

Student Learning Outcomes Committee 2008
Department/Program Assessment Results Report

Department/Program: Business Administration

Degree/Program: MBA

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The purpose of this report is to communicate the assessment activities that have taken place during the 2007 academic year and convey how the results are being used to improve student learning in the MBA program at the College of Business Administration.

I. Working from your assessment report of last year, please discuss some changes made or strategies implemented in response to last year's results.

Based on feedback from the last assessment report (2006-2007 academic year, submitted April 2007) the Graduate Committee's goal was to streamline the assessment process. The following changes were made to the data collection for the current report.

- A. Previously Goal 4 assessment required faculty advisors to write an analysis of students' culminating MBA project. This requirement was eliminated. Instead a rubric was developed and administered to faculty advisors. This faculty survey more efficiently and accurately assesses student activity.
- B. Client organizations enlisted to provide students consulting projects were surveyed. These clients provided external feedback on SDSU MBA student training and project performance.
- C. As part of a Graduate Committee presentation to the College of Business regarding potential curriculum changes the assessment committee presented the findings of the 2006-2007 assessment report.
- D. Last year it was concluded that: "The faculty assessment of the student portfolios only found moderate evidence suggesting students were able to identify and critically analyze salient legal and moral business issues." Starting in Fall 2008, MBA students will be required to satisfy a corporate responsibilities theme requirement by completing one of the following courses: ACCTG 681 – Seminar in Regulatory and Management Controls, FIN 604 – Legal Environment for Executives, IDS 755 – Information Systems Security Management, MGT 722 – Seminar in Business Ethics and Social Institutions, or MGT 746 – Seminar in Corporate Governance.
- E. While the portfolio task revealed interesting assessment information, without some type of incentive, the portfolio requirements were too onerous of a task for the MBA students.

II. Drawing upon the goals and objectives contained in the department/program student learning assessment plan, what was the focus of the department's student learning assessment for the past academic year?

Drawing upon the goals and objectives contained in the MBA student learning outcomes the assessment focused on the following GOAL and its associated Student Learning Objectives.

A. GOAL 4: Acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities.

SLO 4.1: Analyze a business problem in new and unfamiliar circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines.

SLO 4.2: Formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities and communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner.

B. The committee has completed an entire assessment cycle. All goals of the MBA program have been assessed. To address key findings from this assessment cycle the committee intends to use the next academic year to revise the assessment plan. Based on the assessment completed Fall 2004 through Spring 2008, the committee will further explore curriculum changes and improve assessment strategies. Please see Appendix I for a complete list of goals and student learning outcomes.

III. What information was collected, how much, and by whom?

The key assessment vehicle for the student learning outcomes listed under item II is the MBA capstone course Integrative Business Analysis (BA 795). Faculty and client organizations provide feedback on BA 795 course activity and projects.

A. The College of Business Administration uses Integrative Business Analysis (BA 795) as the culminating experience for the MBA program. This MBA capstone course dedicates a semester to a multidisciplinary consulting experience. Consulting teams of three or four students are assigned to a San Diego-area organization. These organizations include entrepreneurial start-ups, small and large companies, and non-profit organizations. Students prepare a report that defines a business problem, details their analytical methods, and states the team's findings and consequent recommendations to the client organization. Two faculty advisors supervise and evaluate each project.

Faculty supervision includes regular meetings with students, oversight during the writing of the client report, and attendance to the final client presentation. Discussions with individual students during these meetings and students' performance on the written report and an oral presentation are indicators of whether individual students are acquiring appropriate skills in the MBA program.

In Spring 2007, a basic questionnaire was administered to faculty advisors regarding whether students acquired the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities — Goal 4. Twelve faculty advisors (10 client projects) responded to three assessment items regarding Goal 4. The responses to this questionnaire help the committee determine what specific types of questions were needed to solicit appropriate feedback regarding Goal 4. This information was used to develop a rubric that more specifically determined the degree of achievement of student learning relative to outcomes 4.1 and 4.2. The instrument also inquired about the extent of faculty support and overall contributions made by different students on each team. (see Appendix II) Nine faculty advisors (7 client projects) completed this assessment instrument and provided feedback regarding Summer 2007 and Fall 2007 student achievement of Goal 4.

