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AN EXAMINATION OF TENURE DECISIONS FOR THE FIELD OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Abstract

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Principal Topic

The field of entrepreneurship is still relatively young compared to other academic fields. Over the years, the field has been criticized for a lack of rigor in its research, lack of quality journals, and lack of a theoretical foundation. More established academic paradigms even question the legitimacy of the field of entrepreneurship. As a result, junior professors have stated, anecdotally, that by specializing in entrepreneurship, they are taking a high risk and possibly jeopardizing their ability to obtain tenure. This is especially true at many top business schools (e.g., Wisconsin, USC, MIT, Maryland, etc.), which tend to discount the quality of entrepreneurship journals during a tenure review. As a result, many faculty at top schools have had problems obtaining tenure at these institutions.

The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of the outcomes of tenure decisions for faculty who had a specialization in entrepreneurship at the time they went up for tenure. Questions were formulated in a questionnaire to determine how research, teaching, and service achievements related to whether a faculty member did or did not earn tenure.

Method

The sample for our study was all members of the Academy of Management’s Entrepreneurship Division. Surveys were pre-tested and then sent to all members through e-mail. We received 150 usable responses. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis will be used to help uncover the different dimensions underlying tenure review, given the type of institution, and a model depicting the interrelationships among these various dimensions leading to positive (tenure) or negative (denied tenure) outcomes will be suggested.

Implications

This is a groundbreaking study for the field of entrepreneurship because no one, to our knowledge, has attempted to identify the actual dimensions (whether they be formal or informal) related to tenure decisions in the field. The results of the study will significantly enhance our understanding of the dynamics that are occurring at all types of universities throughout the world. The information presented from this study will assist both junior and senior faculty in their future decisions.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Dr. Todd A. Finkle grew up in a family business and has previously owned two companies. He runs the entrepreneurship program at The University of Akron where he is Head of Academic Programming and the University’s Annual Business Plan Competition, Curriculum Development, Advising, Recruiting, Marketing, Network Socials, Internships/Mentorships, and Grant Writing. Dr. Finkle has over 75 papers, presentations and grants in outlets like the Journal of Business Venturing and Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice. Dr. Finkle was a runner up for the Academy of Management Entrepreneurship Division’s 2001 Innovation in Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Award.

Dr. David L. Deeds received his MBA and Ph.D. from the University of Washington. Dave currently teaches, performs research, and consults in the areas of entrepreneurship and small business management at Case Western Reserve University. He has published over 30 articles in outlets like the Strategic Management Journal, the Journal of Business Venturing, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Research Policy, the Journal of High Technology Management and Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research. He is also on the review board for the Journal of Business Venturing, Venture Capital: An International Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance, and New England Journal of Entrepreneurship. Dr. Deeds was in charge of the New Faculty Consortium at the Academy of Management Entrepreneurship Division’s 2002 Conference and is a consultant to the U.S. Senate on Small Business.

Dr. Phil Stetz received his MBA in Entrepreneurship from Baylor University and a Ph.D. from Texas Tech University. He is currently an assistant professor of management specializing in entrepreneurship and strategy at Stephen F. Austin State University. He has published several articles in Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research.