In this paper I provide a brief review and analysis of the primary external criticisms over the last century of accounting education and selected responses by accounting professionals and academics. My objective is to demonstrate the constancy of criticism and the failure of any criticism to effect meaningful change in the delivery of accounting courses. The scandals of the late 19th century opened university doors for accountancy. I begin by examining the profession’s earliest vision for accounting education and position that vision within the Progressive reform movement. For more than a century, there has been a consensus that technical knowledge is totally inadequate as the basis of accounting education, but the accounting curriculum continues to have a decidedly technical orientation. One of the themes that emerges from this historical overview is the consistency with which those calling for reform—practitioners and academicians—have repeated this message and how little effect it has had. From a historical perspective, two interesting questions arise: Why did accounting curricula become increasingly technical throughout the 20th century, despite repeated calls for change? What has rendered accountants’ social obligation oblique, if not obliterated, in most of our accounting courses?

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