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## **ACCOUNTING HISTORY: A SURVEY OF ACADEMIC INTEREST IN THE U.S.**

*Abstract:* A number of the reports by academicians and practitioners in the United States have called for significant change in accounting education and an enhanced role for accounting history in curricula and research. However, the survey results reported in this paper suggest that achieving wider acceptance of accounting history presents some perplexing problems. Doctoral faculty, especially assistant professors, report less interest in accounting history than non-doctoral faculty. Although a majority of academicians consider accounting history research to be acceptable for promotion, tenure and hiring decisions and a valuable aid to teaching, practitioners, students, doctoral faculty strongly believe that it is of less value than mainstream empirical research in accounting. Most academicians perceive that research in accounting history is not as methodologically rigorous as other branches of accounting research.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, numerous study groups have discussed problems associated with the current model of accounting education and research and their relevance to the 21st century. The issue of relevance gained importance because of the changes in the business environment, a shift from manufacturing to a service economy, the impact of information technology, and greater communication across geographical boundaries and cultures [Mueller and Simmons, 1989]. Many academicians believe the accounting education model, which embraces both teaching and research dimensions, is outdated with little relevance to the changes taking place in the wider world [Elliott, 1991, Williams, 1991]. Others point out that accounting research produces results that are too technical and not relevant for practice. Thus accounting research, often, has very little effect on public or professional policy [Elliott, 1991; Sunder, 1991].

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Both academicians and practitioners agree that if accounting is to serve a useful role in this changing environment, accounting education and accounting research should become broader based, dynamic, and not restricted or constrained by a single model or approach. Numerous committees formed by the American Accounting Association (AAA), the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), and others have recommended significant changes in accounting education [AAA, 1986; Perspectives, 1989; AECC, 1990]. The consensus of these committees was that accounting education should include general knowledge, business knowledge, accounting knowledge, and the accounting curriculum should include a greater role for accounting history in both teaching and research [Coffman et al., 1993]. The American Accounting Association Committee on the Future Structure, Content, and Scope of the Accounting Profession (the Bedford Committee, AAA, 1986) stated that accounting education should develop “knowledge of the accounting profession including: history of accounting and its role as an information system in society” [p. 183]. “The Perspectives on Education: Capabilities for Success in the Accounting Profession” [Perspectives, 1989], a document issued by executives from public accounting firms, stated that accounting knowledge must include “the history of the accounting profession and accounting thought” [p. 8]. The Accounting Education Change Commission [AECC, 1990] also expressed similar views when it said, “knowledge of historical and contemporary events affecting the profession is essential to effective teaching” [p. 310] and “history of the accounting profession and accounting thought” [p. 311] are both essential to effective teaching.

We can point to two major changes last century that demand a greater understanding of accounting history — developments in information technology and the globalization of business. In addition to the U.S., countries such as the U.K., Germany, Japan, China, and a few Pacific Rim countries play a lead role in the global market place. Although culturally diverse, some of these countries are comparable to the U.S. in their business practices, technologies and organizational structures, while others have different economic systems. Some follow the free market system, while others follow systems ranging from mostly state-owned enterprises to a mixture of state-supported and free market enterprises. Some allow free flow of information, while others censor information. Each has its distinctive cultures. If these disparate countries have to realistically do business with each other, enter into agreements, or

resolve disputes, they must understand each other's cultures, history, and business systems. As Wallace [1990] points out, "The alternative solutions taken by various professionals, fields, countries, and economic styles should be presented and discussed" [p. 303].

Before we prescribe or evaluate how accounting techniques and practices must change or how accountants can be effective in this new technological and global environment, we must understand the evolution of accounting. As Roush and Smith [1997] point out, we should first understand how or why an accounting principle was adopted. What was acceptable practice before the changes were implemented, and what other alternatives were considered before adopting the new accounting principle? Whose interests were recognized by an accounting standard, and whose interests were subordinated? These are important questions that only a study of the history of accounting could answer. Answering these questions would help us understand how accounting concepts and techniques evolved contemporaneously with changes in technology and the world economy. Similarly, study of accounting history would help us observe how the changes in the world economy influenced changes in accounting institutions. For the longer term, studying the evolution of accounting practices would help us in understanding public policy; provide an acceptable basis for harmonization of accounting standards, or ideas for making cost measures more relevant.

