

# Annual Assessment Report to the College 2008-2009

College: COBAE

Department: Graduate Office

Program: Masters of Business Administration (MBA)

Liaison: Leah Marcal

## 1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s)

**1a. Assessment Process Overview:** The plan in 2008-2009 was to ensure that all program learning goals had been measured and evaluated at least once in the last three years. Our primary emphasis was upon the "bookends" of the program – entry (GBUS 600) and exit (GBUS 697G and GBUS 698A).

**1b. Implementation and Modifications:** This year resulted in significant improvements in the assurance of learning process for the MBA program.

## 2. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project:

### 2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

Integrate theory and practice

### 2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

Embedded assessment of GBUS 698A --MBA Graduate Consulting Projects.

### 2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:

All graduate projects completed in GBUS 698A in Fall 08 and Spring 09 for a total of 11 projects.

### 2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:

Compared performance of this year's students vs. last year's students.

**2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** The MBA Consulting Project requires students to demonstrate an ability to integrate the management theory they've learned with practical recommendations. In 2007-2008, the projects were evaluated to widely vary on their successful integration of theory and practice. This informed the program director and faculty to establish clearer expectations of both students and faculty advisors. By 2008-2009, average report quality has increased overall and with greater consistency. However, 3 of 11 projects completed during this academic year still had inadequate implementation plans.

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** The program office is preparing a Faculty Advisor Guide and the MGT 693 (Capstone) faculty will place greater emphasis on implementation. The Graduate Office is preparing a better project outline and guidebook for the students enrolling in the MBA Consulting Project in the next academic year, with an emphasis on how to provide detailed and practical consulting recommendations.

**2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

Appropriate professional management skills: Analytic Thinking

**2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

Embedded assessment using grading rubric assessing analytical skills demonstrated in GBUS 697G, MBA student comprehensive exam and MBA Graduate Consulting Project (GBUS 698A). Additionally, SOM 686 measured students' systems analysis capabilities with five case studies.

**2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:**

All MBA students taking the comprehensive exam (enrolled in GBUS 697G) in Spring 09 and graduate projects completed in GBUS 698A. We are tracking performance and comparing performance of students this year to previous years.

SOM 686: All students enrolled in the course during spring 2009.

**2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:**

The culminating experience is criterion-based demonstration of mastery. The students are evaluated on their ability to meet expected levels of performance before exiting the program.

SOM 686: A cross-sectional sample was used.

**2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:**

In Spring 2009 class, 87% demonstrated proficient analytical skills in their comprehensive exam, while 91% demonstrated proficient analytical skills in the MBA Consulting Project. This is a significant improvement to Spring 2008, when nearly 90% of the students performed weaker analysis in their comprehensive exam than we would expect.

SOM 686: Some 40% of the students' work was deemed very good; 48% was good enough; and 12% was not good enough.

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** We expect all MBA courses to require students to use and develop analytical thinking skills. Results of embedded measures in GBUS 600, SOM 686, MGT 693 across several semesters showed up to 25% of the students performing below expectations. Faculty discussion over these results first focused on concerns about student abilities and appropriate admissions standards. As a result, over the past two years, the MBA Program has increased its admissions selectivity and increased its admission standard. The average GMAT of admitted students is now 600, with the lowest GMAT of a recently accepted student of 540. The faculty discussion has since turned to pedagogy. Faculty discussions have discouraged "over teaming" so that individual students have the opportunity and requirement to demonstrate and develop their analytical skills. Faculty are being encouraged to rely less on multiple-choice exams and to require more essay-type or report requirements in their courses.

**2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

Appropriate professional management skills: Clear Communication (written)

**2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

1. Embedded assessment evaluation of an individual written assignment in GBUS 600. Faculty grade with a rubric that includes specific evaluation of written communication skills. This course includes iterative writing assignments, a detailed grading feedback rubric, and a peer review exercise.
2. Evaluation by graduate committee of COBAE Graduate Committee members of all MBA Graduate Consulting Projects completed in Fall 2008

**2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:**

1. All students enrolled in GBUS 600 in Fall 2008.
2. All MBA Graduate Consulting Projects completed in Fall 2008.

**2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:**

1. We use performance in GBUS 600 to compare to previous classes, as well as performance elsewhere in the program.

**2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:**

1. 85% percent of the students demonstrated written communication skills expected of MBA students.
2. Review of the 2008-2009 MBA Consulting Reports shows improvements, but continued inconsistency in the quality of the written reports.

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** When discussing written communication, faculty expressed a great deal of concern about the (inadequate) quality of writing of our students. The faculty perceived that the excellent scores were achieved by faculty spending immense time coaching, reviewing, and editing iterative student work. This creates a significant cost to the faculty. In 2007-2008, faculty advisors and graduate committee members evaluated the MBA Consulting Projects that suffer from poor

writing, poor formatting, and difficulty with visual presentation of data. Therefore, a writing guide and online resources were provided to the students in the 2008-2009 classes of the MBA Consulting Project. Students were provided samples of excellent reports. Faculty advisors were coached on expectations in writing and formatting. Review of the 2008-2009 MBA Consulting Reports shows improvements, but continued inconsistency in the quality of the written reports. We recognize that faculty also differ in their ability to evaluate and edit written communication. Therefore, beginning in Fall 2009, the MBA Program will employ a communications TA who will provide MBA students with editorial and formatting coaching and feedback on written drafts. We expect this to improve the average feedback each student receives, the output of the average report, and the satisfaction of the faculty with the workload of supervising written work.

