

## Business school sees slow change

Business in the United States is going global; however, business in the management program at the University business school is running a few steps behind.

As the world continues to grow smaller and the business interest in it becomes a global one, there are many changes taking place. One of the changes is the reduction of big business in the United States. The global market is saying, "Cut back and compete ... or else."

In order to compete in the global market with scaled-down international companies, U.S. companies have had to tighten their belts. The interest, for many companies, is in the same pie — but there are only so many pieces to go around.

The cuts, and they are nothing new, are coming from middle management. The old triangle structure of top-level management resting on middle management with lower-level workers filling the space at the bottom of the triangle is becoming a thing of the past. No longer has the global market made it possible for top management to be buffered by middle management. The buffer, for most companies, has already been cut or needs to be.

Keeping up with change is vital to the competitiveness of the University business school. Unfortunately change at the University isn't keeping pace with the changes in the business world. The management program at the University would be a good one if the world were like it was 20 years ago — the years when big business was coming to the University with hopes of filling middle-management positions.

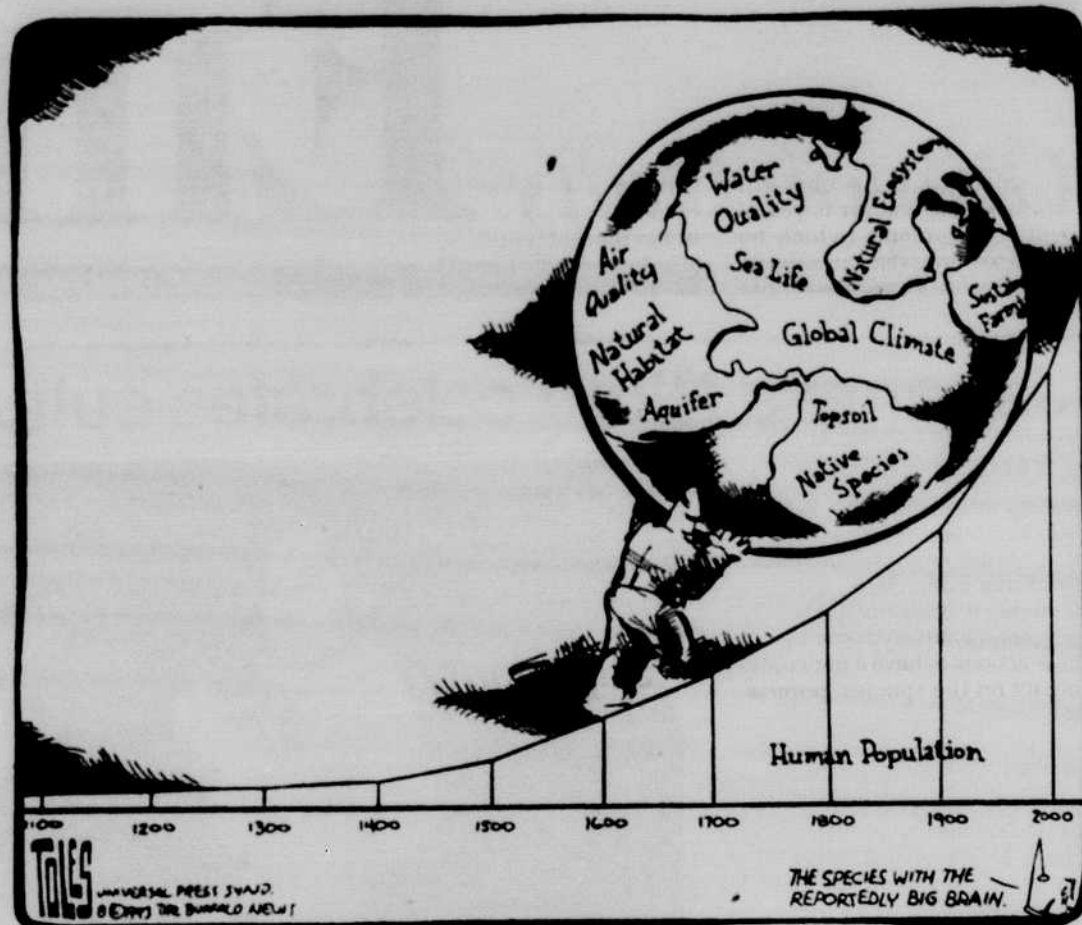
Although the teachers are dynamic, the program is in need of change.

So what if you are a student in the management program? The movement for the business school to reposition itself seems to have been made, and courses like international management are a good start. But even though as the wheel is being turned, it will take some time for the ship to follow.

