

DOI: https://doi.org/10.48009/2_iis_2026_150

Is technology strategic or simply required? Mission–curriculum alignment in AACSB business school

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Abstract

As digital skills become fundamental to business education, an important question is whether business schools treat technology as a strategic priority or simply as a curricular requirement. This study examines the alignment between institutional mission statements and the integration of technology in the business core curricula of AACSB-accredited schools in the United States. Using a random sample of 200 institutions, we analyze mission statements and curriculum requirements through qualitative content analysis supported by natural language processing techniques, including lemmatization and latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) topic modeling. The results reveal a clear misalignment. While a majority of schools require at least one technology-related course, more than half make no explicit reference to technology in their mission statements. This suggests that technology is widely embedded in curricula but not consistently framed as a strategic priority. These findings highlight a gap between institutional messaging and practice, raising important implications for how business schools position digital competencies in response to AACSB's growing emphasis on digital transformation.

Keywords: AACSB accreditation, curriculum alignment, technology integration, mission statements, business education, content analysis

Introduction

The integration of technology in business education is no longer an optional enhancement—it is a defining element of curricular relevance and institutional competitiveness. As business schools respond to the accelerating pace of digital transformation, accreditation bodies such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) have called for more deliberate alignment between institutional strategy and curriculum. AACSB's standards require that mission statements serve as both aspirational and operational guides for planning, resource allocation, and educational design. (AACSB 2025a, 2025c).

Yet despite this requirement, the degree to which business schools explicitly align their strategic communication with the technological demands of modern business education remains unclear. Do institutional mission statements reflect the digital commitments that are embedded in their curricula? Is technology integration portrayed as a strategic priority, or is it confined to course catalogs and program requirements without broader narrative support?

This study investigates these questions through the following research questions:

- **RQ1.** How is technology integrated into the business core curricula of AACSB-accredited schools?

- **RQ2.** How do mission statements of these schools reflect a strategic emphasis on technology?
- **RQ3.** Is there evidence of alignment between mission statements and curricular practices?

The significance of this research lies in its implications for strategic planning and curriculum development. Institutions that aspire to AACSB accreditation—or work to maintain it—must ensure that their educational activities reflect their strategic commitments, including the adoption of emerging technologies. Ensuring alignment between curricular practice and institutional messaging is critical not only for accreditation compliance but also for maintaining stakeholder trust and academic integrity. Without such alignment, resource allocation and fundraising efforts may become more difficult to justify.

It is worth noting that technology is unlike other subjects in the business field. Beyond AACSB's encouragement for technology to be infused throughout the curriculum, the topic is one that supports all other programs. It is more akin to ethics, another area of study that is synthesized throughout other majors. Research has found that including ethics in mission statements can positively influence student ethical orientation (Davis et al., 2007). Can technology have the same potential?

By focusing on strategic alignment in a digital context, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on mission-driven planning, educational technology, and the practical challenges of translating rhetoric into practice.

Literature Review

The study of alignment between institutional mission and academic practices has gained increased attention in recent years, particularly as business schools respond to rapid technological change and evolving accreditation standards. For example, MacKenzie et al. (2025) demonstrate how alignment between mission statements and resource allocation in AACSB-accredited institutions is associated with stronger organizational performance, especially in the context of digital innovation. Prior research emphasizes the importance of coherence between what institutions publicly claim to value and how they design curricula, allocate resources, and assess outcomes (Hwang et al., 2015; Latta, 2015). These findings are consistent with Weick's (1976) conceptualization of educational institutions as loosely coupled systems, where symbolic messaging and operational practices may diverge, leading to inconsistencies between rhetoric and implementation. In the context of AACSB-accredited business schools, strategic alignment is not only a marker of internal consistency but also a component of ongoing accreditation and quality assurance. This review surveys relevant literature on strategic alignment, technology integration in curriculum design, accreditation expectations, and the evolving role of mission statements as both aspirational and operational instruments.

Strategic Alignment in Higher Education

Strategic alignment refers to the degree to which an institution's actions and resource allocations reflect its stated mission, vision, and goals. This conceptualization aligns with Henderson and Venkatraman's (1999) model of strategic alignment in information systems, which emphasizes how IT capabilities can transform organizational performance when tightly linked to institutional strategy. In higher education, alignment has been studied in various contexts, including mission-driven budgeting (Bess & Dee, 2008), faculty performance evaluation (Kezar & Eckel, 2002), and curriculum reform (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). A well-aligned institution demonstrates coherence between what it claims to value and what it operationalizes in practice. This becomes increasingly critical when external stakeholders—such as accreditors, funding bodies, and students—evaluate institutional integrity.