This paper examines whether the greater emphasis placed by the various committees on the need to include accounting history in accounting curriculum have indeed translated into (1) more accounting courses with a predominant history content in U.S. business schools, and (2) interest among U.S. academicians in historical accounting research. Our study is U.S. centric because, as Slocum and Roberts [1986] suggests, in the past, U.S. academicians there have been less receptive to implementing courses with a history content and researching and publishing articles with a historical focus. We examine whether significant changes in perceptions have occurred since 1985 regarding the feasibility of conducting research in areas with an accounting history content. The paper first addresses the changes in the area of teaching and follows this with a report on the changes in expressed interest in accounting history research. In both cases, the study compares doctoral institutions with non-doctoral institutions. Additionally, perceptions of accounting faculty regarding the relevance of history research in

promotion and tenure decisions are contrasted between individuals at doctoral and non-doctoral institutions and among faculty from various ranks.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In 1985, Slocum and Roberts conducted a survey of academicians to examine the provision of courses in accounting history, degree of interest in teaching and doing research in accounting history, and the perceptions about the usefulness of accounting history research in promotion and tenure decisions. During 1997, we reexamined some of the issues identified by Slocum and Roberts to find out how perceptions about accounting history have changed since 1985. However, while we make references to the earlier survey results, we do not report specific data from the 1985 study, because differences in the wording between the two surveys preclude a direct comparison of the results in absolute terms.

Our questionnaire was mailed to academicians listed in the 1997 "Prentice-Hall Accounting Faculty Directory" compiled by James R. Hasselback. We selected all the doctoral-granting institutions in the United States (with the exception of Georgia State University) and a random sample of non-doctoral granting institutions that contained accounting departments with five or more faculty holding at least two of the three faculty ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor. We identified 255 institutions, 86 of which were doctoral institutions and 169 were non-doctoral institutions. We sent out a total of 935 surveys to heads of accounting units and individual accounting faculty employed in these 255 institutions and received 377 usable surveys, resulting in a 40% response rate. The response was 36% for faculty from doctoral institutions and 41% for faculty from non-doctoral institutions. Table 1 provides a profile of the respondents to the survey. The doctoral and non-doctoral institution dichotomy was used because prior research has shown that the evaluation standards and publication requirements at these institutions differ significantly [Campbell et al., 1983; Cargile and Bublitz, 1986; Milne and Vent, 1987; Schulz et al., 1989].

The survey mailed to faculty asked for responses on three subjects: (1) information on the number of accounting courses with history content taught in their schools and their interest in history research; (2) perceptions of their institutions' views regarding the current status of historical research in accounting

**TABLE 1**  
**Profile of Respondents to the Survey**

Type of Institution	Faculty Rank					Years of Service				
	Head	Full	Asso.	Asst.	Total	< 6	7-10	11-20	> 20	Total
Doctoral	28	29	33	34	124	20	19	39	46	124
Non-Doctoral	61	75	56	61	253	23	37	99	94	253
<b>Total</b>	89	104	89	95	377	43	56	138	140	377
Males	74	89	70	53	286	25	33	97	131	286
Females	15	15	17	42	89	18	23	38	10	89
<b>Total</b>	89	104	87	95	375 <sup>a</sup>	43	56	135	141	375 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Two individuals in the associate rank did not indicate their sex.

and how it is valued for hiring, promotion, and tenure purposes; and (3) perceptions regarding the status of historical research in accounting. Changes in emphasis over time were interpreted by comparing the average 1997 responses to the responses generated by the 1985 Slocum and Roberts survey.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

*Interest in Accounting History:* Analysis of the survey data involved both descriptive tables and statistical tests for differences between the two types of institutions and faculty ranks using a chi-square procedure.

