

A Short History of the University Consortium for Executive Education

by

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While informal meetings of university executive-education directors may have occurred before 1972, the first time that a number of the directors got together to talk about their profession was during a cold, blustery week in January 1972 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The idea for the meeting originated with Dean O. Bowman, Director of Executive Education at the University of Michigan's business school. Dean Bowman was worried about his enrollments for the upcoming 1972 programs and began calling his fellow directors to see what they were experiencing. After a number of calls in the fall of 1971, he suggested a meeting at Michigan to talk about enrollments and executive education in general.

The January 1972 meeting was held in the Student Union building at Michigan and was attended by representatives of nine schools. Several schools made informal presentations, although the whole meeting was loosely structured. By the end of the meeting, two actions had been taken. The first was to set a meeting for the next year, and the second was not to set it in Michigan in January. In fact, the thing most remembered about the meeting was the bitter cold walk from the hotel to the Student Union and back.

One of the strong supporters of the Michigan meeting was John Peterson, Director of Executive Education at the University of Southern California. Others playing significant roles in the first meeting were Bill Haeberle of Indiana and Ray Watson of Penn State. The University of Virginia, Ohio State, Pittsburgh, and Northwestern also participated in the program.

One reason the group (which had not yet given itself a name) decided to meet again in 1973 was that John Peterson offered to host the meeting in Palm Springs, California. The University of Southern California frequently hosted management groups in Palm Springs, so Peterson believed his contacts were such that he could easily host the group's meeting. With the temperature around zero outside the Student Union and the winds howling at 25 miles an hour, the Michigan participants had no difficulty agreeing that Palm Springs in the winter would be a good idea.

The second meeting was held February 4-7, 1973, at the International Hotel in Palm Springs. The University of Southern California and John Peterson were the hosts. The attendance was better than at the first meeting; approximately 15 schools participated. PACCAR, Bank of America, Mobil, and Lockheed had been invited to attend and participate, and not surprisingly, several spouses decided to come to the southern California desert that winter.

The group's informality was best evident in its lack of arrangements for any 1974 or 1975 meetings. In both instances, directors offered to host meetings but later cancelled. In the fall of 1975, however, John Peterson once again took the initiative to get the group together, and the meeting was again held in Palm Springs-February 1976 at the Erawan Garden Hotel. Peterson had invited companies to participate, this time as presenters. Six California companies and General Electric attended.

During lunch at the end of the meeting, Peterson, Indiana's Bill Haeberle, Bob Fair of Virginia, and Art Fickel from General Electric discussed establishing an annual meeting of university directors for the future. All agreed that an annual meeting would be a good idea but that it needed to be expanded, have a formal structure, and be attended by more corporate representatives than in the past. At that lunch, Bob Fair volunteered to arrange for the 1977 meeting.

The 1977 meeting was a turning point in a number of important respects for the directors and for the annual meeting. For the first time, a large number of corporate executive-development officers had been invited. Because approximately 40 universities were expected to attend, if the meeting were properly promoted, 40 companies was the number chosen to invite. Because participants, including companies, had previously never numbered more than 25, to have 80 attend was a milestone.

The second important aspect of the 1977 meeting was that all the major business schools attended for the first time. Third, Don Markwell of Unilever and Paul Glover of the National Coal Board led a presentation and discussion of management-development programs in Europe for the first time. Finally, one of the invited companies, General Electric, acted as a corporate sponsor for the meeting. This very successful meeting, held at Sea Island, Georgia, February 20-25, 1977, was the first of many successful annual conferences of the newly named Consortium for University Executive Program Directors.

The University of Indiana and Bill Haeberle hosted the 1978 conference, in Key Biscane, Florida, February 26-March 1; General Motors was the corporate sponsor. At this meeting, the planners-Peterson, Haeberle, Fair, and others-decided to try a

"trade fair" in New York in the fall. They believed a need existed for the directors to "sell" their programs to corporations, but not at the annual meeting. The intention was for the annual meeting or conference to be educational, designed to further the management-development activity, rather than display brochures and buttonhole unsuspecting corporate attendees.

The University of Indiana volunteered to host the first New York meeting, which was held at the Metropolitan Club in November 1978. The meeting attracted 70 corporate attendees, about half of whom used university programs and about half who didn't. Indiana invited one speaker to talk about management development, and the rest of the afternoon was spent in university and corporate attendees meeting each other around display tables of program brochures. The day ended with a brief reception.

In general, the Consortium was pleased with the New York meeting and agreed to a second one, also to be held in New York, the next year. Two years later, the decision was made to have three trade fairs in three days, one right after the other, in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Both the universities and the companies found this schedule to be too much of a good thing, however, so the idea was abandoned. Nevertheless, participants still wanted to move the fall meetings to other parts of the country; thus in 1981 it was held in Houston, Texas. This meeting was poorly attended, however, and the fall fair was moved back to New York, where it has been held every year since.

As the Consortium became more international in membership, it was decided to add "International" to the name of the spring meetings. Shortly after this decision the idea arose of holding the annual conference out of the United States. The University of Western Ontario had been an active member of the group for several years and the Ashridge Management College (England) had also shown interest in hosting a conference. After a meeting between their representatives during the 1985 conference, the two schools volunteered to host the 1986 meeting jointly at Ashridge. Dave Burgoyne of Western Ontario and Philip Sadler of Ashridge, together with the British Petroleum company, hosted the first truly international conference at Ashridge on March 23-26, 1986.