AACSB Accreditation and Technology Expectations

AACSB accreditation standards explicitly require that curriculum and assessment practices be mission-aligned and responsive to the business environment. Technology is expected to be “infused through the curriculum and is vital to the production of scholarship and thought leadership” (AACSB, 2025b). Several studies have explored how AACSB influences the structure of business education, including program learning goals (Martell, 2007), assurance of learning systems (Miles et al., 2014), and administrative decision-making (Lowrie & Willmott, 2009). However, there is limited empirical research on whether technology initiatives—particularly those tied to digital transformation—are reflected in the language of institutional strategy.

Technology Integration in Curriculum Design

Technology integration has been examined across educational disciplines, particularly in K-12 and STEM fields, but its strategic framing in business education remains underexplored. Frameworks such as TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge; Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) offer insight into how educators adopt and adapt digital tools. While these models are widely used for instructional design, they also provide a lens through which to evaluate institutional readiness and systemic change. In business education, emerging research emphasizes the importance of embedding digital fluency into core curricula, ranging from data analytics and cybersecurity to platform strategy and AI ethics (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Benavides et al., 2020). Hwang et al. (2015) found considerable variation in how U.S. institutions implemented information systems core curricula, highlighting the importance of curricular consistency in response to technological change. Similarly, Hulshult and Woods (2020) demonstrated how applying Agile methodologies across IT curriculum development can strategically align academic programs with evolving technological and pedagogical priorities. Together, these studies reinforce the importance of aligning curriculum with evolving industry expectations and technological change.

Beyond classroom instruction, these frameworks also offer value for institutional planning. The TPACK model emphasizes the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, reinforcing the importance of coherent faculty development and resource allocation (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Similarly, the SAMR model distinguishes between technology used to substitute existing practices and technology used to transform teaching and learning. Together, these frameworks suggest that meaningful technology integration requires institution-wide planning rather than isolated curricular additions.

Broader disciplinary guidance also reinforces the importance of technology integration. The CC2020 report, a joint effort by global computing associations, underscores the necessity for all undergraduates—not just computing majors—to attain baseline digital competencies. It explicitly recommends that computing be embedded within general education clusters to promote transferable, ethical, and context-aware understanding of technology (ACM et al., 2020). These recommendations align with AACSB expectations: that technology should be treated as a liberal learning outcome rather than merely a technical skill. However, few studies have examined how CC2020 principles are adopted outside computing departments, especially in mission statements or strategic planning documents.

Symbolic vs. Operational Use of Mission Statements

Research in higher education has long distinguished between the symbolic and operational uses of mission statements. These statements signal institutional values to external stakeholders, accrediting bodies, donors, and prospective students, often aspirationally. Operationally, however, they are expected to serve as planning tools, guiding internal decisions about curriculum, hiring, and budgeting (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). This tension can result in “mission drift,” where institutional activities deviate from the values or priorities that are publicly articulated. This phenomenon is consistent with Weick’s (1976) theory of

educational institutions as loosely coupled systems, where symbolic rhetoric and operational practice often evolve independently, creating space for strategic disconnects, especially around technology adoption. In the context of digital transformation, such drift may be particularly consequential. Institutions may adopt technology at the classroom or departmental level without incorporating it into their strategic identity, leaving a misalignment between planning and practice.

Gaps and Research Need

Despite increased pressure for institutions to innovate, there is a lack of research on how technology integration is reflected in non-technical strategic documents like mission statements. This gap is significant because mission statements serve as both internal guideposts and external signals of institutional identity. Understanding how (or whether) they include technology offers insight into whether schools view digital transformation as a strategic priority or merely a curricular obligation. This study addresses this gap by examining whether technology is strategically represented in the mission statements of AACSB-accredited business schools and whether that strategic messaging aligns with curricular practice.

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in a multi-pronged theoretical framework. First, it draws from Strategic Alignment Theory, particularly the model proposed by Henderson and Venkatraman (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1999), which emphasizes coherence between organizational strategies, structures, and processes. Within higher education, this theory suggests that institutions should ensure consistency between their publicly stated missions and their curricular practices.

Second, the study is informed by models of curricular alignment, including backward design and constructive alignment. These approaches promote the idea that curricula should be developed by first identifying intended learning outcomes and then selecting content and assessments that directly support those outcomes.

Finally, qualitative content analysis serves as a methodological and conceptual lens. Building on the work of Krippendorff (2018) and Mayring (2014), this method enables researchers to systematically examine the language and themes embedded in institutional documents. In this study, mission statements and curricular descriptions are treated as data points reflecting institutional identity, values, and strategy.

This method has been frequently employed in higher education research to explore the alignment between mission statements, educational goals, and curriculum design (Morphew & Hartley, 2006; Yob et al., 2016; Makoe, 2022).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive comparative design that relies on document analysis and natural language processing (NLP) techniques to assess the strategic alignment between technology-related content in institutional mission statements and business curricula.

