

“IMPROVING UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE
MOVIE *MONEYBALL*”

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I. OVERVIEW

In our culture, almost nothing escapes being rated by some authority. Cities are rated by unemployment rates, cost of living, and climate. Olympic athletes are ranked by appropriate measurements. Professional sports teams are ranked by a conference in their quest to win the World Series or Super Bowl. While professional athletes are rated for their individual statistics (i.e., batting averages, runs-batted-in, or whatever measurement is relevant) almost everything in life having a currency value is rated by some metric(s), provided by a credible rating authority.¹

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“IMPROVING UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE
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Is there a bigger challenge for a dean facing an accreditation visit than overcoming deficient faculty scholarship metrics? For many deans, given the publication lead-time (sometimes two years between manuscript completion and actually being in print), this will be a crisis with no immediate or easy answer. If a school fails to hire with a focus on scholarship metrics, a problem may arise without a comfortable remedy. Indeed, internal and organic growth of publication metrics tends to occur quite slowly. And when communication is not a top priority, growth tends to be non-existent. This article presents an analysis of academic rankings and presents a case study that has profound economic implications for institutions of higher education everywhere—we provide a schematic for increasing faculty scholarship productivity, a necessary prerequisite for accreditation.

This article contributes to the debate about college and university curricula, rankings, relevance, scholarly impact, and value to current and future students. In analyzing the debate on these issues, we find that there are great lessons to learn from the movie *Moneyball*, Daryl Morey’s challenges as general manager of the Houston Rockets, and Virgil Carter’s football career in the 70s. The movie *Moneyball* depicts the unlikely success of the Oakland A’s baseball general manager, Billy Beane, as he attempts to build a championship-winning team despite having the lowest salary budget in baseball.² To overcome this challenge, Billy Beane out-thought other team managers by (1) hiring a recent Yale economics graduate (fictional character Peter Brand) and (2) employing computer-generated statistical analysis to identify and recruit undervalued young players and inexpensive discarded veterans.³

In 2007, Daryl Morey was appointed general manager of the Houston Rockets. During this time, “the NBA was on the verge of a revolution . . . geeky executives who root[ed] their decisions in data, exploit[ed] the inefficiencies in the market and combine[d] math, science and basketball savvy [to take] over the sport. [Indeed] . . . five people who worked with Morey are leading NBA front offices.”⁴ With the league’s second-highest percentage of wins over thirteen seasons, executive Daryl Morey’s, “contrarianism was his team’s competitive advantage. Morey’s aversion to conventional wisdom resulted in a team that seemed like they

¹ Duane Truex, Michael Cuellar, Richard Vidgen & Hirotohi Takeda, *Emancipating Scholars: Reconceptualizing Scholarly Output*, Presented at the 7th Int’l. Critical Management Studies Conference (CMS7) Naples, Italy, July 11-13, 2011 (on file with authors).

² See *MONEYBALL* (Columbia Pictures 2011), <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1210166/>.; see also *The Life and Career of Revolutionary Baseball GM Billy Beane*, IMAGINE SPORTS: DIAMOND MIND ONLINE, <https://imagesports.com/news/revolutionary-baseball-gm-billy-beane> (last visited July 21, 2022) (documenting A’s win of back-to-back division championships in 2012 and 2013).

³ See *MONEYBALL*, *supra* note 2; see also Jason Reid, ‘*Moneyball*’ is Compelling, but Leaves Out Much of the Real Story, WASH. POST (Oct. 11, 2011), https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/nationals/moneyball-is-compelling-but-leaves-out-much-of-the-real-story/2011/10/11/gIQAMA1cdL_story.html (discussing how fictional character Peter Brand is a composite of several of Billy Beane’s coaching assistants).

⁴ Ben Cohen, *Daryl Morey, Who Changed the NBA in Houston and China, Is Leaving the Rockets*, WALL ST. J. (Oct. 16, 2020, 2:03 PM), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/daryl-morey-who-changed-the-nba-in-houston-and-china-is-leaving-the-rockets-11602785038>.

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were playing an entirely different sport.”⁵ As a result of focusing on data analytics, the Houston Rockets:

[T]ook the most 3-pointers . . . in league history They were the first, and remain the only, teams to shoot more 3-pointers than 2-pointers in a season When they broke the record in 2015, 3-pointers accounted for 39% of their shots. [During 2020,] 3-pointers accounted for 38% of the league’s shots.⁶

Morey, “a former management consultant who publishe[d] academic research and produce[d] musicals in his spare time . . . founded a conference for analytics dorks at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that became the hottest ticket in sports.”⁷

A somewhat similar story could be extracted from American football in 1970. NFL quarterback Virgil Carter graduated from Northwestern University as a business student and the data he crunched during that time created the foundation for the NFL’s analytics revolution.⁸ Quarterback Carter “spent most of his career with the Chicago Bears and Cincinnati Bengals, [but] wanted to calculate something he intuitively understood So he authored [a] seminal paper on a metric called expected points—the typical number of net points a team can expect based on field position, down and distance.”⁹ Carter then met with NASA consultant and football fan, Professor Robert Machol, and the two subsequently co-authored a study titled “Operations Research on Football.”¹⁰ In the study, the two were able to quantify the idea of expected points and found that “. . . a team facing 1st-and-10 from its opponent’s 5-yard line had 6.041 expected points. From the 15, that fell to 4.572 expected points.” Fast forward to 1987, Carter and Machol later “used this concept to study one of the most important decisions in football: when teams should go for it on fourth down.”¹¹

This article is written from our experience and perspective as employees working for a college of business. However, these issues, challenges, and strategies can be applied to law schools and other disciplines. In many aspects, parallels may be drawn to the plight of less well-funded education institutions, compared to wealthier colleges and universities, as these institutions seek to excel using resourcefulness despite limited resources. In a modern electronic environment, scholarly impact is vastly different than it was in the past. Researching, writing, and publication can all be characterized as both a process and a product. For

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Andrew Beaton, *The Nerdy Quarterback Who Solved Football—50 Years Ago*, WALL ST. J. (Nov. 23, 2020, 9:58 AM), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-nerdy-quarterback-who-solved-football50-years-ago-11606057081>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

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example, writing to achieve exposure to the widest possible audience requires creatively incorporating both pre-and-post publication strategies.

This article is organized in seven parts. First, we discuss the role university rankings play in parents’ and students’ decisions to enroll in certain schools. Second, we analyze how faculty members’ decisions to teach at a given university are influenced by the university’s ranking. Third, looking at this subject through the lens of a business school, we comment on the obvious role that resources play in executing any mission. Fourth, we discuss the specifics of scholarly impact and how that impact is later measured. Fifth, we examine lessons learned from the popular book and movie *Moneyball*. Sixth, we provide a case study of how Prairie View A&M University’s College of Business set about fostering a community of purposeful, productive interdisciplinary faculty scholarship having an impact. And last, we conclude. The information provided in this article is valuable and important to the topic of enhancing scholarly output and impacting resource-poor institutions.

II. UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

University rankings are important determinants of several things, including how likely students are to attend that university, how comfortable parents will feel about the significant educational investment they are making, and how an institution’s financial future will result.¹² Universities and their schools, departments, and faculties are all ranked by numerous metrics and are subject to various accreditation regimes.¹³ Additionally, universities, schools, and departments all have unique constituencies and segments seeking greater access to educational opportunities such as faculty members, legislators, nearby communities, parents, potential employers, purchasers of university sponsored research, and students.

Author Allison Symulevich studied the impact faculty profiles can have on law schools. She writes, “[a]s the prominence of academic ranking systems have grown, devising ways to boost faculty scholarly impact is becoming increasingly important for most, if not all, disciplines in academia.”¹⁴ Recent advancements in technology:

[Q]uantify academic metrics [which] are now routinely used for tenure and promotion decisions, while news institutions such as the U.S. News & World Report (U.S. News) ranking of colleges and universities . . . or the [Financial] Times Higher Education’s World University Rankings annually rank academic institutions for their news reading public.¹⁵

¹² See John L. Cotton & Alex Stewart, *Evaluate Your Business School’s Writings As If Your Strategy Matters*, 56 BUS. HORIZONS 323, 325 (2013).

¹³ *Id.* at 326.

¹⁴ Allison N. Sumulevich, *Using Law School Faculty Author Profiles to Promote Impact: The U.S. News & World Report Saga Continues*, 8 J. LIBRARIANSHIP & SCHOLARLY COMM. 1, 2 (2020).

¹⁵ *Id.*

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Of significant importance to all colleges and universities, “[t]hese educational ranking systems can define an institution’s selectivity, academic prowess, and prestige to the public, and are promoted as a tool for potential students to select where they apply and attend.”¹⁶ Therefore, “how a program or institution ranks within these academic ranking systems can have a serious effect on student enrollment, operational budget, and institutional prominence.”¹⁷ Consider:

We have entered the era where every citation counts—beyond decisions for promotion and tenure—and librarians have a key role that they can play to ensure that our faculty’s scholarship is included and counted within these ranking systems...

In their article, Michael Sauder and Ryon Lancaster (2006) note, ‘Over the last 15 years, there has been a great increase in the number of rankings of educational institutions published by widely circulating magazines and newspapers both in the United States and internationally’ (p. 106). Governments and other funding bodies are concerned about research accountability when they provide grants to universities for research (Pagell, 2009). These government agencies and funding bodies want to know how universities and academic programs compare to others on both a national and international level (Pagell, 2009).

Prior to *U.S. News* rankings, which are consumer centric, the focus of institutional rankings and prestige was on faculty research output and peer review, not input factors and faculty characteristics (Pagell, 2009). *U.S. News* ranks a variety of academic disciplines, as well as overall undergraduate institutions. Each ranking has its own methodology (Morse, Hines & Martin, n.d.). Many of them contain a peer survey to determine the prestige of an institution, but none of them have a specific scholarly impact factor (Morse, Hines & Martin, n.d.).

However, *U.S. News* rankings are not the only rankings in the world. The *Times Higher Education (THE)* ranks universities globally with their Times Higher Education World University Rankings. According to *THE*’s methodology (2019), they assess almost 1,400 universities across the globe. *THE* (2019) looks at teaching (the learning environment, research (volume, income, and reputation), citations (research influence), international outlook (staff, students, research), and industry income. There are 13 indicators used among these five areas. Research makes up 30% of an institution’s ranking. Research looks at responses to *THE*’s Academic Reputation Survey (18%), research income that is scaled for purchasing power parity (6%), and research productivity (6%).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

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According to the methodology, for research productivity, *THE* looks at Elsevier’s Scopus database: ‘To measure productivity we count the number of publications published in the academic journals indexed by Elsevier’s Scopus database per scholar, scaled for institutional size and normalized for subject’ (*THE World University Rankings 2020: Methodology*, 2019).

THE also uses citations to measure research influence. This citation factor comprises 30% of an institution’s ranking. Again, *THE* works with Elsevier to determine citation counts.¹⁸

A. U.S. News and World Report

The U.S. News and World Report provide perhaps the most well established and best known ranking of colleges in the United States.¹⁹ Approximately fifty different categories of numerical rankings are provided by U.S. News, including national universities,²⁰ liberal arts colleges,²¹ A+ schools for B students,²² best value schools,²³ regional colleges,²⁴ regional universities,²⁵ engineering programs,²⁶ Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs),²⁷ top public schools,²⁸ high school counselor rankings,²⁹ colleges by state,³⁰ and business

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Best Colleges*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁰ *Best National University Rankings*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²¹ *Best National Liberal Arts Colleges*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²² *A-Plus Schools for B Students*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²³ *Best Value Schools*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁴ *Regional Colleges*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁵ *Regional Universities*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁶ *Undergraduate Engineering Rankings*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁷ *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁸ *Top Public Schools*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

²⁹ *High School Counselor Rankings*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

³⁰ *Colleges By State*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

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schools.³¹ Exhibit 1 depicts the 2020 rankings of the top 10 of 310 schools listed by U.S. News and World Report.³²

Exhibit 1
U.S. News and World Report’s
Top 10 Universities in 2020³³

Rank	College or University
1	Princeton
2	Harvard
3	Columbia
4	MIT
5	Yale
6	Stanford
7	Chicago
8	Pennsylvania
9	Northwestern
10	Duke

B. News Ranking Methodologies

What criteria does the U.S. News and World Report use for “best college” rankings? The 2020 edition of *Find the Best College for You!* reveals that U.S. News and World Report “uses quantitative and qualitative statistical measures that education experts have proposed as reliable indicators of academic quality, and it is based on [its] researched view of what matters in education. First, [it] categorize[s] regionally accredited institutions by their mission, to establish valid comparisons... and emphasize faculty research.”³⁴ Specifically, the U.S. News methodology on grouping and ranking schools is “derived from the 2018 updated of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education’s Basic Classification.”³⁵ In ranking schools, U.S. News gathers data from each college based on fifteen factors of academic excellence and weighs each factor according to its assigned percentage.³⁶ Each ranking factor is assigned a weight that reflects U.S. News’ research about how much measure actually matters. For the year 2020, the U.S. News and World Report provide the following explanation of factors used in determining rankings as depicted in Exhibit 2.

³¹ *Business Schools*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

³² *National Universities*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with authors).

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Robert J. Morse & Eric M. Brooks, *How We Rank Colleges, Find the Best College for You!*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP., 60 (2020 ed.).

³⁵ *Id.* at 61.

³⁶ *Id.*

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Exhibit 2

Top 10 Universities for 2020³⁷

Ranking Factors in the U.S. News and World Report, 2020

Ranking Factor	Weight
1. Outcome: graduation and retention (22%), graduation rate performance (8%), and social mobility (5%).	35%
2. Faculty Resources: class size (8%), faculty salary (7%), faculty with the highest degree in their fields (3%), student-faculty ratio (1%), and proportion of faculty who are full-time (1%).	20%
3. Expert opinion	20%
4. Financial Resources	10%
5. Student Success	10%
6. Alumni Giving	5%

III. BUSINESS SCHOOL RANKINGS

Similar to institutional rankings, U.S. News and World Report and other media outlets (e.g., Wall Street Journal), also rank business schools. Exhibit 3 provides the 2020 rankings of the top ten business schools in America:

³⁷ *Top 10 Universities for 2020*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: BEST COLLEGES 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with the authors).