A second international meeting was held, as an extended fall trade fair, in Brussels, Belgium, in September 1989. Leon Selig of INSEAD, Al Vicere of Penn State, Ron Bendersky of Michigan, and John Boquist and Cam Danielson of Indiana coordinated this meeting. It was extremely well attended and was judged successful in every way.

Over the years, all the planning and execution of the various meetings and conferences was done in a very informal way. Usually, John Peterson or one of the other originators would call an informal meeting during a conference or job fair to discuss what to do next. To qualify for attendance at these meetings, almost always held at lunch or dinner or over drinks, the director had to have hosted one of the spring conferences. As more schools hosted

meetings, the larger the group became.

The first order of business at these informal meetings was to identify who would be the next host. This task sometimes proved to be such a problem that two or three short meetings had to be held before someone would "Volunteer." As time went on, other items of business would be discussed. Finally, it became obvious that some more formal method of planning had to evolve.

In the summer of 1988, Alan White invited the attendees at the most recent informal meeting to come to MIT for an organizational meeting. At that day-and-a-half session, the participants decided to elect a board and a chair of the board and to develop objectives and bylaws for the organization. Tom McNichol of Northwestern came to the meeting with a recommendation to govern board membership. He was supported by Nancy Hartigan of Northwestern and Ray Watson of Duke. (The support of McNichol and Watson, two of the founding members, was deemed essential to the success of any action recommended.)

Basically, the recommendation was to form a board of those in the informal group who were still active in executive education and to establish a Senior Fellow category for those who had been active but who had retired. At that meeting, Bob Fair of Virginia was elected the first Chair of the Board. The group further decided that the new Board would have its annual meeting every year at the end of June and that the next meeting would be at Duke.

Between June of 1988 and June of 1989, several important things happened as the Board got organized. Most important was the decision to include in the Consortium all degree-granting institutions around the world that offered four-week or longer general-management programs. These institutions were all notified of this decision, and all agreed to membership. At that time, the membership of the Consortium was thus 49 schools and universities from 7 countries (Canada, the United States, England, France, Ireland, Switzerland, and Australia). As of November 1991, the membership is 58 institutions from 8 countries.

A second important action taken during 1988-89 was the drafting of a set of bylaws, which were subsequently revised and adopted at the board meeting at Duke. Bill Haeberle was elected the first Secretary of the Board also at that meeting.

In its meetings in 1990 and 1991 the Board has continued to formalize its deliberations. Under the direction of Alan White as the second Chair, almost everything has been reviewed. White's primary goal has been to open the Consortium's decisions and activities to all Consortium members. An Annual Meeting of all members is now held in conjunction with the Spring Conference. Further, the Consortium membership now elects a new member to the Board each year. At the 1991 Board meeting, even the name was changed-to the University Consortium for Executive Education.

Since 1978, the Consortium has conducted 18 international conferences and 14 trade fairs. A list of the dates, locations, and sponsors of both conferences and fairs is attached.

While most of the trade fairs have been in New York, only two pairs of annual conferences have been in the same location—the two early meetings in Palm Springs and two at the Cloisters in Sea Island. The most recent conference was held in Fountainbleau, France, April 25-28, 1991. This meeting was hosted by four schools—Penn State, Columbia, INSEAD, and IMD. The program was chaired by Al Vicere of Penn State with Mary Anne Devanna of Columbia, Arie de Koning of IMD, and Leon Selig of INSEAD participating

on the planning committee. For only the second time, this meeting had multiple corporate sponsors—British Petroleum (its second time as a sponsor), Whirlpool, CIBA-GEIGY, and Digital Equipment (its second time also as a sponsor). This conference was innovative in many ways, not the least of which was to give it the name UNICON, a name (with the year designated) to be used for future annual conferences.

The purpose of the Consortium is to advance the field of executive education through the use of university resources. Over the years, the Consortium's conferences and trade fairs have brought together university directors and their customers, business and government executives, to discuss at length how suppliers and customers can work together to further the development of business leaders. Through its Board, the Consortium is actively exploring additional ways to improve the development and delivery of continuing management education. The pace of ideas and opportunities has quickened in the last few years, so the organization will no doubt continue to develop and expand its activities in the future.

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**HISTORY OF
THE CONSORTIUM FOR UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS**

Year	Location	Univ. Program Mgr.	Individual
1978	NYC – Metropolitan Club	Indiana	Haeberle
1979	NYC – Union League Club	Virginia	Fair
1980	National Tour - New York City - Chicago - San Francisco	Indiana Northwestern Southern Cal	Haeberle McNichols Peterson
1981	Houston	Houston	Holland
1982	NYC - Waldorf	Columbia/Virginia	Simpson/Fair
1983	NYC - Hyatt		
1984	NYC - Hyatt	Duke	Watson
1985	NYC - Penta	MIT	White
1986	NYC - Penta	Cornell	Thomas
1987	NYC - Vista	Northwestern	Hartigan
1988	NYC - Vista	Penn State	Vicere
1989	NYC - Vista	Indiana	Danielson