As of April 2025, there were 970 AACSB-accredited business schools worldwide offering undergraduate degrees (AACSB, n.d.). Due to the researchers' familiarity with the U.S. higher education system and the shared regulatory and curricular context across domestic institutions, the scope of this study was limited to the 591 AACSB-accredited schools located in the United States. To balance methodological rigor with

practical feasibility, a random sample of 200 institutions was selected from this population, representing approximately 33.9% of U.S.-based AACSB schools. The full list was obtained from the official AACSB website and randomized using spreadsheet software. We selected the first 200 institutions from this randomized list, without stratifying by institutional type, region, or control. While the sample was not designed to be proportionally representative, a post-hoc review confirmed broad variation in institutional characteristics (e.g., size, region, control), supporting reasonable generalizability. The data collection and validation process was largely manual. Graduate assistants independently collected mission statements and curriculum information for each institution. One of the authors subsequently verified all mission statements, curriculum classifications, and coding decisions to ensure completeness and consistency. Any discrepancies identified during the review were resolved through discussion before the final dataset was analyzed. Given the labor-intensive nature of this process, limiting the sample to 200 institutions was a practical decision. The sample size provides broad coverage across institutional control (public vs. private), size, and geographic region. While AACSB is an international accrediting body, the decision to focus exclusively on U.S. institutions was made to enhance the internal validity and comparability of the findings. Including international schools would introduce variability in cultural, regulatory, and curricular frameworks that could confound the alignment analysis.

For each institution, the primary institutional website was used to locate three key documents: the general education curriculum, the business core curriculum, and the school's mission statement. If both institutional and business school-specific mission statements were available, the latter was used to ensure relevance to the business program.

Technology-related courses in both the general education and business core curricula were identified and classified as either *mandatory* or *optional*. Courses were coded as mandatory when they were required of all students, and optional when students could select from a group of alternatives to satisfy a requirement. This classification helped to determine the prominence of technology within the core curriculum and assess whether its inclusion reflected a strategic imperative or merely a peripheral offering.

Following curriculum coding, mission and vision statements were processed using the spaCy natural language processing library (Honnibal & Montani, 2017). Texts were lemmatized to normalize word forms. Stop-words were removed using a combination of the standard English list from the Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) and a custom list of domain-specific frequent terms (e.g., "student," "university," "education," "learn") to reduce lexical noise and enhance thematic clarity.

To identify deeper patterns in institutional language, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling was applied using the Gensim library (Řehůřek & Sojka, 2011). Prior to training, all tokens were converted into a bag-of-words model, and an LDA model with five topics was trained over fifteen iterations to ensure interpretive coherence and topic stability. This allowed us to uncover clusters of conceptual themes embedded in mission statements, ranging from community service and learning outcomes to innovation and social responsibility.

In addition to topic modeling, a keyword-driven classification approach was developed to evaluate technology emphasis in institutional mission and vision statements. A curated list of more than 30 technology-related keywords (e.g., technology, innovation, digital, cybersecurity, AI, robotics, programming, cloud computing, data science, blockchain, IoT, STEM, and analytics) was developed through an iterative review of the educational technology literature and terminology published by UNESCO, Education 5.0, McNulty, and the Proximate Change toolkit. The research team reviewed and refined the keyword list prior to analysis to improve relevance and consistency. The complete list of keywords and sources is provided in the Appendix. Each statement was scanned for keyword presence to compute a technology relevance score. Mission statements containing no technology-related keywords

were classified as No-Tech. Statements containing technology-related keywords were subsequently evaluated based on the frequency of keyword occurrence together with sentiment analysis using the TextBlob library (Loria, 2018). Statements reflecting greater technology-related keyword presence and more positive sentiment were classified as Tech-Positive. This combined keyword-frequency and sentiment-based approach helped distinguish incidental mentions of technology from statements that positioned technology as a strategic institutional priority.

Findings

Technology Integration in Curricula (RQ1)

To assess how technology is integrated into AACSB-accredited programs, we reviewed both general education and business core curricula. In the general core, just over half of the institutions included at least one technology-related course. Specifically, 18% of institutions mandated a technology course, while an additional 37% offered one or more technology courses as options within broader elective requirements.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of institutions with required and optional technology courses in the general education core.

