

MBA Program Assurance of Learning Summary

Fall, 2008

In fall 2006, the Graduate Studies Committee identified and made recommendations concerning four areas for improving the assurance of learning plan. These recommendations were implemented fall 2006 through spring 2009. The four recommendations, the fall 2007 assurance of learning report accomplishments as listed in the fall 2007 report, and the accomplishments from spring 2008 through fall 2008 are listed below.

1. **Recommendation:** Improved writing of goals and competencies

Fall 2007 Accomplishments: Goal Chairs held “closing the loop” meetings for all instructors teaching a course related to the specific goal. One objective of these meetings was to discuss and clarify any ambiguities in the assurance of learning goals or outcomes related to the topic being discussed. Several assurance of learning outcomes were revised based on these “closing the loop” meetings.

Recent Accomplishments: The closing the loop meetings resulted in several additional outcome changes which were implemented in the 2008-2009 school year. The goal and outcome changes are listed in Table 1. Three outcomes were revised and one new outcome was added to the list. These changes were made to better clarify the outcomes for these measurements.

2. **Recommendation:** Improved communication with faculty concerning procedures will be implemented through group meetings, individual meetings, and written communiqués.

Fall 2007 Accomplishments: Training videos were created to aid faculty in the assurance of learning process. Graduate students offered to assist faculty inputting data results. Emails and faculty visits by Goal Chairs also increased the flow of communication concerning the assurance of learning process.

Recent Accomplishments: From spring 2008 to fall 2008, 50 instructors were asked to complete assurance of learning documentation for MBA courses. Seventy-two percent of the faculty submitted all assurance of learning results over this time frame. Another eight percent submitted a portion of the information required. Twenty percent did not submit any assurance of learning information.

Beginning in spring 2009, the College MBA staff advisor will be assigned the task of improving the assurance of learning process by arranging personal meetings with assurance of learning instructors. The assurance of learning process will be reviewed during these individual

meetings. Follow-up emails will be sent to ensure all assurance of learning information is understood and completed.

Table 1

Revisions to Goals and Outcomes Based on Closing the Loop Meetings

Goal:	Old Competency	New Competency
1. Apply skills and knowledge appropriate for conducting business in a global environment.	B: Apply appropriate theories and models relevant to assess the impact of a current global event on a business	B: Apply relevant conceptual frameworks (e.g., theory, model, etc.) to understand the impact of global events or international differences on business or business practice.
	C: Develop and justify strategy alternatives for effectively responding to the global event	C: Develop and justify recommendations to effectively respond to global challenges.
2. Apply skill and knowledge appropriate for managing the effective use of technology.	B: Understand the impact technology and innovation have on business	B: Analyze and describe the impact of technology and innovation on a business situation.
5. Apply effective communication skills appropriate to a business environment.	A: Understand how the major management theories and leadership roles influence the communication climate in organizations	A: Apply the major management / leadership theories and explain how they influence the communication climate in organizations.
	B: Understand the importance of fostering positive work relationships and effective group communication	B: Explain the importance of fostering positive work relationships and effective group communication.
	C: None	C: Demonstrate ability to write clear, coherent, logical, and concise paragraphs with 1) correct grammar, 2) appropriate word choice, and 3) correct punctuation.

- 3. Recommendation:** Improved communication with faculty concerning the reasons for conducting assurance of learning assessment. A dedicated effort is needed to work with new faculty to ensure conveyance of the importance of this process.

Fall 2007 Accomplishments: The importance of the assurance of learning process has been emphasized at both College and department level meetings. All faculty now understand the importance of assurance of learning procedures and their relationship to student learning outcomes and the AACSB International accreditation process for the College of Business & Economics.

Recent Accomplishments: Assurance of learning was once again a topic discussed by all faculty at the 2008 fall retreat. These discussions emphasized the importance of assurance of learning information in directing the future learning outcomes for the College of Business and Economics.

- 4. Recommendation:** Improved reporting procedures through communication, continual review of the implementation process, and a determined effort to streamline the procedures is the next step in achieving better faculty participation in this process.

Fall 2007 Accomplishments: All MBA Program assurance of learning data is reported using a database tool created by Digital Measures. This database tool simplifies report procedures and data retrieval for faculty and administrative reference.

Recent Accomplishments: The Digital Measures reporting tool continues to be the most efficient method of information reporting and storage. Only minor problems have been experienced with individual reporting.

The summary assurance of learning results for spring 2007 – spring 2009 can be found in Table 2.