First, we asked the faculty to indicate their level of interest in accounting history on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 = no interest and 10 = significant interest). This is significant because, although an institution may recognize the importance of including historical content in accounting courses, it must find faculty to teach the curriculum, who have interest in teaching accounting history and conducting historical research. Furthermore, if faculty have no expressed interest in accounting history, they are not likely to encourage their institutions to offer a course in accounting history or even at a minimum, to include historical content in their traditional accounting courses.

We examined faculty interest in accounting history according to two variables: type of institution in which employed and academic rank. We used these categories because we expected research and publication focus to differ between doctoral and non-doctoral institutions. We expected faculty from doctoral

institutions to engage in mainstream research (for example, market-based research) that is publishable in top-tier accounting journals such as *The Accounting Review* or *The Journal of Accounting Research*.

Among the faculty ranks, we expected heads of departments and assistant professors from doctoral institutions to show less interest in accounting history than associate professors or professors. Similar to Ettredge and Wong-on-Wing, [1991], heads of departments of doctoral institutions may view mainstream research publications (e.g. empirical, market-based research) in the top-ranked journals as more prestigious and as creating greater recognition for their faculty and department than accounting history research. Consequently, untenured assistant professors would follow the lead of their heads of departments and would show low interest in historical research. We believe, however, that tenured and senior faculty would be more inclined to pursue research that interests them, even if it is not mainstream or popular (e.g. history research). Table 2 reports the responses.

We interpreted means below 3 as slight or no interest in accounting history, between 3 and 6 as moderate interest, and above 6 as significant interest. The results indicate that the interest shown by faculty to accounting history is, at most,

**TABLE 2**  
**Level of Interest in Accounting History**

Faculty Classification	Type of Institution*				Total		Chi-Sq. (p-value)
	Doctoral		Non-Doctoral		No.	Mean	
	No.	Mean	No.	Mean			
Head	28	3.75	61	3.93	89	3.88	9.768 (0.461)
Professor	29	4.11	75	4.58	104	4.54	10.510 (0.397)
Associate	33	4.03	56	3.96	89	3.98	10.935 (0.363)
Assistant	34	2.62	61	4.23	95	3.65	16.121 (0.096)**
<b>Total</b>	124	3.67	253	4.21	377	4.03	

\*The responses were provided on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 = no interest and 10 = significant interest).

\*\*Significant at the 0.10 level.

\* We also tested response differences between types of institutions and did not find the results to be statistically significant (Chi-Sq. = 28.932 and p = 0.521)

moderate. This is true for faculty from both doctoral and non-doctoral institutions and for the various faculty ranks. However, faculty from non-doctoral institutions, in general, appeared to show more interest in accounting history than faculty from doctoral institutions.

Responses of faculty from various ranks support our expectations. Heads of departments of doctoral institutions indicated only moderate interest (3.75) and similarly, assistant professors from doctoral institutions indicated slight or even no interest in accounting history (mean = 2.62). While the responses of the heads of departments and assistant professors from non-doctoral institutions are higher, the level of interest can only be defined as moderate. Associate professors and professors from both doctoral and non-doctoral institutions indicated slightly more interest in accounting history. The level of interest in history research indicated by assistant professors from doctoral institutions compared to faculty from non-doctoral institutions was statistically significant (at the 0.10 level for assistant professors). When compared to the responses to the 1985 survey, the interest of heads of doctoral institutions in accounting history has declined. Assistant professors continued to show low levels of interest in accounting history.

*Courses with a history focus:* We followed the questions on the interest of individual members of faculty in accounting history with questions concerning their institution's interest in accounting history. Since various academic and practitioner groups have recommended use of historical content in accounting curriculum, we asked the faculty to provide information on the number and level of courses involving accounting history in their accounting program. Table 3 reports the responses.