For students in the management program now, future employment opportunities are going to be few and far between. Preparing for the marketplace now means preparing for the global marketplace. Qualified people are wanted if they qualify for jobs.

Students come to the University to receive an education that prepares them for the working world. Students are making an investment in their education and, in return, education is investing in them. That education must be worthy and competitive in the modern business world.

The changes in the business world are exciting and hold the potential for many great careers. As technology continues to link the world together, the opportunities continue to grow. But the University needs to continue its move to link the students to the business world. The opportunities may not be apparent today, but neither are the changes that the future brings. For those with a watchful eye and the ability to be flexible, the future can be an exciting one.



## COMMENTARY

# Only humans can destroy Earth

By Kevin M. Nakamura

Oh, the arrogance of humankind! David Thorn, in his recent opinion column (*ODE*, Jan. 12), authoritatively declares that humans are "superior to all other forms of life." I'd hardly dare to challenge such wisdom, especially considering some of the undeniably solid scientific evidence he presents. Who would dare to argue with the logic, for instance, that pot-bellied pigs didn't plan the Apollo missions?

Of course I understand that Thorn is only being sarcastic when he makes such remarks, and his sense of humor is acknowledged. The question is, therefore, how seriously are we to take him? Does he honestly believe that any particular form of life is more valuable than another? Apparently so.

Thorn's insistence that humans are superior comes from his disagreeing with a bumper sticker that simply reads, "All forms of life are equal." He goes on to say that this claim "just doesn't hold up to any serious scrutiny."

The problem here is that Thorn is evaluating this statement from a purely human set of values. Human beings, whether we like it or not, tend to interpret value in terms of economics: A whale is more valuable than a microorganism because it is larger, more complex and exists in greater scarcity.

The fact of the matter is that these human-created rules of determining value simply do not apply here.

There is a balance of life on planet Earth, a balance that can be easily disturbed, but not easily restored. Unfortunately, we as humans cannot readily perceive this intricate network through which all living things are connected.

We fail to foresee the consequences of widespread deforestation, the hunting into extinction of rare animals and the human-induced degradation of our planet's natural habitats. You see, whenever you detrimental-

ly affect a single population of organisms, you tend to affect the entire community that that organism inhabits.

Thorn seems convinced that small organisms are less valuable than large. In truth, Earth's oceans are teeming with microscopic organisms that are important and even critical to many larger animals, including people. The oxygen that we breathe is the result of more than three billion years of photosynthesis. A good fraction of this can be attributed to autotrophic marine microorganisms. Clearly they are quite valuable.

So why, asks Thorn, when he uses antiseptic mouthwash, should he not be "punished" for "murdering" millions of microscopic life forms? Besides the obvious reason (morning breath), the answer is strictly one of statistics: Simply put, you cannot help killing microorganisms because the probability of accidentally doing so at any given time is essentially one (as in 100 percent). Does this mean that amoebas are inferior to hamsters? No, it just means that you are more likely to step on or swallow a protozoan than you are a three-toed sloth.

And so we come to the question of intelligence. Does humankind's ability to understand "cause and effect" make us any more essential than our fellow animals? Does the application of intelligence make us special?

Thorn claims that zoologists have failed "to determine conclusively whether animals understand 'cause and effect.'" If you're looking for the word "proved," then don't hold your breath. True science will never prove anything. What it can do, however, is disprove. So, essentially, it has not been disproven that animals cannot understand causality. The American psychologist B.F. Skinner found that rats could learn to press a bar to receive food, and studies of chimpanzees have found that the act of using sticks to extract termites

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for food is a learned (as opposed to instinctual) behavior. Is this not an application of intelligence?

I would not assume to challenge the notion that humans are the most intelligent form of life this planet has ever produced. The fact remains, however, that our intelligence, our ability to process larger amounts of information, is little more than an evolutionary advantage randomly bestowed (read: mutation) on our ancestors some 500,000 years ago. Homo sapiens are not superior. Just lucky.

We are currently the most intelligent species on Earth. With such intelligence, however, comes a tremendous responsibility. Although he does not condemn it, Thorn expresses annoyance at environmentalism, which he seems to feel suppresses our own animal instincts:

"No other animal is expected to curb its own consumption in order to save the planet; animals, left by themselves, will eat entire species into oblivion, and not feel a shred of remorse. If they are capable of destroying the environment, they probably will. And no one would consider it 'immoral.'"

In fact, there is only one animal capable of destroying the environment as we know it. And I'll tell you one thing — it's not the pot-bellied pig.

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