

**Student Learning Outcomes Committee 2011  
Department/Program Assessment Results Report**

**Department/Program:** Business Administration, Undergraduate Program

**Degree/Program:** BSBA (Common Goals)

**Date Submitted:** 4-1-11

**PLEASE NOTE:** *All appendices to this report can be found on the College of Business Administration Assessment Website at:*

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~cba/assessment/undergrad.html>.

(Username & Password: SDSUCBA)

The purpose of this report is to communicate the assessment activities that have taken place during the last academic year, as well as to convey how the results are being used *to improve student learning at the program level*. The report should be kept as succinct as is possible, while answering the following questions clearly and conscientiously:

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

Last year's assessment report discussed the assessment of two goals and their corresponding student learning outcomes:

**Goal 1: Written and Oral Communication - Communicate effectively with individuals, teams, and large groups, both in writing and orally.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 1.1:** Write well-organized and grammatically correct papers including letters, memos, case analyses, and research reports.
- **SLO 1.2:** Make effective oral presentations that are informative as well as persuasive, as appropriate.

**Goal 5: Essential Business Knowledge - Demonstrate an understanding of the major functional areas of Business.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 5.1:** Describe basic concepts in each major functional area of business.
- **SLO 5.2:** Apply techniques and theories from various areas of Business to business situations.

**GOAL 1**

Last year's report detailed the results of assessments of both the oral and written components of Goal 1. Our students were found to possess adequate skills in both these areas however efforts were instituted to further strengthen oral skills through the institution of a common exercise in the required Business Communication course. Further, existing remedies to strengthen writing skills were tested for efficacy.

- **Oral Communication.**

As mentioned briefly in the conclusions of last year's report, an in-class exercise designed to strengthen our students' oral communication skills was developed and implemented in all sections of BA 290 (formerly IDS 290) – Business Communication. This exercise increased the amount of attention paid to oral skills in BA 290 whose

curriculum had been found to emphasize written over oral skills. The exercise involves students discussing the CBA Oral Communication Skills Rubric in order to produce a norming effect then viewing a video of student presentations. During and immediately following the video the students are asked to rate each of the presenters using the rubric. This exercise raises students' awareness of the importance of oral communication skills, requires them to review the CBA Oral Communication Skills rubric, and provides an opportunity to practice strong and/or weak oral skill recognition. All sections of BA 290 continue to complete the exercise during a class period.

- Written Communication.

As detailed in last year's report, the use of the WPA exam as an assessment of our students' written communication skills provides the advantage that a significant "closing the loop" vehicle is already associated with it. Students who score at a level that equates to meeting expectations (rather than exceeding them) are required to take a "W" course. A "W" course is an upper-division writing course. Students who score at a level that equates to falling below expectations are required to take a remedial, lower-division writing course and then to follow that with an upper-division "W" course. A variety of "W" courses are offered across the university including two in the CBA: IDS 390W, Reporting for Accountants (required of all Accounting majors) and IDS 396W, Reporting Techniques for Business Professionals (required of all Information Systems majors and open to all majors in the CBA other than Accounting). Students required to take a "W" course as a result of weak WPA performance may choose any course with that designation from across the university however many CBA students choose the "W" courses offered in their college. In order to assess the value of this existing "Closing the Loop" activity, students who took IDS 390W or IDS 396W in Spring or Summer 2010 completed a writing test designed to parallel the WPA. The exams were rated by experienced WPA raters, using the same rubric employed for evaluating the WPA. Students' scores on this test were matched to their original WPA scores in an effort to determine whether writing skills had improved. In short, it was found that students who were required to take two additional writing courses had a significant improvement in their writing skills while those required to take only one additional writing course did not. This outcome has led the College of Business Administration (CBA) to consider what additional writing-related loop closing activities may be needed for our students. Currently the development of a CBA writing center is under consideration. Detailed results of the effort briefly described here are found in Appendix A.

