

*Draft*  
**University of Dayton**  
**School of Business Administration**  
**Learning Assessment Report for AACSB**  
February 14, 2003

## **Introduction**

The SBA has used learning assessment as a tool to assist in educational program improvement and communication of the quality of these programs for over fifteen years. However, the assessment procedures used have evolved over the years and it is useful to briefly review this history in order to understand current procedures and impending, planned changes. The history may be divided into four phases:

- Until 1995
- 1995-2000
- 2000-2002
- 2003 onward

## **Until 1995**

The assessment tools and procedures used were largely informal. Formal assessment procedures were isolated. For example, since its inception in the mid-1980s, the MIS major had formal assessment via exit surveys and interviews of graduating students. The only systematic assessment tool utilized was the student evaluation of courses and teaching. Typically, the individual faculty member concerned, in consultation with the department chair, alone dealt with any changes resulting from issues identified in the evaluations thus limiting the ability to make systemic changes. Further, with the exception of one or two questions on summary course outcomes, the evaluation instrument focused on the teaching process rather than the learning outcomes. These shortcomings, along with the university accreditation process beginning to stress outcomes-based assessment, led to major changes starting in 1995.

## **1995-2000**

In 1995, the university adopted an outcomes-based assessment plan requiring implementation by all academic units. That plan focused on individual majors with each department bearing the responsibility for the design and implementation of its assessment procedures subject to oversight by the University Assessment Committee. The SBA Assessment Coordinator served as a resource to departments and as a liaison with the University Assessment Committee. For each major, key learning outcomes had to be identified and multiple measures defined for each outcome. Data collection and assessment were the responsibility of the department where the major was housed (or, the MBA Program Director) and were required annually utilizing one or more measures for each outcome.

In addition to the continued use of teaching evaluations, the following data collection tools were utilized in this period in decreasing order of pervasiveness:

- Graduating Student Exit Surveys
- Alumni Surveys
- Employer Surveys
- Student Focus Groups

These surveys typically also included open-ended questions requiring qualitative responses.

Results from such assessments contributed in this period to initiating or validating many curricular changes, some of which are listed below:

- MKT 455 started as a capstone course for MKT majors.
- BAI 295 begun as a prerequisite to either a MGT or MKT internship.
- MKT 455 (MKT capstone) linked with MKT 430 Marketing Research
- Complete overhaul of old MGT major and launch of new ENT and LDR majors with the design of multiple (about six) new courses for each major.
- MGT 490 renamed Managing the Enterprise to represent a shift in focus for the course to exposing students to decision making of the General Manager (i.e., individuals with P&L responsibilities). Simulation introduced into limited sections to pilot its effectiveness in applications in decision-making at General Manager level.
- Began FIN 493 Seminar in Investments with students handling a real-money portfolio
- Vertically Integrated Investment Program was launched with additional money being given to FIN 493. At that time the university gave first installment of money toward the \$1 million level with commitments to give the remainder of the million over the next year or so. Vertically Integrated Investment Program was a new name for the series of courses in investments leading up to and including the FIN 493 class.
- Center for Portfolio Management and Security Analysis was opened with a management team of about 35 students. The Center is a resource for the whole university, but it is most relevant as a resource to enrich education in the area of finance. The student managers also get applied business experience and we offer some lab academic credit for work in the center.
- FIN 475 Commercial Bank Management was added as a new elective to strengthen our offerings in the area of financial institutions. That course uses a banking simulation game that is used by the American Bankers' Association. A similar offering was added at the MBA level.
- ECO 310 Economics of the Environment was added as a new elective and as part of the cluster on Global Environmental Issues.
- ECO 490 Senior Seminar in Applied Economics was added as a requirement for majors in the business school and in arts and sciences. This course was created to give our students a chance to be in an economics class with only other economics majors and to discuss some applications of economic theory as well as do some form of research project or paper.

- ECO 480 Sports Economics was introduced as an elective for economics majors.
- The MIS major was completely overhauled with the addition of six new courses to replace old courses.
- The key change in the Accounting program was the combined BS/MBA program to meet CPA 150-hour requirements. This has been done in a way that also meets student needs for a double major.
- The MBA program was completely redesigned to highlight cross-functional integration through interdisciplinary, team taught courses and a capstone strategy sequence that includes a business consulting project. Elective hours were increased. Foundation courses in all disciplines were redesigned.
- New MBA electives were added, e.g., MBA679 Organizational Change.