- B. In addition to faculty assessments, the BA 795 client organizations are surveyed to determine their rating of the quality of the project and the consulting service received. Seventeen organizations provided feedback about projects completed during Spring, Summer, and Fall 2007. Three items in the survey related to the assessment of learning of outcomes: 1) “Overall, do you feel that you received a useful consulting report from the student team?”, 2) “Did the report present reasonable recommendations with adequate support?”, and 3) “Did the students appear well trained?” Respondents provided feedback by indicating a “yes”, “somewhat,” or “no” response to each item.
- C. Graduating MBA students completing BA 795 are surveyed regarding their experiences in the MBA program and BA 795. To complement the faculty and client assessment data, student feedback regarding the extent to which they perceived BA 795 added to their knowledge base and/or professional goals. This information provides an indirect measure of the Student Learning Goal 4.

IV. What conclusions were drawn on the basis of the information collected?

SDSU MBA students acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities. However, a small number of students struggle with the application of tools and theory.

- A. The primary assessment tool to determine whether MBA students acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities is the faculty assessment of BA 795 project activities and team performance.

An initial questionnaire administered in Spring 2007 indicates that MBA students were achieving Goal 4. The majority of students were able to analyze a business problem in unfamiliar circumstances and formulate strategies to solve business problems. Almost all students could communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner.

Faculty Assessment of Student Achievement on Goal 4				
Spring 2007 BA 795 Project				
(n)=indicates the number of faculty providing rating (10 projects evaluated)				
	Not at all	Somewhat	Generally	Definitely
The project demonstrates an ability to analyze a business problem in new and unfamiliar circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines.	4.5% (1)	22.7% (5)	31.8% (7)	40.9% (9)
The project demonstrates an ability to formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities	0.0% (0)	27.3% (6)	36.4% (8)	36.4% (8)
The project demonstrates an ability to communicate formulated strategies in a clear and concise manner	4.5% (1)	13.6% (3)	27.3% (6)	54.5% (12)

The final rubric administered Fall 2007 verified that MBA students are achieving Goal 4. They do acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities. They are able analyze business problems in new and unfamiliar

circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines (4.1). The majority of students are able to develop clear and feasible alternatives and generated appropriate assumptions. Almost all students are able to apply tools to the problem but a few students ignored or incorrectly applied tools to the problem. The majority of students gather appropriate evidence, interpret, and integrate results in the project. A small number of students struggle with the application of theory.

Faculty Assessment of Student Achievement on Student Learning Objective 4.1 Summer/Fall 2007 BA 795 Project Activities (n)=indicates the number of faculty providing rating (7 projects evaluated)			
	Only one solution considered	Multiple alternative solutions proposed, but some may not be feasible	Multiple clear, concise, and feasible alternatives identified
Developed alternative solutions	0.0%(0)	44.4%(4)	55.6% (5)
	Assumptions inappropriate or not stated	Reasonable assumptions stated	Appropriate assumptions clearly identified, supported, and distinguished from facts
Assumptions	0.0%(0)	11.1%(1)	88.9% (8)
	Ignored tools from one or more functional areas	Identified appropriate tools from each functional area	Identified and justified all analytical tools used
Selection of analytical tools	22.2%(2)	11.1%(1)	66.7% (6)
	Major errors in application of tools	Minor errors in application of tools	Correct application of all tools
Applied analytical tools	11.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	88.9% (8)
	Insufficient evidence was gathered to evaluate proposed solutions	Appropriate evidence was gathered	Ample evidence was gathered to evaluate all proposed solutions
Evidence	0.0%(0)	44.4%(4)	56.5%(5)
	Missing or misinterpretation of results	Minor errors in interpretation of results	Complete and correct interpretation of results
Interpreted output of analysis	0.0%(0)	22.2%(2)	77.8%(7)
	Major errors in application of theory or techniques	Minor errors in application of theory or techniques	Demonstrated competency in the disciplines relevant to the proposed problem
Competency in subject matter	11.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	77.8%(7)
	Analysis skewed toward one discipline	Analysis drew from multiple disciplines	Analysis included all relevant business disciplines
Integration	11.1%(1)	44.4%(4)	44.4%(4)

All students were able to formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities and communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner (4.2). All students considered alternative strategies and recommended appropriate strategies. They clearly supported their recommendations with solid evidence.