## **GOAL 5**

Also detailed in last year's report were the results of an annual assessment of Goal 5 (formerly Goal 4). These results indicated that, as in the past, students' command of essential business principles continues to be weakest in the areas of statistics and finance. The previous year an effort to strengthen skills in statistics and finance was attempted through the implementation of an online review in one large section of the college capstone course (also detailed in the 2010 annual report). The results of this pilot provided evidence that our students' finance skills were enhanced by the review while their statistics skills remained flat. The option to use the commercial software that was available to us for the initial effort (in Fall 2009) went away due to lack of a funding source hence the decision was made in Spring 2010 to attempt to develop an "in house" online review in finance. This approach would be less expensive and hopefully build on the results of the initial effort which suggested that finance skills could be strengthened with such an approach. Two faculty members, a Finance professor and a Strategy professor, worked

through summer and fall 2010 to develop an “in-house” online Finance review. The review, described in a bit more detail in Section V of this report, is being tested in one large (125) section of the capstone strategy course during Spring semester 2011. The outcome of the test will be detailed in next year’s report.

**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?**

- A. This section should list the student learning goals and objectives that were the focus for the report year (selected from your complete set of goals and objectives).
- B. It would also be helpful to note here the student learning goals and objectives that you intend to assess during the next year.

The College of Business Administration (CBA) has a set of common goals for all undergraduate students (since all students are in the BSBA program). Additionally, each major and specialization within the college has a set of goals specific to that major or specialization. This report focuses on the set of common goals. Assessment of goals specific to the major or specialization is reported separately.

They BSBA Common Goals are:

**Goal 1: Written and Oral Communication - Communicate effectively with individuals, teams, and large groups, both in writing and orally.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 1.1:** Write well-organized and grammatically correct papers including letters, memos, case analyses, and research reports.
- **SLO 1.2:** Make effective oral presentations that are informative as well as persuasive, as appropriate.

**Goal 2: Analytical and Critical Thinking Skills - Demonstrate effective analytical and critical thinking skills to make an appropriate decision in a complex situation.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 2.1:** Collect and organize critical data and information to solve a problem.
- **SLO 2.2:** Find appropriate models and frameworks to analyze information and follow logical steps to reach an effective decision.

**Goal 3: Ethical Reasoning<sup>1</sup> - Distinguish and analyze ethical problems that occur in business and society, and choose and defend ethical solutions.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 3.1:** Explain the various ethical dimensions of business decision making.
- **SLO 3.2:** Explain the role of various affected parties in business decision-making.
- **SLO 3.3:** Assess the ethics of decision alternatives using different ethical decision rules.
- **SLO 3.4:** Apply ethical decision-making rules to cases drawn from various business sub-disciplines.

**Goal 4: Global Perspective – Demonstrate a global perspective and an understanding of the dynamics of the global economy in making decisions.**

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<sup>1</sup> Goal 3 has previously had three student learning outcomes however the first SLO has been split into two (now SLO 3.1 & 3.2. The former 3.2 is now 3.3 and the former 3.3 is now 3.4.

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 4.1:** Identify and describe the impact of the global economy on business decisions.
- **SLO 4.2:** Explain and apply a global perspective in making business decisions.

**Goal 5: Essential Business Principles - Demonstrate an understanding of the major functional areas of Business.**

Learning Outcomes:

- **SLO 5.1:** Describe basic concepts in each major functional area of business.
- **SLO 5.2:** Apply techniques and theories from various areas of Business to business situations.

In the first cycle of program assessment (2004-2008), Goals 1-3 were assessed on a rotating basis, one each year, while Goal 5 (formerly Goal 4) was assessed annually. With the addition of the Globalization goal in 2009 this pattern would have produced a five year cycle (Goal #1 was split and took two years to assess). The AACSB (the College of Business' outside accreditation agency), however, recommends that a program complete two full cycles of assessment in a five year period. As a result the pace of goal assessment has been stepped up for the second cycle and beyond.