In spite of the contributions of outcomes-based learning assessment in this period, a number of weaknesses became apparent:

- Although the faculty perceived a need for increased integration within the SBA's undergraduate curricula, the assessment procedures were based on majors and not on evaluating the undergraduate program as a whole and could not provide the results for the school as a whole in an integrated manner.
- There was a lack of assessment of the undergraduate business core, i.e., required business program outside the major.
- The quality of the assessment procedures across the majors was uneven due to strain placed on faculty resources.
- Most importantly, the assessment process could not provide external benchmarks for the undergraduate and graduate program. There was no information on how outcomes of these programs compared to those achieved at peer institutions.

These were among the factors that led to changes in the assessment program in 2000.

## **2000-2002**

Assessment efforts in this period focus more on the SBA as a whole and less on the majors. The SBA Assessment Coordinator largely relieved the departments of the responsibility of implementing the assessment procedures and the assessment process is more uniform.

In addition to the continued use of teaching evaluations, the following data collection tools have been generally utilized in this period:

- AACSB/EBI Exit Surveys
- Graduating Student Exit Surveys by Major/MBA
- AACSB/EBI Alumni Surveys
- Student Focus Groups

These graduating student surveys by major, but not the AACSB/EBI surveys, typically also included open-ended questions requiring qualitative responses. In this period, two data collection cycles have been completed. The description of the second (and most recent) completed cycle will provide more detail about these tools. In general, the AACSB/EBI surveys first used at the undergraduate level only in 2000 provide a uniform way to assess the business core program learning processes and outcomes and also

provide comparisons with peer institutions. The use of this tool along with centralizing much of the assessment procedures with the SBA Assessment Coordinator solved many of the problems previously identified with the process.

Assessment results from the first data collection cycle in this period (2000) indicated overall performance that met or exceeded objectives for both undergraduate and graduate programs and compared well to other schools in the case of undergraduate programs (no comparison was made in the case of the MBA program). In addition to specific suggestions for improvements in the majors, coverage of international business topics and developing writing skills were identified as needing improvement. A sample of curricular changes and other actions that have resulted, at least in part from the results, follow:

- Redesign of MKT 405 Consumer Behavior and MKT 430 Marketing Research into one 6-credit hour course MKT 450 Buyer Behavior and Market Analysis
- MKT 350 e-Marketing moves from experimental course to MKT elective course offered each semester
- All sections of MGT 490 Managing the Enterprise now have the simulation as an integral part of course responsibilities and simulation is overtly linked to learning objectives for this SBA capstone course.
- FIN 430 Topics in Corporate Finance was added as a new elective to strengthen our offerings in the area of corporate finance.
- Certain sections of FIN 301 began to be designated as "recommended for majors" in an effort to better prepare finance majors for the upper level courses.
- FIN 470 Fixed Income Securities was added as a new elective to strengthen our offerings in the investments area. A similar offering was added at the MBA level. These courses use MatLab software to better prepare students for the workplace.
- ECO 410 Business and Economic Forecasting was introduced as an elective for economics majors.
- ECO 415 Game Theory with Business Applications was introduced as an elective for economics majors.
- The economics major for students in the business school was revised and renamed Business Economics. This new major added a requirement to take either econometrics or business and economics forecasting to build students' quantitative skills. It dropped the requirement to take intermediate macroeconomics and replaced two of the previous economics electives with a requirement to take a two-course concentration in another business discipline from an approved list to give the student breadth and additional exposure to business applications of economics.
- ECO 460 and ECO 461 were added to the new cluster on the Business Professional in a Global Society.
- MIS program switched the MIS 225 course from C++ to Java to stay current with technical trends.
- The Operations major and minor were begun with a number of new courses supporting this new major.
- The new E-Business minor was developed and adopted.
- A number of new MIS elective courses were introduced with many of them supporting the new E-Business minor as well, e.g., Internet Security, Data