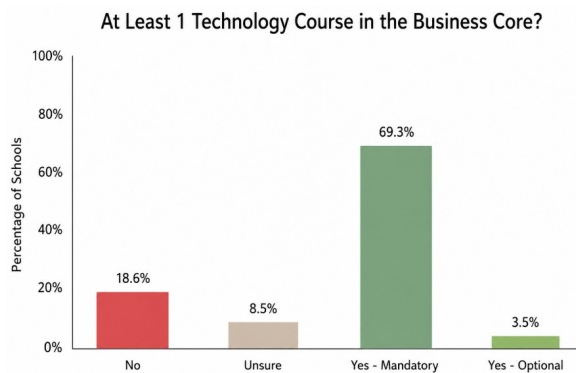


Figure 1. Technology Course in Gen Ed Curriculum

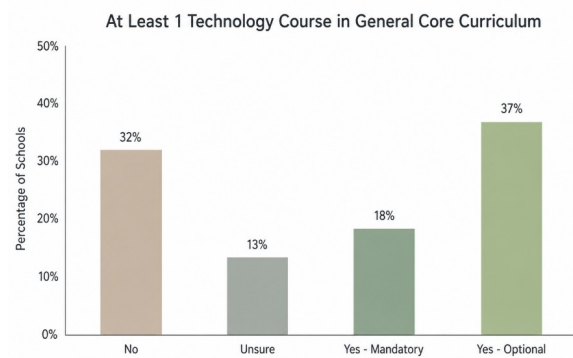


Figure 2. Technology Course in Business Core Curriculum

The business cores, taken as a whole, reflected a much stronger commitment to technology. A total of 69% of the schools in our sample required students to complete at least one technology-related course as part of the core business curriculum. These courses varied from introductory information systems and analytics to applied topics in cybersecurity and digital platforms. While it is usually accepted that technology should be integrated across all aspects of the business curriculum, many institutions still choose to highlight certain courses as explicitly “technology-related” for curricular planning and assessment purposes. For the purposes of this study, a “technology-related course” was defined as one that includes a primary focus on topics such as information systems, data analytics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, programming, or other emerging technologies. This definition is grounded in both AACSB’s expectations for digital preparedness and global curriculum standards such as Computing Curricula 2020 and Education 5.0. Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of institutions that include a required technology-related course in the business core curriculum. This indicates that while AACSB-accredited institutions are increasingly incorporating technology into their programs, the emphasis is more explicit in business curricula than in general education requirements.

Computing Curriculum 2020: Field Expectations

Beyond institutional practices, guidance from professional standards also reinforces the importance of embedding technology across the curriculum. The 2020 Computing Curriculum (Force, 2020) report, developed by leading academic and industry organizations, highlights the need for all undergraduates—not just computing majors—to attain foundational computing knowledge.

While much of the emphasis in CC2020 is directed at technology-specific programs, the report also explicitly encourages integrating computing concepts into general education. For example, the competency model notes that “computing graduates are normatively expected to skillfully apply computing disciplinary knowledge (relevant to their academic program), foundational knowledge consistent with baccalaureate education, and, lastly, professional knowledge relevant to how graduates operate as professionals” (Force, 2020).

Moreover, the report advocates including computing content in “general education clusters,” situating technology not only as a professional tool but as a liberal learning outcome. These competencies encompass ethical, contextual, and communicative dimensions of computing—supporting its inclusion in both general education and business foundations (Force, 2020).

Taken together, these expectations align with our finding that technology-related courses are present across curricula, and they further strengthen the argument that such integration should be mirrored in strategic institutional narratives.

Strategic Language in Mission Statements (RQ2)

Mission and vision statements were analyzed using word frequency visualizations, keyword classification, and LDA topic modeling. Our initial word cloud (Figure 3), created after lemmatizing and removing stop-words, showed that institutional statements heavily emphasized values such as “community,” “education,” “diverse,” “public,” and “engagement.” These reflect a broader institutional focus on public service, inclusion, and academic development.



Figure 3. Mission and Vision Statements



Figure 4. Most Common Lemmas (excluding specified words and verbs)

To explore deeper themes, we excluded generic academic terms and regenerated the word cloud (Figure 4). The updated visualization highlighted terms such as “research,” “state,” “world,” “innovative,” and “excellence,” revealing a common emphasis on advancement, external engagement, and leadership.

However, terms directly associated with technology (e.g., “technology,” “digital,” “AI,” “innovation”) were sparse (Figure 5).

A histogram of keyword frequency (Figure 5) confirmed that more than half of the mission statements did

not include a single technology-related term. Among the 90 statements that included technology-related terms, more than 70% did so only once, and typically in vague ways, such as referencing a commitment to ‘innovation’ or ‘technology-enhanced learning,’ without further elaboration. For example, Auburn University at Montgomery's mission refers to the use of "traditional and electronic delivery systems," emphasizing technology as a mode of instruction. In contrast, California State University, Northridge highlights preparing students to live and lead in a "technological age" and to apply technology to meaningful purposes, illustrating a more integrated treatment of technology within the institution's broader mission. These examples demonstrate the diversity of technology-related language observed across mission statements without implying any specific study classification. Very few mission statements made explicit references to emerging tools like AI, data analytics, or cybersecurity.