**TABLE 3**  
**Accounting Courses with a History Focus**

Course Level:	Type of Institution		Total N=216
	Doctoral N=70	Non-doctoral N=146	
Undergraduate	2	0	2
Masters	4	7	11
Doctoral	7	0	7
Total	13	7	20



The results do not indicate that academic institutions are taking the recommendations of the AECC and others seriously by implementing courses with a history focus. When compared to the 1985 survey results, in doctoral institutions, the number of courses with an accounting history focus has actually declined. In non-doctoral institutions, courses with a history focus have shown a marginal increase.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether their institution had either added or deleted a course with a history focus and whether there are any plans in their institution to add a course with a history focus. Since 1985, no course with a history focus was deleted, and only one doctoral institution has added an undergraduate course with a history focus. There were no plans in any institution to add a course with history content.

*Accounting History Research Publications in Hiring and Promotion/Tenure Decisions:* Numerous outlets are available for publishing accounting history research. However, unless academicians perceive that accounting history research is recognized by their peers as quality research and is rewarded with promotion and tenure, they are unlikely to engage it and take advantage of publication opportunities in the field. The institution's perceptions about what constitutes acceptable research during promotion/tenure is bound to influence an academician's choice of research area and publication intentions.

Academic institutions tend to hire an individual if a good match exists between the institution's expectations about acceptable research and publications and the applicant's current publication record and research interests [Schroeder and Saftner, 1989; and Holland and Arrington, 1987]. Similarly, the individual would most likely accept a job offer from the institution that s/he perceives will offer the reward of promotion and tenure based on publications derived from current research interests. We therefore requested academicians to convey their perceptions about the usefulness of accounting history research in two distinctive areas: (1) promotion and tenure and (2) hiring of new faculty.

As prior literature indicates, what counts as acceptable research significantly differs among institutions, and specifically between doctoral and non-doctoral institutions. Doctoral institutions are more selective about what is acceptable research for tenure/promotion decisions than non-doctoral institutions [Bazley, 1975; Brown and Gardner, 1985; Schulz et al., 1989].

We do not imply that research deemed acceptable for hiring or promotion/tenure decisions is indicative of the quality or worth of that research. However, there is greater risk for an academician who, in the early part of a career, pursues research considered not to be mainstream.

Whether an institution views certain types of research as mainstream and whether certain publications are acceptable for hiring or promotion/tenure decisions are often influenced by the opinions of the head of the department, the dean, and a few influential faculty within the department. Although academicians may agree or differ on what types of research are interesting or useful, on a more pragmatic note, they would be compelled to pursue the types of research that are acceptable to their institutions. However, on a more personal level, a faculty member's views on research may differ from the institutional views. Analyzing the differences between the faculty's perception of the institution's views and their personal views about history research would be informative for the following reasons. If there were no differences in the perceptions between academicians and their institutions about the usefulness of history research and publications during promotion, tenure, and hiring, it would suggest that faculty support their institution's view about history research. On the contrary, if academicians' personal perceptions significantly differ from their institution's perceptions about the usefulness of history research and believe that it should be given greater weight during promotion, tenure, and hiring, it would indicate their reluctance to conduct history research is guided by more strategic reasons than by perceived intrinsic value.

We first requested faculty to respond on what they believed was their institution's views about the usefulness of history research during hiring and promotion/tenure decisions. We then requested the faculty to respond on their personal views about historical research and the relative value of accounting history publications compared to other academic publications. In both instances, the questions elicited respondents' perceptions about their institution's views on the worth of accounting history research and publications in promotion/tenure decisions (equal to other empirical publications or equal to other practitioner publications) and during hiring (history publications are equally acceptable as other publications). The responses were obtained on a five-point Likert scale where, 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree; and 9 = unsure. However, in the interest of brevity, we

grouped the results thus: (1) disagree (scales 1 and 2); agree (scales 4 and 5); and no opinion (scales 3 and 9). Table 4, provides descriptive data on the perceptions of the faculty about the value of history research comparing the institutional and individual perceptions.