The following table details the timeline for assessment of these goals:

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>CYCLE #1</b>	<b>CYCLE #2</b>	<b>CYCLE #3</b>
Goal #1 (Oral Communication Component Only)	2004-2005 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 10-15-05)	Fall 2008 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 4-1-10)	Fall 2010 (Results to be reported in 2012 report)
Goal #1 (Written Communication Component Only)	2005-2006 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 4-1-07)	Spring 2009 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 4-1-10)	Fall 2010 (Results to be reported in 2012 report)
Goal #2 (Analytic and Critical Thinking Skills)	2006-2007 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 4-1-08)	Fall 2009 Results detailed in this report	Spring 2011 (Results to be reported in 2012 report)
Goal #3 (Ethical Reasoning)	2007-2008 (Discussed in Assessment Report dated 4-1-09)	Spring 2010, Results detailed in this report	Fall 2011
Goal #4 (Global Perspective)	Not Applicable – Goal adopted in May 2009.	Spring 2010 Results detailed in this report	Spring 2012
Goal #5 (Essential Business Principles)	Assessed Annually	Assessed Annually, Latest results detailed in this report	Assessed Annually

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

- A. This section should briefly describe the methodology used to examine the targeted goals and objectives. Please attach relevant scoring rubrics, surveys, or other materials used to examine student learning to the back of the report, as Appendices.

- B. Please note that the expectation here is that programs will make use of *direct* measures of student learning outcomes.

### Goal #2: Critical Thinking

In Cycle #1 our students' critical thinking skills were assessed using written case analyses in MGT 405, the college-wide capstone strategy course. This approach could not be duplicated for Cycle #2 assessment of critical thinking due to the fact that as class sizes have grown in MGT 405, all instructors were relying on group efforts for case analyses. The instructor in the largest section of MGT 405, however, used an essay exam format for the course final exam during the 2009-2010 academic year hence providing an opportunity to glean critical thinking samples from a total of 125 students. Students were asked a general question that required critical thinking but allowed them to choose any case analyzed in the course over the semester as the focus of their essay. The question the students responded to was:

*Pick one of the firms you analyzed this term and identify its competitive advantage. Identify two key resources and discuss how they contributed to this advantage? Identify two factors and discuss how these factors can threaten the firm's competitive advantage.*

The answers were rated independently by two raters using a common rubric following a norming session. The rubric was produced after reviewing the literature on the assessment of critical thinking and after mapping the two critical thinking student learning outcomes to the question asked of the students. The Undergraduate Committee had previously agreed that the benchmarks used when critical thinking was assessed in Cycle #1 would again be used in Cycle #2.

Specifically:

- 85% of our students should meet or exceed expectations for critical thinking.
- 50% of our students should exceed expectations for critical thinking.

This information (including the rubric and the results) are further detailed in Appendix B. The appendix also includes the results of the Cycle #1 (2006) assessment of critical thinking to allow for a comparison of the results from the two cycles.

### Goal #3: Ethical Reasoning

In Cycle #1 we assessed only two of the three student learning outcomes that existed for ethical reasoning at the time. At that time the third SLO, related to application, was planned for assessment in MGT 405, the college-wide capstone course and was not assessed because insufficient students who had taken the Ethics course where content was delivered, BA 300 (which was instituted in 2006) had reached MGT 405.

In Cycle #2, two things have changed. First, the three Goal 3 SLOs have become four as the first SLO from the original set has been split into two. Second, it was decided that MGT 405 has been asked to carry too large of a burden of assessment data collection and that the SLO related to application (now 3.4) could successfully be assessed in BA 300 along with the other Goal 3 learning outcomes.

The BA 300 (Ethical Decision-Making in Business) course coordinator developed a set of questions specifically mapped to the four student learning outcomes for Goal 3. Three questions were developed that addressed/mapped to each of the four SLOs hence producing a total of twelve questions to assess this goal. Instructors across all sections of BA 300 agreed to include these twelve questions in their Spring 2010 final exam. This produced a sample of 594 students.