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Exhibit 3

U.S. News and World Report’s
Top 10 Business Schools for 2020³⁸

Rank	Business Program
1	Stanford
2	University of Pennsylvania (Wharton)
3	Northwestern (Kellogg) – tie
3	Chicago (Booth)-tie
5	MIT
6	Harvard
7	Berkeley (Haas)
8	Columbia
9	Yale
10	New York (Stern)

Exhibit 4 provides the factors considered when ranking business schools in the United States, along with the factor’s corresponding weight:

³⁸ *MBA Rankings*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: TOP 10 BUSINESS SCHOOLS FOR 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with the authors).

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Exhibit 4

Ranking Factors in the U.S. News and World Report’s
Top 10 Business Schools for 2020³⁹

Ranking Factor	Weight
1. Average Peer Assessment Score	50%
2. Average GMAT score and average GRE quantitative, verbal, and analytical writing scores of part-time MBA students entering in fall 2019.	15%
3. Average undergraduate GPA of part-time MBA students entering in fall 2019	12.5%
4. Number of years of work experience of part-time MBA students entering in fall 2019, with more years of work experience scoring higher in the rankings	10%
5. Percentage of the business school's fall 2019 total full-time and part-time MBA enrollment that is in the part-time MBA program, with a higher percentage of MBA students being part-time scoring higher in the rankings	12.5%

During early 2023, “Under pressure amid a boycott by top law schools, U.S. News & World Report told law school deans... that it will make several changes in the next edition of its influential ratings.”⁴⁰ A deviation from previous years, “The 2023-24 rankings, scheduled to be published this spring, will also rely less on surveys of schools’ reputations submitted by academics, lawyers and judges, the magazine said.”⁴¹

While in a law school faculty setting, Professors Willey and Knapp reflected on how the frequency of downloads and citations impacts tenure decisions and the measure of a scholar’s influence⁴² After learning about U.S. News’ plan to include

³⁹ *MBA Methodology: Ranking Factors*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT: TOP 10 BUSINESS SCHOOLS FOR 2020 (citing to the printed version, 2020) (on file with the authors).

⁴⁰ Ruth Graham, *After Law Schools Boycott, U.S. News Will Change Its Influential Ranking System*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 3, 2023 at A13.

⁴¹ *Id.* See also Melissa Korn, *U.S. News & World Report to Revamp Parts of Its Law-School Ranking*, WALL ST. J., Jan. 2, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-news-world-report-to-revamp-parts-of-its-law-school-ranking-11672667620>.

⁴² Rob Willey & Melanie Knapp, *Hein, U.S. News, and How to Increase Citations* (March 11, 2021), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3801190> (citing Robert Morse, *U.S. News Considers Evaluating Law School Scholarly Impact*, U.S. NEWS: MORSE CODE: INSIDE THE COLLEGE RANKINGS (Feb. 13, 2019 at 1:00 PM), <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-rankings-blog/articles/2019-02-13/us-news-considers-evaluating-law-school-scholarly-impact>); see also Lauren Mattiuzzo, *U.S. News Considers Using Hein’s ScholarCheck to Evaluate Law School Scholarly Impact*, HEINONLINE BLOG, (Feb. 25, 2019), <https://home.heinonline.org/blog/2019/02/u-s-news-considers-using-heins-scholarcheck-to-evaluate-law-school-scholarly-impact/>; Robert

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citations as a factor for law school rankings, both professors stated that they started focusing their attention on citations.⁴³ The question then looms: how long will it be before business schools are subject to the same ranking factors as law schools?

IV. RESOURCES AT BUSINESS SCHOOLS

It comes as no surprise that universities and business schools differ substantially in the number of resources at their disposal. After the 2008 financial crisis,⁴⁴ several public universities encountered significant budget constraints.⁴⁵ Further, the pandemic imposed additional burdens onto public and private colleges and universities in ways we have yet to fully understand.⁴⁶ Even more pronounced are the burdens the pandemic has imposed on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).⁴⁷

For example, in 2020, the total endowment for Prairie View A&M University was around \$84 million, which is more than the majority of HBCU institutions receive.⁴⁸ During 2020, Prairie View A&M returned 6.5 percent of its budget for the 2020 fiscal year to the Texas Governor’s office.⁴⁹ Given the estimated \$5 billion shortfall in Texas’ state revenues, the actual claw back by the state could be much higher.

The pandemic has contributed to the current hiring freeze that is impacting all faculty and staff positions at many public universities. By 2021, there were 142 colleges and universities with endowments in excess of \$1 billion.⁵⁰ This list does not include a single HBCU. Even at Howard University, the HBCU with the biggest endowment, the endowment only stands at around \$795 million.⁵¹ The median endowment of the HBCUs was only \$97.8 million and the combined total of all HBCUs was only \$2.1 billion.⁵² Exhibit 5 illustrates endowment size among the top 10 HBCUs in America.

Morse, *U.S. News Responds to the Law School Community*, U.S. NEWS (May 2, 2019), <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-rankings-blog/articles/2019-05-02/us-news-responds-to-the-law-school-community>.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ Lawrence J. Trautman, *Personal Ethics & the U.S. Financial Collapse of 2007-08: Decade Later* (August 12, 2017), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2502124>.

⁴⁵ Dick Startz, *University Finances and COVID-19: Different Schools, Different Risks*, BROOKINGS: BROWN CTR. CHALKBOARD (June 19, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/06/18/university-finances-and-covid-19-different-schools-different-risks/>.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ U.S. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson & Lawrence J. Trautman, *The Demographics of Death: An Early Look at COVID-19, Cultural and Racial Bias in America*, 48 HASTINGS CONST. L. Q. 357 (2021), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3677607>.

⁴⁸ E-mail from Cynthia Carter-Horn, Sr. VP for Bus. Affairs & CFO, Prairie View A&M University to Munir Quddus (Jan. 4, 2023, 11:50 CST) (on file with authors).

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *HBCU Money’s 2021 Top 10 HBCU Endowments* (Mar. 4, 2022), <https://hbcumoney.com/tag/hbcu-endowments/>.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

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Exhibit 5

U.S. News and World Report’s
Top 10 HBCUs with the Largest Endowments (2021)⁵³

Rank	College or University	Endowment
1	Howard	\$795 million
2	Spelman	\$530 million
3	Hampton	\$379 million
4	Morehouse College	\$278 million
5	Meharry Medical College	\$186 million
6	North Carolina A&T	\$157 million
7	Florida A&M University	\$118 million
8	Morgan State University	\$87 million
9	Tennessee State University	\$91 million
10	University of the Virgin Islands	\$82 million

When one compares the information from Exhibit 5 (HBCU endowments) and Exhibit 6 (Largest Endowments), the discrepancy between the two is quite clear. Indeed, the colleges listed in Exhibit 6 are among the most prestigious of American private universities, with the top ten receiving endowments in excess of \$10 billion. Among the most prestigious American private universities, the following ten universities each have endowments in excess of \$10 billion.

Exhibit 6

U.S. News and World Report’s
Top 10 Universities with Largest Endowments (2020)⁵⁴

Rank	College or University	Endowment
1	Harvard	\$41 Billion
2	Yale	\$31 Billion
3	Stanford	\$29 Billion
4	Princeton	\$26 Billion
5	MIT	\$18 Billion
6	University of Pennsylvania	\$15 Billion
7	TAMU – College Station	\$13 Billion
8	Notre Dame	\$12 Billion
9	University of Michigan	\$12 Billion
10	Columbia	\$11 Billion

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ Josh Moody, *10 Universities with the Biggest Endowments*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, Sept. 21, 2021, <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/the-short-list-college/articles/10-universities-with-the-biggest-endowments>. (last visited July 22, 2022).

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V. SCHOLARLY IMPACT FACTOR DEBATE

Scholars across America have different views as to what contributes to scholarly impact, resulting in what many in academia deem the scholarly impact factor debate. This article provides a thorough analysis of the ongoing debate by exploring the following topics: (1) the currency value of citations; (2) the life cycle of citations; (3) measuring scholarly impact; (4) factors that impact the acceptance process; and (5) additional impact considerations in a college of businesses.

A. Currency Value of Citations

It is undisputed that citations carry a certain value. In fact, many scholars regard citations as the currency of legal scholarship. Scholar and economist, J. Atsu Amegashie, wrote that “[c]itations are used by government agencies, foundations, universities and departmental committees, and academic associations to determine funding, promotions, academic awards, teaching loads, etc. . . .”⁵⁵ Teaching in the modern business school is “based on scientific principles that can only be dug out through some form of research. Certainly, most business schools proudly display the research accomplishments of their faculty, and faculty salaries are strongly related to research accomplishments, particularly at the more prestigious institutions.”⁵⁶ In 2003 Professor Stan J. Liebowitz, wrote that, “there is a tentative movement to incorporate specific data on research productivity into some business school rankings.”⁵⁷ Moreover, Professors Frey and Rost observed that, “publication and citation rankings have become major indicators of the scientific worth of universities and countries, and determine to a large extent the career of individual scholars.”⁵⁸ To a considerable extent, academic citations have become the currency and measurement of legal scholarship.⁵⁹ Some scholars, such as Richard Posner,

⁵⁵ J. Atsu Amegashie, *Citations and Incentives in Academic Contests*, 58 *ECON. INQ.* 1233 (2020).

⁵⁶ See Stan J. Liebowitz, *The Role of Research in Business School Rankings*, (Mar. 11, 2003), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=464480.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ See Bruno S. Frey & Katja Rost, *Do Rankings Reflect Research Quality* (Institute for Empirical Res. in Economics Univ. of Zurich, Working Paper No. 390, 2008), <https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/zuriewwp/390.htm>; see also Erick Kitenge & Lawrence J. Trautman, *The Business School Academic Job Market: What’s Valued? What’s Not!* (2022) (unpublished manuscript) (on file with authors).

⁵⁹ See Jason P. Nance & Dylan J. Steinberg, *The Law Review Article Selection Process: Results from a National Study*, 71 *ALBANY L. REV.* 565 (2008), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=988847>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *The Value of Legal Writing, Law Review, and Publication*, 51 *IND. L. REV.* 693, 695 (2018); see also J.M. Balkin & Sanford Levinson, *How To Win Cites and Influence People*, 71 *CHI. KENT L. REV.* 843, (1996); Mario Biagioli, *Quality to Impact, Text to Metadata: Publication and Evaluation in the Age of Metrics*, *KNOW: A JOURNAL ON THE FORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE* (Dec. 29, 2018), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3307615>; Lorenzo Ductor et al., *On the Influence of Top Journals*, *TINBERGEN INSTITUTE* (Apr. 19, 2020), <https://www.tinbergen.nl/discussion-paper/5940/20-019-ii-on-the-influence-of-top-journals>; Adam Mossoff, *How Copyright Drives Innovation: A Case Study of Scholarly Publishing in the Digital World*, 2015 *MICH. ST. L. REV.* 955 (2015); Gregory C. Sisk et al., *Scholarly Impact of Law School Faculties in 2012: Applying Leiter Scores to Rank the Top Third*, 9 *ST. THOMAS L. REV.*

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contend that citation analysis provides important insight into “social phenomena such as reputation, influence, prestige, celebrity, the diffusion of knowledge, the rise and decline of schools of thought . . . the quality of scholarly output, the quality of journals, and the productivity of scholars . . . and university departments.”⁶⁰

Indeed, citations allow a reader to verify the accuracy of the author’s assertions and allow authors to receive credit for their ideas when other authors use them. Additionally, citations allow researchers to quickly locate valuable information.⁶¹ According to Lawrence Solum “the new reality of the . . . academy is that your ability to produce excellent . . . scholarship will determine how far your connections and credentials (or lack thereof) will take you.”⁶² The gauge of an author’s impact on scholarship has:

[B]een evaluated through tabulation of citations to their writings. Citation counts have been utilized in assessing scholars’ work for purposes of grant awards, tenure, or promotion decisions.

Those using citation data for evaluative purposes have justified such use by pointing to research demonstrating a high correlation between the total of citations to a scientist’s or scholar’s writings and judgments by peers of the ‘productivity,’ ‘significance,’ ‘quality,’ ‘utility,’ ‘influence,’ ‘effectiveness,’ or ‘impact’ of scientists and their scholarly products.’ One investigator has gone so far as to say that ‘citations and peer rankings appear to be virtually the same measurement . . .

Even with their acknowledged limitations, citation counts are attractive as relatively objective tools for assessing scholarly impact. They can be used not only to gauge the impact of a given author or writing, but also to identify which writings are the most frequently cited, taken to be a rough measure of the writings which have had the most extensive impact.⁶³

B. Life Cycle of Citations

To extract the most value out of citations, one must understand the life cycle of citations. Indeed, an article’s citation is most valuable at its peak as compared to

838 (2012); Tom Ginsburg & Thomas J. Miles, *Empiricism and the Rising Incidence of Coauthorship in Law*, 2011 U. ILL. L. REV. 1785 (2011); Gregory C. Sisk et al., *Scholarly Impact of Law School Faculties in 2015: Updating the Leiter Score Ranking for the Top Third*, 12 ST. THOMAS L. REV. 100 (2015).

⁶⁰ Richard A. Posner, *The Theory and Practice of Citations Analysis, with Special Reference to Law and Economics* 3 (Univ. Chi. L. Sch., John M. Olin Program L. & Econ. Working Paper No. 83, 1999).

⁶¹ See Trautman, (*Value of Legal Writing*) *supra* note 59, at 712 (citing Patrick Eoghan Murray).

⁶² Lawrence B. Solum, *The New Realities of the Legal Academy*, BECOMING A LAW PROFESSOR: A CANDIDATE’S GUIDE (forthcoming), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1651166>.