**TABLE 4**  
**Usefulness of History Research During Promotion,**  
**Tenure and Hiring:**  
**Institutional and Individual Perceptions (percentages)\***

	Institutional Perception (by institution)			Individual Perception (by rank)				Total
	Doc- toral	Non- doctoral	Total	Head	Full	Asso.	Asst.	
<b>Acceptable for Promotion and Tenure</b>								
Disagree	24	8	14	8	4	11	8	8
Agree	54	82	72	84	80	77	75	79
No opinion	22	10	14	8	16	12	17	13
<b>Worth equally as other empirical research during promotion and tenure</b>								
Disagree	64	33	43	36	25	27	30	29
Agree	22	51	41	48	50	44	50	48
No opinion	14	16	16	16	25	29	20	23
<b>Worth equally as other practi- tioner research during promo- tion and tenure</b>								
Disagree	22	20	21	23	20	14	20	19
Agree	53	64	60	68	64	67	60	65
No opinion	25	16	19	9	16	19	20	16
<b>Is acceptable during hiring</b>								
Disagree	11	17	8	5	6	6	20	9
Agree	59	73	68	79	81	80	62	74
No opinion	30	10	24	16	13	14	18	17

\* The responses were grouped as follows: Disagree (scales 1 and 2); Agree (scales 4 and 5); and No opinion (scales 3 and 9).

As the results in Table 4 indicate, more than one in two academicians from both doctoral and non-doctoral institutions (54% and 82%) believe that during promotion and tenure, history publications are acceptable to their institution as evidence of research productivity. However, when asked to respond whether history research is given equal weight as other academic empirical publications during promotion and tenure, at least two-thirds (64%) of doctoral faculty disagreed (in contrast, only 33% of non-doctoral faculty disagreed with this statement). More than one in two academicians (53% and 64%) stated that history research is given equal weight as practitioner publications only during promotion and tenure decision. The final question related to acceptability of history research publications in a person's resume during recruiting. Academicians from both doctoral and non-doctoral institutions agreed that history research and publications are acceptable to their institutions during hiring (59% and 73% respectively).

We examined personal views among the various ranks of faculty. Specifically, we were interested in the responses of heads of departments who have significant input into promotion and tenure decisions and in the responses of junior faculty who are especially affected by hiring, and promotion and tenure decisions. Both heads of departments (84%) and assistant professors (75%) overwhelmingly agreed that history publications are acceptable for promotion and tenure. Professors (80%) and associate professors (77%) also expressed similar views. As to the question, are history publications equal to other empirical research, there was less support. Only 48% of the heads of departments agreed with the statement and indicated that history publications are equal to practitioner publications (68%). Assistant professors held very similar views as the heads of departments, with 50% agreeing that history research counts as equal to empirical research and 60% agreeing that history research counts as equal to practitioner research. As to the acceptability of history publications on a person's resume during recruiting, over two-thirds of the faculty from all ranks believed that they are acceptable.

A chi-square analysis was performed on the responses to the questions on the usefulness of history research during promotion/tenure and hiring. Our analyses were conducted on the following dimensions: (1) personal and institutional perceptions, regardless of whether a faculty is employed in a doctoral or a non-doctoral institution, (2) personal and institutional perceptions of faculty from doctoral institutions, (3) personal and

institutional perceptions of faculty from non-doctoral institutions, (4) personal perceptions of faculty from doctoral institutions and non-doctoral institutions, and (5) institutional perceptions of faculty from doctoral and non-doctoral institutions. The results are reported in Table 5. The chi square results for all five dimensions analysis were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The results show that the perceptions of doctoral and non-doctoral institutions on the usefulness of history research during promotion, tenure, and hiring are significantly different and significant perceptual differences also exist among individual academicians and their institutions regardless of whether they are employed by a doctoral or a non-doctoral institution.

**TABLE 5**  
**Usefulness of History Research During Promotion,**  
**Tenure and Hiring Institutional and Individual**  
**Perceptions: Statistical Analyses**