The Undergraduate Committee had previously agreed that the benchmark used when ethical reasoning was assessed in Cycle #1 would again be used in Cycle #2. Specifically:

- At least 70% of students should be able to respond correctly.

This information (along with the results) is further detailed in Appendix C. The appendix also includes the results of the Cycle #1 (2007) assessment of ethical reasoning to allow for a comparison of the results from the two cycles.

#### Goal #4: Global Perspective

Global Perspective was added as a goal in 2009 and was assessed for the first time in Spring 2010. The instructor in the largest section of MGT 405 asked an essay-type exam question pertaining to global perspective and designed to cover the two global perspective student learning outcomes. Responses from a total of 125 students were assessed. The question the students responded to was:

*Assume that one of the companies you analyzed [in this class this semester] is seeking to enter (sell its product or service) in a new international market. Describe the fundamental challenges that this company may face as it expands its product/service. What recommendations would you offer to deal with these challenges?*

The answers were rated independently by two raters using a common rubric following a norming session. The Undergraduate Committee had previously agreed that the following benchmark would be used:

- 70% of our students should meet or exceed expectations for global perspective.
- 35% of our students should exceed expectations for global perspective.

This information (including the rubric and the results) is further detailed in Appendix D.

#### Goal #5: Essential Business Principles

The College of Business Administration participated in the CSU Business Assessment Test (BAT) during Spring semester 2010. This is the seventh time the CBA has participated in the exam<sup>2</sup>. The BAT exam consists of 80 multiple choice questions drawn from a pool of questions developed by a consortium of CSU business schools and administered through CSU Long Beach. The exam covers seven content areas deemed to represent the essential business knowledge that all undergraduate business majors should have mastered. The areas are: Accounting, Economics, Finance, Information Systems, Management, Marketing, and Statistics. The exam was administered during Spring 2010 in a majority of the MGT 405 sections<sup>3</sup>. MGT 405 is the capstone course required of all students in the BSBA program. A total of 402 seniors took the exam. This represents 57.6% of the students enrolled in the capstone course in the Spring semester and 34.1% of the annual enrollment in the capstone course in 2009-2010. Exams were graded by the BAT Test Administration at CSU Long Beach and results were sent to SDSU.

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<sup>2</sup> It is the 8<sup>th</sup> time if Fall 2009 is counted. In that semester the BAT was administered to a single class of students who were participating in a pilot program for closing the loop in Essential Business Knowledge. Data from this class is not included in the overall annual BAT reports.

<sup>3</sup> The BAT is designed for a 75 minute class period hence could not be administered in MGT 405 sections that meet three times per week for 50 minutes per class period.

The BAT test was subject to revision and improvement during the 2009-2010 academic year. This effort was largely driven by SDSU and CSU Long Beach. In Fall 2009, prior to the test administration at SDSU (as part of the closing the loop pilot program), a Finance professor and a Statistics professor from SDSU both reviewed the BAT questions in these respective disciplines ensuring that the questions mapped well to the learning outcomes that exist for the courses where this content is delivered. Further, in Spring 2010 and Summer 2010 the SDSU CBA Director of Assessment participated in meetings with other CSU Assessment Directors and Associate Deans aimed at strengthening the BAT by mapping questions across all disciplines to appropriate SLOs. The result of these efforts was a revised and improved Business Assessment Test that will be implemented for the first time during the current semester (Spring 2011).

This information (along with the 2010 results) is further detailed in Appendix E.

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

- A. This section should briefly describe the results (in summary form) in regard to how well students have met the targeted goals and objectives. For example, what percentage of students met the objectives? Is this a satisfactory level of performance? What areas need improvement?
- B. Whenever it is possible to do so, please organize and present collected data by way of tables and/or graphs. [Note: the committee expects and welcomes both quantitative and qualitative data, so this suggestion should not be construed as seeking quantitative data only.]