⁶³ Fred R. Shapiro & Michelle Pearse, *The Most-Cited Law Review Articles of All Time*, 110 MICH. L. REV. 1483, 1485 (2012).

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the beginning and end of the citation’s life. Professors Sebastian Galiani and Ramiro H. Gálvez present findings from “a dataset consisting of more than five million citations to 59,707 research articles from 12 dissimilar fields of research.”⁶⁴ The authors reported “that citations follow a life-cycle pattern. In the first years after publication, articles generally receive a small but growing number of citations until, eventually, they reach a peak from which they then decline. Importantly, the shape of these life cycles varies greatly from one field to the next.”⁶⁵ In addition, “given that several influential metrics restrict their input to a certain range in terms of the number of years since publication, these differences are by no means neutral and should be taken into account when evaluating researchers or their institutions.”⁶⁶ Further, in analyzing a citation’s value and life cycle, Dean David C. Yen observed that:

Citations can be categorized (depending on the actual usage) by:

- (i) Searching the title and keywords only to indicate/identify the relevancy to support the working paper in the subject area,
- (ii) Reviewing and reading the published article to identify the currentness and if the content contains certain important knowledge and information which can be used to provide as a citation reference, and
- (iii) Having a physical download to allow the direct quote of the paragraphs, texts, tables or figures to be employed/expanded in the working paper.⁶⁷

In the context of scholarly impact, understanding when a citation’s value has peaked is essential to experiencing more exposure and value. Keep in mind, a citation’s life is typically not at its peak at the beginning or end of the citation’s life.

C. Measuring Scholarly Impact

A seemingly never-ending, controversial topic among faculty is what exactly constitutes scholarly impact and how individual contributions will be measured for tenure-track faculty. Professor William H. Starbuck wrote that “a few years ago, some deans of business schools announced new criteria for tenure and

⁶⁴ Sebastian Galiani & Ramiro H. Gálvez, *The Life Cycle of Scholarly Articles Across Fields of Research* (2017), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2964565>.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ E-mail from David C. Yen, Dean, Jesse H. Jones School of Business, Texas Southern University to Munir Quddus, Dean, College of Business, Prairie View A&M University (May 2, 2021, 4:12 pm) (on file with author).

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promotion that place extreme emphasis on publications in so-called A journals. The deans’ statements implied that articles in A-ranked journals are essential and those in B or C journals are insignificant.”⁶⁸ Professor Starbuck further explained that in order “[t]o gain tenure or promotion to full professor . . . a professor must have published at least *N* publications in A journals. However, Professor Starbuck criticizes this approach and stated that “even though many social science departments and business schools use such an approach to faculty evaluation, its apparent oversimplification and narrow focus is disturbing . . . Personal experience teaches us that it makes no sense to judge articles solely on the journals in which they appear.”⁶⁹ A similar practice of focusing on journal rank as a proxy for quality is noted in law journals.⁷⁰ However, article acceptance by law journals is often determined by factors unrelated to the intrinsic value of the article under consideration. For example, law journal articles are generally much longer than scholarly articles appearing in top journals for other disciplines. Law review articles are typically fifty to eighty printed pages—compared with eight to fifteen in many other disciplines. As a result, such unrelated factors as page space limitations, preference for authors from particularly prestigious law schools, time of year submitted, and the like are often determining factors as to whether an offer to publish is granted. Further contributing to the conversation revolving around scholarly impact of any particular article, Dean David C. Yen provided that:

Some schools may also pay attention to some other impact factors which may include but are not limited to the following items:

1. Contribution rate (number of the co-authors)
2. Innovation factor (ranking of the author sequence)
3. Journal subscription rate (more readers may mean/represent a bigger impact)
4. Journal Subscription rate (sometimes, high quality journals may not transform into a high submission rate)
5. Practitioners’ judgment. For example, Harvard Business Review, Sloan Management Review, California Management Review, IEEE IT Professional...Some governmental publications, United Nation’s [sic] publications may be regarded by the practitioners highly.

⁶⁸ See William H. Starbuck, *How Much Better Are the Most-Prestigious Journals? The Statistics of Academic Publication*, 16 *ORG. SCI.* 180 (2005).

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ See Nance & Steinberg, *supra* note 59.

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6. Editorial board and review process (academic random peer review, in house review, editorial board review, and / or if 3-tier structure with which Editor-in-chief /SE, AE and general reviewers are used to make decision[s]).⁷¹

With the advent of Google Scholar and Scopus in 2004, scholars have used “three tools, ISI from Thompson Reuters, Google Scholar from Google, Inc., and Scopus from Elsevier are used by academics to track their citation rates. Access to ISI Web of Science is a subscription-based service, while Google Scholar provides a free alternative to retrieve the citation counts.”⁷² Accordingly, this section briefly comments and focuses on measurements that currently appear to be more widely used for purposes of tenure assessment: (1) the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List; (2) Cabell’s list of journals; (3) Google Scholar; (4) Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN); (5) Scopus; (6) Web of Science; and (7) UT Dallas’ Naveen Jindal School of Management list of 24 leading business journals.

1. *Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List*

The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List ranking system and metrics are often used by senior faculty who received their Ph.D. over twenty years ago. After all, significant ranking tools such as Google Scholar and SSRN did not yet exist over twenty years ago.

In December 2019, the ABDC list “endorse[d] 2,682 journal entries with the following classifications: A* 7.41% (199); A 24.27% (651); B 31.69% (850); [and] C 36.61% (982).”⁷³ It is not unusual for arguments to ensue among senior faculty cohorts about which journals ought to be rated “A” for purposes of tenure, “B” or “C,” or various permutations in between. Faculty and tenure committees have committed numerous hours debating what should count for tenure at their school and why. Since the senior faculty make up the majority of these committees, the controversy surrounding the rating of journals is one that is all too familiar. However, the controversy tends to be a source of disagreement and frustration among the junior faculty seeking tenure. Comparable to the ABDC list for business schools is the Washington and Lee rankings for legal scholarship.⁷⁴

In 2020, Professor De Jong and Professor Veld examined the ABDC system of journal classification “factors, such [as] number of journals in each category... number of papers published per year... number of authors per paper, and the number

⁷¹ E-mail from David C. Yen, *supra* note 67.

⁷² See Nader Ale Ebrahim et al., *Equality of Google Scholar with Web of Science Citations: Case of Malaysian Engineering Highly Cited Papers*, 8 MOD. APPLIED SCI. 63 (2014).

⁷³ See *The 2019 ABDC Journal Quality List*, AUSTRALIAN BUS. DEANS COUNCIL (Dec. 6, 2019) (on file with the author).

⁷⁴ W&L Law Journal Rankings, Washington and Lee School of Law, <https://managementtools4.wlu.edu/LawJournals/>, (last visited July 25, 2022).

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of academics in each discipline.”⁷⁵ Both professors reported that there were “clearly more opportunities for Management and Economics academics and less for Finance, Marketing, Econometrics, and especially Accounting researchers. This finding applies to both the highest two categories (A* and A) combined and to the highest category (A*) considered on itself.”⁷⁶ Moreover, “the difference in higher ranking publishing opportunities seems to have slightly declined in the 2019 list compared to the 2016 list.”⁷⁷ U.S. legal journals are essentially missing-in-action from the ABDC list.

2. *Cabell’s*

Cabell’s was founded by Dr. David W.E. Cabell in 1978. Dr. Cabell created this platform in search of “an easier way for tenure committees, professors, researchers, and doctoral students to find academic journal information in order to publish their research.”⁷⁸ And according to the Pfeiffer Library at Tiffin University, “Cabell’s International is a scholarly services company that can assist researchers in properly preparing their work for publication submission.”⁷⁹ The website contains a database with over 11,000 academic journals that cover over eighteen different disciplines.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Cabell’s offers editing services for scholars publishing outside their native language.⁸¹ This allows researchers visiting Cabell’s International to get the most out of their research time.⁸²

Since its establishment, Cabell’s has continually expanded and increased its research and journal capacity. Indeed,

Since its founding almost 40 years ago, Cabells has expanded its services to include systems for identifying both journalytics and predatory journals, manuscript preparation tools, and a suite of powerful metrics to help its users find the right journals, no matter what stage of their career.

The searchable Journalytics database includes 18 academic disciplines from more than thirteen thousand international scholarly publications.

⁷⁵ Abe de Jong & Chris Veld, *Does the ABCD Journal Classification Create Unequal Opportunities for Accounting and Finance Researchers?* (2020), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3565550.

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *About Us*, TIFFIN UNIV. PFEIFFER LIBR.: CABELL’S, <https://www2.cabells.com/about> (last visited Feb. 11, 2022).

⁷⁹ *What is Cabell’s*, TIFFIN UNIV. PFEIFFER LIBR.: CABELL’S, <https://library.tiffin.edu/introducingcabells/whatiscabells> (last visited Feb. 11, 2022).

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ *Prep Your Paper for Success*, TIFFIN UNIV. PFEIFFER LIBR.: CABELL’S, <https://cabells.editage.com/> (last visited Feb. 11, 2022).

⁸² *Id.*

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Through our continued partnerships with major academic publishers, journal editors, scholarly societies, accreditation agencies, and other independent databases, Cabells provides accurate, up-to-date information about academic journals to more than 750 universities worldwide. . . .⁸³

3. *Google Scholar*

After studying engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Anurag Acharya traveled to America to earn his doctorate and became a computer science assistant professor at the University of California in Santa Barbara.⁸⁴ Professor Acharya joined Google in 2000 and partnered with Alex Verstak to create and launch Google Scholar on November 18, 2004.⁸⁵ As this free academic search engine matured, Google Scholar Citations launched in November 2011, and metrics were released for the first time in April 2012.⁸⁶

Unlike other citation services, Google Scholar provides services free of charge in addition to “Bibliometrics information on a wide range of scholarly journals, and other published material, such as peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts, and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations.”⁸⁷ Emphasizing the importance of indexing the above-listed documents, Ebrahim and his co-authors question whether “some of these documents would not otherwise be indexed by search engines such as Google, so they would be ‘invisible’ to web searchers, and clearly some would be invisible to Web of Science users, since it is dominated by academic journals.”⁸⁸

In discussing Google Scholar (GS), Professor Gary Lucas, Jr. stated that “GS has enormous potential to provide us with significant information about the impact of . . . scholarship at a very low cost.”⁸⁹ The steps are easy, “individual scholars can create a GS profile, and GS will automatically add their publications and count citations. A scholar can then make his or her profile visible to the public.”⁹⁰ A school, college, or university “can create a GS profile for its entire faculty that includes all of the faculty’s publications and citations.”⁹¹

⁸³ *About Us*, *supra* note 78.

⁸⁴ See Steven Levy, *The Gentleman Who Made Scholar*, WIRED (Oct. 17, 2014), <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/the-gentleman-who-made-scholar/>.

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *A Brief History of Google Scholar*, PAPER PILE, <https://paperpile.com/g/google-scholar-guide/#a-brief-history-of-google-scholar> (last visited Feb. 11, 2022).

⁸⁷ See Ebrahim, et al., *supra* note 72 at 64.

⁸⁸ *Id.* (citing K. Kousha & Michael Thelwall, *Google Scholar Citations and Google Web-URL citations: A Multi-discipline Exploratory Analysis*, 58 J. AM. SOC. INFO. SCI. & TECH. 1055 (2007)).

⁸⁹ See Gary Lucas, Jr., *Measuring Scholarly Impact: A Guide for Law School Administrators and Legal Scholars*, 165 U. PA. L. REV. ONLINE 165, 171 (2017).

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ *Id.*

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For years, academic publishing has been characterized by scholars who work on research that they proudly render for free to a cartel of largely European publishing oligarchies (e.g., Emerald, Kluwer, Oxford University Press, Reed Elsevier, Springer, Thomson Reuters, and Wiley Blackwell) in exchange for the “honor” of having their work published in one of these journals. Interestingly, scholars not only render their work for free but often at a cost to them due to submission fees and other editorial costs. In turn, scholarly research is generally destined to appear for all to see, but often exists behind a paywall.

There are a few potential positives and negatives to using Google Scholar. Weighing against the advantage of being free, Professor Lucas points to the following Google Scholar drawbacks that readers may want to consider. “Most importantly [as of 2017], many . . . scholars and . . . schools do not have a profile. This means that ranking scholars and faculties is labor intensive and requires manual searches.”⁹² With the passage of time, this issue is likely to be resolved as more scholars and institutions create profiles. However, Professor Lucas further warns that, “G[oogle Scholar] includes citations that some administrators might prefer to exclude, e.g., citations in unpublished working papers. Finally, GS sometimes introduces errors, e.g., double counting a citation.”⁹³

On the positive side of the ledger, Professor Lucas provides insight into the useful features of Google Scholar:

In addition to counting total citations, GS gives a separate count covering the past five years. GS also calculates a scholar’s h-index, which is the largest number h , such that h of the scholar’s publications have been cited at least h times. For example, a scholar who has five articles that have been cited twenty, five, four, two, and two times respectively has an h-index of three. Compared to total citations, the h-index deemphasizes the importance of scholars who have a large number of citations attributable to a small number of publications. Finally, GS includes citations to some books as well as articles.⁹⁴

4. *Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN)*

In recent years, the SSRN repository and ranking of downloads have been recognized by many university tenure committees as a valuable measurement of scholarly impact. In fact, a 2006 study conducted by Bernard Black and Paul Caron reported, “that SSRN downloads are correlated with citations . . . [and] the correlation is especially strong at the faculty level, which suggests that ranking . . . faculties based on SSRN downloads gives a rough approximation of relative

⁹² *Id.* at 172.