While graduate students may earn two C grades in their program and still graduate, most students consider an A or B an acceptable grade. A standard grading scale assigns a B letter grade to a score of 80-89 percent and an A letter grade to a score of 90-100 percent. Applying this standard to the assurance of learning percentages, 13 of the 14 outcomes resulted in 80 percent or more of the students earning a very good or good enough evaluation. Two outcomes resulted in more than 90 percent of the students earning a very good or good enough evaluation.

The global business outcome: to “Identify key global-relate issues within a ‘Discipline-Specific’ environment,” was the single unacceptable learning outcome. The outcome was not performed at an acceptable level by 20.35 percent of the students.

Table 2

**MBA Program Assurance of Learning Data
Spring 2008-Fall 2008**

Goal:	Competency	Results			
		VG	GE	NGE	TOTAL
1. Apply skills and knowledge appropriate for conducting business in a global environment.	1. Identify key global-relate issues within a "Discipline-Specific" environment.	50.02%	29.63%	20.35%	378
	2. Apply relevant conceptual frameworks (e.g., theory, model, etc.) to understand the impact of global events or international differences on business or business practice.	44.50%	39.97%	15.53%	373
	3. Develop and justify strategy recommendations to effectively respond to global challenges.	38.07%	43.43%	18.50%	373
2. Apply skills and knowledge appropriate for managing the effective use of technology.		VG	GE	NGE	TOTAL
	1. Identify key technological and innovative-related issues within the business environment	45.83%	36.94%	17.26%	360
	2. Analyze and describe the impact of technology and innovation on a business situation.	57.66%	33.15%	9.19%	359
	3. Recommend alternative technology solutions for solving specific business problems	61.56%	22.56%	15.88%	359
3. Apply high-level strategic thinking skills appropriate for conducting business		VG	GE	NGE	TOTAL
	1. Identify key strategic issues for a particular business.	22.37%	64.47%	13.16%	152
	2. Apply discipline specific theories and models to generate potential strategic alternatives.	53.10%	34.07%	12.83%	226
	3. Select and justify appropriate course of action	13.42%	67.11%	19.46%	149

Goal:	Competency	Results			
		VG	GE	NGE	TOTAL
4. Apply ethical reasoning to diverse business situations	1. Identify the key dimensions of ethical reasoning	35.56%	49.72%	14.72%	177
	2. Apply appropriate theories and modes to assess divergent perspectives of a particular ethical dilemma.	37.16%	48.65%	14.19%	148
	3. Develop and justify recommended solutions to an ethical dilemma.	41.19%	45.95%	12.86%	148
5. Apply effective communication skills appropriate to a business environment		VG	GE	NGE	TOTAL
	1. Apply the major management/leadership theories and explain how they influence the communication climate in organizations.	78.60%	11.79%	9.62%	229
	2. Explain the importance of fostering positive work relationships and effective group communication.	45.54%	36.68%	17.78%	229
	3. Demonstrate ability to write clear, coherent, logical, and concise paragraphs with 1) correct grammar, 2) appropriate word choice, and 3) correct punctuation.	New Outcome Not Yet Measured			

In order to increase the students' abilities to identify key global-related issues within a "disciplined specific" business environment, more effort will be taken to apply global applications and theories to business projects. This should assist students to better define those issues when they are faced with them and also enable our graduate students to understand the impact of these issues on global events.

The outcome is taught in Economics 758, Finance and Business Law 755, Management 763 and 777, and Marketing 761 and 772. Faculty recommendations for improvement in teaching and learning for this outcome include: "more student work on relevant theories" (Economics 758) and "Students will suggest and justify the decisions made with relation to a Google AdWords campaign," (Marketing 772).

Future Assurance of Learning Goals

The assurance of learning process is effective in its present form. Reporting, communication, and closing the loop activities will continue to be the focus for improvement in the 2009-2010 school year. The college MBA staff advisor will monitor the assurance of learning process will allow us to assess areas throughout the year. While closing the loop activities continue to improve learning outcomes, these activities were not sufficiently documented this year. Future closing the loop activities should require a brief report documenting the meetings. A longitudinal analysis of “very good” and “good enough” results will also be implemented.

Specific goals for the 2009-2010 school year include:

1. Improve complete faculty documentation for assurance of learning from percent 72 percent to 80 percent or higher.
2. Document one individual contact with each assurance of learning instructor each semester.
3. Document the closing the loop activities.
4. Achieve an average of 80 percent or more of the students earning “very good” or “good enough” evaluations on each learning outcome and show longitudinal results for measures across goals.