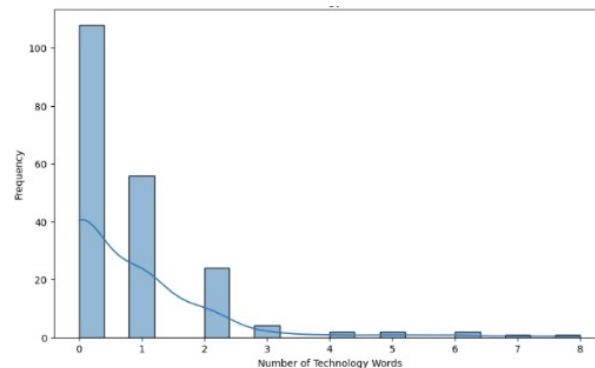


Figure 5. Number of Technology Related Words in Mission Statement

Using LDA topic modeling with five distinct topics, we uncovered the following themes:

- Topic 1: Community and Research Focus
- Topic 2: Innovation and Global Outlook
- Topic 3: Career and Personal Growth
- Topic 4: Public Service and Access
- Topic 5: Current and Emerging Technology

To better understand the semantic makeup of each theme, we created horizontal bar charts displaying the top keywords for each topic. These charts illustrate the relative frequency and weight of the most influential terms in the model's output. Figures 6–10 present the twenty most probable keywords associated with each LDA topic, providing additional context for the thematic labels assigned during interpretation. Topic 1 emphasizes community and research, Topic 2 centers on innovation and global outlook, Topic 3 highlights career and personal growth, Topic 4 focuses on public service and access and Topic 5 captures current and emerging technology. Together, these keyword distributions support the thematic interpretation of the latent topics identified through LDA.

Topic 1: Community and Research Focus

This is the largest topic in the corpus, accounting for 29% of all tokens. It emphasizes terms such as “community”, “research”, “state”, “world”, “engagement”, and “professional”. The topic reflects both community engagement and research activities, while terms such as “innovative” and “opportunity” suggest a future-oriented perspective.

Topic 2: Innovation and Global Outlook

This reflects institutional priorities related to innovation, diversity, and global engagement with key terms such as “community”, “innovative”, “research”, “leader”, “engagement”, “diverse”, and “global”. Frequently used terms like “economic”, “transform”, and “advance” suggest broader economic and societal

change.

Topic 3: Career and Personal Growth

This topic includes terms such as "community", "professional", "business", "research", "personal", "society", "skill", emphasizing career preparation, professional development, and personal growth. Although terms like "innovation", "global", and "opportunity" are also prominent, the focus is on career readiness and experiential learning.