⁹³ *Id.*

⁹⁴ *Id.*

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scholarly impact . . . SSRN updates its rankings monthly, and these updates receive significant attention throughout the . . . academy.”⁹⁵

In 1994, the widespread growth and availability of the Internet enabled the development of the Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN).⁹⁶ Founded by Michael C. Jensen and Wayne Marr in 1992,⁹⁷ the SSRN “is devoted to the rapid worldwide dissemination of social science research and is composed of a number of specialized research networks in each of the social sciences.”⁹⁸

Today, communication among academic researchers is enhanced by the “early distribution of research results by distributing submitted abstracts and by soliciting abstracts of top-quality research papers around the world.”⁹⁹ For example, Professor Dan Hunter provided his personal thoughts on communication on SSRN’s platform: “I post draft articles to SSRN in order to gather comments from other scholars and to grant access to my ideas to anyone who might be interested.”¹⁰⁰

Scholars benefit from SSRN’s database referencing over 1,141,515 scholarly working papers as of July 19, 2022, and forthcoming papers, including an Electronic Paper Collection currently containing over 995,005 downloadable full-text documents, along with research papers from a number of Fee-Based Partner Publications.¹⁰¹ Publication of author contact information facilitates scholarly community and the flow of research between scholars.¹⁰² Downloads of scholarly articles averaged more than two million per month during 2021-22,¹⁰³ with full-text downloads growing during 2022 to over 153 million since inception.¹⁰⁴ SSRN also contributes to community among academicians by providing information about conferences, calls for papers, other announcements, and job postings.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁵ Lucas, Jr., *supra* note 89 at 173; see Marcel Clermont & Harald Dyckhoff, *Coverage of Business Administration Literature In Google Scholar: Analysis and Comparison With Econbiz, Scopus and Web Of Science*, 1 *BIBLIOMETRIE-PRAXIS UND FORSCHUNG* 1 (2015), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2016850>; see also Eric Voigt, *Interactive Ways to Teach Cost-Effective Research Using Google Scholar and LexisNexis*, *THE LAW TEACHER* (2012), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2102812>.

⁹⁶ See generally Noam Cohen, *Now Professors Get Their Star Rankings, Too*, *NY TIMES* (June 9, 2008), http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/09/business/media/09link.html?_r=0.

⁹⁷ See Michael C. Jensen, *About SSRN: SSRN’s History and Structure* (Feb. 2, 2012) (website no longer available, information on file with the authors).

⁹⁸ Home page, Leading Social Science Research Delivered Daily, Social Science Research Network, <http://www.ssrn.com/en/>, (website no longer available, information on file with the authors).

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ Dan Hunter, *Walled Gardens*, 62 *WASH. & LEE L. REV.* 607, 609 (2005).

¹⁰¹ Home page, *supra* note 98.

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ See *Browse eLibrary Statistics*, SSRN (June 12, 2020) (on file with authors), <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/DisplayJournalBrowse.cfm>.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ See generally Susan Duncan, *Demystifying the SSRN Process: How to Make it Work for You* (2008), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1166022>; Jevin D. West et al. J, *Author-Level Eigenfactor Metrics: Evaluating the Influence of Authors, Institutions and Countries Within the SSRN*

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In his 20th Anniversary announcement, SSRN Chairman Michael C. Jensen stated:

SSRN’s objective is to provide worldwide distribution of research to authors and their readers and to facilitate communication among them at the lowest possible cost. In pursuit of this objective, we encourage authors to upload their papers to SSRN (without charge). And any paper an author uploads to SSRN is downloadable for free, worldwide . . . SSRN does not take copyright on any paper posted to SSRN. SSRN takes only a non-exclusive, revocable license (revocable at any time by the author or copyright holder) to distribute an author’s work.¹⁰⁶

Scholars Shapiro and Pearse observed that “SSRN remains one of the most popular subject-matter repositories for faculty, commanding popularity for its download counts.”¹⁰⁷ Both scholars contend that “[s]uch download or ‘click’ metrics provide a broader or more inclusive sense of impact than traditional citation because they help capture a sense of the visibility of one’s scholarship”¹⁰⁸ As another measure of impact reflecting recent technological change, “download metrics potentially include popularity among a broader audience of readers, such as non-scholars or people who view or read an article but might not have occasion to reference it. . . . It is arguable that papers with higher download counts skew more favorably toward newer articles.”¹⁰⁹

It can be helpful to check the SSRN database for recently posted papers just before submitting a final manuscript for publication. This often enables the addition of timely new information to a manuscript about to be published.¹¹⁰

A recent merger between SSRN, Mendeley, and Elsevier could provide an even stronger resource in the future. On May 17, 2016, SSRN Founder and Chairman Michael C. Jensen announced an ownership change, whereby “SSRN [joined] Mendeley and Elsevier to coordinate . . . development and delivery of new products and services.”¹¹¹

Community (Harvard Bus. Sch. NOM Unit Working Paper No. 12-068, 2012), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1636719>.

¹⁰⁶ Michael C. Jensen, *20th Anniversary Message*, SSRN (Feb. 2, 2012), (website no longer available, information on file with authors).

¹⁰⁷ *Id.* citing Shapiro & Pearse, *supra* note 63 at 52.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*; see Gregory J. Gordon, *What We Don’t Know We Don’t Know*, 22 AGAINST THE GRAIN, 18 (2010), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1710009; see also Zura Kakushadze, *An Index for SSRN Downloads*, 10 J. INFORMETRICS 9 (2016), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2656600>; Theodore Eisenberg, *Assessing the SSRN-Based Law School Rankings* (Cornell Legal Studies Research Paper No. 05-026, 2005), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=788006>.

¹¹⁰ See Trautman, *supra* note 59.

¹¹¹ *From The Desk of Michael C. Jensen, Chairman*, SSRN (May 17, 2016), <http://www.ssrn.com/en/index.cfm/ssrn-joins-mendeley-elsevier/>.

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5. *Scopus*

Scopus was founded in 2004 by Elsevier.¹¹² Scopus describes itself as, “the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. Delivering a comprehensive overview of the world’s research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities, Scopus features smart tools to track, analyze and visualize research.”¹¹³ BioRxiv, a preprint server for biology, describes Scopus as, “a leading bibliometric database. Indeed, Scopus does contain the largest number of abstracts and articles cited in peer-reviewed publications. The journals included in Scopus are periodically re-evaluated to ensure they meet indexing criteria.”¹¹⁴ As a “source-neutral abstract and subject matter database,” Scopus protects the integrity of the scholarly record and assists in bolstering institutional research performance, rank, and reputation.¹¹⁵

6. *ISI Web of Science*

The ISI Web of Science (WOS) is a costly database, available now for many years, providing citation and publication information for “all domains of science and social science.”¹¹⁶ The WOS describes itself as:

[T]he world’s most trusted publisher-independent global citation database. Guided by the legacy of Dr. Eugene Garfield, inventor of the world’s first citation index ... [delivering] best-in-class publication and citation data ... allow[ing] you to track ideas across disciplines and time from over 1.7 billion cited references from over 159 million records.¹¹⁷

7. *UT Dallas’ Naveen Jindal School of Management List*

The Naveen Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) ranks performance of the top 100 business schools since 1990 using

¹¹² See *What is Scopus About*, SCOPUS BLOG: ACCESS & USE SUPPORT CENTER (last updated Sep. 21, 2021), https://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/15100/supporthub/scopus/.

¹¹³ *Id.*

¹¹⁴ See Andrea Cortegiani et al., *Inflated Citations and Metrics of Journals Discontinued from Scopus for Publication Concerns: the GhoS(t)copus Project*, BIORXIV (2020), <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.26.007435v1>.

¹¹⁵ See *Scopus: Data Curated, Connected, Complete*, SCOPUS (n.d.), (website no longer available, information on file with the authors).

¹¹⁶ See Nader Ale Ebrahim, Hossein Gholizadeh & Artur Lugmayr, *Maximizing Research Impact: An Effective Strategies for Increasing Citations* (Jan. 23, 2018) (unpublished manuscript), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3101575>.

¹¹⁷ *Web of Science: Confident Research Begins Here*, CLARIVATE WEB OF SCL., <https://clarivate.com/webofsciencgroup/solutions/web-of-science/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

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a database of the 24 top business journals.¹¹⁸ Predicated upon the fundamental management axiom that “you get what you create an incentive for,” UTD’s Dean Hasan Pirkul has done an excellent job of building scholarship among his faculty by rewarding faculty performance for publications in these ultra-highly-rated peer-reviewed journals. Dean Pirkul wanted his faculty to focus exclusively on scholarship placement in the highest ranked journals for each discipline. As a result, UTD claims it is currently ranked “fifth both in North America and globally.”¹¹⁹ When asked “[w]hat was/is the secret of [his] success in building a highly ranked B-School,” Dean Pirkul, focused on the following principles that he believes are essential for success:

1. Understand the current positioning of the School and the University in the regional and national level[s];
2. Understand the culture of the institution;
3. Determine the market and potential for growth;
4. Develop a vision that is ambitious and challenging yet plausible. Make sure faculty, staff, students, university administration and alums are part of the visioning process and have bought into the vision;
5. Develop a business plan to support the implementation of the vision;
6. Drive measurable goals and milestones to implement the vision. Do extensive benchmarking;
7. Communicate the vision effectively and repeatedly;
8. Do not compromise on quality in teaching, research, and community outreach;
9. Make a long-term commitment to the institution;
10. Interact closely with faculty and staff. They should know you at a personal level and trust you;
11. Be upfront and always stand behind your word;
12. Genuinely care about the wellbeing and happiness of everyone at the school from students to faculty and staff; and
13. Finally, be demanding but fair and nice.¹²⁰

D. Factors Impacting Acceptance Process

What do we know about the extent to which the acceptance process is fickle? And whether an author’s academic affiliation and where they attended

¹¹⁸ See *The UTD Top 100 Business School Research Rankings, Research Rankings Overview*, UT DALLAS: JINDAL, <https://jindal.utdallas.edu/som/the-utd-top-100-business-school-research-rankings/index.php> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

¹¹⁹ See *UTD Endowed Chairs and Professorships: Dr. Hasan Pirkul*, UT DALLAS: CHAIRS, <https://utdallas.edu/chairs/profiles/dr-hasan-pirkul/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

¹²⁰ Email from Hasan Pirkul, Dean, Jindal School of Business, University of Texas at Dallas, to Munir Quddus, Dean, College of Business, Prairie View A&M University (Apr. 22, 2021, at 15:39 CST) (on file with authors).

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school influences journal acceptance? Professor William H. Starbuck writes, “Treschmann et al. (2000) reported that authors from the top 50 business schools account for 70% of the articles in 20 prestigious business journals.”¹²¹ Notably,

Peters and Ceci (1982) conducted what may be the most discussed and controversial study of reviewing by journals. They resubmitted 12 articles to the very journals that had published them just 18 to 32 months earlier. All 12 were top-tier journals. Whereas authors from prestigious psychology departments originally had written the articles. Peters and Ceci gave the resubmissions fictitious authors with return addresses at obscure institutions. In all, 38 editors and reviewers saw the resubmissions. Three of these 38 recognized that submissions had already been published, which cut the sample to 9 articles that received 18 reviews. Out of 18 reviewers, 16 recommended rejection, and the 9 editors rejected 8 of the 9 articles.¹²²

E. Additional College of Business Impact Factor Considerations

In an undergraduate business school setting, we found numerous scholarly discussions regarding impact factor specific to the unique disciplines of accounting, business communications, business ethics, business law, economics, entrepreneurship, finance, human resources, management, management information systems, marketing, operations management, organizational behavior, and quantitative data.

1. *Accounting*

According to Professors Bell and Roebuck, “[t]he Australian Business Dean’s Council (ABDC) journal ranking list had these accounting journals ranked as A+ Journals: *The Accounting Review*, *Accounting, Organizations & Society*, *Contemporary Accounting Research*, *Journal of Accounting and Economics*, *Journal of Accounting Research*, *Review of Accounting Studies*, and *ABACUS*.”¹²³ In addition, “[a]cross the years, three accounting journals, *The Accounting Review*,

¹²¹ See Starbuck, *supra* note 68 (citing J.S. Trieschmann et al., *Serving Multiple Constituencies in Business School: MBA Program Versus Research Performance*, 43 ACAD. MGT. J. 1130 (2000)).

¹²² See Starbuck, *supra* note 68 (citing D.P. Peters & S. J. Ceci, *Peer Review Practices of Psychological Journals: The Fate of Published Articles, Submitted Again*, 5 BEHAV. BRAIN SCI. 187 (1982)).

¹²³ Reginald L. Bell & Deborah Britt Roebuck, *Citation Differences Between ABC Journals and Related, but Unaffiliated Quality Journals* (2015), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2638431 (citing K.C. Chan, J.Y. Tong & F.F. Zhang, *Accounting Journal Rankings, Authorship Rankings and the Author Affiliation Index*, 22 AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING REV. 407 (2012)).

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The Journal of Accounting Research, and *The Journal of Accounting and Economics* have ranked as the most desired outlets in accounting.”¹²⁴

Professors Dechow, Sloan, and Zeng write, “[t]he most commonly used metric for evaluating accounting academics is the number of academic publications, with special attention given to publications in ‘top-tier’ journals. Yet, a top-tier journal publication is a crude measure of research impact when impact is defined as expected future citations.”¹²⁵ Consider that “over five percent of the publications in top-tier accounting journals have never been cited, while the most highly cited ten percent of papers account for over 50 percent of total citations.”¹²⁶ Additional scholarly literature is available regarding factors impacting the accounting discipline.¹²⁷

Regarding the recent debate about whether *Google Scholar* is a superior measuring device when contrasted with the *Social Science Citation Index* via the Web of Science, Professors Dechow, Sloan, and Zeng observe:

The key advantage of *Google Scholar* is significantly greater coverage. The disadvantages of *Google Scholar* are twofold. First, the increased coverage is weighted toward non-journal sources such as theses, books, conference papers and unpublished papers that tend to have less citations. Second, relative to ‘controlled’ databases,

¹²⁴ See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123.

¹²⁵ Patricia M. Dechow, Richard G. Sloan & Jean Zeng, *Is It a Home Run? Measuring Relative Citation Rates in Accounting Research* (2019), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2635700>.

