business and Economic education in institutions of higher learning is not an easy subject to cope with. As with most any subject there are extreme views on what such a curriculum should be. At one of the spectrum are those who argue that the purpose of an institution of higher learning is to produce what has been called the «well educated» man, that is, a man with a broad liberal education. Curriculae developed *solely* from this point of view stress general education with a smattering of courses from the fine arts, history, languages basic sciences, etc. The argument is often made that answers to business problems can be found in the ethical framework that such education is supposed to instill in the graduate. At the other extreme is the belief that business and Economic education should be confined to a form of vocational education. This point of view emphasises skills such as book -keeping, operating office machinery, and secretarial skills.

Obviously, neither extreme provides people with the kind of education needed to succesfully occupy administrative positions within the public and private sector. The true answer to modern Business Administration curriculum development seems to lie somewhere between the extremes.

Most modern curriculae for Business and Economic education are developed around two basic beliefs. The first is the belief that there are some areas of knowledge that are so basic to success in all business and economic activities, that all students should be required to gain knowledge in all areas. The second basic belief revolves around the idea that most people are more suited to performing one kind of work than another, and therefore should be given the opportunity for some degree of specialization.

The first basic belief is reflected in the existance of a core of courses which are required of every one regardless of his prime interest. The second basic belief is reflected through the development of several major areas for concentration and by the offering of a number of elective courses. The general or basic curriculum will be the subject of the balance of this paper. Major areas of concentration will be discussed in a later article.

## THE GENERAL CURRICULUM

Most modern business and economic curriculae consist of two parts—The General Curriculum and the Specialized Curriculum. The General Curriculum consists of those that everyone should take before he graduates. The purposes behind these required courses are :

- 1) to provide general knowledge useful to people in administrative positions, and
- 2) to provide the tools, or knowledge, necessary to take more advanced courses.

To begin a discussion of general curriculum development is useful, initially, to consider *areas of knowledge* and skill which every graduate should have, rather than specific courses. Development of the specific required courses comes after a basic foundation has been laid in general business knowledge. Some basic courses already exist in the present curriculae of many of Turkey's institutions of higher learning. Where such courses do exist, it is recommended that they be reviewed and analyzed to determine whether or not they do in fact provide a basic foundation for more advanced courses. The minimum number of basic areas of knowledge should include :

- 1 — Communication
- 2 — Mathematics and Statistics
- 3 — Economics
- 4 — Accounting and Finance
- 5 — Marketing
- 6 — Management
- 7 — Environmental courses

*C o m m u n i c a t i o n s* : One of the first complaints voiced by administrators in both business and government concerning graduates of institutions of higher learning is the inability to communicate. And this complaint concerns both written and verbal communications. At a recent meeting between Turkish Business men and Educators one of the first comments of businessmen concerning graduates was that they were deficient in communication skills.

The suggestion to include communications courses in the curriculum of an institution of higher learning meets with the objection that these courses are lycée level courses and have no place in the curriculum of higher institutions. The criticism which is heard would indicate that perhaps the lycées are not doing a satisfactory job. But even when students bring with them satisfactory backgrounds in basic communications skills, there is a need to increase his skill in written and verbal communications.

Courses in communication skills should not, of course, duplicate those the student would have had at the lycée level. Rather, they should build on what he has already learned. Examples of such courses might be :

- 1 — Business letter writing
- 2 — Technical report writing
- 3 — Business and economic vocabulary
- 4 — Principles of public speaking
- 5 — Advanced public speaking

A further element of communication which appears extremely important in a business and economic curriculum is a sequence of foreign language courses. As the world becomes smaller and as business becomes increasingly international in scope, proficiency in foreign languages become increasingly important. It is suggested that academy students be required to take four years of a foreign language. Many students bring some language competency from the lycée, and depending the level of competency it may not be necessary that all students take a four full years. But all students should be required to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency.

*Mathematics and Statistics* : There are two good reasons for including Mathematics and Statistics as required courses in a business and economics curriculum. The first has to do with the thought processes of young men going into business and government. While many of the day to day decisions required of an administrator do not require higher mathematics, training in Mathematics and Statistics develops an orderly approach to solving business problems.

The second reason is concerned with the technology of business information. As computers decrease in price and find wider use in practical business applications, knowledge of Mathematics becomes more important to administrators. This does not suggest that every administrator become an expert computer programmer or operator. On the contrary—there are or will be many people with these skills available to do the actual computer work for the administrator. The problem lies in the fact that the administrators of tomorrow will find it increasingly necessary to communicate with the technicians—to understand what computers can and cannot do and in general how work is performed by computers. Since computers are basically solving problems which can be expressed quantitatively, the administrator should have some background in higher Mathematics and Statistics.