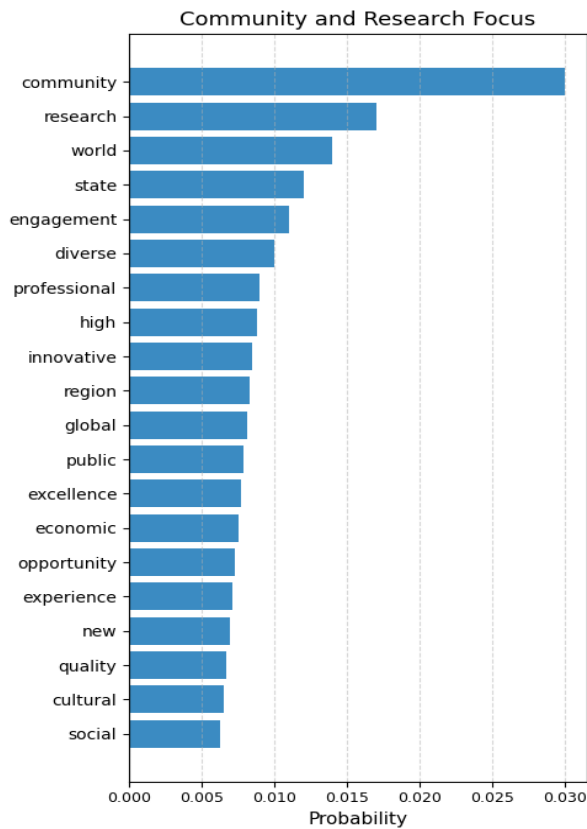


Figure 6. Topic 1 Keywords

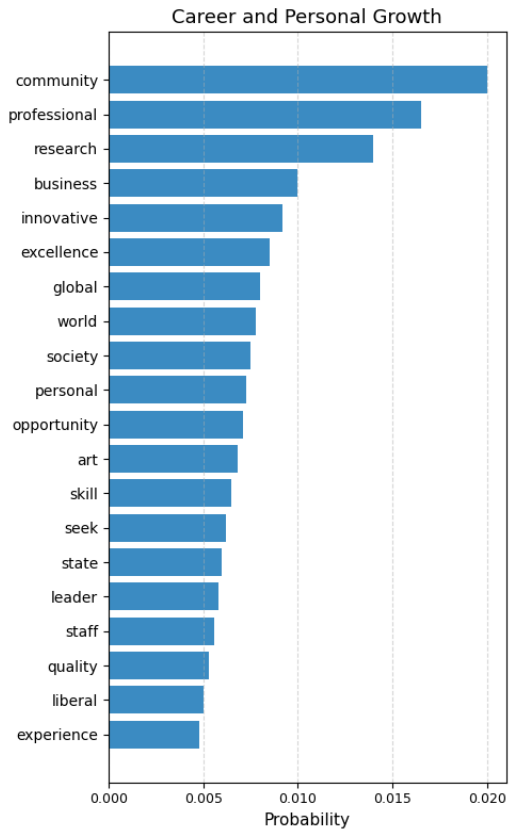


Figure 8. Topic 3 Keywords

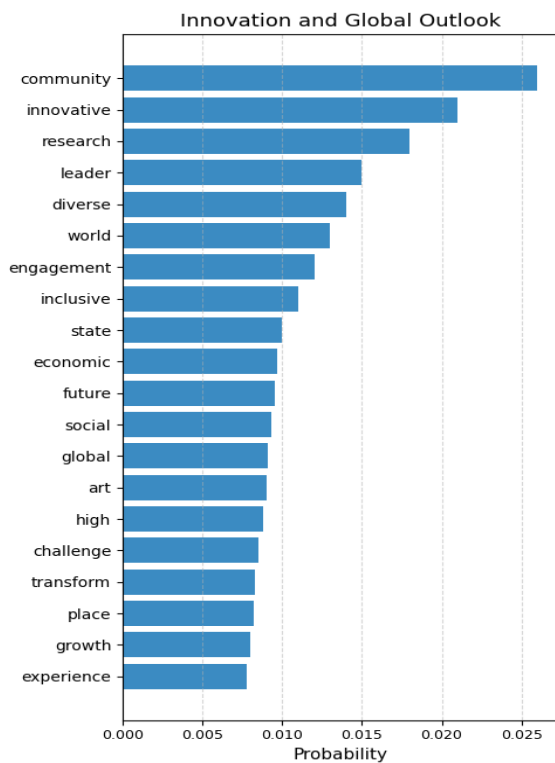


Figure 7. Topic 2 Keywords

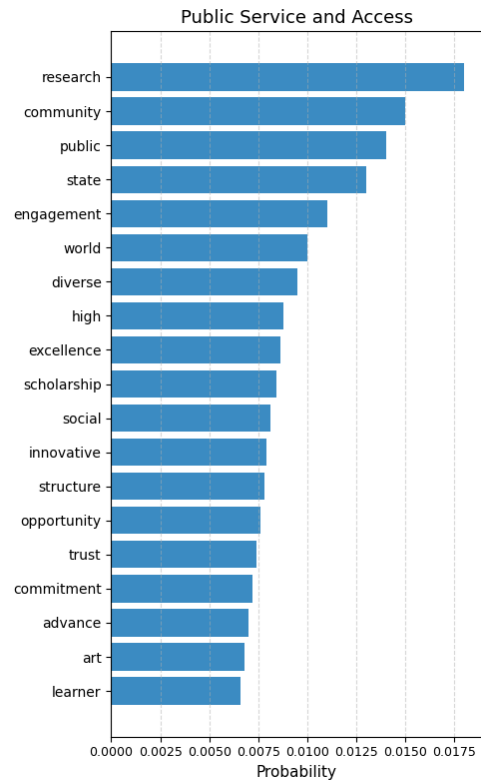


Figure 9. Topic 4 Keywords

Topic 4: Public Service and Access

Terms like “research”, “community”, “public”, “state”, “engagement”, and “scholarship” suggest a focus on institutions’ civic duty. Moreover, terms like “leader”, “economic”, “urban”, and “work” suggest that institutions foster regional progress, while terms like “diverse”, “comprehensive”, “cultural”, and “inclusive” signal accessibility.

Topic 5: Current and Emerging Technology

This topic is the most semantically distinct, reflecting a combination of institutional identity and emerging technology themes. Terms such as “research”, “excellence”, “community”, “tradition”, “scholarship”, “Texas”, and “Wisconsin” point to institutional identity, whereas terms such as “technology”, “innovation” and “global” suggest an orientation toward technological change and future development.

Taken together, these five topics capture a broad range of institutional priorities, including community engagement, research, innovation, career development, public service, and institutional identity. While each theme offers insight into how schools frame their strategic missions, their relative prominence also reveals the dominant narratives represented across AACSB-accredited business school mission statements. Notably, Topic 5 did not yield a high proportion of explicitly technology-related terms. Although the initial modeling process grouped terms such as innovation, global, and excellence alongside institutional identifiers, these terms were not consistently accompanied by language reflecting explicit commitments to technology or digital transformation. Consequently, many mission statements associated with this topic were subsequently classified as tech-neutral or non-tech-positive in the sentiment analysis. This finding highlights the importance of considering not only the presence of technology-related terminology, but also the broader context in which such language is used when evaluating strategic emphasis on technology.