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ See John Barrick et al., *Ranking Accounting Journals by Topical Area and Methodology* (2017), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2848560>; see also Sarah E. Bonner et al., *The Social Structure of Communication in Major Accounting Research Journals*, 29 *CONTEMPORARY ACCT. RES.* 869 (2012); Lawrence D. Brown, *The Importance of Circulating and Presenting Manuscripts: Evidence from the Accounting Literature*, 80 *ACCT. REV.* 55 (2005); Fielding G. Burton et al., *Do We Matter? The Attention Policy Makers, Academics, and the General Public Give to Accounting Research* (2020), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3022175>; Fielding G. Burton et al., *Accounting Academics Perceptions of 12 Research Journals* (2021), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3813222> (perceptions of over 1,000 accounting faculty regarding 12 accounting journals); Chee W. Chow et al., *How Well Can Publication of an Article in a Top Accounting Journal Be Used as a Proxy for its Contribution?* (2006), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=921297>; Amy E. Dunbar & David P. Weber, *What Influences Accounting Research? A Citations Based Analysis*, 29 *ISSUES IN ACCT. EDUC.* 1 (2014), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2129827#; Jared S. Moon & David A. Wood, *Research Relevance and Research Productivity*, *ISSUES IN ACCT. EDUC.* (forthcoming) (discussing research in accounting education and how faculty research is evaluated), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3614034; Jared S. Moon et al., *Publication Benchmarking Data Based on Faculty Promoted at the Top 200 Worldwide Accounting Research Institutions*, *ACCT. HORIZONS* (forthcoming) (providing publication benchmarking data for faculty promoted between 2013 and 2019), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3750167>; Garrison Nuttall et al., *Citation-Based Benchmarks and Individual Accounting Faculty Research Rankings by Topical Area and Methodology* (2016), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2608491>; Daniel E. O’Leary, *On the Number of ISI Citations to JETA, JIS, IJAIS and ISAFM* (Marshall Sch. Of Bus. Working Paper No. ACC 24-10, 2010), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1693527>; Derek Oler et al., *Characterizing Accounting Research* (2009), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1121956>.

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such as *Web of Science*, the exact coverage of *Google Scholar* is unknown. Coverage appears to change over time and the metadata is of lower quality.¹²⁸

2. *Business Communications*

Professors Bell and Roebuck report that members of the Association of Business Communication (ABC) frequently read the following high quality journals: *International Journal of Business Communication*, *Business & Professional Communication Quarterly*, *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, *Technical Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Management Education*, *IEEE Transaction on Professional Communication*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, and the *Harvard Business Review*.¹²⁹ In addition, “[o]ther noteworthy journals that publish business communication subjects include *Corporate Communication-an International Journal*, *Communication & Strategies*, and the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*.¹³⁰

3. *Business Ethics*

The subject of law and ethics is important to any business or legal pedagogy.¹³¹ Several scholars consider the following journals as part of the top ten

¹²⁸ See Dechow, et al., *supra* note 125.

¹²⁹ See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123.

¹³⁰ *Id.*

¹³¹ See Walter Block, *Cyberslacking, Business Ethics and Managerial Economics*, 33 J. BUS. ETHICS 225 (2001); see also Gerlinde Berger-Walliser & Inara Scott, *Redefining Corporate Social Responsibility in an Era of Globalization and Regulatory Hardening*, 55 AM. BUS. L.J. 167 (2018); Michael J. Conklin, Brian Elzweig & Lawrence J. Trautman, Legal Recourse for Victims of Blockchain and Cyber Breach Attacks, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4251666>; Brian Elzweig & Lawrence J. Trautman, When Does A Nonfungible Token (NFT) Become A Security?, 39 GA. ST. U. L. REV. (forthcoming), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4055585>; Todd Haugh, *Nudging Corporate Compliance: Corporate Compliance*, 54 AM. BUS. L.J. 683 (2017); David Hess, *The Transparency Trap: Non-Financial Disclosure and the Responsibility of Business to Respect Human Rights*, 56 AM. BUS. L.J. 5 (2019); Mohammed T. Hussein & Lawrence J. Trautman, The Internet of Things (IoT) in a Post-Pandemic World, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4149477>; Neal F. Newman & Lawrence J. Trautman, *Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs) and the SEC*, 24 U. PA. J. BUS. L. 639 (2022), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3905372>; H. Justin Pace & Lawrence J. Trautman, Mission Critical: *Caremark. Blue Bell*, and Director Responsibility for Cybersecurity Governance, WIS. L. REV. 887 (2022); Steven R. Salbu, *Mitigating the Harshness of FCPA Enforcement Through a Qualifying Good-Faith Defense*, 55 AM. BUS. L.J. 475 (2018); Kenneth J. Sanney, Lawrence J. Trautman, Eric D. Yordy, Tammy W. Cowart & Destynie Sewell, *The Importance of Truth Telling and Trust*, 37 J. L. STUD. EDU. 7 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3430854>; Lawrence J. Trautman & Joanna Kimbell, *Bribery and Corruption: The COSO Framework, FCPA, and U.K. Bribery Act*, 30 FLA. J. INT’L L. 191 (2018), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3239193>; Lawrence J. Trautman, et al., *Teaching Ethics and Values in an Age of Rapid Technological Change*, 17 RUTGERS BUS. L. REV. 17 (2021), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3102552>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *Governance of the Facebook Privacy Crisis*, 20 PITT. J. TECH. L. & POL’Y 41 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3363002>; Lawrence J. Trautman, Tik Tok! TikTok: Escalating Tension Between U.S. Privacy Rights and

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business ethics journals: *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Business and Society*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organizational Science*, *Business Ethics: A European Review*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and *Harvard Business Review*.¹³²

4. *Business Law*

Unlike journals and reviews in other academic disciplines, an accurate count of author citations is not as readily available in law journals.¹³³ This seems to be due, in part, to the fragmented publication of law school journals as opposed to a relatively concentrated few major publishers of academic journals in other disciplines (Emerald, Kluwer, Oxford University Press, Reed Elsevier, Springer, Thomson Reuters, and Wiley Blackwell). In addition, the Blue Book citation convention of placing footnotes at the bottom of the page rather than as an easily scannable list appearing at the end of an article has arguably led to the slower reporting of legal citations.

Professors Korkeamaki, Sihvonen, and Vähämaa observe that “it is important that faculty members from different disciplines are evaluated, treated, and incentivized in a fair and objective manner. Any perceived inequities across disciplines are likely to lead to poor motivation among faculty members within the disciplines who feel mistreated.”¹³⁴ This is notoriously the case for niche disciplines such as business law faculty teaching in business schools, particularly where such

National Security Vulnerabilities, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4163203>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *Democracy At Risk: Domestic Terrorism and Attack on the U.S. Capitol*, 45 SEATTLE U. L. REV. (forthcoming), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3808365>; Lawrence J. Trautman & Neal Newman, *The Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Debate Emerges from the Soil of Climate Denial*, 53 U. MEM. L. REV. (forthcoming), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3939898>; Lawrence J. Trautman, Seletha Butler, Frederick R. Chang, Michele Hooper, Ron McCray & Ruth Simmons, *Corporate Directors: Who They Are, What They Do, Cyber and Other Contemporary Challenges*, 70 BUFF. L. REV. 459 (2022), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3792382>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *Virtual Art and Non-fungible Tokens*, 50 HOFSTRA L. REV. 361 (2022), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3814087>; Lawrence J. Trautman & Neal Newman, *A Proposed SEC Cyber Data Disclosure Advisory Commission*, 50 SEC. REG. L.J. 199 (2022), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4097138>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *The FTX Crypto Debacle: Largest Fraud Since Madoff?*, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4290093>; Kevin Werbach & Tae Wan Kim, *More Than Just a Game: Ethical Issues in Gamification*, 18 ETHICS IN INFO. TECH. 157 (2016).

¹³² See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123 (citing C. Albrecht et al., *Business Ethics Journal Rankings as Perceived by Business Ethics Scholars*, 95 J. BUS. ETHICS 227 (2010)).

¹³³ See generally Theodore Eisenberg & Martin T. Wells, *Ranking Law Journals and the Limits of Journal Citation Reports* (Cornell Legal Studies Research Paper No. 12-30, 2012), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2084169.

¹³⁴ Timo Korkeamaki et al., *Evaluating Publications Across Business Disciplines: Inferring Interdisciplinary “Exchange Rates” from Intradisciplinary Author Rankings*, 84 J. OF BUS. RES. 220 (2018), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296317304708>.

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faculty are the sole tenure-track faculty in this discipline.¹³⁵ Legal research does not look at all like that of other disciplines; footnote conventions are different--- while economics or finance scholarship consists primarily of statistical analysis and relevant explanation.¹³⁶

5. *Economics*

Since its establishment in 1885, The American Economic Association (AEA), a non-profit, non-partisan, and scholarly association, has been dedicated to discussing and publishing economic research.¹³⁷ The AEA, which was once composed primarily of college and university economics professors, now attracts over 20,000 diverse members from a variety of multicultural and academic backgrounds, including academic, business, government, and consulting groups. However, all members are either professionals or graduate-level students who are dedicated to researching and teaching economics.¹³⁸ The AEA website lists the following publications: *American Economic Review*, *American Economic Review: Insights*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, and *AEA Papers and Proceedings*.¹³⁹

In the realm of economics, several scholarly literature pieces extensively use citations to rank economic programs and departments across the country.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ See generally Robert C. Bird, *Special Report: Legal Scholarship in Business Schools*, 53 AM. BUS. L.J. 9 (2016); Robert C. Bird, *On the Future of Business Law*, 35 J. LEGAL STUD. EDUC. 301, 309-313 (2018).

¹³⁶ *Id.*; see also Gregory C. Sisk, *Measuring Law Faculty Scholarly Impact by Citations: Reliable and Valid for Collective Faculty Ranking*, 60 JURIMETRICS 41 (2019); Gregory Mandel, *Measure for Measure: The Risks of Incorporating Citations Data into U.S. News Rankings*, 60 JURIMETRICS 69 (2019); Paul J. Heald & Ted M. Sichelman, *Ranking the Academic Impact of 100 American Law Schools*, 60 JURIMETRICS 1 (2019).

¹³⁷ *Who We Are*, AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ *AEA Journals*, AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, <https://www.aeaweb.org/journals> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

¹⁴⁰ See Maria Victoria Anauati et al., *Quantifying the Life Cycle of Scholarly Articles Across Fields of Economic Research* (2015), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2523078>; see also Chia-Lin Chang, Michael McAleer & Les Oxley, *What Makes a Great Journal Great in Economics? The Singer Not the Song*, 25 J. ECON. SURVEYS 326 (2011), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1777805>; Daniel Hamermesh, *Citations in Economics: Measurement, Uses and Impacts*, 56 J. ECON. LIT. 115 (2018); Syed Abul Hasan & Robert V. Breunig, *Article Length and Citation Outcomes* (Institute of Labor Econ. Discussion Paper No. 13045, 2020), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3562835>; E. Han Kim et al., *What Has Mattered to Economics Since 1970* (CRSP Working Paper No. 612, 2006) <https://ssrn.com/abstract=927941>; Si Li & Hui Ou-Yang, *Explicit Incentives, Implicit Incentives, and Performance: Evidence from Academic Tenure* (2010), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=399240>; Laurent Linnemer & Michael Visser, *The Most Cited Articles from the Top-5 Journals (1991-2015)* (CESifo Working Paper Series No. 5999, 2016), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2821483>; Frank Mueller-Langer & Richard Watt, *How Many More Cites is a \$3,000 Open Access Fee Buying*

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Generally, economists look at citations as both a measure of the quality of scholarship and as a positive impact on society.¹⁴¹ Some prominent scholars have listed the following five journals as the top five for economics and corresponding citations: (1) the *American Economic Review*, (2) *Econometrica*, (3) the *Journal of Political Economy*, (4) the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, and (5) the *Review of Economic Studies*.¹⁴² In economics, like many other disciplines, “the position in publication performance rankings, based on journal quality ratings is seen as highly reputational for the scientist. [Although] . . . at least in economics, such publication performance measures cannot always be reconciled with measures for academic influence such as citation-based measures.”¹⁴³ After analyzing data from the Scopus database and the prestigious German-based *Handelsblatt* ranking for 100 renowned economists, Professors Haucap, Thomas, and Wohlrabe determined that scholarly influence is greatly impacted by various bibliometric indicators such as the number of citations, the h-index, and the citations of the most cited papers.¹⁴⁴ Overall, the authors contend that publication performance measures based on journal rankings, such as the *Handelsblatt* rankings, are not good proxies for an economist’s impact within the scientific community.

6. *Entrepreneurship*

In the entrepreneurial world of academia, the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) is a prestigious organization that focuses on providing its members with innovative and scholarly entrepreneurship education.¹⁴⁵ The USASBE consists of members that are in an “inclusive community advancing entrepreneurship education through bold teaching, scholarship, and practice.”¹⁴⁶ In addition to its prestigious membership, USASBE lists and hosts the following publications on its website: *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, *Journal of Business & Entrepreneurship*, and *Journal of Ethics and Entrepreneurship*.¹⁴⁷ In addition to these journals, entrepreneurial scholars recognize the following six journals as among the most prestigious: *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*,

You? Empirical Evidence from a Natural Experiment, 56 *ECON. INQ.* 931 (2018),
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3127910>.

¹⁴¹ Josh Angrist et al., *Inside Job or Deep Impact? Using Extramural Citations to Assess Economic Scholarship* (National Bureau of Econ. Research Working Paper No. 23698, 2017), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23698>.<http://www.nber.org/papers/w23698>.

¹⁴² See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123.

¹⁴³ Justus Haucap et al., *Publication Performance vs. Influence: On the Questionable Value of Quality Weighted Publication Rankings* (CESifo Working Paper Series No. 6818, 2018),
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3126669>.

¹⁴⁴ *Id.*

¹⁴⁵ *Introduction*, USASBE, <https://www.usasbe.org/page/intro> (last visited July 24, 2022).

¹⁴⁶ *Mission Statement*, USASBE, <https://www.usasbe.org/page/mission> (last visited July 24, 2022).