Faculty Assessment of Student Achievement on Student Learning Objective 4.2 Summer/Fall 2007 BA 795 Project Activities (n)=indicates the number of faculty providing rating			
	Only one strategy considered	Multiple alternative strategies considered, but some may not be feasible	Multiple clear, concise, and feasible alternative strategies considered
Considered alternative strategies	0.0%(0)	33.3%(3)	67.7% (6)
	Recommendations not supported by evidence	Key recommendations supported by evidence	All recommendations supported by evidence
Support of recommendations	0.0%(0)	22.2%(2)	77.8% (7)
	Recommended strategies fail to address key identified issues	Recommended strategies fail to address key identified issues	Recommended strategies address all identified issues
Strategies solve problems	11.1%(1)	33.3%(3)	55.6% (5)

Although faculty support for the client project was considered reasonable, on some projects the level of contribution across student team members was not equal. Two out of nine faculty advisors indicated that there was inequity in team member contribution. One key issue with BA795 as an assessment vehicle is that the final deliverable in the course is a group project. So while faculty advisors are able to evaluate individuals during team meetings, the final project that faculty advisors evaluate is group-based work. As the committee explores curriculum changes and improvements to the assessment process during the 2008-2009 academic year, they will examine ways to address this issue.

- B. Overall, client assessments of MBA 795 projects were highly positive. Sixteen of the seventeen clients indicated that SDSU MBA students were well trained and they received useful reports that provided reasonable recommendations from the MBA students. Only one client indicated that students were “somewhat” well trained and that they received “somewhat” useful reports. This client also indicated that the students provided “somewhat” reasonable recommendations.
 - C. College of Business Administration MBA students perceive the culminating experience to add to their knowledge base and/or professional goals. On a seven-point point scale anchored by 1= Very Unsatisfactory and 7=Very Satisfactory the mean rating of the culminating experience was 6.12 (SD=1.59).
- V. **How will the information be used to inform decision-making, planning, and improvement?**

Based on last year’s report recommendations the committee is working to streamline the assessment process.

- **Portfolio requirements for the MBA students are too onerous of a task without some type of incentive and faculty involvement from a course in which students are enrolled. During the assessment plan revision that is scheduled for the next academic year the committee will explore new formats for portfolio based assessment.**

- **As discussed in the report the committee has created specific survey instruments for assessment. This has eliminated reliance on graduate surveys that do not directly assess student learning outcomes. These graduate surveys responses are now used as indirect measures in the assessment process.**

During the assessment plan work scheduled for 2008-2009, a key area of revision to the assessment plan will be to address the issues identified in this report. Specifically, the committee will seek to address the problems with evaluating individual team members when the final deliverable is group-based work. The committee will also explore curriculum changes that could potentially address any deficiencies the MBA students' have regarding the application of tools and theory.

Report completed by: Mehdi Salehizadeh

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Appendix I-College of Business, MBA Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

GOAL 1. Develop the solid foundation in theoretical concepts and managerial skills needed to lead business organizations.

SLO 1.1: Apply concepts and decision models in organizational behavior, finance, economics, marketing, and production to make business decisions.

Assessment instruments: Student surveys; Course exams and reports

SLO 1.2: Employ methods of financial and cost accounting and statistical data analysis to support business decision making

GOAL 2. Develop an awareness of the domestic and global economic, legal, ethical, and technological environment in which managers make and implement decisions.

SLO 2.1: Identify and critically analyze salient legal and moral business issues.

Assessment instruments: Student surveys; Portfolio of student work

SLO 2.2: Evaluate the impact that changes in the domestic and global economic environment have on the business climate.

GOAL 3. Gain insights into the behavior of individuals and groups in organizations and the potential influences of culture and demographic diversity.

SLO 3.1: Identify similarities and differences between the national and international environment and cultures and analyze the need to modify business strategies to pursue opportunities in new markets.