Goal #2 – Critical Thinking

The table below summarizes the results of the assessment of both Critical Thinking student learning outcomes:

	<b>Below Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeding Expectations</b>
<b>SLO #1</b>	10.5%	8.0%	52.5%	29.0%
<b>SLO #2</b>	11.25%	12.25%	53.25%	23.25%

Given the established benchmarks of 85% of our students meeting or exceeding expectations and 50% of our students exceeding expectations, it is noted that neither SLO met either benchmark. These results are presented in greater detail in Appendix B.

Goal #3 – Ethical Reasoning

Ethical Reasoning was assessed through a series of multiple choice questions rather than a rubric hence performance fell into one of two categories. Students who answered a question correctly were determined to have “met expectations” while student who answered a question incorrectly were determined to fall “below expectations”. The table below summarizes the results of the assessment of all four Ethical Reasoning student learning outcomes:

	<b>Below Expectations</b>	<b>Met Expectations</b>
<b>SLO #1</b>	10.1%	89.9%
<b>SLO #2</b>	19.0%	81.0%
<b>SLO #3</b>	9.9%	90.1%
<b>SLO #4</b>	25.4%	74.6%

Given the established benchmark of 70% of our students meeting expectations (i.e. answering correctly), it is clear that success has been obtained. It is worth noting, however, that the fourth student learning outcome, which focused on application rather than recall, produced somewhat lower levels of correct answers. These results are presented in greater detail in Appendix C.

#### Goal #4 – Global Perspective

The table below summarizes the results of the assessment of both Global Perspective student learning outcomes:

	<b>Below Expectations</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeding Expectations</b>
<b>SLO #1</b>	29.8%	33.9%	25.8%	10.5%
<b>SLO #2</b>	24.2%	37.4%	30.1%	8.1%

Given the established benchmarks of 70% of our students meeting or exceeding expectations and 30% of our students exceeding expectations, it is noted that neither SLO came close to meeting either benchmark. These results, quite disappointing, are presented in greater detail in Appendix D.

#### Goal #5: Essential Business Principles

The average score earned by SDSU students on the BAT exam was 56.41% (Adjusted), 53.14% (Unadjusted)<sup>4</sup>. This represents an improvement from average performance when the exam was administered in Spring 2009 (Adjusted Mean: 55.33%, Unadjusted Mean: 51.48). Average performance placed SDSU students first in campus rankings across the seven CSU schools that administered the test during the 2009-2010 academic year. Appendix E contains a Power Point presentation that was used to present the results of the assessment to various constituencies in the College of Business.

As in past years and as would be predicted, students majoring in a particular field did better in that sub-test than non-majors. Overall, students performed strongest in the content areas of Marketing and Management and weakest in the content areas of Finance and Statistics. This is consistent with results from previous administrations of the exam. As detailed in Sections I & V of this report, a significant effort was undertaken in the past year to begin closing the loop for this goal.

### **V. How will the information be used to inform decision-making, planning, and improvement?**

- A. This section should describe the strategies that will be implemented for program improvement as a result of the conclusions drawn from the assessment activities.
- B. The program change may pertain to curricular revision, faculty development, student services, resource management, and/or any other activity that connects to student success.

#### Goal #2 – Critical Thinking

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<sup>4</sup> Beginning in 2008 the exam was scored both adjusted and unadjusted. The adjusted scoring removed 22 of the 80 items which had been determined to be of questionable validity. Since scores prior to 2008 are only unadjusted, both scores are reported here so that comparisons to pre-2008 assessments can be made.