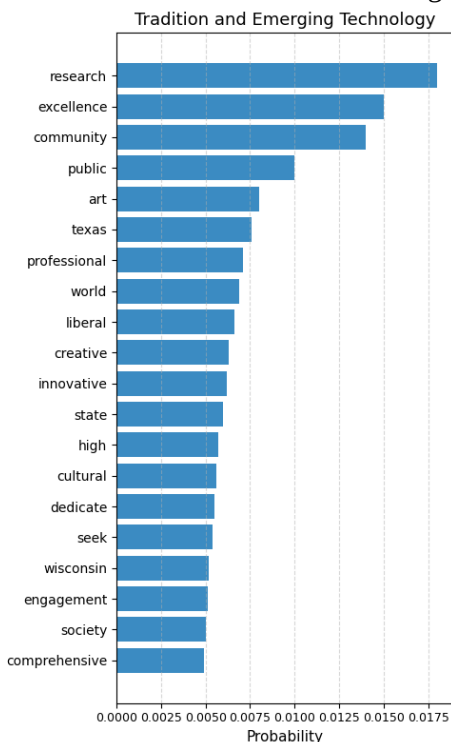


Figure 10. Topic 5 Keywords

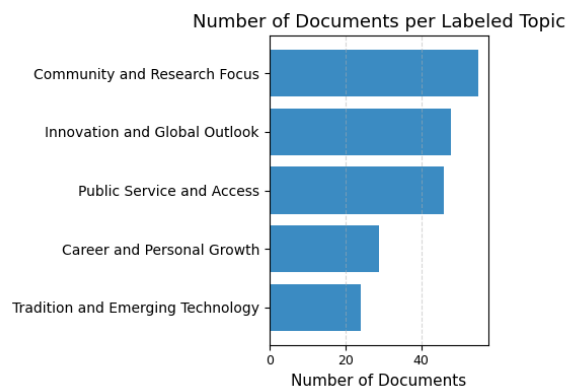


Figure 11 Mission Statements Distribution by Topic

Figure 11 shows the distribution of mission statements by topic. Topic 1 was the most dominant theme, emphasizing engagement, research, and professional development. Topic 5, which included references to tradition and technology, was the least common, reinforcing our earlier findings that technology is not widely presented as a strategic pillar.

An intertopic distance map (Figure 12) shows that Topics 1, 2, and 4 were thematically close, while Topics 3 and 5 were more isolated. The thematic isolation of Topic 5 supports the idea that technology is discussed only by a subset of institutions and is often tied to broader identity narratives rather than central goals.



Figure 12. Intertopic Distance Map

Technology Sentiment and Alignment Patterns (RQ3)

To further quantify alignment, we evaluated the sentiment and frequency of technology-related terms in mission statements. Institutions were classified into three categories: Tech-Positive, Tech-Neutral, and No-Tech.

Figure 13 illustrates the proportion of Tech-Positive mission statements across the five LDA topics. Technology appeared most frequently in Topic 2 (Innovation and Global Outlook) and Topic 1 (Community and Research Focus), reinforcing the association between innovation and digital commitment. By contrast, Topics 4 and 5 contained fewer Tech-Positive cases.

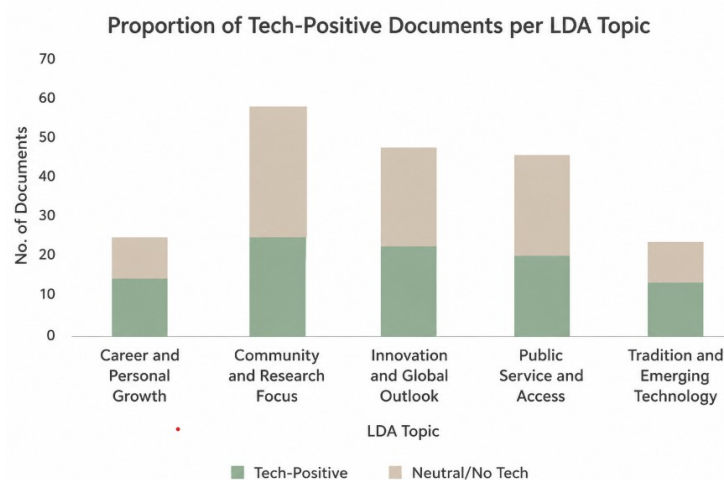


Figure 13. Proportion of Tech-Positive Documents per LDA Topic

Discussion

The analysis highlights a discrepancy between curricular implementation and institutional strategy in AACSB-accredited business schools. While most institutions include technology in their business curricula, few treat it as a strategic priority in their mission statements. This finding suggests that technology may be seen as a technical or departmental concern rather than a central element of institutional identity.

