

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS
FOR THE FALL 2003 SEMESTER

1. What did your data say about how you are reaching your department goals?

As stated in our Mission Statement, our goal is to serve the diverse needs of the seven segments that we have identified as our student population. To effectively service these diverse needs, we have designed a curriculum to achieve the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- #1 Think and read critically so they can effectively solve business problems using appropriate information resources and reasoning.
- #2 Master business terminology which will enable them to read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and business sectors are met.
- #3 Demonstrate quantitative and technological literacy, especially computer literacy, in data collection and analysis, reasoning, and business problem-solving.
- #4 Understand and develop ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills that will prepare them for life-long learning, employability, and effective citizenship.

Using both direct and indirect types of assessment, our Assessment Plan was designed to measure how effectively we were achieving each of these Student Learning Outcomes.

In our Assessment Plan, we decided to focus our assessment techniques on the following two Business courses during the Fall 2003 Semester:

- Business 111 – Introduction to Business. This is a required course for all Business Certificate and Degree Programs and is a prerequisite for several other Business courses.
- Business 182 – Managerial Accounting. This is the second Accounting course Business students take and it is required for all Business Degree Programs.

The following is a summary of the results from our assessment efforts for each of the Student Learning Outcomes:

OUTCOME #1

Assessment Method 1 – Completion of Business 111

84.3% of the students completing the course earned a grade of “C” or better. Student performance was significantly higher than the 70% standard established by the Business Department.

Assessment Method 2 – Survey of Students in Business 111

Questions 4, 5, and 6 on the Student Survey dealt with critical thinking.

Question 4: 86% of the students felt competent in solving business problems.

Question 5: 80% of the students stated that class discussions had challenged them to solve business problems analytically.

Question 6: 91% of the students felt that reading about real companies and how they react to their environment, had enhanced their ability to approach business problems in an organized and thoughtful process.

These results are significantly higher than the standard of a majority of the students feeling competent in using critical thinking to solve business problems.

Assessment Method 3 – Survey of Teachers of Business 111

All four instructors believed their students were competent in using critical thinking to solve business problems. These results were significantly better than the standard of a majority of the teachers having this opinion about the critical thinking skills of their students.

OUTCOME #2

Assessment Method 1 – Completion of Business 111

84.3% of the students completing the course earned a grade of “C” or better. Student performance was significantly higher than the 70% standard established by the Business Department.

Assessment Method 2 – Survey of Students in Business 111

Questions 7, 8, and 9 on the Student Survey dealt with business terminology.

Question 7: 91% of the students felt they understood business terminology and are able to use it appropriately.

Question 8: 89% of the students stated that reading and homework assignments had strengthened their understanding of business terminology.

Question 9: 88% of the students felt comfortable understanding business terminology when reading articles in business magazines or newspapers.

These results are significantly higher than the standard of a majority of the students feeling they have reasonable mastery of business terminology.

Assessment Method 3 – Survey of Teachers of Business 111

All four instructors believed their students had attained reasonable mastery of business terminology. These results were significantly better than the standard of a majority of the teachers having this opinion about their students.

OUTCOME #3

Assessment Method 1 – Completion of Business 182

70.5% of the students completing the course earned a grade of “C” or better. Student performance was just slightly above the 70% standard established by the Business Department.

Assessment Method 2 – Survey of Students in Business 182

The 10 questions on the Student Survey dealt with mastery of accounting cost systems and basic managerial accounting analysis.

Question 1: 90% of the students indicated they were able to properly classify manufacturing costs.

Question 2: 89% of the students stated they had the ability to make journal entries for a Job Order Cost System.

Question 3: 85% of the students stated they had the ability to make journal entries for a Process Cost System.

Question 4: 94% of the students felt they could calculate Contribution Margin.

Question 5: 78% of the students felt they could compute Breakeven Point.

Question 6: 89% of the students indicated they were able to properly classify costs into one of the following categories: Variable Costs, Fixed Costs, or Mixed Costs.

Question 7: 79% of the students believed they knew which costing system (Absorption Costing or Variable Costing) treats Fixed Factory Overhead as an expense of the period in which it was incurred.

Question 8: 66% of the students indicated they could list most of the budgets that make up the typical Master Budget for a manufacturing business.

Question 9: 77% of the students felt they could compute the favorable or unfavorable Direct Materials Price Variance for a business.

Question 10: 63% of the students indicated they could list two or more types of calculations or analysis in Managerial Accounting that could be done using a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel.