As was reported in Section IV and Appendix B, results suggest that our students' critical thinking skills need strengthening. In an effort to encourage faculty members to develop and implement critical thinking enhancement projects, the College of Business (CBA) Assessment Committee has put out a strong plea for graduate fee proposals related to this important issue. In 2009 the CBA implemented a professional fee that is charged for all graduate units taken in the college. A significant portion of this fee is earmarked for faculty projects that relate to assurance of learning. Proposals for projects are submitted to a CBA committee which reviews them and makes awards. The committee is currently reviewing proposals for the upcoming year.

### Goal #3 – Ethical Reasoning

The results of the Ethical Reasoning assessment, as reported in Section IV and Appendix C of this report, suggest that our students are meeting our expectations for learning in this area. Thus, no significant changes to our current efforts are being planned. However, because the application of ethical reasoning concepts was the weakest area for our students we are encouraging faculty across the college (and especially in our capstone strategy course) to include case studies that have an ethical dimension.

### Goal #4 – Global Perspective

The first assessment of our students' global perspective, as reported in Section IV and Appendix D, was quite disappointing. Although the CBA promotes itself as providing "Leadership for the Global Marketplace", results of the Global Perspective assessment suggest that many of our students lack a strong global perspective. Many serious conversations have taken place within the college as a result of these findings. Several possibilities are currently in process or being considered at the present time:

1. The GEP Certificate Program

An optional Global Experience Program (GEP) certificate program has been developed and implemented in the college. The program is designed to enhance the learning for students who choose to study abroad. The GEP program requires both pre-departure and upon return workshops, community service and internships, language courses, and the development of a portfolio. While this program will not affect all students in the CBA it is seen as a very positive move toward strengthening the global perspective of students who do choose to study abroad.

2. Program Change to Require a Global Course

Many of our students take one or more of the existing globally-related courses offered in the CBA. All departments within the college offer at least one course that focuses on international aspects and several departments offer multiple courses. These courses, however, are currently electives. The CBA Undergraduate Committee is considering requiring students in all majors within the CBA to choose at least one international course. Alternatively, consideration is being given to the development of an international business course that would be required of all students.

3. Greater global emphasis in existing courses

While consideration is being given to the possibilities detailed in #2 above, the results of the Global Perspective assessment have been disseminated across the college and all faculty members have been encouraged to further emphasize international issues in their courses.

### Goal #5: Essential Business Principles

As described in last year's report and in Section I of this report, an effort has been underway for more than a year to develop review material aimed at strengthening our students' essential business knowledge. In 2009 (as reported in the 2010 BSBA Assessment report), we piloted an online review in finance and statistics, the two sub-disciplines where our students have consistently proven weakest. Results of that initial pilot suggested that the greatest opportunity for improvement via an online review was in finance hence that is where we have continued to focus attention in the past year. Another reason for focusing on finance is that our college-wide capstone strategy course relies on financial analysis knowledge more so than statistics knowledge. Since the online review is to be completed as part of the capstone course, it was deemed easier to achieve buy-in from the strategy instructors if the review focused on finance. During summer and fall 2010, an in-house finance review specifically tied to our finance student learning outcomes was developed. This review is being piloted during Spring semester 2011 in a large section of the capstone strategy course. Students who complete the review will be compared to those who did not on the BAT exam at the end of the current semester. Should the effort prove successful in strengthening our students' finance skills, the long term strategy is to continue to develop online reviews in other sub-disciplines that challenge our students.

**Report completed by:** Kathleen A. Krentler, Director of Undergraduate Programs

**Date:** 4-1-11

PLEASE NOTE: *All appendices to this report can be found on the College of Business Administration Assessment Website at:*

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~cba/assessment/undergrad.html>.

(Username & Password: SDSUCBA)

**Appendix A**

**A Test of the Existing Loop Closing for Goal #1, SLO 1.1 (Written Communication Skills)**

**Appendix B**

**Goal #2 – Critical Thinking**

**Appendix C**

**Goal #3 – Ethical Reasoning**

**Appendix D**

**Goal #3 – Global Perspective**

**Appendix E**

**Goal #5 – Essential Business Knowledge**