	Differences in Perceptions — Individuals and Institutions Chi-sq (p-value)				
	Individuals vs. Institutions	Individuals vs. Doctoral Institutions	Individuals vs. Non-doctoral Institutions	Individuals from Doctoral vs. Individuals from Non- doctoral Institutions	Doctoral vs. Non-doctoral institutions
<b>Acceptable for Promotion and Tenure</b>	138.31 (0.00)	62.83 (0.00)	64.33 (0.00)	18.967 (0.00)	33.55 (0.00)
<b>Worth equally as other empirical research during promotion and tenure</b>	185.57 (0.00)	73.38 (0.00)	107.01 (0.00)	22.87 (0.00)	35.28 (0.00)
<b>Worth equally as other practitioner research during promotion and tenure</b>	183.92 (0.00)	65.41 (0.00)	116.69 (0.00)	9.975 (0.01)	5.79 (0.05)
<b>Is acceptable during hiring</b>	171.08 (0.00)	62.47 (0.00)	101.98 (0.00)	9.026 (0.01)	7.97 (0.02)

*Academic Perceptions of the Value of Accounting History Research:* In the previous section, we reported the views of academicians on the status of history research from an institutional and individual perspective during hiring and promotion/tenure decisions. We then asked academicians to express their views on four other important issues that indicate the perceived value of history research: the importance of history research to the profession, teaching, practitioners, and accounting graduates. We considered that the responses would help us in assessing the perceived value of history research when viewed without the constraints of hiring and promotion/tenure decisions. If significant numbers of faculty perceive that history research is important to teaching, practice, and the profession, it might encourage heads of departments, deans, other faculty, and journal editors to be more receptive to this type of research. In the long term, recognition of the value of history research would also translate into greater weight being assigned to history publications during hiring and promotion/tenure decisions.

Academicians stated their personal views on a five-point Likert scale where, 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree; and 9 = unsure. As before, in the interest of brevity, we grouped the results into three groups: (1) disagree (scales 1 and 2); agree (scales 4 and 5); and unsure (scales 3 and 9). Table 6, provides descriptive data on the perceptions of the faculty about the value of history research, comparing institutional and individual perceptions.

The results show that academicians from both doctoral and non-doctoral institutions agree (70% and 80% respectively) that accounting history research is important to the profession. Academicians expressed similar supporting views on the question of history research as a valuable aid to teaching (55% and 59% of doctoral and non-doctoral institutions respectively); valuable to practitioners (67% and 75% of doctoral and non-doctoral institutions respectively), and valuable to accounting graduates (62% and 72% of doctoral and non-doctoral institutions respectively).

Once again, we examined the response difference among faculty ranks. There was support from all ranks on the importance of history research to the profession (77%), valuable aid to teaching (58%), effective functioning of practitioners (71%) and valuable for graduates (73%). The responses appear to support the view of the Accounting Education Change Commission [AECC, 1990] that "knowledge of historical and contemporary events affecting the profession is essential to effective teaching" [p. 310] and "history of the accounting profession

**TABLE 6**  
**Faculty's Perception About the Value of History Research:**  
**Comparison of Institutional and Individual Perceptions**  
**(percentages)\***

	Institutional Perception (by institution)			Individual Perception (by rank)				Total
	Doc- toral	Non- doctoral	Total	Head	Full	Asso.	Asst.	
<b>Is important to the profession</b>								
Disagree	9	5	6	9	6	8	5	7
Agree	70	80	77	70	82	80	74	76
No opinion	21	15	17	21	12	12	21	17
<b>Is a valuable aid to teaching</b>								
Disagree	12	13	14	19	14	9	12	14
Agree	55	60	58	53	58	62	58	58
No opinion	33	27	28	28	28	29	30	28
<b>Is valuable for the effective functioning of the practitioners</b>								
Disagree	5	6	6	6	6	3	5	5
Agree	67	75	72	65	75	76	69	71
No opinion	28	19	22	29	19	21	26	24
<b>Is valuable for graduates to appreciate the body of knowledge</b>								
Disagree	10	5	7	10	0	8	9	6
Agree	62	72	68	61	78	72	66	71
No opinion	28	23	25	29	22	20	25	23

\* The responses were grouped as follows: Disagree (scales 1 and 2); Agree (scales 4 and 5); and No opinion (scales 3 and 9).

and accounting thought" [p. 311] are both essential to effective teaching.