In the day by day handling of the variety of minor decisions there is always a need for skill in lower mathematics (business arithmetic). Survival and success in business means learning to think quantitatively—that is, to calculate interest rates, rate of inventory turnover, employee turnover, ratios of advertising expenditures to income, ratios finished goods inventory to production volume and the like. Therefore, a course in mathematics of business is desirable to include in a business curriculum.

*E c o n o m i c s* : A basic understanding of the economic system is an important aspect of good citizenship regardless of vocation. It is particularly important that business and government administrators be well founded in Economics, and as both the world wide and national economic systems of the future become more complex, the business or government leaders of the future will need to know even more about the functioning of the system of which they are a part. As an absolute minimum, rigorous courses in basic micro economic principles and in macro economics should be offered. If the semester system is used a full semester should be devoted to each macro and micro economics. If the semester system does not exist a year should be devoted to each course.

*A c c o u n t i n g a n d F i n a n c e* : Perhaps the most fruitful beginning course in a business and economics curriculum is in the field of accounting. The allocation of resources is almost universally planned and controlled in monetary units. In addition, and

perhaps even more important is the fact that the planning and control of the operation of administrative units (whether they are in private business, public enterprise, or governmental agencies) is done in monetary units and depends upon an understanding of basic accounting course as a foundation for advanced studies is obvious. For the student who does not intend to become a professional accountant the basic course is equally important, but understanding the «why» of accounting is more important than developing expert ability in book-keeping procedures.

*Marketing* : In some curriculae the basic course in marketing is considered to be the first course in the sequence leading to a professional specialization in Marketing. The majority of schools, however, consider basic Marketing knowledge to be a foundation course for advanced studies in all the areas of business administration. There is good reason to adopt this latter viewpoint. As the world and the nations in it continue to mature, the distribution of goods and services becomes more important and regardless of the profession of an individual, he is increasingly effected by the operation of the market system.

As in the case of accounting, a basic course in marketing provides, for the student who intends to enter the field of marketing as a profession, a foundation for more advanced study. For students who plan for other careers, a basic marketing course is also important. Because he will be involved with the market system in one way or another regardless of his profession, he needs to understand how that system functions.

*Management (Administration)* : Persons attending institutions of higher learning almost universally aspire to eventually hold an administrative position. As people progress upward in any organization they find that the skills demanded by their jobs often change. At the lower levels, jobs demand a high degree of technical competence because the jobs themselves are technical in nature. However, as a person is promoted he finds that he devotes an increasing amount of his time to administrative duties and a decreasing amount of time to technical duties. This is true regardless of the nature of the organization. Since the academies are training people to fill the many administrative positions being created by economic expansion, the

need for a basic course in principles of administration seem obvious.

*Environmental Courses:* Every student of business and economics needs to have an understanding of the environment in which he will work and live. He should be aware that as an administrator he is free to make decisions by whim, but rather that his decision making is subject to certain restraints imposed on him by the numerous environmental factors which surround him.

There are, of course, many courses of an environmental nature, which might be useful. Therefore, for purposes of discussing a general curriculum, it is probably most productive to first consider *areas* of environmental knowledge before deciding on specific courses. Four environmental areas seem to be important. They are the areas of : 1) social environment 2) psychological environment, 3) legal environment 4) the environment created by Government regulation. Each area deserves to have one course devoted to it within the general curriculum of the first two years. Serious consideration may also be given to offering additional courses in the advanced curriculum. It is not suggested that the following model is the only way that a general curriculum can be designed. There are many other ways and many other sequences of courses that could be followed. This illustration is **intended to** be only one model from many, but it does illustrate one way in which the fundamental areas of knowledge can be offered.

#### A MODEL FOR A GENERAL CURRICULUM

How the courses in the basic curriculum are offered depends upon whether a true semester system exists or whether each course is taught for a full academic year. Assuming a semester system general curriculum might be developed as follows :

##### FIRST YEAR

1st. Semester		2nd. Semester	
Course Title	Class Hrs/week	Course Title	Class Hrs/week
Business Communications	3	Technical Report Writing	3
Mathematics for Business	3	General Mathematics	3

Principles of Economics I	3	Principles of Economics II	3
Psychology	3	Sociology	3
Legal Environment of Business I	3	Legal Environment of Business II	3
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**SECOND YEAR**

1st. Semester			2nd Semester		
Course Title	Class	Hrs/week	Course Title	Class	Hrs/week
Principles of Accounting I		3	Principles of Accounting II		3
Principles of Marketing		3	Principles of Administration		3
Statistics I		3	Statistics		3
Government and Business I		3	Government and Business II		3
Business Law I		3	Business Law II		3
		<hr/> 15			<hr/> 15