

October 2002

Status Report on the Call To Endorse Prof. Windsor's Letter to AACSB

From Diane Swanson, Kansas State University and Bill Frederick, University of Pittsburgh.

Dear Colleagues around the world,

Back in the days of radio (BT, BC, BW: Before Television, Before Computers, Before Web), Walter Winchell, a radio news commentator in the US, always began his reports with an exciting rapid-fire greeting: "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. North America and all the ships at sea. Let's go to press." It is in that same expansive spirit that we bring you this update on the Call to Arms and Duane Windsor's letter to AACSB. It has truly become a global enterprise.

The response has been enormously gratifying, with many of your endorsements streaming into the AACSB offices. The flow was big enough to temporarily shut down Bill's personal computer this morning, but we aren't complaining. You should know that the endorsements of the Call and Duane's letter are coming not just from the US but also from schools and organizations in four continents. This diversity of expression is sending a powerful message to the accrediting authorities. However, WE NEED EVEN MORE RESPONSES AND ENDORSEMENTS, so do us this favor: Send the Call, Duane's letter, and the endorsement request to anyone you personally know who would be interested in supporting our collective actions. Use your personal network. Don't worry about duplications. The broader and more diverse the response-base, the better. And if your school is not in the US, don't hesitate to participate. Ethics in business is a global phenomenon. We need to get that message to AACSB. BTW, some members of SIM, IABS, and SBE do not read e-mail regularly and/or are not on the list-serves, so help us reach them. Diane and I are not the "owners" of this collective effort.

WE INVITE ALL WHO READ THIS MESSAGE TO SHARE OWNERSHIP OF THIS COLLECTIVE EFFORT. PLEASE!

We want to keep this update short. Here are some key items you should know about:

* We [Diane and Bill] remain in touch with Jone Pearce, AOM president, and Elena Antonacopoulou, chair of AOM's ethics committee. We hope the ethics committee will draft a statement to the AACSB concerning the proposed accrediting standards. Pearce has said that the AOM as an organization "does not take positions on public or other entities' policies." However, no doors have been closed.

* We [Diane and Bill] continue to explore ways to open a formal face-to-face dialogue with AACSB. We envision a diverse representative group to carry our central message into such discussions. We may ask for volunteers. Let us know if you're interested. If you or your dean can lend a hand, see what you can do and let us know so we can coordinate efforts.

* Media contacts remain vitally important. You can help by actively seeking media agents who can be interested in the responsibilities that business schools have for ethics education. It's a hot topic, highly publishable these days. Local newspapers recently contacted Bill, and stories will appear soon. Diane has done radio interviews and has placed stories in newspapers. The Nation and Business Ethics are doing stories. Diane has been in touch with The Chronicle of Higher Education for a possible story. We want to break into the Washington, DC and New York media, and to get the attention of the White House by possibly building on Bush's Wall Street speech. Business Week is another target. Can any of you help with more media contacts? Please let us know. Take action at your local level.

* A professional journal has indicated an interest in devoting a section of a future issue to the questions raised in the Call and Duane's letter. Diane is pursuing this possibility and will let us know soon. You may be asked to contribute.

* Many of you have sent encouraging, creative examples of new actions taken or being planned by your school to strengthen the ethics component of business education. Frankly, there are too many to list here. We'll try to summarize them soon and send them along to you. We encourage copy cats!