- Warehousing, Internet Networking, E-Business, E-Commerce Processes & Technologies, Basic Web Development, Advanced Web Development, etc.
- Many new or significantly revised MBA accounting electives are being offered or designed such as: Information Assurances ("Advanced Auditing"), Advanced Accounting, Advanced Taxation, Contemporary Issues in Accounting, Financial Statement Analysis, Accounting Planning and Control Systems ("Advanced Managerial Accounting"), Forensic Accounting, International Accounting, Special Topics in Accounting (team taught; topics have included a variety of topics including earnings management issues, derivative accounting, legal issues in accounting, governmental accounting issues, forensic accounting, etc.).
  - In collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences and the Philosophy Department, an elective course, MBA 652 Social Responsibility and Ethical Dimensions of Management, was developed and offered.
  - An MBA Concentration in Technology-Enhanced Business and courses were developed to respond to the changing technological emphasis in business and to assessment questions that relate to staying current and technologically proficient. Courses developed include MBA 661 E-Commerce, MBA 668 Website development, MBA 669 Computer and Internet Security, and MBA 669 Technology Enabling E Business.
  - Additional electives were added to the MBA Program to respond to survey results that indicated content and quality needed improvement in elective offerings. Elective coursework added include MBA 649 Game Theory with Business Applications and MBA 656 European Culture and Management (including an international experience).
  - The SBA explores expansion of international programs, beyond Germany, to other sites in Spain, Italy, Finland, etc.
  - Along with other academic units on campus, the SBA begins to define graduation-level competencies in basic skills starting with reading and writing. This should help pinpoint the source of perceived deficiencies in developing writing skills so that solutions may be developed.

### **Most recent assessment results**

The most recent assessments of the SBA's undergraduate and graduate degree programs were conducted over 2001-2002. The assessments are organized around the learning objectives (or, student outcomes) of these programs as specified in the SBA's Divisional Strategic Plan. Detailed results are provided in the SBA Educational Outcomes Assessment Results for 2001-2002 document.

### Procedures

Sources of the data utilized to assess each outcome include:

- *Student Evaluations of Integrated Business Core Course Objectives Achievement:* A set of common learning objectives is established for all sections of each undergraduate core course required for business majors in the sophomore, junior, and senior years. Statements of these objectives are then provided as an

- addendum to the standard student evaluation of course and instructor effectiveness forms. Students indicate the extent of their agreement as to whether each objective was achieved. The data used for this report were collected in December 2002 from all sections of all second through fourth year core courses except MGT 201. New faculty were involved in that course for the first time and the process of coordination of common objectives could not be completed in time.
- *AACSB/EBI Undergraduate Business Exit Survey*: This is a standardized, national survey of perceptions of undergraduate students graduating with a business major. The questions focus on various aspects of the learning process and outcomes. The data used for this report were collected from the April 2001 administration of the survey. The number of students completing the survey was 128, which represents a response rate of 56%. This survey provides benchmark data as it compares results with the mean of a “Select 6” group of schools identified by us from among those participating at the time. Our “Select 6” comparison group consisted of Boston College, DePaul University, John Carroll University, Marquette University, Miami University of Ohio, and the University of Akron. Results are also benchmarked against the average of all 33 participating schools in our Carnegie classification (Doctoral/Research University-Intensive) as well as against the average of all 184 participating schools.
  - *AACSB/EBI Undergraduate Business Alumni Survey*: This is a standardized, national survey of perceptions of undergraduate business school alumni from 1 to 3 years after graduation. The questions focus on various aspects of learning outcomes. The data used for this report were collected from the Summer 2001 administration of the survey. The number of students completing the survey was 244, which represents a response rate of 33%. This survey provides benchmark data as it compares results with the mean of a “Select 6” group of schools identified by us from among those participating at the time. Our “Select 6” comparison group consisted of the University of Akron, University of Missouri-Columbia, Ohio University, Western Kentucky University, Baylor University, and Kennesaw State University. Results are also benchmarked against the average of all 12 participating schools in our Carnegie classification (Doctoral/Research University-Intensive) as well as against the average of all 44 participating schools.
  - *Exit Survey (including open-ended questions) by Major*: Each major has developed a list of learning outcomes, which were incorporated into a custom survey by major. The surveys also included some open-ended questions inviting students’ comments. All students taking the capstone business course, MGT 490, in April 2002 were administered the survey appropriate to their major. Nearly all students, numbering 167, completed the survey with the distribution by major ranging from four for International Business to 57 for Marketing. Double majors were asked to respond to the survey for what they considered to be their primary major. Note that only a small number of Entrepreneurship majors, most of whom were double majors, graduated at that time. Consequently, there are no responses for that major in the sample. Some majors, such as Accounting and MIS, elected to do a supplementary survey and/or group exit interview.
  - *Evaluation of the University General Education Program* (Report from the University Committee on General Education and Competencies, January 2002):

This is a secondary data source. This report was prepared based on interviews with SBA academic administrators and with the SBA Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, a survey of SBA faculty, surveys of 174 sophomores and 141 seniors, and a senior student focus group.