GOAL 4. Acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities.

SLO 4.1: Analyze a business problem in new and unfamiliar circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines.

Assessment instrument: Capstone course: BA 795 – Business Consulting; Student Surveys; Client Surveys

SLO 4.2: Formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities and communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner.

Appendix II-Assessment Instrument

1. Intro

BA 795 Project/Culminating Experience Assessment Survey
This survey should take less than ten minutes to complete!

2. Goal

As part of the on-going assessment of the MBA program we are reviewing 795 projects and we are seeking your input.

We are requesting you evaluate the extent to which the projects you supervised (or co-supervised) met two specific learning outcomes associated with the MBA program. The learning outcomes are associated with the goal listed below.

GOAL 4: Acquire the capacity to formulate and communicate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities.

3. Project

Please provide the following information

1. Name of Project:

2. Semester:

3. Please enter your last name:

4. SLOs

The following are the SLOs associated with Goal 4.

Student Learning Outcome 4:1: Analyze a business problem in new and unfamiliar circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines.

Student Learning Outcome 4:2: Formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities and communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner.

5. 4.1

Relative to Student Learning Outcome 4:1 please indicate the degree to which the following traits apply to the project.

Student Learning Outcome 4:1: Analyze a business problem in new and unfamiliar circumstances through the integration of relevant disciplines.

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4. Developed alternative solutions

1. Only one solution considered
 2. Multiple alternative solutions proposed, but some may not be feasible
 3. Multiple clear, concise, and feasible alternatives identified
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

5. Assumptions

1. Assumptions inappropriate or not stated
 2. Reasonable assumptions stated
 3. Appropriate assumptions clearly identified, supported, and distinguished from facts
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

6. Selection of analytical tools

1. Poor tools from one or more functional areas
 2. Identified appropriate tools from each functional area
 3. Identified and justified all analytical tools used
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

7. Applied analytical tools

1. Major errors in application of tools
 2. Minor errors in application of tools
 3. Correct application of all tools
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

8. Evidence

1. Insufficient evidence was gathered to evaluate proposed solutions
 2. Appropriate evidence was gathered
 3. Appropriate evidence was gathered to evaluate all proposed solutions
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

9. Interpreted output of analysis

1. Missing or misinterpretation of results
 2. Minor errors in interpretation of results
 3. Complete and correct interpretation of results
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

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10. Competency in subject matter

1. Major errors in application of theory or techniques
 2. Minor errors in application of theory or techniques
 3. Demonstrated competency in the disciplines relevant to the proposed problem
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

11. Integration

1. Analysis showed toward one discipline
 2. Analysis drew from multiple disciplines
 3. Analysis included all relevant business disciplines
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

6. 4.2

Relative to Student Learning Outcome 4:2 please indicate the degree to which the following traits apply to the project.

Student Learning Outcome 4:2: Formulate strategies to solve business problems and pursue opportunities and communicate these strategies in a clear and concise manner.

12. Considered alternative strategies

1. Only one strategy considered
 2. Multiple alternative strategies considered, but some may not be feasible
 3. Multiple clear, concise, and feasible alternative strategies considered
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

13. Support of recommendations

1. Recommendations not supported by evidence
 2. Key recommendations supported by evidence
 3. All recommendations supported by evidence
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

14. Strategies solve problems

1. Recommended strategies fail to address key identified issues
 2. Recommended strategies address key identified issues
 3. Recommended strategies address all identified issues
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

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15. Communication: recommendations

1. Recommendations not clearly stated
 2. Key recommendations stated in a clear and concise manner
 3. All recommendations communicated in a clear and concise manner
 N/A
 Briefly explain scores of 1 or 2: _____

7. Faculty support

16. Please indicate whether this project was acceptable in terms of individual team member contributions and faculty support.

	Completely not	Generally	Completely
All team members in this group contributed appropriately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The degree of faculty support required to provide an appropriate project to the class was reasonable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Please add any comments you have regarding specific strengths or weaknesses of the project with regard to meeting the above student learning outcomes for the MBA program.

8. thank you

Thank you for your input! Please click done to submit your responses.

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