This finding also contributes to strategic alignment theory by extending the concept beyond the alignment of organizational strategy and operational activities to include alignment between institutional messaging and curricular implementation. Prior research suggests that organizational effectiveness depends on consistency between strategic priorities and organizational practices. Our findings indicate that technology may become embedded in curriculum long before it becomes embedded in institutional identity. This disconnect suggests that strategic communication often lags operational change, particularly during periods of rapid digital transformation.

Several factors may explain this pattern. Mission statements are typically revised infrequently, whereas curricula evolve continuously in response to employer expectations, technological advances, and accreditation requirements. Institutions may therefore integrate technology into programs without simultaneously updating their strategic narratives. In addition, many institutions intentionally maintain broad mission language to preserve flexibility and emphasize enduring values such as community, leadership, and service rather than specific technologies.

This misalignment could be interpreted as a symptom of organizational inertia, where strategic documents lag actual instructional practice. Alternatively, it might indicate a cautious approach to adopting technology as a core value amid institutional efforts to maintain broader appeals related to tradition, access, or community identity. The thematic distance observed between innovation-oriented and tradition-oriented mission statement topics supports this interpretation.

Notably, the institutions that did incorporate technology into their mission statements were more likely to use forward-looking, progressive language, terms like "global leadership," "innovation," and "digital transformation". This suggests that technology is framed aspirationally when present, rather than operationally or pedagogically. As a result, students, faculty, and external stakeholders may find it difficult to discern whether a school's technological capabilities are a core strategic commitment or simply a curricular feature.

Mission statements are public facing and influence a host of campus decisions. Institutions that include technology in their mission statements but not in their curriculum could be called into question for failing to execute on their mission. Conversely, those that include technology courses but make no mention of it in their mission may find that efforts to secure grants, create industry partnerships, or garner alumni support for innovation are undermined as a result.

Institutional planning committees, accreditation task forces, and academic leadership teams can benefit from explicitly auditing the language of their mission statements in comparison to their curricular investments. Incorporating references to technological competencies, digital ethics, or innovation capacity could help position the institution more effectively within AACSB expectations and the broader educational marketplace.

Finally, this study suggests a larger opportunity for systemic integration. Rather than viewing technology as a discrete element of business education, institutions could consider framing it as part of a holistic student

learning journey, from mission and course selection to advising and career preparation. Aligning technology strategy with institutional identity supports efforts to meet digital transformation requirements and fulfill institutional strategy in AACSB-accredited business schools.

Limitations and future work

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the analysis focused exclusively on AACSB-accredited business schools in the United States. While this scope allows for a concentrated investigation within a specific accreditation context, it limits the generalizability of results to institutions with different accreditations and/or those operating abroad. Future research could expand this scope to examine mission–curriculum alignment across global regions or among institutions aligned with other accrediting bodies.

Second, the data sources were restricted to publicly available mission statements and curriculum descriptions. These materials may not fully capture the nuanced ways institutions frame and execute their strategic priorities internally. Documents such as strategic plans, faculty meeting minutes, or program reviews could offer deeper insights into the alignment process. Additionally, mission statements may be outdated or in flux, especially as institutions adapt to evolving technological landscapes.

Third, the study used keyword frequency and topic modeling to identify thematic patterns. While these methods offer valuable insights at scale, they are inherently limited by their sensitivity to surface-level textual features. Some mission statements may reflect strong commitments to technology through idiomatic or metaphorical language not easily captured by keyword analysis. Future studies could supplement NLP techniques with qualitative approaches such as interviews, discourse analysis, or case studies.

Finally, alignment was evaluated categorically based on curricular presence and textual mentions. Future work might explore the *depth* or *quality* of alignment; for instance, whether technology is integrated across the curriculum or isolated in standalone courses, and whether mission statements frame technology as a core institutional value versus a peripheral tool.

Conclusion

This study addressed three research questions concerning the strategic alignment of technology within AACSB-accredited business schools. It found that while technology is commonly integrated into business curricula (RQ1), it is largely absent from institutional mission statements (RQ2), resulting in a pattern of partial alignment (RQ3). This disconnect suggests that, for many institutions, technology is treated primarily as a curricular requirement rather than as a core element of institutional strategy.

By combining curriculum analysis with content analysis of mission statements, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how technology is represented both operationally and strategically in business education. As business education continues to evolve in response to technological change, institutions should ensure that their strategic messaging evolves alongside their educational practices.

These findings also have practical implications for institutions pursuing strategic renewal, particularly those responding to AACSB's evolving accreditation standards. Institutions may benefit from periodically reviewing mission statements to ensure they reflect evolving technological priorities, incorporating technology more explicitly into strategic planning processes, and developing measurable indicators to

evaluate mission–curriculum alignment over time. Strengthening this alignment can enhance institutional coherence, improve communication with stakeholders, and better position business schools for continued digital transformation.

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