- *UD MBA Exit Survey*: The MBA office conducts a survey of students graduating from the MBA program regarding their perceptions of the learning process, outcomes, and support services. This survey is conducted three times each year in May, August, and December to coincide with the graduation schedule. The data used for this report are from the most recent administration in December 2002. Fifteen students responded to the survey.
- *AACSB/EBI Part-Time MBA Exit Survey*: This is a standardized, national survey of perceptions of students graduating with an MBA from part-time programs. The questions focus on various aspects of the learning process and outcomes as well as on administration and support services. The data used for this report were collected from the April 2001 administration of the survey. The number of students completing the survey was 65, which represents a response rate of 20%. This survey provides benchmark data as it compares results with the mean of a “Select 6” group of schools identified by us from among those participating at the time. Our “Select 6” comparison group consisted of Arizona State University, University of Akron, George Mason University, Marquette University, Syracuse University, and DePaul University. Results are also benchmarked against the average of all 17 participating schools in our Carnegie classification (Doctoral/Research University-Intensive) as well as against the average of all 90 participating schools.
- *AACSB/EBI Full-Time MBA Alumni Survey*: This is a standardized, national survey of perceptions of MBA program alumni from 1 to 3 years after graduation. The questions focus on various aspects of learning outcomes. The data used for this report were collected from the Summer 2001 administration of the survey. The number of students completing the survey was 132, which represents a response rate of 41%. This survey provides benchmark data as it compares results with the mean of a “Select 6” group of schools identified by us from among those participating at the time. Our “Select 6” comparison group consisted of the University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Miami, University of South Carolina, University of Texas Dallas, University of Georgia, and University of Nevada Las Vegas. Results are also benchmarked against the average of all 6 participating schools in our Carnegie classification (Doctoral/Research University-Intensive) as well as against the average of all 17 participating schools. Note that we chose to be compared with full-time programs, which is likely to be a more stringent test, than with other part-time programs.

Faculty representatives in the majors, SBA Undergraduate Committee, and SBA Graduate Committee have reviewed the results and developed their implications as documented in this report. The overall conclusion is that the learning objectives are being achieved in both the undergraduate and graduate programs and we have strong educational offerings. At the same time, the assessment has identified areas for further investigation and improvement.

## Findings

Detailed results including tables displaying data are available in the SBA Assessment Results 2002 document. Implications of these results for each outcome are reproduced here.

### *Undergraduate (Bachelor of Science) Outcomes*

Outcome 1A: Mastery of the fundamental concepts of business in a global market place.

Overall, the desired outcome is being achieved. Technology issues and integrating the fundamental concepts/theory with practice are areas of strength. Although there may be concerns with the quality of teaching in certain areas, the results show that instructors are responsive to students' concerns and course objectives are being achieved. The business law/legal environment area has new faculty leadership since the data were collected. MGT 490 has been redesigned only recently and may continue to evolve. The biggest concern is in the area of ethical issues. This must be investigated further to identify appropriate actions.

Outcome 1B: Mastery of specialized knowledge in one or more areas of study. (This is assessed by major.)

Overall, SBA undergraduate major curricula are strong. In spite of the slight concern with teaching quality, the majors are evaluated highly in terms of the learning outcomes. Duplication of content is not necessarily a concern as it can result from integration across courses. However, this needs to be examined further by faculty in each major as they continue to strive to improve the curricula to meet the focused, integrated, relevant, and enriched (FIRE) criterion.

Specific analysis by majors follows:

#### Accounting:

We are still in an early stage/transition with our five-year program. Building up this program does seem to have caused some confusion or disappointment with those students completing only a four-year degree. While this is probably a common reaction when a new program receives an extra push, we are definitely looking at this issue. We are in the early stages of a project (mainly Ron Burrows, Joe Castellano, and Tom Brady) that could lead to a track (perhaps an unofficial track) toward the CMA certificate (Certificate Management Accountant) or CFM (Certified Financial Manager). This would also fall into line with the number of accounting majors who double in FIN and OPS respectively. In short, we do want to give our four-year program some attention.



There was also some continuing dissatisfaction with our systems area. We have already decided, and Tom Brady has requested and Janet Greenlee accepted, that we will move Tom out of the systems area back to intermediate where he feels more comfortable. Mike will also join Tom in covering the intermediate accounting. Janet will move into the systems area, an area she taught quite often with success at her former school. Rob will also move out of intermediate and totally into managerial accounting so he concentrates more on this area where he is needed.

