

Walker College of Business

Assessment Overview & Background

Introduction

Prior to 2002, the assessment efforts in the Walker College of Business consisted mostly of indirect and/or informal methods; student, alumni, and employer surveys, and faculty committee discussions about student learning. Beginning in April 2002, the university Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning conducted assessment workshops for all academic departments in the College of Business and presented the university academic assessment guidelines that had been developed in the previous year. Efforts were begun to develop a more comprehensive academic assessment plan for the college that would emphasize direct assessment methods. Dr. Faye Sawyer (previously in the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning) was appointed as the Assistant Dean for Assessment in the college in July 2003 and a college Assessment Committee was formed in September 2003.

Since that time, the assessment efforts in the College of Business have evolved as we have learned more about direct assessment techniques, developed a broader base of support for assessment efforts in the college, and studied our own efforts and results. In the summer of 2005, with the appointment of Dr. Randy Edwards as the Interim Dean of the college, coordination of assessment efforts was assigned to a newly created position, the Associate Dean for Accreditation, which was filled by Dr. Don Cox. He guided the college through its reaffirmation of accreditation in the spring of 2008. Dr. Heather Norris assumed the position of Associate Dean in July of 2008. She now oversees maintenance of accreditation initiatives. At the same time, Dr. Martin Meznar was appointed Assistant Dean responsible for program assessment.

Following is a brief outline of the assessment program actions for the college since fall 2007.

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u>Summary of Assessment Activity</u>
2007-08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation of Assessment Program continued, focusing on assessment of functional business knowledge, written communication skills, ethical awareness, and analytical/problem solving skills- Faculty stipends were approved for those evaluating assessment data during the summer
2008-09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Functional business knowledge, global business knowledge, technology skills, and oral communication skills were assessed- Rubrics for these learning goals were evaluated and refined- Faculty stipends were again approved for summer evaluation of student performance in these areas
2009-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Assessment efforts focused on functional business knowledge, ethical awareness, and problem solving skills- Functional business knowledge was assessed using the ETS major field exam in business, attitude toward business ethics was assessed using Reichel & Neumann's (1988) instrument
2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Assessment efforts focused on functional business knowledge, written communication, global business knowledge, and technology skills

- Functional business knowledge was assessed using the ETS major field exam in business, global business knowledge was assessed using the International Issues portion of the ETS, and technology skills were assessed using the computer skills proficiency exam
- Faculty stipends were again approved for summer evaluation of student performance in these areas

2011-12

- Functional business knowledge, ethical awareness, oral communication and problem solving skills were assessed.
- Ethical awareness was assessed using a modified version of the Attitude Towards Business Ethics Questionnaire
- Problem solving skills were assessed using a straightforward logic problem
- Faculty stipends were again approved for summer evaluation of student performance in these areas
- BSBA Learning Goals were divided into specific outcomes to ensure that all aspects of the goals are measured

2012-13

- Functional business knowledge, written communication, global business knowledge, and technology skills were assessed
- Written communication and global business knowledge were assessed using a globally-focused case study. Case study was given to students in the capstone course (BUS-4000)

Summary of Degree Program Changes Linked to Assessment Actions

Over the past years, findings from newly implemented direct assessment methods and from continuing use of indirect assessment methods (surveys, etc.) have led to a variety of course and/or program changes in hopes of quality improvement. The following list, though not exhaustive, summarizes some of these changes/enhancements:

BSBA

- Receiving approval to hire, and then hiring (for January 2008), a business professor to fill an endowed university professorship in ethics (James E. Holshouser, Jr. Distinguished Professor in Ethics). The new faculty member in this role will assist other faculty members in infusing ethics education into the curriculum and offer courses dedicated to business ethics. The need for this action was partially supported by the assessment findings related to ethics noted in the item above.
- Approving an undergraduate curriculum requirement that students must take a Business Writing course (ENG 3100) in their junior year. Previously, students were able to take the course anytime from their sophomore through senior year. The new requirement ensures that students will complete the Business writing course *before* they take senior level business courses that have writing components, and also that students will have at least one significant writing-focused course in each year of their undergraduate program (i.e., spreading writing- focused courses across all four years).
- Increasing emphasis and/or refining core business course content related to functional business knowledge areas where student performance was found to be weaker than desired. A couple of examples include:
 - In the Introduction to Finance course (FIN 3680), provide increased instruction and emphasis in four areas; net present value, financial ratios, bond valuation, and historical risk-return relationships for financial assets.
 - In the Principles of Marketing course (MKT 3050), provide additional emphasis in the topic areas related to product and promotion.
- Hiring an International Programs Coordinator major who is responsible for assisting International Business (IB) students in finding appropriate international experiences as required by the major. This need was identified in part from student survey feedback.
- Creating BUS 4000, a capstone course required of all College of Business students. The 1-credit hour course is to be used to help implement assessment initiatives.
- Instituting a “global issues” requirement for all BSBA students. This requirement can be fulfilled in a variety of ways, ranging from taking an internationally oriented course to an internship overseas to actually studying abroad
- Due to 2008 ETS scores in accounting, the accounting course required for business majors was moved to the sophomore level (ACC 2100) and an additional course (ACC 1050) was created at the freshman level for non-business majors. This allowed the accounting course for business majors to cover material in greater depth and reduced the amount of time between the accounting course and graduation (when the ETS exam is administered). Accounting scores in several majors remained low for the following 3 years, through the 2010/2011. However, when students admitted under the changed

catalog became seniors in 2011/2012, accounting ETS scores improved significantly across-the-board

MBA

- Redesigning the MBA Program curriculum, shortening the program from a two-year program to a one-calendar-year program (with specified prerequisites), and adding an international experience component. These changes were undertaken partly as a result of indirect assessment feedback from students, alumni, and employers, in conjunction with program review activities of the Graduate Curriculum Committee.
- Creation of a required course, MBA 5820 (Executive Skills), in which students gain formal and informal training to better equip them with tools to achieve Goals #2 (Leadership Skills) and #4 (Professional and Communication Skills).
- Addition of concentrations (economics, sustainable business, and international business) as well electives to allow students to become more specialized in the functional areas of business (improve performance on Goal #1- Functional Business Disciplines).
- Implementation of one hour ethics and law modules into required curriculum to give students in depth knowledge about business ethics and applications in the real world (improve performance on Goal #3- Business Ethics)
- Offering more international trips at various times throughout the academic school year to give students additional opportunities to participate in international experiences (strengthen performance on Goal #5- Global Business Environments).
- Goal change proposed and approved in order to more clearly focus on higher level skills required of Master's level students.
Previous Goal: 1: Functional Business Disciplines
 - A. Students will demonstrate competence in each of the functional areas of business: accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, operations, and information systems.
 - B. Students will demonstrate an ability to integrate the functional areas of businessNew Goal: 1: Functional Business Disciplines
 - A. Students will demonstrate an interdisciplinary understanding of relevant business disciplines.
 - B. Students will apply knowledge to integrate and solve problems in changing and unfamiliar environments.

MSAcc

- Modifying the MS in Accounting Program, eliminating one of the previously offered specialization tracks (Accounting Information Systems), and adding a new program capstone course. These changes were undertaken partly as a result of indirect assessment feedback from alumni and employers, along with program review activities of the Accounting Department graduate faculty members.

- Changes made in ACC 5580:
 - Student writing and format guide adopted (strengthen performance on goal 1).
 - Additional writing assignments integrated into the curriculum (strengthen performance on goal 1).
- Changes made in ACC 5390 and ACC 5580:
 - Practice exercises/assignments in which students are asked to identify the ethical dilemma in a case were integrated in to the course (strengthen performance on goal 2).
 - More emphasis placed on identifying stakeholders in case analysis (strengthen performance on goal 2).
 - Increased number of examples of ethical dilemmas discussed in class (strengthen performance on goal 2).
- Changes made in ACC 5590:
 - Additional attention given to the proper accounting for foreign currency transactions (e.g., purchases and sales of inventory) at all of the important dates (strengthen performance on goal 3).
 - Additional attention given to the mechanics of the special form of cash flow hedge accounting that SFAS 138 permits (strengthen performance on goal 3).
 - Coverage of translation and hedging earlier in the term to ensure that adequate time is devoted to these topics (strengthen performance on goal 3).
 - Additional time was spent on fair value adjustments in years following the year of acquisition (strengthen performance on goal 3).