**2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

Appropriate professional management skills: Clear Communication (oral)

**2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

1. Embedded assessment of an assigned oral presentation in GBUS 600 using an evaluation rubric.
2. Detailed assessment of an oral presentation of the MBA Graduate Consulting Projects (GBUS 698A).
3. SOM 686 uses an in-class presentation of a term project to measure students' oral presentation skills.

**2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:**

1. All students enrolled in GBUS 600 in Fall 2008
2. All MBA Graduate Consulting Projects completed in Fall 2008
3. All students enrolled in SOM 686 during Spring 2009.

**2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:**

1. We use performance in this class to compare to previous classes, as well as performance elsewhere in the program.
3. A cross-sectional sample was used in SOM 686.

**2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:**

1. 100% percent of the students in GBUS 600 (Fall 08) demonstrated a well-rehearsed, professional presentation
2. 100% of students presenting their graduate projects in GBUS 698A were evaluated as strong presenters. However, over 90% of the presentations had poor organization for the type of presentation.
3. Some 68% of students' work was deemed very good, and 32% was good enough.

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Most of the MBA courses require both formal and informal presentations. Currently, we have actively assessed formal presentations. We have not yet discovered an effective means of capturing student performance on informal presentations. Because most of our students come to our program with 5+ years of professional work experience, the general level of oral presentation is quite high. Most of the students who struggle are international students, and even then the numbers are few. They are typically identified early and provided with significant feedback so that they can improve. The faculty who teach GBUS 600 have spent years making course improvements when faced with unsatisfactory performance on oral presentations. The course now includes a lecture-demonstration of giving an effective presentation, multiple oral presentations for iterative feedback, detailed grading rubrics to provide clear expectations and rich feedback, and a "dress rehearsal" peer review session. For Fall 2009, we have created a workshop in partnership with a local company president to prepare the students for their Consulting Project presentations.

**2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

Appropriate professional management skills: Effective Teamwork

**2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

Use of midterm and end-of-term peer and faculty evaluation in GBUS 698A (spring 09) of teamwork and leadership using rubrics

**2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:**

All students enrolled in GBUS 698A in Spring 2009.

**2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:** We track average performance at the same points in the program over time – and compare different students at different points in the program. Because GBUS 698A is a culminating experience, at the end of the program, we have established specific learning outcomes we expect to be achieved for successful program completion.

**2e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:**

In Fall 2008, 100% of students were evaluated by peers and faculty as demonstrating effective teamwork, but by term's end, 5% of the students received less than satisfactory scores on teamwork. In Spring 2009, 100% of the midterm peer evaluations were positive. However, by the end of the project, 12% of the students were negatively evaluated by their peers and supervising faculty.

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:**

Discussion among the faculty advisors generated the recommendation that beginning Fall 2009, we will collect peer evaluations three, instead of two, times across the semester, and faculty advisors will specifically address teamwork and leadership in their meetings with the teams, not just the work product.

<p><b>2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?</b> Appropriate professional management skills: ethical practices</p>
<p><b>2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?</b> Evaluated comprehensive exam and graduate projects for evidence of students' ability to recognize/identify ethical issues and apply models of ethical decision making</p>
<p><b>2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:</b> All students enrolled in GBUS 697G and GBUS 698A in Spring 2009.</p>
<p><b>2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:</b> Benchmarking student performance at the end of program against expectations of student achievement.</p>
<p><b>2e. Assessment Results &amp; Analysis of this SLO:</b> Although students demonstrate elsewhere in the program that they can successfully perform ethical analysis when direct to, students uniformly failed to consider ethical analysis when not specifically directed to.</p>
<p><b>2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:</b> We will better communicate the importance of ethical analysis and our expectations that it be included in the final culminating experience. However, our goal is that students will ultimately engage in ethical analysis without specific prompting. This requires review and redesign of ethical analysis within the curriculum. Faculty are discussing curriculum review and considering how to better integrate ethical analysis across the MBA curriculum.</p>

<p><b>2a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?</b> Understand the interdisciplinary relationships in the firm and its environment</p>
<p><b>2b. What assessment instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?</b> Students' understanding of basic operations management concepts was assessed with a comprehensive final exam in SOM 686.</p>
<p><b>2c. Describe the participants sampled to assess this SLO:</b> All students enrolled in the SOM 686 course in spring 2009.</p>
<p><b>2d. Describe the assessment design methodology:</b> A cross-sectional sample was used.</p>
<p><b>2e. Assessment Results &amp; Analysis of this SLO:</b> Roughly 12% of students' work was deemed very good; 48% was good enough; and 40% was not good enough.</p>

**2f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:**

None this year.

**3. How do your assessment activities connect with your department's strategic plan?**

The MBA program shares assessment information, student evaluation inputs, MBA ranking and profile information, each semester with the MBA faculty at a retreat. From the discussions at this retreat, the COBAE Graduate Committee builds and develops the strategic plan. We have open and effective communication, discussion and reflection among the faculty and across the MBA curriculum.

**4. Overall, if this year's program assessment evidence indicates that new resources are needed in order to improve and support student learning, please discuss here.**

The continued faculty frustration with written communication issues, has led to the recommendation to employ a Teaching Assistant to provide student and faculty support for communications, especially in GBUS 600 and GBUS 698A. Funds from the new MBA Business Professional Fee have been dedicated to fund this measure.

**5. Other information, assessment or reflective activities not captured above.**

**6. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.**

No.