Some students have requested we offer an undergraduate or graduate CPA review course for credit. We will NOT be doing this. We think this is wrong and the AACSB people we have spoken to frown on it. Commercial CPA review courses are convenient in Dayton and most other areas. We have tweaked some of our other courses to better prepare students for the CPA exam, but we definitely do NOT want to become a CPA "mill" and will not do so. The employers are very satisfied with the performance of UD grads on this exam. We would also note that information we are starting to receive from the most recent (November) exam show that our recent five-year graduates did very well.

Students have expressed concern about the lack of accounting electives. There is absolutely no question that the recent additions to our faculty allow us to offer a large variety and quantity of MBA electives to the point we can likely offer more MBA electives than the number of such students would call for. However, at the undergraduate level our electives are still lacking. We have been making plans to overcome this. First, we are attempting for the third year to hire a PhD in Taxation. Advanced Taxation is probably the most often requested elective that we have not been able to offer on a regular basis. We will likely cure this when we hire the next faculty member. The second most requested additional elective would be in Advanced Managerial Accounting. This has not been offered in a few years because of staffing. We believe we will be able to correct this, perhaps as early as next year but most certainly the year after, as we move Rob Larson totally into the managerial accounting area as noted above.

Other improvements are now possible with the recent additions to our faculty that give us the quantity, research, and teaching skills in a variety of areas. They have also brought fresh ideas and a renewed energy. We have also recently reformed an accounting advisory committee. We had a similar committee a few years ago, but it was allowed to go dormant. This committee, our ongoing assessment activities, increased strategic planning, etc. should really keep us in a continuing improvement mode.

#### Economics:

We were generally pleased with the survey results. The scores were strong in critical thinking, problem solving, and breadth and rigor of the courses. Points discussed by the faculty are:

Designing the major for law, business, etc: One student comment alerted us to the fact that the piece on our old web site about designing the economics major for your career goals had not carried over to the new web site. We still have such a piece in our handouts about the major, but we need to reinstate it on the web and think of other ways to inform students.

Majors only classes and increased use of math: Currently the only majors-only economics class is the senior seminar (ECO 490), which our majors seem to like very much. The econometrics class also tends to have a high concentration of majors. In all of the other economics classes we have majors mixed with business students taking their third economics course as well as others such as international studies majors and cluster students. The presence of the non-majors has an impact on the assumed background and interest in economics and also on the rigor and math that can be used in the course. While this is not the ideal situation, we do not see a good solution to the problem at this time. In the 1980s all business students were required to take the same third economics course, ECO 347, and that situation did not work well either. Just one of the problems of that sort of arrangement is not being able to offer the breadth of electives we would like to have for our majors. We have no plans at this time to offer additional majors-only classes.

Revision of majors: For students in the business school, we introduced the new business economics major in fall 2001 and the old economics major is being phased out. We have been pleased with the change and our numbers of majors in the business school have increased. We will continue to monitor this new program. This year we will begin a review and possible revision of the economics major for students in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Auditorium sections of ECO 203 and 204: We currently teach about 1200 students in the principles sections during the academic year and we have 5-6 auditorium sections that handle from 100-190 students each. We feel that it would be more in keeping with a private university to teach economics principles in small classes. Although many universities teach principles of economics in large lectures, they generally have economics graduate students who run discussion and problem sessions for those students in addition to the lectures. We do not have graduate students in economics, so this is not possible in our situation. Moving out of the auditorium is a staffing issue that we do not control. It is still worth bringing up every time we have a chance!

#### International Business:

Reactions to the major are very positive. The only issue to be addressed at this time is that of some redundancy in content across courses. This is an interdisciplinary major, which necessitates co-ordination across courses from different departments making it harder to effectively coordinate content. The

Program Director will convene faculty involved in the courses, perhaps with the help of the newly formed advisory committee, to address the issue of redundancy.

#### Finance:

We felt that some of the weaker responses to the objective part of the survey were related to how we asked the questions. For example, we allowed students to answer about skills relevant to possible concentration areas even though not all students concentrate; some take courses in each of the areas. Within each of the concentration areas there were questions about skills that are in a specific course that students may not have taken. In addition, one of the lowest scores for all of our majors was on improving career readiness by cooperative education or internship experience. Our perception is that those who did not participate in this type of experience answered “strongly disagree” and there really needs to be a “Not Applicable” category, or we need to rephrase the question.