Note: This question was included in the survey to gauge the ability of students to use a spreadsheet program to perform calculations and analysis.

All of these results, from a high of 94% to a low of 63%, are significantly higher than the standard of a majority of the students feeling they have reasonable mastery of accounting cost systems and basic managerial accounting analysis.

Assessment Method 3 – Survey of Teachers of Business 182

All three instructors believed their students had attained reasonable mastery of accounting cost systems and basic managerial accounting analysis. These results were significantly better than the standard of a majority of the teachers having this opinion about their students.

OUTCOME #4

Assessment Method 1 – Completion of Business 111

84.3% of the students completing the course earned a grade of “C” or better. Student performance was significantly higher than the 70% standard established by the Business Department.

Assessment Method 2 – Survey of Students in Business 111

Questions 1, 2, and 3 on the Student Survey dealt with business ethics.

Question 1: 92% of the students felt they had gained greater sensitivity to the role of ethics in business decision-making.

Question 2: 91% of the students indicated that if they had to make difficult business decisions, they could make them ethically.

Question 3: 91% of the students believed that the textbook’s examples of corporate ethical behaviors provided real-life perspectives for applying ethics in business decision-making.

These results are significantly higher than the standard of a majority of the students feeling they have a reasonable understanding of how to apply ethical standards in business decision-making.

Assessment Method 3 – Survey of Teachers of Business 111

All four instructors believed their students had the ability to apply ethical standards in making business decisions. These results were significantly better than the standard of a majority of the teachers having this opinion about their students.

2. Which General Education Learning Outcomes did your department address successfully and how?

The four Student Learning Outcomes for the Business Department are very similar to the following General Education Learning Outcomes:

- #1 Think and read critically so they can solve problems using appropriate information sources and reasoning processes.
- #2 Read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and private sectors are met.
- #3 Demonstrate quantitative and technological literacy, especially computer literacy, for interpreting data, reasoning, and problem-solving.
- #5 Understand and develop ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills that will prepare them for life-long learning, employability, and effective citizenship.
Note: The Business Department's Student Learning Outcome #4 is exactly the same as this Outcome.

Given the similarity between the above General Education Learning Outcomes and the four Student Learning Outcomes for the Business Department, the execution of our Assessment Plan also successfully addressed these four General Education Learning Outcomes.

3. Which General Education Learning Outcome did your department address least successfully and what are you doing to improve in that area?

The Student Learning Outcomes for the Business Department do not include the following General Education Learning Outcome:

- #4 Understand and appreciate diversity in gender, race, age, class, and culture as well as differences in physical abilities, in a global society.

Therefore, our Assessment Plan did not attempt to address General Education Learning Outcome #4 at this time.

Since the majority of our Business courses do not directly deal with issues of diversity and physical abilities, the Department did not feel it was appropriate to include this as

one of our Student Learning Outcomes. However, diversity and physical ability are issues discussed in the following four Business courses:

- Business 214 – Legal and Social Environment of Business
- Business 258 – Small Business
- Business 269 – Principles of Management
- Business 271 – Human Resources Management

In the future, we intend to include one or more of the above courses in our Assessment Plan so we can measure our effectiveness in achieving this General Education Outcome.

4. How will changes your department are making address diversity, ethics, and technological literacy?

Diversity

In the four Business courses where diversity is an important issue in the course, we believe we are currently doing an effective job of covering this topic. However, as we adopt future textbooks in these courses, we intend to put added emphasis on the coverage of diversity in evaluating the suitability of a textbook.

Ethics

During the past two years, the Business Department has revised all the syllabi for the 30 Business courses in our College Catalog to include ethics as one of the Learning Outcomes.

On the Teacher Survey for Business 111 discussed earlier in our report, some faculty expressed the need for a more current textbook that would include discussions of some of the more recent ethical lapses in business such as Enron and WorldCom. In response to these concerns, we have adopted a new textbook for the course for the Fall 2004 Semester. This new textbook has excellent coverage of business ethics and includes up-to-date examples of ethical successes and failures by businesses.

Technological Literacy

In the Student Survey in Business 111, 63% of the students indicated they could list two or more types of calculations or analysis in Managerial Accounting that could be done using a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel. While this met the standard we had set, it was the lowest of the responses in the Survey.

In order to improve student ability to recognize calculations and analysis that can be effectively done using spreadsheet programs, we intend to devote additional class-time to demonstrating and discussing spreadsheet applications in the course.