¹⁴⁷ *Journals & Publications*, USASBE, <https://www.usasbe.org/page/JournalsandPubs> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

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*Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Journal of Business Venturing, Small Business Economics, and Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal.*¹⁴⁸

7. *Finance*

One of the most well-recognized academic organizations for finance scholars is The American Finance Association (AFA). AFA describes itself as “the premier academic organization devoted to the study and promotion of knowledge about financial economics.”¹⁴⁹ Since 1946, the AFA has published *The Journal of Finance*.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the AFA’s journal is ranked among the top five finance journals in addition to the following four: *Journal of Financial Economics*, *Review of Financial Studies*, *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, and *Journal of Financial Markets*.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, scholars who have a larger quantity of published articles in finance journals tend to realize higher productivity levels. Indeed, finance scholars “. . . that have published twelve or more scholarly papers in finance journals . . . , their productivity increases dramatically in the years before tenure and early success seems to be a useful forecast of future quality and quantity of publications.”¹⁵² In addition, “unlike the average finance Ph.D., these role models begin publishing earlier and maintain a high level of productivity appearing to decline slightly after tenure.”¹⁵³ Aggarwal reports that “there is [an] increasing tendency to publish with co-authors and there is high concentration of these prolific scholars especially at the five top-rated finance journals.”¹⁵⁴ Examples of using citations to rank scholarly literature in finance economic programs and departments across the country are provided in our footnotes.¹⁵⁵

8. *Management*

In their study of publications during the 1980s and 1990s, Professors Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Bachrach, and Podsakoff discovered that “seven journals accounted for 61 percent of the citations of 28 leading business journals over two decades, and that the three journals that showed the greatest increase in influence [during this time] were the *Academy of Management Journal*, the *Academy of*

¹⁴⁸ See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123.

¹⁴⁹ *About the AFA*, THE AMERICAN FINANCE ASSOCIATION <https://afajof.org/about-the-afa/> (last visited July 24, 2022).

¹⁵⁰ *Id.*

¹⁵¹ See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123.

¹⁵² Raj Aggarwal et al., *Role Models in Finance: Lessons from Life Cycle Productivity of Prolific Scholars*, 28 REV. QUANTITATIVE FIN. & ACCT. 79 (2007), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=926397>.

¹⁵³ *Id.*

¹⁵⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵⁵ See Michael J. Alderson et al., *The Relative Significance of Finance Journals, Authors and Articles: An Update*, ADVANCES IN FIN. EDUC. 1 (2009), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1593069>; see also Matti Keloharju, *What’s New in Finance?*, 14 EUR. FIN. MGMT. 564 (2008), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1132536>; Thomas M. Arnold et al., *Impact: What Influences Finance Research?* (2001), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=271661>; Johnny Chan et al., *Research Ranking of Finance Departments: A Modified Citation Approach* (2005), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=646185>.

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Management Review, and the *Strategic Management Journal*.”¹⁵⁶ Yuyuenyongwatana and Carraher find *The Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, and *Journal of Management* were among the top fifty-one of the other journals.”¹⁵⁷

9. *Management Information Systems (MIS)*

In discussing MIS journals, Professors Lowry explains that “[k]ey problems with well-publicized lists that drive research behavior and reward in business schools are their creation by an external organization serving a non-academic agenda.”¹⁵⁸ For example, Dennis warns that “few tenured IS researchers publish in ‘elite’ journals as defined by one of the commonly accepted business-school journal lists promoted in Trieschmann’s article. [insert footnote]. Indeed, the business-school journal lists promoted in Trieschmann include “only MISQ and ISR from the IS discipline...(also true of other top business lists...Financial Times, Business Week, and UT-Dallas).”¹⁵⁹ After running a cluster analysis (n=21), Lowry discovered that “MISQ, ISR, and JMIS remained in the top, ordered tier; [while Journal of the Association for Information Systems, Journal of Strategic Information Systems, European Journal of Information Systems, and Information Systems Journal] remained in the second, unordered tier.”¹⁶⁰ Professors Lowry, Romans, and Curtis observe:

In evaluating the quality of an academic’s contribution to research [other than journal rankings], several other approaches can be considered: (1) evaluating the quality of the journals in which one’s articles appear; (2) assessing the number of times one’s works have been cited by others; (3) having external experts qualitatively evaluate the quality of the contribution of one’s articles; (4) counting the number of articles published by the scholar; and, (5) evaluating the external impact of one’s work in terms of adoption by practitioners, use in classroom texts, patents, and citations by national press and television.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ See Bell & Roebuck, *supra* note 123, (citing P.M. Podsakoff et al., *The Influence of Management Journals in the 1980s and 1990s*, 26 STRATEGIC MGMT. J. 473 (2005)).

¹⁵⁷ *Id.* (citing R. Yuyuenyongwatana & S. Carraher, *Academic Journal Ranking: Important to Strategic Management and General Management Researchers?* 25 J. BUS. STRATEGIES 1 (2008)).

¹⁵⁸ Paul Benjamin Lowry et al., *Evaluating Journal Quality and the Association for Information Systems (AIS) Senior Scholars’ Journal Basket via Bibliometric Measures: Do Expert Journal Assessments Add Value?* 37 MIS Q. 4, 993 (2013) (citing A. Dennis et al., *Empirical Benchmarks for Promotion and Tenure in Information Systems*, 30 MIS Q. 1, 6 (2006)).

¹⁵⁹ *Id.* at 994.

¹⁶⁰ *Id.* at 1003 (where journals referenced: MISQ= MIS Quarterly; ISR= Information Systems Research; JMIS= J. of Management Information Systems; JAIS= J. of the Association for Information Systems; JSIS= J. of Strategic Information Systems; EJIS= European J. of Information Systems; ISJ= Information Systems L.).

¹⁶¹ Paul B. Lowry et al., *Global Journal Prestige and Supporting Disciplines: A Scientometric Study of Information Systems Journals*, 5 J. OF THE ASS’N FOR INFO. SYS. 29 (Feb. 2004); *see also*

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More recently, Professors Dean, Lowry, and Humpherys, “examined the effects of expanding on Dennis by including *MIS Quarterly*, *Information Systems Research*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Journal of the AIS*, *Information Systems Journal*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Technology*, and *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*.”¹⁶² Consider that “Senior scholars from the Association for Information Systems (AIS) adopted a global resolution stating that to recognize only MISQ and ISR as ‘A [quality] journals’ is highly detrimental to the [Information Systems] field because these two journals alone limit the publishing opportunities for the IS discipline...”¹⁶³ Professor Dean embraces the senior scholars’ recommendation that most information system programs should consider the AIS-8 to be among the highly rated journals, which would allow them to qualify as T1 journals that count towards tenure.¹⁶⁴

10. *Marketing*

Published in 2018, European Professors Korkeamaki, Sihvonen, and Vähämaa selected the following marketing journals for their extensive look at evaluating publications across business disciplines: *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Marketing Science*.¹⁶⁵ This study suggests:

[A] novel approach to comparing publications across business disciplines. Specifically, we aim to provide an objective method for evaluating the interdisciplinary value of publications based on intradisciplinary author rankings. Using publication data from the leading journals in accounting, economics, finance, management, and marketing, we first construct intradisciplinary author rankings and then utilize these rankings to estimate the marginal effect of an additional publication on the individual’s ranking within her own discipline. Based on the implied effort required to improve an individual’s intradisciplinary ranking, we infer interdisciplinary

Michael J. Cuellar, Duane Truex & Hirotooshi Takeda, *Reconsidering Counting Articles in Ranked Venues (CARV) as the Appropriate Evaluation Criteria for the Advancement of Democratic Discourse in the IS Field*, 44 COMM. OF THE ASS’N FOR INFO. SYS. 188 (2019) (arguing that the current process for evaluating scholarly output, ‘counting articles in ranked venues (CARV), creates pressures that result in a distorted discourse inhibiting the growth of the field).

¹⁶² Douglas L. Dean et al., *Profiling the Research Productivity of Tenured Information Systems Faculty at U.S. Institutions*, 35 MIS Q. 1 (2011).

¹⁶³ *Id.* at 4.

¹⁶⁴ *Id.* at 26.

¹⁶⁵ Timo Korkeamaki, Jukka Sihvonen & Sami Vähämaa, *Evaluating Publications Across Business Disciplines: Inferring Interdisciplinary ‘Exchange Rates’ from Intradisciplinary Author Rankings*, 84 J. BUS. RES. 220, 222 (2018), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/sdfe/reader/pii/S0148296317304708/pdf>.

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"exchange rates" to evaluate the value of top-tier publications across disciplines. Our estimates indicate that the value of a single single-authored publication in a top-ranked journal is highest in accounting and lowest in marketing. We confirm the validity of our "exchange rate" approach by constructing an interdisciplinary author ranking in which authors from different disciplines are uniformly distributed across the ranking list.¹⁶⁶

11. *Operations Research*

In 2014, Professors Pishchulov, Tuselmann, and Sinkovics provided a publication ranking list for 79 journals within several categories including operations research, management science, production, and operations management. The professors provided that the top ten journals were (1) *Management Sciences*; (2) *Journal of Operations Management*; (3) *Operations Research*; (4) *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*; (5) *Series B, Annals of Statistics*; (6) *Transportation Research Part B: Methodological*; (7) *Decision Sciences*; (8) *Transportation Research Part A: Policy & Practice*; (9) *Risk Analysis*; and (10) *Mathematical Programming*.¹⁶⁷ We now present a case study of how Prairie View A&M University's College of Business set about during the school year 2019-2020 to foster a community of purposeful, productive interdisciplinary faculty scholarship having an impact.

VI. PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

Located just outside of Houston, Texas and founded in 1876, Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) became the first historically Black College or University in Texas. PVAMU has consistently ranked as one of the South's top public education institutions.

PVAMU's student body consists of approximately 9,469 students, of which about 7,569 are undergraduate students. More than 83% percent of students are between the ages of 18 and 24. Approximately 64% percent of the student body is female and 36% percent male. Interestingly, more than 94% percent of students self-identify as members of a racial minority group.

The university presently offers more than forty undergraduate concentrations and offers majors in more than twenty-five graduate programs, including six doctoral programs. Forty-five percent of the students live on-campus, with an enrollment of 9,469 students in thirty-six bachelors', thirty masters', and six doctoral degree programs. Eight colleges house PVAMU's academic programs: Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering, Education, Architecture, Nursing, Juvenile Justice, Psychology, and Graduate School.

¹⁶⁶ *Id.*

¹⁶⁷ Grigory Pishchulov et al., *Towards a Consolidation of Worldwide Journal Rankings—A Classification Using Random Forests and Aggregate Rating via Data Envelopment Analysis* (2014), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2492472.

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Additionally, PVAMU received the ability to award students with baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees after the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredited the school. The university holds ten special program accreditations and is a member of several state and national associations and organizations related to professional programs.

A. PVAMU’s College of Business

The College of Business (COB) offers undergraduate and graduate programs in several fields including, accounting, finance, management information systems, management marketing, business administration (MBA, entirely online, Executive MBA), and Accounting (MSA). Students may also minor in any of the following programs: economics, entrepreneurship, finance, supply chain, business analytics, international business, and more. In addition to what is offered at the main campus, PVAMU has instructional sites in northwest Houston and downtown Houston where students may participate in architecture, education, business, and nursing graduate programs.

Enrollment in the COB in the fall of 2020 consisted of 1,450 students—250 are graduate students, including Executive MBA students. The graduate programs include a fully online MBA program, an MSA program offered in the hybrid format, and an Executive MBA program, offered on weekends for managers and professionals interested in moving up the management ladder.

B. Accreditations

Accreditation is a critical measure of institutional quality in higher education. Nearly all public and private universities desiring an image of quality, seek institutional or regional accreditations. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is one such organization that accredits qualifying universities.¹⁶⁸ The need for accreditation is not limited to universities; professional programs also seek specialized accreditations from various bodies. For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International¹⁶⁹ accreditation is the most important credential a business school can receive because it is globally recognized as the “gold standard” for B-School accreditations. Unfortunately, less than a third of all business programs in North America offering a four-year degree have attained this prestigious AACSB accreditation.

The PVAMU College of Business had continuously attempted to achieve the prestigious AACSB accreditation well before Dean Munir Quddus became dean of PVAMU’s College of Business in 2001. Upon the commencement of Dean Quddus’ tenure, the university president charged him with the task of obtaining accreditation for the business program before 2006—the timeline built into the

¹⁶⁸ *About SACSCOC*, SACSCOC, <https://sacscoc.org/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022, 9:48 PM).

¹⁶⁹ *About AACSB*, AACSB, <https://www.aacsb.edu/> (last visited Jan. 28, 2022, 03:36 PM).

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Office for Civil Rights settlement with the federal and state government.¹⁷⁰ The price tag for attaining AACSB accreditation typically tends to reach millions of dollars, of which most of the money is spent on recruiting research-oriented faculty and improving the facilities to demonstrate high quality programs committed to continuous improvement. The COB received roughly two million dollars of financial support to increase the amount of COB faculty quality. This was especially important because the faculty previously suffered from years of neglect which proved to be a hurdle to receiving accreditation. However, increasing the faculty numbers ensured that PVAMU could successfully compete for “initial” accreditation by AACSB International.

With the university president’s mandate in mind, Dean Quddus quickly hired several faculty members, recruiting nearly ten new professors of different ranks to boost the COB faculty. It was important that professors of different ranks were hired because, at the time, Dean Quddus was the only faculty member with the status of full professor. Accordingly, one important task was to attract and hire senior faculty who could serve as department heads and committee chairs.

Twenty to thirty faculty candidates were invited to campus visits over an 18-month selection period. Dean Quddus worked closely with the faculty members already employed to complete this recruitment process. He kept a close eye on the new faculty members’ journal publications, searching for recently published quality journals, and whether there was a potential for future publications of quality journals. In addition to excellent teaching in the classroom, Dean Quddus was particularly interested in creating and building a culture of interdisciplinary, quality scholarship, and research.