In general, both the numerical scores and the student comments indicated that we are offering a strong program. Specific points that the faculty addressed are:

Concentrating in corporate, investments, or financial institutions: While it may be a good idea to require students to concentrate, our current staffing and the closing of many finance electives early in the registration process make it impossible. Very often, students who register later have to take the electives that are available instead of the ones they would ideally prefer. This is something we may work toward in the future, but it will depend on either more staff or fewer students. In the meantime, we will be sure to discuss the idea of concentrations in the FIN 301 classes and will also send a mailing to junior finance majors discussing concentrations.

Better preparation for the upper level finance courses: For the last year we have been working on increasing the rigor in the FIN 301 course so that our majors will be better prepared for the upper level courses. The grade point averages in the FIN 301 sections had risen above 3.0 in many cases and the course directors worked with instructors to push the students harder and keep the grades down. In fall 2002 the highest GPA in a FIN 301 section was 2.84. In addition we have started offering sections of FIN 301 that are recommended for finance majors and those sections are more demanding than the others. Because students often declare a finance major after taking FIN 301, we have not been able to require that our majors take certain sections.

Educational value of the Center for Portfolio Management: This score was highest for the students concentrating in investments and lower for the other concentrations. We guess that is expected. The faculty will continue to try to incorporate use of the Center into their classes. There is a team of student software specialists working in the Center and these students can work with faculty on this project.

Requested courses in investment banking and in portfolio engineering: These were two specific requests in the student comments. The faculty felt that a unit on investment banking could be included in the FIN 471 course rather than having a separate course. We do not feel that enough of our students are up to the challenge of portfolio engineering to offer that course at this time.

Rewriting questions: We probably need to rewrite our questions to be more general and in line with questions asked by the other majors. For example, we currently have a question on fundamentals of real estate, but not everyone takes that class. We also feel that the co-op and internship question is getting a misleadingly low score because not everyone participates. In this case a Not Applicable choice would help.

#### Leadership:

The survey results show positive responses to the major. The major is relatively new and required the development of six new courses. It is expected that there will be some teething troubles and consequent refinements to the program. However, students with this major have only recently begun to graduate. The plan is to collect more data and engage in ongoing evaluations to identify where improvements and changes may be warranted. Note that the Entrepreneurship major, which is also new and for which no data could be collected at this time because of the small number of graduating students, plans to be engaged in similar, ongoing assessment activity.

#### Management Information Systems (MIS):

The data indicate that the MIS major curriculum is strong. Responses to all items are in the acceptable range. Students are satisfied with the MIS courses, particularly the Senior Project sequence, and the faculty. However, a few issues deserve attention. There is continued dissatisfaction with courses in the MIS major delivered by the Computer Science department particularly regarding pedagogy. Past attempts to resolve these issues have not been successful. The solution, in cooperation with Computer Science, appears to be to reduce the dependency relationship. Consequently, the MIS faculty will offer MIS 225 in the short term and Computer Science has been invited to a joint committee to look at a longer-term plan for this course. CPS 310 will be utilized as an alternative to MIS 380 only when the latter is not offered, e.g., in summer terms. Computer Science faculty will continue to teach CPS 437, which is more favorably received than the other CPS courses.

Another issue is the lack of individual student accountability for contributions to teamwork. The faculty perceive that this problem manifests itself in complaints observed in the data about the group process, quality of students, and expectations in preparatory courses in the major. The MIS faculty in each course will re-

evaluate the relative weight for individual and group assignments and are discussing steps to implement to better account for and evaluate individual contributions to group work. As an example, the role of peer evaluations is being made more explicit in Senior Projects and problem cases are identified early and asked to sign contracts regarding their contribution to the team effort.

Students perceive that they need greater number of technical courses and are dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity to take elective courses. A number of elective courses, most of them technical, have been introduced within the past two years. However, enrollments in these courses remain low. The problem appears to be that many MIS students transfer from other majors and have already used up their free electives. They cannot take MIS electives without adding to the hours required for graduation. Consequently, the MIS faculty propose to convert three hours currently required for a specific course, DSC 370, to required elective hours, which may be satisfied by successfully taking a course from a list of approved MIS electives, including DSC 370.

The faculty also note the need for greater vitality and sense of purpose for the student MIS Club. A new faculty advisor to the Club has been selected to assist in this process.

#### Marketing:

Overall, the survey results are very good. The responses to items concerning ethical issues and global issues in marketing are at an acceptable level but lower than the other items, which are very strong. These items will be reviewed and monitored.

The student comments further attest to the strength of the major. However, they also suggest a demand for more elective offerings and concentrations within the major. The faculty concur with the idea of offering concentrations, or clusters of electives. They are contemplating creating a market research center, which will serve as a centerpiece of the design of a proposed new, focused major in Market Research, which will co-exist with the current Marketing major and other focused concentrations that may be identified in the future.