In Table 7, we report the statistical analyses. We compared the responses on three dimensions: (1) responses of various ranks from all institutions; (2) responses of various ranks from doctoral institutions; and (3) responses of various ranks from non-doctoral institutions. Differences in these responses were not statistically significant. Academicians from all ranks were

**TABLE 7**  
**Value of History Research During Promotion,**  
**Tenure and Hiring**  
**Individual Perception (by rank)**

	Differences in Perceptions Among Individuals and Institutions Chi-sq (p-value)		
	Individuals from all Institutions By rank	Individuals from Doctoral institutions By rank	Individuals from Non-doctoral institutions By rank
<b>Is important to the profession</b>	2.91 (0.820)	3.98 (0.679)	3.24 (0.778)
<b>Is valuable aid to teaching</b>	11.18 (0.083)	8.83 (0.183)	6.94 (0.326)
<b>Is valuable for the effective functioning of the practitioners</b>	7.81 (0.252)	7.58 (0.270)	4.64 (0.59)
<b>Is important to the profession</b>	5.19 (0.519)	7.91 (0.245)	8.49 (0.204)

more emphatic about the value of history research for the effective functioning of practitioners and its value to graduates. The results, with greater consensus on the value of history research, was in contrast to the results reported in Table 4 on the usefulness of history research during promotion, tenure and hiring with significant differences among the respondents. We believe that these contrasting results are indicative of the academic environment in the U.S. where some research is considered mainstream by the institutions and where some publications are acceptable for promotion and tenure decisions. The environment compels the faculty to more actively engage in research that would secure promotion and tenure and encourages faculty to ignore other research that would be valuable for the long-term development of the profession, teaching, or its graduates.

*Academic Perceptions about the Contribution and Methodological Rigor of Accounting History Research:* We finally asked the academicians whether they considered that accounting history research and publications offered a significant contribution to the accounting literature and whether accounting history research



was comparable in terms of its methodological rigor to contemporary accounting research. We expected responses to these two questions would complement earlier responses to questions on the usefulness of history research during promotion, tenure, and hiring and value of history research to the profession. We asked faculty to respond to the contribution and rigor of history research from the institutional and individual perspectives. The responses were obtained on a five-point Likert scale where, 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree; and 9 = unsure but were reclassified into three groups: (1) disagree (scales 1 and 2); agree (scales 4 and 5); and no opinion (scales 3 and 9). Table 8, provides descriptive data on the perceptions of the faculty about the contribution and rigor of history research comparing the institutional and individual perceptions.

**TABLE 8**  
**The Contribution and Rigor of Historical Research:**  
**Institutional and Individual Perceptions (percentages)\***

	Institutional Perception (by institution)			Individual Perception (by rank)				Total
	Doc- toral	Non- doctoral	Total	Head	Full	Asso.	Asst.	
<b>Contributes to accounting literature</b>								
Disagree	13	8	10	5	5	6	5	5
Agree	60	77	72	76	84	67	68	78
No opinion	27	15	18	19	11	27	27	17
<b>As rigorous as other contempo- rary accounting research</b>								
Disagree	41	27	32	28	28	23	23	26
Agree	15	35	28	28	34	32	32	33
No opinion	44	38	40	44	38	45	45	41

\* The responses were grouped as follows: Disagree (scales 1 and 2); Agree (scales 4 and 5); and No opinion (scales 3 and 9).

As the results in Table 8 indicate, there was strong support for the statement "history research contributes to accounting literature" from the institutional perspective (72%) and from the individual perspective (various ranks) (78%). However, when asked to respond whether history research is equal in

methodological rigor as other contemporary accounting research, there was very weak support from doctoral institutions (15%) and only limited support from non-doctoral institutions (34%). Similarly, on an individual basis, faculty from various ranks, showed only limited acceptance of the rigor of history research (ranging from 28% for heads of departments to a high of 34% for full professors).

We then compared the response differences relating to contribution and rigor on the following dimensions: (1) personal and institutional perceptions, regardless of whether a faculty is employed in a doctoral or a non-doctoral institution, (2) personal and institutional perceptions of faculty from doctoral institutions, (3) personal and institutional perceptions of faculty from non-doctoral institutions, (4) personal perceptions of faculty from doctoral institutions and non-doctoral institutions, and (5) institutional perceptions of faculty from doctoral and non-doctoral institutions. The results are reported in Table 9.