One essential step taken during this hiring process was the creation of a COB Faculty Handbook, perhaps the first one on campus. The handbook was compiled and approved by the then existing faculty. Important to creating a culture of scholarly research, the handbook included a section dedicated to the minimum writing standards in research and publications required for attaining tenure and promotion. Typically, faculty members resist adhering to minimum writing standards because many dislike the idea that their future promotion prospects may be prevented due to their research productivity falling short. However, the faculty approved these standards unanimously.

In early 2006, the AACSB Peer Review Team visited the COB. During this time, three of the AACSB deans spent three days on campus reviewing all aspects of the college, including faculty competencies, faculty deployment, facilities, curriculum, staff sufficiency, student success metrics, support from the central administration, library and computing resources, support for faculty teaching, and especially research. Before their departure, the Peer Review Team (PRT) informed the president, the provost, and the dean that they would recommend initial accreditation to the AACSB Accrediting Committee. Accreditation was

¹⁷⁰ Felicia Walker, *PVAMU Settles for \$98 million, Students Protest Allocations*, HOUSTON CHRON., (Apr. 12, 2001), <https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/article/PVAMU-settles-for-98-million-students-protest-9899790.php>.

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subsequently approved, and Dean Quddus had fulfilled the task set before him.¹⁷¹ George Wright, then the University President, and Dean Quddus attended the AACSB Annual meeting in Paris, France, for the formal public announcement that the COB at PVAMU had been accredited by AACSB International for the first time in the institution’s history.

After carefully analyzing Dean Quddus’ pathway to accreditation, the most important factor leading PVAMU to its first ever AACSB accreditation was the COB’s faculty’s success in producing a large amount of high-quality research. Indeed, it was the research component that convinced visiting deans that COB faculty and leaders had a strong commitment to quality research. Since then, the COB has instilled processes and resources to maintain its commitment to quality research and to sustain the same quality research that led the College of Business to AACSB accreditation.

After the initial accreditation, the AACSB visited the college three different times in 2011, 2016, and 2021. During each visit, there were no major issues raised, especially regarding faculty qualifications in terms of research productivity. It is important to note that the AACSB’s standards on faculty qualifications focused on faculty members of every department who teach students having strong academic credentials and active engagement in research and writing, as opposed to faculty members’ overall portfolios. AACSB believes that there cannot be high-quality classroom instruction without a significant section of the faculty engaged in the production of new knowledge to improve management practices and pedagogy.

C. Optimizing Results Despite Constraints

An attractive characteristic of PVAMU is the affordability of its programs. PVAMU offers an annual tuition of \$11,200. In 2020, PVAMU’s annual tuition represented approximately twenty-three percent of the average yearly tuition for the top three national universities. In comparison to Princeton University (\$45,420 tuition and fees), Harvard University (\$47,074 tuition and fees), and the University of Chicago (\$52,491 tuition and fees), PVAMU’s tuition is drastically lower and offers more affordability for students.

However, PVAMU receives considerably less money than its counterparts. PVAMU’s endowment in FY2019 was \$84 million, which is approximately \$39.92 billion less than the \$40 billion endowment that Harvard University had during the same year.¹⁷² In addition, PVAMU’s COB faculty number count falls short compared to Harvard’s Business School. Also, during 2019, PVAMU’s COB

¹⁷¹ Munir Quddus, *AACSB International Accreditation—A Case Study of Benefits and Costs*, 2 E-J. BUS. & ECON. ISSUES 1 (2007).

¹⁷² Abigail J. Hess, *Harvard’s endowment is worth \$40 billion—here’s how it’s spent*, CNBC (Oct. 28, 2019, 9:00 AM EST), <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/28/harvards-endowment-is-worth-40-billionheres-how-its-spent.html> (in December 2020, PVAMU received a gift of \$50 million from writer and philanthropist, MacKenzie Scott, a once-in-a-lifetime gift propelling its total endowment by 40 percent.). See also Jakab Spencer, *Harvard Beats Texas Despite oil Riches*, WALL ST. J., (Aug. 23, 2022, 1:05 PM ET) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/harvard-beats-texas-despite-oil-riches-11661274139>.

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faculty consisted of only 44 full time faculty members (thirty of whom had research doctorates) while Harvard’s Business School reported 233¹⁷³ full-time faculty (not including research fellows, post-doctorates, and others).

While the COB has several glowing characteristics, it also suffers from a lower faculty count and a lack of financial resources, compared to well-financed institutions like Harvard. Therefore, the question that many ask is how, with less faculty and less money as compared to other universities, can PVAMU optimize its performance? We answer this question in the following section.

VII. SO, HOW DOES A SMALL SCHOOL COMPETE?

Logically, small schools often employ less full-time faculty members than larger schools. For example, Prairie View A&M’s COB’s full-time faculty is 188 less than the full-time faculty at Harvard; 180 less than the full-time faculty at Wharton (225¹⁷⁴ full-time faculty); and 119 less than the full-time faculty at Columbia’s Business School.¹⁷⁵

Research further indicates that the school that an author graduated from and the rank of the journal in which the author’s work is published highly influences another author’s decision to cite that author’s published work.¹⁷⁶ Professors Fei and Bell explain, “[t]op-ranked journals are shown to be biased in favoring Carnegie classified research extensive institutions over lesser-known institutions.”¹⁷⁷ The professors noted that publication decisions are not completely based on the quality of the articles submitted. Instead, the focus rests on “which institutions the authors are affiliated with, the authors’ reputation and other types of non-quality factors can determine who gets published in what types of journals.”¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, “brand-named institutions crowd out other institutions; a lesser-known researcher from a lesser-known institution submitting his or her work to a highly regarded journal

¹⁷³ *Statistics, Faculty & Staff*, HARVARD BUS. SCH.,

<https://www.hbs.edu/about/statistics/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Feb. 13, 2022).

¹⁷⁴ *Id.*

¹⁷⁵ *Faculty Directory*, COLUMBIA BUS. SCH., [https://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/cbs-](https://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/cbs-directory/faculty-)

[directory/faculty-](https://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/cbs-directory/faculty-search?combine=&field_departments_tid=All)
[search?combine=&field_departments_tid=All](https://www8.gsb.columbia.edu/cbs-directory/faculty-search?combine=&field_departments_tid=All) (last visited Feb. 13, 2022) (listing 164 full-time faculty as of Dec. 28, 2020).

¹⁷⁶ See Jeffrey L. Harrison & Amy R. Mashburn, *Citations, Justifications, and the Troubled State of Legal Scholarship: An Empirical Study*, 3 TEX. A&M L. REV. 45, 26 (2015).

¹⁷⁷ See Qiang Fei & Reginald L. Bell, *Marketing Journal Ranking, Celebrity Authors, and The Diminishing Quality Gap*, 3 MUSTANG J. OF MGMT. & MARKETING 16 (2013) (citing Reginald L. Bell, *From the Editors What if...?: Diversity, Scholarship and Impact*, 9 ACAD. OF MGMT. LEARNING & EDUC. 5 (2010); see also Reginald L. Bell & H.G. Chong, *A Caste and Class Among the Relative Frequency of Faculty’s Publications: A Content Analysis of Refereed Business Journals*, 8 J. OF LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ETHICS 65 (2010).

¹⁷⁸ See Fei & Bell, *supra* note 177 (citing Reginald L. Bell, *An Empirical Investigation of Communication Content in Reputable Management Journals*, 4 BUS. STUD. J. 21 (2012)); see also S. Macdonald & J. Kam, *Quality Journals and Gamesmanship in Management Studies*, 31 MGMT. RES. NEWS 596 (2008).

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will be lucky to have it read by a staff editor, and the manuscript might never be sent out for peer review.”¹⁷⁹

So, how does a small school—like Prairie View—compete, if at all? As discussed in more detail below, we recommend first developing a culture of interdisciplinary faculty scholarship. Second, extracting and applying specific lessons provided in the movie *Moneyball*. Third, taking and implementing key tactics from PVAMU’s SSRN strategy for the 2019-2020 school year. And fourth, learning from the lessons we outlined in the pre- and post-publication strategies section.

A. Building A Culture of Interdisciplinary Faculty Scholarship

Upon his appointment as Dean, Professor Quddus realized that of all the hurdles, the steepest to overcome (given the short timeline) was substantially upgrading the faculty—to achieve a much richer mix of research-oriented, academically qualified faculty—as measured by their recent research and publications. Working with the faculty, he was able to implement the following initiatives:

1. *Recruiting New Professors.* Dean Quddus successfully recruited nearly twenty new professors, all ranked differently. Further, he closely considered the new professors’ existing publications portfolio and more importantly, their potential for future publications in quality outlets defined as peer-reviewed journals or PRJs by AACSB. In addition, taking into consideration the reasonable cost of living in Northwest Houston where the campus is situated, professors were offered competitive salaries.
2. *Introducing Direct Incentives.* For example, for every new PRJ accepted for publication, the publishing faculty would receive a financial incentive in his or her professional development (PD) account. This bonus could be spent on traveling to conferences, paying submission fees, or paying for journal subscriptions and the like. This incentive proved to be both popular and effective. After this incentive was implemented, faculty started asking to use these funds, in addition to other funds, for other professional expenses.
3. *Encouraging Collaborative Research.* To encourage collaborative research, Dean Quddus implemented financial incentives for co-authors. For example, when authors collaborated on research, each co-author would receive a financial incentive credited to their own Professional Development account for each publication.
4. *Reducing Teaching Loads.* Working with the provost, Dean Quddus managed to reduce the teaching load from 4+4 (teaching load of four

¹⁷⁹ *Id.*

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courses per semester) to 3+3, so that faculty committed to productive research have extra time—a precious resource—to conduct more research. However, reducing teaching loads was not an easy task, especially considering that all tenure-track or tenured research faculty were historically encouraged to maximize the teaching assignments.

5. *Introducing A Grant Program.* Dean Quddus introduced a highly effective competitive summer mini-grant program, which is still in effect today. Each spring, the Dean’s Office issues an email reminder inviting faculty to submit proposals for research over the summer. The stipends for summer research typically range from \$4,000 to \$5,000 and are paid directly to faculty members to compensate for their time and research-related expenses. While these cash payments proved to be a great incentive, there is intense competition for these funds since it allows faculty to step away from teaching and focus on research during the critical summer months. Moreover, this incentive has led to many new publications often led by collaborative research teams. One summer mini-grant is reserved for a faculty research team including one or more professional faculty members. Over the years, this has resulted in several Ph.D. faculty members mentoring other professional faculty in their research. Moreover, in a more recent innovation, one or more mini grants valued at \$6,000 have been reserved for faculty members who successfully published in a “high-quality” journal on the ABDC list within the past year.
6. *Increasing Travel Funds.* To encourage attendance at conferences and collaborations with colleagues at other institutions, travel funds substantially increased. Faculty who had not traveled to present a paper for many years began attending conferences, which subsequently led to an increase [in] paper presentations, publishing in peer-reviewed-journals (PRJs), and collaborations with colleagues in other institutions.
7. *Providing Research Seminars.* A lively research seminar was introduced at the university and organized by a standing faculty committee named the Intellectual and Profession Contributions (Research) Committee.
8. *Improving Faculty Performance Evaluations.* A new method for tracking and providing faculty performance evaluations was created. This allowed for evaluations to be inputted into a spreadsheet based on detailed numerical weights on various types of research publications and on the quality of outlets. Publications in “high quality” journals, such as the journals listed by the Australian Business Dean’s Council, were given higher points in faculty performance evaluation, merit raise, and tenure/promotion considerations.

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9. *Effectuating Merit Raises.* Working with a faculty committee, the dean developed a set of criteria for determining merit raises for faculty. When such funds are made available from the President’s office, the criteria favored success in publishing in peer-reviewed journals (especially in highly rated journals in each discipline).
10. *Developing Written Standards.* For those seeking tenured positions, promotions to associate, or full professorship, Dean Quddus developed written standards that were later unanimously approved by the faculty. Surprisingly, faculty who were at the associate level willingly accepted the new higher standards for themselves. The entire process of developing and approving these written standards provided sufficient evidence that the culture of the college was transformed by overcoming resistance by faculty to these changes. Moreover, senior faculty were more than willing to “raise the bar” for themselves because they had the broader goal in mind—attaining AACSB accreditation.
11. *Building Relationships with Faculty.* Dean Quddus discovered that small gestures helped immensely. Whenever a faculty member received a letter of acceptance from the editor of a journal, the dean sent out a congratulatory email to all faculty members, including the provost, the president, and the Dean’s Advisory Board, announcing the good news. In some cases, faculty even received congratulatory messages from the president and Board members. In addition, extremely successful researchers have been featured in the COB newsletter, often with their pictures appearing on the flat screens placed around the building.
12. *Implementing the Dean’s Excellence in Research Award.* Another innovation to celebrate success in research and create incentives was the creation of the annual Dean’s Excellence in Research Award. The award was given to the faculty with significant and high-quality research performance. A \$1,000 stipend accompanied the award, which could be shared between several faculty members. The award is presented at COB’s annual Award and Recognition Ceremony in April, where faculty, students, families, university officials, and corporate donors are present to celebrate the awarded faculty member(s).
13. *Holding Faculty Members Accountable.* To keep faculty members accountable for maintaining research standards, the Dean commonly called, and still does, upon faculty who are lagging in their research and publications. To steer clear of public reprimands, Dean Quddus privately encouraged faculty to collaborate in their research and create mentor-mentee relationships to stay accountable. As a result, several struggling faculty members are now considered among the most successful researchers in their respective departments.