#### Outcome 2: Ability to identify and capitalize on business opportunities.

MGT 490 has undergone a lot of change recently. The course has new faculty and more rigorous requirements. Competitive business simulation exercises have been introduced into the course. As these changes take effect and mature, stronger outcomes are anticipated. In the meantime, the Alumni Survey suggests that the outcome is being achieved. The measures for this outcome should be refined and supplemented with data from other sources, e.g., student-run businesses.

Outcome 3: Ability to effectively participate and/or provide leadership in solving complex business problems involving challenges such as, cross-functional issues, highly integrated systems, diverse work teams, and the broader issues of society. (Note that this outcome subsumes graduation competencies in reading and writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy common to all business majors.)

The development of a variety of skills is required to achieve this outcome. The evidence suggests that this is a strong outcome with great success in developing a variety of important skills including team work, leadership, integration of theory and practice, oral communication, and problem solving/decision making. The development of writing skills warrants further attention.

Outcome 4: Commitment to life-long learning to maintain professional competence.

This outcome was not assessed. Measures need to be developed for this outcome.

Outcome 5: Broadly educated with an integrated understanding of science, social science, and the humanities.

The report found that the General Education Program, which is the primary basis for Outcome 5, is strong overall. Elements such as the Humanities Base and CORE Program are done well. The Thematic Clusters were not rated highly. The College of Arts and Sciences is making efforts to improve the Thematic Clusters. For example, there have been changes in the administrative responsibility for the clusters and how the value proposition is communicated to students. The SBA has taken the lead in the development of a new cluster, Business Professional in a Global Society, to better meet the desired outcome for business students. Other actions include the investigation of the relative amount of science and social science requirements to promote integration with and relevance to the business program.

Outcome 6: Personal qualities which embody integrity, the principle of servant leadership, ethical decision making, desire to grow spiritually, and the ability to balance one's work, family, and societal responsibility.

The available data indicate some success in achieving this outcome in light of the results for leadership, service, and maintaining a level of harmony/balance/camaraderie on campus. The only item related to ethics is at an acceptable level in contrast to data regarding ethics obtained for other outcomes (e.g., Outcome 1a). However, very few measures are currently available for this outcome. Consequently, a greater number and different measures need to be developed for this outcome.

*Graduate (Master of Business Administration) Outcomes*

Outcome 1: In-depth understanding of the functional areas and their interrelationships in the business enterprise.

This learning objective is successfully being accomplished. All responses to survey data are positive. We should continue to emphasize the in depth understanding of functional areas and their relationships in the business enterprise.

Outcome 2: Ability to effectively participate and provide leadership in solving complex problems involving cross-functional issues, highly integrated systems, diverse work teams, and/or the broader issues of society.

This learning objective is being successfully accomplished as measured by the survey results. While the program will strive for higher scores, this area is generally considered a strength of the program.

Outcome 3: Ability to generate, analyze, evaluate, and realize business opportunities in a global marketplace.

Generally this learning objective is an area of strength. However, the performance is not viewed as strong as #1 or #2. The committee is working toward a clearer articulation of this objective and developing survey questions that reflect accurate assessment.

Outcome 4: Commitment to continuous personal and professional learning and development and an understanding of the issues of career management, while balancing these principles with family and societal commitments.

This objective appears to be being successfully accomplished, though it is somewhat more difficult to measure since it is all encompassing. Balancing family and societal commitments is particularly difficult to measure.

Outcome 5: Personal qualities which embody personal integrity, the principles of servant leadership, moral discernment, and ethical decision-making.

The data from the exit survey and consensus feedback from the graduate committee suggest that although the program currently includes elective content in business ethics, in the form of a new course just introduced this past year, and ad hoc discussions, most students are not exposed to ethical decision making in a significant way via required coursework. The committee recognizes this as an area of weakness and is currently considering options to further incorporate business ethics in the graduate curriculum. We currently do not have a measurement for moral discernment or servant leadership.

## Summary

In the undergraduate program, students are not only learning the core concepts of business but are also able to apply these very successfully to practice. This provides encouragement to continue the SBA's ongoing efforts (currently addressing the second and third year courses) to integrate its undergraduate business core not only across courses and disciplines but also with practice. The effects of such integration in the first-year experience and in the capstone core course, together with various enrichment activities built into the curriculum (e.g., field projects) and the strong preparation provided by the different majors, are reflected in the very positive results for the development of skills required for leadership and problem solving/decision making. Such skills in the areas of teamwork, integration of theory and practice, oral communication, critical thinking, thinking strategically, technology, and quantitative analysis are strengths relative to our comparison schools. Of these, the ability to work effectively in teams was ranked very high and deserves particular mention.

