Doctor of Business Administration Program

With an Applied Scholarly Project

Introduction

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program is designed to bridge the gap between academic research and business practice. Unlike traditional PhD programs, which emphasize theoretical contributions, the DBA focuses on addressing practical, real-world challenges.

Rationale for the Change

Alignment with the DBA Mission

The traditional dissertation prioritizes theoretical contributions, which are more suitable for academic career pathways. In contrast, an Applied Scholarly Project directly supports the DBA's focus on solving real-world business challenges through research-based solutions.

Meeting Candidates' Needs

DBA candidates are typically senior professionals or executives aiming to address pressing business problems in their industries. An Applied Scholarly Project provides a structured platform to tackle these challenges, implement innovative strategies, or explore industry opportunities.

Maintaining Academic Rigor

While applied, the project still requires scholarly rigor, including a comprehensive literature review, theoretical grounding, evidence-based analysis, and robust recommendations.

Enhancing Industry Impact

An ASP strengthens collaboration with industry stakeholders, allowing candidates to undertake projects that create tangible benefits for organizations and sectors.

Key Features of the Applied Scholarly Project

Structure

An ASP involves defining a significant business problem, conducting rigorous research, analyzing findings, and presenting actionable recommendations. Deliverables may include consulting reports, implementation plans, or innovative business models.

Scholarly Foundation

The project is grounded in academic research, including literature reviews, theoretical frameworks, and evidence-based methods, ensuring intellectual depth.

Evaluation Criteria

Projects are assessed based on problem relevance, research rigor, quality of analysis, practicality of recommendations, and overall impact.

Deliverables

Final deliverables include a written report and an oral presentation, demonstrating both scholarly and professional competencies.

Comparison: Dissertation vs. Applied Scholarly Project

Aspect	Traditional Dissertation	Applied Scholarly Project
Focus	Theoretical contribution to academic knowledge	Practical solutions to real-world business problems
Outcome	Academic paper	Report, plan, or applied deliverable
Audience	Academic community	Business leaders and industry stakeholders
Contribution	Expands theory	Solves practical problems and creates industry impact
Timeframe	Long-term research	Shorter, action-oriented research

Benefits for the Institution
- Enhanced Reputation: Positions the DBA program as cutting-edge, aligning with the needs of modern business leaders.
- Increased Enrollments: Appeals to professionals seeking a flexible and practical doctoral program.
- Stronger Industry Ties: Builds long-term partnerships with organizations through collaborative projects.

Implementation Plan
- Curriculum Adjustment: Replace the dissertation phase with an Applied Scholarly Project module and develop corresponding guidelines.
- Faculty Training: Equip faculty to mentor candidates in applied research and problem-solving.
- Industry Partnerships: Collaborate with organizations to provide real-world contexts for projects.
- Accreditation and Standards: Ensure compliance with academic and professional accreditation standards.

Conclusion
Replacing the traditional dissertation with an Applied Scholarly Project represents a forward-thinking evolution for the DBA program. This change enhances relevance, flexibility, and impact while maintaining academic rigor, positioning the program to better serve professionals and their industries.