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B. Lessons Learned from the Movie *Moneyball*

We began our article with the inspirational story from the movie *Moneyball* of how Billy Beane, the Oakland A’s general manager, built a World-Series-winning team despite having the lowest salary budget in baseball.¹⁸⁰ When you have severe resource limitations, the necessity to “out-think” the rest of your competition in any industry is readily apparent. In this regard, education is not unlike every other line of business. Attracting and retaining students requires (1) a superior education product, (2) the ability to document relevant metrics, and (3) communicating effectively with customers. In other words, it’s what you do with what you have that counts. The 2020-2022 global pandemic has proven disproportionately difficult for many students attending HBCUs.¹⁸¹ Despite the disruptive influence of the pandemic, our faculty have continued to write and publish articles with an eye to using these in the classroom. These freely available SSRN materials provide an introduction to and an overview of subjects that students can expect to be covered in the classroom.¹⁸²

C. PVAMU Academic Year 2019-2020 SSRN Strategy

With the addition of Lawrence J. Trautman to Prairie View’s College of Business faculty during the fall of 2019, the COB has made an immense effort to focus on increasing interdisciplinary research collaboration among faculty and

¹⁸⁰ See *MONEYBALL*, *supra* note 2.

¹⁸¹ See Johnson & Trautman, *supra* note 59.

¹⁸² See Robert W. Emerson & Lawrence J. Trautman, *Lessons About Franchise Risk From YUM! Brands and Schlotzky’s*, 24 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 997 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3442905>; Timothy T. Hsieh, Robert W. Emerson, Brian A. Link, Cherie A. Sherman & Lawrence J. Trautman, *Intellectual Property in a Post-Covid World* (manuscript on file with authors); Mohammed T. Hussein, Lawrence J. Trautman & Reginald Holloway, *Technology Employment, Information and Communications in the Digital Age*, J. U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE SOCIETY (2023), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3762273>; Neal F. Newman & Lawrence J. Trautman, *Securities Law: Overview and Contemporary Issues*, 16 OH. ST. BUS. L.J. 149 (2021), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3790804>; Kenneth J. Sanney et al., *The Importance of Truth Telling and Trust*, 37 J. LEGAL STUD. EDU. 7 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3430854>; Lawrence J. Trautman et al., *Posted: No Phishing*, 8 EMORY CORP. GOV. & ACCT. REV. 39 (2021), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3549992>; Lawrence J. Trautman et al., *Governance of The Internet of Things (IoT)* 60(3) JURIMETRICS 315 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3443973>; Lawrence J. Trautman et al., *Employment Law: The Basics* (2022) <http://ssrn.com/abstract=3765016>; Lawrence J. Trautman, *Rapid Technological Change and U.S. Entrepreneurial Risk in International Markets: Focus on Data Security, Information Privacy, Bribery and Corruption*, 49 CAP. U. L. REV. 67 (2021), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2912072>; Lawrence J. Trautman et al., *IRAC! IRAC! IRAC!: How To Brief Any Legal Issue*, 29 SOUTHERN L.J. 317 (2020), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2827285>; Lawrence J. Trautman, Vanessa L. Johnson & Lora J. Koretz, *Customer Injuries: An Introduction to Tort Law* (2021), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3795841>; Lawrence J. Trautman, Larry D. Foster, II., Lora J. Koretz, Clyde McNeil & Eric Yordy, *Ethical Challenge at Theranos*, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=4040181>.

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publication success. The faculty are invited to several discussions about tactics to increase publication productivity and work together.

It is common for small faculty groups to form small research-oriented working groups. Indeed, once a comfortable working relationship develops between faculty, the research groups tend to continue and maintain research over time. Once a comfortable working relationship develops, these groups rationally tend to perpetuate themselves over time. In addition, over the years, some senior faculty members developed productive relationships with internal faculty members and faculty members at other institutions. These relationships are extremely helpful when it comes to maintaining the COB’s research standards.

Accordingly, our strategy is not to disturb what is working. For these senior faculty who appear gainfully focused on productive research, our efforts have primarily focused on encouraging the citation of work by the COB faculty where appropriate. None of us is born with an instinctual understanding of how optimal publication works; even professional athletes at the top of their game have coaches. Exhibit 7 shows Prairie View’s SSRN ranking among the Top 500 U.S. Business Schools based on article downloads during the past 12 months.

Exhibit 7
SSRN Top 500 U.S. Business Schools¹⁸³
As of December 1, 2022

Last 12 Months			All Time					Authors					
Rank	Institution	Total New Downloads	# of New Papers	New Downloads per paper	Total # of Downloads	Total # of Citations	# of Papers	Total Downloads per paper	Total Citations per paper	# of Authors	Total Downloads per author	New Downloads per author	Total Citations per author
63	Prairie View A&M University - College of Business Authors	23,947	14	149	104,604	479	161	650	3	17	6,153	1,409	28

After just one academic year, our efforts appeared to have benefited PVAMU’s junior faculty. However, even some of our senior faculty have seemed to benefit from productive group discussions on this topic. To date, seventeen of PVAMU’s COB’s faculty members have posted scholarship to SSRN. The amount of PVAMU’s posted scholarship is extremely low compared to the following schools: Harvard Business School (401); the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business (350); NYU’s Stern School of Business (385); and The University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business (476).¹⁸⁴ With support from the Dean and his team, COB faculty members are working hard to build upon the COB culture of interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty.

Exhibit 8 depicts one measure of improvement in scholarly impact as illustrated by downloads during the rolling twelve months for scholarship posted to SSRN by Prairie View’s COB faculty ending July 1, 2022. Improvements were realized within only months of starting on this path.

¹⁸³ See *SSRN Top 500 U.S. Business Schools*, SSRN, https://hq.ssrn.com/rankings/Ranking_Display.cfm?TMY_gID=2&TRN_gID=11 (last visited Jan. 25, 2023) (statistics on file with authors).

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

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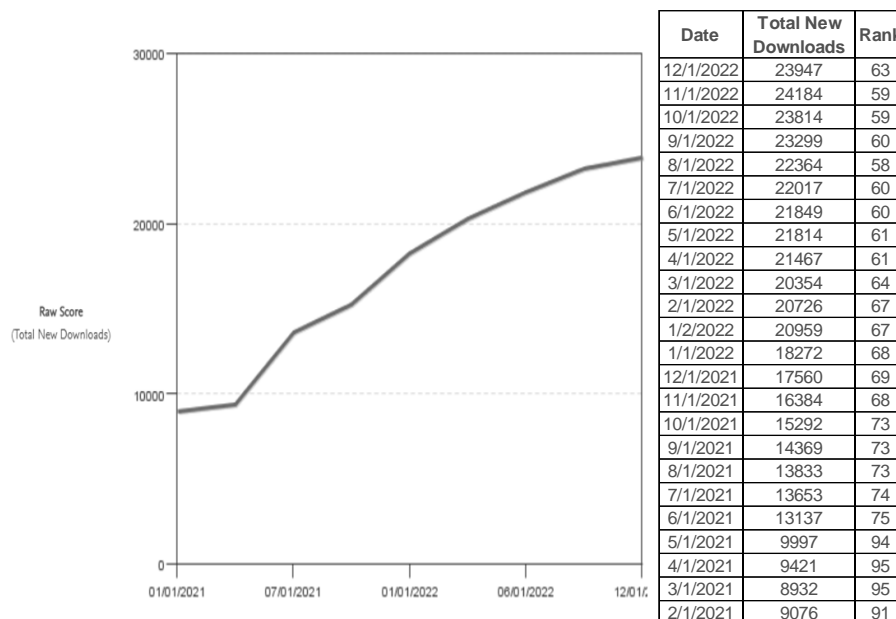
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Exhibit 8

SSRN Top 500 U.S. Business Schools¹⁸⁵

SSRN Total New Downloads and PVAMU College of Business Rank. December 1, 2022



As of December 1, 2022, the COB at Prairie View A&M University is ranked number sixty-three (63rd) among the Top U.S. Business Schools by SSRN based on downloads during the past twelve months.¹⁸⁶

1. *Pre- and Post-Publication Strategies*

Scholarly research is best optimized when viewed as a process, not merely a published product. Although not the subject of our paper and mentioned only in passing here, numerous social media platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and ResearchGate, allow scholars to communicate regarding their activities and research agenda. In addition, several social media and blogging strategies may be helpful for faculty to increase awareness of their research among their peers.

As discussed in more detail below, crafting manuscripts to achieve the widest possible audience and focusing on search engine optimization and visibility is just as important as the traditional indicia of quality scholarly contributions. After all, “if people are unaware of the research, they won’t be citing it.”¹⁸⁷ Indeed, “the more researchers and students in other fields who have heard about the research,

¹⁸⁵ Top 500 U.S. Business Schools, SSRN, https://hq.ssrn.com/rankings/Ranking_graph?compeditorID=446471&TRN_gID=11&TMY_gID=2 (last visited January 2, 2023) (on file with authors).

¹⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁸⁷ See Ebrahim, et al., *supra* note 72 at 64.

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the [more likely] the researcher will receive more citations. Citations to an article might strongly depend on the visibility, rather than the merit of the article.”¹⁸⁸

In discussing the importance of academic search engine optimization (ASEO), Professors Ebrahim, Gholizadeh, and Lugmayr wrote that “ASEO should not be seen as a guide on how to cheat academic search engines. Rather, it is about helping academic search engines to understand the content of research papers and, thus, about . . . making this content more widely and easily available.”¹⁸⁹ Currently, the COB post-publication visibility strategy is not much more than a recognition of importance. However, we hope to soon take steps to optimize the impact value of our faculty scholarship.

Let there be no misunderstanding—the following strategies are not intended to promote mediocre or poor scholarship. Here, we are only discussing faculty scholarship that is, “methodologically sound and justified, well-grounded theoretically, written and structured clearly, contain[s] a solid literature review, contribute[s] something new and useful to that literature, deliver[s] a thorough discussion of their findings, and offer[s] a satisfying conclusion.”¹⁹⁰ Many thanks to Professors Ebrahim, Gholizadeh, and Lugmayr for providing forty-eight different strategies and techniques intended to increase citation count, visibility and impact.¹⁹¹ In order to “enhance the visibility and impact of any article without alerting its central arguments or general writing style[,]” authors can use the following simple techniques:¹⁹²

1. Use a unique name consistently throughout academic careers;
2. Use a standardized institutional affiliation and address, using no abbreviations;
3. Repeat key phrases in the abstract while keeping readability;
4. Select correct metadata;
5. Optimize your article for Google Scholar and other academic search engines;
6. Become [a] member of editorial boards, program committees, and review boards;
7. Start being editor of journal special issues, edited books, and organize scientific events;
8. Assign keyword terms to the manuscript;
9. Do basic research on trends, hypes, and hot topics;
10. Avoid . . . selecting a question type of title;
11. Select a short title for the article;
12. Use more references;
13. Publish a longer paper;

¹⁸⁸ *Id.*

¹⁸⁹ *Id.* at 66.

¹⁹⁰ *Id.* at 64.

¹⁹¹ *Id.* at 64-66.

¹⁹² *Id.* at 64.

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14. Cite relevant thought influencers in your article (to be the best, cite the best);
15. Make a unique phrase that reflects [your] research interest [brand yourself] and use it throughout academic life;
16. Write a review paper;
17. Publish tutorial papers;
18. Publish with international authors;
19. Write articles collaboratively (team-authored articles are cited more);
20. Publish papers with a Nobel laureate;
21. Increase the number of publications in peer-reviewed journals;
22. After a conference takes the paper, correct it, extend it, and submit it to a journal;
23. Publish in a journal with a high impact factor;
24. Publish across disciplines;
25. Self-archive articles;
26. Keep your professional web pages and published lists up to date;
27. Make your research easy to find, especially for online searchers;
28. Use Open Access (OA) to increase citation rates;
29. Deposit papers in an Open Access repository;
30. Participate in dissimilar gender working groups;
31. Contribute to Wikipedia;
32. Start blogging;
33. Share your article on all social media platforms;
34. Interact with your peer connections through academic social media;
35. Keep track of your international contacts;
36. Individually email the PDF file of your published paper to selected collaborators;
37. Take paper photocopies and leave them on the brochure desk of the conference;
38. Papers published after having first been rejected elsewhere receive significantly more citations;
39. Papers with a larger number of ‘callouts’ [are] likely to receive a higher number of citations;
40. Share detailed research data;
41. Present a working paper;
42. Publish your article in one of the journals everyone in your discipline reads;
43. Publicize yourself—link your latest published article to your email signature;
44. Publish your work in a journal with the highest number of abstracting and indexing;
45. Follow-up the papers that cited your article;
46. Create a podcast describing the research project;

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47. Make an online CV like *ORCID* or *ResearchID*; and
48. Use all ‘*Enhancing Visibility and Impact*’ tools . . . ¹⁹³

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper begins by posing the initial question of how a dean may enhance the ranking of his or her college when there is limited access to resources? Larger schools generally have access to considerably more faculty members who have reduced teaching loads, and numerous, talented graduate research assistants. The issue then becomes how faculty in smaller, less-endowed programs compete with larger schools, especially in research productivity and scholarly impact. We answered these questions through a case study of Prairie View A&M’s—a mid-size public university—business program.

Through our case study of PVAMU’s COB, we argue and ultimately demonstrate, that it is not the size of the faculty or the endowment that allows schools to compete in research and make an impact. Instead, the ability to compete rests on how incentives are structured and on what strategies collegiate leaders focus on. For example, in the case of the COB at PVAMU, the dean established a strong research culture, including collaborative research, within two decades. Increasing research-related funds, developing new criteria for measuring and rewarding faculty performance, and incentivizing faculty research performance, contributed to PVAMU’s high SSRN ranking where it placed within the Top 500 and Top 100 Business School lists.

Throughout this article, we share the strategies that PVAMU’s dean used while working with faculty who supported raising the research bar despite knowing that doing so would make it more difficult to attain tenure and promotion. However, most succeeded in raising their own personal research game given the new standards, and in the process, raised the overall profile of their program and the institution. The three cycles of AACSB accreditation without any issues demonstrate just how successful PVAMU’s strategies have been. With a focus on research and the resulting success, PVAMU’s strategies serve as a prime example of how research contributes to attracting and retaining faculty who have the potential to conduct highly productive research.

¹⁹³ *Id.*; See also Mark J. McCabe & Christopher M. Snyder, *Does Online Availability Increase Citations? Theory and Evidence from a Panel of Economics and Business Journals* (2014), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1746243>.