The undergraduate major curricula offered by the SBA are producing the desired outcomes for each major. At this time, a common attribute of all the SBA majors is change. A number of new majors have been instituted; significant changes have been made or are planned for other majors. The effect of these changes will be assessed over a period of time but it appears that continued innovation toward achieving majors characterized as focused, integrated, relevant, and enriched ("FIRE") contribute to strong outcomes in the longer-term but also shorter-term stresses. Consequently, the current results for some majors are more positive than others depending on the recency and extent of changes made, i.e., those that have gone through the change process earlier appear to perform better than those in the midst of change.

The most important issue in the undergraduate program that requires attention relates to the topic of ethical decision-making in business. Students are required to take a three-credit business ethics course and various other courses incorporate modules on ethical decision-making. Further investigation is needed to understand causes of the lower scores on this item and to identify courses of action. Other issues that need to be addressed are the development of writing skills, which did not rate as well as desired, and the development and refinement of assessment procedures.

The integrated core consisting of the team-taught, interdisciplinary courses along with the business strategy course and a business consulting experience is the distinctive feature of the MBA program. The assessment results show that, relative to comparison schools, the program is very successful in developing key outcomes such as an understanding of the functional areas and their interrelationships in business and the development of leadership and problem solving/decision making skills involving complex, integrated, cross-functional issues. It is worth noting that continued success in winning a state-wide case competition against other well-regarded programs is a further testimonial to the role of the MBA program in the development of integrated problem solving skills.



The topic of ethical decision-making in business needs attention. This item was rated lower than desired and is a priority item for action this coming year. Other action items include the development and refinement of procedures to assess all the learning outcomes; some outcomes currently have inadequate measures. A review of individual core courses in the MBA program and their learning objectives is also planned.

In summary, the SBA's degree programs are very successful in meeting educational goals. More importantly, it is evident from the SBA's curricular plans and actions that it is committed to seeking to further improve its offerings.

The SBA has been a leader in outcomes assessment on campus. For instance, it was a pioneer in external benchmarking of our educational programs. Assessment programs have contributed data that supported the significant revision of our programs. Nevertheless, there is still a need to improve the assessment process as a number of issues of concern have been identified:

- Changes in the conceptualization of learning outcomes without accompanying changes in assessment procedures have left some outcomes (e.g., Outcomes 4 and 6 for the undergraduate program and Outcome 5 for the MBA program) with inadequate measures. Similarly, the university now requires that attainment of graduation level competencies in communication and other skills be measured.
- The process relies overly on surveys and, in particular, on the AACSB/EBI surveys, some of which are not based on learning outcomes. Also, qualitative data, which have been the source of some of the most useful information for changes in the curricula, are under-utilized in the AACSB/EBI survey scheme.
- Performance goals for individual items are arbitrary. They do not account for differences in context.
- Faculty involvement in and ownership of the assessment process is potentially weak as a result of centralizing the process with the SBA Assessment Coordinator. The assessment process risks being seen as something to put up with as opposed to an integral part of the educational design process.
- The process is overwhelmed by data and suffers from inadequate attention to actions that should result. There is barely enough time once the data are analyzed to consider actions before it is time to collect data once more.
- The assessment process is narrowly focused, inflexible, and does not meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- Overall, the assessment process is in danger of becoming merely perfunctory although it has contributed to significant curricular change in the past.

The SBA has achieved, and has further aspirations for, recognition as a national leader in business education. Consequently, it is important to the SBA to have a relevant process for assessing the achievement of educational outcomes. The new process, to be effective, must account for the weaknesses of the current system while still protecting faculty resources from onerous data collection.

## **2003 Onward**

A new plan is proposed to maintain a useful assessment process. The plan is slated for implementation starting in 2003. It addresses measures for all outcomes. It retains the use of external benchmarking studies but proposes the utilization of a greater variety of data sources, with further participation from additional stakeholders such as faculty and employers, and including an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative data. It promotes greater ownership of the process by faculty. At the same time, it does not increase the data collection effort and provides more time to implement actions chiefly by proposing moving from the current annual assessment cycle to a biennial cycle. Please see the SBA Educational Outcomes Assessment Plan document for details.