The chi-square results for the first three dimensions, comparing the perceptions of the individuals with their institutions,

**TABLE 9**  
**The Contribution and Rigor of Historical Research:**  
**Statistical Analyses of Institutional and**  
**Individual Perceptions**

	Differences in Perceptions — Individuals and Institutions				
	Chi-sq (p-value)				
	Individuals vs. Institutions	Individuals vs. Doctoral Institutions	Individuals vs. Non-doctoral Institutions	Individuals from Doctoral vs. Individuals from Non- doctoral Institutions	Doctoral vs. Non-doctoral institutions
<b>Contributes to accounting literature</b>	194.73 (0.00)	88.76 (0.00)	105.48 (0.00)	16.62* (0.10)	0.59* (0.99)
<b>As rigorous as other contemporary accounting research</b>	284.15 (0.00)	80.07 (0.00)	203.82 (0.00)	4.06* (0.67)	3.56* (0.73)

\* Not statistically significant at the 0.05 level

were significant at the 0.05 level. The results indicate significant differences between the individual perspective and the institutional perspective on both contribution and methodological rigor. However, when we analyzed the response differences between individuals from doctoral institutions and non-doctoral institutions and differences between doctoral and non-doctoral institutions, the results were not significant. That is, there was greater consensus between individuals and institutions on (1) the contribution of history research to the accounting literature and (2) history research does not have the same rigor as other contemporary accounting research.

The response of individuals from non-doctoral institutions that history research was not equal in rigor to contemporary empirical research was surprising. Earlier, individuals from non-doctoral institutions responded with greater support than their counterparts in doctoral institutions on the questions of usefulness and value of history research. The skepticism expressed by academicians of all ranks and from all institutions over methodological rigor should be noted by accounting researchers. We do not suggest that history researchers should resort to indiscriminate replication of current empirical methodology. However, where applicable, if history research could increase its methodological rigor, in the long run, it will enhance its acceptability to all institutions and its contribution to the accounting literature.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study surveyed the perceptions of U.S. accounting faculty to ascertain their interests in accounting history and accounting history research. Specifically, the study examined whether the emphasis placed by the AECC and others on the importance of historical content in the accounting curriculum and the greater opportunities in terms of resources and publication outlets available to publish accounting history research have resulted in (1) more accounting courses with a history content in the U.S. business schools, and (2) greater interest among U.S. academicians in accounting history research. Analyses of the survey responses indicate that neither of these has happened.

The number of courses with history content has declined in the U.S. business schools during the period 1985-1997. Although several accounting education committees have recommended that accounting education should include history of

accounting in the accounting curriculum, we did not find evidence of such changes in academic institutions in the U.S. While individual academicians in the U.S. seemed to appreciate the importance of accounting history to the profession, practitioners and graduates and its contribution to accounting literature, their institutions were not responding by making appropriate changes to the accounting curriculum.

As for interest in accounting history research, academicians from doctoral institutions, more so than academicians from non-doctoral institutions, indicated that history research is less likely to be rewarded during hiring, tenure, or promotion than other empirical research. When asked to express their personal views on the importance of accounting history research, there was some support that accounting history research is useful and should be treated as equal to other empirical research. We interpret the greater recognition of the value of accounting history research and yet, reluctance of academicians to pursue accounting history research as indicative of a reward system for promotion, tenure, and hiring that prevails in the U.S. which emphasizes that some research is more mainstream than other types of research.

We also elicited the views of the academicians on the rigor and contribution of accounting history research. Unlike responses to questions on the usefulness and value of history research, there was greater consensus among doctoral and non-doctoral faculty that accounting history research is not equal to other empirical research in its methodological rigor. The overwhelming perception among U.S. academicians that history research lacks methodological rigor is a matter for concern. Regardless of whether the perception is correct or not, we believe that this is an important issue and should be discussed and dealt with by the academic community, the Academy of Accounting Historians, accounting history researchers, and the professional and academic institutions.

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